A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE JEWS

High Middle Ages, 500–1200: Volumes III–VIII

VOLUME VII

HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LETTERS
A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE JEWS

By SALO WITTMAYER BARON

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High Middle Ages, 500–1200: Volumes III–VIII
VOLUME VII
HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LETTERS

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LINGUISTIC RENASCENCE

AND in hand with the deepened and diversified interest in the Bible went the newly awakened scientific curiosity about the Hebrew language, its vocabulary and forms, and the rules governing its use in different contexts. This nexus was perfectly obvious to contemporaries. The distinguished Karaite grammarian and exegete, Abu’l Faraj Harun, voiced a commonplace sentiment among Jewish intellectuals when he wrote: "The need to gain an acquaintance with the Hebrew language brings with it the obligation of knowing the words of the Lawgiver in their true interpretation. No one can arrive at this whilst being ignorant of the language because he is liable to err and interpret falsely." In other words, knowledge of the Bible presupposed a good knowledge of the language and vice versa.1

Perhaps in no period of human history did preoccupation with the correctness and purity of the spoken and written language become such a deep concern of educated classes as during the Islamic Renaissance. The intelligentsia of the Graeco-Roman world had evinced deep interest in the elegance of the Greek or Latin style in letters or oratorical exhibitions. The talmudic sages, too, tirelessly reiterated that, even in ordinary speech, one must beware of profanities and employ only "clean language." They also insisted upon clarity and precision in speech and tried to support it wherever needed by mnemotechnic aids concerning literary usage, for they considered such clarity in formulation relevant to the proper grasp and preservation of substantive knowledge. "The inhabitants of Judaea," Rab declared, "who had been careful about their language, succeeded in preserving their Torah, while the population of Galilee, having become negligent in speech, did not preserve its Torah" (‘Erubin 53a).

Not until the Muslim era, however, did fine points in grammar become the subject of passionate debate not only among specialists, but also among all other educated persons. From Ibn Janaḥ we
learn that Spanish Jews, evidently following a widespread fashion among their Arab neighbors, heatedly debated philological minutiae in their social gatherings. Mental gymnastics on grammatical problems became such a popular pastime that poets like Abraham ibn Ezra composed many linguistic riddles, the solution of which taxed the ingenuity of generations of playful students. In all Arabic-speaking countries elegant speech was the hallmark of a gentleman. According to Baihaqi, the Meccans, who after a devastating flood in 823 received from the Caliph relief funds accompanied by a letter, evinced greater interest in the elegant diction of that letter than in the money. Accustomed as they were to discount such figures of speech, Baihaqi’s readers believed that even a stricken population might be interested in stylistic niceties. Because of its intimate connection with sectarian interpretation of the respective Scriptures, grammar as such often became a matter of religious importance, and Hadassi was not alone in enjoining his readers to study the Hebrew language as a primary religious duty; in fact, as one of the ten cardinal duties of a Jew.  

DANGERS OF BILINGUALISM

In the case of Jews, however, their sacred language had to compete with their ordinary spoken dialects, especially Aramaic, Arabic, or both. True, their Muslim and Christian neighbors, too, were confronted by a sort of bilingualism of their own. The language of the Qur’an was often so remote from the language of the street that it required considerable intellectual effort to learn it. “Before the end of the first century of the Hejirah,” observes Alfred Guillaume, “an Umayyad caliph was unable to convey his meaning to the pure-blooded Arabs of the desert.” A similar gap existed between the “translation Greek” of the Septuagint and parts of the New Testament, or the canonical Syriac of the Peshîṭta and the local dialects. Yet Hebrew was not only more remote from these majority dialects, but its study required basically different linguistic approaches. To an Arab or Syriac student of language, the grammar and lexicography of the classical forms of their respective Scriptures completely overshadowed those of the spoken
dialects, which were studied mainly for comparative purposes. In ninth-century Baghdad “people were surprised to find a man effortlessly speaking correct grammatical Arabic with case terminations.” A Jewish philologist of necessity had to concern himself with the linguistic laws and vocabularies of both biblical and Mishnaic-rabbinic Hebrew, while never forgetting the grammatical rules of his daily Arabic speech and writing. A similar battle had also been fought by students of the Persian language. But once the victory had been won and, except for the adoption of the Arabic alphabet, Persian had reasserted its complete independence, Persian philology could freely develop along its own lines without constant regard to newer trends in Arabic linguistic studies. Jews, living as a permanent Arabic-speaking minority and using for literary purposes alone a language long in disuse as a spoken tongue, could never escape the impact of the Arabic world language and the superlative achievements of its grammarians and lexicographers.8

In the Jewish communities, moreover, this often became a three-cornered struggle. Especially in countries where Jews had for centuries spoken an Aramaic dialect and had created in it literary monuments of the grandiose sweep of Talmud, Targum, and Midrash, resistance against the conquerors’ linguistic encroachments often was vigorous and protracted. In Babylonia, as we recall, Aramaic maintained its hold on both the masses and the intelligentsia down to the tenth century. During the first, almost inarticulate, two and a half centuries after the rise of Islam Jewish scholars were actually confronted with the serious complications of a genuine trilingualism.

In the long run, however, Aramaic was bound to lose and be replaced by Arabic, while Hebrew gained an ascendancy long unprecedented in Jewish life. Aramaic evidently went into total disuse most speedily in regions where it had never held uncontested sway over the Jewish community. Despite their age-old reverence for Onkelos, the Jews of Fez gradually abandoned its public recitation in the synagogue. Probably it was more than a mere claim that, as Yehudah ibn Quraish reports, they “did not need this translation,” but in fact that translation had become quite meaningless to them, since they understood the Hebrew
original much better than the Targum. If the old battle cry of Judah the Patriarch and the Babylonian R. Joseph for the use of either Greek or Persian, in lieu of Aramaic, as the Jewish majority's second language was not now replaced by the slogan of "either Hebrew or Arabic," this was doubtless owing as much to the rapid disintegration of Aramaic as to the Rabbanites' deep reverence for the Aramaic literary monuments of their classical tradition. Karaites, on their part, did not wish to invoke the watchwords of talmudic sages, although they meant the same thing when they accused their opponents of using "the language of Assyrians and Arameans, which is the shameful language of the men of the dispersion [Babylonia]. For its sake the Hebrews have neglected their own tongue and in it they laid down the fruits of their wisdom and thought in a jargon, which caused them to misunderstand Scripture, to weaken in its interpretation, and to abandon its ordinary meaning."  

Ultimately, Arabic won over the very leaders of the Babylonian academies, who, from Saadiah on, began using it even within the sacrosanct precincts of the Halakhah. Like the Karaite leaders, they yielded to the practical need of making themselves understood by the masses of the population which no longer spoke Aramaic and whose Hebrew equipment was likewise deficient. An increasing number of inquiries to the academies, even if written by experts in rabbinic law in various lands, were couched in Arabic terms, and the replies had to be given in the same language. Authors of works in the newer disciplines of Jewish and general learning found themselves under still greater pressure to use the ever more refined Arabic medium.

In his well-known apologia for the use of Arabic by the Eastern scholars, addressed to the communities in Christian lands, Yehudah ibn Tibbon explained that this had happened because all the people understood that language. Moreover, this is a rich and diversified language meeting the various requirements of speakers and authors. Its phraseology is precise, lucid, and presents the substance of each subject matter far more penetratingly than is possible in Hebrew. For all we possess of the Hebrew language is what we find in the Bible, which is not adequate for the needs of every speaking person. They [the Eastern scholars] also intended to benefit through their works the uneducated populace unfamiliar with the holy language.
Of course, these difficulties were not insuperable. Ibn Tibbon himself, and other members of his family, showed that where there was a will, or rather the inescapable need of the Jewish communities in Christian lands unfamiliar with Arabic, a way was found to translate these accumulated treasures of Arabic-speaking Jewry into Hebrew. For similar reasons Tobiah ben Moses, “the Translator” of Constantinople, had early in the eleventh century pioneered with his translation into Hebrew of Arabic works written by Palestinian Karaïtes for the benefit of his Byzantine coreligionists. If his, as well as the Tibbonide, Hebrew was marred by stylistic harshness and numerous conscious Arabicisms (some passages can actually be understood only by reference to the Arabic originals), this was entirely owing to the usual shortcomings of pioneers and the stubborn concentration of these men on precision and exactitude, rather than stylistic elegance. For this purpose the Tibbonide family developed a special Hebrew style, which might properly be called “translation Hebrew,” reminiscent of the “translation Greek” cultivated, for analogous reasons, by the ancient authors of the Septuagint and the New Testament. More gifted littérateurs, such as Moses ibn Chiquitilla, Ibn Ezra, or Yehudah al-Ḥarizi, simultaneously working on the same materials, produced far more Hebraic and readable, if less exactlying accurate, versions.6

Clearly, had the original authors themselves made an effort from the outset to lend their philosophical and scientific ideas a Hebrew garb, they would undoubtedly have been far more successful, for they would not have had to operate within the straitjacket of someone else’s thoughts. One need but compare Menahem ibn Saruq’s pioneering *Maḥberet* (Dictionary) with Yehudah ibn Tibbon’s translation of a similar work by Ibn Janaḥ to realize the advantages of such freedom. Similarly, as David H. Baneth has shown, Maimonides, reproducing in Hebrew some of his own writings, could freely adjust his style to the exigencies of a linguistic as well as a juristic or theological nature. However, lacking the compulsion of the Western unfamiliarity with Arabic, the Eastern authors preferred to use the already well-fashioned instrument of Arabic to express their ideas even within the traditional realms of law and biblical research.6

As a matter of fact the greatest of the Arabic-writing Jewish
philosophers, Ibn Gabirol, Halevi, Maimonides, even Saadiah, had a much better command of the Hebrew than of the Arabic tongue. In their very Arabic writings they addressed themselves almost exclusively to the Jewish intelligentsia. That is why, as a rule, they wrote their Arabic books in the Hebrew alphabet and quoted all passages from Bible or Talmud in their originals, without adding an Arabic translation. The extant autograph fragments of Maimonides' writings are in this respect representative of the entire Arabic Jewish philosophic literature. At the same time, Samau'āl ibn Yaḥya explained the failure of the Jewish masses to appreciate the beauty of the Qur'an by their deficient knowledge of Arabic. Ibn Janaḥ, too, scolded his Spanish-Jewish compatriots for their insufficient attention to the subtleties of the Arabic language. Indeed, Judeo-Arabic gradually developed many linguistic peculiarities which, coupled with obvious Hebraisms, must have been offensive to the ears of Arab purists. Some of these Hebraisms, as we remember from Saadiah's and Jephet's Bible translations, were not even unconscious, but represented a studied effort to render biblical phrases through like-sounding Arabic words, however far-fetched.7

Disregarding such deliberate affectations, the language of these medieval Jewish authors evidently reflected some of the divergent speech habits in the Jewish communities, which can only in part be accounted for by similar deviations in the local dialects of their Arab neighbors. After a careful examination of the Arabic employed by Maimonides, perhaps the best Arabic stylist among the medieval Jewish philosophers, Israel Friedlaender found that the Fustāṭ philosopher

interchanges cases and modes, pays little heed to the rather complicated rules governing numbers, frequently removes sentences from the rigid control of the Arabic syntax, and uses a great many anacolutha. He makes use of a mass of new words, and still more frequently of old words in new meanings, rejected by the "classical" language.

True, irregularities of this kind can also be found among such contemporary Arab writers as the physician Ibn abī Uṣaibī'a, who hewed more closely to the popular, living language of his environment than to the artificially rigid "classical" patterns. However, there still remained a considerable residuum of Jewish
peculiarities which can be explained only by some specific usages in the Jewish communities. These growing deviations, including a considerable number of Hebraisms, adumbrated the subsequent evolution of modern Judeo-Arabic dialects. That they never led to the development of an independent language similar to Yiddish or Ladino is fully understandable in the light of both the greater intimacy of social intercourse between Jews and Arabs and the absence of large and enduring settlements of Arabic-speaking Jews outside the Arab world. But, already in the Middle Ages, certain minor peculiarities in pronunciation and style and the use of loan words from Hebrew and talmudic Aramaic must have made the speech of the Jew on the street readily distinguishable from the respective dialects of his Muslim neighbors. Conversely, the medieval Hebrew language received many stimuli from Arabic as well as from other languages in vocabulary, syntax, and especially in pronunciation.8

It was indeed a high price that the Jewish people had to pay for its insistent bilingualism, occasionally even trilingualism (Hebrew and Arabic combined with Aramaic, Greek, Latin, or some other vernacular). Diaspora Jewry had long employed at least one language other than Hebrew in its intellectual as well as daily life, but not until the Arab period did the greatest creative minds of Jewry alternately use two media in their writings. In ancient times, Philo wrote only in Greek, a talmudic sage only in Hebrew or in the Talmud’s peculiar blend of Aramaic and Hebrew. Even Josephus wrote Greek (with the aid of assistants) only after he had ceased writing Aramaic. Now, however, such great masters of Hebrew poetry as Ibn Gabirol or Halevi unhesitatingly turned to Arabic in their philosophic works. Moses ibn Ezra wrote his immortal lyrics in Hebrew, but used Arabic for instructing others in the art of writing Hebrew poetry.

Arabs, on their part, failed to recognize how much their linguistic studies had been promoted, especially in the formative years, by Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac prototypes. Far from believing, as Goethe was to express it centuries later, that one best learns the intricacies of one’s native language by learning another, Arab philologists refrained, as a rule, from the study of foreign languages. There always were far fewer Muslim than Christian
Hebraists. More, backed by powerful public prejudices, Arab
purists suspected every bilingual person, and still more every bi-
lingual group, of unavoidable offenses against the purity and
elegance of their Arabic speech. Al-Jaḥiz's comment on the feat of
an eighth-century Iraqi orator is typical of the prevailing opinion.
Musa al-Uswari, we are told, used to address an Arab crowd
seated to his right and a mass of Persians placed at his left by im-
peccably using both languages. "This is one of the world's mar-
vels," Al-Jaḥiz added, "for when the two languages meet on a
single tongue, one usually hurts the other." The Arab public
readily swallowed such assertions, since even without the knowl-
dge of foreign languages many a Muslim writer suffered from a
serious inferiority complex concerning his own ability to express
himself in faultless Arabic—a complex steadily nurtured by the
unceasing propaganda about the unparalleled mysteries of the
Arabic language. It was indeed fortunate for Jewish literature
that such a Jewish author as Baḥya ibn Paquda did not desist
from composing his ethical treatise merely because he did "not
possess an elegant style in Arabic." However, Arabic too had
absorbed many ingredients of Hebrew and Aramaic, the very
Qur'an being replete with loanwords from both these languages.
Such an impact was even more constantly felt in Christian lands
where "Hebrewisms" characteristic of all translations of the Old
Testament deeply influenced the native languages, many of them
in their formative stages. The continued preoccupation of many
Christian Bible students with the Hebrew text injected further
elements into these perennial, if often imperceptible, manifesta-
tions of Judeo-Gentile linguistic reciprocity.⁹

Bi- and trilingualism unavoidably had many serious effects on
the Jews. On the one hand, sooner or later it necessarily led to
some sort of "levantinization" of Jewish speech habits. Many
Jews, and some Christians, doubtless developed in time certain
traits of multilingual groups, speaking and writing in several lan-
guages sloppily, if not altogether incorrectly. In their early stages
the Judeo-Arabic dialects, as spoken by the masses, must also have
revealed certain typical characteristics of "jargons," until some
of them became refined through literary usage into more dis-
ciplined "dialects."
On the other hand, Jews were induced to pioneer along the lines of comparative linguistics. The same factors which induced a Muslim like Ibn Ḥazm to become a pathfinder in the study of comparative religion, operated to make the North African Jew, Yehudah ibn Quraish, at least half a century before Ibn Ḥazm, a pioneer in the comparative study of languages. Islam, which had admittedly absorbed important ingredients from Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism, and whose entire career was permeated with sectarian strife, offered a clear challenge to inquiring minds to compare these faiths to one another and to derive certain generalizations, which ultimately proved valuable for the understanding of religion as such. Jews, who staunchly resisted the incursion of outside religious ideas and rituals (without necessarily succeeding in preventing gradual seepage), evinced only mild interest in other faiths. Many of them would have considered a calm comparison without any apologetic bias an outright blasphemy. At the same time, linguistic parallels of a sort necessarily evolved within their own Hebrew language in its development from biblical antiquity to their own days. Even before they learned the refined philological approaches of their Arab neighbors, they could not help noticing the differences as well as the similarities between the language of the Mishnah and that of Scripture, and they were prepared to elucidate one by the other.

From here it was but a step to the utilization of linguistic materials not only from other Semitic languages, primarily Aramaic and Arabic, but also from the unrelated Berber, Persian, and other Indo-European dialects. It probably was more than mere coincidence that Abu ‘Ubaida Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthanna (728–825), one of the founders of the great Arab philological school of Basra and the author of some two hundred philological treatises, allegedly was the grandson of a Persian Jew. He delighted in antagonizing Arab fellow students by pointing out the foreign origins of many words, institutions, and families cherished by proud Arab traditionalists. Harun ibn Musa al-Asdi (d. ca. 786), who was the first to compile a list of difficult words and passages in the Qur’an, seems to have been born a Jew. Ultimately, a sensitive student of Hebrew, Ibn Quraish, living in Tahort, Algeria, during the middle of the tenth century, evinced considerable interest
in the dialects spoken by the Berber tribes in the vicinity and the linguistic residua of North Africa's Graeco-Roman heritage. He put them all to excellent use in explaining Hebrew words which, in his opinion, could not be adequately interpreted even with the aid of Aramaic and Arabic. He explained, for example, that the word *mesurah* (measure; Lev. 19:35) was identical with the Latin term, *mesura*, and found the equivalent of the Greek word, *kalós* in the Hebrew *le-qalles* (enhance; Ez. 16:31). An eleventh-century Cairo scholar (perhaps the liturgical poet Sahlal ben Abraham), finally, compiled a curious list of divine designations in fourteen languages. He was far surpassed by Sallam, the interpreter, who, as we recall, was allegedly able to speak in thirty languages.  

**LEXICOGRAPHY**

Comparative linguistics could the better be used for the elucidation of vocabulary, rather than of grammar or phonetics, as the meaning of words and phrases was generally the overriding concern of scholars and public alike. A proper understanding of the biblical, and to a lesser extent of the talmudic, terminology in all its shades of meaning became an indispensable prerequisite for both the new scholarly exegesis and the creative use of the resurrected Hebrew language in poetry and prose. At the same time the abundance of biblical homonyms and synonyms and the infinite variety of meanings which could be produced in words of the same roots by a slight change in vocalization alone challenged the ingenuity of students.

Concern for the significance, even spelling, of words was evident already among talmudic sages. On one occasion Rab suggested that in order to ascertain the correct spelling of two words in the Mishnah one should inquire among the inhabitants of Judaea, "who are punctilious in the use of language." On another occasion he (according to a variant reading it was Raba) speculated on the abridged form *ḥab* (guilty), instead of the more usual *hayyab*, in the Mishnah and concluded that the author of this phrase must have been a Jerusalemite. At times, of course,
interpretation of a single word could have important legal implications. In a famous controversy over the meaning of the mishnaic term *mab’eh* (destroyer of crops) Rab and Samuel invoked two different biblical verses in support of their contentions that the Mishnah had in mind destruction caused by man or by the tooth of an animal. While the ensuing legal argumentation completely drifted away from the linguistic issue, these two founders of Babylonian Jewish learning evidently had two divergent grammatical theories in mind when they interpreted these biblical statements. Ibn Janaḥ was not too far off the mark when he supplied a good philological rationale for this controversy, adding in a self-congratulatory vein, “And I do not know of any student of the Talmud in this generation who realized the hidden meaning of these proofs which we have detected.” Even more vital was such minute differentiation for the Masorites, whose decision in matters of spelling, punctuation, and statistical classification largely depended on the sense they attributed to each of two or three ostensibly similar words.¹¹

The first, however, to compile a regular dictionary of terms was Ṣemaḥ bar Paltai Gaon (872–90). Curiously, his lexicon was entirely devoted to talmudic vocabulary, and it evidently pursued the practical pedagogic aim of facilitating the study of the Talmud. This had indeed become a necessity with the growing diffusion of talmudic studies outside the restricted halls of the academies. Certainly those countless private scholars who were now preparing at home for the semiannual *kallah* gatherings required some such written aids in the complex vocabulary of a language whose use was rapidly declining even in the cities of Babylonia. Such need was more strongly felt in the western Mediterranean communities, where Aramaic had never been a spoken language. Perhaps the gaon was prompted to compile his lexicon by an inquiry from Spain. According to the aforementioned report by Hezekiah ben Samuel of 953, his great-grandfather Ṣemaḥ Gaon had been asked by Spanish scholars for explanations of “difficult passages in the whole Talmud, so many that several donkeys could not carry that load.” Since a donkey’s load, a measure frequently used for manuscripts in contemporary Arabic let-
ters, represented a considerable number of manuscript leaves, the
grandson may indeed have alluded here to an extensive glossary
of talmudic terms prepared by Šemah Gaon.

One wonders, however, whether this work was not identical
with those explanatory comments on the whole Talmud (Pitron)
which, as we recall, the Spaniards had solicited from Šemah’s fa-
ther, Palțoi. The latter may have entrusted his son with the com-
position of the glossary, while ordering some scribe or scribes to
copy the Talmud text itself for the benefit of his Spanish cor-
respondents. If this be true, Šemah’s ‘Arūkh probably followed the
pattern of the early geonic commentaries, mainly devoted to the
successive explanation of difficult terms, rather than that of regu-
lar alphabetic dictionaries, which came into vogue a century or
two later. Such an intention to facilitate the reading of the ac-
companying text of the Talmud which, together with the gloss-
ary, certainly covered several donkeys’ loads, may also explain
the noteworthy inclusion in Šemah’s work of names of places and
persons mentioned in the Talmud. For most readers these nat-
urally required as much explanation as did some difficult or un-
usual terms. Moreover, such data may even occasionally have had
a bearing on the halakhah, especially if they shed light on the
chronology of a particular talmudic tractate. Was not even Yaqut’s
famous geographical dictionary written mainly “to enable the
traditionalists to trace each transmitter of traditions to his home”?
Unfortunately, Šemah’s dictionary, still known in the sixteenth
century, has since been totally lost.12

Saadiah was somewhat more fortunate. At the age of twenty he
made literary history by arranging a “Small Collection” (Égron)
of Hebrew words in two alphabetic orders. One, giving the be-
ginnings of words, was intended to facilitate the quest by poets
of an appropriate vocabulary for acrostics, while the second listed
words in the alphabetic sequence of their endings and was to serve
as a regular rhyming dictionary. The explanations, always concise,
often consisted only of references to pertinent passages in the
Bible. All this was to promote the use of the Hebrew language,
“which our God has chosen from the beginning and in which
sing the angels of His holiness.” In his Hebrew introduction, from
which these words are taken, Saadiah also referred to the widely
held chronology of the Seder ‘olam rabbah that during the first 1,996 years after the creation of the world all mankind spoke He-
brew exclusively. Only since the Tower of Babel did men speak a variety of languages, and even the Hebrews themselves from the
days of Nehemiah, some three years before the Seleucid era, be-
gan neglecting their holy tongue. In the dispersion, finally, the
Jews learned the languages of their environment. To help stem this forgetfulness our youthful author prepared his dictionary, because “it is fitting for us and the whole people of God to study, comprehend and investigate it constantly, for us, our children, wives, and slaves, so that it not leave our lips. For by it we shall understand the laws of the Torah of our Creator, which are the core of our existence, our light and sanctuary from the beginning and unto eternity.”

Some years later, evidently after settling in Baghdad, Saadiah came under the spell of the then raging controversies between the Başran and the Kufan schools of Arabic philology, the headquar-
ters of which had previously been removed to the imperial capital. He therefore reissued his lexicon in revised form by adding to it not only Arabic translations of the Hebrew terms, but also a new third section dealing specifically with the “burdens of poetry,” that is with grammatical rules (including the then much-debated erratic performance of weak consonants), the use of metaphors, and other aids to poets. He also prefaced it by a less picturesque but more informative Arabic introduction. Quite appropriately he renamed this edition the “Book of Principles of Poetry,” or more concisely, the “Book of Poetics.” Later in life the gaon added, primarily for exegetical purposes, his brief lexicographical treatise on the hapax legomena of the Bible. He also compiled a “Dictionary of the Mishnah,” probably in connection with his aforementioned Commentary on that basic code of rabbinic Judaism. In addition, he unhesitatingly enriched the Hebrew lan-
guage by many new words and phrases, used to particularly good advantage in his poetic works.

Like almost everything else written by this militant champion of Jewish learning, Saadiah’s lexicographic contributions evoked a considerable debate. Apparently soon after the gaon’s death, Mubashshir ha-Levi wrote his comprehensive critique of Saad-
ih's scholarly works, arguing against both interpretations of certain terms and some of the underlying grammatical rules. Without directly referring to the Egron or the gaon's other studies of the biblical vocabulary, Mubashshir objected to some identifications of biblical names which had already been featured in Saadiah's early work. According to Ibn Ezra, author and critic disagreed, for example, as to the location of the biblical Tarshish. While in his dictionary as well as in his translation of Genesis (10:4) Saadiah identified it with Tarsus, Mubashshir preferred to see therein a reference to Tunis, doubtless because he knew that an inland city like Tarsus could not be reached by ship. He may also have felt that the distance to the southeast coast of Asia Minor would not have warranted a three-year journey, as seemed indicated in the biblical story of Solomon's expeditions (1 Kings 10:22). Hence he looked for a like-sounding but more distant location. None of Mubashshir's known comments revealed a sectarian bias, however, and although he occasionally accepted a Karaite interpretation, he definitely was a Rabbanite scholar. On the other hand, "the grammarian Abu Ya'qub [Joseph] al-Bakhtawi," mentioned by Salmon ben Yeruham, probably was a Karaite contemporary of Saadiah.15

We know too little about a lexicographic work by Abu Sahl Dunash (Adonim) ibn Tamim of Kairuwan, briefly referred to in later writings, to judge the extent to which it marked an advance over Saadiah. He, who in his Commentary on Yeṣirah boasted that at the age of twenty he had assisted Isaac Israeli (some time before 913) in replying to some of Saadiah's scientific inquiries and in correcting the Fayyumite's errors, certainly would not have hesitated to assert his views against the gaon also in philological matters. From a citation by Abraham ibn Ezra it appears that he tried to draw a parallel between the diminutive form in Arabic and such biblical words as abiyonah (Eccles. 12:5). Instead of the translation "And the desire shall fail," offered by Rashi, he suggested that the word was a diminutive of ebyon (poor) and referred to the poor soul which shall fail. Ibn Ezra repudiated both the interpretation and the underlying assumption, and pointed out that if ancient Hebrew had used diminutive forms, we
“would find in the Bible hundreds and thousands” of illustrations and not only the three mentioned by Ibn Tamim. The latter seems also to have made some contributions to Hebrew phonetics going beyond anything suggested by his masoretic predecessors.\textsuperscript{16}

Ibn Tamim was not alone in trying to relate Hebrew to Arabic grammatical forms. Another North African contemporary, Yehudah ibn Quraish (born in Tahort near Tlemçen, Algeria, about 900) went even farther afield. Apparently writing in Saadia’s lifetime, he took no cognizance of the gaon’s pioneering work. He expressed concern not so much for the forgetting of Hebrew as for the growing oblivion into which the Aramaic Targum was falling among the Jews of Fez, and he addressed to them a comprehensive Epistle (\textit{Risala}) pointing out not only the Targum’s traditionally high standing, but also its usefulness for the proper understanding of Hebrew.

I, therefore, resolved [he informed his correspondents] to write this book for intelligent readers that they may know that Aramaic and Arabic words, nay foreign and even Berber expressions, are intermixed with the holy tongue, but Arabic in particular. For Arabic contains many words which we find to be pure Hebrew. . . . The cause for this resemblance and (consequent) interchange is to be found in the pro-pinquity of habitations and consanguinity of races. . . . For this reason we find resemblances between Hebrew and Arabic apart from the natural kinship of the consonants used for structural purposes in the beginning, the middle, and ends of words. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic are by nature fashioned on one form. . . . We will begin by giving an account of Aramaic elements in the Torah, then of such rare words as can only be explained from the language of the Mishnah and the Talmud, and finally of Arabic words. We will also explain those kindred consonants which in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic stand in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of words, but in no other language than in these three. All these we will put down in alphabetical order, so that every letter wanted can easily be found in its place.

It may well be said that with this dictionary Ibn Quraish laid the foundation for a comparative study of grammar and etymology. Apart from this specialized work, our author seems also to have compiled a comprehensive general dictionary of the Hebrew language, which, apparently used to good advantage by Menahem ben Saruq and Dunash ben Labrat, is now totally lost. He may also
have written a treatise in which he assembled some strange rabbinic aggadot and warned the reader against accepting them as literal truths.17

Fortunately, another major dictionary of the period has come down to us and is available in a fine critical edition. David ben Abraham, native of Fez but apparently a long-time resident of Palestine, was a Karaite. Although very likely but a convert to Karaism after his arrival in the Holy Land, he did not display the intolerance of many neophytes, but readily learned not only from Ibn Quraish and Saadia (whom he mentions twice by name without the usual Karaite maledictions), but also from the Talmud and Rabbanite prayer books. In fact, he sometimes ascribed to the Mishnah words documented only from posttalmudic times. Like both his Rabbanite predecessors, he was also interested in comparative linguistics, except that, unlike Ibn Quraish, he quoted no Berber nor Graeco-Latin terms, but introduced much comparative material from the Persian with which he could have become familiar in both Fez and Jerusalem. Like Saadia, he tried to identify many proper names. For example, he believed that the biblical Ophir was identical with Sarandib or Ceylon, and that Mount Ararat was located in Kurdistan. On the other hand, he wavered as to whether he should equate Ashkenaz with Khazars or Franks. He explained his method in a comprehensive introduction in which he also warned any would-be Bible commentator not to be "rash in his interpretations, but master first the grammatical rules, inflections, the causes for change of accents, and the syntax of the language, as well as its correct use in speech. This would stimulate thinking, enhance knowledge, do away with in-dolence, awaken the soul, and inspire one to the search of knowledge." 18

All these authors, except Saadia in the first edition of his dictionary, unhesitatingly used Arabic as a medium for explaining Hebrew terms and communicating their own observations to the public. Saadia himself frankly referred to a story current among the Muslims about one of their leaders (Al-Aswad ad-Du'ali), who, allegedly saddened by the prevailing incorrect speech of his compatriots, composed for their guidance a brief grammatical tractate. One must bear in mind, however, that in Egypt, where Saadia
first composed his dictionary, philological studies had not been greatly cultivated in the ninth century. But there undoubtedly were Egyptian students of works produced in the two great centers of Arabic philology at Baṣra and Kufa. We know of an Egyptian contemporary of Saadiah, Aḥmad ibn Wallad, who, after pro-
longed study under the leading philologists of Baghdad, returned to Cairo, where he died in 943, one year after Saadiah. Very likely there also appeared in Fayyum some such learned eastern immi-
grants as the Armenian Al-Qali, who, after an apprenticeship of several years in Baghdad, arrived in 942 in Cordova, where he served as a highly popular teacher of language for the subsequent two decades. Nor was this an entirely one-sided influence. Cer-
tainly, in the formative stage of Arabic philology, the Arabs had learned a great deal from their Jewish and Christian neighbors, or from such men of Jewish origin as the aforementioned ‘Ubaida and Harun ibn Musa. Saadiah seems to have been influenced particu-
larly by his older contemporaries, Ta’alab (815–904) and Ibn Duraid (837–933), representatives of the schools of Kufa and Baṣra, respectively.¹⁰

SPANISH PHILOLOGISTS

Curiously, while Iraq held undisputed sway over Arabic philology for half a millennium after the rise of Islam, the Babylonian center of Jewish culture contributed but slightly to the evolution of the new linguistic studies in Hebrew. Even Saadiah and Qirqisani were newcomers from other lands. Dunash ben Labraṭ was perhaps the only Hebrew philologian of note to have studied in Babylonia. But, as we shall see, he produced his works only after settling in Spain. This reticence was not owing exclusively to the great Babylonian concentration on rabbinic learning, since some of the later geonim themselves dabbled in philology. Moreover, Palestine, too, the old center of masoretic and exegetical studies, brought forth only one real first-rate Hebrew philologist: the Karaite Abu’l Faraj Harun. In contrast thereto Ibn Tamim, Ibn Quraish, and David al-Fasi were all natives of northwest Af-
rica—a region, undistinguished then and long after in the annals of Arabic linguistic studies.
Evidently these western Jews felt more acutely the prolonged struggle between the dying local cultures and languages and the overpowering influence of the conquerors. In the East there was more of a linguistic exchange. The Arabs themselves more readily learned there from the Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, and Persian philological achievements, though formally insisting on the absolute purity of their own linguistic heritage. In the western lands they uncompromisingly imposed upon themselves and their ever growing following the gradually evolving eastern patterns of speech and writing as the only legitimate forms; all resistance was driven underground. Jews, as often before and after, saw themselves placed between these conflicting groups. They reacted with redoubled energy, as they were simultaneously confronted, in their own midst, with the rapid disintegration of Aramaic and the renascence of Hebrew. Most profoundly sensitized on this score, naturally enough, were the Jews of Spain, that western outpost of the Islamic world, where the local Romance dialects and traditions were never fully suppressed by the Arab steamroller.

Even here, however, Arabic philological doctrines had to be accepted by the very men who rejected the use of the Arabic language in works on Hebrew lexicography. Another member of that highly gifted generation after Saadia, Menaḥem ben Jacob ben Saruq of Tortosa, made a point of writing his dictionary in Hebrew and of giving it a purely Hebrew title, Mahberet (literally: Set, following Lev. 26:4). A Hebrew lexicon of this kind must have been felt as a godsend by the Jewish intellectuals north of the Pyrenees, to whom Arabic works necessarily remained sealed books. Put to excellent use in Rashi’s commentaries, it exercised a lasting influence on the philological thinking of many generations of European Jews. A protégé of Ḫisdai ibn Shaprut in Cordova, Menaḥem was undoubtedly familiar with the linguistic discussions evoked by Al-Qali and other grammarians among the Arabs of that city. He refused, however, to quote expressly Arabic words in explanation of biblical terms, though he not infrequently cited Aramaic words for this purpose.

Menaḥem’s main strength lay in his attempt to understand each term out of its context in Scripture. This procedure, which he indicated clearly in his introduction, led him to an unprecedented
stress on both omission and duplication of ideas in the Bible. His teachings of such elliptic and pleonastic usages became very influential in the subsequent philological and exegetical literature. He also stressed the importance of biblical parallelisms and stated that “one half of the verse instructs us in the meaning of the other half.” On the other hand, he rejected some of Ibn Quraish’s artificial explanations by the simple permutation of letters, and carefully scrutinized (sometimes in direct opposition to Saadia) the nature of some of the weaker consonants. That his linguistic explanations had considerable bearing also on religious doctrine is self-evident. Sometimes he went out of his way to emphasize religious piety. Discussing the difficult term ṭoṭafot (usually translated “frontlets”; Deut. 6:8), he connected it with the verb ṭaṭṭifu (preach; Micah 2:6, etc.), and explained it to mean that Moses enjoined Israel “My people! Place my words before thee and my laws before thine eyes.” Menaḥem thus clearly alluded to the commandment of phylacteries derived by the rabbis from this biblical phrase. He also took occasion to explain away biblical anthropomorphisms and, apparently for the first time in the lexicographic literature, to attempt a full classification of the biblical commandments. In explanation of the divine designation Ehyeh asher ehyeh (Exod. 3:14), he denied that these words had any connection whatsoever with the Hebrew verb “to be” and the ensuing translation of “I am that I am.” The conclusion of that verse, “Ehyeh hath sent me unto you,” clearly showed, in his opinion, that this “holy, honored and awe-inspiring name” is like “one of those words which have no explanation, or like a name that has no derivation from any other word.”

Rarely in the annals of mankind has the publication of a simple dictionary created such a furor as did Menaḥem’s Mahberet. Hailed immediately and again in later generations as a masterpiece of Hebrew learning, it soon elicited the sharp opposition of a recent arrival from eastern lands. Dunash (Adonim) ben Labrat (about 920–80), for a time resident in Fez, had spent several years studying under Saadia and other masters of language in his native Baghdad, the great center of philological learning. After his arrival in Cordova, where he looked down upon the local philological “upstarts,” he felt doubly free to employ against Mena-
hem's dictionary his sharp satirical pen, as he was soon thereafter to use it also against his celebrated master's treatise on the unique words in the Bible. In his polemical fervor Dunash not only used intemperate language (he did the same in his strictures on Saadiah), but he also placed at the top of the one hundred and sixty incriminated passages two which, in his opinion, best demonstrated Menaḥem's heterodox leanings. That the latter had denied the doctrine of free will seemed evident to Dunash from Menaḥem's interpretation of Lamentations 3:33–36, while he suspected serious legal deviations in Menaḥem's consistent literal acceptance of the spelling lo as a negative in several verses (Exod. 21:8, Lev. 11:21, 25:30, and Job 9:33). Menaḥem's explanation of Leviticus 1:15, which he, perhaps unwittingly, had shared with 'Anan the Karaite, was, of course, a perfect target for Dunash's shafts. Prefacing his attack with Hebrew poems in the Arabic meter, which became his most significant innovation in the history of Hebrew poetic forms, Dunash so persuasively repudiated many of Menaḥem's interpretations and grammatical assumptions that even Menaḥem's patron, Ḥisdai, lost his faith in his Spanish-born protégé. Apart from illustrating the constantly changing moods of a typical grandee at an Arab court, this sudden disgrace of a meritorious student mirrored to a great extent the prevailing feeling of inferiority of the Spanish scholars toward such newcomers from the East.21

It was a sign of Spain's rapidly growing maturity, therefore, that Menaḥem found three devoted disciples who took up the cudgels in his defense as well as in that of their country. Accusing Dunash of sheer envy and ignorance and harshly rejecting the application of Arabic meters to Hebrew poetry, these disciples (Isaac ibn Chiquitilla, Ephraim ibn Kafron, and Yehudah ben David) nevertheless had to prove to their readers that they, too, were capable of writing such rhythmic poetry. Apart from this stunt, however, they contributed some solid observations on fifty-five controversial entries in Menaḥem's dictionary. They defended, for example, Menaḥem's interpretation of the verses in the book of Lamentations as relating to the uncertainty of man's fate, rather than his lack of freedom. There was a considerable dose of
demagoguery in some of their asides, too. For example, they imputed to Dunash the thought that, having disposed of Menahem, he had routed all Spanish scholars. They also rejected Dunash’s equation of the word *pigru* (stayed behind; I Sam. 90:10) with “were destroyed” in analogy to an Aramaic term in the Targum, because the underlying assumption of all such linguistic comparisons is “that all languages are equal without discrimination.” They also appealed to both the Spanish and the Jewish chauvinism of their readers. In reply, Yehudi ben Sheshet, one of Dunash’s pupils, upheld his master’s position. His answers are characterized by even greater venom. He not only pointed out that Menahem himself had not had the courage to answer Dunash’s strictures, but that the pupils had dared to take issue with only fifty of the two hundred objections raised by Dunash (the ratio was more correctly 55:160). Moreover, Yehudi tried to show that, in at least thirty of their replies, they, and not Dunash, were wrong. This rejoinder he intended “to circulate in every city,” so as to expose their foolishness, “and they become a laughing stock among all Spaniards.” Whatever the merits of the two sides, this vitriolic controversy helped to stimulate broad public participation in the debate of philological minutiae and to refine the understanding by experts of the peculiarities of the Hebrew language.²²

One of the debaters on Menahem’s side, Yehudah ben David, was probably identical with the famous grammarian by that name known as Abu Zakariya Yahya ibn Daud Hayyuj (born in Fez about 940). Possibly stimulated by this discussion, Hayyuj soon made his great grammatical discoveries which will be discussed below. His theories became known also to the Jews of Christian Europe through Hebrew translations by Moses ibn Chiquitilla and Abraham ibn Ezra. Here, however, he refrained from polemics and but briefly intimated some of his new, revolutionary doctrines. Although not directly concerned with vocabulary (only in his *Kitab an-Nutaf* [Book of Glosses] on Prophets did he make a direct lexicographic contribution), his new theories naturally had considerable bearing also on Hebrew lexicography. Curiously, despite his use of the Arabic language and terminology, Hayyuj followed Menahem in abstaining from quoting any similarities
between Hebrew and Arabic. Perhaps his previous commitment on this issue in the controversy with Dunash had made him doubly reticent.\(^{23}\)

Such parochialism, completely out of keeping with the Jewish people’s linguistic and social situation, was bound to fail. The comparative method reasserted itself fully in the *magnum opus* of Jonah (Abu’l Walid ibn Merwan) ibn Janaḥ, the great disciple of Ḥayyuj’s colleague Isaac ibn Chiquitilla, the second part of which, entitled “Book of Roots” (*Kitab al-Uṣul*), was essentially a dictionary. In his earliest book, dedicated to corrections and additions to Ḥayyuj’s lexicon (both these terms are included in the Arabic title *Kitab al-Mustalḥiq* and in the alternate Hebrew titles used by the author himself), Ibn Janaḥ expostulated:

My observations [here] have not been stated by any of the Hebrews before me, and I hope that if any man of the humble ones will note what I have associated with Arabic usage as in [the explanation of] the present word, he will not condemn me. For I have not invoked the testimony of the Arabic language in order to confirm by it my personal opinion, nor because the Hebrew language requires the support of the Arabic tongue, but merely because I have stated views the like of which few Hebrews have been accustomed to hear, and I feared that they might hasten to repudiate me outright.

He repeated the same excuse a little more poignantly in the introduction to his main work, where he attacked “what I know of the evil conduct of the men of our time, their ignorance of the vicissitudes of authors and the difficulties of rhymsters, and their proneness to criticize the scholars, particularly as I have myself experienced their foolishness and have not escaped their evil designs.” All his works, in fact, are studded with occasional digs at these unregenerate opponents. For one example, he tried to explain that the term, *sharesu ha-mayim* (the waters brought forth abundantly; Gen. 1:21) could apply to an inanimate object like water. He combated here the views of a “devious” opponent (probably Samuel ha-Nagid) that *sharesu* could be used only in connection with a living being “whose characteristic feature is its collective existence.” Ibn Janaḥ added, “this is nothing new considering the general deviousness of the men of our generation.”\(^{24}\)

In his lexicon particularly, Ibn Janaḥ made a special effort to distinguish between the various shades of meaning appearing in
the biblical use of words derived from the same root. In his introduction he pointed out that, for example, the word *paqad* had seven entirely different meanings in various contexts in Scripture, and he further illustrated this varied application in his entry under that root. Unfortunately he abandoned the effort of earlier Hebrew lexicographers to identify also the proper names in the Bible. Perhaps he realized that historical and ethnological research had made too little progress to enable him substantially to improve on the identifications by Saadiah or David ben Abraham. But Ibn Janaḥ came to grips with the no less complex designations of living or inanimate objects mentioned in the Bible. He recognized, for example, that the term *neḥifot* (often translated by "pendants" in Judges 8:26 and Isaiah 3:19) was only loosely connected with the root *naṭaf* (drop) of Canticles 5:5, Proverbs 5:3 and other verses. He suggested, therefore, that it might be related to the Arabic word *nuṭuf*, meaning pearls or earrings, and expressed preference for the latter meaning in the two biblical verses. One may readily see that such interpretations proved to be a boon to harassed Bible exegetes otherwise forced to rely on the limited biblical vocabulary.25

On the other hand, Ibn Janaḥ was not always fully explicit with respect to the reasons underlying his interpretations, but took for granted a good philological preparation on the part of his readers. In his introduction he warned them that he would presuppose their intimate familiarity with the two major works by Ḥayyuj, as well as with his own previous philological monographs. This was a tall order, indeed, and it is a testimonial to the great intellectual alertness of his Spanish contemporaries and successors and to their abiding interest in problems of Hebrew philology that they were not discouraged from continued, intensive study of these concentrated, stylistically unadorned works of scholarship. Although not only obscurantists but even such enlightened writers as the poet-statesman Samuel ibn Nagrela sharply protested against certain views and interpretations suggested by the great grammarian of Saragossa, his main contributions soon became the common property of the people. Like Ḥayyuj’s work in grammar, that of Ibn Janaḥ in biblical lexicography, both based upon their authors’ fine penetration of the profundities of the Hebrew lan-
guage, remained unsurpassed achievements until the nineteenth century. If Ibn Parḥon’s and later David Qimḥi’s comparable works ultimately displaced that of Ibn Janaḥ in popular accept-
ance among both European Jews and Christian Hebraists, this
was owing not so much to the relatively minor substantive adv-
ances made in the intervening century as to the literary smooth-
ness of works originally written in Hebrew, while Ibn Janaḥ’s
compilation was accessible to Europeans only in the harsh Tib-
bonide translation. The shift in the centers of Jewish life alone
prevented Ibn Janaḥ’s lexicon from becoming that standard work
for later Hebrew philology that Al-Jauhari’s corresponding tenth-
century compilation had become for Arabic lexicography.26

Ibn Janaḥ’s lexicon completely eclipsed the works of his con-
temporaries in both the East and the West. Of the “twenty-two
treatises” in philology by his opponent Samuel ha-Nagid (accord-
ing to Ibn Ezra), only a few minor fragments have come down to
us either directly or through citation in subsequent literature.
The fragments of Samuel’s Kitab al-Istighna (Book of Amplitude),
published by Pavl Kokovtsov, show the great sweep and com-
prehensiveness of this lexicographic and exegetical work which,
if fully preserved, might have established the author’s reputation
as a great philologist, as well as jurist, poet, and statesman. The
distinguished Karaite “grammarian from Jerusalem,” Abu’il Faraj
Harun, wrote a Kitab al-Mushtamil (Comprehensive Book on the
Roots and Branches of the Hebrew Language), the seventh part
of which was wholly devoted to a dictionary, while the eighth rep-
resented a pioneering effort to come to grips with the philological
problems of biblical Aramaic. Despite the ease of communications
between Palestine and Spain, little of that work, completed in
1026, seems to have come to the notice of the circle around Ḥayyuj and Ibn Janaḥ. Ibn Ezra, who evidently knew more of this
work than is extant today, was no longer familiar with its author’s
identity or Karaite biases. More astonishingly, notwithstanding
the enormous prestige and popularity of Hai Gaon in the domain
of law (contemporaries and successors, as we recall, unhesitatingly
attributed to him countless responsa by other authors) his lex-
icographical Kitab al-Ḥawi (Book of Collection), arranged accord-
ing to a contemporary Arabic fashion in the alphabetic order of
the last letters of the Hebrew roots, is known to us mainly from a few brief quotations in Ibn Bal‘am’s commentaries.27

From then on western preeminence remained uncontested. Riding roughshod over all nationalistic objections, Isaac (Abu Ibrahim ben Joseph ibn Benveniste) Ibn Baron (died before 1128) produced, some sixty years after Ibn Janaḥ, a notable treatise frankly entitled Kitab al-Muwazana (Concordance between the Hebrew and Arabic Languages). In this work, largely lexicographic in nature, the author ventured even to document his views by frequent quotations from Arabic poets and the Qur’an, as well as from Ḥalil’s Arabic lexicon. Yehudah Halevi, a personal friend of Ibn Baron, finally supplied a characteristic historical rationale which must have appeased even the most ardently nationalistic opponents of comparative linguistics. Extolling the nobility of the original forms of the Hebrew language, his spokesman informed the king of the Khazars that

according to tradition it is the language in which God spoke to Adam and Eve, and in which the latter conversed. . . . Abraham was an Aramaean of Ur Kasdim, because the language of the Chaldaeans was Aramaic. He employed Hebrew as a specially holy language and Aramaic for everyday use. For this reason Ishmael brought it to the Arabic speaking nations, and the consequence was that Aramaic, Arabic and Hebrew are similar to each other in their vocabulary, grammatical rules, and formations. The superiority of Hebrew is manifest, . . . [however].28

Equipped with this rationale, Solomon ibn Parḥon, a pupil of Halevi as well as of Ibn Ezra, succeeded in familiarizing the Jews of Christian lands with the main findings of Spanish Jewish philology and its comparative approaches. Settling in Salerno, Ibn Parḥon published (in 1160) a new dictionary, entitled Mahberet he-‘Arukh, based upon Ibn Janaḥ’s masterpiece, but adding many data taken from other authors and a considerable number of new and acute observations. He contributed much especially to the understanding of biblical realia and gave an interesting sketch of the earlier developments in Hebrew philology, which effectively supplemented a similar survey by Ibn Ezra. The book’s fluent and lucid presentation secured it almost instantaneous reception, and this dictionary, sometimes mistakenly considered an abridged
translation of Ibn Janaḥ's work, enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the Middle Ages.  

TALMUDIC LANGUAGE

While biblical lexicography thus celebrated its greatest victories in the century and a half between Saadia and Ibn Janaḥ, the far richer and more complicated vocabulary of Talmud and Midrash was not altogether neglected. Because of its very vastness and complexity, as well as the evident impact on it of a variety of Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and Persian dialects, rabbinic literature could not be subjected to such microscopic scrutiny as was the Bible. Sheer reverence for the revealed word of God had induced countless Masorites to go over with a fine comb every word in Scripture in order to ascertain its proper form and its relation to similar-sounding words elsewhere in the Canon. No such sanctity was attached to the talmudic text, which even today, after many more centuries of intensive study, is far from philologically dependable. Research in this field was aggravated from the outset by the variety of readings of talmudic texts current in different areas. It took, as we recollect, an enormous effort on the part of Gershom bar Yehudah, Rashi, and their schools to establish a uniform recension of the Babylonian Talmud for western Europe. But in the Eastern countries differences in readings continued to complicate the task of Talmud students for many generations thereafter. These differences, moreover, were based not only on occasional oversights by copyists, but also on deeply rooted regional variations in the pronunciation and even in the meaning of various talmudic terms. These variations have persisted until today in such outlying areas as Yemen, which generally preserved the Babylonian traditions in greater purity than Iraq itself. It is small wonder, then, that the preparation of a simple talmudic concordance—a task many times performed for the Hebrew Bible and almost performed by Ibn Janaḥ himself—still faces staggering difficulties. Only owing to Chaim J. Kasowski's extraordinary competence and industry have the first volumes of such a gigantic work seen the light of day. Supplementing that author's earlier
concordances to the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Onkelos, this work, when completed, will lay foundations for new solid researches in the language of Talmud and Midrash.30

Yet students of the Talmud, too, required expert lexicographical guidance through the maze of the technical vocabulary used by their Palestinian or Babylonian predecessors. In fact, the very first recorded Hebrew dictionary, we recall, was entirely devoted to talmudic terms. Unfortunately, we know very little about the aforementioned pioneering works by Ṣemah Gaon and Saadiah. From the few references by Abraham Zacuto, the distinguished scientist-chronicler of the early sixteenth century, we may judge that Ṣemah's Sefer he-'Arukh (Lexicon) included identifications of many proper names—a task apparently performed also in Saadiah's dictionary of the Mishnah, but largely neglected by later students of talmudic letters. Building on these foundations, Nathan ben Yehiel of Rome (ca. 1090–1106) prepared an 'Arukh (Lexicon) for the Babylonian Talmud (the Palestinian Talmud was little used even by most talmudic experts then and long after) which remained unsurpassed until the newly awakened philological curiosity of the nineteenth century. At that time Alexander Kohut found it advisable to reissue that lexicon in a revised and much enlarged edition.31

That Rome, rather than some Arabic-speaking city, should have become the place of origin of this major work of philological scholarship is not altogether surprising. Principally a direct offshoot of Palestinian traditions and learning, Italian Jewry must have found it particularly irksome to submit to the now uncontested hegemony of the Babylonian Talmud and Babylonia's geonic halakhah. Verbally, too, even its experts must have been less familiar with the eastern dialect of Aramaic prevalent in Babylonia than with its western, Palestinian idiom, just as conversely some Babylonian students of that period found an Arabic translation of the Palestinian Talmud helpful in penetrating the mysteries of that important, if to them secondary, compendium. Since Babylonian supremacy had now been definitely established, the Italian communities had to come to terms with Babylonian learning. For this purpose they, even more than any other Jewish
group, needed assistance in comprehending words which had not been transmitted orally in their schools from generation to generation.

Nathan's dictionary is in its sphere as monumental an achievement as is that of Ibn Janaḥ in the area of biblical lexicography. In fact, having far fewer and philologically less well-trained predecessors as compared with the Masorites, Nathan ben Yeḥiel often had to cut his own path through the almost virginal forest of talmudic and midrashic letters. Like those Muslim scholars who traveled far and wide in search of authentic traditions, Nathan spent many years studying with R. Mašliaḥ ben Elijah ibn al-Bazaq in Sicily, R. Moses Khalfo in Bari, and R. Moses ha-Darshan in Narbonne—all centers of Jewish learning where the relatively recent heritage of Arab rule was superimposed upon the more deeply ingrained memories of Graeco-Roman civilization. Nathan's journey to Babylonia is somewhat more dubious, but there is no question that his teacher Mašliaḥ had spent some time there and had felt the impact of Hai Gaon's impressive personality. Hai's teachings are indeed quoted no less than 158 times in Nathan's dictionary, a figure exceeded only by the 142 quotations from Ḥananel ben Ḥushiel of neighboring Kairuwan. Although apparently unaware of Saadiah's philological works (of the two minor references to the gaon in the 'Arukh, one expressly relates to a responsum), Nathan made a valiant effort to familiarize himself with the works of the eastern geonim as well as with those of such westerners as Samuel ha-Nagid, R. Gershom, and the "sages of Mayence." Gershom's brother, Makhir, may have served as a direct mentor through his lexicographical work, Alpha Beta. Nathan also gained access to a large number of rabbinic writings which, even in his day, must have been quite rare. Because of his conscientiousness in quoting illustrative passages verbatim from these sources, his work later became a treasure trove of lost midrashim and other ancient and early medieval writings. Apart from literary sources, however, Nathan utilized the fruits of his own and his friends' direct observations and reached many novel conclusions by independent reasoning. He was right, therefore, in informing his readers through an introductory poem that he wished to communicate to
them the results of what “I have heard, seen, and thought about.”

So immediate and universal was the acceptance of Nathan’s work by the Jewish scholars in both the West and the East that it discouraged further creative efforts along the same lines. Nathan’s younger contemporary, Rashi, seems to have used the new dictionary for the revised edition of his commentaries on the Talmud. Quite independently, however, although doubtless using many of the sources at Nathan’s disposal, Rashi suggested so many interpretations of talmudic words that a complete dictionary based upon these explanations would prove helpful to students of both talmudic and medieval lexicography. As we recall, to make his point clearer, Rashi often translated technical terms, names of plants and animals, and other not easily definable words into French. These foreign words (la’azim) in Rashi’s commentaries, totaling some three thousand words, have long been recognized as a major source of information on the French spoken in eleventh-century Champagne and elsewhere. As a popular stylist, moreover, Rashi utilized much of the talmudic vocabulary in his own comments and thus helped to spread their knowledge among the masses. Subsequent generations followed Nathan’s interpretations almost unquestioningly. Although some entries seem to have been lost in the process of constant copying, the lexicon reached the fifteenth century substantially in its original form and with undiminished popularity. It belonged indeed to the earliest printed Hebrew works (about 1480), and it has been frequently reprinted since.

Later scholars concentrated largely on supplementing the ‘Arukh, rather than on writing new talmudic dictionaries of their own. One such early supplement, written by Tanhum Yerushalmi, an Egyptian scholar of the latter part of the thirteenth century, is particularly interesting. As expressed in his introductory critique of Nathan’s work, Tanhum not only assumed an independent attitude toward various lexicographic problems, but he also pursued rather different aims. Within less than a century, the Maimonidean code had established itself in all eastern lands as the preeminent work of rabbinic scholarship and, as anticipated
by the sage of Fustat himself, had begun displacing there the very Talmud as the object of concentrated study. At the same time, familiarity with rabbinic Hebrew declined to such an extent that even the fairly simple and lucid vocabulary of the great codifier was no longer fully understood. In his Kitab al-Murshid al-kafi (Adequate Guide), Tanhum supplied, therefore, a dictionary to Maimonidean and, incidentally, to mishnaic Hebrew which, he emphasized in his introduction, could easily be copied or acquired at low cost.\textsuperscript{34}

**GRAMMAR**

Intimately connected with lexicography was the quest for basic rules of grammar which would explain the various forms under which a particular word or phrase appeared in Scripture. To the students of the Bible, and even of language as such, who were far fewer in number, the distinction between the two realms appeared decidedly secondary. Most of them searched for grammatical rules in order the better to understand the meaning of words, and, conversely, they often analyzed words as mere illustrations for the operation of diverse rules.

Once again we must go back to the largely anonymous students of the Masorah for the beginnings of a semisystematic exploration of laws governing the Hebrew language. To justify a specific spelling, vocalization, or accentuation, the masoretic schools early developed rationalizations which, however empirical in nature, established certain rules from which one could depart only in the case of avowed exceptions. Even the purely mnemotechnical rules included in Ben Asher's Diqduqe ha-te'amin implied certain abstractions concerning the laws governing the Hebrew language which required but fuller formulation to become grammatical rules. The author of Massekhet Soferim had likewise stressed the distinction between the radical and the functional letters and stated that the latter, used for prefixes or suffixes, are frequently deleted. This distinction was greatly expanded by the Masorites. General political and cultural transformations aided in that transition. While contact with the Graeco-Roman civilization, as well as the rather sloppy speech habits of the Aramaic-speaking
populations, tended to make many readers and writers slur over the so-called “weak” consonants, the new dominance of the Arabic speech in western Asia helped restore fuller appreciation for these important functional letters. Problems of the sheva, as we recall, and those of the dagesh, as well as of letters which could take no dagesh, likewise preoccupied the leading Masorites and constituted important ingredients of Ben Asher’s major work. Ibn Janaḥ quoted a masoretic monograph in Arabic devoted wholly to phonetics, if we are to judge from its title, the Kitab al-Musawatat (in Hebrew Sefer ha-Qolot). It evidently dealt in particular with the pronunciation of the consonants het, ‘ayin, and resh. One is reminded, in this connection, of Aaron ben Asher’s much-quoted statement that the differentiation between a resh with or without a dagesh was peculiar to Palestinians (or Tiberians) alone, “whether they read it in Scripture or use it in their conversation, in the mouths of men, women and children.” The grammarian of Saragossa not only greatly admired the pronunciation of the “men of Tiberias, who in the clarity of their speech excel all other Hebrews,” but also considered the Tiberian scholars’ grammatical rules concerning these consonants as sufficiently inclusive not to require further elaboration on his part.³⁵

Here, too, Saadiaḥ’s work marked an enormous step forward. Throughout his life the gaon was cognizant of Hebrew linguistic problems not only in his philological and exegetical treatises, but also in his poems and prayers. In vocalizing hay (not hey) ha-‘olamim in the well-known exclamation “By Him that liveth for ever” (after Dan. 12:7), calling each of the Ten Commandments dibber rather than dibbur, or pronouncing the liturgical formula le-‘olam va’ed (for ever and ever) with a sere, he deviated from what had already in his day become accepted linguistic practice. Far from being arbitrary in these decisions, however, he invoked in each case some well-established tradition, if necessary through some forced interpretation. Frequent exceptions of this kind must have stimulated his agile mind to search more deeply for the underlying reasons of these apparent irregularities.³⁶

Noticing that many other Jews paid “no attention to our plain language, much less to its obscure forms,” Saadiaḥ decided to
append to his dictionary in its revised Arabic edition a section dealing with the three “principles” of language which might prove useful to poets. The very quest for such principles reflects Saadiah’s newly won preoccupation with fundamentals of grammar, undoubtedly the result of his acquaintanceship with similar quests of the Başran philologists from Sibawaihi (d. 794) to his own contemporary and possibly personal acquaintance Ibn Duraid (837–933). Although his own dogmatic aversion to the use of analogy (qiyas) in law and the limitations of the Hebrew language to the documentary records of past ages tended to make him sympathetic to the Kufan “anomalistic” approach, his general logical bent of mind drove him increasingly in the direction of the Başran “analogistic” search for comprehensive rules. The latter consisted in his opinion of “first, call, question, statement, command, and stipulation; second, descriptions, forming four classes defined according to either matter, form, action, or completion [aim], as I shall fully explain; third, classes of comparison, being similar to group two, with the difference that those refer to the object of comparison while the latter are taken from the result.” Unfortunately, the subsequent parts of this work, in which he more fully explained the significance and objectives of this classification, are lost. But this very endeavor reveals a state of linguistic and stylistic sophistication which presupposed considerable familiarity with problems of language on the part of both author and readers. So do Saadiah’s quite technical linguistic observations scattered through his commentaries on the Bible and the Sefer Yeṣirah. With reference to Yeṣirah’s mystically colored classification of letters, Saadiah recalled his suggestion that one must draw a distinction between the eleven letters of the Hebrew alphabet which remain unchanged, and the other eleven letters which undergo great changes and often even disappear completely in certain forms. He also identified Yeṣirah’s three “mothers” of all other letters with alef, vav, and yod, the very three consonants which were in the focus of the Başran-Kufan debate. Followed therein by Dunash ibn Tamim and ’Ali ben Yehudah ’Alan of Tiberias, Saadiah thus laid the foundation for further examination of the so-called weak consonants, out of which ultimately emerged Hayyuj’s revolutionary discoveries.87
Apart from such more incidental suggestions, Saadia prepared a major philological work in which he systematically developed his theories on the Hebrew language. His *Kutub al-Lughah* (Books of Language; or sometimes, more fully, "Books of the Elegance of the Hebrew Language") advisedly used the plural designation, because it consisted of twelve loosely connected philological monographs. It was indeed sometimes cited under the title of "The Twelve Parts." Because of its comprehensive nature and ensuing length, this pioneering venture suffered the fate of Saadia's biblical commentaries and was allowed to sink into oblivion. It was no longer available to Ibn Janaḥ, who otherwise was the gaon's great admirer.⁴⁸

In fact, only one incomplete later copy and small fragments of two others have survived to our day and have in recent years been gradually made available to scholarship by Solomon L. Skoss. The following passages from the third part will give the reader an inkling of Saadia's remarkably advanced approach, as well as of his prolix, often repetitious, style, which helps to explain the work's speedy disappearance:

It [this part] treats comprehensively of the aspects [of the language] of the Bible, called Inflection. The principles laid down in this part are not limited to Hebrew alone, but apply to all the languages with which we are familiar. . . . There are five premises which serve as bases for the study of Inflection: (1) Differentiation of expressions employed by rational beings, so as to classify them properly. On close study we have found them to fall into three groups: nouns, verbs and particles. . . . (2) We have separated the letters prefixed to nouns and found them to be eleven. . . . (3) The addition of affixed personal pronouns to nouns and verbs. On close study we found them to be ten, so we named them the ten possessors. . . . (4) Determining the tense; it is essentially divided into three parts: Past, Present and Future. . . . (5) Combining the four preceding premises together and the way it is done. We seek the aid of God, especially since our aim is that the students (hearers) be mindful of the language of His book, and state that while all four premises are fundamental for the present study, the first one, viz., the recognition of nouns, verbs, and particles, is like a pivot around which the remaining premises revolve.⁴⁹

Saadia then proceeds to analyze the various possible forms taken by Hebrew verbs with respect to functions. Commenting on *qal* and *hif'il* forms only, but referring to the various personal
prefixes and suffixes, he enumerates, after leaving out the present tense, 48 simple and 368 more derivative forms. Including the present, he mentions elsewhere a total of 430 accepted formations of the inflection. With his penchant for careful statistics, Saadiah even figured out a theoretical total of formations of a typical verb like *shama‘* (hear) to be 19,169. Dunash ben Labrat, to whom we owe this figure, not only claims that Saadiah was short of one formation, but also emphasizes that, by adding the *pi‘el* forms, the gaon could have increased his total by several thousand. Of course, the number would have been further augmented if the other four conjugations were used. In a similarly detailed vein Saadiah analyzes the nature of the seven Hebrew vowels, examining in particular the position in the human mouth of the organs controlling the respective sounds, the laws governing the descent from *kholem* to *qamas* and vice versa, and points out forty-nine possible combinations among these vowels. He does not include in this analysis the *sheva*, to which, because of its great importance, he devotes a separate (sixth) monograph. 40

For reasons which cannot as yet be fully assessed, Saadiah’s great philological work failed to exert its due influence on the subsequent development of grammatical studies. Undoubtedly, as in the case of his halakhic monographs, his excessive proclivity for classification into innumerable subdivisions proved discouraging. Although, unlike the legal domain where the talmudic sequences had long been familiar to all students, Hebrew philology had not yet developed accepted patterns of its own, the gaon’s divisions, however logically impeccable, proved of little immediate assistance to either Bible exegetes or creative Hebrew writers. Only one early treatise dealing with various forms of the imperative and inflections quoted the gaon twice and in the selection of *shama‘* as its example for the classification of its paradigms showed at least some superficial similarities with Saadiah’s treatise on inflections. However, the author followed a substantially different arrangement and used the imperative as the verb’s fundamental form, which seems to have early become typical of Karaite grammatical methodology. 41

Nor did Qirqisani betray any outright indebtedness to the work of his geonic contemporary. To be sure, we know of the dis-
tinguished heresiologue's philological doctrines mainly through the debris of his thirty-seven exegetical propositions published by Hirschfeld. The selection of topics is here clearly determined by the primarily exegetical orientation of both author and readers. For this reason great emphasis is placed on such an apparently superfluous particle as *et*, which the author compares with, and differentiates from, the Arabic *iyya*. Qirqisani is likewise concerned with apparent irregularities in the logical succession of parts of sentences in the biblical syntax; the use of the future tense when the past is meant and vice versa; the *vav*’s function in these and other matters; the use of singular nouns for collective and that of plurals for single entities; the carryover of negatives from one part of a sentence to another; the peculiarities of the *he interrogativum* and exceptions therefrom, and the irregular addition or omission of single letters. Qirqisani even gives a fairly clear adumbration of the theory concerning the elliptic and pleonastic mannerisms of biblical writers.\footnote{42}

Of course, in a less articulate form some such teachings are scattered through Saadiah's exegetical works and, probably, in part antedated both authors. Nor do even direct similarities found in later literature necessarily indicate borrowings from Qirqisani. Ibn Janaḥ, for example, reveals striking resemblances in approach and even in what might superficially appear as direct quotations, and yet he may not even have heard of the name Qirqisani. So many of these ideas were "in the air," and so much had become the common property of intellectuals, Jewish and non-Jewish, in the whole Muslim world, that we do not have to postulate any intervening literary links. If we possessed much more of the literary heritage of those vigorous and creative generations, we would probably find that many doctrines emerged from independent reasoning by men separated from one another in time and space, and sometimes among close neighbors who did not know of each other's discoveries.

Even more than their Rabbanite confreres, Karaite scholars, following in Qirqisani's footsteps, treated problems of Hebrew grammar as mere aids for their biblical exegesis. Salmon ben Yeruḥim mentioned in his *Commentary* on Lamentations 1:14 (written in 954) that he had written a treatise on the five Hebrew
“letters of permutation.” That this ardent defender of his faith, however, pursued here too principally exegetical and theological purposes is evident from the tenor of his other writings, and, particularly, from a sharp diatribe (included in his earlier Commentary on Psalms 102:5) against those of his coreligionists who engaged in the study of Arabic science and Arabic grammar. David ben Abraham al-Fasi likewise frequently inserted into his dictionary lengthy excursuses on grammatical problems. But, as we recall, he reiterated that he supplied such data chiefly “in order that anyone contemplating to write some commentary on the Books of the Scriptures should not be rash in his interpretations.” That is why he, like Salmon, accorded special treatment to the problems of permutation or interchange and metathesis or transposition of letters. David discussed also at some length the various forms of the imperative. His overriding concern, however, remained the use of such data for the understanding of the Bible. Hence also came his more than passing attention to masoretic problems.43

The same holds true, to an even greater extent, of an outright exegete like Jephet ben ‘Ali. This distinguished commentator often resorted to grammatical rules in his interpretations of biblical passages. Occasionally, as in his Commentary on Hosea, he added a special appendix in order to explain “difficult words in this book which I have translated and shown their derivations and grammatical forms so that the student may, if God so will it, dwell upon them.” Jephet made, for example, an acute observation on the three different ways in which letters are redoubled in certain Hebrew words, dependent on whether such repetition affected only one letter or two letters of a biliteral or triliteral word. At times he even took a fling at Saadia for some minor inaccuracy allegedly showing that the Rabbanite commentator had “no true insight into the rules of the language.” 44

The first Karaite author to compose a special grammatical work seems to have been Joseph ibn Nuḥ. Unfortunately, not even a fragment of his work has come down to us. From a brief reference by Abu’l Faraj Harun, however, we may judge that it was written in Hebrew and had the characteristic title of Sefer ha-Diqduq (Book of Grammar). Abu’l Faraj himself was among the most pro-
lific grammarians of the Hebrew language. Reference has already been made to his *Kitab al-Mushtamil*, which in addition to its concluding two sections dealing with Hebrew lexicography and grammatical elements of biblical Aramaic contained six parts wholly devoted to an analysis of Hebrew grammatical problems. After a preliminary discussion of the “ten general principles about the forms of words, which can be applied to a great part of the Hebrew language,” Abu’l Faraj concentrated the entire second section of eighteen chapters on a discussion of the Hebrew infinitive. He included here an analysis of the distinction between the infinitive and the verbal noun, which seems to have preoccupied his teacher, Joseph ibn Nuḥ. In subsequent sections this distinguished “grammariian from Jerusalem” made excellent use of Saadiaḥ’s division between the eleven radical and eleven functional or “servile” letters. But he failed to go beyond the gaon in generalizing from the particular use to which the radical letters were put in the Bible about the nature of the biliteral or trilateral of the Hebrew roots themselves. A similar color blindness seems to have characterized also his other philological works. One of these is described on its manuscript title page as “Pearl-Strings on the Grammatical Inflections of the Hebrew Language—may God make it useful”; another, bearing the title *Kitab al-Kafi* (Book of the Adequate), is said by its author to have embraced all sections of the Hebrew language “except the irregular ones.” It was precisely through an intensive study of the irregular verbs, however, that a true insight could be gained into the function of the “weak” consonants, whose frequent baffling disappearance so greatly altered the shape of the same words in different grammatical forms.45

CREATIVE UPSURGE

Such a mental block to the understanding of the real nature of the Hebrew roots is doubly remarkable as the Arab grammarians had long reached the conclusion—far more obvious in the case of Arabic—concerning the basic triliterality of roots of both verbs and nouns. Everything deviating from this rule was relegated to the realm of exceptions. That students of Hebrew were so slow in
adapting parallel assumptions was less the result of their nationalist pride, and their conviction that the two languages were as different as they were alike, than of their exclusive concentration on the Bible. So long as grammar was made but an ancillary science to be used exclusively for the interpretation of Scripture, the ensuing empirical approach proved to be a serious obstacle. It consisted mainly in the generalization of phenomena observed in the various formations of the limited remnants of ancient Hebrew which survived in the Bible.

Only when the Hebrew grammar became a vehicle for creative self-expression by philologically open-minded and well-trained poets and prose writers, as it had become among ancient Greeks or medieval Arabs, could it produce the necessary clarity about the operation of basic laws governing the use of that language to meet varying needs. That the composers of liturgical poetry from Yose ben Yose to Eleazar ha-Qalir had felt little of that need and compulsion is not surprising. Living in a Palestinian environment, where the heritage of ancient Hebrew dialects was still much alive and was influencing even the verbiage of the Palestinian Talmud and where, on the other hand, the masoretic schools operated as watch-dogs ever alert to the slightest deviation from the language of Scripture, these liturgical improvisers unconcernedly coined new terms and used unusual forms to convey their meaning. They paid little attention to any but the most obvious grammatical rules, by virtue of habit rather than conscious design. In other countries, however, especially where, as from Egypt to Spain, even the related Aramaic speech had no deep local roots, only a more conscious effort to uncover the intricacies of the Hebrew language as preserved in the extant literary documents could yield the appropriate linguistic tools for the more complex media of self-expression. Saadiah alone among these early grammarians was a creative writer who made use of his own philological discoveries for the expanded use of language in his sacred poetry.

Saadiah was well ahead of his time, however, which in part explains the neglect of his philological works by contemporaries and early successors. Even most other distinguished philologians of the period, down to Menahem and Abu‘l Faraj Harun, were not poets, but mainly exegetes. In fact, the Karaites among them largely
followed 'Anan in his sharp condemnation of the Rabbanite liturgical "innovations" and demanded that all prayers be selected from the Psalms and other ready-made biblical sections. Qirqisani, outstanding grammarian though he was, blocked his own and his contemporaries' self-rejuvenating interpenetration of linguistic theory and practice when he assailed the Rabbanites because "for prayers (consisting of citations) from the book of Psalms they substitute some composed by themselves, contrary to what is enjoined in the Scripture [Ezra 3:10]: 'To praise the Lord by the words of His servant David.'" 46

Not surprisingly, therefore, the first man to stumble on the principle of triliterality was Dunash ben Labrat, who also was the first to introduce Arabic rhythm into Hebrew poetry. Characteristically, the very term he used for the rhythmic "weight" of syllables, mishqal (borrowed from the Arabic wazm), was employed by him also for the designation of the basic form of a word in contradistinction to its variable suffixes or prefixes. If it be true that he made a living as a synagogue reader (hazzan), he must frequently have improvised liturgical poems and hence doubly resented the shackles imposed upon the poet by the Bible's limited vocabulary and grammatical forms. He allowed himself, therefore, to use, "because of rhythmic exigency," new turns in analogy to some rare, even unique phrases in Scripture.

Dunash himself still had little feeling for the new distinctions, and in his major attack on Menahem's dictionary he still adhered to his opponent's belief that Hebrew roots ranged from one to five letters. But the bitter attack of Ben Saruq's disciples on his poetic mishqal seems to have set him thinking about the latter's practical aspects as pertaining to basic grammatical forms as well. In his rather incomplete notes, reproducing a number of strictures on his master Saadiah's grammatical views and apparently composed toward the end of his life, he claimed that "it is a matter of common knowledge that neither Saadiah nor the other eastern students had an understanding for the nature of the rhyme and the rhythm in poetry." But he sensed the importance of weak or, as in emulation of an Arabic term he called them "dangerously sick," consonants, which frequently vanish in the first, second, or third letter of the root. These letters were soon standardized as pe,
42 LINGUISTIC RENASCENCE

‘ayin, or lamed, the components of the term p’al (verb). Dunash thus adumbrated the new emphasis on the triliterality of all roots, which was to revolutionize the whole approach to Hebrew grammar. In “awakening from the slumber” of ages, as Moses ibn Ezra graphically described his significant though as yet rather inarticulate discoveries, he did not hesitate to defy long accepted teachings and practices. For example, he rejected even Saadiah’s then almost universally accepted division into eleven radical and eleven servile letters by adding to the latter the dalet and tet, merely because of their phonetically determined usage after sibilants in the hitpa’el form. With a typical dash of brilliance and vanity, he gave students a mnemotechnic formula for these thirteen servile letters, Dunash ha-levi emet ke-tob (Dunash the Levite as true as good).47

Possibly stimulated by Dunash’s intimations, Yehudah Hayyuj established once and for all the theory of triliterality in his memorable K. al-Af’al dhawat huruf al-lin (Book of Verbs Containing Weak Letters), followed by a detailed study of “Verbs Containing Geminative Letters.” Unlike most of his predecessors, other than Dunash, Hayyuj did not pursue principally exegetical purposes. In fact, his quotations from the Bible often revealed glaring inaccuracies, explainable only by their citation from memory, the author’s apparent haste in writing his works, and his failure to revise them. On the other hand, he was distressed by the improper use of verbs by many persons “in their sayings and verses” and decidedly considered the growing needs of the contemporary writers. He tried to utilize for this purpose all linguistic materials in the Bible so as to fashion from them workable linguistic tools. In his programmatic introduction, he explained how he was led to compose his book on the weak letters:

When I saw the confusion occurring in these letters, with the help of the Lord I composed this book, in which I have explained all their secrets, and mentioned the occasions when they fall out, are changed, or hardened by dagesh, after stating why they are called latent or lengthening letters and also everything else bearing on the subject. In all this my purpose is to argue from what is contained in Scripture to what is not contained therein. . . . It is moreover the duty of us who desire to write in the holy tongue and to know its ways, to acquire it from the ways of the early Hebrews, who were born in it, grew up in its ways, and established its boundaries: especially should we imitate the language of vision and prophecy.
In other words, he wished to study the Bible, in order the better to comprehend the laws of the Hebrew language, rather than to study Hebrew grammar and vocabulary, in order the better to comprehend the Bible! 48

For this purpose Hayyuj went over in considerable detail the whole range of weak verbs and showed what happened to them when the first, second, or third letter of their roots was an alef, vav, or yod. His characteristic omission of the letter he in this context, however, shows that even this radical innovator still bowed to the tradition, initiated by the author of Yeširah in Saadia's and Ibn Tamim's interpretation and reinforced by the fact that these three weak consonants had also become commonplace in Arabic grammar. Hayyuj supplemented this theory by others dealing with verbs, whose middle and third radicals were identical or "geminative." Here, too, he consistently followed his logical rather than empirical method, and included postulated triliteral verbal forms even where the biblical text had preserved only such abbreviated nominal forms as har (mountain) or tokh (inside). These treatises were preceded by an essay on Hebrew vocalization and followed by his Kitab an-Nutaf (Book of Glosses), consisting of disjointed philological notes on Prophets. Although very little of the latter works has survived, the available samples reveal not only their author's consistency but also his concern for philology as a practical and not purely an exegetical instrument. Even the limitation of his exegetical work to the books of Prophets, which has long puzzled scholars, is understandable in the light of his advice to readers to "imitate the language of vision and prophecy." His selectivity, too, and his admission, "I have omitted from the sections [of the book] those passages the meaning of which is hidden on the whole even from experts, also those the meaning of which I could not grasp," clearly indicate that his chief aim was to marshal the available linguistic resources, rather than to elucidate difficult passages in Scripture. 49

Hayyuj's new theories, buttressed by tremendous illustrative material and ingenious interpretation of apparent contradictions, were bound sooner or later to create a deep impression. While apparently ignored in his lifetime and even for a time thereafter unable to silence opposing voices, his views and, particularly, his insistence on the principle of triliternity, before long dominated
all grammatical discussions. Unilateral roots disappeared forever from the Hebrew grammars of the following generations, and even biliteral roots made only sporadic bows until they found some new advocates in modern philology. Ben Zion Halper is not altogether wrong in his contention that Hebrew grammar of our own days has advanced little beyond the vital discoveries of this eleventh-century Spanish immigrant from Fez.50

Whatever doubts might still have been entertained concerning the acceptability of Ḥayyuj's theories were dispelled by a succession of monumental philological works of Jonah ibn Janaḥ, in whom Ḥayyuj found a faithful and eloquent, if frequently independently creative, successor. From his early Kitab al-Mustalḥaq, entirely devoted to the supplementation of "the lacunae which the illustrious teacher and perfect chief, Abu Zakariya Ḥayyuj (may the Lord be merciful to him and make shine his face) has left in his list of weak letters and geminative verbs," to the crowning achievement of his bipartite Kitab at-Tanqīḥ (Book of the Detailed Investigation), Ibn Janaḥ elaborated the grammatical rules and reinterpreted the entire body of the Hebrew linguistic heritage in the light of Ḥayyuj's new findings. Ibn Daud was right in stating in his Chronicle that, after Ḥayyuj had "placed on solid foundations the Hebrew language which had been forgotten throughout the dispersion," came R. Marinus (Jonah) ibn Janaḥ "and completed what R. Yehudah ben David had begun" (MJC, I, 81).

Although, like his master, writing in Arabic and using to good advantage the precise philological terminology of Arab grammarians (he once referred to Sibawaihi by name) Ibn Janaḥ, too, was primarily concerned with the improvement of the quality of the Hebrew writing of his generation. Through the maze of his philological verbiage one may still sense the impression made upon him by his teacher, the poet Isaac ben Saul. When the sensitive youth recited before the master one of the latter's poems, he followed several manuscripts in which a crucial word, qerab, had been corrected by outsiders into segor (both meaning "innermost" heart), the better to conform with the accepted grammar. Isaac insisted, however, upon the original version. True, constantly on the defensive against obscurantist attacks on philological studies, Ibn Janaḥ often reiterated that without some such precise
knowledge neither Bible nor Talmud could be properly understood. But his main interest evidently lay in the much deplored neglect of the Hebrew language, which he contrasted with the high degree of cultivation of the Arabic speech "among the people in whose midst we live." He deeply deplored the view of some learned talmudists, running counter to that of most cultivated Arabs, that "the science of proper grammatical usage [or more specifically of declension and conjugation] and speech is mere guesswork; in fact, almost borders on heresy." In his detailed grammar (luma') of forty-six chapters and his equally comprehensive dictionary of "roots" (üşul) he wished to place in the hands of the public manuals with the aid of which intelligent readers and writers might tackle even the most intricate problems of the Hebrew language. More than any of his predecessors, he also paid special attention to stylistic problems and, not unjustly, he has been called the "father of Hebrew syntax." 51

Understandably, Ibn Janah's theories did not remain unchallenged. Not only conservatives, who had little use for the "newfangled" philological approaches, but even trained grammarians found many of Ibn Janah's theories unacceptable. Among Abu'l Walid's powerful opponents was no less a master than Samuel ibn Nagreila, who, although likewise a pupil of Hayyuj, believed that he could still uphold the existence of certain bilateral roots. Only small parts of the Nagid's Kitab al-Istighna (in Hebrew: Sefer hâ-'Osher; Book of Amplitude) have thus far been recovered; we cannot even tell for certain whether the twenty-two grammatical treatises alluded to by Abraham ibn Ezra were indeed but chapters of a comprehensive work, like the twelve monographs of Saadia's Kutub al-Lughah. If we may draw a parallel from the recently recovered portions of the Nagid's juristic magnum opus, he probably made an effort here, too, to quote his predecessors at great length. Of course, the philological materials coming from the East were far sparser and less authoritative than the decisions rendered by the geonim in the juridical domain. But, for an assiduous collector like Samuel, who had made it his business to employ numerous copyists to reproduce older books for the use of scholars in many lands, the accumulation of works by older authorities and ample citations therefrom must have appeared a meritorious deed,
quite apart from his own conclusions. Possibly this very involvement in the older literature prevented the great poet-statesman from fully subscribing to the teachings of his revered master, Ḥayyuj. In any case, he found Ibn Janaḥ’s position too radical; it was perhaps made doubly distasteful to him by the Saragossan grammarian’s almost provocatively self-assertive tone. Curiously, the controversy soon assumed the character of a grand debate, in which large groups of intellectuals were arrayed on both sides. Because of the intensive preoccupation of the Spanish-Jewish intelligentsia with all problems affecting the Hebrew language, it was easy for the Nagid’s messenger in Saragossa to convert a purely social gathering in his honor into a forum in which he challenged Ibn Janaḥ, an unwary guest, to a progressively complicated and technical debate. Only a few of the pamphlets exchanged on this and other occasions have come down to us. But whatever one thinks of the tone of the debate, which often degenerated into personal recriminations and outright vilification, it did contribute much to the clarification of many issues in the minds of the main protagonists. It also helped dramatize even the more esoteric philological minutiae before a broad public, which for generations thereafter continued to discuss the relative merits of the respective arguments.  

**GRADUAL ACCEPTANCE**

Curiously, the discoveries of Ḥayyuj and Ibn Janaḥ, though quick to reach Christian Europe as well as the Arabic-speaking East, long remained without any noticeable influence on the philosophical thinking of both these regions. True, some Eastern scholars, possibly including Hai Gaon, friend and correspondent of Samuel ibn Nagrela, paid grudging recognition to Ḥayyuj’s work. According to Ibn Parḥon they exclaimed, “We have not yet received anything worth while from the West except this book, which surpasses in excellence anything written on this subject.” Nevertheless, a long time thereafter, Abraham the Babylonian and other Eastern grammarians still seriously discussed uniliteral roots as if Ḥayyuj had never said anything about the disappearance of letters in weak and geminative verbs. A fragment of a grammatical
work, written by one Nathanael of Yemen and published by Kokovtsov, betrays utter unfamiliarity with the achievements of the Spaniards, although the author seems to have been of Egyptian origin and was clearly imbued with the spirit of independent philosophic inquiry. In the West, too, Rashi and his school never went much beyond Menaḥem. Not even Rashi’s acute observations on the peculiar formation of verbs beginning with nun, or whose middle letter is ‘ayin, and his use of the term “fallen root” (yesod nofel), marked any real advance over Menaḥem’s views or terminology. Rashi’s grandson, Jacob Tam, as we recall, still labored over deciding the merits of the controversy between Dunash ben Labraṭ and Menaḥem’s disciples. A later German exegete (whose biblical glosses seem not to antedate much the only copy now extant, written in 1337) knew of Ibn Parḥon, but never cited Ḥayyuj, Ibn Janaḥ, or Ibn Ezra. For him Menaḥem’s dictionary still represented the acme of philological achievement.53

Undoubtedly, general conservatism and bowing to long-accepted authority account for much of that neglect of the new philological discoveries in both East and West. One wonders, however, whether the absence of a widely felt need did not contribute its share to this consistent disregard of the masters’ persuasive teachings, soon available also in the Hebrew translations by Moses ibn Chiquitilla and Ibn Ezra of Ḥayyuj’s works, and by Yehudah ibn Tibbon of Ibn Janaḥ’s magnum opus. These had been further popularized with great ingenuity by Ibn Ezra in his original writings. In the East, Hebrew poetry and prose declined constantly and gave way to almost exclusive productivity in the Arabic language. This was true even in the Palestinian communities after their destruction by the Crusaders. As late as the tenth century Dunash ibn Tamim still believed that “the inhabitants of Palestine and [especially] the men of Tiberias are the guardians of the Hebrew language and its natural heirs, while the rest of the people, that is our folk, know the language only from literary rather than natural usage.” Now the opposite became true. In Spain, under the impact of the great poetic creativity, linguistic flexibility evolved naturally from the daily use of Hebrew in writing, if not in speech. On the other hand, in Christian Europe Jews wrote Hebrew, but it was a rather poor language, rich in neither vocabulary nor grammatical
forms and hence able to get along entirely with the traditional patterns. Menahem ben Saruq’s dictionary was about all the Franco-German authors needed for their practical purposes, while their Bible exegesis was altogether dominated by the superlatively appealing commentaries of Rashi. Even in Rome, which soon was to produce a poet of the rank of Immanuel, an effort was made to uphold Menahem’s authority. Several years after Ibn Ezra’s visit to Rome, Menahem ben Solomon produced there an encyclopedic philological-exegetical work, Eben bohan (Touchstone), which still was entirely based on Menahem ben Saruq’s, and not Ibn Janaḥ’s, dictionary.54

On the other hand, it was a young Frenchman who, perhaps on a visit to Spain not long after 1050, induced Moses ibn Chiquitilla to translate into Hebrew Ḥayyuj’s two main treatises. This translation was in itself a great pioneering venture. Next to the more or less synchronous translations of Karaite Bible commentaries by Tobiah ben Moses of Constantinople, Moses’ work ranks as the first major work of translation from Arabic into Hebrew. Remarkably, it showed none of the signs of the strains and stresses of the later Tibbonide versions. Its smooth and idiomatic Hebrew is often superior to the Hebrew originals of Menahem and the writers involved in the ensuing controversy around him. That he had to pay a price for this felicity of expression and often admittedly reproduced the author’s ideas a little too freely was of minor concern to Ibn Chiquitilla, since he did not even hesitate to amplify the translation by numerous observations of his own, which unwary readers often confused with Ḥayyuj’s views.55

Nor was Ibn Chiquitilla an uncritical follower of the great masters. He himself wrote an independent monograph on the grammatical aspects of the masculine and feminine genders, in which he took up a number of related issues. He pointed out, for example, the exclusively singular use of the names of six metals recorded in the Bible. Even on the vital problem of triliterality, he offered a new “definitive proof” by arguing that, if there had existed biliteral roots, verbs originally composed of two constantly disappearing “weak” letters might, under circumstances, evaporate into thin air. In this argument he made excellent use of his independent study of Scripture, as well as of the teachings of Arab
grammarians. On one occasion he went so far as to postulate the existence in Hebrew of seven, rather than the accepted six, forms of transitive verbs. He believed that, as in Arabic, one might construe a sentence in which the verb would have a threefold transitive meaning. But his example, "The Lord taught Israel the right way," merely showed that the verb could govern three words, but not three objects. Ibn Baron, to whom we owe this citation, rightly countered that, by increasing the number of adjectives (for instance, the "good, proper and straight" way), one could multiply the transitive functions of a verb indefinitely.  

Although far from deserving the praise showered upon him by Abraham ibn Ezra, who once called him "the greatest of grammarians," Ibn Chiquitilla had not only the merit of opening up the treasures of Spanish Jewish learning to Hebrew-reading Europeans, but also, together with Samuel, Ibn Janah's princely opponent, and other contemporaries, that of maintaining the continuity of independent philological research and preventing Spanish-Jewish scholarship from smugly resting on the laurels of Hayyuj and Ibn Janah. Moses' enemy, Ibn Bal'am, too, entered the debate by contributing monographs on homonyms, particles, and denominative verbs (verbs derived from nouns), and by writing a more introductory "Guide for Bible Readers." Here he seems to have refrained from his customary attacks on Ibn Chiquitilla, probably because grammatical views were less dependent on differing theological preconceptions. For the same reason, Ibn Yashush's monograph on inflections seems to have evoked less controversy than his Bible commentaries, but apparently it also attracted less attention.  

A remarkable inversion of the use of poetry for the teaching of grammar, rather than the usual utilization of grammatical rules for the composition of verses, is offered by Ibn Gabirol's poem 'Anaq (The Necklace). In this poem of 400 double verses (only 98 are extant today), the author, then only nineteen years old, undertook to summarize for the benefit of the uninitiated some major grammatical rules. From his own description and a few subsequent quotations we may deduce that in the poem's four sections he described the respective functions of the radical and servile letters (eleven each as in Saadiah, but with a new anagram
for each, which may best be translated as "I Solomon the Writer," and "The Spanish race alone is irreproachable") and the usual tripartite division of the parts of speech into nouns, verbs, and "words" of the "third" type (particles). This pedagogic purpose was inspired by his doleful observation of the great neglect into which Hebrew had fallen among his people, "half of whom speak Edomite [Romance languages], and the other half talks in the dark language of the children of Qedar [Arabic]." He hoped thereby to "open up mouths hitherto locked in muteness." 58

Pedagogic aims of this kind inspired Abraham ibn Ezra to compose a series of grammatical treatises, which in popular acceptance and historical influence far exceeded those of the more original and laborious works of his predecessors. Beginning with his early Sefer Mo'znayim (Book of Scale), which he prefaced with an interesting historical introduction reviewing the previous achievements of Hebrew philology, he continued with a treatise in defense of Saadia against Dunash ben Labrat's criticisms, and finally published his main philological works the Yesod diqduq (Foundations of Grammar, hitherto unpublished), Sefer Sahot (Book of Clarity) and Safah berurah (Pure Language; reference to Zeph. 3:9). The latter two titles indicated his quest for "correct speech." Throughout these works courses the author's intention to communicate especially to his coreligionists north and east of Spain the results of the great philological learning of his Spanish predecessors. At the same time he sought to "purify" the Hebrew style in use everywhere.

Unflinchingly condemning every deviation from the grammar as it had become standardized in the Spanish schools, Ibn Ezra tried to make all students of Bible, rabbinics, philosophy, and science conscious of the rigid requirements for the correctness of their speech and writing. In a characteristic fashion he also liked to supply philosophic, even astrological, rationales for some of his linguistic concepts. Typical of his general approach is the opening statement in his Yesod, starting with the praise of the Lord according to a custom long prevalent in Arabic letters.

At the beginning of every thought, at the outset of all speech, let me give praise to Him who teaches man knowledge so that he may think; who "createth the fruit of the lips" so that he may speak correctly; and
who gives the being endowed with reason the power to bring forth from his mouth words which resemble bodies, while their meaning resembles souls. Just as the activity of the soul becomes visible only through the body prepared to serve as its abode, and just as the soul receives its strength only in consonance with its body's natural composition, so do meanings achieve reality only through words. Therefore, no matter with how much understanding he listens, he who tries to explain Scripture without penetrating the mysteries of Hebrew grammar gropes along the walls like a blind man and does not know on what he stumbles.

Ibn Ezra objected, in particular, to the assumption that a verse may have ten different meanings or, as Menahem had taught, that a word may signify something in one context and the exact opposite in another. For this reason he also stressed, more than any other Bible commentator, the grammatical aspects of each word or phrase commented on by him, often prefacing his exposition of a chapter by a discussion of grammatical problems related to that chapter. He inserted extensive grammatical excursuses also into such semiphilosophic tracts as the one on the divine names (Sefer ha-Shem) or the principles of Judaism (Yesod mora, or Principles of the Fear of the Lord) and such semimathematical analyses as his Yesod mispar (Principles of Numbers).  

Ibn Ezra evinced also great concern and understanding for the problems of philological terminology. Going beyond all his predecessors, he compiled lengthy lists of grammatical terms and analyzed their meaning. At the same time he did not hesitate to condemn a particular grammatical or lexicographic interpretation as heretical. He aimed his shafts not only at Karaites who, disregarding tradition, interpreted, for example, the he of ha-yitab (would it have been well-pleasing? Lev. 10:19) as an article rather than as an interrogation, but also at such Rabbanites as Dunash ben Labrat and Ibn Yashush. In his defense of Saadia against Dunash, bearing the characteristic title Sefat Yeter (Overbearing Speech; namely, by Dunash, a reference to Prov. 17:7), he accused Dunash of outright blasphemy because the latter misinterpreted the word re'ekha (which Saadia had translated “how weighty also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!”; Ps. 139:17) to mean “Thy friends and companions.” In his wrath over this anthropomorphism, incidentally also shared by Rashi, Ibn Ezra exclaimed: “His [Dunash’s] book is
worthy to be burned!” He used the same phrase also with respect to ultracritical utterances by Ibn Yashush. All of this sound and fury did not prevent him, however, from frequently accepting Dunash’s views, rather than Saadiah’s, in his own Bible commentary.60

His breadth of vision and wide practical experience prevented Ibn Ezra from overstressing the merely exegetical importance of grammatical studies. While he often reiterated that “we the grammarians always run after Scripture,” and pointedly warned students always to follow the biblical accents, for “any interpretation which does not do justice to the accents thou must not accept or listen to it” (Sefer Mo’znayim, fol. 4b; aimed at Saadiah), he nevertheless advocated with equal insistence that linguistic rules could also be derived from analogy and through other forms of reasoning. In fact, in his philosophic-ethical treatise, Yesod mora, he discoursed at great length on grammatical problems because of their equal importance to letter and verse writers and students of Scripture.

Practical considerations of this kind evidently animated two other Spaniards who settled in Christian lands. Ibn Parhon, as we recall, was under Ibn Ezra’s strong influence when he compiled his readable and stimulating dictionary for the benefit of Jews in his adopted Italian fatherland. Less obvious but quite noticeable also is Ibn Ezra’s influence on Joseph ben Isaac Qimhi, a Spanish settler in Narbonne. Even in this formerly Arab-occupied city the knowledge of the great works of Spanish philology was very limited. As in the north, Frenchmen still consulted Menaḥem ben Saruq’s dictionary. For this reason Joseph composed both a new grammatical work in a more popular vein, entitled Sefer Zikkaron (Book of Remembrance; reference to Mal. 3:16), and a book in two parts mainly devoted to a critique of Menaḥem’s views, which he called Sefer ha-Galui (Open Book; reference to Jer. 32:14). In the former he expatiated on his significant discovery of a tenfold division of Hebrew vowels (five long and five short, including the qamas qaṭan as an offshoot of the ḥolem, rather than of the qamaš gadol), which greatly simplified the use of Hebrew words and before long won universal acceptance, although it has encountered some serious objections in recent decades from the
standpoint of comparative Semitic philology. It speedily replaced
the system of seven vowels (or “kings,” as the Masorites had desig-
nated them because of their controlling role in the formation of
words), to which the original Semitic $A$, $I$, $O$ sounds had long
been expanded.

In his second work Joseph had to contend against the enormous
popularity of Menahem’s work buttressed by the great prestige of
Rashi and Jacob Tam. He therefore had not only to criticize
Menahem’s own views, but also to enter the ranks against the
revered rabbinic master of Rameru by frequently giving prefer-
ence to Dunash ben Labrat’s views against the latter’s “Decisions,”
or by voicing opinions at variance with them all. Qimhi realized,
of course, that opposing Jacob Tam in his own country was an
act of great daring. Anticipating objections by readers, “Who art
thou that criest to the king?” (I Sam. 26:14), he argued that, de-
spite R. Jacob’s incontestable authority in talmudic learning, the
latter had never made a real effort to penetrate the profundities of
Hebrew grammatical literature—in fact had never considered the
science of speech a full-fledged discipline. “I, on the contrary, have
grown to be sixty years old, working constantly, day and night, in
this field.” Qimhi also explained the widespread public prejudice
against the scientific character of grammatical studies by the
proverb that “he who does not know a craft, despises it.”

Joseph Qimhi found excellent collaborators in his two sons,
Moses and David, ranking philologists in their own right. David’s
fame soon eclipsed that of his father and brother, indeed of almost
all his predecessors, and, during the Renaissance, his work served
as the fountainhead of most Hebraic studies among the Christians.
In his Mahalakh shebile ha-da’at (The Course of the Road to
Knowledge), the first Hebrew grammar to appear in print, Moses
Qimhi made a definitive contribution to Hebrew grammar by
systematically developing the doctrine of the seven paradigms of
the Hebrew verb from qal to hitpael, for which Saadiah’s discus-
sion of the various forms of qal and hifil of the verb shama’ had
laid the foundations. For obvious reasons Moses preferred the use
of a verb like paqad, which did not have to contend with the
presence of the weak consonant, ‘ayin. In a trilogy, Mikhlol (Per-
fection; a Hebrew grammar), Sefer ha-Shorashim (Book of Roots;
a lexicon), and 'Et ha-sofer (The Scribe's Pen; on the Masorah), David summarized the results of the preceding two centuries of philological research for the benefit of scholars and the general public alike. Although to our taste not always systematic, often both verbose and repetitious, the former two works speedily gained widespread acceptance. In his modesty, David disclaimed all originality and called himself but "a gleaner after the reapers." However, it took much ingenuity and independence of judgment for any author to find his way through the perplexing maze of sharply conflicting opinions advanced by the earlier scholars and to make decisions in innumerable minutiae which would not be wholly inconsistent in themselves. These works thus mark a worthy conclusion to the most creative epoch in the history of Hebrew philology.

The missionary zeal with which Ibn Ezra, Ibn Parḥon, and the Qimḥis embarked upon the propagation in Christian lands of the new grammatical rules and usages established in Spain is understandable only because of their conscious or instinctive feeling that the future of Jewish learning lay now in the Jewish communities of the former Frankish Empire and Italy. This expectation was clearly voiced in those very years by the great sage of Fustat in his famous correspondence with the scholars of Lunel. Although frequently repeating the pious cliché that one could not properly understand the Bible without a clear comprehension of the laws of Hebrew grammar, their interest evidently went much further. They wished to purify the Hebrew style generally used in Christian lands from what they considered barbarous accretions and to enrich it by the new vocabulary and grammatical forms developed by the great Spanish littératiours.

Not unexpectedly, they encountered considerable resistance. Their new approach certainly failed to satisfy those conservatives who wished to maintain philology in its former purely ancillary position to biblical exegesis. Doubtless typical of such reactionary trends was the protest voiced by the author of an anonymous thirteenth-century grammatical work published by Poznanski. This writer, possibly though not likely a resident of Byzantium, fulminated against the use of any words and forms unrecorded in Scripture:
The person [he declared] who ventures highhandedly to invent from his own mind [new forms] and says, “I may do so even though I have not found [them] in the Bible,” breaks the commandment of “Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” [Deut. 12:1]. For we are not entitled to use any language other than that spoken by the prophets and early sages. If one alters their language and uses a speech of his own “all that hear will laugh” at him [Gen. 21:6]. The poets of our generation are mistaken in this matter, as when they use in their poems words like *yiqru* or *idru* [in the *pi’el* form, unrecorded in the Bible]. We need not expatiate on this matter, for the error is widespread and the language has been ruined.

Ultimately, however, the needs of northern writers, aided and abetted by the popularity of the Hebrew-writing grammarians from Ibn Ezra to David Qimḥi, caused the new grammar to prevail over the old in the Franco-German and Italian schools as well.63

**HISTORICAL SHORTCOMINGS**

Ironically, these fulminations of the Ashkenazi author were written at the very end of a period of greatest revival of the Hebrew language and of the “golden age” of the postbiblical Hebrew literature. The immortal lyrics of Ibn Gabirol, Halevi, or Moses ibn Ezra had been made possible precisely because these great poets, and a host of lesser ones, had been constantly enriching their linguistic heritage by new words and forms not found in the Bible. In their persistent quest for self-expression on an endless variety of religious and secular subjects they were greatly helped by the creative work of the great philologists of the age, who supplied rationales and refined the instrumentalities of such linguistic expansion.

Of course, these poets and philologists were not altogether conscious of their revolutionary role. They viewed themselves rather as mere restorers of the ancient Hebrew language, of which only very small fragments had survived the ravages of time. In their historic naïveté they were prepared, with Abraham ibn Ezra, to assert that at the dawn of history “the holy language was the richest of all the languages spoken by the nations, because it was prior to them all.” They believed that the Hebrew language had sprung ready-fashioned from the hands of the Creator in the days of Adam,
and that the first man knew it all as well as, or better than, any of his successors among the Hebrew prophets or psalmists. With their general "devolutionary" view of the world, they could see only constant deterioration in the linguistic as in all other areas of history, and thought it incumbent upon themselves to recapture some of that ancient glory. 

We may understand, therefore, their ambivalent attitude toward the language of Mishnah and Talmud. Our Byzantine author was not alone in postulating the permissibility of borrowings from the language of "the early sages," although theirs, too, evidently was an obvious "addition" to the biblical speech and as such should have been equally outlawed. Even the majority of Karaites, despite their general rejection of the Oral Law and their occasional animadversions on the "shameful" use by the Rabbanites of the "language of the Assyrians and Aramaeans" (Nissi ben Nuh), made good use, as we recall, of the linguistic materials accumulated in the rabbinic literature.

Nevertheless, most scholars drew a sharp distinction between the "language of the sages" and the "language of Scripture." This was no longer, as it had been in talmudic times when it first appeared, a mere empirical observation of existing differences, but was now elevated into a major linguistic criterion. In fact, from Ibn Quraish on the rabbinic dialect was treated as an independent language almost on a par with Aramaic and Arabic and, like the latter, viewed merely as a more or less fit source of comparative materials for the language of the Bible. It never occurred to these penetrating minds to consider mishnaic Hebrew as a newly developed form of the same language, and to inquire about the individual stages which had led up to that development. Of course, to assume that the biblical language itself had undergone some major changes in the course of its historic evolution would have sounded like outright heresy even to most of these rationalist grammarians. Ibn Ezra was reluctant to admit that the square characters had been introduced at a later date. He explained their designation, *ashshurit*, as referring not to the script being of Assyrian origin, but rather to its being even and correct. Rather inconsistently, however, he rejected the explanation by some exegetes of the term *Ashshurim* (Gen. 25:3) as relating not to a proper name but to men
familiar with roads. In short, there was not even a remote adumbration of an historical grammar of the Hebrew language. This discipline, which even in our overwhelmingly history-conscious age still is in the early stages of development, was not as much as thought of in that era of greatest flowering of Hebrew philology.65

Perfectly understandable in the mental climate of the age, this historical unawareness also had serious practical implications. When Saadia prepared his first manual for the use of aspiring Hebrew poets, he did not hesitate to draw some of his illustrative materials from the largely posttalmudic *piyyuṭim*. Historically uninformed as he often was, he considered not only Yose ben Yose, but also Yannai, Eleazar ha-Qalir, and the less well-known Joshua and Phineas as “ancient poets,” more or less contemporary with the talmudic rabbis (Harkavy, *Zikhron*, V, 50 ff., 105 ff.). He was even prepared to quote more recent poets, provided he approved of their use of the Hebrew language. Linguistically always an empiricist, he took his examples indiscriminately from any Hebrew source down to his own age, without realizing that the underlying grammatical rules differed from, and at times even controverted, one another.

As time went on, however, it dawned upon the grammarians that the use of language by the *payyeṭanim* was not quite reconcilable with the grammatical laws they had themselves evolved from their biblical studies. The more systematic Hebrew philology became from Hayyuj on, the more evident became the disparity between the biblical and the *payyeṭanic* grammar. But, rather than acknowledge the difference in time and the different evolutionary stages of the Hebrew language, the twelfth-century philologists simply treated the *payyeṭanic* “deviations” as illegitimate departures from the established patterns of the biblical language. Moses and Abraham ibn Ezra were the most outspoken and the most influential among these purists. Moses ibn Ezra, himself equally distinguished as practitioner and theorist of the Hebrew poetic arts, wrote:

You may use what is found in Scripture [of words and linguistic forms], but what is not found there you must not employ in your poems by way of analogy. The way the [biblical] language goes you go, where it rests, you rest. You must imitate it, not create anything new; follow
it, not run ahead of it. As one of the wise men has said: "Thou shalt walk with the mass, for a wolf will seize the sheep straying by itself." This simile applies also to religious and worldly matters. There is another adage: "The public's dirty waters are better than the clean waters of an individual." Indeed, one of the most incontestable proofs [for truth] is the general agreement of the people, or of their majority together with their sages.

So our poet argued in favor of "common consent" (idjma'), against individual analogy (qi'yas), and thus indirectly combated the fundamental method of linguistic evolution defended in Arabic philology by the school of Baṣra. At the same time he also rejected the Kufic school's latitude in using linguistic materials other than those sanctioned by the Qur'an and pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. In Hebrew letters this meant primarily the rejection of the payyetanic language with its underground survivals of the ancient Palestinian popular idiom. By thus repudiating both the anomalous and the analogistic approaches, Moses ibn Ezra advocated an unheard-of crystallization of language, to which no creative poet, including himself, could ever fully adhere. His kinsman, Abraham, likewise declared that "in the hands of R. Eliezer [ha-Qalir] the language became like a wide-open unwalled city, for he turned masculine into feminine forms and vice versa." 68

True, neither poet could entirely refrain from using many long accepted poetic and linguistic patterns developed by these predecessors. Nevertheless, under the impact of their insistent denunciations, generations of Hebrew grammarians and poets derided the Hebrew of Qalir and his associates as a degradation of the Hebrew language, from the emulation of which any self-respecting Hebrew writer must absolutely steer clear. Puristic preconceptions may also have colored Yehudah al-Ḥarizi's censure of the lack of Hebrew knowledge of the eastern synagogue readers. Even in the thirteenth century these ḥazzanim in the Near East doubtless pursued their old calling of not only reciting the accepted prayers with traditional or newly invented tunes, but also of enriching the services by liturgical compositions of their own. Probably these new poems, written in the long-dominant payyetanic style, greatly aroused the purist in Al-Ḥarizi and elicited his irate observations. Such anti-payyetanic prejudices, further nurtured by reformist trends in the Jewish liturgy of the nineteenth century, persevered
down to our own age. Only in recent years has there emerged a new understanding for the autonomous legitimacy of the Hebrew used by the writers of the early posttalmudic period.67

CONTINUED DEFIANCE

Historical unawareness of this kind, here and in the area of biblical criticism, seemed aggravated by the people's apparent loss of all interest in recapturing their ancient and more recent past. The people of history appeared to have forgotten its own history. Moreover, the forces of nature, now represented by the overwhelmingly assimilatory trends in Muslin society, reasserted themselves with renewed vigor. The new civilization, emerging from a synthesis of all previous Near Eastern cultures, had absorbed so many elements from Judaism that transition from the one to the other community seemed but a minor step. The drive toward "normalcy," which gradually leveled most ancient differences, also exerted great, almost irresistible pressures. This desire was spearheaded by the Arabic language, which in its contact with the world languages of Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, and Persian and through the absorption of some of their most gifted exponents (not by accident did Baṣra, Kufa, and later Baghdad, all outside the original Arab habitat, become the main seats of Arab philology) had developed into a refined instrument for the expression of thoughts and emotions from the most vulgar to the most sublime. No wonder that the new Arab world culture penetrated even the innermost precincts of Jewish law and religion.

Yet Judaism had by that time become such a well-rounded and well-rooted entity that, rather than surrender its identity to the new amalgam of races and cultures, it emerged from this tempting experience with new and deepened self-realization. It absorbed a great deal from its neighbors, just as it furnished them a great deal in return, but it incorporated all such borrowings into its own millennial tradition and reinterpreted them, even twisted them, into something new and peculiar to itself. When it accepted the Arabic speech and wrote its literature in Arabic, it permeated them so deeply with its Hebraic spirit that only the continuity of sojourn in an Arabic-speaking environment prevented this blend
from becoming an independent new language and literature. Judeo-Arabic, as spoken by the masses and even as written by some of the most educated Jews, was distinguishable enough from both the local dialects and the classical Arabic. As a matter of supererogation, many authors wrote their works in the Hebrew alphabet and buttressed their views by quotations from Bible and Talmud without bothering to translate them.

All Jews were convinced, moreover, that their Hebrew language was older than and essentially superior to, all other languages. Arabic, if not altogether a corruption, was but a derivation from the divinely ordained speech of Adam and Eve, whose Hebrew had come into the world in its fullest richness and flawless perfection. Artificial as this historical reconstruction evidently was, it helped furnish a rationale for the rebirth of the Hebrew language after the centuries of its slumber under the veneer of the peculiar blend of Hebrew and Aramaic in the dialect of the Talmud. It also stimulated Jews in their pioneering efforts to compare their biblical Hebrew with its Arabic and Aramaic and even more remote "derivatives," and thus to lay foundations for the science of comparative linguistics. Most of all, it helped the Jewish people to view its own destiny in the broad historic perspectives of world history. For this reason Jewish intellectual leaders regarded every minutia of the Hebrew language as a sacred relic from that earliest, "golden" age of mankind. Typical of prevailing opinion was a thirteenth-century author's extreme postulate of remote antiquity even for the Hebrew vowels. "It is true," he contended, "that punctuation was given on Sinai, but it was forgotten until Ezra came and made it public. . . . It could not be recorded in writing, because legally it had to be treated on a par with the Oral Law" (cited by John W. Nutt in his edition of Hayyuj's Two Treatises, p. xii). Did not even hypercritical Ibn Ezra insist that the Bible could properly be understood only when read in the light of the masoretic vowels and accents?

History-mindedness of this type was not backward-looking, of course. Perhaps more than in any other generation before the Emancipation era the Jewish literature during the Renaissance of Islam was concerned with all aspects of contemporary life—ethical, legal, ritualistic, even private. At the same time it never ceased to
look forward, especially to the ultimate end of days. We have seen how deeply permeated with the messianic ideal was the thinking of medieval Jewry, whether under Christendom or under Islam. This combination of biblical-talmudic traditionalism with deep concerns for the ever changing contemporary trends in the Jewish position in the world and undaunted faith in the ultimate outcome of these historic struggles was, indeed, also the keynote of the immortal Jewish poetry and philosophy of the period.
Revival of Hebrew and biblical research deeply affected the
synagogue ritual. "No religion in the world," rightly ob-
serves Frederick C. Grant, "can be thoroughly understood if
its normal daily worship of God is left out of account: for here is
where the real pulse-beat of every genuine religion is to be felt"
(ZAW, LXV, 73). This is doubly true of the Judaism of the post-
talmudic period, when, perhaps ironically, the synagogue was
constantly gaining in importance while the number and status of
the Jewish people declined. An autochthonous growth of the
Diaspora community, the synagogue had long been overshadowed
by the Temple, not only while the latter existed, but also while
there was still a spark of reasonable hope for its early restoration.
Merely tolerated by the Temple hierarchy, it was allowed to grow
anarchically and largely without regulation by the central author-
ities before 70 C.E. and, to some extent, even throughout the tannaitic age. The third-century Amoraim, especially R. Johanan and
Simon ben Laqish in Palestine and Abba Arikha in Babylonia,
tried to strengthen it and to lend it greater dignity by fostering
synagogue attendance and composing new prayers for its services.
But even they did not hesitate to stress the academy above the
house of worship. With the decline of the central academies in
the sixth and seventh centuries, however, the synagogue emerged
as the mainstay of Jewish life. The diminution of Jewish popula-
tion, too, combined with a continued enlargement of the area of
dispersion, resulted in the thinning out of the Jewish communities,
most of which were now too small to maintain more than one
major institution. All public life began clustering around the local
house of worship, which, as a rule, also accommodated the school,
the charities, and the court of justice.

Developments in the outside world added force to the new
appreciation of synagogue worship. No longer were the Jewish communities under Byzantine and, later, under Arab domination surrounded by pagan temples offering sacrifices which dolefully reminded them of the lost glories of their own sacrificial system. On the contrary, stimulated by the general acceptance in the Christian and Muslim worlds of corporate worship, along precisely those lines pioneered by the synagogue, prayerful assemblies now became the very core of Jewish public life. We no longer hear of distinguished rabbis and leaders abstaining from synagogue attendance and preferring private devotions in the “four ells” of their studies—a fairly common phenomenon in the talmudic age. To the masses of uneducated and communally rather inactive Jews, daily participation in public worship was the main expression of their communal allegiance. Here they also found their opportunity for cooperation with fellow members in matters of general concern, since the synagogue, as in its emulation the mosque, continued to serve as the “house of the people” in areas transcending the narrow confines of “religion.” Under these circumstances the existing anarchical diversity of rituals from community to community, or even from congregation to congregation in the same locality, might have undermined the entire, basically unitarian, structure of Jewish group life.

Perhaps even more, therefore, than in other spheres of Jewish intellectual endeavor, the saboraic and early geonic periods (500–800 c.e.) were marked by efforts to assemble and solidify the accumulated liturgical treasures. They were followed by a period of memorable literary creativity, reaching its apogee in the sacred poetry of the Spanish immortals. However, neither was the earlier period devoid of noteworthy creative achievements in the specific forms of liturgical poetry, known as the piyyut, nor was the work of consolidation completed before 800 c.e. In fact, only the subsequent four centuries witnessed the compilation of the great Jewish liturgical classics, in the form of both prayer books and liturgical codes written by, or attributed to, Amram, Saadiah, Rashi, Simḥah of Vitry, and Maimonides.
LITURGICAL CONSOLIDATION

Heretical trends, so powerful in the early Muslim period, sharply underscored the menace of liturgical disunity. Most sectarian movements sooner or later found their counterparts in important ceremonial deviations, if they did not altogether originate from ritualistic controversies. It was not only the larger Samaritan and Karaite sects which developed early liturgies of their own; the various splinter groups also, including those belonging to the "lunatic fringe," had prayers, even orders of prayers, peculiar to themselves. Unfortunately, no texts of the latter are extant. We possess a considerable body of Samaritan liturgy, in part going back to ancient times, especially to the fourth-century poet Marqa. The Karaites, too, beginning with ‘Anan himself, left behind a mass of prayers and liturgical regulations ultimately reflected in a more or less standardized prayer book, but the services held by the lesser sectarians are nowhere recorded. At best we know that Abu ‘Isa al-Isfahani instituted seven daily services, outdoing therein the orthodox Jews and Muslims. But we are utterly uninformed about the form and content of these ritualistic performances, or whether they were designed primarily for public or for private devotion.¹

Some of the new religious reformers undoubtedly represented borderline cases between outright heresy and a somewhat irregular type of piety. Their variations of old and introduction of new liturgical pieces reflected their feeling of closeness to the Creator and his angelic entourage. Such informality may have sounded blasphemous to some "enlightened" leaders, but it appealed, through inwardness and picturesqueness, to the masses and ultimately secured the sanction of the scholars as well. This was particularly true, as we shall see, in the case of prayers imbued with the mysteries of the contemporary "secret lore."

Obviously, the leaders' ingenuity was often severely taxed in distinguishing between heretical and permissible innovations. Prompted by the necessity of erecting anti-heretical ramparts, the Babylonian academies betrayed an ever growing intolerance toward ritualistic diversity. Reflecting their stiffened attitude,
Amram Gaon declared sweepinglly: "We must not deviate in anything from what the sages had said in the Talmud [about either holiday or Sabbath prayers]. . . . When we come to a place where the reader recites a prayer at variance with the mold formed by the sages, we depose him." Needless to say, the gaon had the Babylonian Talmud alone in mind. Even the recognition of Palestine's ritualistic autonomy, which characterized the outlook of the Amoraim in both lands, now gave way to an attempt to impose Babylonian patterns on the communities of the Holy Land. Pirqoi ben Baboi, a native Palestinian turned pan-Babylonian, attacked with particular relish some of Palestine's liturgical "deviations," for which he offered his stereotype explanation of their origin from real or alleged anti-Jewish persecutions. Even Naṭronai bar Hilai Gaon, generally far more responsible and cautious, once sharply denounced a Palestinian law: "They err and have gone astray." Ultimately, Babylonian immigrants into Palestine herself began battling the established modes of worship. After bitter communal strife, some Babylonian settlers in Jerusalem and other communities succeeded in forcing the local congregations to recite daily the ancient qedushah (sanctification of the divine name, similar in tone to its Christian derivative, the Sanctus), whereas in other communities which did not submit to Babylonian pressure that prayer continued to be recited only on the Sabbath and holidays.²

Forcible unification of this kind, however, though buttressed by interterritorial Jewish migrations, growing ease of communications, and, for a time, effective central controls, also encountered some formidable, indeed insurmountable obstacles. Staunch adherence to accepted ceremonies is one of the most widespread and deepest manifestations of religious conservatism. That is why, for example, the liturgy of St. Basil the Great in the Greek Orthodox Church, and that of St. James in the Syrian Church, could remain so substantially unaltered for fifteen centuries. Similarly, some of the basic Jewish prayers (German scholars like to call them Stammgebete) indubitably go back to remote antiquity, in part even to the pre-Maccabean age. Since, next to Scriptural readings, prayers always characterized services in the synagogue, R. Johanan's tradition that "the Men of the Great Synagogue introduced for Israel
benedictions and prayers, formulas of sanctification and separation
[between holy and profane; habdalot]" (Berakhot 33a), is not so un-
historical as it appears. For example, the first three and the last
three benedictions of the silent prayer 'Amidah, which are com-
mon to all Jewish services throughout the year, may well have
been recited in substantially the same form by all Jewish com-
munities for more than two thousand years.

So convinced were the Jews of the immemorial antiquity of the
first three benedictions (often styled, because of their content, the
"Fathers," divine "Power," and "Holiness") that they attributed
their composition to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This view, pos-
sibly intimated already by Sirach, is quietly taken for granted by
the authors of Pirqei de-R. Eliezer and of several qerobot (liturgical
poems woven around these benedictions). A geonic tradition had
it that as early as the First Commonwealth Jews had recited daily
these three as well as two other benedictions of the 'Amidah, the
Ten Commandments, Shema' and its adjoining prayer, Emet ve-
ya'asib (True and Firm). Such staunch adherence must also have
characterized the regional rites. We recall how the ancient Pales-
tinian sages had already been forced to compromise with respect to
certain ritualistic customs developed in the city of Jericho. In
the course of time, and particularly during the period of weakened
central controls from the fifth to the eighth centuries, these re-
geonal diversities must have increased in both number and in-
tensity. They now became a major stumbling block to all unifying
efforts.3

Linguistic difficulties were no less serious. Realizing from the
outset that Hebrew prayers alone could not satisfy the spiritual
cravings of the Aramaic and Greek-speaking majority of world
Jewry, indeed of the very populace inhabiting the Palestino-
Babylonian heartland of Jewish life, the ancient sages permitted the
recitation of prayers in any language. To be sure, in their effort to
stem neglect of Hebrew, R. Johanan and R. Judah warned wor-
shipers not to employ Aramaic in their prayers for divine interven-
tion in the satisfaction of their wants, because the ministering
angels would not understand them. But these warnings often went
unheeded. Sherira Gaon, citing many talmudic illustrations in
theory and practice, asserted that "since the ancients paid no at-
attention to them, neither do we." In this respect some segments of Palestinian Jewry need not have differed greatly from the Samaritan sectarians, whose ancient liturgy is almost exclusively Aramaic. At times, the Jewish teachers themselves composed Aramaic prayers, such as the well-known prayer for mourners, the Qaddish, which had evident affinities with the Lord's Prayer among the early Christians. Even much later (in the fourteenth century?) a Yemenite author produced a regular targum of the 'Amidah. According to the uncontroverted inquiry of 992 C.E., which gave rise to Sherira's aforementioned ruling, "all the prayers of petition and request which came to our ancestors blessed be their memory, from the holy academy, are in the Aramaic language. . . . Also most benedictions, composed by the geonim for both private and public use, are written in that language." Even the newcomer, Saadiah, adopted the Babylonian custom of counting the days and weeks between Passover and the Festival of Weeks (the so-called Sefirah season) in Aramaic—a custom which, because of his authority, spread also to Yemen. In addition to these more sophisticated liturgical pieces, sophisticated in content as well as through the use of the more refined literary style developed in the academies, there must have been in circulation many compositions in local dialects, enjoying at least a temporary vogue, local or regional.4

Gradual replacement of Aramaic by Arabic in the speech of the masses, combined with the revival of Hebrew linguistic studies among the intelligentsia, now complicated the task of unifiers. Reluctant consistently to apply the old principle and to permit any widespread liturgical use of Arabic, the intellectual leaders encouraged the communities to enrich their rituals by selections from the constantly growing treasury of Hebrew sacred poetry, although, as we shall see, such encouragement ran counter to their deep-seated suspicions of the existing piyyutim. Because of this ambivalence, communities were allowed much leeway in making their own selections. On the other hand, the Hebrew renaissance, with its classicist and puristic predilections, led to occasional questionings, even abandonment, of long accepted liturgical formulas. Some local readers hesitated to use the word qalles in the Qaddish, because, while reflecting the talmudic connotation of praise, it
had in biblical Hebrew the opposite meaning of blame. Hai Gaon had to intervene and point out, on the basis of Arabic examples, that the meaning of a word is often determined only by its context. Finally, rabbinic opinion veered away entirely from the early latitudinarian attitude, still adhered to by Aḥai of Shabḥa, Simon Qayyara, and even Amram Gaon, and insisted that one must recite both the Shema' and the ‘Amidah in Hebrew, even if one does not understand their meaning. At the same time, the Arabic-Hebrew linguistic revolution undoubtedly weakened the resistance of local liturgical traditionalists and made the work of unification doubly imperative.5

The linguistic vicissitudes of the Christian churches in both East and West must also have served as a warning to those Jewish leaders who had even remote familiarity with what was happening in neighboring Christian quarters. At first the Church followed Judaism in its permission for worshipers to use “any language one understands.” John Chrysostom, though a native of Antioch, may have known no Syriac at all; yet, he did not dream of forbidding the use of that language by neighboring farmers. Ultimately, by a curious historical revenge, Syriac liturgical patterns conquered the very citadel of Greek worship, the Byzantine Church. On principle, the Eastern Churches maintained linguistic freedom in the older countries, and they even succeeded in introducing novel liturgies into such newly converted areas as eastern Europe. Yet, in time, these native liturgies, which because of their inherent conservatism could not participate in the general linguistic evolution, became as meaningless to the masses as if they were couched in some foreign dialect. To the majority of Arabic-speaking Syriac and Egyptian Christians, as well as to the Slavs and even the Greeks, their ecclesiastical jargons were no more comprehensible than was, for example, the consistently Latin liturgy of western Christianity. However little cognizance Jewish leadership overtly took of such outside developments, it could not fail to redouble its efforts to establish a single universal Hebrew liturgy, with whatever concessions could safely be made to local Hebrew variations. Although some of the newer piyyuṭim may likewise have become progressively incomprehensible to ordinary worshipers, the Hebrew literary language maintained its living continuity and, hence
also, its general intelligibility to the large and influential segment of well-educated men.

Economic transformations and growing literacy likewise served as a double-edged sword, both stimulating and complicating the task of consolidation. Increasing urbanization led to the formation of a fairly large leisure class, and even many merchants and artisans were now able to devote proportionately more time to the daily services. As a consequence, the latter grew longer and longer, meeting a growingly powerful trend toward a combination of conservative adherence to traditional orders of prayer with numerous, more recent innovations. Gone were the restraints of the ancient rabbis who, to relieve the tired and hungry farmers returning from a hard day's work, shortened the evening services by declaring the recitation of the evening 'Amidah as merely permissive and substituting for it a prayer (Barukh Adonai le-olam amen ve-amen; Blessed be the Lord forever more, amen and amen) originally containing but eighteen verses, rather than benedic-
tions. Now both prayers became obligatory.  

Similarly, a prayer recited by the relatively few members who after the completion of the morning services could indulge in study was amplified by a skillful selection of biblical verses at the beginning and the end, and ultimately made part of the standard liturgy for all (the prayer beginning U-ba le-Siyyon Goel; And a Redeemer Shall Come to Zion). The morning services were further expanded by the addition of lengthy selections from both the Psalms and the Talmud. Psalms had always been an integral part of Jewish worship, but in the talmudic age their daily recitation was left entirely to the discretion of the individual worshiper. While R. Jose prayed that he be given the opportunity of completing the so-called Egyptian Hallel (Ps. 113-18) every day, a later sage actually declared that "he who recites Hallel every day is a blasphemer." The late Amora R. Abina encouraged only the daily recitation of a single psalm (145), distinguished, as was later explained in Amram's prayer book, by its alphabetical arrangement and its reference (in verse 16) to God's furnishing sustenance to all living beings. Even Saadia still argued against the wholesale use of chapters from Scripture, though of course not of biblical phrases, or detached verses, the very mainstay of Jewish liturgy.
His reasoning, however, had already lost sight of the initial social motive. "Every chapter in the Bible," the gaon contended on purely formal grounds, "is mixed with commandments and prohibitions, promises and warnings, and reason rebels against the inclusion of such matters in prayer." That is why his own prayer book began directly with the ancient prayers preceding the Shema' in private devotions and added but two brief benedictions, a selection of pertinent biblical phrases, and Psalms 145 and 147-50 for volunteers.  

Saadia was sharply attacked for these views by the Karaites Qirqisani and Salmon ben Yeruṣîm for, ever since 'Anan, these sectarians had assigned to the psalms and other biblical chapters the lion's share in their liturgy. Qirqisani pointed out that, according to their own ritual (not recorded by either Amram or Saadia), the very Rabbanites opened their prayers with a formula, "He who chose His servant David, and graciously accepted the sacred hymns." In practice, however, the majority of Rabbanites had likewise by that time incorporated a number of stated psalms (the so-called pesuqe de-zimra) in their daily liturgy. This is attested by Saadia's predecessor, Amram, whose introductory announcement that his work was "in accordance with the tradition which is in our possession, in conformity with the institution of the Tannaim and the Amoraim," clearly betrayed his anti-Karaite bias.  

Out of opposition to the Karaite overemphasis, however, the later geonim displayed a curious hostility to any worshiper reciting these psalmic selections after the 'Amidah. Generally speaking, the prayers said after the completion of these more formal services still were far from standardized. In fact, worshipers were encouraged to add any number of prayers of petition (tahanunim) of their own. Amram, Saadia, and Maimonides merely offered suggestions as to what texts might be used for such devotions, since many individuals, even congregations, doubtless were at a loss in formulating appropriate petitions. There certainly seemed to be no reason for any Jew to refrain from using psalms in this or any other connection. Understandably, therefore, neither the questioners of R. Yehudai Gaon, nor the gaon himself, saw any objection to anyone reciting the pesuqe de-zimra after the services
rather than at their beginning. Yehudai merely decided that in such a case no preliminary blessing be required. But, not long thereafter, the controversy with the Karaite schismatics began assuming serious proportions. Hence the geonim Moses and Natronai decided that a worshiper arriving late at the synagogue ought to shorten these selections from the psalms, or even eliminate them entirely, so as to catch up with the congregational recitation of Shema' and 'Amidah. In no case must he recite the psalms after the silent prayer. Natronai's explanation that "there is disrespect in reciting [God's] praise after the prayer," is evidently forced. Very likely the unspoken motivation of these geonic leaders was to emphasize the essential superiority of the post-biblical 'Amidah as the liturgical pièce de resistance. They may also have wished to prevent those Karaites who, living in smaller communities, were forced to attend Rabbanite services from perfunctory participation in the other parts of the ritual and concentration of their own worship on the generally accepted psalms. That is perhaps also why neither Amram nor Saadia included any psalms in their suggestions for the concluding recitations, whereas the Spanish and Franco-German communities, unaware of the original schismatic threat, glibly inserted at least one psalm each (6 or 25) into this part of the service, now become more and more standardized for congregational rather than private devotions.  

Extremists went further. In a case referred to an unnamed gaon, an overzealous elder tried to stop members of his congregation who were wont to arrive at the synagogue before the sunrise of Sabbaths and holidays and recite their psalms until the beginning of services. He endeavored to force these pious Jews to spend their waiting time on the study of Mishnah, Talmud, or halakhic writings, despite the fact that some of them were not learned enough to engage in such studies (Teshubot ha-geonim, ed. by Assaf, 1942, pp. 107 f.). Incidentally, however, this and several related inquiries show that the immortal lyrics of the book of Psalms continued irresistibly to attract pious souls, notwithstanding the cloud cast on their recitation by the sectarian discord. Precisely this opposition to Karaitism may also have inspired the inclusion of talmudic passages relating to talmudic methodology,
the kindling of Sabbath lights, and the sacrificial services at the Temple. Only the latter could be rationalized as reflections of the basic idea that prayers served as a substitute for sacrifices. Amram and his school, however, explained all these talmudic accretions as a mere compliance with the talmudic injunction that every Jew should divide his time equally between the study of the Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud. At the same time, the particular selections and their inclusion among the obligatory prayers clearly reflected the antisectarian animus. In any case, such vast extension—indeed more than doubling in size—of the required recitations was possible only because so many more Jews could now afford to spend almost half an hour in private prayer, or an hour in synagogue attendance, each morning before embarking on their daily chores. Ultimately, despite protests by Hai Gaon and others, congregational services, particularly during the High Holidays season, expanded to such an extent that the Shema was often recited outside the permissible limit of three hours after sunrise.¹⁰

On the other hand, the geonim refused to budge from the talmudic practice of reciting on Saturdays alone the full weekly lessons from the Pentateuch. Originally prompted by considerations for the hard-pressed workingman and farmer, the ancient sages had restricted such weekday recitation to a small initial section, and to Mondays and Thursdays only. This practice was consistently maintained also on Purim, Hanukkah, and fastdays—workdays all—as well as on Sabbath afternoons. More significantly, Saadia voiced a long-accepted opinion when he forbade on all these days the calling of more than three men (four men on new moons and the half holidays of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles) to the Torah, whereas on all other holidays and Sabbaths requiring summons to five or more members the congregations enjoyed full discretion in adding as many more as they wished. On all these festive days, of course, abstention from work was obligatory, hence congregations could freely extend the duration of their services. If Anan suddenly introduced two daily recitations of Numbers 1–8 from the Scroll of Law, he was guided therein not only by his strict formalism and his general dis-
regard of economic interests, but also by the class outlook of the urban intelligentsia to which he primarily appealed.\textsuperscript{11}

With utter abandon, ‘Anan demanded additional scriptural readings not only on Sabbaths and holidays, but also on fast days. We recall that these included a Ramadan-like stretch of seventy days from Nisan 13 to Sivan 23. On each of these days the congregation had to listen to the reading of pertinent passages from the Pentateuch and of a section from the scroll of Esther (3:8–4:17). It stands to reason, although it is not specifically mentioned in the extant fragments, that ‘Anan also required two recitations each during New Moon services falling on weekdays, just as he insisted upon three readings at Sabbath New Moons. In his complete disregard for tradition, as well as the worshiper’s convenience, the heresiarch also insisted that they read such scattered passages from the Pentateuch from the same scroll. He knew that the talmudic sages had already introduced readings from different scrolls so as to enable synagogue officials to prepare the scrolls ahead of time and to spare the congregants the annoyance of waiting until the single scroll was unrolled from one section to another. During the seventy-day fast, for example, the Karaite congregations had to wait until their scrolls were rolled back from Numbers 28 all the way to Exodus 17. Like many other of ‘Anan’s doctrinaire postulates, this procedure was abandoned by later Karaites, who allowed the daily readings from ordinary Bibles or prayer books (see Hadassi, \textit{Eshkol}, fol. 15bc).

\textbf{INWARDNESS AND STANDARDIZATION}

Rabbanite adoption of intellectually significant, but devotionally totally uninspiring, talmudic excerpts as part of the daily ritual reveals from another angle how much the medieval rabbis were true heirs of the talmudic sages in their general appreciation of the synagogue as an educational as much as a devotional institution. Popular opinion seems to have shared this view. As in all other matters echoing widespread folklore, the medieval Hebrew paraphrast of Josephus stated, “He who prays talks to God, he who studies the Torah is spoken to by God.” Saadiah, whether
or not he knew Yosephon or the latter’s source, expressed a similar idea in one of his beautiful prayers of petition, when he asked the Lord, “Turn my heart to Thy message and Thy counsels,” that is, to the study of Torah.  

At the same time, the geonim and other jurists realized that prayer differed from most other ceremonial laws by its utter dependence on the worshiper’s comprehension of its meaning. Ancient and medieval sages untiringly expatiated on the importance of *kavvanah* (intention), or rather, of the worshiper’s complete absorption in the meaning of each prayer. In his philosophic work, Saadiah counted lack of concentration among the behavior patterns which invalidated the ceremonial value of prayers. Citing the psalmist (78:35–37) rather than any talmudic authority, Saadiah failed to consider the grave danger of saddling large masses of conscientious citizens with a guilt complex for every set of prayers recited without due concentration. Apprehensions of this kind doubtless prompted many other sages, ancient and medieval (for instance, R. Ḥananel), to declare sweepingly that “fulfillment of commandments is not contingent on [the performer’s] intention.” But no one denied that a Jew ought to pay undivided attention to his prayers, since “our main purpose in praying is the soul’s yearning to God and its submission to Him.” Such a restrained jurist as Maimonides waxed eloquent when he wrote: “Intention consists in freeing oneself completely from all other thoughts and considering oneself as standing before the Lord’s presence [*shekhinah]*.” All scholars agreed that if a member was silently reciting the ‘*Amidah* he must not interrupt it in order to join in the communal response to the reader’s recitation of the *qedushah*. Nor should he remain silent while the others responded; rather he ought unperturbedly to continue being engrossed in the meaning of his own prayer.  

To encourage concentration, the geonim and their successors sanctioned the widespread custom of bowing, even prostrating oneself, before God during certain prayers, and of praying aloud, except for the silent ‘*Amidah*. Going beyond the example set by R. ‘Aqiba, who in the privacy of his home used to pray with such fervor and with so much physical commotion that he usually wound up at an opposite corner, medieval Jews prayed noisily
and with frequent disregard of decorum. In the case of the *Shema*, loud prayer was specifically enjoined in both the Talmud and medieval law. Curiously, Amram as well as Saadiah, insisted that the more customary way of reciting it was in a sitting position, in contrast to the ‘*Amidah* which, everyone agreed, had to be read standing up. In a characteristic response to an inquiry addressed to him from a Christian country, Maimonides advised against the local observance of having the reader recite the ‘*Amidah* aloud twice, the first time in order to assist ignorant members. Such repetition could, in his opinion, lead only to annoyance and ensuing unruly behavior of the congregation and the “desecration of the name of the Lord among the Gentiles.”

Deep inwardness was easily jeopardized by excessive standardization. Even the most rigid exponents of communal controls could not remain unmindful of R. Simon’s ancient injunction, “When thou prayest make not thy prayer into a fixed form.” They also remembered the significant debate between R. Gamaliel, R. Joshua, R. ‘Aqiba, and R. Eliezer, in which the latter, arch-conservative upholder of rooted tradition, opposed altogether the recitation of prescribed prayers. A fairly common opinion among later sages held that the worshiper “shall add something new every day” to the meaning of his accustomed prayers. That is why then and later Jews were encouraged to add any number of private prayers of petition (*taḥanunim*), especially after the completion of the morning ‘*Amidah*. An early homilist observed that from generation to generation “Israel recites a new poem every hour, just as a well pours out fresh waters every hour.” Even at the end of the tenth century, the Spanish poet-wanderer, Joseph ibn Abitur, sang,

Each day I compose a new blessing  
On God’s works and feats,  
He who renews Creation daily  
With His mighty deeds.

Many such private prayers ultimately found their way into congregational services. The brief petition, *Elohai nesōr* (Oh My God! Guard My Tongue from Evil), first composed by “Mar” bar Rabina in the fifth century, was soon recited by each individual at the conclusion of his silent prayer. The much-embattled ‘*Alenu*
le-shabbeḥ (It is Our Duty to Praise the Lord of All Things), which combined exaltation of the one God of Israel with a sharp disparagement of unbelieving nations, seems to have been compiled by Rab from liturgical phrases dating from various periods (some undoubtedly even then of immemorial antiquity and hence attributed by medieval rabbis such as Eleazar Rokeḥ of Worms to Joshua son of Nun) and inserted into the prayers to precede the blowing of the horn on New Year's day. In medieval Europe, however, the Jewish leaders (beginning with Eleazar of Worms?) decided to recite it at the end of every service, and adhered to it in defiance of increasingly bitter attacks by Jew-baiters from the fourteenth century on.¹⁶

Rationalists doubtless heartily disliked some newer prayers which presupposed the intervention of heavenly intermediaries, be they deceased prophets or angels. They certainly had no use for the Jewish welī worship, which, in imitation of a widespread Arab custom, was rapidly gaining ground among the masses. But there is no record of any official action against the recitation of such prayers as were read by pilgrims at the alleged tomb of Samuel the Seer: “Let my soul and the souls of thy servants who believe in thy prophecy and come to prostrate themselves on thy grave find favor in thine eyes. Beseech, please, the Lord, thy great and awe-inspiring God, for the remaining remnant” of the Jewish people. Especially the belief that the angelic hosts in Heaven praise the Lord on a par with man, was too deeply rooted to be eradicated even by the most determined rationalist leaders. They could stem certain excesses, as did for instance Naṭronai Gaon, when he learned that some overzealous worshipers insisted on holding the showfringes during the entire recitation of Shema’. The gaon condemned these proceedings as sheer ostentation. But neither he nor any of his successors ever seriously attempted completely to sever the nexus which allegedly tied earthly prayers to some such supernatural mediation.¹⁷

Conversely, human prayers were supposed also to influence the behavior and fate of celestial hosts. An ancient prayer, recited by R. Safra at the conclusion of his morning devotions, was frequently repeated thereafter by pious individuals: “May it be Thy will, O Lord, our God, to establish peace among the family above and
the family below, and among the pupils studying Thy Torah, whether they study it for its own sake or for some external reasons; as to those who study it for external reasons, may it be Thy will that they shall study it for its own sake.” True, many rabbis, including some mystics, emphasized the superiority of Israel’s prayers over those of the divine hosts. The very author of Hekhalot (Book of Sanctuaries), an early classic of mystical literature, wrote in the name of R. Ishmael:

When the ministering angels wish to sing praises before the Supreme Being, they first foregather around the throne of glory like mountains of fire and hills of flame. The Holy One, blessed be He, tells them: Remain silent before me, every angel and [heavenly] creature, every wheel [ofan] and seraph whom I have created, until I shall first hear and listen to the songs and praises of My son, Israel. It is written: “When the morning stars sang together [Job 38:7]”; that is Israel; “And all the sons of God shouted for joy [ibid.]”; that is the family of angels.

For similar reasons a talmudic sage had contended that the angels sing only at night, leaving the day entirely to the earthly devotions of pious Jews. Even the medieval midrash which reversed that order admitted that angels observed silence at night, while Jews could freely indulge in prayers at any time.¹⁸

And yet the conviction grew that in their prayers the Jews should take increasing cognizance of the heavenly “family.” The Qedushah, especially, which even in Saadiah’s formulation still merely alluded to some such dialogue with the supernatural world, now began, “We will sanctify Thy name in the world even as they sanctify it in the highest heavens.” More pronouncedly, according to Amram, the reader, while repeating the ‘Amidah, introduced the Hebrew Sanctus by referring to the multitudes above which, together with the gatherings below, give the mystical “crown” to the Lord. But Saadiah himself saw no harm in suggesting that at the conclusion of the ‘Amidah every worshiper should take three steps backward, “just as slaves step backwards when they leave the royal chamber,” and then silently bow to the left and to the right “in tribute to the angels, after he had fulfilled his duty to the Lord, as it is written, ‘And all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left’ [I Kings 22:19].” Another gaon, Hanokh, elaborated on an Amora’s counsel that
men wishing to become wise turn in their prayers in a southerly direction, while those seeking riches pray northward, by relating such orientation to the position of various implements in the ancient Temple. The candelabrum, symbol of wisdom, had been located in the sanctuary’s southern end, while the showbreads, symbolic of wealth, had stood in the northern section.\footnote{19}

Minor concessions of this kind, however, did not satisfy the craving for the supernatural of the ever more numerous students of secret lore, and this desire is reflected in the \textit{hekhalot} and \textit{merkabah} literatures. We shall see how greatly \textit{Sufism} and other trends in Islamic mysticism now stimulated parallel expressions among the Jewish minority. The so-called “descenders into the Chariot,” who often prayed with their heads between their knees and indulged in other gestures conducive to ecstatic self-forgetfulness, laid particular stress upon the \textit{Qedushah}, whose glorification of the mystic “crown” they doubtless helped to formulate. According to one of their writers, whenever God listens to Israel reciting this trishaghion (three times “holy”) He embraces the image of Jacob and contemplates the speedy redemption of the Jewish people. Many indeed were the liturgical innovations which, stemming from these mystic conventicles, sooner or later were adopted by large segments of the people. At times geonic leadership, yielding to popular pressure, accepted such innovations willingly; on other occasions it yielded only after a hard struggle. The geonim of Sura, for example, condemned the recitation of the \textit{Kol nidre} prayer, with its magic fear of the vows unwittingly broken, as a “foolish custom” (\textit{Naṭronai}) long after those of Pumbedita had submitted to popular clamor for it. Before long, however, Saadia\footnote{20} (despite his silence on this score in his prayer book) accepted the Pumbedita custom. Doubtless on Saadia’s authority Yemenite Jewry adopted it and continued its recitation in defiance of Maimonides’ tacit rejection. No such difference of opinion among the geonim is recorded concerning the \textit{kapparot} ceremony on the eve of the Day of Atonement, which, first mentioned in the ninth century, brought back to the surface of Jewish life long-buried memories of the sacrificial substitution of a condemned animal for the sinner himself. This ceremony, indulged in by some overzealous or overanxious persons on the eve of the New Year
well (some rich people slaughtered deer, sheep, or lambs and distributed the meat among the poor), was reluctantly tolerated by the geonim, although it was still condemned by Ibn Adret and Karo (in the first edition of his *Code*). Evidently, popular persistence could not be denied.²⁰

Despite the incursion of such "animistic and demoniac" elements into Jewish liturgy, its predominantly rational tone remained uncontested. The largely uncontrollable infusion of such folkloristic ingredients sufficed, however, to underscore the existing liturgical diversity. Through the partial acceptance or rejection of various groups in Jewry it created another stumbling block to complete unification.²¹

**READER’S DISCRETION**

The original, fairly brief, and simple services required little professional mediation, since basic prayers were easily learned by heart through constant repetition and each individual was encouraged to formulate additional prayers in his own language. Tertullian’s description, "We pray from the heart without a monitor," applied to the second-century synagogue as well as to the church. In time, however, the constant additions to the required liturgy and the growing insistence upon Hebrew prayers made it impossible for many unlearned Jews to memorize them adequately. On the High Holidays, especially, the services became so lengthy and the assembled congregation, often reinforced by arrivals from the neighboring villages, so unfamiliar with the very sequence of prayers that, as we learn from an interesting geonic responsum, the reader had to take time out to instruct the congregation in the general liturgy of the Day of Atonement.²²

The gradual growth of liturgical formulas through progressive accretions is best illustrated by the development of the confession (*viddui*). Emphasized from time immemorial as a part of the much-stressed repentance of the individual sinner, it was elevated into a major liturgical performance in the high-priest's annual confession in behalf of the whole people at the Temple of Jerusalem. From there it spread to both homes and synagogues. R. Joshua ben Levi promised this-worldly, as well as well as other-worldly, re-
wards to him who "sacrifices his evil spirit and confesses his sins." However, precisely because they wished to retain the spontaneity of such confessions, the rabbis refrained from introducing obligatory formulas, several of them suggesting different models for individual worshipers. In time, many of these formulas began to be combined in alphabetic order, and they were constantly amplified by additional sins to be confessed. In the present-day Ashkenazic ritual it embraces fifty-four sentences.23

Quite early, therefore, more learned or specially trained members played a preponderant role in the congregational services. Although believing, as did later the Quakers, in "the priesthood of all believers," Pharisaic Judaism, as attested by Philo of Alexandria, encouraged better informed members to lead the congregation. As the divine services grew longer in the talmudic period, the "messenger of the people" was given considerable leeway in the selection of new prayers and served as guardian of their correct textual transmission. Before long, this task became so arduous that at least the larger congregations began entrusting it to full-time professionals. The *hazzan*, in ancient times primarily a sexton, elementary schoolteacher, and general communal factotum, now became principally the congregational precentor during services. Such an official is casually mentioned in the Palestinian *Sefer ha-Ma'asim*, whose phrasing reflects a long-established institution. True, the old title "messenger of the people" still persisted, and it continued to apply to nonprofessional readers as well. But, characteristically, Naṭronai Gaon had already begun to distinguish between the "messenger" and the ordinary layman who "descended to the pulpit." Without altering the law which recognized the right of any thirteen-year-old to lead in services, Amram Gaon insisted that, except for emergencies, the congregations be led by qualified adults. Other geonim emphasized the need of fully understanding the meaning of prayers, which likewise tended toward professionalization of congregational leadership. At that time, indeed, official "readers" seem to have officiated in most large communities. A century later we even hear of a "chief *hazzan*" in Baghdad who served as the officer in charge of all Babylonian *hazzanim*.24

Lay or professional, the "messenger of the people" read aloud
the prescribed prayers as a substitute for members unable to recite them by themselves. This primary function was never completely abandoned, not even after the printed prayer book had reduced the number of such male congregants to a minimum. Probably with this idea in mind some congregations made the reader recite the entire set of a hundred prayers enumerated by Amram at the beginning of his prayer book, including several benedictions over food and drink and after meals, so as to anticipate later occasions during the day when a particular member might be unable to recite them. Of course, the "messenger" himself, as well as many other members, had no occasion to partake of all those meals during the following twenty-four hours. This practice, understandably, evoked the sharp censure of Maimonides, who strictly forbade the recitation of any benediction in anticipation of possible future needs.25

Independently some leader was expected to explain to the congregation the meaning of the scriptural lessons. In larger communities, there undoubtedly existed enough scholarly members to alternate as preachers and "messengers." Elucidation through appropriate homilies rested there with revered masters of Jewish lore, especially the heads of leading academies. In the smaller communities, however, such division of labor must often have proved impossible. A congregation which had but one outstanding scholar would naturally entrust to such a "messenger" the double task of leading in prayer and delivering the sermon. The combination of offices, recorded already in the ancient community of Simonias, continued throughout the Middle Ages and modern times, except that now the haazzan, instead of being primarily the sexton, became first of all a "messenger of the people." The medieval compiler of the Midrash on the Song of Songs doubtless had his own, as well as ancient, times in mind when he described Eleazar, son of R. Simon ben Yoḥai, as "Bible reader, memorizer, poet, and preacher." On his visit to Mosul, Yehudah al-Ḥarizi heard the community boast of its distinguished "cantor-preacher . . . who explains the Prophets with many interpretations, knows precious poems, and sings songs." This factor may indeed have contributed greatly toward the forging of those intimate links between the early medieval liturgical and homiletical creativity.
which struck so many keen students of both literatures. Nor was this phenomenon limited to Jews. The great ecclesiastical poet of Jewish descent, Romanos, brought with him from his Syrian homeland the “poetic sermon,” called *Kontakion*. After settling in the imperial capital (about 500 C.E.) he is said to have composed no less than a thousand *kontakia*, including a famous Christmas hymn and, not surprisingly, a diatribe against the treacherous act of Judas.26

It is generally assumed that the liturgical author took over concepts and legends previously developed in the Midrashim and invested them with some poetic imagery. This assumption underestimates, however, the creative spark in the liturgical poet, which often equaled or surpassed that of the homilist. Maimonides was not altogether wrong in speaking interchangeably of “compositions of the singers, preachers, and others who imagine themselves to be able to compose a poem.” In his explanation of the origin of the *piyyut* (which he calls *hizana*), Samau’al ibn Yahya describes the role of the precentor as that of leader in ordinary prayers, but, while reciting these additional poems, “he is accompanied by the public with shouts and songs.” This well-informed convert thus unwittingly testifies to both the informality of the new poetry and its origin from the precentors’ creative improvisations. Even the Palestinian Targum contained, according to Samuel ibn Nagrela, “many aggadic accretions, inserted by synagogue readers on their own.” Certainly, what was said of Ephraem the Syrian, that he had “conceived the great idea of utilizing the scriptural lesson as a basis for a festival sermon in hymnal form, that is in artistic fashion,” applied also to the Jewish masters of liturgical poetry. In some cases a preacher’s indebtedness to the poet can actually be documented. For example, a lengthy passage in Tobiah ben Eliezer’s *Leqah tob* is but a midrashic commentary on an old *qerobah* (probably an Aramaic derivative of the messenger “approaching” the Lord) by Eleazar Qalir. At times, the *proem* introducing the sermon was couched in poetic-liturgical form. The old lamentation for the Ninth of Ab published by Zulay was not, as is usually assumed, derived from existing introductory homilies to the Midrash on the book of Lamentations, but, in part, their fountainhead. Although otherwise known only from
such relatively later midrashim as fragments published by Ginzberg and, particularly, the Yemenite Midrash Haggadol, there is no reason to doubt the extensive interplay between reader and preacher in the earlier periods as well.\textsuperscript{27}

Few sermons began with such outright quotations from liturgical poems, but many more seem to have borrowed from them leading ideas, felicitous phrases, or apt hermeneutic interpretations of scriptural passages. Certainly the prolific mind of a liturgical author, himself often a religiously dedicated person rather than poet by grace divine, would often detect an apparently hidden meaning in Scripture or elaborate on a long-accepted theological or ethical doctrine with no less enthusiasm than any preacher. This was particularly true when the same person served as both reader and preacher in some smaller community. In both capacities he frequently alluded to existing rabbinic interpretations and legends, more or less familiar to his audience. But he also often improvised new similes and stories and, with the aid of words, created new images derived from a biblical phrase, which greatly enriched the ever growing domain of Aggadah. That is why the eternal quest for the “lost” midrashic sources of the liturgical poems may, to a large extent, be doomed to utter futility.

Outside pressures, too, undoubtedly helped shape the performance of either task. Ever since Yehudah bar Barzillai, scholars have connected the spurt in liturgical creativity during the early post-talmudic age with anti-Jewish persecutions. Although in many ways a cliché, often merely serving to rationalize historic phenomena whose origins had become obscure or unwelcome, this explanation is indubitably true with respect to Justinian’s Novella 146. Clearly, a prohibition to expound the Oral Law (deuterosis) in any formal instruction easily shifted the burden from the aggadic sermon, now prohibited, to the equally aggadic poem imbedded in the accepted liturgy and hence not outlawed. Of course, Christian antagonism to the Oral Law did not begin in the sixth century. In the growingly intolerant cline of the Eastern Roman Empire, which protected the synagogue while persecuting Jews, there existed many incentives to exploit to the full the educational as well as devotional features of the synagogue liturgy,
the fundamentals of which admittedly antedated Christianity. Justinian's *Novella* of 553, however, never formally revoked, added strength to these internal transformations within Byzantine Jewry before and after the rise of Islam. If we are to believe a tradition, recorded by biased Pirxoi ben Baboi though unattested elsewhere, that the Byzantine rulers also at one time forbade the recitation of the 'Amidah and the Shema', such a prohibition must have added great impetus to the quest for liturgical substitutes of approximately the same content.28

Nor may we neglect the impact of daily contacts with Israel's neighbors. Although the personal relations between Jewish and Christian leaders were far from intimate and even the consultation of Jewish experts was far less frequent in the liturgical area than in that of Old Testament translations, there were enough Christian visitors in the contemporary synagogues to loom as a major threat to Christian orthodoxy in the eyes of St. John Chrysostom, Agybar, and other churchmen. The tireless efforts of Christian missionaries could not fail to acquaint some Jews with the tenets and the external forms of Christian worship. Nor did full-fledged Christian proselytes, whose presence seems confirmed by two poems of Yannai, wipe out all traces of their previous observances as was demanded by Jewish law. Even Jews who never stepped over the threshold of a church must often have learned from such newcomers or visitors something about Christian modes of worship. Nor was surreptitious listening to church music by Jewish cantors in quest of thematic enrichment of their own services, such as is mentioned by a nineteenth-century rabbi of Smyrna, Israel Moses Hazzan, quite so impossible as it appears from the official antagonism on the part of both rabbis and churchmen.29

In Palestine, Christians and Jews alike recited many prayers in the same Syriac-Aramaic dialect, and probably no fulminations of their own extremist leaders wholly deterred inquisitive Jews from examining the form and content of some beautiful poems by Ephraem Syrus. Since the Greek churches, too, were increasingly imbued with the spirit of the Syriac Christian liturgy, the services in neighboring churches may have been far less of a mystery to some Greek-speaking Jews surviving in the former Hellenistic Diaspora than they were to become to their medieval descendants.
WORSHIP

And the three centuries between Constantine and Mohammed marked the period of highest achievement in the evolution of both the Greek and the Syriac liturgies!

The subject matter of some Christian liturgical poems, too, must have whetted the curiosity of Jews. Apart from the frequent treatment in an entirely aggadic vein of such Old Testament subjects as the sacrifice of Isaac, these poems often described contemporary events, especially the catastrophic effects of earthquakes or conflagrations, from which the local Jewish inhabitants had suffered equally. Even poems filled with anti-Jewish polemics were not devoid of interest to Jewish audiences, or at least to their leaders, who often had to learn how to forestall threatening anti-Jewish reactions among the masses. For instance, one of Ephraem's very popular memre (didactic poems) was best known under the stereotype title "Against the Jews," although it merely tried to describe in poetic form Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Needless to say, these influences were reciprocal. In fact, Jews refusing to recognize the revealed character of the New Testament could more readily ignore Christian teachings than the Christians could disregard Jewish concepts and liturgical forms associated with the Old Testament. We recall how all-pervading the Jewish influences had been on the Christian liturgy in its formative stages. Another illustration may be adduced from a liturgical formula recorded in a fifth-century inscription. Beginning Heis Theos (God Is One), it was clearly but a variant of the Jewish Shema'. Curiously, the main variant, namely the addition of "and His Christ is one," may in some indirect way have contributed to the well-known Muslim credo. Such Jewish influences continued to operate also in the subsequent centuries, and they helped to shape the form as well as the content of the liturgies of the eastern churches.30

FAITHFUL RECORDING

In many respects, however, Jewish congregations differed from their Christian counterparts, especially in their having no written prayer books before that of Amram. Jewish liturgy shared therein the destinies of the other realms of Oral Law. Whether we ascribe
this phenomenon to the sheer force of tradition, to the rabbis' fear that circulation of differing records in the far-flung Diaspora might lead to sectarian divergences (their observation of the sectarian strife among their Christian neighbors over liturgical minutiae must have reinforced such fears), or to their apprehensions that possession of books other than the Bible might make their followers vulnerable to special persecution—just as the possession of Bibles had endangered the lives of their Maccabean ancestors (I Macc. 1:56–57)—the effect was that the Jewish communities long possessed no written records of their prescribed or voluntary prayers.

Such absence of liturgical writings was none too serious so long as the Jewish communities possessed but brief weekday, Sabbath, and holiday rituals. These could be memorized by a sufficiently large number of worshipers, and in particular by their “messengers.” Additional prayers could readily be improvised by each individual, as well as by the congregational leaders. Improvisation remained indeed a characteristic feature of synagogue services throughout the talmudic and early post-talmudic periods, when it actually served as a vehicle for imparting to broad audiences some information on Oral Law. The reader himself did not always remember his improvisation after a lapse of time. Before a year rolled around, he often forgot his own hazzanut on the theme of a particular holiday ‘Amidah, and he improvised another piece for the same prayer on each subsequent occasion. That is probably why we find so many parallel qerobot on the same benediction from the prolific mind of Eleazar Qalir.31

Sensing the great responsibility of serving as their congregations' spokesmen before the Lord, many “messengers” prefaced their prayers with poetic appeals for divine forbearance toward their shortcomings and assistance in finding the proper words to express the people's deep yearnings. Some of these moving petitions have become part and parcel of the accepted liturgy. For instance, “I look to the Lord [ohilah la-El] and beseech His presence, I beg from Him the fluency of my tongue,” included in the Musaf prayer of the Day of Atonement, was originally but such a personal outcry for divine help. Of course, these improvisations were but variations on the theme of the long-standardized, introductory petitions
recited by every Jew before and after the silent prayer. They began “O Lord, open Thou my lips,” and ended with “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto Thee.” Less well known is Saadia’s Hebrew quatrain, included in his Pentecostal poems:

To Thee, uplifter from the deepest mire,
I look for guidance to freedom’s lot,
May my heart harbor no foolish desire
My innermost self be free from rot.
Glory unto Thee for cleansing the grime
Of those pacing Thy mosaic floors.
Let me but rejoice in Law’s peaceful clime,
And restore my soul through wisdom’s doors.

To realize the fear and trepidation with which most readers approached their improvisations, one must bear in mind the power of the word which, ever since ancient times, had loomed large in the minds of all Near Eastern peoples. A wrong word, or even a right word uttered, however unwittingly, at the wrong time, might, it was generally believed, cause incalculable harm not only to the speaker, but also to his community.32

Nor must we overlook the basic difference between the oral transmission of liturgical passages and that of the main halakhic and aggadic traditions. The latter depended entirely on professional memorizers at the central academies who, after arduous training for this particular task, could transmit verbatim thousands of sayings with a fidelity which far transcended that of most copyists of manuscripts. The synagogue ritual, however, was the common possession of the whole people. Jews everywhere wished, indeed were obliged, to commune directly with their Creator. Even the expedient of qualified “messengers” leading in prayers proved insufficient when the liturgy expanded and the local messengers themselves could no longer trust their memory. After all, persons like the Muslim scholar Abu’l Fadl (d. 1067), who achieved great fame because he was able after once hearing a poem of fifty verses to repeat it accurately, must have been very rare among the Jews, too. Even the best men in the thousands of small and scattered communities might prove unreliable recorders.

We can understand, therefore, not only the extraordinary for-
bearance toward the diversity of detailed formulations evinced by the otherwise quite authoritarian talmudic and early posttalmudic sages, but also their evident quest for mnemotechnic aids which could help impress new prayers upon the minds of listeners and precentors. One such time-honored aid was the alphabetic acrostic. Perhaps the Old Testament poets themselves had already used that expedient to secure their poems against partial oblivion during the long periods of their oral transmission. Following the psalmists’ example (especially that of the long Psalm 119), many medieval authors facilitated the memorization of their poems by such alphabetic sequences, which made any omission easily noticeable. Later on they added verses beginning with the letters of their own names, thereby safeguarding also the memory of their authorship. Another aid consisted in the use of certain crucial catchwords, taken from either the content of the poem, the liturgical passage to which it was appended, or a pertinent biblical phrase. Placed at decisive points in the poem, such catchwords helped both in confiding that sequence to memory and in faithfully preserving it for posterity.33

Finally, a decisive step was taken by those unknown inventors of rhymed poetry whose influence on the destinies of all Western letters can hardly be overestimated. Possibly stimulated by the example set by the ancient authors of the focal ‘Amidah, the probably unintentional rhymes of which resembled those found in a Philistine war song against Samson, a prophecy of Isaiah, or Homer, these poets began using the rhyme as the most effective vehicle for both memorization and faithful transmission. At first the rhyme was rather simple, and for the most part consisted of words ending in the same grammatical form, such as the plural or the second person masculine or feminine. Nor did the same poet necessarily apply the new technique to all his poems, or even to entire poems. Just as Yose ben Yose used the acrostic only in some of his liturgical pieces, so did the new rhymsters also produce much unrhymed poetry. In time, however, the rhymes became more sophisticated. Coming in contact with the Arabs, who in pre-Islamic times had faced the same problem of fidelity in oral transmission and had, perhaps in complete independence, developed the same rhyming technique, the Jewish authors kept on refining
their own methods. We shall see what degree of sophistication, even artificiality, rhyming and other modes of versification had reached already in the days of Saadiah Gaon. Not surprisingly, the gaon had begun his literary career with a rhyming dictionary intended for the use of aspiring poets. Moreover, these various techniques could easily be combined. Thus many a liturgical creation, protected at its verse beginnings by an acrostic, single or multiple, its ends safeguarded by a rhyme, however crude, and all of it often further sheltered behind an umbrella of recurring catchwords, had a chance to weather, more or less successfully, the debilitating influences of uncontrolled transmission.\textsuperscript{54}

**PIYYUT**

Out of these conflicts between creative inwardness and adherence to tradition was born that peculiar type of liturgical poetry known as *piyyut*. Clearly derived from the Greek term *poeietes* (poet; the Byzantine Tobiah ben Eliezer consistently used the more correct derivative form, *poyyetan*, in lieu of the usual Aramaic term, *payyetan*), this designation was not quite as descriptive of the peculiar nature of this poetry as its less frequently used synonym, *hazzanut*; that is, compositions of synagogue readers. In Arabic writings we frequently find the Hebrew loan word *hizanah*. Even in its most advanced and complex forms, this poetry still betrays its origin from improvisations during synagogue services.\textsuperscript{55}

For a long time there was little to distinguish the new creations from other prayers introduced by some such outstanding rabbinic leader as Rab. Endowed with a beautiful voice, this third-century founder of the academy of Sura is said to have been “accustomed to descend to the pulpit” and improvise new prayers. A number of important prayers, still recited in Jewish houses of worship today, such as the aforementioned *‘Alenu*, owe their origin or final formulation to Rab’s poetic and musical talents. A century later, one Bar Abin greeted Raba, on the latter’s visit to his city, with a brief poem which, apart from a clever allusion to the visitor, included hints to biblical events, the sins of the generation, and an appeal for divine mercy—all of them popular themes in the
later sacred poetry. It appears that this art was cultivated with particular devotion in priestly circles. Remembering their ancient glory, descendants of priests, still living in Palestine in closed settlements centuries after the Temple’s destruction, seem to have preserved many memories of their ritualistic performances at the ancient sanctuary, and long continued to bask in their reflected glory. Some of them seem to have composed poems on the theme of the ancient “watches,” reflecting their extraordinary readiness to spring into immediate action upon the advent of the Messiah, and without delay to restore the ancient rituals into full operation.36

Prominent among these priestly poets is one Haduta or Ḥaduta, who lived, according to M. Zulay, “among groups of priests, each of which knew and recognized its particular watch and looked forward every day to the restoration of the Temple and its own return to its pristine function.” Haduta composed twenty-four poems commemorating the twenty-four “orderings” as recorded by the chronicler (I Chron. 24:7–19). Evidently intended for recitation on the twenty-four Sabbaths, when these groups had traditionally served at the Temple, these poems are among the earliest piyyutim devoted to Sabbath rather than holiday services. This circumstance alone need not militate against their antiquity. While their origin is altogether uncertain, they almost surely antedate the rise of Islam and may belong to the very oldest recorded writings of this genre.37

Much better known is another priestly poet, Yose ben Yose, often called the Orphan, possibly for no other reason than his patronymic. But in many medieval communities, including those in Spain, Jews did not hesitate to call a child by the name of his living father. Although not, as another legend had it, a high priest at the Temple, Yose was a Palestinian priest profoundly cherishing the ancient distinction of his class. His greatest contribution to Jewish liturgy consisted, appropriately enough, of a poetic description of the Temple services on the Day of Atonement, the climactic point in the career of the ancient priesthood. This service, briefly called ‘Abodah (worship), had already been dramatized in the epic description of the Mishnah. Using the mishnaic
text, in fact quoting parts of it verbatim, Yose composed three lengthy poems on this subject.

It is often assumed that the three texts were intended for recitation at the morning, the Musaf (supplementary morning prayers), and the afternoon services of the Day of Atonement. One of them is, indeed, specifically inscribed by a later copyist “for Minhah.” But it appears more likely that the poet had originally improvised them on three different annual occasions, and only later communities, confronted by a choice between three equally distinguished texts, decided to use them all during the lengthy devotions of that supreme annual fast. According to Hai Gaon, neither academy had originally approved the recitation of the ‘Abodah at any time except during the Musaf services. Only from the days of Hai ben David, the first academy head to reside permanently in Baghdad, was the local custom of reciting it also during morning services quietly tolerated. Later Saadiah, another Baghdad resident, quoted two of the three poems by Yose, together with a poem of his own. He suggested the use of one at the morning services, and the second or his own for Musaf, pointedly omitting any reference to the afternoon recitation.38

Stylistically and technically Yose used simple means to convey his ideas to his fellow worshipers. A later Arabic-Jewish literary historian was not unjustified in calling his style of writing khutab, or rhetorical discourse. The long poem Azhir geburot Eloah (I Shall Record God’s Mighty Exploits) consists of two hundred and twenty-eight verses arranged according to an alphabetic acrostic (ten verses for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, except the last, which is used in eighteen verses). Adumbrating a division which became important in the later liturgical creativity, Yose devoted the first twelve letters (or one hundred and twenty verses) to a poetic paraphrase of the events described in the Bible from the Creation to the first “high priest” Aaron. The remaining ten letters (one hundred and eight verses) gave a detailed description of the Temple services on the Day of Atonement, interrupting the narrative at three crucial points by telling quotations from the Mishnah. Essentially the same technique is used in the shorter poem of sixty-six verses beginning Atah konanta (Thou Hast
Set Up the World). Here the historical introduction is limited to the first fifteen verses. The acrostic covers twenty-two verses running forward from A to T, then twenty-two verses going back from T to A, and finally twenty-two verses resuming the usual sequence. The quotations from the Mishnah are even more numerous.\(^{39}\)

Curiously, one may mention in passing, the *Attah konanta* was long recited in some French communities together with a brief introductory poem beginning *Etten tehillah* (I Shall Give Praise), ascribed to no less an author than the apostle Peter. In this case Simon Peter was definitely confused with an early *payyetan*, probably Simon ben Megas the Priest, a near contemporary of Yannai. A medieval homilist doubtless had this poet in mind when he spoke of the author of all sorts of liturgical poems for use “during the entire year, like Qalir.” \(^{40}\)

Simplicity also reigns supreme in Yose’s “confession” (*Omnam ashamnu*; Indeed We Have Sinned), still recited in Ashkenazic congregations on the evening of the Day of Atonement. Written in a double acrostic, with two verses for each letter, this poem is distinguished by a refrain, doubtless reflecting the responsive reading in the synagogue, and pithily expressing one of the major themes in the older Jewish liturgy. The author fervently stressed here God’s great forbearance toward the evil as well as the good, and prayed for His forgiveness of Israel’s sins for His sake rather than theirs. Neither Yose nor any of his successors, however, would have dared to go the whole length of Yose’s Syriac compeer, Cyril lonas (*ca. 400*). In his poem on the locust plague and the Hun invasions of 395–96 this Syriac churchman prayed: “Desist of Thy punishment for I am united with Thee; when Thou chastiseth me Thou aimest at Thyself. For Thy body is in mine, let it not be affronted; Thy secrets have entered into me, let them not be derided.” More remarkably, in a recently published brief introductory poem requesting the Lord’s permission (*reshut*) for the presentation of the congregation’s case, Yose used both the acrostic and the rhyme. This poem, beginning *Erashel liftoah* (May I be Permitted to Open with Songs), has the same rather primitive rhyme *mot* in all its twenty-two half-verses.\(^{41}\)

One wishes that one might speak with greater assurance about
the period of Yose's activity. Apart from the certainty that he flourished some time after the compilation of the Mishnah, we may perhaps assume that he lived before Justinian, most probably in the fifth century. The fact that he composed poetry primarily for use during the High Holidays, and that he made but occasional, often evidently unconscious, use of aggadic themes, clearly indicates that he was not yet concerned with replacing through his poems the forbidden teaching of Oral Law. His simple style, his uncomplicated technique, his fervent piety, and his combination of epic reworking of biblical history with graphic descriptions of major rituals and inward appeals for God's forgiveness—all these remind us of Ephraem the Syrian. But there is no evidence of any personal or literary relations between the two poets, or even of their familiarity with each other's works. They seem merely to reflect the same general intellectual and religious atmosphere in that period of transition from the ancient to the medieval period.

YANNAI AND QALIR

No less obscure is the background of Yose's contemporaries and early successors. Only two names emerge distinctly from the mist of ages: Yannai and his alleged pupil, Eleazar (not Eliezer) Qalir (also called ben Qallir or ha-Qalliri). A century ago hardly more than a name, called to the attention of scholars by Rapoport's fine detective sense, Yannai belongs among the shining stars in the firmament of medieval Hebrew letters. No less than 138 of his certain and 38 of his doubtful qerobot (including more than eight hundred individual poems) were assembled from 173 scattered manuscripts (157 from the Genizah) by M. Zulay in the edition of Yannai's collected poems published in 1938. Several more poems have since come to light. Apart from their impressive number, the form and quality of most of these poems have attracted considerable attention from specialists in medieval Hebrew poetry. 

Almost all of Yannai's qerobot are attached either to scriptural lessons according to the triennial cycle used in Palestine or to the silent prayers recited on holidays. Only a few are connected with
the *Amidah* of one or another "distinguished" Sabbath. None seem to relate to other parts of the synagogue services. Certainly a poet-reader who could improvise a poem for each of 150 weekly lessons of a single cycle—he may of course have originally composed a poem or poems on the same lesson every three years—did not lack the creative power to provide other sections of the liturgy with his poetic comments. The content of his poems is likewise startling: they are often halakhic rather than homiletical in nature. For this reason they may indeed have served as a source of legal information to ‘Anan the Karaite—a fact allegedly discovered by the gaon Hai ben David. Most startlingly, in contrast to Yose’s and all earlier practices, Yannai’s poems often served not to supplement existing prayers, but rather to interrupt them by lengthy additions, if not altogether to replace them. From time immemorial, congregations recited his *qerobot* in the middle of the messenger’s loud repetition of the *Amidah*. They thus ran counter to clear and reiterated prohibitions in both Talmudim. The whole tenor of Yannai’s poems likewise suggests that from the outset they were designed for such reading during, or in lieu of, the *Amidah*.43

These extraordinary features of Yannai’s poetry may best be explained by external pressures. Justinian’s prohibition of instruction in the Oral Law undoubtedly stimulated our author to communicate to synagogue audiences, as part of their still permissible liturgy, a variety of legal regulations, especially those governing the observance of major holidays. That many of these poems should be attached to the weekly recitations from Scripture is less surprising, as Justinian’s *Novella* of 553 had tried to influence the Jews to read their Scriptures together with the Septuagint or another “accurate” version. Justinian’s ill-concealed missionary objectives seem to have influenced the Palestinian Jews not only to elaborate their *Targum* by inserting into it much aggadic material, but also to expatiate on the meaning of each weekly Pentateuchal lesson and its prophetic supplement in didactic poems of halakhic, as well as aggadic, content. This was the Palestinian community’s effective answer to the imperial challenge expressed in the following paragraph of the *Novella*:

We pray that when they [the Jews] hear the reading of the books in one or the other language, they may guard themselves against the
depravity of the interpreters, and, not clinging to the literal words, come to the point of the matter, and perceive their divine meaning, so that they may start afresh to learn the better way, and may cease to stray vainly, and to err in that which is most essential, we mean hope in God. For this reason we have opened for them the door to the understanding of Scriptures.  

Of unknown provenance is another governmental infringement of Jewish ritualistic autonomy, recorded in Pirqei ben Baboi’s rather confused account. Some five hundred years earlier, we are told, that is about the fourth century, the Romans had forbidden the Jews to study the Torah. In another context we are informed that the administration had “instituted a severe persecution [shemad; literally, extinction] against the inhabitants of Palestine by prohibiting them from reciting the Shema’ and praying [the ‘Amidah], but it allowed them to congregate on Sabbath mornings and to recite and chant prayers of petition [ma’amadot].” To be sure, no such prohibitions are recorded in any of the extant Christian-Roman sources, which are otherwise quite explicit with respect to the anti-Jewish regulations. Certainly the date of five hundred years cannot be taken literally, for it would take us back to Constantine’s incipient and rather restrained anti-Jewish legislation. Quite possibly Pirqei confused here some dim recollections of the Hadrianic prohibition of the study of the Torah with the general hostility of the Christian regime after Constantine. Nor was there any reason for Christians to outlaw not only the ‘Amidah, whose anti-heretical benediction they doubtless resented, but also the Shema’, taken in its entirety from the book of Deuteronomy. Very likely Pirqei, or his Babylonian teacher, Yehudai, confounded here some recollection of a local Palestinian prohibition of the ‘Amidah, which because of its local limitations never penetrated the imperial codes of Theodosius or Justinian, with one relating to Persian legislation against the recitation of Shema’. Clearly the recitation twice or thrice daily of this Jewish credo in the unity of God literally shouted defiance at Zoroastrian dualism. That Persian prohibition may then have been extended to Palestine during the brief occupation of 614–28.  

Against this background we may understand the newer developments in the Hebrew liturgical poetry. Reacting to the local outlawry of the ‘Amidah, as well as to Justinian’s prohibition of the
exposition of Oral Law, Yannai composed numerous qerobot around themes suggested by the silent prayer, especially its fairly immutable first three benedictions. By reciting these poems, congregations could replace in some way the entire silent prayer. Even if some communities succeeded in evading the prohibition and in stealthily reciting the traditional prayers, they doubtless found it convenient not to have the reader repeat it aloud publicly, but to substitute the new compositions for the second recitation. This is probably what Samau’al al-Maghribi had in mind when he described the piyyut as a sort of dialogue between the reader and the audience, in lieu of the former’s solo recitation of the ‘Amidah. In fact, Yannai himself probably started this custom by improvising these new liturgical pieces when called upon to recite the ‘Amidah aloud. Before long, when the prohibition was relaxed, and certainly after the Muslim conquest of Palestine, it became customary to combine both recitations. As before, most congregations prayed the ‘Amidah silently, although some Byzantine groups, perhaps bent on demonstrating their regained freedom of worship, recited it aloud but, during the repetition by the “messenger,” inserted the new poems between the respective benedictions.46

Qalir (whose name possibly originated from an inversion of Kyrill or Cyrill), according to a medieval legend pupil of Yannai and victim of his master’s jealousy, went further. Possibly living in Palestine during the Persian occupation, he felt induced not only to compose ever new qerobot for the ‘Amidah of various holidays, fasts, and even some extraordinary Sabbaths, but also occasionally to surround the Shema’ with a garland of poems relating especially to the themes of the antecedent and subsequent benedictions. This doubtless was one of the subterfuges which enabled the Jews, in Pirqei’s words, “on Sabbath mornings stealthily to recite the Qedushah and Shema’.” Evidently the intermingling of three prayers made detection much more difficult. Since the first blessing of the daily Shema’ cycle concluded with the benediction “Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Creator [yosher] of the luminaries,” these compositions came to be known as yosserot. Qalir’s prolific mind also was constantly at work in reshaping with ever new formulations the services on evenings and after-
noons of holidays, and in thus providing the traditional liturgies with a sort of running poetic commentary. He apparently desisted only from amplifying the weekday services, perhaps in recognition of the necessary time limits on the ritual of a working population.  

Living in the period of great tension between the Jews and their Byzantine overlords, Yannai and Qalir often inserted into their liturgical poetry allusions to the existing hostile regime and the hope for its speedy downfall. True, an overt statement like “May Rome fall,” in one of Yannai’s qerobot, was early replaced by a more innocuous phrase, either because of fear of reprisals or because, with the passing of the Byzantine regime over Palestine, such sharp attacks had lost their point. But there remained many allusions to the kingdom of Dumah (this biblical term for silence was used as a synonym for death in Ps. 115:17 and could be used as a transparent veil for Romah), pork and reptile eaters, despisers of circumcision, and even worshipers of idols (icons). The prayer for “ousting the pig from His dwelling, / And giving the holy abode to His community” combined anti-Byzantineism with the hope for restoration to Zion, where Jews had been barred since the days of Hadrian.

Qalir, however, seems to have lived to see not only the temporary liberation of the Holy Land by the Persians, but also its conquest by the Arabs. This world-shaking event inspired him to the composition of an apocalyptic poem, showing this most versatile of the payyetanim in a novel, semi-messianic mood. Sharing the exaltation of many contemporaries who, under the impact of the unexpected upheaval, rediscovered the long-forgotten apocalyptic overtones of the visionaries during the Second Commonwealth—we recall in particular the apocryphal midrash entitled the “Mysteries of R. Simon ben Yoḥai”—Qalir improvised, perhaps while performing at the pulpit, a poetic vision of “that day [to ha-yom]” when “the Messiah, son of David will come.” In the ensuing struggle between Gog and Magog, or the kings of West and East, the whole world would be frightened, even the sun and the moon would be smitten, but “Israel will be cleansed of their sins, and no longer be alienated from their sanctuary.” This rhymed, but otherwise artistically unpolished poem, reveals the state of ecstasy
permeating the Palestinian community at the arrival of the Arabian horsemen.49

Political, military, and legislative challenges offered, however, but the external stimuli to the extraordinary flowering of the new Jewish liturgy. The same creative élan which accounted for the rise and development of the magnificent Church poetry in Syriac and Greek, operated also to loosen the tongues of the Jewish “messengers” and to urge them to improvise ever new poems to enhance the richness and beauty of their divine services. Moreover, once some pioneering precentor discovered a new form, or a congregation developed a new taste for such poetry, a host of imitators joined the ranks. Certainly a poem like Qalir’s **Tal ten** (Give Dew), still recited in many congregations in connection with the prayer for dew on the first day of Passover, caught the spirit of the ancient Jewish peasantry reveling in the blessings of the Palestinian soil. Reflecting the **joi de vivre** of a still predominantly agricultural population, rather than a purely antiquarian reminiscence, the poet sang:

Dew, precious dew, unto Thy land forlorn!
Pour out our blessing in Thy exultation,
To strengthen us with ample wine and corn
And give Thy chosen city safe foundation
In dew.

Dew, precious dew, that we our harvest reap,
And guard our fatted flocks and herds from leanness!
Behold our people follows Thee like sheep,
And looks to Thee to give it back its greenness
With dew.50

Nor was the field of these endeavors limited to sacred poetry in the stricter sense. With religion permeating all aspects of Jewish private and public life, the distinction between sacred and secular poetry was often artificial, as we shall learn even with respect to the Spanish poetry of the Golden Age. For example, an elegy on the death of a friend, although entirely private in nature, lent itself to public recitation in the synagogue on a par with an homiletical eulogy, which it seems at times to have displaced. The Cairo Genizah has, indeed, yielded a copy of an old Aramaic
Aftarta (Leave Taking), which seems to date back to the time when Palestinian Jewry indulged many Aramaic prayers. A beautiful poetic eulogy by Qalir has likewise been found. Weaving with consummate skill a word each from the appropriate verses in Zechariah 12:12 and Isaiah 57:1 before the first and third half-verse; inserting into the latter a clear acrostic of his own name, Eleazar berabbi Qilir; and yet maintaining throughout the poem the rhyme of each strophe of four half-verses, the payyetan succeeded in offering an eloquent tribute to a deceased leader distinguished by both piety and learning.51

Unfortunately, only few of such semiprivate poems have come down to us from the early period of medieval Hebrew poetry. When compared with the vast output of Syriac Church poetry related to current events, extant piyyutim of even more general contemporary interest are extremely scarce. However, many more seem to have been written than appears in the record. Being of a personal or, at best, local interest, these poems did not have a wide enough appeal to be frequently copied or incorporated into rituals of major scope. In fact, if they happened not to be of special interest to the community of Fuṣṭaṭ they never found their way into the Cairo Genizah, and such accidental failure alone often sufficed to commit them to total oblivion. This regrettable communal forgetfulness is made doubly poignant by a comparison with the later selihot, which, especially when relating to contemporary massacres in western Europe, were recited at memorial services for many generations, often copied by zealous scribes, and even included in major liturgical handbooks.

With Qalir the piyyut reached the acme of its popularity, and none of his numerous successors enjoyed equally widespread and responsive audiences. In his handbook for Hebrew poetry Saadia mentioned Joshua and Pinhas (Phineas) alongside Yose, Yannai, and Qalir as the classics of piyyut, yet little of their work was permanently incorporated in the liturgy of any group, and only a few remnants could be laboriously restored from the Genizah materials with the aid of identifying acrostics and rhymes. In this way Zulay reconstructed, for example, one of Joshua’s poems from three fragments now located in New York, Oxford, and Cambridge. In the days after Saadia, too, only a few payyetanim enjoyed more
than a local and temporary vogue. Even so prolific an author as Solomon-Sulaiman, a native of Sanjar near Mosul some time between the ninth and the eleventh centuries—nearly a thousand of his poems are still extant in some three hundred manuscripts—is now known chiefly through careful examination of the surviving medieval fragments, rather than through a living tradition and continued use in synagogues of any rite. The same holds true for another prolific liturgical poet, Samuel "the Third." And yet, the cumulative impact of these lesser lights exceeded greatly that of the founders. In many congregations the very works of Qalir underwent numerous transformations or modifications by the intermingling of poems of later vintage, written in the same vein, if not altogether in direct imitation of the master's form and style.52

WEAK OPPOSITION

Varying needs of respective generations helped determine their choices. There had been no room for piyyut in the technical sense in the days before the standardization of the main prayers, when any worshiper, not only his "messenger," was entitled to add as many prayers as he wished. Similarly, after the rise of Islam, the growing distinction between the universally accepted liturgy, which already included some previously incorporated piyyutim, and the purely elective accretions militated against the latter's universal acceptance. Generation after generation still added new selections to its diversified liturgical treasures, but few of these new poems, whether improvised by cantors or written by poets in the privacy of their homes, became part and parcel of the recognized liturgical practice.

Nor was opposition on principle completely absent. Since the piyyut not only originated in Palestine but in all its decisive evolutionary stages reflected the needs and conditions of that country, it encountered mounting resistance in Babylonian circles. From the eighth century on, in particular, the Babylonian leaders' growingly intensive drive for power and control of world Jewry made such liturgical creativity suspect, because it was both uncontrollable and Palestinian. True, even the more law-centered Babylonian community indulged in the recitation of new prayers. Yet Saadia apparently exaggerated when, after offering in his prayer
book a poem for each day of the Feast of Tabernacles to be recited in connection with the Hosha‘anot cycle, he added, “The Palestinians have additional recitations for the day of the ‘Arabah [the willow-branch, that is the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles], while the Babylonians and others also have unbelievably many.” Moreover, whatever new prayers were composed in the Euphrates valley during the late talmudic and posttalmudic age were, as we recall, read almost exclusively in Aramaic. Now, under Arab domination, these prayers shared the fate of all noncanonical Aramaic letters; they were eclipsed by Arabic in daily use, and by Hebrew in the synagogue. And Hebrew liturgy could more readily be imported from Palestine than created on the spot.53

Whatever its ultimate motivations, the opposition, understandably enough, advanced mainly legalistic objections to the spread of the piyyutim. Such objections were readily available in talmudic law, which had long tried to protect the basic prayers against adulteration by inappropriate additions. To be sure, even in the geonic period Jewish liturgy was still in a state of flux, and no gaon dared to assert, as Eleazar of Worms did later, that “the mystery of prayers had been transmitted to us by teacher after teacher all the way back to the prophets, the elders, hasidim, and Men of the Great Synagogue who had introduced them. Hence woe unto him who adds to, or subtracts from, them a single letter or word, woe in this world as well as in the world to come.” According to formal law, additions even to the ‘Amidah could not be outlawed so long as they dealt with the theme of the concluding blessing of each benediction. Even opponents, therefore, merely tried to lower the dignity of these additional poems by claiming that they had been intended only for the unlearned, and still appealed only to the illiterate masses. Typical of such denunciations is a responsum attributed to R. Nahshon of Sura, which states:

At the academy or any other location where there are scholars we never deviate from the prayers instituted by the sages, [and recite no] piyyut. Neither do we allow a reader familiar with piyyut to officiate in the synagogue. Every congregation reciting a piyyut testifies thereby that they are no scholars.

While Amram still demanded only that no one change the pattern of existing prayers, his assistant, Šemah, “judge of the court” (this seems to have been his title, rather than the great judge), declared
succinctly, "A messenger of the public who adds to the pattern set by the sages for prayer, and heaps words upon words, is liable to excommunication and ought to be discharged." Ultimately, Yehudah bar Barzillai (who may have quoted these three geonic authorities) summarized the prevailing rabbinic view that piyyutim had originated from a reaction to anti-Jewish persecutions and were intended only "to remind and warn the illiterate of the laws and regulations governing holidays and Sabbaths and the minutiae of law." After the cessation of persecutions, he declared, these "foolish and ignorant matters" had no place in Jewish services.  

With less acidity, but no less determination, the piyyutim were also rejected by Maimonides and other rabbis. Maimonides' own inclination was to dispense with them altogether. Only if the populace was very insistent, he declared, one might recite them before the benedictions of the Shema' cycle. But "one must add nothing whatever in the midst of these benedictions, nor cause any interruption between them and the recitation of Shema'". The philosopher of Fustat censured, in particular, their objectionable content, and in his philosophic magnum opus he waxed eloquent on this score:

We cannot approve [he wrote] of what those foolish persons do who are extravagant in praise, fluent and prolix in the prayers they compose and in the hymns they make in the desire to approach the Creator. They describe God in attributes which would be an offense if applied to a human being; for those persons have no knowledge of these great and important principles, which are not accessible to the ordinary intelligence of man. Treating the Creator as a familiar object, they describe Him and speak of Him in any expressions they think proper; they eloquently continue to praise Him in that manner, and believe that they can thereby influence Him and produce an effect on Him. . . . This license is frequently met with in the compositions of the singers, preachers, and others who imagine themselves to be able to compose a poem. Such authors write things which partly are real heresy, partly contain such folly and absurdity that they naturally cause those who hear them to laugh, but also to feel grieved at the thought that such things can be uttered in reference to God.

It is only to be regretted that out of "pity" for those authors Maimonides refrained from citing telling examples. So impressed by these arguments was his son Abraham that, although generally far more pietistic than the father and inclined to increase indi-
vidual devotions far beyond the prescribed ritual, he sharply combated the *piyyutim*. "As soon as I assumed office [as *nagid*]," he later reminisced, "I eradicated this error from Egypt, and restored the ritual to the forms required by law."  

The originator of the "persecution theory" concerning the rise of the *piyyut* was, as we recall, Pirqoi ben Baboi. This Babylonian patriot was not so much concerned with the "nonsense" in the new liturgical output as with the underlying legal deviations. As was noted later by Simḥah of Vitry, Qalir's poems often reflected laws recorded only in the Palestinian Talmud. That is probably why his *Maḥzor*, even in its enlarged versions, contained only one Qalirian poem, the true authorship of which, still rather dubious, was surely unknown to the compiler. Dependence upon the Palestinian Talmud and, more generally, Palestinian law is even more pronounced in Yannai's poetry, with its greater emphasis on legal teachings. It appears that not his excessive concentration on legal complexities, but rather his emphasis on the wrong kind of law later militated against Yannai's popularity in the Western countries which had come entirely under the sway of the Babylonian Talmud. In the ninth century this struggle for supremacy was far from decided, however. Fearing the impact of the popular Palestinian *piyyutim* on the mass of uninformed congregants and the ensuing widespread acceptance of the Holy Land's legal "deviations," Pirqoi, a radical champion of Babylonian hegemony, condemned all these "departures" from Babylonian observance as the unwelcome result of external pressures alone.  

Much later came objections on linguistic grounds. Living in Palestine, where the Hebrew language, although no longer widely spoken, had maintained an unbroken continuity from the days of the Bible, these early medieval poets were able to marshal linguistic resources entirely unknown to Jews of other lands. They had at their disposal a far richer vocabulary, which is partly reflected also in the Palestinian Talmud. Nor did they hesitate to expand it by adjusting existing roots to new forms, or even by coining new terms. Forced by their increasingly rigid requirements with respect to meter, rhyme, acrostic, and strophe to resort to much poetic license, these poets often unwittingly enriched the Hebrew language with new words and turns.
Of course, not all the new terms and phrases were felicitous; still fewer appealed to the changing tastes of later generations. Hebrew philological studies, still in their infancy in the days of Yannai and Qalir, allowed for a more instinctive use of grammatical forms which were subsequently repudiated by the more rigorous and consistent grammarians of the school of Ḥayyuj and Ibn Janaḥ. Many word formations, in particular, based upon biliteral roots, appeared malformed to the Spanish classicists. Although themselves indebted to their payyeṭanic predecessors, Moses and Abraham ibn Ezra haughtily dismissed their works on such formal grounds. While praising to the sky the two prayers of petition by Saadia, apparently the only poems by the gaon known to him, Abraham declared: "In the hands of R. Eliezer [more correctly Eleazar Qalir], may his soul rest in Eden, [the language] became like a wide-open unwalled city. . . . I shall not be able to describe one-thousandth of the payyeṭanim’s errors. Hence I believe that one should not use them [the piyyuṭim] for prayer, but limit oneself to the accepted liturgy. Let our words be few, and we shall not be found wanting at the time of judgment." 57

Defying all such objections, ever new synagogue readers improvised new poems, and more and more congregations incorporated them in their regular services. Each region, sometimes each congregation, followed the dictates of its own conscience as to how many and which poems it wished to use. At times, following changing tastes or fashions of the age, a congregation replaced a long-accepted poem by another, or even combined both by partially supplanting a section of an older work by a newer creation. Outright imitations, too, crept into the existing handbooks, and it was not always easy to distinguish between a master’s genuine work and some effective mimicry. Poets bearing like-sounding names were the more likely to be confused, since the acrostics themselves were often identical or otherwise misleading, as happened in the case of the two Eleazars (Qalir and Ben Abbun).

Finally, the geonim themselves compromised with reality. Saadia, although still reluctant to assign to ḥizanah much space in his prayer book, did not hesitate to compose piyyuṭim of his own, or to reproduce liturgical variants for such prayers as those
recited during the Shema' cycle on the Sabbath eve. "Although not required by law," he declared, "it is permitted to recite these formulas." He thus controverted a view long held at his own academy of Sura. Not long thereafter Hai, head of the academy of Pumbedita, likewise joined the ranks of the liturgical poets. Even Maimonides, by temperament and reasoning anything but a friend of poetic arts, not only dolefully admitted his own youthful indiscretions in composing poetry in the fashion of his Spanish homeland, but also accompanied each major work with a prefatory or concluding poem. Unhesitatingly he provided his Arabic Commentary on the Mishnah with a lengthy, rhymed Hebrew introduction. None of the latter compositions, however, were ever intended for liturgical use. On the other hand, in Ashkenazic countries the piyyutim secured a responsive echo. The few which found their way into prayer books became the subject of intensive study and models for imitation. Some of the Geshem compositions by Qalir, for example, even found eager commentators in the school of Rashi.58

PRAYER BOOKS

When in the eighth and ninth centuries the Jewish people finally regained its voice after the long nightmare of Christian and Zoroastrian persecutions and the traumatic experience of the rise of Islam, Jewish liturgy thus consisted of a number of basic prayers more or less universally accepted, and much supplementary material which enjoyed only local or regional circulation. On the fringe loomed an ever vaster accumulation of liturgical compositions, whose use by congregations and their readers was definitely elective, although some of them acquired an enduring reputation for the piety and depth of their sentiments or the beauty of their expression.

Even the long-accepted basic prayers still offered considerable textual variations. With respect to the 'Amidah, we possess the testimony of the fourteenth-century liturgical expert David Abudarham that he had tried in vain to count the words of that prayer, for no two places in the world had precisely the same text. Four centuries earlier the situation was in even greater flux, and
Saadiah Gaon complained that, on his extended journeys, he had noticed that

with respect to our people's traditions concerning prayers and benedictions there are matters whose practice had been so neglected that they were completely forgotten except by a few select individuals; others were either so amplified or so truncated that they were completely altered and lost their original meaning and purpose; still others suffered amplification or deletion, without alteration, however, of the purposes for which they had been instituted.

The gaon did not really object here to the practice of adding new prayers to the traditional liturgy. Despite his serious reservations concerning the work of payyetanim, he himself composed several supplementary prayers of sublime beauty and inwardness, and others revealing an astounding technical skill, all of which he wished to see employed at least in private devotions. His main concern, however, was for the preservation of the traditional liturgy according to rabbinic law. He feared that, if the existing conditions were allowed to persist, the world Jewish community might be plunged into total liturgical anarchy, which would seriously undermine its cohesiveness and weaken its powers of survival.69

Out of this perennial conflict between communal control and individual freedom, made doubly poignant by the need of reconciling adherence to established tradition with personal inwardness and the worshiper's direct communion with the Deity, arose those manifold attempts at liturgical standardization which occupied the minds of some outstanding Jewish leaders between the ninth and twelfth centuries. These efforts encountered, however, an equally powerful, if less articulate, resistance on the part of the defenders of local autonomy, recruited from adherents of local customs and traditions, as well as from pious groups or individuals bent on finding ever new ways of voicing their innermost religious yearnings. The ensuing compromises found their expression in several successive prayer books and legal summaries.

Babylonian leaders were long concerned with the order of prayers prescribed for particular services rather than with the formulation of these prayers as such. From talmudic times they were prepared to leave the decision about particular readings to
the local "messengers of the public." They long harbored sus-
picions about committing to writing any liturgical matters. A
talmudic sage coined the irate phrase, "Those who write down
benedictions are like those who burn the Torah." Such utterances
were to vex greatly the medieval rabbis who had become inured
to written liturgical texts. In the thirteenth century Zedekiah
Anav degli Mansi still debated the legality of such texts, defending
them merely on the ground that Jewish leadership was always
entitled to adjust the law to emergency situations. He concluded
lamely, "These are the facts of everyday life and a widespread
observance in Israel, and we have seen no one objecting to that
practice." 60

Zedekiah was not the only Westerner to express bewilderment
over the conflict between the existing liturgical practices and the
talmudic views. The farther away Jews lived from the centers of
Jewish life, the greater became the divergence of their local ob-
servances, gradually evolving over a period of countless genera-
tions, from the formal Babylonian laws. When the Great Caliphate
suddenly reunited the Jewries of the Mediterranean world, the
communities in the successor states of the Western Roman Empire
were doubly puzzled by the discrepancies between their own
and the Babylonian rituals.

On the other hand, the Eastern leaders, accustomed though
they were to the differences between Palestine and Babylonia,
were quite impatient with rituals developed in the periphery of
Jewish life. In a characteristic responsum attributed to Hai Gaon,
certain practices concerning the blowing of the horn on New
Year's day were condemned as part and parcel of those "errors
with which the scholars coming from Rome have infected you."
On the other hand, the Westerners were, on the whole, ready to
submit to Babylonia's superior wisdom and traditions. The
Spanish Nahmanides declined to follow a decision by the revered
Isaac ibn Gayyat concerning the uniform recitation of nine
blessings in the Musaf 'Amidah of the New Year by both public
and precentor, although Ibn Gayyat had invoked the testimony of
"great sages, teachers of law, and communal leaders" in Spain,
including Samuel ibn Nagrela and the very founder of the Spanish
school of Jewish jurisprudence, R. Ḥanokh.
It is true [Naḥmanides contended] that the master’s arguments are very plausible. Yet, the geonim testify that such had never been the practice at the academy, but that the individual congregants read only seven blessings, the reader alone reciting nine blessings, and that this was their practice at all times. We must perforse accept their testimony. For the geonim have received their traditions from the Saboraim, and the Saboraim from the Amoraim, and they themselves still occupy R. Ashi’s chair and pray at his synagogue. Moreover, their observance had been adopted by the majority of Jews, until R. Isaac Gayyat persuaded parts of the West to adopt our present customs.

Naḥmanides may indeed have had in mind here the synagogue originally founded by Rab, and later rebuilt by R. Ashi in Sura, whose ancient ritual had often been invoked by various Sura geonim as the authoritative practice of “the house of our teacher in Babylonia.”

Growing literacy and the spread of talmudic literature throughout the Jewish world added to the frequency and intensity of such questions. Gone was the traditional reliance of congregations on their local readers, who for a long time had more or less freely determined the form and content of individual prayers within the generally accepted framework of traditional liturgy. Even Maimonides still restated the older law when he allowed any totally ignorant person to disregard the required liturgy and to pray in his own way and at his own time (M.T. Tefillah 1.3).

Now, however, worshipers in increasing numbers were able to recite the required prayers by themselves and to ponder over their liturgical and legal implications. With the growing availability of talmudic texts and their subsequent rabbinic interpretations, the local diversities became far more startling. The Talmud, to be sure, as a rule did not cite detailed formulas, discussing mainly the general framework and sequence of prayers, as well as the laws governing their recitation. Its redactors evidently took most of the stylistic details for granted because they had been the common possession of all informed groups. Here, too, the peculiar genius of the Jewish religion manifested itself. The main emphasis lay on the exact performance of prescribed rituals at stated times and on the underlying general intentions, but the specific formulas were left to individual or group discretion. Certainly there existed in talmudic Judaism no counterpart
to the heated dogmatic controversies over liturgical phrases such as came to the fore in the struggle over *filioque* among the contemporary Christian groups. We shall see presently how a small liturgical change, postulated on dogmatic grounds by Saadia, failed to gain acceptance even at his own academy. Nonetheless, there was enough material in the recorded amoraic arguments to raise questions in inquiring minds as to whether the existing practices did not too seriously deviate from the demands of the Talmud.

Questions of this kind were aggravated by the occasional discord in the ancient sources themselves. Such differences appeared, for example, in the case of the very first benedictions with which a pious Jew ushered in his morning devotions. Originally Palestinian Jewry, evidently adopting a formula which enjoyed wide circulation in both the Hellenistic and Zoroastrian Near East, made every male Jew express daily thanks for not having been made a Gentile (or, more affirmatively, having been made an Israelite), a woman, or a slave. It doubtless was this formula which Paul had in mind when he asserted to the Galatians that "there is neither Jew nor Greek—there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Later on, perhaps prompted by the observation of the actual paucity of Jewish slaves and the desire to emphasize that no Jew be made a slave, the rabbis substituted for the third benediction one of thanksgiving for not having been made an ignoramus (*bor*). Some texts still contain the indubitably original form "*am ha-areẓ*, clearly betraying the old rabbinic animosities toward the "people of the land" which so greatly colored Palestinian life before, and shortly after, the fall of Jerusalem. In time, however, these animosities receded, and in the fourth century R. Aḥa bar Jacob reintroduced the older and more standardized form of thanksgiving for the enjoyment of freedom.62

The intervening formula, however, never died out. Rationalized by reference to Hillel's observation that "there is no ignoramus [*bor*] who fears sin," thanksgiving for a measure of education persisted to such an extent that Amram Gaon felt the need of combating it as contrary to law. Saadia, on his part, took for granted the formula of not being made a slave. Clearly, at a time when more and more Jews were expected to recite their own
prayers rather than rely on the mediation by congregational read-
ers, a benediction for not having been made an ignoramus be-
came less and less meaningful. In any case, no substitute had been
devised to be recited by an illiterate person similar to the one
introduced for the woman ("who hast made me in accordance with
Thy will").

This bewilderment, particularly of the Western scholars, gave
rise to their growing preoccupation with liturgical problems. It
began already in the middle of the ninth century, when the
relatively large and intellectually alert community of Lucena in
Spain addressed to Naṭronai bar Hilai Gaon of Sura an inquiry
as to the nature and precise sequence of the hundred benedictions
which, according to an old maxim of R. Meir, God required daily
from every Israelite. This number, perhaps used merely as a round
figure by R. Meir himself, was never elaborated in the Talmud.
Nor is there any evidence that R. Meir's homily based on his
predilection for puns—here the similarity in sound of mah (what)
and meah (a hundred; in Deut. 10:12)—was ever taken literally in
the Eastern communities of the talmudic and early posttalmudic
age.

Under the challenge of the Lucena inquiry, however, Naṭronai
and his associates now proceeded to enumerate the required daily
blessings, and with some difficulty they reconstructed the total of
one hundred. Without going into precise details, and for the most
part giving only the beginnings and a few phrases to identify the
specific benedictions, Naṭronai's responsum thus became the
nucleus of the Jewish prayer book.

Externally, Naṭronai's responsum was a juridical rather than a
liturgical composition, and there was nothing to distinguish it
from similar geonic replies on other points of Jewish law. In fact,
it had long been customary among both Rabbanite and Karaite
leaders to discuss liturgical problems in connection with other
halakhic deliberations. Aḥai of Shabha's and Simon Qayyara's codes
had included lengthy sections on prayers, benedictions, the recita-
tion of weekly lessons or the scroll of Esther, and other aspects of
divine service at home or in the synagogue. 'Anan, too, despite the
revolutionary nature of his liturgical reforms, was satisfied with
presenting them as part and parcel of his total revamping of the
existing Jewish legal system. But his innovations forced him to spell out his newly introduced prayers much more fully than did his Rabbanite counterparts, who could presuppose widespread knowledge of the accepted rituals. That is why the pertinent sections of 'Anan’s Book of Commandments reveal so many characteristics of the later Rabbanite prayer books. To a lesser extent the same holds true of the numerous Books of Commandments produced by 'Anan’s Karaite successors. Although, being incorporated in larger juridical manuals, such liturgical sections were devoid of a peculiar identity of their own, the Karaite challenge may have been provocative enough to stimulate reconsideration and final reformulation of the liturgical heritage on the part of Rabbanite leaders as well. Perhaps it was more than accidental that Naṭronai took up the gauntlet here, as he did in other areas under Karaite attack. Without taking direct cognizance of the Karaite opposition, he may indeed have welcomed the Spanish inquiry as an opportunity to restate the official position of Rabbanite Jewry in a phase of Jewish observance which cut so deeply into the daily life of the people.68

AMRAM AND SAADIAH

Within two decades after this exchange, another Spanish inquiry, accompanied we are told by a handsome gift of twenty gold pieces (five for the gaon and fifteen for the academy), stimulated Naṭronai’s successor, Amram, to take up the liturgical problems in greater detail (about 870). While leaning heavily on Naṭronai’s reply, Amram, together with his principal associate Șemah bar Solomon, prepared “an order [seder] of prayers and benedictions for the entire year.” Evidently the term seder did not yet possess the technical connotation of a regular prayer book, but simply referred to some systematic review of the prescribed rituals. This is, indeed, what the gaon offered to his Spanish correspondents. Unfortunately, we cannot fully reconstruct the original form of Amram’s responsum. Apart from a few minor and far from illuminating fragments found in the Cairo Genizah, we possess only three more or less complete manuscripts from the late Middle Ages (the two better ones were completed in 1426 and 1516,
respectively). Even these differ greatly among themselves, and they were hardly based on a single authentic tradition. Generally faithful in preserving the legal requirements summarized by the gaon and his associates, the medieval copyists freely expanded and modified the prayers themselves to conform with the texts used in their communities. Such alterations may have been perfectly unconscious, as many a writer filled in readings with which he had become familiar through a lifetime of recitation. Partly, however, they may have sprung from the fear of offending readers inured to particular versions. It is small wonder, then, that Amram’s prayer book offers many challenging, indeed often unanswerable, problems, and that it has given rise to many irreconcilable theories.67

On the whole, the basic prayers weathered spoliation by time and overzealous copyists much better than more recently adopted liturgical pieces. The Shema’ cycles and the ‘Amidah, long the universal heritage of the people, were carried down through the ages with astounding accuracy, not only by the few professional “memorizers,” but also by the masses of worshipers. The more recent prayers, however, enjoying far less canonical sanctity, were often infringed upon by local readers and showed great variations. Very likely neither Amram nor his vice-chairman Șemaḥ bar Solomon cared to lay down the law for the textual correctness of such relatively late accretions.68

Despite the authoritarian tone characteristic of this and most other geonic replies, the leaders of the Suranic academy were evidently bent on supplying the Spanish communities with a handy reference book to the liturgical laws and regulations, rather than on spelling out for them specific readings. They knew that such readings varied widely even in Sura’s immediate environment. Very frequently they pointed up certain observances at their academy or earlier decisions by their predecessors as profitable examples to be followed. They doubtless indicated the various liturgical pieces only by headings or other identifying words, supplying the full texts only when they doubted the recipients’ familiarity with them or wished to prevent likely errors. When they referred, for example, to a previous discussion concerning the required insertion after the early morning benedicitions of
certain excerpts from Bible and rabbinic letters, they never cited the texts of these excerpts. They merely stressed their importance for daily compliance with the advice of ancient sages that every Jew should divide his time equally between Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud. This liturgical practice, they emphasized, "is thus found in the responsa, and this is the usage of all Israel," to which a patriotic Spanish scribe added "in Spain." Other scribes went further, and altered or amplified the prayers themselves. Hence, Louis Ginzberg's pessimistic observation is as valid today as it was some four decades ago: "We shall probably never know its [Amram's prayer book's] true, original form. It was used until it was used up." 69

Curiously, Amram's compilation came into general use only in the Western countries, where it was constantly copied and re-copied. In the East it long remained slumbering in the archives of the academy of Sura, exercising little influence on the subsequent liturgical evolution. Saadiah made no use of it in the compilation of his own prayer book half a century later, although from the acrostic to one of his poems of warning (azharot), mis-named by the first editor the poem of "six hundred and thirteen commandments," we may conclude that Saadiah served at that time as a high official (alluf) of Amram's own academy. The only other geonim who evinced interest in similar liturgical compilations, Sherira and Hai, both of Pumbedita, had no access to Sura's archival records. From Hai's reply to an inquiry quoting Amram's work, it is evident that he had not consulted it himself.70

Saadiah's prayer book is, therefore, not only completely independent, but also differs fundamentally from Amram's work in approach and motivation. It owed its origin not to outside prompting (the frequent assertion that the gaon prepared it at the request of Egyptian communities is unsupported by any evidence whatsoever), but to the author's inner urge. The more concerned Saadiah had become about the growing signs of Jewish communal disintegration in the decaying Caliphate, and the more passionately he dedicated himself to the task of reunification of world Jewry, the more dangerous appeared to him the existing liturgical anarchy. In his numerous travels he had observed widespread
liturgical "neglect, addition, and omission." He became increas-
ingly apprehensive lest such anarchy result in both "forgetfulness
and permanence of deviation." For this reason, he added,

I have decided to assemble in this book the authoritative prayers,
hymns, and benedictions in their original form as they existed before
the Exile and after, and place them in their proper order. I shall also
mention what I have learned about additions or omissions according
to the arbitrary opinions of individual groups residing in a village
or city, a district or country. Whatever runs counter to the funda-
mental objective, I have forbidden to recite; even with respect to
prayers which do not nullify it. I have pointed out that they were
unsupported by tradition. I shall further append a description of how
one is to fulfill the commandments prescribed for every season of the
year, after having first analyzed the commandments which are to be
observed daily. I am indeed dividing [the whole work] into two parts:
the general duties for every day, and the peculiar matters pertaining
to specific periods of the year. In conclusion, I shall cite some beautiful
prayers and appropriate hymns for the use of the servant who, some-
day, may wish thus to approach his Master. These are elective, and
I shall not require their recitation, as I do that of the essential por-
tions of the book.71

From the outset Saadia wished to make this work as popular
as possible. That is why he avoided all technical discussions of the
law and even refrained from quoting his talmudic sources. He
generally referred the reader to his earlier, elaborate Commentary
on the Pentateuch. On the other hand, he included a brief treatise
"On the Obligation of Prayer," which he seems to have distributed
independently before his major compilation. Here he emphasized
the greater frequency and variety of prayers of petition as com-
pared with those devoted to thanksgiving or praise of the Lord.
He also tried to explain the meaning and logical sequence of the
'Amidah, adducing no less than twelve arguments (only three are
preserved in our manuscript) for the specific number of its
eighteen benedictions.72

No less individualistic was Saddiah's arrangement of the dif-
ferent sections. In contrast to Amram's purely pragmatic approach,
Saadiah sought to introduce a systematic order based on certain
logical, even philosophic, assumptions. Amram had arranged his
compilation so as to give a handy guide to the worshiper, or rather
to the congregational leader. That is why he began with the se-
quence of a typical day and, after describing the devotions during the morning prayers, discussed in detail the blessings required before, during, and after meals. Only then did he resume the description of the afternoon and evening services. To Saadia such an interruption through prayers of a different category seemed highly illogical. He therefore relegated the analysis of the prayers connected with meals to a section dealing with benedictions arising from specific occasions. This section followed his extensive analysis of all regular daily services, both private and congregational, as well as of some of those additional voluntary prayers of petition which he had himself composed for the use of ultrapious worshipers.

Dogmatic preconceptions likewise colored Saadia's formulations far more than those of his predecessor. Discussing, for example, the required blessings before and after Shema', Saadia was prepared to accept many variants, but he strenuously objected to two phrases which, in his opinion, "nullified the fundamental objective." He condemned the insertion of the phrase "O cause a new light to shine upon Zion" before the conclusion of the first of these benedictions, because he felt that "the light for which we give thanks to God every day is the light of the sun itself, and nothing else." He disregarded here the pietistic yearnings to imbue even such simple thanksgiving with a messianic significance. Similarly, he denounced the replacement of the final sentence before the 'Amidah, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast redeemed Israel," by the more futuristic "Blessed art thou, O Lord, king of Israel and his redeemer." The gaon made it clear that the past tense was necessary, because the blessing related only to the redemption from Egypt, whereas the future redemption was left to the benedictions included in the silent prayer. Apart from these formalistic considerations, however, Saadia's decisions running counter, at least in the former case, to a practice well accepted in the two academies (Sherira), may have been dictated by his pro-Babylonian bias, which had reached a high pitch in those very years of his service as alluf and Babylonia's chief spokesman in its controversy with Palestine's Ben Meir.

Saadia's prayer book enjoyed wide circulation in the Eastern lands to which it addressed itself—particularly its legalistic sec-
tions, written in Arabic and never translated into Hebrew. The fragments at the disposal of modern editors are remnants of at least thirty-five copies made by various scribes. Further copies are likely to come to light, especially when the treasures assembled in the Soviet libraries have become fully accessible to specialists in this field. Regrettably, the liturgical compilations of his geonic successors Sherira and Hai are totally lost, hence we cannot trace their detailed indebtedness to Saadia'h's work. However, in at least one case Sherira expressly quotes it with approval. Sherira upholds the "new light on Zion" with obvious reluctance and only because "they have always recited it at both academies." But he adds on his own, "He who fails to recite it, will not be hurt." In answering a Kairouan inquiry quoting Saadia'h's work, Hai pointed out that some Babylonian rabbis, too, had deduced from Saadia'h's Siddur that one had better refrain from drinking a fifth cup of wine during the Passover ceremony. But he viewed with alarm the numerous corruptions which, already at that time, had crept into the existing copies. We must remember, however, that such scribal abuses were perhaps the highest compliment unwittingly proffered to any medieval author. In the West, on the other hand, Saadia'h's work remained largely unknown. Although the gaon's posthumous son, Dosa, doubtless sent a copy of the Siddur along with other works by, and his own biography of, his father to Hisdai ibn Shaprut in Cordova, the only Spanish scholars who seem to have had first-hand acquaintance with this great liturgical work were the tireless collectors of all geonic writings, Samuel ibn Nagrela of Granada, Isaac ibn Gayyat of Lucena, and Yehudah bar Barzillai of Barcelona. After the eleventh century most Western scholars, including Saadia'h's great admirers Nahmanides and Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel, apparently learned about his decisions only from second hand.75

In Kairouan, too, that intermediary link between East and West, the impact of Saadia'h's prayer book was hardly noticeable. True, we cannot confidently speak of this subject until we recover at least some significant fragments of the liturgical compilations or codes allegedly prepared there by Hananel, Nissim, and Shemaria'h ben Ephraim, as well as by Solomon ben Nathan of neighboring Segelmesa. Nissim's pupil Ibn al-Jasus (or al-Gasum),
doubtless had Saadiah's work in mind when he wrote of a prayer book which was "second to none in brevity and thoughtfulness. We rely on it, it is a model for us, and one ought to cleanse it from the copyists' mistakes." Yet the fact that Alfasi, a devoted pupil of the Kairuwan sages, betrayed so little familiarity with Saadiah's compilation makes one wonder whether the book was not rejected there on practical, even more than on dogmatic or legalistic, grounds. It thus shared the fate of the great gaon's equally learned but impractical halakhic monographs, of which in a sense it was the most illustrious example.\(^7\)

Even in the East Saadiah's ritual evidently was nowhere accepted in exactly the form suggested by the gaon. Trying to use it as an instrument for the unification of world Jewry, Saadiah had obviously sought to reduce the practices prevailing in Babylonia, Palestine, and Egypt to a common denominator. Such eclecticism necessarily ran counter to some existing observances in each particular congregation. As usual, the rank and file of congregational members, even more than the leaders, resented the smallest deviation from their accepted ritualistic norms, while merely taking in their stride the gaon's approval of their other practices. Saadiah's acerbity in dismissing objectionable phrases or motions likewise antagonized many worshipers accustomed to them for many years. Apart from disliking Saadiah's tone, many doubtless viewed some of his critical remarks as direct slurs on their revered ancestors. Moreover, Saadiah's book was much too sophisticated. Ironically, Amram's responsum was addressed to informed correspondents and was, therefore, studded with quotations from talmudic and earlier geonic sources, a rather unusual feature in geonic responsa. Nevertheless, it made much simpler reading than Saadiah's more penetrating and theologically more closely reasoned observations, unburdened though these were by supporting source material. Saadiah's systematic arrangement, too, highly satisfactory to the serious student, must have proved difficult for anyone who without acquiring full familiarity with the whole work wished to locate therein a particular prayer or regulation. The medieval reader certainly did not have at his disposal the fine indexes provided for the book by its modern editors.\(^7\)

For these reasons Saadiah found more students and copyists
than direct imitators, even in the Eastern communities. Secure in the possession of their ancestral customs, their leaders studied with great interest the decisions of Saadiah as compared with many rendered by his geonic predecessors and successors. But they unperturbedly continued to adhere to their own local or regional peculiarities.

MAIMONIDES' SUMMARY

Spanish Jewry, though entering at that time the period of its greatest intellectual creativity, contributed relatively little to the unification and standardization of Jewish liturgy. Perhaps its very creative élan militated against concentration on rigid requirements in this domain, while its great poets unstintingly devoted their creative energies to the enlargement and embellishment of the inherited liturgical treasures. We shall see that their new compositions penetrated the synagogue services in many lands. While Spanish jurists continued to make significant contributions to this field as well, the only lasting monograph entirely devoted to liturgy seems to have been written by that distinguished student of geonic lore, Yehudah bar Barzillai of Christian Barcelona. In his Sefer ha-Ittim (Book of Seasons), later epitomized by the French Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne in his Sefer ha-Eshkol (Cluster of Grapes), Spanish Jewry produced a ritualistic classic of the first order. The excessive length of this work, however, militated against its popularity even among the Spanish Jews, and only some relatively small segments could be recovered by its modern editors from the few extant manuscripts. Another liturgical work, perhaps combined with a more regular prayer book prepared about the same time by Ibn al-Jasus (or Al-Gasum), a pupil of R. Nissim, fared worse; only a small fragment seems to have survived in the world's libraries.78

The only scholar after Saadiah to exercise a lasting influence on the liturgical evolution of the Jewish communities in the Muslim world was Maimonides. But he achieved this effect precisely because he did not produce an independent prayer book. A comprehensive liturgical volume from even his pen would probably have remained but a flash illumining the momentary state of
Jewish liturgical practice. Only because the sage of Fustaṭ included the liturgical regulations in his own superlative legal code, and with them a brief enumeration of the required prayers and benedictions, was he successful in deeply influencing the liturgical evolution as well.

Accepting many (but also rejecting some) of Saadiah’s rules and reasons, showing familiarity with a wide range of rituals extending from Spain and Morocco to Egypt and Palestine, and utilizing the diversified experiences of the Egyptian communities themselves, Maimonides was able to produce another composite summary. On the whole, he tried to revert to the bare essentials laid down in the Talmud, but since the Talmud was far from explicit in regard to most controversial problems, the codifier had to pave his own way, generally adhering to his much cherished “golden mean” and seeking a compromise between some universally acceptable rituals and the chaotic variety of local observances. Because it was far less revolutionary in content, his eclecticism was evidently found less objectionable. During the century and a half since Saadiah, moreover, the continuing symbiosis of congregations of different rites in such cosmopolitan centers as Fustaṭ-Cairo and the increasingly vigorous cultural exchanges between the Jewries of various lands had produced a certain growing mutual toleration, as well as a leveling down of existing differences. Without completely smoothing over the ritualistic disparities, the deepening social and cultural homogeneity of the Eastern communities, sharpened by the incipient intellectual lassitude and opposition of independent creativity, bred a more general receptivity for final and authoritative regulation of both domestic and synagogue rituals.79

Maimonides and his son Abraham doubtless dreamed of completely unifying the liturgy of Egyptian Jewry under the aegis of the new Code, although progress in this direction must have appeared to them disappointingly slow. Only after several generations of living under the communal control of “princes” of the house of Maimon did Egyptian Jewry gradually slough off its ritualistic divergences. At the end of the Middle Ages, indeed, we no longer hear of congregations in Cairo or Alexandria adhering strictly to their inherited Babylonian or Palestinian rites. To
foreign visitors like Obadiah Bartenora, all Egyptian Rabbanites appeared as a ritualistic unit, opposed only by such sectarians as Samaritans and Karaites. In far-off Yemen, too, the combined influence of Saadia and Maimonides, revered there above all other masters of Jewish lore, produced a liturgical synthesis which was authoritatively summarized in the comprehensive native product called *Takhailil* and outlasted all subsequent political storms and individualistic innovations. It still forms the foundation of the Yemenite liturgy of today.80

Curiously, even Maimonides and his son did not always see eye to eye in liturgical matters. This area, so closely related to the worshiper’s communion with God, necessarily reflected the temperamental disparity between the rationalistic father and the mystically minded son. Moses Maimuni considered himself the watchdog of the universal tradition of his people, and he sought to discourage individual departures, even when dictated by excessive piety. With particular reference to the cycle of benedictions accompanying the recitation of *Shema*’, he insisted that “these blessings, together with the other blessings recited by all Israel, were instituted by Ezra and his court, and no one is entitled to subtract from, or to add anything to, them.” He therefore opposed not only the addition of *piyyuṭim*—he shared this hostility with many illustrious predecessors—but also the inclusion of any personal petitions within the stated liturgy or even its interruption for the purpose of reciting an individually required benediction. In reply to an inquiry, he wrote tersely: “It is not appropriate to interrupt them [congregational prayers] for anything, not even for benedictions, for he [the worshiper] is engaged in the fulfillment of a commandment; why, then, should he interrupt it for the sake of another commandment?” Maimonides also objected strenuously to the wholesale recitation of the numerous morning benedictions enumerated in Amram’s prayer book and widely adopted in the contemporary communities. “This is a mistake,” he exclaimed, “one must not do so; one should recite a blessing only if one is personally obliged to recite it” because of particular circumstances. Abraham Maimuni concurred with this view and even tried to enforce it by
administrative orders. Yet, at variance with the entire tenor of his father's decisions if not with their clear formulation, he wished to encourage private devotions going far beyond the accepted limits. With some evident embarrassment, he replied affirmatively to an inquiry concerning the permissibility of constant prostrations: "As to a voluntary fast, voluntary prayer, or [other] acts of piety, may they multiply and spread widely. There is not the slightest suspicion of their being prohibited, but it is rather forbidden to place any obstacles in the way of Israel's worship, devotion, and immersion in prayer." 81

WESTERN COMPILATIONS

In the West the output of new liturgical handbooks may have been slowed down by the publication of the Maimonidean Code, but it did not stop. In the increasingly feudalistic environment of Christian Europe the Jews shared with their neighbors an extreme reverence for local custom. Since no domain of Jewish private or communal life was dominated by custom to a greater extent than that of liturgy, European Jewry evinced an insatiable curiosity about every minutia of liturgical practice. It unceasingly contrasted the formal law, grown familiar through ever more intensive study of the Talmud and geonic letters, with its daily ritualistic practice, the heritage of those "dark" and inarticulate ages which had preceded the rise of the Franco-German schools in the Provence, Champagne, and the Rhine lands.

Beginning with Joseph Tob 'Elem (Bonfils), therefore, French rabbis, particularly of Rashi's school in Troyes, produced many liturgical treatises. Rashi's pupils adopted the custom, which was soon to prevail in the Christian universities as well, of taking copious notes. Since the master undoubtedly repeated his lectures every few years, there arose numerous divergences in the notes compiled by different pupils at different times. The disciples often included observations on the master's personal conduct on certain ritualistically significant occasions. In contrast, therefore, to Rashi's Commentaries on Bible and Talmud, which were either originally written or at least carefully revised by him and bear
the full imprint of his personality and editorial care, the juristic-liturgical treatises attributed to him were never seen by him in their present form. Hence come, as we recall, their constant repetitions and frequent contradictions. Nevertheless, they often supplement one another significantly. Between them the aforementioned juridical miscellanies entitled Sefer ha-Pardes (Orchard), Ha-Orah (Light) or Oreh (Plucker), and Siddur (Prayer Book), attributed to Rashi himself, the Maḥzor Vitry compiled by his pupil, Simḥah bar Samuel, as well as two as yet unpublished works, entitled Sefer ha-Sedarim (Book of Liturgical Orders), and Sefer Issur ve-hetter (Book of Forbidden and Permissible Matters) have given us deep insights into the entire realm of legal practice and ritualistic thinking of the founders of Jewish learning in western Europe. They have also served as an inexhaustible mine of information on the preceding liturgical evolution in all of Jewry.82

With the exception of Simḥah of Vitry's work, none of these collections of notes deserve the name prayer book. Though largely concerned with liturgical problems, they also included many other legal materials. Both the Pardes and the Orah actually begin with semilegal and semimoralistic discourses on certain aspects of family relations. Even the Siddur, which generally hews somewhat more closely to the line of ritual, has many admixtures from other domains of law. While discussing, for example, the services for the Day of Atonement, the compiler also treats of the required forms of self-mortification during that supreme fast. The whole work concludes with an analysis of the laws of mourning and a variety of dietary regulations, but it interrupts them with a brief discourse on the scriptural lessons prescribed for holidays. Similar haphazard notes thrown together in the Pardes became so irksome to readers that, before long, an Italian disciple felt prompted to summarize and rearrange them in a more systematic collection, called Liqqute Pardes (Pluckings of the Orchard). The original confusion became even more confounded as a result of ruthless handling by copyists, who unperturbedly omitted passages and, more frequently, added pertinent (and not so pertinent) decisions by later authorities or marginal notes by assiduous readers. If the original compilers had few compunctions about lifting passages from the notebooks of fellow students, the later copyists with even
greater abandon inserted into their own texts borrowings from other compilations.\textsuperscript{83}

By far the most important liturgical work from the school of Rashi is, therefore, the \textit{Mahzor Vitry}, for which Rashi’s authorship was never claimed. Although likewise suffering from lack of careful planning and organization (the usual concomitant of the dynamic approach of the Ashkenazim) and subjected to equal tampering by undisciplined copyists and interpolators, it bears the earmarks of greater fidelity to the author’s original intentions. More significantly, it is the first real prayer book compiled by a Western rabbi to combine ritualistic regulations with verbatim texts of prayers.

R. Simḥah made extensive use, both overt and tacit, of Amram’s prayer book, which he sometimes called \textit{Mahzor}, a term borrowed from the astronomic “cycle.” He also was familiar with other “ancient prayer books [\textit{mahzorin}].” However, despite his occasional references to Saadia, his direct acquaintance with the gaon’s liturgical work is very doubtful. He nevertheless followed Saadia’s example in supplying full texts of many long-accepted prayers, as well as inserting numerous more recent \textit{piyyuṭim} for the free choice of synagogue readers. It is small wonder, then, that his own \textit{Mahzor} vastly exceeded in size Amram’s popular responsum and the ritualistic works compiled by his fellow students of Troyes. Despite its great bulk, R. Simḥah’s book seems to have immediately captured the imagination of his ritualistically minded contemporaries. By offering the synagogue readers an authoritative text, buttressed by extensive halakhic discourses and quotations from older sources, including Rashi himself (frequently referred to by name), it also met an important communal need. That is why many communities secured copies, laboriously transcribed and partly vocalized by more or less competent scribes. If we are to believe R. Jacob Tam, within a few decades after R. Simḥah’s death the \textit{Mahzor} was to be “found in most places.”\textsuperscript{84}

Clearly, R. Jacob did not mean to imply that R. Simḥah’s voluminous work was available in many copies throughout western Europe. Its size alone, even without the numerous subsequent interpolations, must have made its price prohibitive to all but a few wealthy booklovers or synagogue treasuries. Its use was
further aggravated by its mixture of prayers with extensive and often complicated regulations for their recitation, constantly interspersed with halakhic discussions on other ritualistic matters. In this respect, the Mahzor Vitry was even less handy as a prayer book in the modern sense than was Amram's Seder in its original form. Although more practical than Saadia's systematic compilation, both these works were likewise designed principally to offer guidance to the intellectual élite, particularly the men in charge of congregational worship. Ordinary members, even if perfectly literate, did not have a regular prayer book at their disposal until after the invention of printing. Smaller congregations, such as were the rule in western Europe and the Near Eastern countryside, doubtless possessed only one or two copies of these ambitious handbooks. Kept in the local synagogues, these were always available for consultation by interested persons, especially synagogue readers.

Against this background of great scarcity and high prices, we may also understand the continued insistence of the medieval rabbis upon recitation of prayers from memory. Even the best informed worshipers as a rule did not own texts containing all the prayers likely to be used. This was doubly true in the case of holiday prayers. More extensive and complicated, a holiday mahzor always commanded a far higher price. At the same time it was of direct use only during a few days each year, parts of it only once a year. Clearly, most congregants could learn only certain prayers by heart and had to rely on the precentor and his authoritative copy for reading aloud all the less familiar liturgical pieces. In the days of Yehudai Gaon, even the readers were not allowed to use written texts, except in the case of the lengthy and complicated prayers recited on the Day of Atonement or other fasts. Saadia observed that many contemporaries preferred to omit verses rarely used in holiday services rather than commit errors in quotation. He felt prompted, therefore, to warn worshipers against excessive caution on such stated occasions as the holiday Musaf. Rashi, still echoed by Abudarham, however, forbade the recitation, except on Sabbaths and New Moons, of verses whose frequency alone offered a sufficient safeguard for correct memorization.86
SYNAGOGUE CHANT

Memory was at times aided by a uniformly accepted tune. Once a melody became associated with a particular prayer, most changes in phrasing, willful or erroneous, caused a noticeable alteration also in the melody. Such a deviation was less likely to escape the attention of the audience than was the textual variant itself. The distinguished sixteenth-century rabbi Mordecai Jaffe complained that his efforts to correct certain errors in the text of the Kol Nidre prayer proved unavailing because the cantors "were unable to change [the text] during the services on account of the tune to which they had become accustomed." To make doubly sure that the "messenger" would make no mistakes, ancient congregations often associated with him one or two assistants (so-called "supporters" or "helpers"), who served primarily as prompters. Later, when written prayers were available, it became their principal duty to assist the precentor in his musical performance. Occasionally, especially for some major celebrations such as the installation of a new exilarch, these helpers, who were usually young boys, formed regular choirs.

Otherwise, synagogue chanting was either a solo performance on the part of the precentor, only occasionally interrupted by brief congregational responsoria and exclamations like amen or halleluyah, or congregational singing in unison. Despite the impression created by Philo's description, Jewish congregations were never as passive as many Christian church assemblies were to become in the days of the Graeco-Syrian Testamentum Domini (about 400). The fundamental Jewish belief in the "priesthood of all believers" necessarily placed the emphasis on the congregation rather than on its "messenger." Later, Pirqei observed that, despite governmental persecutions, Jews were allowed "to foregather on Sabbath mornings to read and sing" piyyuṭim. Samuel ibn Yahya likewise observed that the authors of these new poems composed for them numerous melodies. The Jews used to assemble during their services to sing and to read them. The difference between the new poetry [hizanah] and the obligatory prayer [salat] is that the latter is recited without a melody. Only the precentor reads it, and no one shouts it together with him. At the hizanah, however, he is assisted
by many members of the audience with shouts and songs as an accom-
paniment to his melodies.

Samau’al did not mean that the obligatory prayers were recited in a complete monotone. On the contrary, even the scriptural lessons were from very early times read with a particular cantilla-
tion, for which the masoretic schools introduced specific symbols. In contrast to modern notation, however, which has developed slowly and painfully over the last millennium, the masoretic te’amim (accents), like their Byzantine and Syriac counterparts, indicated musical phrases rather than individual sounds. While less precise than modern musical notes, these accents offered suffi-
cient guidance to establish a certain basic uniformity, which has outlasted many social and environmental changes. To this very day Bible reading in the world’s synagogues sounds very much alike.87

Because of a certain vagueness of the exact musical equivalents of each symbol, it was possible to use the same thirty (in Ben Asher’s time only nineteen) symbols for the entire Bible, except for the books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, which were equipped with an independent system. Evidently responding to the need for distinguishing the cantillation of psalms from the ordinary scriptural lessons, the Masorites introduced twelve different sym-
 bols. Even with the same accents, however, it was possible to vary greatly the cantillation between the Pentateuchal lesson and the prophetic selection, as well as between the readings on Sabbaths and on holidays. Different tunes were used for the Five Scrolls, es-
pecially for the mournful recitation of Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab. Equal latitude was given to regional and individual pref-
ferences. The fourteenth-century Yemenite author of the Manuel de lecteur declared that “every main and subsidiary accent has tone and melody of its own. They do not resemble one another, except perhaps in regard to one or two turns.” The psalmistic tunes, on the other hand, were often neglected, and the morning selections from the psalms were almost universally recited without the prescribed cantillation. Only in Baghdad, we learn from Petaḥiah, did they have several tunes for each psalm, Psalm 6 being recited in eight and Psalm 92 in ten modes. As late as the thirteenth
century some congregations in western Europe likewise recited Psalm 91 in a particular cadence.  

Most of these accents seem to be derived from hand signals which the precentors used to give to their audiences, especially with regard to the raising or lowering of their voices or of maintaining a tune on an even pitch. As has been pointed out, many symbols transcended linguistic or national boundaries and there were resemblances between the Byzantine, Syriac, and Jewish modes of cantillation. For example, the ascending qadmah, the descending tiphah, and the constant ethnah look very much like their Romance counterparts, the acute, grave, and circumflex accents. Such visual conducting of the congregational chant seems to have continued at least to the eleventh century. According to Rashi, cantors from Palestine visiting western Europe still lifted or lowered the second finger to warn the audience of an ascending or descending tone to follow.

No such system of cantillation was employed for prayers, yet there developed in the course of time certain basic tunes for a few major daily recitations (even more for holiday prayers) which successfully weathered changes of habitat and the corrosive forces of time. For example, the magnificent tune of the beautiful Musaf 'Amidah of New Year's day shows fewer and less far-reaching local or regional variations than one would normally expect. Most prayers, however, were not recited in such uniform fashion. Newly inserted supplications or laudations usually were set to music by the authors themselves while they improvised the prayers. Jewish authors probably differed little in this respect from their Christian counterparts such as the great melodos, Romanos. Whatever accompaniment was offered by the assistants and the public evidently was un-rehearsed. Nor was Hai Gaon alone in permitting a congregation to silence its "messenger" if the latter committed some serious error. Such accompaniment must long have been limited largely to the congregational responsoria. Many piyyutim, indeed, made a point of having refrains, often consisting of passages from the Bible, or the particular prayer to which they were appended. These refrains were doubtless recited by the congregation in some kind of singsong. Probably at first completely un-
trammelled, responses were later regulated as to timing and tune and became standard prayers of the liturgy. However, if we are to believe Samau’al even in his day there was still a great deal of freedom for individual and mass improvisation. Certainly, the medieval Jewish congregations evinced far greater interest in inwardness and intensity of prayer than in outward decorum, evoking, as we recall, a sharp censure from Maimonides.90

Chanting was nevertheless considered but a secondary aspect of worship. From its inception, the synagogue made a studied effort to avoid too close emulation of the Temple services. Circumstances, too, as we remember, had forced the ancient congregations in the dispersion to follow increasingly austere lines. Moreover, because of their association with both Graeco-Roman worship and licentiousness in public and private festivities, musical performances as such fell into disrepute among the more ascetically minded Jews as well as among Christians. We shall see how deeply this antagonism affected the attitude toward secular music of most ancient and medieval Jewish communities. It is small wonder, then, that liturgical music, which had played such a great role in the Christian heresies from the days of Bardeisan and Arius, never became a major subject of controversy between orthodox and sectarian Jews. There is hardly any reference to it in the vast Karaite and anti-Karaite literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Nor do we hear of any outright opposition to the chanting of new musical creations, such as was attempted for a time by the Council of Laodicea (about 370). Hostility was directed against the content of the piyyutim rather than against their melodies.

Drawing a sharp line of demarcation between sacred and secular music, the Jewish leaders permitted the former, provided that it was clearly imbued with the spirit of worship and shunned purely external aesthetic and emotional appeals. True, they realized that synagogue music, along with the sermon, often attracted even Gentile worshipers. It has been suggested that a Pahlavi inscription recovered from the ruins of the Dura-Europos synagogue commemorated such a Gentile who “looked there where the Jewish chant was, he destroyed the other god, came and listened,” and it is reminiscent of R. Judan’s aforementioned homily about the preacher whose sermons brought Gentiles to the synagogue.
Nevertheless, music was not considered of focal importance in the Jewish liturgy. Instrumental music, in particular, was considered objectionable even on weekdays, and doubly so when it violated the Sabbath or holiday rest. The Baghdad custom, observed by Petaḥiah of Ratisbon, of reciting psalms with the accompaniment of instruments during the half holidays was quite exceptional. Even singing was to be limited to sacred themes and to male voices. “An ear listening to [secular] music shall be torn out,” said none other than Rab, himself a distinguished liturgical writer and leader in prayers. Endowment with a beautiful voice, the rabbis agreed, was only one of many prerequisites for a precentor. Defining the qualifications of the elder and experienced person demanded by the Mishnah, R. Judah taught that it ought to be a man burdened with a family and unable to provide for it, working hard in the field and yet having an empty house, a man of attractive appearance, humble and popular with the community, who has musical understanding and a pleasing voice, is competent to read the Torah, Prophets, and Hagiographa, knows how to study halakhic and aggadic hermeneutics, and is perfectly familiar with all the benedicitions.

To be sure, the requirement of poverty, intended to make his supplication for the welfare of the entire community the more deeply felt, was often overlooked. When it came to a test, R. Ḥisda interpreted away that requirement by declaring that the “empty house” really meant a house devoid of sin. Wealth thus ceased to be a deterrent, but it never attained the importance of piety, learning, or a good singing voice. In the words of Maimonides, “We appoint as messenger of the community only its most distinguished member by learning and good deeds. An old man is most eligible. We also try to choose a man possessing a pleasant voice and experience in reading.” If we must choose, decided Yehudai Gaon, we should rather select a scholar without a voice, than a singer without learning.91

Ultimately, however, vocal endowment, training, and good musicianship outweighed all other qualifications. With the progressive lifting of the ban on secular music, indeed with the growing appreciation of beautiful songs for their own sake, the cantorial performances in the synagogues likewise became artistic, as much as devotional, feats. The old austerity, still maintained in the
poverty-stricken, insecure communities north of the Alps or in Yemen, gave way to an increasing *joie de vivre* in most Mediterranean lands. With it came also a greater appreciation of the aesthetic and emotional values of sacred music. The medieval compiler of *Pesiqta rabbati* had already impressed on the minds of his readers the story of an ancient cantor named Nabot, who, on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, attracted "all Israel" to listen to his performances. Because he once failed to come to the Holy City, he died before his time. Late in the thirteenth century, Immanuel of Rome depicted a cantor boasting,

When I recite the great *Qedushah*, a *yośer*, or a *gerobah*, all the wells of the great abyss break lose [that is, even the most hardened members are swept off their feet]; when I pray on the Day of Atonement, read the scroll of Esther on Purim, recite the *En kamokha* [There is None like unto Thee] on the three pilgrims’ festivals [Passover, Festivals of Weeks, and Tabernacles, before the Reading of the Law], or chant a psalm, the mighty ones tremble before my voice; and when I read "the Vision of Isaiah," intone the Lamentations, or recite the evil forebodings of Jeremiah, all tongues remain silent, and no eye is free of tears.

Immanuel also emphasized the high social standing of the cantors of his day, a fact which had incidentally found expression in the early inclusion of the *hazzan* among the communal dignitaries, for whom a special blessing was recited. Our poet clearly sensed that some of the tunes heard in the Italian synagogues were of non-Jewish origin, a practice frowned upon by medieval rabbis such as Alfasi. But Immanuel comforted himself with the old rationale that "the whole science of music among Christians was certainly pilfered from the land of the Hebrews." This reputed friend of Dante could, indeed, cite ample patristic testimony for the Church's early borrowings from synagogue chants.92

At times these artistic exhibitions distorted the relation between the established prayers. In some congregations the elective new poems, lending themselves to fine musical interpretation, overshadowed some of the basic prayers whose musical interpretation followed long-accepted patterns and left little scope for individual artistry. A gifted cantor might spend a whole hour on the recitation of the psalms, or even on a single liturgical piece. Although generally annoyed with such undue lengthening of services, the
rabbis encouraged it where it enabled latecomers to catch up with the congregation. Especially on Friday evening such lengthy chants became customary. The Kol Nidre recitation, which had to begin long before sunset, was usually repeated three times in a constant crescendo. On the other hand, some cantors, invoking an ancient tradition, permitted themselves to cut down the very ‘Amidah of the Sabbath and holiday eves to but three brief benedictions. They were evidently trying to facilitate the congregants’ homeward trek while there still was some twilight. Mystically-minded precentors were encouraged to imbue certain laudations with mystic meanings by the spreading belief that earthly services were but a direct emulation of the homage rendered the Almighty by the heavenly hosts. Did not the Talmud depict the Lord himself in the role of a precentor instructing Moses in the fundamentals of Jewish liturgy? Such passages may have caused much grief to Saadiah and other philosophic expounders of God’s incorporeality, but they did not fail to stimulate popular cantors, and their enthusiastic followers, to musical ecstasies in their adoration. For this reason the German pietists soon urged every precentor to look for a suitable tune for each piece. In short, overriding reiterated protests by intellectuals on philosophic as well as legalistic grounds, musical performances, in constant interplay with the rising tide of piyyutim, assumed a focal position in congregational life.93

RITUALISTIC DYNAMISM

In the end a balance was struck between the old and the new. Rigid adherence to tradition was mitigated by the creative reshaping of old forms to adjust them to newly awakened needs and desires. The original nucleus of universally accepted prayers and benedictions, supplemented by an anarchical variety of personal devotions, now gave way to a comprehensive communal liturgy incorporating the original prayers together with a vast array of elective liturgical pieces. Congregations, and particularly their professional or lay “messengers,” could decide whether and how many of these voluntary additions they wished to incorporate into their services, both regular and extraordinary.

Musical recitation was even less regimented. Apart from the
biblical accents, which served as more or less definite guides in reading scriptural lessons, there was considerable freedom in the selection of new tunes, or variations of older ones. Of course, here too tradition played a great role. Before long certain prayers came to be chanted in approximately the same way in each congregation, region, or even throughout the entire Jewish world. However, even in the biblical cantillation, and still more in such traditional chants, much room was left to individual variation. Precisely because the biblical accents did not resemble modern notes indicating specific sounds, the reader could express the same general theme in a more personal fashion than is possible even for a creative modern virtuoso who is necessarily restricted by the particular score.

In this way Judaism succeeded in dynamically developing its system of worship, which reconciled personal inwardsness and the individual’s communion with his Deity with a modicum of communal control and an all-pervasive unity. During the geonic period, to be sure, at the height of Jewish communal centralization an attempt was made to standardize Jewish liturgy too. Some leaders objected, in particular, to many popular *piyyuṭim*, whose content, attuned to the mass mind, no longer agreed with their own more refined legal or theological concepts. They also viewed with disfavor the improvisation of ever new tunes, some undoubtedly borrowed, however unconsciously, from non-Jewish folksongs or ecclesiastical music, which made listening to the new poems often more attractive to the masses than hearing the relative monotone of the old prayers. Their general sense of propriety and orderliness, enhanced by their legal training and unbounded reverence for tradition, was likewise offended by the anarchical nature of this entire output. As long as the *piyyuṭ* consisted merely of oral improvisations by gifted cantors enjoying local reputation, the harm did not appear to be great. But when more and more of these poems began circulating in writing and capturing the imagination of audiences in many lands, the danger to Jewish unity loomed large. Nevertheless, even the most authoritarian of the geonim, Saadiah, himself a genuinely dedicated person and liturgical poet by grace divine, did not try to outlaw these new crea-
tions completely, but merely to subsume them under some such authoritative order as that summarized in his prayer book.

After Saadiah the communal control declined, while the original fears of the disintegrating influence of the *piyyut* and its musical exercises were greatly mitigated. Some of the geonim themselves became friendly to the new poetry which, following Saadiah’s lead, they themselves were helping to expand. If the equally rationalistic and authoritarian codifier Maimonides still remained unreconciled, he never really ventured to suppress completely what had in the interim become a hallowed tradition. Moreover, he was himself too religious a person to wish to see the liturgy entirely crystallized. In his codification of the laws governing prayer he, therefore, not only reminisced romantically about the lost glories of the complete liturgical freedom during the First Commonwealth, but he actually allowed variations within the text of the *’Amidah* (except for the first three and the last three benedictions).

These prayers [he declared] must not be reduced, but they may be increased. If a man wishes to pray the whole day, he is entitled to do so, and all his additional prayers will be considered as if he brought a free-will offering. In fact, when reciting any of the middle benedictions he ought to add something new. Once he adds some new turn to a single benediction, he has done his duty, for he has shown that he made a free-will offering, and not merely fulfilled an obligation [*M.T.* Tefillah 1.9].

Such reconciliation of the general interests of the community with the individual’s quest for religious self-expression was facilitated by the entire tenor of Jewish liturgy. Here individual and national wants merged so imperceptibly and naturally that the worshipper could hardly draw a line where his own supplication ended and that of the nation began. In fact, under the combined impact of tradition and existing circumstances, the Jew viewed his individual salvation as intimately linked with the salvation of the whole people. Eleazar Qalir and other poets often started their poetry in a purely individualistic vein. Their personally colored laudation of the Creator and His works was often followed by a purely personal supplication. But in most cases their prayer ended on the theme of national redemption as a cosmic event super-
seding all else. Most of these poets, moreover, invoked the testimony of history. They quoted the sacred history of their people and of the world at large, as it was mirrored in the ancient stories of the Bible and recreated and expanded in the Aggadah, which many of them constantly helped to enrich. With such an underlying unity in outlook, the individual and regional divergences were minor indeed. Despite the proliferation of local and regional rites, the Jewish people pursued its historic career with an essentially uniform liturgy in an overwhelmingly unitarian, though basically free, synagogue.
LEGAL and homiletical compilations, Bible commentaries, grammars, and prayer books became the major, but far from exclusive, branches of a rich and variegated literature in both prose and poetry. Long called by their Arab neighbors the “people of the book,” namely of Scripture, the Jews became under Arab domination a people of many books. Previously their leaders had often harbored serious misgivings about committing to writing any of their countless oral traditions. Nor did the Jewries of Palestine and Babylonia ever evince any serious interest in the works of their Greek-writing coreligionists, including Philo and Josephus. Since their own literary output in Aramaic, outside the realm of Oral Law which long continued to be transmitted only in oral form, was extremely limited, the libraries in the possession of individual scholars and synagogues, and even of the central academies, must have been very small indeed.

BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

A tannaitic law provided only that “members of a community shall force one another to acquire the Torah and Prophets” at public expense. These biblical books (not the Hagiographa) were, of course, required for public recitation in the synagogue, and no obstreperous congregational minorities could be allowed to interfere with their acquisition. It was also exclusively with the view to propagating the production and distribution of biblical writings that tannaitic law exempted scribes and booksellers from the required recitation of prayers at stated times or the wearing of phylacteries, “for he who is engrossed in the performance of one commandment is free from performing another commandment.” Whatever homilies or liturgical works may have circulated in
the Jewish communities, apart from the still popular magic scrolls or codices, there certainly was no Jewish writer of the fourth or fifth century who could rival the literary output of such Syriac contemporaries as St. Ephraem or Theodore of Mopsuestia. The reputed three million lines of text produced by the great Syriac poet-homilist and the forty-one works attributed to the distinguished Christian Bible scholar (Theodore’s contemporary Ma’na allegedly wrote sixty or even eighty works) easily exceeded in size anything produced in written form by entire generations of talmudic rabbis.

Under Muslim domination the roles were reversed. While Syriac and Greek letters, even in areas still under Byzantine sovereignty, deteriorated in quality and gradually diminished in quantity, the Jewish literary output increased by leaps and bounds. We have already noted the great flowering of Jewish legal, homiletical, and polemical literatures, as well as of Bible exegesis and philology during the three centuries from 900 to 1200. The same prodigious effort also characterized the creativity in the fields of sacred and profane poetry, of philosophy and science. This veritable literary revolution, reaching its apogee in Islam’s western outpost, Spain, not unjustifiably earned for that period the designation of the “Golden Age” of Jewish literature.

Apart from the great intellectual stimulus generated by the rise and spread of the new expansive civilization, the Jews owed their new masters the reunification, under one regime, of the overwhelming majority of their people, including their two chief intellectual centers of Palestine and Babylonia. The growing ease of communications and the large-scale entry of Jews into world trade tied together that far-flung dispersion and produced a vast and responsive audience for the creative efforts of leaders. The Jewish, as well as the non-Jewish, output of books was affected even more directly by the new facilities for production and distribution. Expensive ancient materials, such as parchment and papyrus, now gave way, to relatively inexpensive paper, which was within the reach of even impecunious authors and readers. Conditions remained far less propitious in Christian Europe. Throughout the Middle Ages, Western Jewish leaders were forced to issue public warnings
against the mutilation of existing manuscripts by cutting out margins for use as notes of indebtedness, talismans, and the like.\(^2\)

Every book still had to be copied by hand, however. This required the training of a class of skilled and informed scribes, who would not only cultivate their calligraphy, but also familiarize themselves with a great variety of subjects. Many of these scribes, being scholars in their own right, were frequently tempted to eliminate "errors," both formal and substantive, from the texts before them. While some were careful to suggest such alterations on the margin, others changed the text with complete insouciance. The greatest culprits were those who for dogmatic rather than scholarly reasons tampered with existing versions and considered such "improvements" the fulfillment of their religious duty. Others abbreviated given texts when they regarded certain portions as unnecessary ballast. For example, the prayers cited in the Maimonidean Code are so truncated by both author and copyists that the reconstruction of the underlying prayer book is very arduous. These willful, as well as unconscious, mistakes in transmission generally escaped the attention of all but the most critical readers. As the latter group increased in number and influence, there also arose a growing demand for old and reliable manuscripts, not only of Scriptures considered sacred by the respective faiths, but also of works of secular scholarship. One can envisage, therefore, the joy of Maimonides when he was able to consult the masoretically impeccable copy of the Bible in the possession of the Rabbanite community of Cairo and a copy of the Talmud allegedly five hundred years old.\(^3\)

Understandably, the cost of labor still was very high. Despite the reduction in the price of raw materials, many students could not satisfy their craving for books. On the other hand, apart from appealing to the intellectual curiosity of readers, possession of books was considered both meritorious and fashionable among the educated classes. Many intellectuals echoed Hai Gaon's epigrammatic advice that everyone do three things of merit and beauty: "Acquire land, friend, and book." Some patrons of Jewish learning, like Samuel ibn Nagrela, gave away books free of charge to impecunious students in Spain and other lands. This poet-
statesman had no use, however, for those wealthy illiterates who purchased books only for display. In his widely read collection of epigrams he wrote:

He who buys books at great expense,  
But leaves his heart empty and bland,  
Is like the lame who on a wall  
Paints a leg, and yet cannot stand.

At the same time he admonished his readers that  
A wise man will give up the life of pleasure  
So that in reading he may find his leisure.

Quoting both these passages, Yehudah ibn Tibbon, the famous translator, extolled the merits of the large library he had assembled, which included even some duplicates and triplicates. This collection, he assured his son Samuel in his “ethical will,” would make it unnecessary for Samuel to borrow works of scholarship, while other less fortunate students “must bustle about to seek books, often without finding them.”

Private collections doubtless were overshadowed by some school and congregational libraries. Throughout the Muslim world many libraries were attached to mosques or academies (often housed in the same buildings), beginning with Al-Ma’mun (813–33) who had founded the first of three famous libraries which were destined permanently to enrich the intellectual life of Baghdad. Although we possess no specific information, Jewish congregations and colleges doubtless followed suit. Of course, none of the Jewish libraries could compare in size with such famous collections as those of the Fadhiliya mosque in Cairo which, according to Maqrizi, embraced a hundred thousand volumes, or that of Cordova, which already in the days of Al-Ḥakam II (961–76) allegedly owned four hundred thousand volumes (Ibn Khaldun). Even the size of some private Muslim libraries was often staggering. We are informed by Yaqut that Waqidi’s library, when he moved from the western to the eastern section of Baghdad, consisted of one hundred and twenty camel loads.

No such collections, it appears, were ever assembled by medieval Jews. Even with their growing articulateness during the period of the Islamic Renaissance, Jewish authors, with rare exceptions
like Saadiah, produced fewer books than their Muslim confreres. Moreover, not many of their works were considered by even wealthy bibliophiles to be worthy of reproduction and inclusion in a private collection. The difficulties confronting Jewish students in securing necessary books are well illustrated by the conditions in medieval Narbonne, which, situated at the crossroads between Muslim Spain and Christian France and Italy, was a major center of Jewish intellectual activity. And yet a distinguished scholar like Abraham ben Isaac, author of the important halakhic treatise *Eshkol*, could not locate in the city a copy of the Palestinian Talmud or even of the first section of the Mishnah. Two centuries later Immanuel of Rome and his friends in Perugia were overjoyed when they secured a list of one hundred and eighty titles from a visiting bookseller, Aaron of Toledo. No sooner did Aaron depart from Perugia when, despite his insistent warnings, Immanuel and his friends opened the boxes he had left behind and copied ten of the most precious works. Even in the more populous and literary-minded Eastern communities the libraries evidently were very small. One need but study the few extant book lists of that period to realize how comparatively small were the Jewish collections, indeed the whole Jewish literary output.  

Communities and individual booklovers often tried to make up for this quantitative paucity by the great care they lavished on the preservation of even the smallest fragments. Reverence for the book, especially one that might contain the divine name, was so great that synagogues as a rule set aside boxes in which members deposited torn books, or sections thereof, which had outlived their usefulness. In time such boxes were filled with fragments, often single torn leaves, given the characteristic name of *shemot* (names). Ultimately, these receptacles were either formally buried in cemeteries or else preserved in synagogue attics. It is to this practice that we owe the preservation of the Cairo and other genizahs, which have so immeasurably enriched our knowledge of medieval Hebrew letters. Yehudah ibn Tibbon, who in his will enjoined his son to “make thy books thy companions, let thy cases and shelves be thy pleasure-grounds and gardens,” also gave him good practical advice as to how to take care of the precious library he was bequeathing him:
Examine thy Hebrew books at every new moon, the Arabic volumes once in two months, and the bound codices once every quarter. Arrange thy library in fair order, so as to avoid wearying thyself in searching for the book thou needest. ... A good plan would be to set in each compartment a written list of the books therein contained. ... Examine the loose leaves in the volumes and bundles, and preserve them. These fragments contain very important matters which I collected and copied out. Do not destroy any writing or letter of all that I have left. And cast thine eye frequently over the Catalogue so as to remember what books are in thy library. ... Cover the book-cases with rugs of fine quality; and preserve them from damp and mice and from all manner of injury, for thy books are thy good treasure. If thou lendest a volume make a memorandum before it leaves thy house, and when it is returned, draw thy pen over the entry. Every Passover and Tabernacles call in all books out on loan.

In view of the general scarcity and high cost of manuscripts, book-lending to needy students was considered a high moral obligation. Especially in the small and struggling communities of medieval Europe, public opinion often forced the hands of reluctant lenders.  

While high prices and the limited Jewish book market impeded commercialization of learning and the spread of much “lowbrow” literature catering to mass appetites, they also greatly increased the dependence of Hebrew authors on the good will and financial support of wealthy patrons. Even more than the contemporary Arabic letters, therefore, medieval Hebrew poetry, particularly that of the “Golden Age” in Spain, has the aspect of a typical “court poetry.”

POETIC SOPHISTICATION

The dichotomy between the fairly simple technique of synagogue poetry addressed to the masses of worshipers and the far more complex structure of poems written for the benefit of the intellectual élite is noticeable as early as the writings of Saadia Gaon. The two prayers of petition which he inserted in his prayer book are models of simplicity. Written for the benefit of the perplexed worshiper, who “instead of coming closer to his Master might alienate Him by mistaken utterances,” these prayers (baq-qashot) were written in simple biblical language understandable
to all. They elicited the highest words of praise from Abraham ibn Ezra, generally an unrelenting critic of the older liturgical poetry. They were intended to convey the simplest ideas of “praise and adoration for the Lord, and humility on the part of man; a confession of sins, and the request for forgiveness and success in matters of this world as well as one for the comfort and salvation of the Jewish people.” To facilitate further the understanding of the second, somewhat longer, and more complicated prayer intended for recitation on fast days, the gaon himself supplied an Arabic translation. Before long the first prayer, too, was translated into Arabic (by one Şemah ben Joshua), and both were recited widely and with great veneration. In fact, several generations later Maimonides was asked “whether one was required to stand up while reciting Saadiah’s prayer.”

At the same time the gaon composed a great many liturgical poems in the style of Yannai and Qalir, but he included only a few of these among the elective recitations of his own prayer book. In some cases he so clearly composed a liturgical piece only for a special occasion that, rather than sign his own name in the acrostic, he arranged the concluding letters to read “Solomon,” doubtless the name of the precentor who was to recite them in the synagogue. Such devious designation was to be emulated later by Hai Gaon and others, greatly complicating the task of modern investigators, who usually rely on the acrostics for the identification of the poet himself.

Some of these poems were clearly intended only for the Hebrew intellectual élite. Saadiah’s variation on the theme of the Ten Commandments, for example, ending with a single rhyme lar, used almost exclusively Graeco-Roman and Persian loan words scattered through the remote recesses of the Babylonian Talmud or the Aramaic versions. Only linguistically well-trained students of the Talmud and the Targumim could penetrate the meaning of this poem and its hidden allusions.

In such linguistic artifices the gaon merely followed the fashion of the age. Just as among the Jews the provocatively complicated structure and verbiage of Qalir’s piyyuṭim had overshadowed for a long time the less sophisticated creations of his predecessors, the Greek-speaking churches now neglected the memorable kontakia
of Romanos for the sake of the difficult and intentionally obscure poems of John of Damascus and Cosmas of Jerusalem. These Christian writers lived in Qalir's region a century after Qalir. Saadiah, who wrote some of his poetic works during the years of his stay in the Holy Land, also shared with the Arab poets of that age the quest for innovation (bidʿa) which had inspired the outstanding poet and theorist of poetic arts, Abu'l 'Abbas 'Abdullah ibn al-Mu'tazz, to compile an anthology of difficult poems for the guidance of both readers and aspiring poets to which he gave the title *Kitab al-Badi*.

Saadiah went even further in his nonliturgical poetry. Particularly his polemical pamphlets, usually written in single-rhymed strophes, taxed the ingenuity of readers. They were clearly intended for assiduous study rather than quick perusal. Occasionally the gaon himself felt impelled to add an Arabic commentary. His *Essa meshali* (I Shall Take Up My Parable), of which about a third has been recovered from various manuscripts, is filled with so many obscure allusions to talmudic sayings, both halakhic and aggadic, that only a fine student of the Talmud, reading and re-reading it with attention to every detail, could derive from it any meaning whatsoever. An entire section is devoted to biographical details concerning certain Tannaim—true to form, Saadiah did not fail to mention in this connection "my grandfather Dosa who has turned me to my Creator and carved out for me my niche"—which only a fully informed talmudic scholar could comprehend. It required further concentrated thought to place this section in the general anti-Karaite framework of this lengthy poetic treatise which embraced some five hundred and seventy-five strophes, each provided with a single rhyme in alphabetic order. Whether or not specifically aimed at the great Masorite Aaron ben Asher, who certainly was not a militant exponent of the sectarian viewpoint, this difficult exercise was no more intended for mass circulation than was Saadiah's even more complicated poem on the alphabet.

We may indeed believe the Karaite assertion that none of the gaon's antihalakhic writings were "published," that is, widely distributed, in his own lifetime. Nor do they seem to have been much in vogue in subsequent generations. Not only the *Essa meshali* and his rhymed reply to Ḥivi's antibiblical strictures, but
even his *Sefer ha-Galui*, provided with an Arabic translation and hence clearly intended for mass distribution during his life-and-death struggle with the exilarch, apparently were neither copied nor quoted frequently by later generations of scholars.

Did all this creativity belong in the realm of sacred or of secular poetry? If asked, Saadiah himself would doubtless have refused to draw any such distinction. Clearly such controversial poems were not meant to be recited in the synagogue, but they might conceivably find a place in one’s private devotions. The line between study and prayer being quite tenuous, especially in private worship, many an admiring student might have considered immersion in the fine points of *Essa meshali* as the equivalent of the recitation of any *piyyut*. Certainly the introductory strophe, stating the poet’s intention to “ascribe unity to my Maker” and exhorting all creatures to “praise and exalt Him,” could have served as an opening for any liturgical poem as well. Similarly, Saadiah’s “Hymn for the Bridegroom” had a “sacred” character in so far as it was evidently intended for recitation during a religious wedding ceremony.\(^{13}\)

More significant was the distinction that, while the ancient *piyyutim* largely consisted of on-the-spot improvisations by precentors during services, the new sacred poetry, liturgical as well as academic, was but a literary product by authors writing in the seclusion of their studies. True, this distinction cannot always be documented, and indeed it may never have existed in such clear-cut fashion. Qalir’s enormous and technically often very complex output, in particular, cannot readily be envisaged as the exclusive result of momentary inspiration at the pulpit. Certainly the twenty-one different poems composed by him for the Ninth of Ab, quite possibly in twenty-one successive years, show in their rich variations on the same theme signs of premeditation and conscious differentiation. Very likely many other early cantorial “improvisations” were also born with no less travail than were the “inspired” sermons of many medieval and modern homilists, memorized to the last letter several days in advance of their delivery. Yet only in the increasingly literate era of the Islamic Renaissance could Saadiah and his confreres consciously produce liturgical poems with no intention whatsoever of reciting them in person before
an assembled congregation. By substituting the name Solomon or David for his own (Sa'îd) in the acrostic of some poems and thus intimating that it was to be recited by the one or other precentor, the gaon clearly underscored the literary nature of his liturgical works, although they differed in no way from his other poetic or prose writings, always produced with some "sacred" objective in mind. Saadia's older contemporary, Nissi al-Nahrawani, who had allegedly warned the exilarch against the appointment of the self-assertive gaon, could not recite any prayers from the pulpit, since his blindness disqualified him from leading the congregation. Yet some moving liturgical pieces by the blind bard, evidently written for recitation by others, have come to light in recent years.¹⁴

Not that cantorial creativity completely died out. Apart from supplying appropriate tunes for poems written by others, many precentors continued to write their own liturgical poetry. Now, however, they too became primarily littérature. The family Al-Baradani, especially, whose members long occupied leading cantorial positions in Baghdad, also produced significant poets in Joseph and his son Nahum. In the West, the foundations of liturgical poetry were laid by such cantors as Simon bar Isaac "the Great" of Mayence (ca. 1000), or Meir bar Isaac "the Messenger of the People" of Worms (ca. 1050). However, the cantorial monopoly was definitely broken. Some of the most prolific liturgical poets, such as Sulaiman of Cairo, seem no longer to have officiated as synagogue readers.¹⁵

This new literary character and speedy distribution of liturgical poems through many countries of the dispersion counteracted the forces of regional or parochial separation. The fact that the Cairo Genizah preserved two fragments of poems by Simon bar Isaac need not indicate the presence in the Egyptian capital of a congregation of German rite, as suggested by Habermann, but rather that poems traveled from community to community and were incorporated into local liturgies whenever they struck the fancy of worshipers or cantors. For this reason, too, we may understand the relative paucity of Franco-German liturgical poetry included in Simḥah bar Samuel's Mahzor Vitry. While in matters of law and observance R. Simḥah followed primarily Ashkenazic
authorities, he was far more cosmopolitan in the selection of liturgical poems. Among the authors quoted, most of the Franco-German poets are represented only by one piece each, while no less than eight poems by Ibn Gabirol, twelve by Abraham ibn Ezra, and twenty-six by Yehudah Halevi are included. The latter number amounts to about one fourth of the entire collection.16

Poetry had acquired so great a prestige among both Arabs and Jews throughout the Caliphate that spiritual leaders of the people, whether or not endowed with poetic gifts, often felt it incumbent upon themselves to versify in honor of the Lord. We possess penitential poems composed by an Exilarch David, who may well have considered such recitations on a par with homiletical performances. Hai Gaon himself, although head of the academy of Pumbedita which had long opposed the proliferation of piyyuṭim, joined the ranks of liturgical poets. His poetry, to be sure, reveals his deep preoccupation with public affairs. Even in his most elegiac outpourings he is less concerned with the trials and tribulations of the individual soul than with the sufferings of the people. Israel's degradation, contrasted with the power and affluence of the other nations, is the constant refrain of his lamentations. "Be jealous," he appealed to God, "for the sake of our humiliation. Or else, be jealous for the sake of Thy name!" In one poem Hai contrasted the beautiful attire of the ancient priests sacrificing the daily offering with the discriminatory garment reimposed by an imperial decree of 1031 upon the "protected subjects" throughout the Empire. He also turned to good advantage the like-sounding Hebrew words, 'ebed and 'obed, when he echoed the stereotype complaint of Jewish homilists and poets under Islam: "We the sons of the mother [Sarah] have become slaves to the sons of the slave-girl [Hagar], and the servants of God are in bondage to worshipers of idols," that is to Christians—a distinct echo of the iconoclastic controversy. Written in simple biblical style, these elegies lent themselves very well to public recitation. They were dedicated to individual readers (especially one Abraham ben Isaac), whose names in the acrostic long obscured the authorship of the last of the great geonim.17

Despite Hai's great prestige, however, which extended into the Western countries as well, his liturgical poems seem never to have
enjoyed wide acceptance. Except for a Day of Atonement prayer, 
*Shema' qoli* (Hearken to My Voice), and to a lesser extent a peni-
tential prayer of questionable authorship, *Et mi zanahita* (Whom
Didst Thou Forsake), they were never incorporated into any per-
manent ritual. They had to be laboriously pieced together by their
modern editor from a few scattered Genizah fragments. Curiously,
Hai's more secular, didactic work, *Shire musar haskel* (Poems of
Wise Conduct), was far more avidly read. It belongs among the
early classics of the ever growing ethical literature of medieval
Jewry. Evidently public and cantorial tastes, even whims, were
often more decisive than uncontested reputations gained in other
fields of learning or communal leadership. Neither were Hai's
compeers, such as David (probably ben Zakkai) the Exilarch, the
Palestinian gaon Solomon ben Yehudah, or even the Western
"Light of the Exile," R. Gershom of Mayence, more successful.
More or less gifted liturgical poets though they all were, little of
their poetic output found its way into the prayer books of any
rite.18

**SPANISH COURTS**

If in the Near East the choice of subjects and techniques was
often determined by the growingly sophisticated tastes of the small
intellectual minority, the poets of Spain and neighboring Provence
frequently had to cater to the wishes of a few powerful individuals
and their court camarillas. Moses ibn Ezra may have been right
when, in his classical survey of Spanish Hebrew poetry, he referred
to Isaac ibn Ḥalfon (early 11th cent.) as the first "professional"
poet. Before him Dunash ben Labraṭ, for instance, seems to have
derived his livelihood from the occupation of synagogue reader.
Yet even Dunash, in addressing a poem, *De'eh libbi ḥokhmah*
(My Heart, Know Wisdom), to Ḥisdai ibn Shapruṭ (some time
after 958) could not refrain from extolling the scholar-statesman's
great generosity, extending all the way to the academy of Sura.
Calling himself Ḥisdai's "servant, the youngest of teachers," he
referred to this patron with such unmistakable allusions as

He is to the destitute
Like to children a father,
BELLES-LETTRES

From his rain-pouring hands much
Bounty verse makers gather.

Much of the heat which developed in his controversy with Menahem ben Saruq evidently stemmed from the then customary rivalries among protégés of the same grandee. 19

The dissolution of the 'Umayyad Caliphate and the subsequent internecine struggles among the petty rulers throughout the Peninsula during the eleventh century further stimulated the evolution of court florid poetry among both Jews and Arabs. The more complicated the game of petty power politics became, the more room was there for domestic intrigues, the meteoric rise and decline of momentary favorites, and the desire of the ever embattled princes and their chief counselors for inner reassurance by poetic flattery. Laudatory or satirical poetry, moreover, played at that time a major political role as the most effective press agentry in support of, or in opposition to, certain personalities or ideas. Influencing public opinion among one's own subjects, as well as among the subjects of one's friendly or hostile neighbors, certainly was worth a considerable investment in the patronage of talented poetic propagandists. Todros Abulafia’s characterization of genuine magnate as a gentleman "who disperses his fortune to accumulate laudations" held largely true for the entire Golden Age. Apart from the immediate advantage of a good press, many a grandee sought in this way to influence the judgment of posterity as well, and to secure for himself a bit of immortality. Many believed, with Moses ibn Ezra, that "a statement in prose vanishes like the flight of cinders, while a poem remains like an inscription engraved in stone. Through poems are eternally recorded the virtues of generous men and the faults of misers." The patrons therefore treated their gifted protégés with a mixture of awe and condescension and assigned to them positions ranging all the way from glorified domestics to close confidants. 20

Such quest for immortality through the medium of poetic laudations was itself a novel feature in Jewish life. In the talmudic age and after, great leaders of the academies were remembered for their sayings and exemplary conduct, but their memory was preserved by posterity essentially as a lesson to subsequent generations. Their halakhic decisions, moreover, had to be recorded in their names,
for, according to certain long-accepted rules, majority opinion followed some sages in certain legal areas and others in their particular specialties. During the geonic age, too, decisions rendered by academic leaders were recorded in their names, not for the purpose of their authors' glorification, but rather in order to lend them greater canonical validity and to enable students to trace them back to the sources in case of conflicting transmission. The rank and file of academic teachers, on the other hand, like the innumerable homilists and synagogue readers, were largely satisfied with the recognition by colleagues and informed contemporaries, and rarely shed the cloak of anonymity which enveloped their contributions. Nor had communal leaders done much about perpetuating their own memory. Not even exilarchs are known to have employed court historiographers or poets to hand down the record of their achievements to posterity. However, once Spanish Jewry had caught the bug of literary immortality from its Arab neighbors, the fashion rapidly spread to the Eastern lands and gradually made its way into Christian Europe as well.

One must not overlook the basic difference between the power of Jewish and Arab patrons. The latter were as a rule kings or viziers who, however impotent in relation to their neighbors, reigned despotsically and often quite arbitrarily in their own domains. Samuel ibn Nagrela himself wrote from personal observation,

Kings frequently forgive some grievous sins,
But make heads roll for minor digressions.
At times they gladly hearken to lies
But shut their ears to honest confessions.

Nor can one miss the tone of personal anxiety in Samuel's query,

Is there a joy which equals that . . .
Of lifting friends and humbling foes,
Or sleeping without the fear of kings?

or in his remarkable simile,

A royal favorite
Is like a lion rider
Feared by all who see him,
He trembles at his bearer.
In contrast thereto, Jewish grandees, even Samuel himself, could punish a recalcitrant poet by withdrawing his pension or even forcing him to leave the community. But they could never seriously endanger the life of a protégé. Even the excommunication and self-imposed exile of the jurist-poet Joseph ibn Abitur was an exceptionally drastic penalty inflicted on a leader who had antagonized both a community and its commanding personality.21

Long before Pietro Aretino, on the other hand, Arab and Jewish poets had discovered the great power of character assassination inherent in satirical poems, and their enormous blackmailing potential. Already Menahem ben Saruq, countering the disgrace into which he had fallen with Hisdai ibn Shaprut, pointed out to the statesman the power of his pen in combating Hisdai’s enemies, but he also unmistakably warned his former patron that the direction of these shafts could easily be changed. In the hands of unscrupulous poets this could indeed become a dangerous weapon, and moralists like Bahya and Maimonides strongly objected to its indiscriminate use. Ultimately, the thirteenth-century ethical philosopher, Israel al-Naqawa, characterized the abuse heaped by poets on their personal enemies as “the worst kind of an evil tongue.” Such unsavory practices could but accentuate the antipathy of many jurists, both Arab and Jewish, toward poetry, as we have noted already in the case of piyyuṭim.22

It is difficult today to gauge the extent of the political and social influence wielded by gifted versifiers in eleventh- and twelfth-century Spain. Literary talent often became a prerequisite for a political career, inasmuch as official and especially diplomatic correspondence, following the fashion of the age, had to be couched in literary, often outright poetic, forms. That is why so many rulers and statesmen themselves joined the ranks of poets and writers. According to a wholly credible story recorded by Ibn Daud, Samuel ibn Nagrela owed his sudden rise to power in Granada to his scribal elegance in the composition of letters for one of the vizier’s slave girls. Of course, this was only an entering wedge for the Jewish shopkeeper to become acquainted with the royal counselor, who soon appreciated Samuel’s extraordinary versatility and sound talents. However, even at the acme of his power
as chief diplomatic and financial adviser and on occasion, military commander for the Crown, the Nagid’s literary abilities helped him to stave off many an attack by rivals and Muslim bigots. He thus maintained himself in his exalted position to the end of his days, and even transmitted it as an inheritance to his less able son. It is small wonder, then, that time and again he extolled in his poems the power of his pen:

A man’s wisdom rests in his writing,
Through the pen his reasoning is shown,
By his pen he may wind his way up
To the splendor of the royal throne.

Although for this purpose full command of the Arabic poetic arts was a major requirement, the knowledge of other languages spoken in the multinational Peninsula proved of great utility to any negotiator and statesman. Samuel himself trained his sons in the Arabic language and poetry from their early childhood. But such preference indirectly accrued to the benefit of Hebrew poetry as well. In fact, the Nagid taught his son Eliasaf, then aged six, to transcribe his Hebrew poems, and he aided his other son and successor, Joseph, in composing a poem at the age of nine.23

Such impact on public opinion can be explained only by the presence throughout Spain of a relatively large and influential intelligentsia to whom poetry, even more than grammar, was of vital personal concern. Not only were poems widely read and frequently copied, but oral improvisations were often quickly memorized and more or less accurately transmitted to other groups. In his Kitab al-Luma’ (xviii, pp. 207 f.; Sefer ha-Riqmah, pp. 226 f.), Ibn Janaḥ reminisced that he himself had incorrectly recited a verse by his teacher, Isaac ben Saul, because the copyists of “most books” had replaced there a difficult word by a simpler one. Like many of his contemporaries, Isaac evidently delighted in using here an extraordinary grammatical form which could be understood only through a clever application of a rare biblical parallel.

Frequent parlor games tested the guests’ powers of improvisation. Some poets developed an astonishing technical mastery, and produced verses of complicated rhythm and rhyme according to a pattern set by an opposing player, or else in emulation of some celebrated poem. In one of his letters, Yehudah Halevi described
such an exhibition of skills in imitation of a poem by Moses ibn Ezra. For the amusement of sophisticated audiences some poets produced poems making sense when read both forward and backward. Al-Ḥarizi, for example, dedicated a poem to a well-known miserly patron. When read straightforwardly it consisted of a series of blessings, but in reverse it contained as many curses. At times poets improvised on street corners, vying there for popular favor with the storytellers and itinerant preachers. When they overstayed their welcome at one court or lost their popularity with the public of one city, they often moved to another. Thus arose in Spain and neighboring Provence the traveling troubadour, Arab, Jewish, or Christian, who apparently paved the way for his more renowned medieval French successor. Isaac Gorni, in particular, wandered for years through southern France, half tramp, half revered poet.24

While increasing the temptation to pure virtuosity and even meaningless poetic acrobatics, this widespread popular acclaim lent the poet a social standing and influence such as he has enjoyed in few historical periods. Among Spanish Jews, too, the poet ranked with the jurist and the philosopher as the main intellectual spokesman of the people. In fact, some of the greatest poets were themselves either famous jurists (Joseph ibn Abitur, Isaac ibn Gayyat, Samuel ibn Nagrela) or keen philosophers (Ibn Gabirol, Halevi). To secure complete popular acceptance, however, as well as a measure of immortality among the masses, poets depended on the inclusion of some of their sacred lyrics in one or another recognized prayer book. At times even great poets like Ibn Gabirol composed old-style piyyutim after the manner of Yannai and Qalir, side by side with philosophically more refined prayers of adoration of the type of Ibn Gabirol’s masterpiece, the “Royal Crown.”

STELLAR ACHIEVEMENTS

Out of this spiritual and intellectual ferment arose a galaxy of great poets and grandmasters of Hebrew style such as the world had not seen since the days of the Old Testament prophets. Samuel ben Joseph ha-Levi ibn Nagrela (993–1056), Solomon ben Yehu-
dah ibn Gabirol (ca. 1022–51 or 1022–70), Moses ben Jacob ibn Ezra (ca. 1060–1138), and Yehudah ben Samuel Halevi (ca. 1075–1141) were but the greatest of these immortals. Even Samuel's star was long obscured by the shining brightness of his three successors, whom Al-Ḥarizi had already glorified as the supreme and unsurpassable triad. Only in recent decades have scholars become acquainted with most of the poems of the statesman of Granada, whose claim to immortality had theretofore rested chiefly with his political successes and his significant halakhic contributions. But, since the recent discovery and publication of his Diwan, he has emerged as a poet of prime magnitude, one who introduced into Hebrew letters themes and poetic moods unheard of since the loss of Jewish independence.  

Ibn Gabirol of Malaga ultimately joined the ranks of Samuel's pensioners. For a number of years, however, he had lived in Saragossa on the payroll of another Jewish grandee, Yequitiel ibn Ḥassan, whom he immortalized in several poems. Extraordinarily precocious, Solomon composed some of his most beautiful and thought-provoking poems, including a lengthy poetic discourse on the six hundred and thirteen commandments, at the age of sixteen. At nineteen he added his aforementioned poem on grammatical rules (Anaq). He was orphaned in his childhood, and he never married, although later legend supplied him with a woman created by magic. The celibatarian poet-philosopher considered himself fortunate for being "consumed with the quest for wisdom, while others allow love to devour their substance." He spent his span of life (less than thirty years, according to Al-Ḥarizi, though he seems to have lived much longer) on writing several philosophic and ethical treatises and creating, in an almost endless flow, poems on a vast variety of subjects.

Although more than three hundred of these poems have already been included in the major collection of Ibn Gabirol's poetic works, additional poems are still emerging from the obscurity of medieval manuscripts and rare early prints. Besides religious themes, they include the usual encomia on benefactors, bitter attacks on private enemies, poems of self-glorification, and other secular topics. Embittered by the constant chicaneries of his rivals,
Ibn Gabirol combined utter contempt for them with new heights of self-laudation. Typical of many others is his sneer:

Crooked as a camel, trivial as an ant,
Devious as a fox, as a steer unyielding
They are wholly clad in pettiness and shame,
Utter folly being sown unto their frame.

In contrast thereto he claimed for himself that "I am the boy endowed even before my birth / With the understanding of a sage of eighty." Most of the Saragossan poet's creativity, however, is permeated with a deep quest for new religious truths. At the same time, as noted by Moses ibn Ezra, "he emphasized in his poems ideas based on the laws of the Torah in consonance with tradition." His religious poetry, culminating in the "Royal Crown" recited by countless thousands on the evening of the Day of Atonement, elicited universal admiration, "and even the jealous praised him." He thus fulfilled the vow so beautifully expressed in his poem:

Thy name I remember and whisper
As waters whisper in constant flow
My mind refuses to abandon
Thy keen remembrance stamped on my brow
As Thou hast never withheld Thy grace
I shall forever strive Thee to praise.27

Moses ibn Ezra was born in the last years of Ibn Gabirol's life, or perhaps even after his demise. Recognizing in his predecessor a "knight of style and master of poetry," Moses modeled himself after the sage of Saragossa in many ways, but he refrained from venomous attacks on personal enemies. He regretted, as we recall, even the few satirical poems he had written in his youth. If his poems are permeated with pessimism, and even more frequently filled with complaints about personal misfortunes, this was owing to his truly unhappy career. Although, like Ibn Gabirol and Halevi, he was envied by the mercenary Al-Ḥarizi for the patronage extended to him by wealthy benefactors, he was really an unlucky wanderer, who, leaving his native Granada some time after the city had fallen into the hands of the intolerant Almoravids in 1090, moved from place to place in Christian Castile and Aragon.
The difference in the general level of civilization between the northern and the southern regions still was so great that, as we recollect, our poet could never reconcile himself to the life of an exile in the new, backward environment. He did not, however, allow his personal unhappiness to overwhelm him. Apart from his complaints and his constant reassertions of his superiority (he felt “like a plucked rose among thorns”), his writings, both in verse and in prose, bear testimony to a gentle, deeply ethical, and, in the ultimate sense, even serene soul.  

Ibn Ezra’s younger friend Halevi tried to comfort him. In a moving poem on parting, Halevi wrote to the ever disconsolate master:

We have known thee to roam from thy days of youth
Shed of tears a river flowing in a torrent.
But shall we spar with time which has never sinned,
And with days that harbor no design abhorrent? . . .
For man was united, only to divide,
That a people bring forth diverse populations,
Had the sons of man not parted from of old,
Our earth would not be settled now with many nations.

Not that Halevi himself was altogether reconciled to the existing realities. Of a far sunnier disposition than either Solomon or Moses, Yehudah might have felt perfectly happy with his medical career, his loving family, and his host of devoted friends. Even in his mature years, when he turned to philosophy, for “if wisdom is like the sea’s expanse, poetic rhymes are like its foam,” he could no more help versifying than could young Ovid in his well-known *iam iam*. But, living on an erupting volcano, on the very frontier between the retreating world of Islam and advancing Christendom, then permeated with an ardent crusading spirit, he felt more keenly than his predecessors the untenability of the Jewish position in that divided world. Creatively responding to the great world crisis of his time, he sought not only personal salvation by leaving his country for the land of his forefathers, but he also began singing his immortal odes to Zion. He soon became the national bard, as he was also to become the philosopher of the Jewish national heritage for medieval Jewry.

Apart from these four shining luminaries, eleventh- and twelfth-
century Spain brought forth an array of other outstanding poets. Moses ibn Ezra, as unerring in his critical evaluation of the poetic achievements of others as he was severe in the standards he had set for himself, enumerated in a lengthy sketch the great poets of the preceding generations on the Iberian Peninsula. Of many poets whom he extolled, not a single poem has come down to us. Only a few proved to have had an enduring influence. Among these one need mention only the distinguished jurists Joseph ibn Abitur and Isaac ibn Gayyat, the great Bible commentators Moses ibn Chiquitilla and Abraham ibn Ezra, and, like the latter, the world wanderer Yehudah al-Harizi, whom Heinrich Heine once called a “Voltaireian six hundred years before Voltaire.” With Al-Harizi, the “Golden Age” of Spanish-Jewish poetry drew to its close, although a number of significant poetic creations continued to emanate from the Iberian Peninsula to the very era of expulsions. The poetic works of Abraham’s son, Isaac ibn Ezra, are more important from the standpoint of social than of literary history, because they shed a weird light on the thought processes of the scion of a distinguished Jewish family, first converted to Islam, probably out of love for a Muslim woman, then repenting and returning to the fold. Similarly, Yehudah ibn ‘Abbas (d. 1177), is known not only as a poet of distinction, but also as the father of the convert Samau’al al-Maghribi, to whose anti-Jewish work we owe so much information on the Judeo-Muslim religious controversies, as well as on some forgotten phases of Jewish history, including the evolution of early medieval liturgy.  

SECULAR THEMES

The upsurge in Spanish-Jewish creativity found expression not only in the growing quantity and ever more refined quality of the new output, but also in a great thematic revolution. Theretofore Hebrew poetry was mainly concerned with religious topics, and, to all intents and purposes, it had served as a handmaiden of liturgy. Even poems never intended for recitation in the synagogue, such as wedding songs, dirges, or poems for circumcision, had a more or less direct connection with religious ceremonies. In medieval Spain, however, the progressive secularization of Hebrew poetry
led to a thematic diversification which ultimately covered a wide range of human relations. After timid beginnings concerned chiefly with friendship poems, versified polemics, and poetic exaltation of patrons, with which the Golden Age was ushered in in the days of Ḥisdai ibn Shaprut, topical diversity reached a sudden climax in the work of Samuel ibn Nagrela.

As a poet Samuel responded to the inner urge of an egocentric memorialist, recording all significant happenings in a sort of running poetic diary, as much as to fashions prevailing at the Arab court, where he lived constantly on the alert against the fluctuating friendly and inimical forces. A long series of his poems describes in graphic detail his military and political exploits. Since he often accompanied the armies, and on more than one occasion faced death on the battlefield, his vivid descriptions of battle scenes have no peer in Hebrew letters. Hardly any other Hebrew poet of the pre-Emancipation era could have written a description of such colorful immediacy as the following:

The two armies confronted one another
   Host deployed against host standing at bay,
Men felt like first-born, proud of partaking
   Of a day of wrath, jealous in the fray,
Each striving to gain glory and fame—
   While life’s strength was ebbing away.

The earth was stirred up from its foundations,
   Plunged in turmoil as at Gomorrah’s quakes,
Faces which had shone with strength and beauty
   Were darkened now like stove-blackened rakes.

The day was clouded in mist and darkness,
   The sun, like my heart, covered by a veil,
The crowd’s shouts resembled thunder and sea roar
   With waves whipped high by a powerful gale.

At sunrise the ground seemed to heave and tremble,
   Shaking like a drunkard to walk unfit,
Horses running wild darted back and forth,
   Like startled reptiles thrown out of their pit.

Untold numbers of lances, like lightning,
   Filled the air with sparks of illumination,
Arrows pouring out, like raindrops, in sheets
   Gave men’s backs a sieve-like perforation.
Bows in archers' hands resembled irate snakes,
Spitting out swarms of vicious stinging bees,
The riders' swords aflame high over their heads,
Suddenly turned dull when below their knees.

Men's blood began flowing, drenching the ground,
Like the blood of cattle beside an altar,
Mighty men of valor lost their will to live,
Preferring the choice of victory or slaughter,
Young lions gloried in a festering wound
In their heads, as if it were a crown.
Slaying a neighbor became a good deed,
Letting live the cause of a serious frown.

Even in the description of this battle with the enemy forces of the
prince of Almeria, which in 1037 saved the Jewish vizier from the
intrigues of his inveterate enemy Ibn 'Abbas, Samuel could not
quite refrain from such ethical asides as the last-quoted verses. If
on other occasions he did not hesitate to fill pages with invective
and bloodthirsty gloating over the downfall of his enemies, these
passages often sound more like a reprise of phrases long common
in Arabic letters than an expression of the author's innermost
feelings.  

Equally stereotyped are most of the love poems of the period.
Even Yehudah Halevi, who came closer than any of his compeers
to resuscitating the ardor of the Song of Songs in Hebrew letters,
frequently adhered to widely accepted erotic themes and imagery
which tended to obscure the personality of both lover and be-
loved. For example, his complaint of total enslavement to his self-
assertive 'Ophrah (synonym for sweetheart) could have been voiced
in exactly the same words by any other poet:

'Ophrah launders her clothes in buckets of my tears,
And spreads them out to dry in her beauty's sunlight,
She needs no spring water, since she controls my eyes,
Nor looks for the sun, since radiance is her birthright.

Even more stilted are many comparisons adduced by Samuel ibn
Nagrela to extol the charms of his beloved. In one of his fifteen
poetic variations on the old Arabic theme that the apple was meant
to be admired because of its smell, looks, and touch but not to be
bitten into, the Nagid praised his sweetheart's likeness to the apple
and characterized her as being “as smooth as its texture, as sweet as its taste, and as red-cheeked as its skin.”

Ibn Gabirol wrote no erotic poetry at all. Many of his poems attest to his conscious abnegation of worldly rewards, which may have been but the result of the apparently permanent physical ailments of which he allegedly died at the early age of twenty-nine, at least according to a persistent tradition. The following brief stanzas may serve as a telling illustration:

If you desire to live with men of eternity,
Your soul trembles before the underworld’s flame,
Make light of worldly values, and be not misguided
By riches, honors, an heir to your name.

You must cherish highly poverty and debasement,
And die, as Seled did, without a kin.
Try to know intimately your soul, for it alone
Will endure beyond all your flesh and skin.

Childless Seled (I Chron. 2:30) had long engaged the attention of homilists, but he had rarely been invoked as an example to be followed. Like most of his colleagues, Solomon spiritualized earthly love into an *amor Dei intellectualis*, so fully developed already by the ancient allegorizers of the biblical Song of Songs. At times such Platonic love was transferred to the poet’s men friends, but without smacking of quite the outright homosexuality that characterized much of contemporary Arabic poetry. Most of the wine ditties, too, very widespread in Spanish-Hebrew poetry, betray little originality. Devoid of the added sweetness of “stolen waters”—neither Jewish law nor society frowned on moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages—many of these creations followed accepted patterns and, for the most part, could readily be interchanged among their authors. And yet, the very fact that so many lyrics could be dedicated to the praise of worldly enjoyments was a startling innovation in Hebrew literature. At the same time, this extreme imitation of Arabic patterns, in themselves often strongly influenced by ancient Greek prototypes, at times had a distinctly nationalistic motivation. Proud not only of the antiquity but also of the richness and pliability of their ancient Hebrew language, these Jewish poets often tried to show that their ancestral tongue lent itself to the exercise of sophisticated
poetic techniques, even stunts, on an infinite variety of subjects. Friendship poems, on the contrary, and those relating to personal joys and sorrows, have for the most part an authentic ring. Discounting obvious exaggerations, even the glorification of patrons often lends expression to genuine feelings of gratitude and admiration. For example, Ibn Gabirol’s several poems exalting his Saragossan benefactor, Yequitiel ibn Ḥassan, have all the earmarks of a sincere personal attachment which did not cease even at moments of temporary misunderstanding. When such unavoidable differences arose among the friends, the poet may have felt deserted by his old benefactor, whom he then styled “father of abandonment,” but he still claimed that there was not enough water in the world to extinguish the ardor of his love for Yequitiel, since, after the days of Noah, God had forsworn the use of another deluge. Upon the tragic death of his patron, Ibn Gabirol composed a long, moving dirge, beginning Bi-Yeme Yequitiel (In Yequitiel’s Days), in which he erected for his departed friend a monument far more enduring than any stone placed on the latter’s grave. Ibn Gabirol’s several poems addressed to Samuel ibn Nagrela, on the other hand, combined acknowledgment of benefactions with genuine reverence for the intellectual accomplishments of the great Nagid, whom he once extolled as “my father, my rider, and my chariot,” terms borrowed from the ancient prophetic exaltation of the Divine power. His versatile pen could, on the other hand, be as sharp in adverse criticism as it was warm in praise. In fact, his attacks on enemies, real and imaginary, were more widely quoted than his poems of friendship. Moses ibn Ezra was not altogether wrong in writing that “although he [Ibn Gabirol] by nature and training belonged to the philosophers, his excitable temper dominated his reason. He never could suppress his anger nor overcome his inner Satan. It was easy for him to make fun of distinguished men, and write about them in derisive and debasing terms.”

Samuel ibn Nagrela, on his part, devoted much of his poetry to his own family, recording as if in a poetic memoir his immediate reactions to such family events as the illness of a child. The following dirge on the death of his brother Isaac may serve as a telling illustration of the poet’s uncontrolled grief and his unwillingness
later to expunge passages which, upon calmer reflection, he might have left unwritten:

I journeyed to visit my brother on hearing
    Some men talk about his lying broken and ill.
A harbinger of evil met me in silence,
    I inquired, "Is Isaac among the living still?"
The messenger said bluntly, "He has passed away!"
    "Keep quiet!" I cursed him, "and control your tongue wild,
May your ears be filled with all sorts of misfortunes,
    Your father and mother be bereaved of their child!
I have brought here with me a famous physician,
    Who's healed many patients as helpless as my kin.
Why, then, should a leader, by his brethren beloved,
    Be allowed to perish to his nation's chagrin?"
He answered me curtly, "No one managed to wince,
    After a fatal illness, be he pauper or prince."

Some time later our poet, still disconsolate, added a stanza:

    My heart has despaired of his coming back to life
        And of my ever seeing his image again,
    I must live on in sorrow, or else seek respite,
        By following him in death, from my mourning's strain.

Even more eloquent was Abraham ibn Ezra's famous dirge over
the loss of his son Isaac. This dirge may be taken literally as the
outcry of a bereaved father weeping over his son's death in a
strange land three years previously, although it could have re-
ferred to the latter's spiritual "death" through conversion to
Islam. The blow occasioned by the son's voluntary act may have
proved even more lastingly painful than would have been his
natural death, and the wound might well have refused to heal
even after the passage of three years. In any case, the son's ultimate
repentance and return to the ancestral faith, became, in turn, the
source of many memorable poetic confessions from Isaac's pen.35

None of the Spanish poets, however, could rival Yehudah Halevi
in the number and eloquence of his poems, relating to friendship
of a dedicated type toward a host of individuals. Endowed with a
real genius for friendship, this warm-hearted poet seems to have
attracted devoted companions wherever he chanced to come dur-
ing his numerous wanderings. Moses ibn Ezra, whom he always
cherished as his mentor, inspired him to compose no less than fifteen poems of glowing praise and devotion. Halevi could never reconcile himself to parting from this beloved friend or to the latter’s settling among the relatively uncouth coreligionists of Christian Spain. Time and again he punned on this “western light” (ma’arabi) returning to his original habitat (ma’arabkha). Leave taking of beloved companions was generally very serious, in so far as the political divisions and mutual hostility prevailing among the states of the Iberian Peninsula greatly diminished the chances for parting friends ever to see each other again. On the other hand, upon his arrival in Egypt Halevi quickly acquired a great host of admirers who made his stay so pleasurable that he constantly put off his departure for the inhospitable shores of the Holy Land, the ultimate and unwavering goal of his life’s journey. Since many of these friends in both Egypt and Spain were gifted poets in their own right and several answered Halevi in kind, only the overshadowing beauty of expression and the good taste of these authors prevented the Halevi circle from degenerating into one of the then not uncommon mutual admiration societies.36

Among those quick to respond was Moses ibn Ezra. But, unlike his younger friend, Moses filled his own poems with unending complaints about the cruel treatment he had received from life. One need but compare his plaintive Eyne selaim dam’u damo’a (The Rocks’ Eyes Were Filled with Tears) with Halevi’s briefer lyric, Ekh akhrekha emsa margo’a (How Shall I Find Peace after Thy Departure?), to which it was a direct reply. This exclusive preoccupation with his own fate, however, was not owing to Ibn Ezra’s pronounced egocentricity alone, but also to his inability to make new friends in his places of exile. He was eternally starved for some deep personal attachments such as those he had known in his youth in Granada. We may, indeed, believe his assertion that

If in mine exile I might meet but one,  
With whom to hold sweet converse of the mind,  
Then I would willingly forgive Fate’s spite,  
That sent me forth, so dear a friend to find.

Moses ibn Chiquitilla, finally, complained of unreciprocated friendship. Perhaps referring to olive branches he had extended to his unrelenting critic Yehudah ibn Bal’am, he lamented, “I love
and they hate, / I make peace, they war, / I even kiss their hand, / But they slap my face.” 37

Poetry now branched out into all fields of human endeavor. We recall that the struggle over grammatical rules was conducted by the disciples of Dunash ben Labraṭ and Menahem ben Saruq under the guise of polemical rhymes, and that even Menahem’s pupils found themselves forced to employ the Arabic meter so as to demonstrate their equal linguistic mastery. Such superficial rivalries may appear rather childish to us, but they made good sense to a generation accustomed to the linguistic acrobatics of minority groups bent upon proving that their own languages were no less pliable than Arabic. Did not Ibn Gabirol himself poetically expound his philological concepts in his famous “Necklace”? The extant fragment of this poem demonstrates that in the hands of a master even such a technical exposition could combine exactitude in philological detail with lyrical beauty. Didactic poems soon spread to other branches of human knowledge, and finally penetrated also the realm of science. It was particularly Abraham ibn Ezra who devoted (in his philosophical Hai ben Meqis) a number of distinguished lyrics to a variety of astrological topics, which had become, next to the study of the Bible, the overriding passion of his life. From the days of Dunash ben Labraṭ, moreover, gifted Spanish-Jewish poets, like their Muslim confreres, spent much of their energy in formulating clever riddles taxing the ingenuity of readers. They covered a multitude of subjects, all designed to test the listener’s erudition as well as his quick wits with respect to some linguistic or juridical problem. Many a reputation was established through such contributions to parlor games, often improvised on the spot. While the early riddles by Dunash still reveal technical inadequacies and sound belabored, those of Halevi combine ingenuity with grace. For example, his quatrain

An object embracing the infinite,
So tiny your hand can conceal,
Too far from your reach its contents to seize,
And yet near enough to reveal,

was often quoted to indicate a mirror. This importation from the East became contagious in Spain, and from there was reexported to others lands of Jewish settlement.38
ETHICS AND HISTORY

Medieval Hebrew poetry would not have been true to the entire Jewish tradition had it not dealt at great length also with ethical teachings and historical narratives, particularly those related to biblical events. Clearly, both of these subjects closely bordered on religious interests, and sometimes their treatment may be subsumed under the general term of sacred poetry. However, most ethical teachings were concerned with purely worldly wisdom, even more secular in nature than the biblical Proverbs from which many authors drew their main inspiration. The historical poems, too, often assumed a new, secular coloring. Not only were many contemporary events recorded by their poetic chroniclers, with little if any reference to the general divine guidance of history, but almost all descriptions were now permeated with a new, semimodern spirit of nationalism. Although ancient Hebrew poetry too had always been infused with the idea of national self-realization, there was a basic difference between the nationalism of tribes living on their own soil and the national aspirations of a scattered people in exile, which, despite all odds, yearned deeply for its ultimate redemption in the land of promise.

Even physical manifestations in nature were often imbued with some ethical or historical meaning. These artists had an eye for lovely landscapes and turbulent seas, but they made nature itself subservient to their own emotion by depicting it either as but a blind instrument of the divine will, or else as an unwitting reflection of their own momentary feelings. For example, without the conclusion, Ibn Gabirol's beautiful description of a sunset would have been but another impressive word painting of a recurrent natural phenomenon. But the last verse turned it into a moving dirge on Yequiel's assassination:

See the sun redden on evening's approach,
As if it were clad in a crimson spread,
It disrobes the corners of north and south,
And covers the sea with a purply red.
It leaves the earth behind, naked and bare,
Hovering calmly in the shadow of night.
Of a sudden the sky grows dark, as if
It donned a sack on Yequiel’s blight.

Similarly, Halevi’s renowned cycle composed during his stormy sea journey to Egypt includes precious gems of descriptive power. But it invariably turns to the poet’s feelings of loneliness away from his accustomed environment, his helplessness in the face of danger, where “glory comes not to wise and knowledgable men, but to those who know how to swim,” and his ultimate reliance on the saving grace divine. The same holds true for the graphic artistry of Moses ibn Ezra and the other poets. In fact, as in contemporary Arabic letters, the sun and the stars, clouds and snow often became stereotype symbols of human actions and reactions. Only occasionally were they to be taken literally, as in the witty complaint of the distinguished jurist-poet R. Meir ha-Levi Abulafia (ca.1170–1244) about the combination of heat and rain which bedeviled his journey:

The burning heat of wandering has consumed my heart and soul,
While streams from the sky came down on my head, and engulfed my knees,
I said, “O Lord, Thou causeth fire to run of water afoul,
Please choose one, and don’t chastise me with both fire and dripping seas.39

The progressive rediscovery of the works of Samuel ibn Nagrela also brought to light his large collection of aphorisms, entitled Ben Mishle (Offshoots of Proverbs)—a clear indication of the author’s indebtedness to the biblical book. The fairly complete text now embraces a total of 1199 epigrams, for the most part consisting of four-verse stanzas, although many extend to a dozen lines and more. Apparently arranged by the Nagid’s young son Eliasaf under his supervision and according to a formal scheme of its own, the collection included observations on a wide range of human activities, partly borrowed from literature, but largely derived from the author’s own rich experience. That he would not indicate his sources lay not only in the nature of this type of literature, but also in the then fairly general custom of disregarding literary property in the exposition of what one believed to be true. It is generally agreed that the compiler of the biblical Proverbs need not have been familiar with similar ancient Near Eastern collections
even where his formulation bears close resemblance to theirs; only the sequence of Amenope's book of wisdom indicates some direct indebtedness. In the same manner, even great verbal similitude in medieval words of wisdom, if not altogether accidental, proves little more than that two authors apparently drew their inspiration from the same apothegms freely circulating from mouth to mouth through many lands. The topics were as a rule of such wide interest that they lent themselves to constant repetition, as well as unconscious rediscovery, by writers completely unknown to one another. A stanza like the following from the Nagid's pen could have been written by any number of keen observers of human life:

Three persons answer softly,
   Even when they rant and rail,
Your reigning king, a patient
   In great pain, and—a female.

We surely should not be astonished to find a disproportionately large number of Samuel's aphorisms dealing with court life and the behavior of rulers. In these matters he spoke indeed with great authority.40

Samuel's great personal popularity added to the influence of his ethical teachings. As a distinguished jurist and leader of the Jewish community in his own country he maintained an extensive correspondence with Jewish leaders in other lands, including Hushiel and Nissim of Kairuwan (the latter's daughter became his son Joseph's wife), Exilarch Hezekiah, and Hai Gaon in Babylonia. According to fashion, such correspondence was sometimes couched in poetic terms, and often included gifts of excerpts from one's poetic works. Supported by the Nagid's growing reputation as statesman and philanthropist, his works became known "to the ends of East and West." Moses ibn Ezra, extolling this worldwide popularity, admits that after the Nagid's death there arose many carping critics who found fault with Samuel's grammar. In this formative period of Hebrew philology, we recall, controversies over minutiae of language often raged with the fervor of political or religious conflicts. However, the wisdom of his epigrams remained uncontested. "They are more renowned and accepted by all," Ibn Ezra added hyperbolically, "than the miracle in Gibeah,
and more sparkling than the very sun in the midst of the skies."  

Samuel’s example could not fail to stimulate the interest of authors and public in ethical poetry. Ibn Ezra spoke of numerous imitators, even plagiarists, conscious and involuntary. Among the authors distinguished in their own right who enriched the Jewish ethical literature by a considerable number of new, or newly reformulated, pearls of wisdom were Hai Gaon and Ibn Gabirol. Although of somewhat uncertain authorship, the lengthy didactic poems Shire Musar haskel (Wise Conduct) were early attributed to the great gaon of Pumbedita. Because of Hai’s great fame, this collection enjoyed considerable reputation throughout the Middle Ages, and ultimately it was twice translated into Latin.  

Ibn Gabirol, too, always deeply interested in ethics and the author of a fine Arabic treatise “On the Improvement of the Moral Qualities of the Soul,” wrote a collection of moral aphorisms known only in the Hebrew text under the title Mibhar hapeninim (Choice of Pearls). It seems that the original, since lost, was written in Arabic, and that the highly popular Hebrew text came only from a translation by Yehudah ibn Tibbon. If so, Ibn Gabirol probably wrote it in Arabic prose. However, before a century passed it was recast in poetic form by Joseph Qimhi and republished under the title Sheqel ha-godesh (Sacred Shekel). It too was also later published in a Latin translation. Poetic and prose epigrams were also composed by most other famous Spanish poets, some being widely quoted in such prose works as ethical wills. We recall the extensive and reverent use to which Samuel’s Ben Mishle was put by Yehudah ibn Tibbon in his “Will.”  

Contemporary historical events, on the other hand, were far less frequently the subject of poetic description in Muslim lands, although, as we shall see, they were to become a primary subject for the penitential prayers composed in the Franco-German communities. In the south we must often be satisfied with such generalities as Moses ibn Chiquitilla’s telling distinction between the “wounds” inflicted by Edom’s knights and the “yoke of taxes” imposed by the valorous sons of Qedar. Undoubtedly many more poems of contemporary relevance were written in Spain and elsewhere than are now extant. For the most part of interest only to a
particular region, locality, or even family, such poems carried little appeal outside the immediate range of interested groups, and hence they were rarely copied. That is why even the historically and autobiographically significant poems by Samuel ha-Nagid have been preserved in few manuscripts. The Cairo Genizah itself, a rich treasure trove for all other branches of literature, has yielded only a few relatively minor epics or litanies relating to contemporary historical developments. Those hitherto uncovered are often far from specific, and pass over concrete details in favor of pious sentiments which could relate to almost any similar situation. A poem describing a Palestinian earthquake, for example, is uncertain as to both date and authorship, although it seems to refer to events of 1033 and was possibly written by one Samuel bar Shalom. Of greater interest is a poem relating to anti-Jewish riots in Egypt (in 1011–12), written by the prolific poet Samuel ben Hosa'nah (the Third), while the personal lamentation by one Yeshu'a ben Nathan on the death of his son in 1025 belongs to the class of friendship poems and dirges, of which a large number is extant from Spain and other countries. However, the Spanish and other Mediterranean communities did not have the good fortune to preserve their genizahs.44

Of a different kind were poems describing episodes from biblical history which were of universal interest and had long been embellished by the fertile imagination of homilists and liturgical writers. To be sure, Muslim leaders frowned upon the retelling of the Qur'anic stories in any form other than that contained in the sacred book itself. This negative attitude may have put a damper on the zeal of Jewish poets, too, accounting for the relative paucity of epics on biblical themes, such as had been written by Philo the Elder. However, the tradition of talmudic homilists and payyetanim offered strong encouragement, with added incentive arising from the new general preoccupation with scriptural studies. From ancient times, moreover, biblical stories lent themselves to allegorical reinterpretation, which lifted them from the realm of historical accident into that of timeless metaphysical and ethical doctrines. In a recently recovered liturgical poem by Ibn Gabirol, for instance, the entire sacred history from the Creation to the building of the First Temple is reviewed in
symbolic terms of sin and its forgiveness through repentance. Such allegorization of biblical history is characteristic in fact of much of Ibn Gabirol’s poetic as well as philosophic creativity. Other philosophizing poets, like Yehudah Halevi, used such biblical materials with less overt allegory, but essentially also with the aim of conveying some moral. Only occasionally did Halevi follow the usual theme of earlier liturgical poets, as in his poem on “Elijah and Elisha” for recitation at the Habdalal ceremony on Saturday night. This poem is prefaced by the characteristic messianic exclamation “Our signs have been delayed, / Where is the God of Elijah?”

As in the case here mentioned, most such historical poems belonged to the domain of sacred, rather than secular poetry. Even contemporary historical events in both the Mediterranean and the northern countries were largely recorded in poems designed for synagogue recitation at memorial services or ritualistic occasions. Of course, some of these lyrics may have originated from personal utterances of pious souls in their private communion with God. Only later one or another congregation, impressed by their content, may have decided to include them in its worship on special occasions. Such undoubtedly was the origin of the famous Zionide elegies by Yehudah Halevi—that purest and loftiest expression of medieval Jewish nationalism. When he composed the moving poem Siyyon ha-lo tish’ali (Zion, Dost Thou Not Ask for the Peace of Thy Captives?), Halevi conceived it as a personal confession of himself as the “captive of hope,” longing to shed his tears on the desolate hills of Judaea. Little did he dream that before very long almost all Jewish congregations in the world would incorporate this elegy, alongside the biblical Lamentations, in their rituals for the Ninth of Ab. Nor could he anticipate that the cries of anguish of his perceptive soul responding to the Jewish and universal crisis in a deeply divided world would evoke their greatest emotional response in the era of a resuscitated modern Jewish nationalism, long after that particular separation between the Christian West and Islamic East had given way to other imperial and ideological divisions. For more than eight centuries Halevi’s exclamation,
BELLES-LETTRES

My heart is in the East, and I in the far West,
How can I savor food, and find in it delight?
How shall I pay my vows and self-denying oaths,
When Zion bows to Edom, and I to Arab might?
I find it easy to leave all the bounty of Spain,
And to cherish instead the dust on the Temple’s site,
inspired many would-be pilgrims to the Holy Land, and gave an
emotional uplift to the entire people in its darkest hours.46

SACRED POETRY

Messianic, nationalist, and historical themes naturally occupied
a prominent role also in these writers’ liturgical poetry, which, in
fact, can rarely be distinguished from poems originally composed
for private circulation. Our scanty biographical data, often la-
boriously reconstructed from the contents of poems themselves,
will hardly ever allow for a definite assessment of the authors’ in-
tentions or of the earliest use to which their lyrics were put. It
appears, however, that when conscious of writing for congrega-
tional use even the greatest of these poets were forced to make
concessions to popular taste and the old traditions of liturgical
poetry.

Although far less pronounced than in the works of the tenth-
century Baghdad poet Abu’l ‘Ataluj, whose erotic court poetry
differed radically from his pious outpourings for mass use, there
exists a line of demarcation even between the religious poetry
written by Ibn Gabirol for self-edification and the religious con-
templation of a few friends and his regular ṭiyyuṭim. The former
are sophisticated in both form and substance. There is little to dis-
tinguish, for example, his beautiful poem Sha’ali yeveh-fiah (Ask
of Me, Beautiful) from similar historical-messianic poems by
Yehudah Halevi. Alluding to Daniel’s vision of the four beasts,
the poet bewails the historic fact that hardly had the Lion and the
Leopard (Babylonia and the Hellenistic empires) ceased their
depredations of Judah when the Wild Ass (the Arabs) appeared
“out of midnight . . . to trample and dwell on our soil.” The
poem concludes with the prayer that Ishmael’s offspring be com-
manded back to Arabia, as his mother had been sent off by Sarah.
Although perfectly lucid, this poem is written with Ibn Gabirol’s usual sophistication in both form and content. In contrast thereto another reshut (prayer of authorization), which appears in much expanded form in one of the Sephardic collections of penitential poems, renders long-accepted ideas in language so simple that it might have stemmed from the pen of any average penitent. Here simplicity borders on cliché, as may be noticed even through the protective screen of the following translation:

When I knock at Thy gates, O Lord, please unlock them,   
Stretch out Thy pitying hand, when to Thee I weep.   
Let my prayer and wailing rise up before Thee,   
And take the honored place of former tithes and sheep.   
Light of my eyes! please guard from evil words my tongue,   
And forgive if I err, and utter something wrong.   
I have lifted up to Thee my eyes and my heart,   
Lend me Thy willing ear, and throw a friendly gaze;   
Recognize my spirit humiliated to its depths,   
My overbearing fat become so lean and base.

In fact, some of these piyyutim so consciously followed long-accepted patterns that Ibn Gabirol was prepared to sacrifice for them his otherwise scrupulously observed rules of language and poetic arts. For exactly the same deviations Abraham ibn Ezra was soon sharply to censure the chief payyetan, Qalir.47

Among the outstanding liturgical poets in Spain were, not by mere accident, the distinguished talmudic scholars Samuel ibn Nagrela, Ibn Abitur, Ibn Gayyat, and, later, Meir ha-Levi Abulafia. Samuel’s poems hark back to the early origins of the piyyut, and they have the perfect simplicity of a Yose ben Yose or the talmudic sages. For example, his poem for the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Shemini ḥag aseret) uses neither the artifices of the later Qalirian school nor the advanced Spanish techniques, including his own. It merely harps on the themes of divine greatness and forgiveness and the love of the Law, appropriate for a Festival of Rejoicing in the Torah. Perhaps that very simplicity accounts for the lack of appeal of such poems to the more sophisticated Spanish congregations, which did not include them in their congregational recitations. Ibn Abitur, taking seriously the earlier talmudic urging to constant liturgical innovation, clung more closely to the forms of the schools of Qalir and Saadia. But
his language aimed at greater simplicity of expression than was customary among poets of these schools, other than the gaon himself in his memorable prayers of petition. The Cordovan exile’s allusions to talmudic and midrashic teachings, though presupposing a considerable amount of talmudic learning on the part of readers, were less obscure than those of his Eastern predecessors, with whose works he must have become fully familiar after his departure from Spain. To judge from his extant poems, Ibn Abitur evinced particular interest in the eternal dialogue between Israel and the celestial powers, and the praises of the Lord sung in unison by the Jews on earth and the angels on high.48

In external techniques very similar, the sacred poetry of Ibn Gayyat was distinguished by its novel content. Deeply interested in the new philosophic and scientific discoveries, this great rabbi included some of the newly evolving doctrines and concepts in his poems relating to cosmogony and manifestations in nature. Many readers must have found these poems “difficult to understand,” as was observed by Al-Ḥarizi. Nevertheless, already in the days of Moses ibn Ezra they circulated widely in Spain, and before long they were incorporated in the liturgical collections of the Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean world. More than three hundred of his poems, largely of liturgical character, have been preserved in manuscripts and early editions, and many more are still likely to emerge from the recesses of the world’s libraries.49

Philosophic concepts, particularly as derived from the new and intensive preoccupation with Platonic and Aristotelian teachings and their application to Jewish religious problems, now colored more and more the poetic writings of Spanish Jewry. The distinguished poet-philosophers, Ibn Gabirol and Halevi, frequently expressed in concise poetic form thoughts on which they expatiated at length in their major philosophic prose works. In fact, the full import of many a poem can be understood only by reference to some such more extended discussions in their own or their contemporaries’ philosophic treatises.

One of the most celebrated philosophic poems is Ibn Gabirol’s “Royal Crown,” long since adopted by many Jewish congregations for recitation at the height of their religious ecstasy on
the evening of the Day of Atonement. Setting out to aid the worshipers in the understanding of the mysteries of the universe, the suffering poet of Saragossa composed this lengthy poem of 640 verses, in which “The living God’s wondrous ways / Are briefly told in songs of praise.” He tried to explain, for example, the unity of God, by pointing out that it is not like any other oneness, but that its mystery escapes the understanding of the wise. “Thou art One, but not like a unit to be grasped and counted, / For neither number nor change, neither attribute nor surname can reach Thee. / Thou art One, but my mind has failed to set Thee within bounds, / Therefore I have decided to guard my ways from sinning with my tongue.” Or, in another context, “Thou art God, and there is no difference between Thy Godhead and Thy Oneness, Thy preexistence and existence—For all is one mystery.” In this vein the poet reviewed the divine government of the universe, discussing the superlunary world in terms of the contemporary astronomic views of the spheres permeated with the divine spirit, and then turning to the fate of the departed souls and the actions of man on earth. The poem concludes with a traditional prayer for forgiveness and mercy, and a reminder that it is the duty of all to praise the Lord. On closer examination, even Ibn Gabirol’s views on immortality and his ethical teachings reveal certain individual nuances which set him aside, in content as well as in form, from the general run of worshipers. If this poem, and still more his ḥiyyuṭ Shokhen ‘ad (He who Dwelleth Forever), recited by Sephardic congregations during the Musaf services of New Year’s day, reveal the impact of certain doctrines of Yeṣirah, another lengthy liturgical piece of 512 verses, devoted to so-called Azharot (Warnings), follows rather closely the then widely accepted enumeration of the six hundred and thirteen commandments given in Simon Qayyara’s law book. Curiously this poem, widely accepted by Jewish communities for recitation on the Festival of Weeks and provided with exegetical notes by several commentators, betrays in neither form nor content any indebtedness to Saadiah’s similar work, with which Ibn Gabirol may indeed not have been familiar.59

Less philosophically creative, pessimistic Moses ibn Ezra constantly emphasized the inadequacy of the human mind to grasp
the mysteries of existence. In one of his penitential prayers Moses especially enjoined the worshiper, "Who is to dare partake of the Lord's secrets and mysteries, / And how shall a mere mortal gauge the majesty of the living God?" His religious fervor reached its greatest heights during his ecstatic contemplation of God's grandeur, which he time and again contrasted with man's total unworthiness. One of his major religious poems, Be-shem El asher amar (In the Name of God Who Said), in particular, expatiated on the theme of God's inaccessibility to human cognition except indirectly through the contemplation of His works. This poem so impressed Meir ha-Levi Abulafia that the latter composed a poem on this very subject, closely imitating Ibn Ezra's rhyme and rhythm. The acme of Moses' religious poetry was attained in such penitential prayers as his Be-leb hared, whose remarkable rhythm and spirit, though not rhyme, are caught in Solis-Cohen's apt translation:

    With trembling heart, in fear profound,
    I ask of God forgiveness.
    For secret sins in days of youth,
    Prostrate I fall before Him.
    May fitting words come to my lips—
    And thus I make beginning:
    "Upon the Lord my soul doth wait,
    His saving word I hope for."

Notwithstanding the relative paucity of Ibn Ezra's liturgical output, a grateful posterity nicknamed him sallah (penitential poet) and included several of his poems in its liturgy. His influence soon transcended all national boundaries, and before long some of his liturgical poems became part and parcel of the synagogue worship north of the Pyrenees.51

World-wide influence was achieved to an even greater extent by Moses' namesake Abraham ibn Ezra and his close friend Yehudah Halevi. Through his extended journeys and protracted residence in Christian lands, Abraham became the great historic mediator between the two worlds, transmitting to the growing communities under Christendom not only the results and methods of Spanish philology, Bible exegesis, and science, but also the new approaches of Spanish poetry. Abraham himself composed numerous short
liturgical pieces. More notable for their technical perfection than for contagious religious enthusiasm, they were nevertheless much admired, and often put to liturgical use.  

Surpassing all others in variety, as well as in depth and vigor, Halevi's religious poetry extended into every traditional nook of Jewish liturgy and refashioned into memorable personal confessions ideas and images long since become commonplace. For example, in a poem called *Yah anah emša'akha*, filled with pithy paradoxes, he inquired, "O Lord, where shall I find Thee / Hid in Thy lofty place? / And where shall I not find Thee, / Whose glory fills all space?" Combining a general epistemological skepticism in metaphysical speculation with national-historical positivism, Halevi constantly harped on the theme that the divine regimen of the world cannot be grasped by the mind but only by the heart. Time and again the poet begged for divine grace and aid in this emotional comprehension. Skillfully climaxing his own meditations with pertinent biblical passages, he wrote:

The Creator who's fashioned all from naught  
Stands revealed in the heart, not to the eye.  
Hence do not ask about how, where and why,  
For it's He who "filleth heaven and earth" [Jer. 23:24].

When thou removest thy innermost lust  
Thou shalt find thy Master live in thy heart,  
Gently pervading each and ev'ry part—  
"He bringeth low, He also lifteth up" [I Sam. 2:7].

Contemplate well the mystery of soul,  
Search, and thou wilt find in it restful glee,  
Then He will make thee wise, and set thee free,  
Who art prisoner now, in the world's gaol.

Make knowledge mediate between thee and Him,  
Suppress thy will before the will divine,  
Know that His eye roams over all secrets thine  
And that "there is nothing too hard for Him" [Jer. 32:17].

Knowledge as postulated here by Halevi was neither the gnostic kind, although he like Bahya seems to have been quite familiar with some surviving Hermetic writings, nor even that of a metaphysical kind. As we shall see, Halevi did not share the view, held by some Karaites, Bahya, Abraham ibn Ezra, and other thinkers, that David's injunction to Solomon, "Know thou the God of thy
father" (I Chron. 28:9), was tantamount to a commandment to study religious philosophy. He rather referred here, as elsewhere, to the traditional lore which, as he sang in another poem, "I have heard and believed, without questioning and testing." 53

Nor could even the more rigid rationalists entirely escape the powerful trend toward poetic self-expression. Not only is the semimystic Bahya ibn Paquda known as the author of two fine prayers of petition and exhortation, but also Joseph ibn Ṣaddiq, author of the rationalistic "Microcosm," composed a series of poems. One of these actually served as a model for his friend, Halevi, who answered him in a poem of exactly the same rhythm and rhyme. Maimonides himself, at least in his younger years, paid homage to the prevailing fashion and wrote a number of liturgical poems. However, the well-known Yigdal prayer, recited by many Ashkenazic and Sephardic (though not Italian) congregations at the beginning of their morning services, is most definitely not of his pen, although it is a fairly correct poetic restatement of his Thirteen Principles. It begins with a typically Maimonidean emphasis:

The living God be magnified and praised,
He who exists outside time's eternal drone;
The One and Only, with none like Him alone,
In mystery veiled, of oneness infinite.

There were other poets, however, especially during the heated anti-Maimonidean controversy (for instance, Meshullam da Piera), who wrote verses attacking one or another doctrine of the sage of Fustat.54

ITALO-GERMAN PIETISM

Compared with the extraordinary richness and variety of Spanish poetry, that of the other European countries appears narrow and confined. S. J. L. Rapoport, one of the earliest scholarly students of medieval Hebrew letters, noted that "in the poetry of the Spaniards it is man's soul which converses with its Creator, in that of the Ashkenazim—the people of Israel converses with its God." This difference clearly mirrors the divergences in social structure and world outlook among the Jews of those countries.
Muslim Spain had received from the Great Caliphate all those vital impulses of a competitive, individualistic society, which had so vitally contributed to the multicolored patterns of the new civilization during the Renaissance of Islam. It added to them further intellectual stimuli, through its frontier life facing the challenges of neighboring Christian states and the fermentation of mutual adjustments by its various ethnic and cultural groups. Western Europe, on the other hand, increasingly felt the impact of the feudal order with its ever stricter social controls and its closed Catholic weltanschauung. There was little room within its struggling and segregated Jewish communities for indulgent heralding of purely private sentiments of friendship, love, or the ordinary pleasures of life—indeed for any kind of secular poetry. Even in the relatively friendlier climate of southern Italy, the ninth-century poet Amittai ben Shefatia knew of no better way of celebrating the wedding of his sister Kassia than by a liturgical poem (yoṣer), extolling the wisdom of the divine order which includes the commandment of procreation and concluding with a prayer for ultimate messianic redemption. Only in the twelfth century did the new, Spanish-oriented, secular poetry, like Spanish science and philosophy, find devotees in southern Italy and later also in Rome. The new poetry of the Sicilian judge Anatoli ben Joseph and his associates finally led up to the wholly secular, erotic poetry of Immanuel of Rome, which, though quite in line with the prevailing tastes of the rising Italian Renaissance, were to shock many generations of northern pietists.55

Religious poetry reigned supreme also because of the overshadowing role of religion in all walks of life and particularly in all Judeo-Christian relations. Compared with the breadth of human concerns reflected in the Jewish literature, as in non-Jewish literature under Islam, Franco-German and even Italian and Byzantine Jewish letters were dominated by religiously dedicated persons who hardly deigned to look at ordinary human problems and daily preoccupations unrelated to law, ethics, or religious doctrine. Cultivating the subject matter as well as the forms developed in Palestine during the Byzantine period, the Western poets, too, were but gifted disciples of the pre-Islamic Palestinian
payyeṭanim and homilists. Had not even some southern Italian Christian poets written Greek poetry after Byzantine models?

Western Jewry's relations with its Christian neighbors had become ever more tense. When Christian missionary undertakings were coupled with the use of force, and when popular and governmental persecutions became a recurrent phenomenon, Jewish poets often reacted vehemently. Their bitterness, far exceeding any sentiment displayed by Yannai and other sufferers from Byzantine implacability, was often sharpened by personal experiences. When R. Gershom bar Yehudah, deviating from the established law, mourned for two weeks the apostasy of his son (a week each for his soul and his body), he must have loved the boy dearly. How much must such paternal grief have deepened his hatred of the Church, the source of his personal misfortune, as well as of the misfortunes of his people! The same was true of his elder contemporary, R. Simon bar Isaac, the poet and leader whose converted son Elḥanan was invested by later Jewish legends with the Roman pontificate. R. Simon's sense of loss, we are told, was ultimately mitigated when, on a mission to Rome in behalf of his persecuted people, he was led by peculiar moves on the chess board to recognize his son in the reigning pope, and to secure from him the requested pro-Jewish decree. Needless to say, any enforced mass conversion of Jews, such as seems to be reflected in a liturgical piece by Amittai ben Shefaṭiah, left an even more indelible imprint on the minds of Hebrew poets who went through that tragic experience.56

It is small wonder, then, that controversial topics in the Judeo-Christian debate occupied a prominent place in all northern poetry. Ever since ancient times, we recall, the problem of Jewish exile and powerlessness had engaged the attention of polemical writers of both faiths, the Christian apologists frequently quoting it as positive proof of God's anger at the Jews for their repudiation of Christ. "Why are you put to shame?" Christian missionaries are quoted by Simon bar Isaac as saying to the Jews, "On account of the sin of the cross / You, like the dead, are totally forgotten." Medieval controversialists belabored this point in a way reminiscent of the ancient pagan argument that a victorious nation had
ipso facto proved also the superiority of its deities over those of the vanquished people. For this reason Jewish poets in the Christian orbit dwelled at great length on the theme of their divinely willed political inferiority. "They glory in chariots and horses," declaimed Simon bar Isaac in another lengthy penitential prayer, "but we remember the name of the Lord, our God." At the same time these poets stressed their yearning for the speedy restoration of Jews to their own country, and for divine vengeance on their ruthless enemies. The following piyyut on the Thirteen Attributes of God (which serve as a refrain) from the pen of Amittai may be cited here as a fairly typical, though rather tame, example:

I remember the Lord, and am keenly distraught,
   When I see each town built on its foundation,
   But God's city doomed to utter humiliation.
Yet we belong to God, and to Him goes our striving.

O Attribute of Mercy, intercede for us!
   Before Thy Master kindly place our entreaty
   In behalf of Thy people invoke divine pity,
Because "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint" [Isa. 1:5].

Unto these thirteen words I have anchored my stand,
   And to the gates of tears which never come to rest,
   My speech flows forth to Him who submits hearts to test.
I rely on these and the merit of fathers.

Let it be Thy will, O God, listener to wailings,
   To receive our tears and preserve them in Thy bowl,
   So that we may be spared decrees, cruel and foul,
For it's to Thee alone that our eyes are clinging.

Apart from the acrostic Amittai, there is little in this poem, Ezkerah Elohim, to distinguish it from any of the early piyyutim. Through the very simplicity of its technique it carries great appeal, and it is still fervently recited today by Polish congregations on the Day of Atonement. On the other hand, the equally melancholy poems by Solomon ben Yehudah, "the Babylonian," resident of Rome (tenth century), were very complicated. Perhaps for this reason they failed to attract a large following among the European communities.57

Of course, the advent of the Messiah, that focal point in the Judeo-Christian controversy, likewise left its distinct traces. Be-
cause of its intimate connection with Christian Trinitarianism, it was often treated within the poetic cycle zu'lat, recited immediately after the passage in the morning prayer proclaiming that "there is no God beside Thee" (zu'lat ekha). In one such poem Amittai bitterly complained of those "sinners against God" who loved to start a religious disputation by exclaiming, "Where is your Messiah, and where the place of your Redeemer? Ye have been sold forever." With equal acrimony Gershon bar Yehudah complained of the ruthless foes who were "forcing Thy chosen people to exchange its [messianic] hope for a man earth-born and hanged." Both these poets and their confreres naturally wound up with a prayer to the Lord finally to usher in the true messianic era.68

Bitterness mounted in the course of the eleventh century, and it reached its highest pitch after the massacres of the First Crusade. Even the scholars gathered around the gentle and humane Solomon Yis'haqi, who like his immediate rabbinic predecessors had also joined the ranks of liturgical poets, now spoke in a voice of wrath reminiscent of ancient Israelitic prophets. Emulating the Deuteronomic litany of curses (28:15-68), one of Rashi's disciples, in the poem Titnem le-herpah (Put Them to Shame, Curse and Desolation), made fully known only in recent years, prayed that God should bring all these plagues "on Edom, Ishmael, and the entire host of Rome, together with the rest of Thine enemies from every nation." Compared with this recital of maledictions, the lamentations of Baruch bar Samuel of Mayence on various tragic events including the ritual murder libel of Blois (1171), and even of Ephraim bar Jacob of Bonn, the graphic chronicler of the massacres during the Second and Third Crusades, pale into mild stereotypes.59

Apart from such polemical outbursts, the liturgical poetry of the Italian, French, and German writers contained many expressions of inward piety and of the striving of tormented souls toward communion with their Deity. For example, in a moving penitential poem, Gadol 'avoni (My Transgression is Great), Gershon bar Yehudah used the technique of a chain verse (here the last word of each of the forty-seven lines also starts the following verse) to convey the sinner's agonizing feeling of inadequacy while standing before his Creator. The first and the last strophes
may serve here as an illustration of both the technique and, despite its obvious artificiality, its basic effectiveness:

My transgression is great, in sin persevering,  
Persevering in guilt, how grave is my offense!  
My offense is serious, to flogging convicted,  
Convicted to exile, My abode I forgot.  

Let forgiveness be granted today before Thee!  
Before Thee plead the Thirteen, signed to Thy faithful.  
Thy faithful remember, and forgive Thy children,  
Thy children, sons of martyrs, do not repudiate.

The main themes of the respective holidays lent themselves to most frequent versification, as many of these poets were synagogue readers trying to supplement the accepted Palestinian ritual. This need was greatest during the second days of holidays, which, never having been observed in the Holy Land, often required complete new sets of piyyuṭim.⁶⁰

Ethical-didactic poems, on the other hand, were rather neglected here. Their paucity, however, was not owing to any basic lack of interest, as is evident from the large and ever growing ethical prose literature in the Ashkenazic communities, but essentially to the character of these liturgical poems. Addressed to God, rather than to the reading public, they emphasized the weaknesses and sinfulness of human nature much more than ethical postulates. Only occasionally could a poet like Amittai, in verses dedicated to the sanctification of the marriage ceremony, glorify Jewish sexual ethics and the basic virtues of Jewish marital unions. He contrasted especially “the nations’ proclivity to fornication and their revelry in sin and obscene language” with the attitude of Jewish bridal couples who “in their very festivities rejoice only in their God.” ⁶¹

Partly for the same reason history played a relatively greater role in the poetry of Christian lands. Holiday liturgy lent itself admirably to the retelling of biblical narratives connected with each festival, as amplified by ancient and early medieval homilists. Whatever unconscious restraints may have hampered Jews in Muslim lands, because of excessive Arab fears of despoiling the Qur’an’s matchless beauty by any purely human reformulation, were totally absent in the lands of Christendom which had long
accepted the artistic rewriting of biblical stories as an integral part of Christian liturgy and homiletics.

Passover especially, with its underlying drama of liberation from Egyptian bondage, inspired many Jewish poets to compose new narratives. To a Franco-German Jew, even before the Crusades, the unrelenting political and religious pressures of the Christian majority often appeared as a direct parallel to the regime of the ancient Pharaohs. Hence the story of the miraculous liberation of his ancestors carried a message of ultimate salvation for himself and his generation as well. This is indeed the theme of practically all the extant poems by the earliest German poet, Moses bar Kalonymos, who had apparently emigrated from Italy to Mayence in the early part of the tenth century. Similar contemporary overtones are audible in the poetic elaborations of the Passover story by Simon bar Isaac, Gershom bar Yehudah, and other northerners.62

At the same time there began a new, perfectly articulate poetic martyrology describing the actual suffering of Franco-German Jewry. During the period of the Crusades these voices swelled into a powerful chorus. Despite their natural vagueness and frequently stereotyped phrasing, some of these successive lamentations from Kalonymos bar Yehudah, father of the famous mystic Eleazar of Worms, to Ephraim bar Jacob of Bonn possess great documentary value. They bear witness to their author’s preoccupation with at least the more gory facets of current history.

Nor were these poets indifferent toward the basic riddles of the universe and of human existence. However, their philosophy, like that of their prose-writing contemporaries, was long but a continuation of the mystical speculations of their Palestinian predecessors. The mysteries of the Hekhalot literature, which as we shall see brought into the open some underground traditions of ancient gnosticism, deeply influenced Italians like Amittai and received memorable reformulation from Eleazar of Worms and his school of German pietists. Especially the so-called ofanim, prayers describing the participation of celestial hosts in the recitation of the morning gedushah, served as admirable vehicles of such mystic speculation. In his poem Er’elim u-mal’akhim (Divine Spirits and Angels), for example, Amittai described in graphic
detail the actions and utterances not only of such long accepted angelic figures as Michael and Gabriel, but also of the more obscure divine "messengers" like Hadarniel, Sandalfon, or Galışur. Underlying this description, or the related one concerning the reception given Moses by the heavenly hosts on his arrival to receive the Torah, were such older Aggadot as had found their way into the Pesiqta rabbati. But they also contained novel elements, represented only in later mystery books. Similarly, the poem Ve-'*attah banim (And Now My Sons, Sing to the Lord) by Simon bar Isaac is correctly characterized by its later heading, "An ofan based on the book of Hekhalot." 63

A peculiar branch of this mystic poetry, cultivated especially by the German pietists, came to be known under the name of Shire ha-yihud (Poems of Unity). Briefer versions were often styled the Shire ha-kabod (Poems of Grandeur). Although akin to Saadiah's philosophically oriented poems of petition and Ibn Gabirol's "Royal Crown," they were keyed to less complex professions of faith in God's unity and omnipotence. One of the earliest of these poems, Ashirah ve-azamrah (I Shall Sing and Chant), is sometimes ascribed to Samuel, father of Yehudah the Pious, and sometimes to Yehudah himself, as well as to other writers. In view of its considerable length, it was subdivided for recitation on the six weekdays and the Sabbath. Like its thoughts, its technique is perfectly simple; the author is neither bound by the rigid exigencies of rhyme and meter of the Spanish schools, nor does he indulge in the linguistic gymnastics of the school of Qalir. If, nevertheless, some later students felt impelled to provide this "sacred" poem with extensive commentaries, their main purpose was further elaboration, rather than explanation, of the ideas expressed by its author—a fairly common phenomenon among medieval exegetes. We need but compare with it a similar effusion by the fourteenth-century Spanish kabbalist, Joseph ibn Waqar, to note its essential lack of sophistication. Ibn Waqar's poem Adonai ehad (God Is One) is so deeply permeated with kabbalistic allusions, obscure to all but the fully initiated, that the author himself felt obliged to supply a detailed commentary. 64

Of course, even the simplest poetic refinements of such theological ideas as unity and omnipotence taxed the understanding of
the rank and file of Jewish worshipers. For this reason there developed at times a strong opposition to their recitation as integral parts of daily or Sabbath services. Some uncontrolled rumors, moreover, attributed the composition of Ashirah ve-azamrah to a Christian monk, Michael Basilius. For these reasons, the distinguished eighteenth-century rabbinic leader, Elijah Gaon of Vilna, for many years engaged in a losing battle against the rise of the new popular mystic movement of Hasidism, tried to eliminate that poem from the synagogue liturgy. Two centuries earlier Solomon Luria had endeavored to suspend at least its daily recitation, because constant repetition of such lofty professions tended, in his opinion, to weaken their impact on the worshiper. Nonetheless, most congregations of the Ashkenazic rite have continued reciting its final section, An’im zemirot (I Shall Intone Sweet Chants), at the conclusion of the Sabbath morning services.65

ROMANCES AND PARABLES

Wide popular interest in Hebrew poetry also stimulated the rise of a new genre: fictional narratives (sadj) with sections ending in rhymes and interspersed with poems. Jewish interest in such novelistic accounts was very old. It went back to the ancient Aramaic translation of the Aḥiqar story and the biblical or apocryphal elaborations of the stories of Esther, Tobit, or Judith. As we recall, subsequently ancient and medieval homilists often indulged in the recitation of tales and parables, and, particularly in the Arab world, Jewish preachers had their field day in including regular storiettes in their sermons, oral or written. Nissim of Kairuwan’s comprehensive folkloristic collection in Arabic became, at least in its later Hebrew garb, a regular “best seller.”

Growing secularization of Hebrew life and letters, as well as the widening of geographic horizons, caused travelogues, real and fictitious, to kindle popular imagination with respect to adventures in distant lands. Following the fashion set by such popular Arab writers as Hamadani and Hariri, there began growing also among the Jews of Spain and the Near East a branch of literature known under the Arabic name maqamas. Neither this designation, originally derived from the “place” and the assembly where these
stories were told, nor its Hebrew counterpart, *Maḥbarot* (Note-
books; apparently coined by Al-Ḥarizi), comes anywhere near
describing the multicolored pattern of these poetic miscellanies.
Loosely connected by some imaginary hero traveling from one
town and country to another, meeting all sorts of people and find-
ing himself in many unexpected and even dangerous situations,
these narratives gave free reign to the poetic imagination and
allowed for the treatment of almost any subject, ethical, psycho-
logical, literary, or linguistic. Unbound by rhythmical exigencies
and, by the nature of Hebrew and Arabic suffixes, given great lee-
way in the selection of rhymes, some of these authors could devote	heir talents to the exploration of the hidden possibilities inherent
in their linguistic medium.

Linguistic acrobatics came to the fore in Yehudah ben Solomon
al-Ḥarizi’s translation, or rather Hebrew paraphrase, of Haririri’s
Maqamas, entitled *Maḥbarot Ithiel* (the biblical hero of Prov.
30:1 replacing Hariri’s narrator, Harith ibn Hamman). Prepared
at the instance of some Spanish patrons, some time before Al-
Ḥarizi’s departure for the Orient about 1211, this work has come
down to us in a single manuscript, which fails to supply informa-
tion concerning the author’s avowed objectives and methods. We
are doubly grateful, therefore, for the brief, but illuminating ex-
cursuses included in the introduction to his own similar work in
Hebrew, the *Taḥkemoni*.

The consideration [he wrote] which gave me the impetus to the com-
position of the present work was that a man from among the Ishmaelite
sages, one of their superior intellects, whose tongue overflowed with
Arabic phrases and through whom the art of poetry stood widely re-
vealed, had written a book in Arabic, dispensing words of great beauty.
He is known under the name of Al-Hariri, and compared with him
every other father of parables appears barren. To be sure, all his topics
are derived from Hebrew, and all his precious parables are borrowed
from our books. Should anyone ask any of these phrases, “Who had
brought thee into the language of the descendants of Hagar?” it would
reply, “For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews”
[Gen. 40:15]. When I saw that work, the skies of my rejoicing rolled
up like a scroll, and the streams of my sorrow flowed forth. For every
people carefully expresses its thoughts and guards itself against sinning
with its speech, but our language, which had been the delight for every
onlooker, . . . has now been deprived of pride and beauty. Our peo-
people's children have cast aspersion on it, and aimed at it the shafts of their ridicule. They contend that our speech is inadequate and short of phrases, not knowing that that shortcoming lies with themselves, because they fail to understand its vocabulary, and to recognize its delights.

Just as Hariri used with extraordinary skill the rich resources of the Arabic style and lexicography, Al-Ḥarizi exploited to the full the Hebrew linguistic refinements of his Spanish predecessors. His task was even more arduous in so far as he tried to reproduce in some corresponding Hebrew form all the extraordinary turns and unusual poetic forms of the Arabic original. At times this undertaking proved impossible of attainment. Al-Ḥarizi himself twice had to admit that he had been unable adequately to render Hariri's sixth magama, which had purposely been so arranged that each word was composed alternately of consonants written with and without diacritical marks, while in the twenty-sixth magama each letter alternated between marked and unmarked forms. Since the Hebrew alphabet had no equivalent to the Arabic division into fourteen diacritically distinguished and fourteen simple letters, the Hebrew poet had to limit his rendition of these magamas to their content and structure. Neither was Al-Ḥarizi able to reproduce Hariri's five-verse poem of six words each, all of which made good sense whether the letters were read forward or backward. On the other hand, he outdid his model when, in another context, he replaced a sentence of seven such words by four Hebrew sentences using the same artifice. Al-Ḥarizi proved an even more consummate craftsman when he had to find biblical and Jewish equivalents for Qur'anic and other Muslim allusions.66

In his own original Hebrew work, Taḥkemoni (Poetic Miscellany; the title is borrowed from II Sam. 29:8), Al-Ḥarizi produced a truly classical work of the same genre. Having had on his numerous journeys in Spain, North Africa, and western Asia the opportunity to observe human behavior under different social conditions, Yehudah ben Solomon combined the fruits of this direct experience with ample erudition in contemporary letters, both Hebrew and Arabic. On the order of the Roman Jewish elders, he had produced an elegant, if not precise, Hebrew version of a part of Maimonides' Commentary on the Mishnah. He later
translated that author's philosophic *magnum opus* into readable Hebrew and, on his own, wrote a commentary on Job and other works. Yehudah evidently combined expertness in biblical, talmudic, and philosophic problems with excellent familiarity with the earlier Hebrew poetic literature, a keen sense of humor, and an almost uncanny mastery of the Hebrew language. Two of the fifty chapters in his work (iii and xviii) are entirely devoted to literary criticism and a brief survey of the Hebrew poetic achievements in East and West, and these have long served as guides for the rediscovery of many artistic treasures.

True, in dispensing praise or blame, Al-Ḥarizi was far from objective. He shared with many of his contemporaries an ardent Jewish patriotism which made him believe in the ultimate superiority of Hebrew over all other languages. Would otherwise, he asked, the Creator of all languages have chosen it as the instrument of His creation in lieu of another more perfect tongue? He was also a staunch Spanish patriot, convinced that whatever achievements the various centers of Jewish learning may have had in other fields of literary creativity, they fell far short of the high standards of Spanish poetry. In fact, by establishing seven major negative criteria which seriously vitiated poetic quality, he tried to prove that Spain rather than Arabia had been the fountainhead of all great poetry. With his penchant for generalization, he illustrated these faulty techniques by attributing each of them to poets of particular countries. Al-Ḥarizi also evinced strong personal likes and dislikes. Quite avowedly mercenary, he heaped unmeasured abuse on those who failed to support him financially, while he praised to the sky each of his generous patrons. The unresponsiveness and lack of generosity of his generation became one of the recurrent themes in his writings—a *leitmotif*, incidentally, also for the chorus of Spanish-Arabic writers ever since the Almoravid regime. Al-Ḥarizi contrasted this miserliness of his contemporaries with the liberality of the Jewish grandees in the days of Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moses ibn Ezra, and Yehudah Halevi. In one of the poetic miscellanies appended to the last chapter of his main work he complained:

*When the suns of Solomon, Yehudah, and Moses,*

* Fathers of our poetry, had risen in the West,*
They were fortunate in finding patrons of learning,
To whom they could sell their pearls for a silver-filled chest.
But soon after my birth generosity had vanished,
The patrons’ sun had set, followed by a pitch-dark night.
While the great masters had bathed in refreshing rivers,
Whichever way I turned, I found only drought and blight.

Very likely, however, his arrogance antagonized a great many would-be patrons accustomed to insistent demands of literary carpetbaggers. Nor was Al-Ḥarizi’s personal life above all reproach. Not only is his book filled with outspokenly erotic, sometimes obscene passages—he followed therein the prevailing fashion among the Arab authors of maqamas, including Hariri himself—but he seems to have at times rather too readily yielded to the numerous temptations encountered on his extended journeys. In a poem on the subject of sexual “desire” (hesheq) he himself alluded to “opponents who quarrel with me on account of my desire.”

Such smiling acceptance of human weaknesses must have aroused the ire of a large segment of the reading public, as condemnation of erotic and other physical appetites had become a commonplace in the moralistic and even in the romanticizing letters of the period. Joseph ben Meir ibn Zabara, for example, whom Al-Ḥarizi himself counted among the greatest Spanish poets, frequently spoke of them derogatorily. He voiced the generally accepted ethical views, whether or not complied with in practice, when he wrote, “Asked as to which was the best and most honored companion, a wise man replied, ‘The good deed and fear of the Lord.’ And as to which [companion] was evil and despised, he answered, ‘The covetous soul.’” Ibn Zabara also cited Diogenes’ saying that “A man’s virtue is measured by the supremacy of his reason over his desire, and his shortcoming by his desire’s control over his reason.” Otherwise he had much in common with Al-Ḥarizi. Born in Barcelona (about 1140), he apparently traveled extensively, although he seems never to have gone beyond the confines of the Iberian Peninsula and the Provence. Even this lesser area, however, then broken up into innumerable small principalities and feudal lordships, both Muslim and Christian, offered to this keen observer of human nature a considerable variety of mores and folklore which he depicted for his readers in a series of charming
anecdotes, ethical sayings, and parables. Some of these were original with him, while many others he quoted from Jewish and Arabic sources. His Sefer Sha‘ashu‘im (Book of Delight) speedily became a classic of that peculiar literature of adventure, and doubtless influenced Al-Ḥarizi and other writers. Also largely composed in rhymed prose, it was prefaced by one long and three short poems and contained twenty-two additional poems interspersed throughout the text. Many of the latter, however, were borrowed from other authors, such as Halevi.68

Ibn Zabara’s contemporary, Yehudah ben Isaac Shabbetai, likewise practicing medicine in Christian Barcelona during the twelfth century, addressed himself principally to the then widely debated status of women, and to the merits and demerits of married life. In his delightful Soneh nashim (Misogynist) he described in graphic detail the vicissitudes of his young hero, who together with three youthful companions pledged himself to combat matrimony. Ultimately, the would-be celibatarian fell victim to a successful feminine cabale and not only succumbed to the charms of a beautiful “gazelle,” but married an ugly, quarrelsome hag, whom the women substituted for his intended bride. This substitution theme was generally quite popular in contemporary letters. Going all the way back to the biblical story of Leah and Rachel, it was retold many times by various authors. One of the earliest Jewish maqama writers, Solomon ibn Siqbal, made it a major topic of his poetic miscellany Ne‘um Asher ben Yehudah (Thus Spake Asher ben Yehudah). A century later Al-Ḥarizi was so impressed by Solomon’s tale that he reshaped it in a story of “seven virgins” and incorporated it as a special chapter (xx) of his work. However, the moral of Yehudah ben Isaac Shabbetai’s story was evidently pro-feminist, and in his conclusion the author himself professed to love his wife and child “more than anyone who lived before me.” Nevertheless, the provocative title of his book elicited many a defense of womanhood. One need but mention an interesting poem, written in 1298 by the then eighteen-year-old philosopher Yedaiah ben Abraham ha-Penini or ha-Bedershi (of Béziers, Provence), and pointedly entitled Oheb nashim (Philogynist).69

Other classics of that literature included the story of the “Prince
and Dervish" (Ben ha-melek ha-na'azir) by another member of the Barcelona community, Abraham ben Samuel ibn Ḥisdai. The antecedents of this epic yarn on the conflict between a hedonist king and his ascetic son, aided and abetted by a "subversive" dervish, went back to an old Indian tale frequently modified in its subsequent migrations through the Christian and Muslim Near East. Among the numerous poetic gems of worldly wisdom, one is not altogether surprised to find also a religious, almost liturgical poem. Jacob ben (or rather, ibn) Eleazar (Abenalazar), another occasional Spanish liturgical poet of that period, achieved considerable popularity through his Hebrew translation of the Near Eastern classic Kalilah ve-Dimnah, a book which in the Latin translation by the converted Jew, John of Capua, became very popular in the Christian West as well. Ibn Eleazar's own Sefer Meshalim (Book of Parables), a collection of maqamas, and his related ethical-philosophic speculations, partly in rhymed prose, under the picturesque title Sefer Pardes rimmona ha-hokhmah (Orchard of Pomegranates of Wisdom), seem to have been far less widely read. Only the second half of the latter work and the "love stories" included in four chapters of the "Book of Parables" have thus far appeared in print.70

Closely akin was another branch of popular Hebrew letters consisting of extensive collections of fables. Such were compiled especially in the thirteenth century by Isaac ibn Sahula and Berakhiah ben Naṭronai ha-Naqdan (the Punctuator). The former's Mashal ha-qadamoni (Ancient Parable) reproduced in an original and attractive form the thrice-told tale of the ultimate failure of an ingenious scheme by a dishonest depositary to embezzle a precious purse entrusted to him. Berakhiah the Punctuator of northern France (and possibly England), well-known also for his exegetical work on the Bible and his ethical treatises, presented in his Mishle shu'alim (Fox Parables) one hundred and nineteen graphic animal tales, which in part went back to Aesopian traditions. The French author borrowed also much from the Kalilah ve-dimnah, the related Mishle Sindbad or Sendebar (Parables of Sindbad), and other current folktales, particularly those of Maria de France, as well as from rabbinic legends.71

Berakhiah went further than any of his predecessors in spelling
out the moralistic purpose of his collection. Apart from generally safeguarding himself in the introduction against the imputation that he had merely furnished "a parable in the mouths of fools, filled with dreams and vanities," he concluded each story with a forthright explanation of its intended lesson. Though less articulate, the Jewish authors of *maqamas* likewise pursued principally moralistic aims. Despite differences in form and their greater appeal to popular imagination, they therefore belonged essentially to the class of ancient homilists and more recent writers of ethical treatises and apothegms. In fact, it is not easy to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the sententious observations on human behavior included, for example, in Samuel ibn Nagrela’s *Ben Mishle* and Ibn Gabirol’s *Choice of Pearls* (especially in its rhymed paraphrase by Joseph Qimḥi) and the moralistic epigrams of Ibn Zabara and Al-Ḥarizi, or between the two aforementioned works by Jacob ibn Eleazar.

**NON-HEBRAIC POETRY**

Remarkably, despite these close interrelations with Arabic poetry, Jews themselves wrote relatively little poetry in any language other than Hebrew. Many of them undoubtedly had sufficient command of the Arabic language and meter to compose any number of poems in that language. Yet there was a sort of conspiracy of silence which discouraged all but the hardiest souls to defy tradition.

Probably the problem of the Arabic script had something to do with this extraordinary restraint. We recall that the Muslims had long viewed with disfavor the use of the Arabic alphabet by infidels. Since Jewish writers as a rule addressed themselves exclusively to Jewish audiences, they considered it no hardship to use the Hebrew script in their prose writings. Most Jewish philosophers wrote their Arabic works in the Hebrew alphabet. If Saadiah and some copyists of Maimonides’ philosophical work departed from this tradition, they merely confirmed the rule. Such a compromise could hardly appeal to poets. Because of rigid metric requirements and the difference between long and short vowels, any transliteration of Arabic poems into Hebrew script necessarily
created much confusion in the minds of readers. We need but consider the difficulties of modern scholars in unraveling quotations from Arabic poems in Moses ibn Ezra’s Arabic work on Hebrew poetic arts, now extant in a single manuscript written in Hebrew script. Doubtless for this reason Yehudah ibn Tibbon, in his translation of Ibn Gabirol’s ethical treatise, preferred to omit altogether quotations from Arab poets (they are restored in the recent Hebrew translation by N. Bar-On), while Abraham ibn Ḫisdai, in his Hebrew translation of an ethical treatise by Al-Ghazzali, replaced Arabic poems by Hebrew verses from the pen of Samuel ibn Nagrela and others.\(^2\)

Such restraint is doubly remarkable, as Jews had actively participated in the creation of Arabic poetry in pre-Islamic Arabia. Not only was Samau’al ibn Adiya a renowned Arabic poet in his own right, but the Jews of the oasis of Teima were generally considered excellent judges of the quality of Arabic poems. According to a contemporary tradition, the leaders of that community were asked to serve as arbiters in a poetic contest between two neighboring Bedouin tribes. On his appearance in Medina, we are told, Mohammed was greeted with derisive poems by K’ab ibn al-Ashraf and a Jewish poetess, Asma, daughter of Merwan. This chain was suddenly broken by the destruction of the Jewish communities on the Peninsula, and it took centuries before the practice was resumed. True, little of the Arabic-Jewish poetry has come down to our day. But there is good evidence that Samuel ibn Nagrela himself wrote some Arabic poems, although the tradition, recorded by Saadia ibn Danon, that he had once composed a poem in seven languages is most likely apocryphal. The Nagid also encouraged his sons not only to study Arabic poetic writings, but also to exercise their skill in the composition of such works. Moses ibn Ezra, whose Arabic prose was grammatically and stylistically impeccable, though at times a little too ornate, is also recorded as the author of occasional Arabic poems. Among his various linguistic feats Al-Ḥarizi produced a fairly lengthy poem in three languages (Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic). His younger contemporary, Abraham ibn Sahl of Seville, actually left behind an entire Diwan of Arabic poems, largely written before his conversion to Islam. Perhaps because of its preponderantly erotic content, this
Diwan allegedly sold for ten times the price of a Qur'an. Nor was there any lack of popularizers who, through the composition of didactic poems on certain subjects, wished to impress their teachings on the minds of readers. We find such didactic poems not only on medical subjects, but even on the laws of Jewish ritual slaughtering (by the thirteenth-century poet, Abraham ben Isaac ben Meborakh).73

Even stranger in many respects are the occasional Castilian stanzas in Hebrew script appended to some poems by Yehudah Halevi. The great Hebrew poet must have decided to conclude some of his friendship poems addressed to Spanish Jewish grandees with several verses in Castilian, because the latter was the recipient’s favorite language. For example, in writing a beautiful Hebrew poem in honor of Joseph ben Ferrizuel, surnamed Cidellus or Cidello, Halevi added four lines which have been reconstructed to read:

Responde[d]; Mio Cidello! venid
Con bona albixar
Como rayo del sol exid
En Guadalajara

Another poem, written on the occasion of Abu'l Hasan Meir ibn Qamaniel's journey from Seville to Marakesh, Morocco (some time before 1130), concluded: "Filiol alienu / Bastaredes mais a meu senu." Although the vocalization of such awkward Hebrew transliterations, which must further have suffered in the course of transmission, is far from certain, Spanish philologists have found in them significant testimony for the early developments of the Castilian dialect.74

Compared with both Arabic and Castilian, poetry in the Aramaic language was not viewed as a foreign importation. Even in the first millennium, when Aramaic still was the spoken language of the Near Eastern masses, such Aramaic prayers as the qaddish had gained free admission into the liturgy of the synagogue. Especially in the forms incorporated in the two Talmudim, Aramaic had become to all intents and purposes a Jewish idiom, hallowed by the sacred tradition of the leading academies. That is why the liturgical poets of the age, including those of the school of Saadiah, had no compunctions about composing additional
piyyūtim in that language. This custom continued long after the disappearance of Aramaic from among the living dialects of the Jewish people. Western Jews, who had never spoken that language, now considered it a part of their religious heritage to cultivate the speech of their talmudic sages. For example, the Worms cantor Meir bar Isaac left behind several significant Aramaic poems, including the widely recited Aqdamut. Mystics felt a particular attraction toward that idiom, which was sufficiently Hebraic not to be regarded as an alien growth, and yet unintelligible enough to the masses to allow for the communication of mysteries to initiates only. Even the declaration of R. Johanan concerning the alleged unfamiliarity of the ministering angels with the Aramaic language failed to discourage the composition of Aramaic prayers specifically addressed to angels. Occasionally, however, Aramaic poems were written for other than liturgical purposes. Samuel ibn Nagrela, for example, wrote both a letter and a comforting poem in that language to his friend R. Hananel of Kairuwan. Nor did the trilingual “miscellany” by Al-Ḥarizi pursue any religious purpose.75

POETIC ARTS

Far more significant than these occasional foreign-language creations were the formal, as well as substantive, influences of the Arabic and, to a lesser extent, the Romance literatures on the Hebrew-writing authors. Although historically uninformed and even lacking in basic historical curiosity, the Spanish Hebrew poets themselves were fully aware of the foreign origin of some of their basic technical devices, particularly their rhythmic forms. In their excessive zeal they were prone to claim absolute priority for the holy language in almost any other field of endeavor, but they could not conceal to themselves and their readers that the new poetry differed fundamentally in many of its methods from the poetry of the Bible. Only in the period of the Italian and Spanish Renaissance, when the memories of the Arabic background grew dimmer while those of the ancient cultures loomed ever brighter, were voices heard saying that the new rhythm had belonged to the forgotten vestiges of a biblical Hebrew, which had once en-
joyed greater richness than could be recaptured from its few remnants in the Old Testament. The Spanish poets themselves made no such claims. Some, like Yehudah Halevi, rebelled against this indebtedness and wished to curtail the emulation of Arabic patterns. But even they could not escape the impact of both the environment and an already established tradition, and in practice they employed the new forms in their own works. Others, like Moses ibn Ezra, took it more calmly. In his long poem Be-shem El (In the Lord’s name), modeled after Ibn Gabirol’s “Royal Crown,” he actually extolled the combination of the correctness of Hebrew with the vigor of Arabic and the elegance of Greek. In his unbounded admiration for Arabic poetry, he believed that among the Gentile nations it was only to the Arabs that poetry came naturally, whereas all other peoples wrote artificial poems. He even tried to explain this difference by the dry climate and peculiar air of Arabia. In time all opposition was silenced in the domain of secular poetry, where the new techniques now held undisputed sway. Only in sacred poetry did the old forms, aided and abetted by a millennial tradition, persist even in Spain, while most other communities largely maintained their unbroken continuity with the old piyyut.76

The greatest transformation took place in the Hebrew meter. The biblical meter had always stressed tonality and consisted primarily in the rhythmic scansion of words, rather than syllables. The Arabs, who had long cultivated a syllabic rhythm, developed it further in their contact with the Christian heirs of the Graeco-Roman civilization. In Spain, particularly, their own rhythmic variations increased in number and accessional richness. The purely subsidiary position of vowels in both Arabic and Hebrew, in sharp contrast to their independent quality in the Indo-European languages, stimulated the development of ever new metrical forms. These possibilities were further increased by the frequency of the sheva mobile and its ḥaṭaf derivatives, which, without quite attaining the status of vowels, were nevertheless distinctly audible and could enter a combination with the subsequent vocalized letter or letters to form a so-called yated (peg). Numerous combinations of such “ pegs” with syllables, both long and short, lent the new poetry a certain colorful richness and musicality which, at least in
the hands of great artists, made possible some of the immortal creations of the "Golden Age."  

After many decades of hesitation, modern scholarship has reached a fair degree of unanimity in regarding Dunash ben Labraṭ as the first medieval Hebrew poet who consciously imitated the Arabic meter. His predecessors, including Saadiah, seem purposefully to have avoided the introduction of these strange forms into Hebrew letters. If we are to believe one of Dunash's boasts (the genuineness of that statement is still under debate) a poem written by him in the new meter once elicited the gaon's unbounded admiration. However, Saadiah himself, though generally far from fearful in breaking new ground, never extended his poetic experimentation, both theoretical and practical, into the domain of Arabic meters. Possibly he and his confreres, writing almost exclusively sacred poetry, did not dare to inject such an obviously foreign growth into the synagogue ritual. Dunash, however, who all his life seems to have written secular as well as liturgical verses and very likely had pioneered along these lines even while in his native Fez or in Babylonia, saw no harm in using the new vehicle and even boasted of his "measured poems" (širim nishqalim). Once committed to the new technique, he probably saw no reason for abandoning it in his liturgical poems. Spanish Jewry, doubtless overawed by his linguistic mastery and generally avid to learn from the admired newcomers from eastern lands, seems to have offered no resistance. Even when in the subsequent controversy the disciples of Menaḥem ben Saruq accused Dunash of having "despoiled the holy tongue left to the Remnant by weighing the Hebrew with foreign meters," the Spanish Jewish public paid little heed. In fact, Dunash's pupil, Yehudi, could already point to the universal imitation of Dunash's example by subsequent poets. 

Matters were speedily settled when Samuel ibn Nagrela began the extensive use of Arabic meters in his own poetry. His international prestige, as Nagid and juridical expert, practically silenced all opposition. Since most of his poetry was devoted to secular subjects, its formal deviations from the accepted patterns aroused no protests. Samuel even ventured to employ the new meter in some of his Aramaic poems, such as that included in his letter of comfort to R. Ḥananel. According to David Yellin, who
made a special study of this subject, Samuel's experimentation with the new medium led him to the employment of more metric forms than any other medieval Hebrew poet—an achievement of which he spoke with considerable pride. Yellin identified no less than fifty-seven distinct meters in Samuel’s poems, as against Ibn Gabirol’s fifteen, Moses ibn Ezra’s eighteen, and Halevi’s twenty-three. Eliminating duplications, Samuel’s three great successors utilized altogether thirty-one metric forms, of which all but four used by Halevi had already been found in the Nagid’s verses. Adding to these another meter apparently first introduced by Abraham ibn Ezra, and two more found in the works of the thirteenth-century poet Todros ben Yehudah Abulafia, Yellin established a total of sixty-four Hebrew meters employed by various medieval Spanish poets. The readers’ preference was unequivocal. Even objectors seem to have admitted, to use Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s simile, that meter was like yeast “worthless and disagreeable by itself, but giving vivacity and spirit to the liquor with which it is proportionally combined.” Of course, some meters were more popular than others, but many remained in vogue until the Italian Renaissance, when the tonal meter began once more to displace the syllabic rhythm of the Arabic poetry. Still later the central European quantitative meter began penetrating European Hebrew poetry as well. But, despite all artificiality, perhaps even the violence it had done to the spirit of the Hebrew language, the Arabic meter helped to discipline generations of Hebrew poets, and it forced them fully to exploit their linguistic resources.79

Some poems of the great Spaniards, to be sure, have a rhythm far from pleasing to modern ears. But in these cases the fault usually rests with the reader. It is well known that the rhythm of German poetry does not always appeal to Frenchmen, nor that of French poetry to Germans, unless the verses are recited strictly in accordance with the specific accentuation of these national meters. Similarly, the proper reading of the Syriac poems by St. Ephrem presupposes the attuning of both readers and listeners to the specific scansion of the seven-syllable verses of that liturgical master. Obviously, a special technique, now still in its infancy, is also indicated for the recitation of some of the masterpieces of the Spanish Hebrew poets.80
Rhyming, on the other hand, elicited no objections. Whatever one thinks of the biblical antecedents of Hebrew rhymes, they certainly were fully developed by the early medieval payyeitanim. Saadiah, as we recall, began his literary career with a rhyming dictionary, intended to facilitate the composition of new rhymed poems. As in Arabic, the rhyme, sometime extending over an entire lengthy poem, became the most characteristic feature of Hebrew poetry and served as the main instrument of identification. Medieval compilers often arranged their diwans (collections) of individual poets in the sequence of rhymes. Even in modern times, many a poem has been identified, and numerous dispersed fragments of the same work reunited, only with the aid of such verse endings rather than the incipits, which had often gone astray. Of course, the uniform Hebrew plural forms, im and ot, and still more the constancy of such suffixes as ekha or ayikh, made rhyming extraordinarily easy. The greatest of poets at the very height of their achievement readily resorted to this rather simple expedient, which may at times appear tiresome to western readers or listeners. No less a masterpiece than Halevi’s famous Zionide poem is all composed with the ayikh rhyme. However, a large number of other rhymes in successive, alternating, or other verses likewise came into extensive use.61

Apart from rhythm and rhyme, the Spanish poets developed a kaleidoscopic variety of “adornments of poetry,” relating to both poetic forms and modes of expression. Here again Arabic examples proved irresistible. Reference has already been made to the pyrotechnics employed by Al-Ḥarizi and others, not only in their poetic works but also in stories and letters written in rhymed prose. We remember Al-Ḥarizi’s poems which were so arranged that words could be read backward and forward, in each case yielding a different meaning. This artifice, employed also by such Byzantine writers as Leo the Wise, bore the special Greek designation of “crab poem” (karkinos). Among both Arabs and Jews an epistle so written that it conveyed praise or blame for the recipient dependent upon the direction in which it was read, was considered the acme of epistolary skill. We may also add Al-Ḥarizi’s exercises in the use of words containing a particular letter. He astounded his readers by presenting them with a two-
hundred word epistle in rhymed prose and a ten-verse poem in which every word contained the letter resh, and another epistle and poem completely devoid of that letter.\textsuperscript{82}

Such linguistic feats aside, however, the Hebrew poets were conscious of using a considerable number of poetic forms of expression which, between them, accounted for the main difference between the poetic and the prose style. Moses ibn Ezra submitted these forms to careful scrutiny, trying to defend them against strong and vocal conservative opposition. Regrettably we have no record of these opposing views, which were evidently silenced by the ultimate popular acceptance of the regnant forms of Spanish Hebrew poetry.

Curiously, in his defense, Ibn Ezra did not hesitate to invoke the testimony of Hebrew Scripture, as well as of the Qur’an and Christian authors. In all he found that the Hebrew poets employed twenty such technical “adornments,” in addition to their penchant for parables and riddles. Moses supplemented his theoretical analysis of each of these expedients by illustrative material, quoting with particular frequency poems by such recognized masters as Ibn Gabirol and Samuel ibn Nagrela. For example, the use of metaphors is illustrated not only by quotations from the Bible, but also by Ibn Gabirol’s verse describing, “The night clad in an armor of darkness / Which the thunder pierces with the spear of lightning”—similes clearly borrowed from implements of war. Ibn Ezra expressed the hope that

after the proof I have adduced from our holy Scriptures and the Qur’an I need not fear the strong opposition to the use of metaphors voiced by sages and jurists of our time. Particularly so since I have noticed that the best among the jurists and the greatest thinkers, such as R. Saadia, R. Hai and others among the thinkers, have solved many problems in the interpretation of difficult prophecies by explaining them as metaphors. In fact, you find the same thing in Christian commentaries. Truly, all those who object to that usage today examine with attentive ears and sharp eyes the small human affairs, but they are struck with blindness when it comes to major concerns.

Of course, not all forms of poetic expression, even license, found vocal objectors. For instance, punning and parallelism, listed by Ibn Ezra as the fourth and sixth poetic “adornments,” had been hallowed by so long and universal a usage that they elicited no further debate.\textsuperscript{83}
A characteristic technical device, rapidly spreading in Spain in the days of Ibn Ezra, is passed over by him in silence, probably because of its relatively recent origin. Spanish Muslims and Christians, as well as Jews, found great delight in the so-called *muwashshah* poems, despite their very complicated structure. Far simpler were the poems in which each strophe, sometimes each verse, began with the same word on which the preceding verse had ended. Such “chain verses” (*shire ezor*, as they were aptly named by Brody) were not altogether unprecedented in Hebrew poetry. While they cannot yet be fully documented from early *piyyutim*, they reflect a general human proclivity toward a word just used. Their preliminaries in the Bible, which seem to have influenced the fifth-century Syriac poet Narses, their occurrence in a few traditional prayers from ancient times, and the afore-mentioned rudimentary use of them by Ashkenazic liturgists evidently uninfluenced by Spanish prototypes, all make their early antecedents among the Palestinian *payyetanim* extremely likely.

On the other hand, the biblical origin of the Hebrew strophe seems never to have been forgotten. Although documented in Hebrew letters only at a much later age, the term *bayyit* (house) must have early come to connote the strophic structure of biblical poetry. Borrowed by Byzantine authors, this term (in Greek: *oikos*) came into widespread use, and is still employed in many European languages in the equivalent form of *stanza*.

Debates like these induced Ibn Ezra to compose his treatise on the Hebrew *ars poetica*, the first comprehensive work of its kind. Moses was in a direct line of descent from Aristotle (in his *Poetics*) and a large number of Arab writers, beginning with Ibn al-Mu'tazz in the ninth century. The later Hebrew authors of similar treatises were prompted more by practical considerations and the desire to place in the hands of would-be poets some useful hints. This had, in fact, also been the main reason for Saadiah's *Egron*, both in its early and its later formulations. Moses, however, responded to the more theoretical curiosity of students interested in the nature and historical antecedents of medieval Hebrew versification.

Whether the eight questions addressed to Ibn Ezra by a friend were authentic or a mere literary device, they undoubtedly agitated the minds of many contemporaries. “You fail to understand,” the
poet replied, "why poetry is natural among the Arabs and artificial among the other nations. You want to know whether the Israelitic people in the days of its monarchy composed poetry in rhyme and rhythm, and when the Jews of the dispersion began to write poems? Why have the Jews of the Spanish dispersion been more successful in writing poetry than their coreligionists in other lands?" The inquirer allegedly also wanted to know the meaning of some poets' assertions that they had composed verses in their dreams, and whether the drinking of wine was conducive to poetic inspiration. Of course, he also wished some guidance as to how best to compose Hebrew poems along the lines of Arabic poetry. Ibn Ezra addressed himself to all these questions in seven chapters, the basic discussion of the Hebrew poetic arts being relegated to the concluding and lengthy eighth section. His fifth chapter has been of particular interest to modern scholars because it contains a brief historic sketch of the author's Spanish Jewish predecessors. This chapter has frequently been cited in our earlier treatment. Of considerable interest also are Ibn Ezra's quotations from medieval poems, including his own, some of which are no longer extant.  

More limited in scope and less detached was his friend Halevi's brief treatise on Hebrew meters. Although Ibn Ezra, too, doubtless included a discussion of meters in a section of his book since lost, and the seventeenth-century copyist of Halevi's booklet (of which only eighty-three lines have come down to us) specifically attributes it to Moses ibn Ezra, Halevi's authorship is fairly well established. The views expressed here, apparently during the author's residence in Egypt toward the end of his life, bear striking resemblance to some ideas propagated earlier in his philosophic work. The tenor of the whole essay is to show which rhythmic forms (eleven in all) are aesthetically most acceptable to Hebrew poets, and at the same time to denounce too close an emulation of Arabic patterns because of some basic differences between the two languages. "It is an ugly thing," he declared, "to measure metrically the Hebrew language which was created to unite [vowels], but is made [through adherence to Arabic meters] to separate them. Thus is repeated that which is written, they 'mingled themselves with the nations, and learned their works' [Ps. 106:35]." Everyone agreed, moreover, that adherence to quantita-
tive rhythms often imposed disregard of the accepted ultimate or penultimate word accents and, hence, conflicted with the tonal qualities of Hebrew. Nevertheless Halevi himself, at least during his earlier rich poetic creativity, had never followed such negativistic counsels. Much of the beauty of his poems came from the employment of the manifold Arabic meters, and not only of those eleven forms recommended by him for aesthetic reasons.

Although likewise writing in his old age, in fact adducing his lonesome life "at the end of my days" as one of the reasons for the composition of his book, Moses ibn Ezra probably never learned of his younger friend's change of mind. His views in any case reveal no deviation from his own and his Spanish confreres' unquestioning admiration for the Arabic theory and practice of poetry. Not that Ibn Ezra was innately a rebel against Jewish tradition. In fact, whenever he touched on a problem of theological concern, he made sure that the reader should not suspect him of any radical deviation. For example, when he discussed poetic exaggeration as one of the legitimate "adornments" of versification, he added,

However, the wonderful predictions included in Scripture with reference to our expected [messianic] reign, may God hasten its coming, were not written in the way of a parable or riddle. All these expected miracles are exactly true and are to be understood literally, for we may learn from the past for the future. But it is not my purpose in this work to explain these matters. He who reads these statements in order to examine them in the light of natural science, or harbors doubts in his heart, is not a believer in the religion of Jews.

For further information Ibn Ezra referred the reader to a collection of all biblical passages relating to miracles performed in behalf of individuals or for the people at large, as well as to the messianic age, which had been prepared not long before by (Abu) Zakariya (Yehudah) ibn Bal'am.

Moreover, the aim of Ibn Ezra's entire work was to show, at the hand of scriptural quotations, that most tenets and methods of Arabic poetry may be detected, at least in rudimentary form, in the Bible itself. The use of biblical and, to a far lesser extent, talmudic phrases was indeed common among all Hebrew poets of the time. Here again Arab influence was decisive, particularly in rhymed prose, for instance in Menahem ben Saruq's famous
epistle to Ḥisdai ibn Shaprūt, where citations were unhampered by the exigencies of meter. The more novel a turn was given to a phrase, the more learning and erudition was required on the part of the reader or listener to comprehend the meaning of a biblical allusion, the higher rose the popular esteem for the author. Moses ibn Ezra’s poems abound with such biblical ingredients, more than those of Samuel or Ibn Gabirol. But he was overshadowed, in turn, by Abraham ibn Ezra, Al-Ḥarizi, and Todros Abulafia. Certainly only scriptural experts, endowed with considerable ingenuity, could possibly derive any meaning from such a poem as Abraham’s Zekhor-na (Please Remember), which cited all sorts of biblical names to indicate hidden situations. Not incorrectly, such constant admixture of biblical phrases came to be known as the Musiv style (in Hebrew: shibbus), because it resembled a mosaic pattern of old and new word pictures. This style remained a much admired attribute of Hebrew poets throughout the ages, until the excessive addiction to such ready-made borrowings by the writers of the Enlightenment provoked a sharp reaction.⁸⁸

Ashkenazic communities produced no counterpart to Ibn Ezra’s and Halevi’s analytical discussions. Even Italy brought forth some practical handbooks for aspiring poets, only at a much later date. At best, one could mention in this context the thirteenth-century Sefer Qerobah, entirely dedicated to the discussion of sacred poetry. Its author, unfortunately unknown to us, not only assembled a number of earlier liturgical texts, but also submitted them to fairly close scrutiny. As expected, this northern author was less concerned with the methodological, than with the legal aspects of the qerobot. Nonetheless, methodology, too, was paid some attention in comments scattered throughout the book.⁸⁹

MUSICAL TRENDS AND THEORIES

Rhythmic poems were often combined with special tunes to which they were supposed to be sung. The nexus between rhythm and music was so obvious that in Halevi’s discussion on the pre-eminence of the Hebrew language, the Khazar king raised the objection as to why, then, “other languages [namely, Arabic]
surpass it in songs metrically constructed and arranged for tunes.” Halevi’s Jewish spokesman replied, “It is obvious that a tune is independent of the meter, or of the lesser or greater number of syllables.” Halevi spoke here from rich experience. Musical tunes often had indeed a completely independent existence and, Abraham ibn Ezra’s advice to the contrary, were readily borrowed for use in poems of different metrical structure. Such borrowings were quite universal. It appears that the ancient psalmists and, following them, the early medieval Syriac poets or their copyists indicated the tune to which they wished a particular poem to be sung by referring in the heading to a popular song previously recited to that tune. This method soon penetrated Arabic and Hebrew letters as well. Abraham ibn Ezra had this practice in mind when he thus explained the puzzling inscriptions in the book of Psalms. Headings beginning with the Arabic term lahn (tune or melody), followed by the opening words of an Arabic or Hebrew poem, abounded in medieval manuscripts. Understandably, those written in Byzantium or the West often substituted for it the Greek or Latin designation of mousiké or musica.90

Such borrowings were particularly widespread among Jews, since their proclivity to compose new and original tunes for other than liturgical poems was seriously hampered by a persistent tradition opposed to secular songs altogether. Almost all the influential molders of Jewish public opinion reiterated the old talmudic objections to rejoicing with wine and song on any but the few religiously hallowed festivities. True, such orthodox spokesmen of Christian and Muslim opinion as Pope Gregory the Great and Al-Ghazzali shared their aversion to secular singing, and the ninth-century author Ad-Dunya al-Qurashi wrote a special treatise, K. Dhamm al-malāhi (Disparagement of Musical Instruments), for he believed that “all dissipation begins with music and ends with drunkenness.” Yet among Jews this attitude, as we recall, was far more universal. Even such an enlightened and, in all scientific realms, readily secularizing poet as Abraham ibn Ezra drew the following distinction:

Arabs like singing of love and desires,
Christians of battlefields and vengeful fires,
Greeks of wisdom’s fruits and speculation,
Hindus of proverbs and divination.
But Israel chants to the Lord of Hosts.91

Life, of course, did not allow itself to be entirely regimented under such artificial categories, and there must have existed hosts of young Jews who indulged in gay sociability punctuated by merry songs. The populace, too, then as in later generations, must have created all sorts of folksongs, or at least adapted some tunes and ideas current among its non-Jewish neighbors. Although we have no record of such conscious transformations before the sixteenth century, when the distinguished mystical poet Israel Najara professedly wrote religious poems to many Arabic, Turkish, Greek, and Spanish folksongs current among his coreligionists, such sanctification of profane tunes seems to have proceeded apace in the Middle Ages as well. However, neither the leaders nor the masses consciously encouraged musical creativity. Occasional rebels, who insisted on improvising tunes to their own poems with the accompaniment of such musical instruments as the Arabic al-'ud (the English “lute” is its linguistic offshoot), left no permanent imprint on the people. Even late in the thirteenth century, the Provençal Jewish troubadour Isaac Gorni, though feeling confident that his songs had comforted many aggrieved hearts, had every reason bitterly to complain of the ridicule and disdain heaped upon musicians. In fact, as Schirmann pointed out, before long the very name of Gorni was forgotten in Jewish literature, while a commonplace and poetically cumbersome ethical treatise by his contemporary, Yedaiah ha-Penini of Béziers, became one of the “best-sellers” among medieval and early modern Jews, largely because its pious sentiments so greatly appealed to the average reader.92

Unfortunately, our information on medieval Hebrew music is extremely limited. Even the few writers concerned with musical theory were discussing poetic rhythm and meter rather than their musical equivalents long after the Arab writers had begun to evince genuine interest in the musical forms as such. Since, moreover, little is known about views held by Jewish leaders before Saadia—-even those expressed by Isaac Israeli and David al-Muqammiş earlier in the tenth century are hardly known—we cannot tell whether the Jews were in any way affected by the great debate between the Arab “Classicists” and “Romantics” of the
ninth century. All our Jewish sources date from the time when in the Arab environment the innovations of the romantic schools had proved victorious. By that time the influx of Persian and other foreign tunes, and the freedom of the individual composer to deviate from the accepted musical patterns of ancient Arabia, had been fully recognized. It appears, however, that Jewish conservatism was not limited to the view that “melodic modes were of secondary importance to the rhythmic modes”—an attitude partly abandoned by the Arabs late in the tenth century—but extended also to the musical tunes themselves.93

Undoubtedly this neglect may be partly explained by the growing nationalist aversion to imitation of foreign melodies. Alfasi’s rigid prohibition of applying Arabic tunes to prayers was frequently repeated by later jurists, and, in European countries, it was extended to all music of the Gentiles. German pietists specifically prohibited the singing of Gentile lullabies to Jewish children, as well as the teaching of Jewish tunes to Gentile priests, lest they adapt these melodies to Church use. Whatever interrelations had existed between the music of the ancient Church and that of the Temple in Jerusalem or the ancient synagogue was now completely forgotten, and the emphasis was laid exclusively on the unseemliness of Jewish borrowings from the worship of the hostile religion. Of course, prohibitions of this type often proved futile in the face of the overwhelming power of the environment, especially in the case of anything so subtle and self-insinuating as a popular tune. This is even more true in the case of folksongs, to which no serious objection of “idolatry” could be raised. Here, however, puritans often had a field day in denouncing the “immorality” of the lyrics originally associated with those melodies. Female singers, already repudiated by Sirach and the talmudic sages, offered a particular target, inasmuch as “almost every Arab of substance in those days had his singing-girl, who appears to have been as much in evidence in the household as the pianoforte is with us today.” Some rabbis rejected the very idea of even innocuous entertainment as unbecoming to a suffering people in exile. Among the most outspoken objectors was Maimonides:

It is known that music in general and rhythmic music in particular [the great jurist wrote in reply to inquirers evidently disturbed by the widespread singing of Arabic muwashshahat] is forbidden even
if it is not joined with words, for the Rabbis say: "The ear listening to song shall be extirpated" [Soṭah 48a]. The Talmud teaches expressly [Giṭṭin 7a] that there is no difference between hearing vocal or instrumental music, and music in general. Such music is forbidden, except when it belongs to prayer which moves the soul either to joy or to sorrow. . . . The listening to any licentious utterance as such is forbidden, even if it is only spoken. If it is accompanied by instrumental music, it would involve three prohibited acts: (1) The listening to licentious and pornographic speech, (2) listening to vocal music, and (3) listening to musical instruments. If it happens in a place where they drink wine there is a fourth prohibition. . . . If the singer is a woman there is a fifth prohibition, . . . the more so if she sings at a banquet.

True, few jurists echoed this radical form of outlawry, and this particular Maimonidean responsum seems rarely to have been copied in the Middle Ages; it remained unpublished until 1873. Nevertheless, it was referred to in Jacob ben Asher's authoritative code, and the underlying antagonism, especially to the borrowings from the popular Arabic erotic songs, was shared by many pious Jews.  

Yet music was of much too fundamental and universal human interest to be thus curtly dismissed on moralistic grounds. Maimonides himself and other thoughtful leaders of Jewry under Islam could the less afford to overlook the basic problems of music and its effects on both individuals and society, as great Arab thinkers, including Al-Kindi, Farabi, and the mystic Brethren of Purity had already concerned themselves deeply with musical theory and had utilized to good advantage some of the musicological views of the most admired Greek sages. Nor could Maimonides himself, as we shall see, while acting as a physician, completely disregard the therapeutic value of music.

It is doubly to be regretted, therefore, that we know almost nothing about the musical practitioners among the Jews under Islam. It seems that, for example, Abu'l Fadhl Ḥisdai in Saragossa was both a distinguished musicologist and an able musician, but he may have developed these skills mainly after his apostasy to Islam. A Cordovan Jew, Isaac ibn Sim'an, was said to have composed, like his friend Ibn Bajja, songs in all styles. So preoccupied were the leading Jewish minds with the legalistic aspects of the permissibility of music that they paid no attention to its history.
This conspiracy of silence is the more remarkable as the Arabs had long evinced great interest in the biographies of their own musicians. The famous Kitab al-Aghani (Book of Songs) by Al-Isfahani supplied much information on the history of music to the tenth century, while Isfahani's contemporary, Mas'udi, testified to having had at his disposal ample historical and biographical literature pertaining to the history of music and musicians among both the Arabs and the other nations.96

Largely for the same reasons the medieval Jewish thinkers, if writing at all on the subject of music, paid least attention to its aesthetic aspects. They all realized, of course, that in order to be accepted by the populace any music had to be pleasing to the ear. Following some Hellenistic and Arab theorists, some of them even looked for connections between the impact of sound on the sense of hearing and those of color on vision, and of odors on the sense of smell. Occasionally they even stressed these physiological and materialistic aspects above all others. Many readers of Al-Ḥarizī's independent rendition of Hunayn ibn Ishaq's philosophic aphorisms were also inclined to agree with the latter's popular saying that music was the best profession, for in it action equaled speech, "as in the case of a lute player, whose melody corresponds to his motions." However, not until the era of the Italian and Spanish Renaissance, with its great emphasis on beauty, did aesthetic considerations play any role in the pertinent Jewish discussions of music by Joseph Albo, Samuel Archevolte, and others.96

Almost all Jewish writers of both the earlier and later periods were concerned with the psychological effects of music. Being so deeply interested in concentration on prayer, they realized with Maimonides that music helped prayer to move the soul to either joy or sorrow. The sage of Fustat also believed that the power of desire, usually stimulated by music, ought to be restrained, although he admitted that, in the case of exceptional individuals, music might facilitate comprehension of intelligible things and enhance submission to things divine. The connection between music and religious ecstasy had long found champions among the Arab thinkers, particularly Al-Ghazzali, with whose views Maimonides may have been familiar. Even outside the world of Islam
the leading German-Jewish pietist advised his readers, “If you cannot add anything [to the prescribed prayers] search for some melody, so that you may pray in a melody which is agreeable and sweet to you. Then you will pray with concentration, and your heart will feel what your lips recite in a prayer of petition. For song makes the heart receptive . . . and gladdens the heart” (Sefer Hasidim, No. 11).

Saadia had gone further. He had tried to analyze the correlation between the eight kinds of melody which he enumerated and the singers’ physiological and psychological reactions. He believed that the first two moved the humor of blood, and hence stimulated the urge toward domination over others; the third, by stimulating the yellow bile, enhanced courage and audacity; the fourth, affected the phlegm, and was thus conducive to self-abasement and cowardice; the remaining four moved the black bile, and thus produced the contradictory dispositions of gladness and sorrow at diverse times. The gaon shared the view prevalent in certain Arab circles that music might even affect government. He concluded his discussion by saying:

Kings therefore have the custom of seeking, by means of a suitable intermingling of modes [melodies], to produce within themselves a harmonious balance; so that these melodies may stimulate such dispositions as kings find helpful, causing them to be neither too merciful nor too cruel, neither too aggressive nor too timid, neither too much nor too little given to pleasure.97

Music’s curative value in cases of mental derangement loomed large in all medieval discussions. Even the fervid opponent of secular music, Maimonides, admitted in another context that a sufferer “from melancholia may rid himself of it by listening to songs and all kinds of instrumental music, by strolling through beautiful gardens and splendid buildings, by associating with beautiful forms [women] and other things that enliven the mind and dissipate gloomy moods.” Great healer that he was, he doubtless did not refrain from applying music, both vocal and instrumental, to patients in need of such remedy. His pupil Joseph ibn ‘Aqīn embodied these lessons in his system of mental hygiene. In his Ṭubb an-nufus, a treatise entirely devoted to the “therapy of souls,” he developed a regular educational program
in which he encouraged students to devote one each of ten years to the mastery of a significant discipline. In this curriculum he assigned the advanced eighth year to the study of music. Somewhat later, Shem Tob ben Joseph ibn Falaquera in his encyclopedic Sefer ha-Me'bahqesh (Book of the Seeker), written in 1264, described the effects of liturgical music which moved worshipers to tears and repentance, other melodies which inspired courage during battle, and still others “invented to be sung in hospitals to bring the sick relief from suffering.” In all these views the Jewish physicians merely echoed a medical opinion long regnant among Greeks and Arabs. Ibn 'Aqnin and Falaquera were much indebted particularly to Farabi. Avicenna’s classical Canon had likewise devoted considerable space to the therapeutic aspects of music, and in both its Arabic original and its later Hebrew translation it greatly influenced Jewish scholarly opinion.98

From another physiological aspect of music, namely the connection between the rhythmical musical beat and the human pulse beat, was but a step to a consideration of the basic mathematical aspects of acoustics and, more generally, of the nexus between mathematics and music, which had already been stressed by the ancient Pythagoreans. Great believers in authority, the medieval scholars, Syriac, Arab, and Jewish, readily quoted whatever pertinent scraps of information had reached them from the ancient world and expatiated on the “science” of music almost as if it were but a branch of mathematics. In his Sefer ha-Mispar (Book of Numbers) Abraham ibn Ezra bluntly placed musicology as a third science and declared, “It is a very distinguished science, for its measures are composed of both arithmetical and geometrical measures.” The great mathematician Abraham bar Ḥiyya (Savasorda) felt induced to translate into Hebrew the brief musicological analysis in Saadiah’s philosophic work, evidently because he considered it a necessary part of mathematical knowledge. He also stated his own views on music, apparently at some length, in his Yesode ha-tebunah (Principles of Understanding), but regretfully, this section is no longer extant.99

These theoretical discussions on music often bore the imprint of abstract speculation, almost wholly divorced from musical realities. If the composers had listened to the musicologists they might even
then have developed some abstract music along our own ultramodern lines. However, many theorists themselves, such as Ibn ‘Aqnin or Ibn Falaquera, once again following Farabi’s example, drew a sharp line of demarcation between natural and artificial music. According to Ibn Falaquera, the science of theoretical music was concerned “with music in general, abstracted from any instrument or material object.” On the other hand, he himself displayed great interest in the practical aspects of music and tried to explain, for example, the special merits of the lute by repeating the then standardized correlation between its four strings and the four “humors” of the human body.100

In all these matters Jews largely followed the lead of Arab writers. Their own tradition made them listen with particular attention, however, to theories connecting music with the celestial world. The doctrine of the harmony of the spheres and of the ensuing correspondence between earthly music and celestial melodies had long been developed in ancient Greek philosophy. Despite vehement objections by Farabi and Maimonides, some such correspondence was simply taken for granted by most Jewish authors. It offered too attractive a rationale for the old Jewish concept of the heavenly hosts singing the Lord’s praises in unison with Israel to be discarded on mere philosophic grounds. Even the rationalistic Moses ibn Ezra could not deny himself the spiritual elevation of contemplating this harmony between the heavenly and the earthly worshipers. Among his relatively few liturgical poems he included one devoted to the traditional theme of the qedushah:

Miraculous ofanim [wheels of the Chariot], angels of celestial height, Stars among heavenly hosts, inquire “Where does God reside?”
Of course, “the heavens are His throne, the earth lies at His feet.”
All praise His saintly name wher’er pious congregants meet.

Far more outspoken was the astrologically minded Abraham ibn Ezra. Interpreting the psalmist’s description of the Lord’s might “above the voices of many waters” (93:4) as clearly indicating “that the spheres have voices,” he added bitingly, “These voices are not heard by the deaf, any more than the awesome works of the Lord are seen by the blind.” Feeling attuned to this heavenly
music, this poet-polyhistor devoted many of his lyrics to astral influences upon the destinies of men.\textsuperscript{101}

**FREEDOM UNDER AUTHORITY**

In poetry, poetic prose, and the accompanying music the Jewish people found a release for its pent-up energies. Instead of appealing to a limited circle of talmudic scholars and, at best, approaching the masses only through the instrumentality of orally delivered homilies, the new generations of writers found a fairly extended group of educated laymen eager to listen to them on a variety of subjects. The ever growing intelligentsia now not only pursued with deep interest the new scientific discoveries, but also wrestled vicariously with the many problems of individual concern so beautifully formulated by contemporary poets. With the broadening of the frontiers of knowledge came also the awakened curiosity about happenings in distant lands and the pearls of wisdom formulated by sages of different ages and faiths. Philological curiosity, combined with widespread familiarity with the more rigid requirements of the new poetic arts, made every new poem by a distinguished author an important literary event. It was considered worthy of extended discussions, showered with vigorous praise or blame, and even provided with ample pecuniary rewards. The quest of perpetuating the memory of one’s own achievements through some epic description in poetic form stimulated patronage on the part of the rich and competition among the poets.

All this may have been a mere imitation of ways of life gradually evolving in the new and rich civilization of the Renaissance of Islam. Yet in many respects, rather than representing the assimilation of foreign ways, the new poetry was a deep expression of the revival of national feeling among medieval Jews. At least in their early stages both the Syriac and the Hebrew literatures under Islam affirmatively responded to the challenge of the marvelous expansion of Arab letters. Just as in their linguistic studies Jewish leaders tried to show that Hebrew was no less a pliable language than Arabic, so their poets endeavored to demon-
strate to the world that Hebrew poetry could be written with the same ease and mastery of technical detail as the most celebrated works of Arab authors. Occasionally, to be sure, such consistent emulation of Arab methods evoked sharp protests. No less a master of the new techniques than Halevi raised his voice against the unnatural shackles which the Arab meter had imposed upon the differently constructed Hebrew idiom. Nevertheless, the newly acquired discipline in self-expression and the enforced search for the hidden resources of the Hebraic heritage greatly stimulated the spirit of intellectual adventure so characteristic of the Golden Age.

Beyond serving as a nationalistic answer to an external challenge, the new poetry awakened in the souls of the people forces long dormant. However profound was the new sense of style and poetic beauty—only generations endowed with a fine aesthetic taste could have brought forth such immortal works of art—there was little conscious aestheticism in these new quests. We have noticed that even in the theoretical discussion on music there was very little concern for its purely aesthetic functions. In poetry, too, beauty was taken for granted rather than explored. The preoccupation of both poets and critics was mainly concentrated on substantive issues.

Here, too, those of general human or national concern evoked far more frequent and more searching comments than those of a personal nature. Not only in Italy, France, or Germany, but also in Spain, despite its considerable interests in the psychological problems of the individual, there was little room, for example, for simple love poetry. Although following the fashion of the age one might have expected a great many erotic, even bawdy, poems in Hebrew letters, Al-Ḥarizi's (and later Immanuel of Rome's) "naughty" verses, and the popular romances, were rather exceptions confirming the general studied chastity of Hebrew poetry. Some of the greatest poets, such as Samuel ibn Nagrela and Ibn Gabirol, as we recall, wrote very few love poems. Even the most prolific author in this field, Halevi, seems later to have repudiated his preoccupation with love as a youthful indiscretion. Before long even love was spiritualized into that mystic union between the worshiper (or rather the whole Jewish people) and
the Creator which had already underlain the rabbinic reinterpre-
tation of the Song of Songs. True, such exclusive preoccupation
with religious and national issues must have struck outside
observers as a sign of narrowness and spiritual bondage. But
Halevi voiced the opinion dominant among his fellow poets when
he wrote:

Servants of time are slaves of slaves,
But the Lord's servant is truly free.
Each man prays for his part in life,
But my part, O Master, in Thee I see.\textsuperscript{102}
# ABBREVIATIONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AJSL</td>
<td>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</td>
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<td>'A.Z.</td>
<td>'Abodah Zarah (talmudic tractate)</td>
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<td>b.</td>
<td>Babylonian Talmud</td>
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<td>BJRL</td>
<td>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester</td>
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<td>B.Q.</td>
<td>Baba Qamma</td>
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<td>BZ</td>
<td>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</td>
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<td>CSEL</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum</td>
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<td>Ei</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Islam</td>
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<td>Essays Hertz</td>
<td>Essays in honour of J. H. Hertz. London, 1942</td>
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<tr>
<td>Festschrift Harkavy</td>
<td>Festschrift zu Ehren des Dr. A. Harkavy. St. Petersburg, 1908.</td>
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<td>GK</td>
<td>Ginze Kedem</td>
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<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
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<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual</td>
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<td>j.</td>
<td>Palestinian Talmud</td>
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<td>JA</td>
<td>Journal asiatique</td>
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<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis</td>
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<td>JJLG</td>
<td>Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur</td>
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<tr>
<td>JJS</td>
<td>Journal of Jewish Studies</td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies (continuation of AJSL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JQR</td>
<td>Jewish Quarterly Review (new series, unless otherwise stated)</td>
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<td>JRAS</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</td>
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<td>JSS</td>
<td>Jewish Social Studies</td>
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ABBREVIATIONS

KS
M.
MGWJ
MJC
M.T.
M.Q.
O.H.
PAAJR
PG
PL
r.
Rashi Anniv. Vol.
REJ
Resp.
RH
Saadia Anniv. Vol.
SB
SRIHP
T.
YB
ZAW
ZDMG
ZHB

Sefer ha-Yobel la-Professor Shemuel (Samuel) Krauss. Jerusalem, 1937.
Kirjath Sepher. Quarterly Bibliographical Review
Mishnah
Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums
Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles, ed. by A. Neubauer
Moses ben Maimon’s Mishneh Torah (Code)
Mo‘ed Qatán
Orah Hayyim (sections of Jacob ben Asher’s Turim and Joseph Karo’s Shulhan Arukh)
Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research
Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca
Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina
Midrash Rabbah (Gen. r. = Bereshit rabbah; Lam. r. = Ekhah rabbati, etc.)
Revue des études juives
Responsa (Teshubot or She’elot u-teshubot)
Revue historique
Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften (identified by city: e.g., SB Berlin, Heidelberg, Vienna)
Studies of the Research Institute for Medieval Hebrew Poetry
Tosefta. Ed. by M. S. Zuckermandel
Yivo Bletter
Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums
Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft
Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie
NOTES

CHAPTER XXX: LINGUISTIC RENASCENCE

1. H. Hirschfeld, “An Unknown Grammatical Work by Abul-Faraj Harun,” JQR, XIII, 3. This and other passages underscore the interrelation between scriptural exegesis and philology which in essence existed also among the Muslim students of language. Hirschfeld overstates the difference, therefore, in saying that “while for Arab grammarians the minute elaboration of the finesses of their language became an end in itself, Jews brought their linguistic endeavours into the service of the study of the Holy Writ.” Literary History of Hebrew Grammarians and Lexicographers, p. 7.

2. Ibn Janah’s K. at-Taswiya (Book of Redress; a grammatical treatise) in his Opuscules et traités, ed. by J. and H. Derenbourg, pp. 344 ff.; Baihaqi cited in Mez, Renaissance of Islam, p. 299; Hadassi’s Eshek ha-kofer, fols. 21cd, 60e ff. The degree of philological sophistication among Jews may be gauged from such complicated intellectual exercises as “Saadya’s Piyut on the Alphabet,” reedited on the basis of 19 MSS and early prints by S. Stein in Rosenthal’s Saadya Studies, pp. 206-26. In this poem the gaon arranged each of the thirty quatrains to begin with a letter of the alphabet. “The words that follow in the first two hemistichs begin with letters whose numerical value corresponds exactly to the number of times the letter in question is to be found in the Mishna [Bible; these range from 1,975 occurrences of the letter pe to 76,822 of the letter vav]. The other two hemistichs contain each a word from a Biblical verse, in which the number thus indicated happens to occur” (ibid., p. 210). This prodigious stunt naturally imposed severe shackles on the author and challenged the ingenuity of readers. Under the circumstances it is rather surprising that it makes enough sense to enable Stein to present an English translation. On the authenticity of this poem and the gaon’s own commentary thereon, see infra, Chap. XXXV, n. 13. Saadiah’s pupil Dunash ben Labrat composed at least ten linguistic riddles included in his Shirim (Poems), ed. by N. Allony, pp. 94 ff., 105 ff., 170 ff., 182 f., 190. See also Allony’s analysis of “Ten Dunash ben Labrat’s Riddles,” JQR, XXXV, 141-46. Much more popular, in fact the source of amusement for countless students, were “The Linguistic Riddles of Abraham Ibn Ezra,” analyzed in a Hebrew essay by N. H. Torczyner and reprinted in his Ha-Lashon ve-ha-sefer, III, 354-65. See also, more generally, B. Klar’s suggestive lecture on “The Beginnings of Hebrew Grammar” (Hebrew), reprinted in his Mehqarim ve-iyyunim, pp. 1-7 (incomplete because of the author’s death in ambush). Klar overstated here, however, the difference between the Greek and Indian approaches and, even more, the impact of the transition to the use of codices, instead of rolls, on the development of Masorah. See supra, Vol. II, p. 390 n. 35.

3. A. Guillaume’s preface to T. Arnold and his edition of The Legacy of Islam, p. viii; Mez, Renaissance, p. 237. The difference between the official Arabic lan-

4. Ibn Quraish’s *Risala*, Introduction, ed. by Bargès and Goldberg, p. 1 (Hebrew trans. by M. Katz, p. 1; on his date, see *infra*, n. 17); Nissi ben Nuh’s “Commentary on the Ten Commandments,” excerpted in Pinsker’s *Liekute kadmoniot*, I, 38. That Nissi was not animated by linguistic xenophobia per se is evident from his assertion, in that very context, that he had consulted for his interpretation Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, as well as Hebrew sources. On the ancient opposition to the vernacular Aramaic, see *supra*, Vol. II, p. 146. The later geonim, on the other hand, tried to uphold its use, as we have seen *supra*, Chap. XXIX, n. 28. One may also mention that even today some isolated Jewish communities in northern Iraq have retained a distinct collection of old Aramaic proverbs. See J. B. Segal, “Neo-Aramaic Proverbs of the Jews of Zakho,” *JNES*, XIV, 251–70 (data collected from Zakho emigrés in Israel).

5. Yehudah ibn Tibbon’s introduction to his Hebrew translation of Bahya’s K. al-Hiddya (Duties of the Heart), entitled *Hobot ha-lebabot*, in A. Zifroni’s edition, p. 2. Very similar is his subsequent expostulation in the introduction to his translation of Ibn-Janah’s K. al-Luma’ (Sefer ha-Riqmah), ed. by Wilensky, p. 4. Here (pp. 5 f.) the translator also explained his quest for exactitude, so that the translation differs from the original “only with respect to language.” See also Ibn Chiquitilla’s introduction to his Hebrew rendition of Yehudah Ḥayyyuj’s *Treatises*, ed. and trans. by J. W. Nutt, pp. 1 (Hebrew), 1 f. (English); and Abraham ibn Ezra’s expostulation in the introduction to his Keli Nehoshet (Commentary on Ptolomy’s Astrolobe). The Hebrew renditions of Maimonides’ *Guide* by Samuel ibn Tibbon and Yehudah al-Ḥarizi, respectively, both prepared shortly after the publication of the original, have long been recognized as standard examples of the dichotomy between exact and elegant translation. See also M. D. Goldmann’s dissertation, *Zu den Arabismen bei den hebräischen Übersetzern des Maimonides*, summarized in the *Jahrbuch der Dissertationen der Philosophischen Fakultät* . . . Berlin, 1925–26, pp. 9–11.

Incidentally, this perennial dilemma of translators also deeply colored the adjustment of contemporary Latin renditions, despite the long and venerable traditions of the use of that language in philosophic literature. See the examples cited by M. Hubert in his “Quelques aspects du latin philosophique au XIIe et XIIIe siècles,” *Revue des études latines*, XXVII, 211–33. If, on the other hand, Elijah Bashyatchi and others were unable to distinguish between Tobiah ben Moses’ original work and a translation by him of a work by Joseph Al-Baṣir (see Z. Ankori’s discussion in his “Elijah Bashyachi,” *Tarbiz*, XXV, 49 ff.), this uncertainty is understandable because of the combination of bias and lack of philological refinement on the part of the distinguished fifteenth-century Karaite codifier. See *supra*, Chap. XXVI, n. 29.
6. D. H. Baneth, “Maimonides’ Translations of His Own Writings as Compared with Those of His Translators” (Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, XXIII, 170–91. See also B. Klar’s more general analysis of “Methods of Expanding the Hebrew Language in the Middle Ages” (Hebrew), reprinted in his *Mehqarim ve-’iyyunim*, pp. 51–41. Klar has shown that even the translators made relatively little use of direct loan words from Arabic. In the more than three thousand philosophic, scientific, and medical terms reviewed in J. Klatzkin’s *Ozar ha-munaḥim ha-pilosophiym* (Thesaurus philosophicus linguae hebraicae) only about eighty, or 2.6 percent, were direct loan words. Most of the adjustments were made by the transmutation of meaning of old Hebrew words or the coinage of new Hebrew terms in analogy with the Arabic designations used in the original works.

7. See, e.g., Maimonides’ brief autograph responsum, ed. by R. Gottheil in my *Essays on Maimonides*, pp. 123 ff.; B. Chapira’s “Textes inédits de Maimonide,” *REJ*, XCIX, 6–33 (publishing an autograph fragment of Maimonides’ Arabic commentary on his *Code* and the *Epistle to Yemen* and listing a number of earlier publications); Ibn Janah’s *K. al-Luma*, Introduction, p. 15; in the Hebrew *Sefer ha-Riqmah*, ed. by Wilensky, p. 18 (or Metzger’s French trans., pp. 15 f.); Samau’al ibn Yahya’s *Ijham*, cited by M. Schreiner in *MGWJ*, XLII, 253. It is less astonishing that such works as Maimonides’ commentaries on the Mishnah were written in Hebrew script. A comprehensive autograph of that *Commentary* on two sections of the Mishnah (Mo’ed and Nashim) has in recent years been part of the Sassoon collection. See D. S. Sassoon’s catalogue, *Ohelet Dawid*, I, 92 f.; and his “Notes on Some Rambam Manuscripts,” in I. Epstein’s collection of essays on *Moses Maimonides*, pp. 217 ff. See also S. D. Sassoon’s aforementioned photostatic ed. of that MS of Maimonides’ *Commentary*; other literature listed *supra*, Chap. XXVII, n. 65; and, more generally, S. M. Stern’s careful analysis of “Autograph Manuscripts of the Commentary on the Mishnah by Maimonides” (Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, XXIII, 72–88 (with 7 facsimiles).

8. See I. Friedlaender, “Die arabische Sprache des Maimonides,” in Jakob Gutt- mann *et al.*, *Moses ben Maimon*, I, 428; and, with fuller lexicographic documentation, his *Der Sprachgebrauch der Maimonides*; and S. L. Skoss’s analysis of The *Arabic Commentary of ‘Ali ben Suleiman the Karaites on the Book of Genesis*, pp. 64 ff. The study of Judeo-Arabic dialects in their historical evolution is still in its infancy. Even the analysis of dialects now spoken in various communities throughout the Muslim world is limited to a few scholarly works relating to certain aspects of speech in Algiers, Yemen, and Baghdad. See, e.g., L. Brunot and E. Malka’s *Textes judéo-arabes de Fès*, supplemented by their *Glossaire judéo-arabe de Fès*; and with reference thereto W. Leslau’s “Hebrew Elements in the Judeo-Arabic Dialect of Fes,” *JQR*, XXXVI, 61–78 (listing other important publications); his “Judeo-Arabic Dialects” (Yiddish), *YB*, XXVI, 58–78; the three illustrations adduced by D. S. Löwinger in his Hebrew essay, “Observations on the Arabic Language of the Jews” in *Ha-Zofeh*, XII, 105–8; and M. Wald’s aforementioned remarks on *Die arabischen Glossen in den Schriften der Geonim*. The present-day dialects will be more fully discussed in their modern context. See also *supra*, n. 5; and, on the environmental influences on medieval Hebrew phonetics, *infra*, n. 40.
9. Al-Jahiz cited in Goldziher’s *Muhammedanische Studien*, I, 162; Bahya’s *K. al-Hidaya ‘ila fara’id al-qulub* (Duties of the Heart), ed. by A. S. Yahuda, pp. 22 f. (in Hyamson’s ed. and trans. of the Hebrew version, I, 22). The mutual impact of Hebrew and Arabic is well illustrated in the studies by M. H. Gottstein, *Tahbirah u-millonah shel ha-lashon ha-ibrit* (Mediaeval Hebrew Syntax and Vocabulary as Influenced by Arabic; Hebrew University dissertation, 1951, typescript); and A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’an*, as well as some of the other literature listed supra, Chap. XVII, n. 15. The Arab philologists were, of course, familiar with the foreign origin of many Arabic terms, although they did not quite draw therefrom the obvious conclusions for the dignified status of these other languages. See, e.g., the illustrations adduced by A. Siddiqi in his *Ibn Duraid and His Treatment of Loan-Words* (reprinted from *Allahabad University Studies*, VI, Arts section, pp. 669–750).

The “Hebrewisms” in the Western Bible translations have often been treated. To the literature previously mentioned, esp. in Chaps. XXIV and XXIX, add such recent monographs as M. Rehm’s fresh analysis of “Die Bedeutung hebräischer Wörter bei Hieronymus,” *Biblica*, XXXV, 174–97; and K. Borowicz, “The Hebrew Etymology of the Term ‘Missa’” (Polish), *Ruch biblijny i liturgiczny*, V, 445–69. It is small wonder that already in the Middle Ages there was a demand for Hebrew dictionaries. See the brief analysis of the Hebrew-Latin dictionaries of the twelfth century in Avrances and Tours by S. Berger in his still very useful study of medieval Christian Hebraists, *Quam notitiam linguae hebraicae habuerint Christiani mediæ aevi temporibus in Gallia*, p. 17. More remarkably, some scholars detected Hebrew linguistic influences even in such remote regions as India. See, e.g., the hypothesis of the Hebrew origin of a Sanskrit term advanced by V. S. Agrawala in his “Ancient Contacts between India and the Middle East . . . Hebrew Word Traced,” *India and Israel*, IV, No. 4, p. 45.


The implications of Jewish bilingualism and trilingualism are yet to be fully explored. The cultivation of Hebrew, especially, alongside the spoken languages of the respective countries, essentially differed from that of two languages spoken at the same time in the same area. Having long ceased to be the daily medium of communication, largely reserved for the use of the intelligentsia in its higher intellectual pursuits but at the same time appealing to the religious instincts of the masses, Hebrew neither served as a target of antagonistic legislation, as did for instance Gaelic in Ireland, nor did it suffer from the inferiority complexes of languages spoken by many oppressed minorities (including Yiddish). Even the oppressors, whether Muslim or Christian, readily admitted the antiquity and, at times, even sanctity of the Jews’ “holy tongue.” Within the Jewish community the prestige of Hebrew loomed extremely high throughout the pre-Emancipation era. On the other hand, it lacked the strong moorings of a language spoken by a conservative peasantry or a population residing in inaccessible mountain recesses.
which rarely could be completely dislodged by the "superior" language of any intellectually and politically dominant group. The dramatic decline of Gaelic in nineteenth-century Ireland and its equally dramatic revival in twentieth-century Eire point up certain factors which, despite their substantial variations, may help elucidate some of the aspects of the speedy Arabicization of the Jewish masses and the simultaneous revival of Hebrew among the intelligentsia so soon after the rise of Islam. See the data assembled in W. H. Rees's dissertation on *Le Bilinguisme des pays celtiques*. These parallels as well as dissimilarities might be the subject of a fascinating monograph.

A reexamination is also needed, with the aid of modern techniques, of the extent to which preoccupation with Hebrew studies in any particular period interfered with the purity of speech and the command of the literary language of the environment by Hebrew-trained children and adults. The educational exploration in this area, still rather sparse and scattered, is largely confined to an examination of the bilingualism of Yiddish-speaking and other "foreign-language" groups in schools. See the literature listed in M. N. H. Hoffman's dissertation on *The Measurement of Bilingual Background*. Methodological studies of this kind, cultivated especially in such multilingual areas as Switzerland, can offer substantial aid also for the examination of the Hebrew problem, provided the investigator will carefully assess the modifications created by the unique position of Hebrew as an unspoken, and yet much alive, literary heritage. See also F. Schneersohn, "The Psychology of Bi-Lingualism in Palestine" (Hebrew), *Hahinnuch*, XII, 1-28; and esp. U. Weinreich, *Research Problems in Bilingualism with Special Reference to Switzerland* (Columbia University dissertation, 1952, microfilm), as well as his briefer study of *Languages in Contact, Findings and Problems*.

11. *Erubin* 53b (with reference to M. vi.1, Bekhorot vi.6); B.Q. 3b (with reference to Isa. 21:12, Ob. 6), 6b (with reference to M. i.1); Ibn Janaḥ's *K. al-Luma'*, Introduction, ed. by J. Derenbourg, pp. 5 ff. (*Sefer ha-Riqmah*, ed. by Wilensky, I, 14 ff., or Metzger's French trans., pp. 5 ff.). In this context Ibn Janaḥ also showed that the talmudic sages never hesitated to illustrate the meaning of a biblical word by a like-sounding word in Greek, Persian, or Arabic. Curiously, some conservatives who objected to linguistic and particularly to comparative studies nevertheless, according to our author, pointed out certain ungrammatical forms in the Mishnah. That these were not Karaite opponents of the Mishnah, as suggested by Wilensky (*ibid.*, p. 19 n. 6), is evident from the context. Nor is it at all likely that the Saragossan grammarians should have felt the need to defend the grammar of the Mishnah against sectarians, whose very presence in his community is yet to be proved, and whom he failed to combat more directly in any other context. Evidently some of the talmudic students themselves tried to discredit philological studies by pointing out that grammatical rules about which philologists were making much ado had been completely disregarded in the Mishnah. Of course, in the Near East, where the sectarian conflicts had reached their apogee in the tenth century, the very disparity in the vocalization and pronunciation of certain biblical words between Babylonians and Palestinians and even between various regions in Babylonia itself, with the ensuing differences in meaning, were grist for the mill of the Karaite assailants of the reliability of the Rabbanite traditions. See the debate on this score between Jacob ben Ephraim the Syrian and Qirqisani, as reported in the latter's *K. al-Anwar*, ii.16-17, ed. by Nemoy, I, 135 ff.; and in B. Klar's some-
what abridged Hebrew trans. in his Meḥqarim ve-‘iyyunim, pp. 522 ff. Of course, the Hebrew of the Samaritans was far more divergent. See the literature listed supra, Chap. XXV, n. 38; and esp. Z. Ben-Hayyim’s comprehensive study, ‘Ibrit va-aramit nusah Shomeron (Hebrew and Aramaic of the Samaritan Variety).

12. Abraham Zacuto, Sefer Yuḥasin ha-shalem (Lexicon biographicum et historicum), ed. by H. Filipowski, pp. 100b, 206, 217, and elsewhere; Hezekiah ben Samuel’s report cited supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 28; and S. D. Margoliouth, Lectures on Arabic Historians, p. 19. Because of the absence of any direct quotations from Ṣemah’s work in the later geonic and medieval letters, L. Ginzberg voiced doubts about the identity of the author and suggested that Zacuto may have used a dictionary prepared by some later author named Ṣemah. See his Geonica, I, 159 f. But, apart from the improbability that the informed and extremely careful Zacuto should have committed such an obvious blunder, a good case has been made for the use of Ṣemah’s work by Nathan ben Yeḥiel in eleventh-century Rome, or within little more than two centuries after Ṣemah Gaon’s death in 890. See the literature cited supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 50; and infra, n. 51.

13. Harkavy, Zikkron, V, 52 ff.; and supra, Chap. XXVIII, n. 74. N. Allony has strongly argued for the spelling Egron (rather than Agron), as it is indeed vocalized in the title of two extant MSS. See his fine Hebrew analysis of this work in Fishman’s Rav Saddya Gaon, pp. 242 ff., reprinted in his Mi-Torot ha-lashon, pp. 35-86; and Harkavy’s remarks on his edition, p. 29 n. 5. Allony and S. L. Skoss have substantially added to our knowledge of this early Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic philological classic by publishing a number of additional fragments and by their penetrating observations. See Skoss’s “Fragments of Unpublished Philological Works of Saadia Gaon,” JQR, XXIII, 329-36; Allony’s Hebrew essays, “A New Fragment of Saadya’s Egron,” Tarbiz, XIX, 89-103 (with additional notes by S. Abramson, ibid., p. 104; XXI, 63); and on the use of “Telof telef in Saadiah,” Sinai, XIV, Nos. 167-68, pp. 144-61. Allony also announces the preparation of a new volume on the Egron, which will include a fragment from a Leningrad MS obtained by S. L. Skoss. See his review of Skoss’s volume, cited infra, n. 40.

14. N. Allony, “From R. Saadia Gaon’s Dictionary on the Mishnah” (Hebrew), Leshonenu, XVII, 167-78 (publishing a MS folio from the British Museum; with additional notes by S. Abramson, ibid., Special Issue, 5714 [1954], 49-50).

Among the numerous as yet unsolved questions pertaining to Saadia’s lexicon remains that of the date of the Arabic revision. In his own introduction Saadia refers vaguely to “some years” having passed since the initial composition. Even if one could be sure that Saadia’s own references to this book in his Commentary on Sefer Yeṣirah and the polemical Sefer ha-Galui related to the second, and not a third, edition, we would only have a terminus ad quem of almost thirty years after the first recension (902). See also E. Ben Ezra’s study of the “New Vocabulary Introduced by R. Saadia Gaon” (Hebrew), Horeb, VIII, 135-47; IX, 176-85; X, 295-318. The influence of Arab grammarians, admitted by Saadia himself (Harkavy, Zikkron, pp. 44 ff.) is noticeable especially in the gaon’s emphasis on the importance of the weak and servile consonants. The debates between the two schools on this score were later summarized by Abu'l-Barakat ibn al-Anbari (1119-81) in his K. al-Insaf fi masa’il al-ḥilaf (Die grammatischen Streitfragen der Basrer
und Kufer), ed. by G. Weil, pp. 6 ff. (Arabic), 121 f. (German). See also J. Košut’s detailed analysis of “Fünf Streitfragen der Basrenser und Kufenser,” SB Vienna, LXXXVIII, esp. pp. 315 ff.; supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 25; and infra, n. 37.

15. Saadiah and Mubashshir, quoted in Ibn Ezra’s Commentary on Jonah 1:3; Harkavy, Zikhron, V, 68 ff.; Saadiah’s Commentary on Gen. 10:4, in his Oeuvres, I, 17; Salmon ben Yeruham’s introduction to his comments on the Ten Commandments in Pinsker’s Likute kadmoniot, II, 62 (mentioning Al-Bakhtawi as deceased); Yeshu’a ben Yehudah’s Commentary on Exod. and Lev., ibid., pp. 73 ff.; and other sources cited by Fürst in his Geschichte des Karärthums, I, 90 f., 170 f. Mubashshir’s bias is evident from every page of his critique in his K. Istidrak, ed. by Zucker, where, however, our controversy over the meaning of Tarshish is not included. See Zucker’s introduction, p. 8. Understandably, Mubashshir aimed his strictures primarily at Saadiah’s major works, such as his Bible commentaries and his Beliefs and Opinions. The critics’ task was greatly facilitated by the gaon’s penchant for identifying names simply by the similarity of sound. Nor was he altogether consistent; in his translation of Isa. 25:10, he rendered the “daughter of Tarshish” by “maritime community” (daughter of the sea). See his Oeuvres, III, 33; and supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 43.

16. Ibn Tamim’s Commentary on Sefer Yesirah, Introduction, ed. by M. Grossberg, p. 17 (or the improved version of the Parma MS cited by Mann in his Texts and Studies, I, 74 n. 25; and more fully by G. Vajda in “Le Commentaire kairounais sur le ‘Livre de la création,’” REJ, CVII, 126); Rashii’s and Ibn Ezra’s Commentaries on Eccles. 12:5. Cf. Bacher’s remarks in ZDMG, XLIX, 587; Hirschfeld’s Literary History of Hebrew Grammarians and Lexicographers, p. 20; and M. Z. (H.) Segal’s Yesode ha-Fonetiqah ha-‘ibrit (Principles of Hebrew Phonetics), pp. 101 ff. Curiously, none of these medieval grammarians refer to Ibn Tamim’s alleged temporary conversion to Islam, first mentioned some five centuries after the event by Saadiah ibn Danan of Granada. See his Epistle, published by Z. H. Edelmann in his Hemdah genuzah (Collection of Manuscript Fragments), p. 16. See also infra, Chap. XXXIII.

17. Ibn Quraish’s Risala, ed. by Bargès and Goldberg, p. 2 (Hebrew version by M. Katz, pp. 3 ff.; here quoted from H. Hirschfeld’s English excerpt in his Literary History, pp. 17 f.). The date of Ibn Quraish, which largely depends on the time he had met Eldad the Danite (see supra, Chap. XVII, n. 52), is still as controversial as ever. After reviewing the pertinent earlier discussions, M. Katz came to the conclusion that Ibn Quraish flourished between 770 and 800, or more than a century before Saadiah. See the intro. to his trans. of the Risala, pp. 4 ff. Apart from other difficulties, however, mentioned by Katz’s predecessors, it is very unlikely that Ibn Quraish should have moved to Fez soon after its foundation by Idris II in 808 and before the establishment there of a sizeable Jewish community. See also the other arguments (including some inconclusive ones like that stemming from Ibn Quraish’s strong anti-anthropomorphism) advanced by G. Vajda in “La Chronologie de Juda ibn Quraish,” Seferad, XIV, 385–87. Vajda favors the original editors’ suggestion that Ibn Quraish came to Fez after the destruction of his native city of Tahort in 908, a date which does not necessarily conflict with his possible encounter with Eldad in his younger years.
XXX: LINGUISTIC RENASCENCE

The third part of Ibn Quraish's work, devoted to comparisons between Hebrew and Arabic words, including such as have undergone the change from an sh to an s sound and vice versa, seems to have had a separate characteristic title, "Book of Affinity." It is so cited by Ibn Ezra who, however, also mentions it under its incipit as the "Book of Father and Mother." On Ibn Quraish's book on the aggadot mentioned by a Karaite polemist in the treatise published by Assaf in Tarbiz (IV, 204 ff.), and the oft-debated question as to whether he betrayed Karaite sympathies, see Mann's observations in his "Varia," ibid., VI, 66 ff. As elsewhere, this either-or attitude in regard to a scholar's Karaite leanings evidently does violence to the actual historic situation. See Katz's intro. to his trans. of Ibn Quraish, pp. 31 ff.; and supra, Chap. XXIX, nn. 15–16. On the other hand, it is almost superfluous to assert that Ibn Quraish, like most other pioneers, did not start absolutely from scratch.

There still is no way of telling whether Ibn Quraish knew any of Saadiah's philological works. It has been noted that even where he had direct occasion to cite the gaon, as in the second section dealing with a comparison of biblical with talmudic terms, he failed to do so. In fact, he mentioned only seventeen of the more than ninety biblical hapax legomena which Saadiah tried to explain from rabbinic parallels, and even here he cited as a rule different illustrations from the Mishnah and the Talmud. See D. Yellin's Toledot hitpaṭḥut ha-diqduq ha-ibri (Historical Evolution of the Hebrew Grammar), p. 42. However, Ibn Quraish evidently intended to furnish a number of telling illustrations, rather than an exhaustive list of such biblical-rabbinic parallels. See also, more generally, S. Eppenstein's analysis of "Die hebräisch-arabische Sprachvergleichung des Jehuda ibn Korelsch," MGWJ, XLIV, 486–507.

18. David ben Abraham's K. Jamīʿ al-alfaz, I, 15, 146, 154, 159, 410; S. L. Skoss's comprehensive introduction thereto, esp. pp. lxxvii f.; and the numerous passages listed in his Index, pp. lxxxiv ff. Skoss has plausibly argued that the author's familiarity with the topography of Palestine and the fact that his dictionary was soon thereafter abridged by Levi ben Jephet in the Holy Land (the introduction to an epitome of this abridgment prepared by 'Ali ben Sulaiman was published by Pinsker in his Lichute kadmoniot, I, 189 ff.), indicate that he had left Fez and lived in Palestine. Here apparently he joined the Karaite sect. We possess records of only one Karaite settlement in northwest Africa, namely in the outlying community of Warjalan (Ouargela) in the southern Algerian desert. See Ibn Daud's Chronicle in MJC, I, 79; Mann's Texts and Studies, II, 193 ff., 155; and supra, Chap. XXVI, n. 74. Both these sources date from the twelfth century, but it seems unlikely that two centuries earlier there had been a Karaite community in the great Jewish center of Fez, birthplace or residence of Dunash ben Labraṭ, Menahem ben Saruq, and Isaac Alfasi, without leaving any trace whatsoever. Of course, an individual like David could even there have evinced considerable sympathies with the Karaite point of view while formally still a member of the undivided, and hence Rabbanite, Jewish community. Even later he revealed none of the strong biases characteristic of most Karaite teachers in Jerusalem, and his Karaite orientation is evident only from occasional reference to Karaites as maskilim (the enlightened ones) and his preference for some legal interpretations accepted by these sectarians. See Pinsker's Lichute kadmoniot, I, 117 ff., 122 ff.; and Skoss's introduction, pp. xliv ff. But did not Mubashshir, Rabbanite though he was,
condemn one of Saadia's strictures on 'Anan's interpretation by exclaiming, "It was he who blundered, not 'Anan'?" See his K. Istidrak, pp. 26 (Arabic), 79 (Hebrew). David's extensive use, on the other hand, of the linguistic materials in the Targumim, Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash (see the numerous passages listed in Skoss's Index, pp. lxxxı f.) is no proof of his pro-Rabbanite orientation. Such use, practically inescapable (see supra, Chap. XXVI, n. 5), became a commonplace among Karaite exegeticians. Even Qirqisani, who objected to the Rabbanites' reverence for and reliance on Onkelos in many of their biblical interpretations, did so on purely theological, not linguistic, grounds. See his quotation of several "objectionable" renditions of the Targum in his K. al-Anwar, 14, 18, ed. by Nemoy, I, 39 f.; and Nemoy's trans., HUCA, VII, 361.

19. See infra, n. 37. In the Arabic introduction to his second edition, Saadia argued that "just as the knowledge of the individual is lost from heedlessness, so is that of the multitude forgotten for the same reason," and he blamed on that collective neglect the fact that such important philological treatises as the "Book of Weights" (of Meters?) and that of the "Knowledge of Beginnings" had been lost. See Harkavy's Zikhron, V, 45; and Hirschfeld's trans. of this passage in his Literary History, pp. 12 f. See also Allony's observations in Fishman's Rav Saadya Gaon, pp. 251 ff.; and Brockelmann's Geschichte, I, 96, 112 ff., 121 f., 138 f. The story of the interrelations between the Arab and Jewish philology in this crucial era of the development of both still awaits elucidation. See supra, nn. 10, 13; and infra, n. 28. Thus far even such experts as Bacher (see esp. his Die hebräische Sprachwissenschaft vom 10. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert), Hirschfeld, or Yellin have limited themselves to a few generalities.

20. Menahem's Mahberet (Set; a dictionary), ed. by H. Filipowski, fols. 11b, 12a, 50b, 54a, 70a, 99ab, 105a. See also the additions and corrections supplied from a Bern MS by D. Kaufmann in "Das Wörterbuch Menachem Ibn Saruk's," ZDMG, XL, 367-409. Numerous examples of Menahem's explanations of biblical phrases by elliptic or pleonastic usage are adduced by Yellin in his Toledot hitpathut, pp. 60 ff. The theological bias of Ben Saruk's interpretation of the term Elyeh is doubly evident, as it runs counter to his general effort to connect even rare words with some more familiar ones in the Bible. In this respect his explanation of the genuinely unique term ḥajafot is far more typical. In fact, on one occasion he listed fully 116 words, "which have none like them in the Torah, but are explained by their context." Unlike Saadia, however, whose work on the hapax legomena he did not mention, he generally refrained from interpreting these words by comparison even with the vocabulary of the Mishnah. Curiously, only fourteen of these words occur in Saadia's list, and, in the single case where Menahem cites a mishnaic parallel, it, too, differs from that of the gaon. See Yellin's remarks, p. 62; and, more generally, Bacher's Hebräische Sprachwissenschaft, pp. 23 ff.; and Hirschfeld's Literary History, pp. 24 ff. On Menahem's likely share in the preparation of Hisdai's famous letter to the Khazar king, see supra, Chap. XIX, n. 34.

21. Dunash ben Labrat's Teshubot (Criticae vocum recensiones), ed. by H. Filipowski, p. 75 and passim. The biographical data here given, especially the assumptions that Dunash was born in Baghdad rather than in Fez and that his
father's first name was Labraṭ, follow N. Allony's arguments in his edition of Dunash's Shirim, pp. 5 ff. Allony's denial (pp. 14 ff.), however, of any connection between Menaḥem's dismissal by Hīsdlai and Dunash's attack is far-fetched. The fact that in the poem addressed to his patron Menaḥem failed to refer to that attack is no more conclusive than Menaḥem's general silence on this score, or the absence of any further reference to his alleged heterodoxy in either his own writings or in the replies by his pupils. See also Allony's additional observations on “Dunash ben Labraṭ’s Language” (Hebrew), Leshonenu, XV, 161–72; and, mainly with reference to poetic forms and detailed interpretations, A. Mirski's Hebrew review of Allony's ed. of Dunash's Shirim in KS, XXIV, 16–19. Of course, Menaḥem was not a Karaite sympathizer. He probably did not even know of 'Anan's interpretation, since in Spain Karaism was hardly an issue before the return of Ibn al-Taras from Jerusalem some two generations later. Dunash, on the other hand, coming from the polemically overcharged environment of Saadijah's school, was far more sensitive. Menaḥem's insistence on the literal meaning of the negative lo, however, merely upholding the masoretic spelling, antagonized even the great Tosafist, Jacob Tam of Rameru. In his booklet entitled Hakhra'ot (Decisions), in which he passed judgment on the merits of the Menaḥem-Dunash controversy, R. Jacob, while generally siding with Menaḥem, pointed out that “even the shallowest of the shallow” could not have so misinterpreted the meaning of Scripture, but that he rather agreed with Dunash and that “both were right.” See the text published by Filipowski in parallel columns in his edition of Dunash's Teshubot, p. 75; and H. Englander's “Rabbenu Jacob Ben Meir Tam as Grammariian,” HUCA, XV, 485–95.

22. Sefer Teshubot (Liber Responsionum) of Menaḥem's disciples and Yehudi's rejoinder, published by S. G. Stern, Part I, pp. 29, 31 ff., 96 f.; Part II, pp. 18 f. In his notes Stern supplies from the same Parma MS some improved readings of Dunash's strictures as well. Doubtless Menaḥem himself had considered it beneath his dignity to enter the ranks and even failed to refer indirectly to the accusations in his dignified letter to Hīsdlai (published ibid., pp. xxiii ff.), which has long been recognized as a gem of the Spanish-Jewish epistolary style. In his various analyses of the controversial points from the standpoint of the philological knowledge of our day, D. Yellin has shown that the weight of evidence favors most of Dunash's and Yehudi's contentions. See his Hebrew essays on “Dunash ben Labraṭ’s Wrangling” in Gulak-Klein Mem. Vol., pp. 105–14; and “Dunash ben Labraṭ’s ‘Teshubot,’” Leshonenu, XI, 202–15. See also his Toledot hitpathut, pp. 67 ff.

23. Ḥayyuj's K. an-Nutaj (Book of Glosses), long known by Ibn Ezra's somewhat misleading reference to his “fourth book” (see Sefer Mo'znayim, Intro., fol. 2a), has in part been recovered to his a Leningrad MS and published and annotated in P. Kokovtsov's K’istorii srednevekovoi evreiskoi filologii (Contributions to the History of Medieval Hebrew Philology and Judeo-Arabic Literature), II, 1–73 (Russian), 1–58, 191–204 (Arabic). See also S. Poznanski's analysis thereof in his “New Materials to the History of Hebrew and Hebrew-Arabic Philology during the X–XII Centuries,” JQR, XVI, 258 ff. In this essay (pp. 245 ff.) Poznanski strongly argued also against the long-accepted identification of Ḥayyuj with Menaḥem's disciple involved in the controversy with Dunash. However, his main chronological and geographic arguments are far from conclusive. Ḥayyuj may
well have been born in Fez even before 940 to parents of alleged Christian origin and arrived in Cordova in time to participate in the controversy. In fact, his enmity to Dunash may have dated back to the time they had both resided in Fez. Nor would such Moroccan origin have in any way interfered with his participation in a booklet attacking Dunash, whose superiority complex was clearly eastern rather than Moroccan in nature. Since Ḥayyuj's great contributions are in the field of grammar, rather than lexicography, his theories will be more fully analyzed in the next section. See also N. Allony's "Yehudah ben David and Yehudah Ḥayyuj" (Hebrew), Zlotnik Jub. Vol., pp. 67-82, arguing for their identity, but denying that Ḥayyuj was a native of Fez and a pupil of Menahem.

24. Ibn Janah's K. al-Mustalḥiq, in his Opuscules et traités, ed. by J. and H. Derenbourg, pp. 140 ff.; his K. Al-Luma', ed. by J. Derenbourg, Intro. and Chap. xxxi (xxxii), pp. 18, 340 ff. (Sefer ha-Riqmah, ed. by Wilensky, II, 358, with the editor's notes thereon; Metzger's French trans., pp. 21, 337). Ibn Janah was not only by nature a pugnacious writer, but he was made doubly sensitive by his opponents' frequent imputations of plagiarism on his part. See the data cited by Wilensky in his "On the Biography of R. Jonah ibn Janah" (Hebrew), Tarbiz, IV, 100 ff. (Wilensky also makes it plausible here that the grammarian was a native of Lucena, rather than Cordova). Such polemical asides may have detracted somewhat from the author's objectivity, but they doubtless increased the interest of readers in these generally technical and mentally exacting discussions. On Samuel ibn Nagrela's philological works, see infra, nn. 27 and 52.

25. Ibn Janah's K. al-Uṣul (The Book of Hebrew Roots), ed. by A. Neubauer, cols. 3 ff., 431, 579 ff. (Sefer ha-Shorashim, in the Hebrew trans. by Yehudah ibn Tibbon, ed. by W. Bacher, pp. 2, 302 ff., 407 ff.). On Ibn Janah as a grammarian and his great, if indirect, share in the evolution of biblical exegesis, see supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 77; and infra, nn. 50-52. Of special interest also are Ibn Janah's contributions to comparative linguistics, in which he went far beyond any of his predecessors. See Bacher's seven decades old, but still very useful, analyses of Die hebräisch-arabische Sprachvergleichung des Abulwālid and Die hebräisch-neu hebräische und hebräisch-aramäische Sprachvergleichung des Abulwālid. See also the fragment of an otherwise unknown Hebrew dictionary apparently used by Ibn Janah, published by Allony in his Mi-Sifrut yeme ha-benayim, pp. 75 ff. The arrangement here is so unsystematic that it, or some other dictionary like it, evoked Ibn Janah's righteous anger. See the latter's K. al-Uṣul, col. 12 (Sefer ha-Shorashim, p. 7). Some broader aspects are also discussed in M. Madan's brief Hebrew essay on "The Biblical Dictionary of the Spanish-Jewish scholars," Leshonenu, XVII, 110-14.

26. On Ibn Parḥon's lexicographical work, see infra, n. 29, whereas David Qimhi's Sefer ha-Shorashim (Book of Roots), ed. by J. H. R. Biesenthal and F. Lebrecht (also in many earlier editions), will be more fully considered in connection with the linguistic studies in later medieval Europe. Recent biblical scholarship, prone to abandon some of the excessively critical approaches of the last generation, has increasingly reached the conclusion that, as far as biblical lexicography is concerned, our knowledge has substantially increased beyond that of Ibn Janah and his fellow lexicographers only where the Hebrew vocabulary
could be explained by comparison with other ancient Near Eastern languages. See G. R. Driver’s pertinent observations in “L’Interprétation du texte masorétique à la lumière de la lexicographie hébraïque,” Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses, XXVI, 337–58.


The eighth part of Abu’l Faraj Harun’s Muṣhtamil was edited from a British Museum MS under the title “Chapter on Biblical Chaldee,” in Hirschfeld’s Arabic Chrestomathy, pp. 54–60. Its conclusion, mentioning the date 1026, explains the rather unfinished state of this section by the author’s illness. It is altogether missing in the voluminous Leningrad MS, the size of which (579 leaves) discouraged P. Kokovtsov from contemplating its full publication. Regrettably, even that Russian orientalist’s intention to publish instead Abu’l Faraj’s K. al-Kāfī (see infra, n. 45) has not been realized. See his letter to S. L. Skoss of 1924, communicated in the latter’s Arabic Commentary of ‘Ali b. Suleimān, p. 27 n. 151. See also Ibn Bal’am’s Commentary on Amos 7:14 and Hab. 2:6, ed. by Poznanski in JQR, XV, 32, 45 f. Cf. Hirschfeld’s Literary History, pp. 53 f., 69 f.

28. Ibn Baron’s K. al-Muwazana (Concordance between the Hebrew and Arabic Languages) in Kokovtsov’s K’istorii, I and II, 153–72 (Arabic), with variants and additions, ibid., pp. 216–33 (Russian); Halevi’s K. al-Khaṣāṣ, II.68 (in Hirschfeld’s English trans., pp. 124 f.). See also S. Eppenstein’s detailed analysis of “Ishak ibn Baroun et ses comparaisons de l’hébreu avec l’arabe,” REJ, XL, 233–49; XLI, 76–102; and P. Wechter’s Dropsie College dissertation on Ibn Barun’s Book of Comparisons Between the Hebrew and the Arabic Languages (typescript). On the spelling Baron, rather than the more widely accepted Barun, see S. M. Stern, “The Explanation of a Difficult Verse of Yehudah Halevi and the Spanish Etymology of the Name Ibn Baron,” JQR, XL, 189–91. It may also be noted that Ibn Bal’am, too, though generally very conservative in his theology (see supra, Chap. XXIX, nn. 64, 76), did not hesitate to adduce Aramaic and Arabic parallels or even to cite, on occasion, a Christian Bible commentator. See his Commentary on Hab. 2:4, ed. by Poznanski in JQR, XV, 10, 45 (in n. 10 Poznanski lists other such references by Ibn Bal’am and other medieval exegetes); and his three small grammatical treatises published by Kokovtsov in their Hebrew translation together with some fragments of the Arabic originals in his K’istorii, II, 67–152 (Hebrew-Arabic), 201–15 (Russian); and analyzed by Poznanski in his “Hebräisch-arabischen Sprachvergleichungen bei Jehudah ibn Bal’am,” ZDMG, LXX, 449–76, LXXI, 270 (here mainly corrections by Goldziher). See also infra, n. 57.

29. Ibn Parḥon’s Maḥberet he-ʾArūkh, end, ed. by Stern, fol. 75ab. Yehudah ibn Tibbon, writing only a decade after our author, already mistook the latter’s intentions. Considering the new dictionary but a translation of Ibn Janaḥ’s
work on a par with two other incomplete versions (covering the first twelve letters), Ibn Tibbons censured Solomon for inserting his own observations on the basis of “midrashim and medical books” without clearly marking such interpolations. “This is a great sin and injustice.” See his rendition of Ibn Janah’s Sefer ha-Shorashim, p. 550. Modern scholars have made clear, however, that, deeply indebted as Ibn Parhon undoubtedly was to his illustrious predecessor, he produced a new book of his own. See esp. W. Bacher’s analysis of “Salomon ibn Parchon’s hebräisches Wörterbuch,” ZAW, X, 120–56; XI, 35–99 (offering on pp. 97 ff. some interesting corrections to Stern’s edition on the basis of the very Vienna MS used by that editor).

30. C. J. Kasowski, ᪃атур leshon ha-talmud (Thesaurus Talmudis Concordantia Verborum); and the other concordances listed supra, Vol. II, p. 428 n. 6; and Chap. XXIX, n. 33. Investigation of the talmudic idiom has received new impetus in recent years through the publication of such detailed monographs as E. Porath’s Leshon hakhamim le-fi mesorot babliyot (Mishnaic Hebrew as Vocalized in the Early Manuscripts of the Babylonian Jews). See also the interesting comments in their reviews of this work by B. Klär, reprinted in his Meḥzarim ve-‘iyyunim, pp. 77–81; and P. Kahle in Orientalistische Literaturzeitung, XLII, 299–301. Stimulating observations “On the Linguistic Approaches and the Thought of Our Sages” were offered by N. H. Tur-Sinai in a Hebrew essay under this title, reprinted together with several related articles in his Ha-Lashon ve-ha-sefer, III, 257 ff. Many important insights into the rabbinic language, particularly as it had been current in ancient Palestine, are scattered in the various publications by S. Lieberman, especially in his Greek in Jewish Palestine, his Hellenism in Jewish Palestine, and the extensive commentary on his new edition of the Tosefta, entitled Tosefta ki-fshu‘ah, of which thus far Vols. I–II for the order Zera‘im have appeared. Of course, the medieval students did not have at their disposal all these paraphernalia of modern scholarship. It is doubly remarkable, therefore, that working empirically with limited materials they achieved a great measure of success.

31. Zacuto’s remarks, cited supra, n. 12; the analysis thereof in Kohut’s introduction to his ed. of the Arch compl., pp. xvii ff., with constant reference to S. J. L. Rapoport’s still useful biographic sketch of Toledoth Rabbenu Nathan ish Romi (A Biography of R. Nathan of Rome and the Story of His Book). Here Kohut has plausibly shown that Nathan was fully familiar with the work of his predecessor. There is less evidence of Nathan’s familiarity with Saadiah’s lexicographical work, although the Roman scholar generally made excellent use of the vast materials accumulated in the geonic commentaries on the Talmud and juristic works. See also D. S. Blondheim’s “Liste de manuscrits de l’Atrouch de Nathan ben Yehiel,” Festschrift Aron Freimann, pp. 24–50; supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 44 and passim; and infra, n. 52. The dates of Nathan’s birth and death are still uncertain. Kohut is entirely noncommittal with respect to both dates, denying even the previously long-accepted year of 1106 for Nathan’s demise. Arguing for the latter date as approximately correct, H. Vogelstein suggested c. 1035 as the most likely date of Nathan’s birth. See his and Rieger’s Geschichte der Juden in Rom, I, 337 ff. In his Mabo le-Sefer Rabiah, pp. 390 ff., V. Aptowitzer advanced the birth date to 1025. Much of that chronology depends on the identification of
Rashi as the inquirer from the community of Rome. See, more generally, supra, Chap. XXVII, nn. 134–35. Little progress has been achieved in the whole area of 'Arukh research during the last half century and more.

32. See the data assembled in Kohut's introduction; and supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 92 and passim. Kohut seems to go too far, however, in denying Nathan's familiarity with Arabic and, more generally, in underestimating the Roman scholar's considerable independence from his sources and his frequent resort to direct observation. Nathan's use of three different designations for Arabic (leshon Tayit, Ishmael, and 'Arabit) is no more proof of ignorance than is his interchangeable use of various designations for the talmudic dialect (leshon Tal-
mud, Mishnah, gemara, hakhamim, rabbanan). In fact, the greater accuracy of his references to Arabic than to Greek etymologies (in some cases Nathan actually confused Greek with Latin, although the latter differed but little from his own Italian dialect) should have given pause to the editor. Nathan had evidently tried to adhere rather faithfully to the earlier sources, but he had found in them insufficient data to dispense with fresh reasoning and observation. Certainly to declare all reference to Arab, Palestinian, or Babylonian customs as quotations from older sources merely because it is unlikely that "an unworldly man dwelling in the tent of the Torah should have traveled north and south, east and west" (Kohut, p. vi), is a completely anachronistic misreading of the scholars' way of life and pursuit of learning during the Renaissance of Islam. See my remarks in Saadia Anniv. Vol., p. 22.

33. On the much-debated relationships between Rashi and Nathan ben Yeḥiel, see the literature listed in my "Rashi and the Community of Troyes," Rashi Anniv. Vol., p. 54 n. 13; and on Rashi's lexicographic contributions, J. Weinstein and A. Zimroni's unfortunately incomplete compilation of "A Biblical Dictionary According to Rashi" (Hebrew), Leshonenu, X, 5–20, 119–34; XI, 29–37 (covers only the first ten letters of the Hebrew alphabet); J. Beniel's lexicographic studies in his "Harvesting in Rashi's Vineyard" (Hebrew), ibid., XI, 3–28; the literature listed supra, Chaps. XXVII, n. 58; XXIX, nn. 56–57; and infra, n. 48. In his "Rashi as a Lexicographer of the Talmud," Rashi Anniv. Vol., pp. 219–48, B. Cohen not only offered an analysis of the Troyes sage's contributions in this field, but also reported the preparation of a comprehensive dictionary of Rashi's definitions, of which he offered here (pp. 228 ff.) a very instructive sample. A comprehensive review of the linguistic material, both grammatical and stylistic, included in Rashi's commentaries has recently been presented by I. Avinery in his Heical [Hekhal] Rashi (Thesaurus linguae hebraicae auctore Rabbi Shlomo Izhaqi), Vol. III. The French and other foreign words in Rashi's commentaries have been treated supra, Chaps. XXVII and XXIX. Their import will be better assessed in the general context of the use of European languages by Jews during the later Middle Ages.

34. See I. Goldziher's Studien über Tanchūm Jerūšalmi, pp. 46 ff.; W. Bacher's Aus dem Wörterbuche Tanchum Jeruschalmis; and the brief excerpt from a British Museum MS in Hirschfeld's Literary History, pp. 88 f. In his Texts and Studies, I, 437 ff., J. Mann published the manuscript heading of an elegy by Tanḥūm's son Joseph, from which it is evident that Tanḥūm died in Cairo on
June 20, 1291. Tanhum's own linguistic and exegetical contributions will be discussed more fully in a future volume.


Of course, much depends on our assumptions of what were the prevailing pronunciation and vocabulary of premasoretic Hebrew. This long and often heatedly debated problem is not devoid of actuality, inasmuch as on the answer to that question hinges to a large extent the claim to greater "original purity" of the now prevailing "Sephardic" pronunciation as against that of the other Hebrew dialects. Apart from F. Perez Castro's comprehensive review article, "Problemas de las fuentes de conocimiento del hebreo premasoreto," Sefarad, VIII, 145–87, and other studies mentioned supra, Chap. XXIX, passim, see especially several other essays included in Gumpertz's volume; B. Klar's succinct observations "On the History of Hebrew Pronunciation during the Middle Ages" (Hebrew), reprinted in his Meḥqarim ve-iyyunim, pp. 42–46; and various studies in Leshonenu, including J. ha-Kohen's "Studies in Grammatical and Masoretic Problems" (Hebrew), ibid., XII, 127–33, 264–67; XIII, 203–10 (largely aimed at Kahl's theories); A. S. Hartom (Artom), "The Hebrew Pronunciation among the Jews of Italy" (Hebrew), ibid., XVI, 52–61; and I. Garbell, "The Pronunciation of Hebrew in Medieval Spain," Homenage à Millás Vallicrosa, I, 647–96. These matters are still very much in flux, however, and probably only the discovery of additional early sources could definitely settle certain highly controversial issues.

36. See Saadiah's Siddur, p. 83; and H. Yallon's observations thereon in his Hebrew essays on the "Ten Commandments" Inyane lashon, I, 46–48; and "On the Margin of Saadiah's Siddur, II: Linguistic Aspects" in Fishman's Rav Saadya Gaon, pp. 561–66. Yallon's illuminating notes are symptomatic of a fairly general reaction in recent years against the previous practice of emending irregular forms found in medieval manuscripts. With the increase of available documentary materials it became manifest that what seemed to be an arbitrary deviation from accepted grammatical rules frequently was but a perfectly legitimate usage in a certain period or region. In the case of a linguist like Saadiah, however, the forms used by him reflected not only local deviations from then accepted norms, but also a more or less reasoned acceptance of certain rules which made such deviations not only permissible but well-nigh imperative.

37. Harkavy, Zikhron, V, 45, 49 ff. (in the English trans. by Hirschfeld in his Literary History, pp. 12 ff.); Saadiah's Commentary on Yeṣirah, I, 8, ed. by Lambert, pp. 28 f. (Arabic), 49 ff. (French); Dunash ibn Tamim's Commentary on Yeṣirah, ed. by Grossberg, p. 16 (cf. Vajda's ed. in REJ, CVII, 126 f.); 'Ali ben Yehudah 'Alan cited
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by David Qimhi in his Mikhlol (Perfection; a Hebrew grammar), Venice, 1545 ed., fol. 28c; in W. Chomsky's English rendition, p. 25 (on 'Ali's identity, see the authors cited by Chomsky, ibid., p. 44 n. 57). On the importance of the three letters in Arabic philology, see supra, n. 14, and M. Bravmann's Materialien und Untersuchungen zu den phonetischen Lehren der Araber, pp. 18 f. By adding the tet to the eleven functional letters enumerated by Saadiaf, Ben Asher had counted twelve such letters, "each of which has a judge and lord," that is, depends on the main "radical" letters. See his Diqduq, pp. 3. 5; supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 25; Harkavy's excursus, pp. 121 ff. (pointing out the influence of Saadiaf's classification of consonants on the subsequent Hebrew grammarians); and Allony's remarks in Fishman's Rau Saadya Gaon, pp. 245 ff., 251 ff., 270 ff.

Allony shows here Saadiaf's indebtedness to Ibn Duraid and reexamines the mnemotechnic symbols employed by the gaon to facilitate remembrance of the auxiliary consonants. Ibn Duraid, however, was but a disciple of a long chain of Basran authorities from Sibawaih to Mubarrad, with whose works Saadiaf may have been directly acquainted. Sibawaihi's "Book," ed. by H. Derenbourg (cf. G. Jahn's fully annotated German trans. of his Buch über die Grammatik), had long become a classic of Arabic philology, while Mubarrad, who had died not many years before Saadiaf's arrival in Baghdad, was vividly remembered by many disciples and opponents as well as by readers of his work. See G. Weil's illuminating introduction to his edition of Ibn al-Anbari's Grammatische Streiffragen. In fact, Sibawaihi was to be quoted later by the anonymous Jewish author of the fragment of a grammatical "Book of Definitions," published by H. Hirschfeld in "The Arabic Portion of the Cairo Genizah, XXX," JQR, [os.] XVIII, 228 f. (Arabic and English); and Ibn Janaḥ (see infra, n. 51). On the other hand, Saadiaf shows none of Ibn Duraid's penchant for classifying words as of foreign origin merely because of the existence of variant readings and other such superficial criteria. See A. Siddiqi's aforementioned study of Ibn Duraid and His Treatment of Loan-Words.

38. In his K. al-Luma' (11, xiv [xv], xx1 [xxii]) Ibn Janaḥ twice states explicitly that Saadiaf's comprehensive philological work mentioned in the gaon's Commentary on Yesirah had not reached Spain, although in another context he quotes a philological treatise "attributed to the gaon," which very likely stemmed from the same collection (pp. 29, 170, 236; Riqmeh, I, 59, 193, 252; Metzger's French trans., pp. 32, 159, 226). The latter citation, relating to the "swallowing" of the nun, seems to have come from the seventh or, more likely, the eighth part, dealing principally with laryngeal letters. Bearing the special title maqala, each of these parts constituted a book apart (see Skoss's remarks in "Fragments of Unpublished Philological Works of Saadia Gaon." JQR, XXIII, 335 n. 15), and one was apparently known in this form to Ibn Janaḥ.

39. Saadiaf's Kutub al-Lughah (Books of Language), in the passage ed. and trans. by S. L. Skoss in "A Study of Inflection in Hebrew from Saadia Gaon's Grammatical Work 'Kutub al-Lughah,'" JQR, XXXIII, 174 ff. The extant fragments in a Leningrad MS, supplemented by smaller fragments in a Bodleian MS and a Cambridge Genizah MS, are fully reviewed by Skoss in his partly posthumous essays reprinted under the title Saadia Gaon, the Earliest Hebrew Grammarian. According to Skoss, we now possess portions of Parts II–VIII, and perhaps
of Part IX. Part I can be partially reconstructed from subsequent references to it by Saadia himself and by Dunash ben Labrat, whereas the very content of the remaining parts still is conjectural. The vast compass of these Saadianic monographs may be gleaned from the subjects dealt with in the first nine parts: "I. A Study of the Alphabet; II. Augmentation and Contraction in Stems; III. Inflexion; IV. Dagesh and Rafeh . . . ; V. A Study of Vowels; VI. The Shewa; VII. Vocalization of Affixes when Added to Laryngeals and Non-Laryngeals, and IX. Expletives and Affixes" (Skoss, p. 4). In successive chapters Skoss analyzes all the information now available on the gaon's views. But, thus far, only small segments of the text itself have seen the light of day. See n. 40.


41. Harkavy, Zikhron, V, 74 ff., 82 ff.; and Skoss's remarks thereon in JQR, XXXIII, 212. Harkavy had hesitantly suggested that anonymous author's indebtedness to Saadia's Egron, whereas Skoss rightly showed the far closer nexus between his as yet undatable treatise and Saadia's monograph on inflections.

42. Hirschfeld's Qirqisani Studies, pp. 31 ff.; and his Literary History, pp. 15 ff. Qirqisani's occasional philological observations in his comprehensive K. al-Anwar have not yet been subjected to adequate scrutiny. In his own exposition, as well as in his acceptance or rejection of theoretically and legally relevant views of others buttressed by peculiar interpretations of biblical verses, Qirqisani often betrays here his own philological biases, which, if thoroughly reviewed, would shed new light on the operation of his grammatical propositions. In his reply to Jacob ben Ephraim, for example, he, though an easterner, argued for the superiority of the Palestinian over the Babylonian and Iranian pronunciation of Hebrew, pointing especially to the former's acceptance in all Christian countries where Jews had lived "since the exile from the Second Commonwealth." See his K. al-Anwar, 11, 17, 5, ed. by Nemoy, I, 139; in Klar's Hebrew trans. in his Mehqarim ve-iyyunim, pp. 325 ff. See also the passages cited supra, n. 18; and Chap. XXVI, passim.

43. Salmon's Commentary on Lam. 11:14, ed. by S. Feuerstein, pp. xl, 8 f., 12 f., 20 f.; his comment on Ps. 102:5, excerpted and translated into Hebrew by Pinsker in his Lickute kadmoniot, II, 133 f.; David ben Abraham's K. Jami' al-alfaz, ed. by
44. Jephet’s appendix to his Commentary on Hosea in Hirschfeld’s Literary History, pp. 103 ff. (Arabic), 32 ff. (English); and P. Birnbaum’s introduction to his edition of that Commentary, pp. xxxvi ff. This supplement, previously published by R. Schröter in the appendix to “Die im Cod. Huntington aufbewahrte arabische Übersetzung der kleinen Propheten,” Archiv für wissenschaftliche Erforschung des alten Testaments, ed. by A. Merx, II, 25 ff., is also reproduced in Hebrew letters in Birnbaum’s ed., pp. 227 ff. Some other grammatical excursuses scattered through Jephet’s exegetical works had been analyzed a century ago by S. Munk in his “Notice sur Abu’il-Walid,” JA, 4th ser. XV, 312 ff., but a fresh analysis on the basis of the much richer documentary materials now available is clearly indicated.

45. Skoss’s ‘Ali ben Suleiman, pp. 10, 20 ff., based in part on the Bacher and Poznanski articles, mentioned supra, n. 27. In the aforementioned letter of 1924 (ibid.), P. Kokovtsov stated his intention of publishing, in the third volume of his K’istorii, Abu’l Faraj’s K. al-Kaf, which is extant in a Leningrad MS of some four hundred folios, but this plan has not materialized. Here, too, a detailed analysis of Abu’l Faraj’s philological views, as expressed in his exegetical works, might effectively supplement and elucidate his grammatical writings. Now with the increased availability of sections of Saadiah’s major “Books of Language,” an inquiry ought also to be instituted in regard to their influence on Karaite grammarians. For example, Abu’l Faraj’s acceptance of the division into two series of eleven letters, rather than of Ben Asher’s ten and twelve letter system, very likely stems directly or indirectly from Saadiah. See supra, Chap. XXIX, nn. 72, 76.

46. Qirqisani’s K. al-Anwar, 1, 3, 4. ed. by Nemoy, I, 15 f. (HUCA, VII, 352). One also wonders to what extent Karaite concentration on the qiyas (analogy) method in law and, with it, the rejection of extrabiblical sources, whose linguistic materials were at best tolerated, likewise served as a stumbling block. Discussing the role of the qiyas in the Basran-Kufan controversies, G. Weil noted that “while in [Muslim] canon law the qiyas served as a progressive tool, it became in grammar an obstacle to the organic evolution of language, the moment it transcended its purely exegetical function. As such it was inimical to progress.” See his introduction to his ed. of Ibn al-Anhari’s Streitfragen, p. 46. In the Karaite case, we recall, this method, after initial advances, tended to become a force of regression even in the domain of law. See also supra, Chap. XXVI, nn. 5, 36 ff.; and infra, Chap. XXXI, nn. 8 ff.

47. See Dunash’s Teshubot . . . ‘al Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, ed. by Schröter, pp. 12 No. 56, 16 f. No. 51, 31 No. 105, etc.; and his Teshubot against Menahem, ed. by Filipowski, fol. 5b. On his occupation as professional reader, see Allony’s ed. of his Shirim, pp. 8 ff. Although relatively few poems by Dunash have been preserved, his reputation among his early successors, including Ibn Janah and Ibn Gabirol, rested chiefly upon his poetic attainments. See Allony’s Hebrew essay “On the Language of Dunash ben Labraj” in Leshonenu, XV, 161 f. That he was also a well-trained grammarian may be deduced not only from his ingenious strictures on his opponents, but also from his programmatic introduction to his observations on Menahem’s
work, which outlined the general problems of Hebrew grammar. It is to be regretted that he did not see fit to follow up his critical theses with a broad positive treatment of some fundamental grammatical problems. See also D. Yellin’s analysis in his “Dunash ben Labrat’s ‘Teshubot’” (Hebrew), Leshonenu, XI, 205 ff.

48. Ḥayyuj’s K. al-Af’al, ed. by M. Jastrow under the English title The Weak and Geminative Verbs in Hebrew, pp. 1 ff.; and in Moses ibn Chiquitilla’s Hebrew translation, ed. and trans. by J. W. Nutt under the title Two Treatises on Verbs Containing Feeble and Double Letters, pp. 2 ff. (Hebrew), 4 f. (English). See also Nutt’s introductory remarks, p. 9. A slightly different translation of the introductory statement here quoted is offered by Hirschfeld in his Literary History, pp. 36 f. Ḥayyuj’s decision to depart from the Hebrew medium used by Menaḥem enabled him to express his philological laws with greater terminological precision. Although Menaḥem, too, had been deeply convinced of the basic regularity of grammatical forms and with predilection spoke of the “law” (ḥeqqah or mishpat) of language (see the examples cited by Bacher in “Die Anfänge,” ZDMG, XLIX, 365), his rather awkward Hebrew style, combined with his avowed aversion to imitation of Arabic patterns, still militated against terminological clarity.

49. Ḥayyuj’s K. at-Tanqit (Treatise on Punctuation) was ed. together with Abraham ibn Ezra’s Hebrew trans. entitled Sefer ha-Niqqud, and his own English version, by J. W. Nutt in his Two Treatises, while the K. an-Nutaf (Book of Glosses) is known mainly in excerpts published by Kokovtsov in his K’istorii, II, 1–58, 191–204. See also Pozanski’s comments thereon in his “New Material,” JQR, XVI, 245 ff., esp. pp. 262 f., 266. On the three “mother” letters, see supra, n. 43. Ḥayyuj’s practical-educational aim comes to the fore also in such rhetorical flourishes as “Know, and may God lead you in the right way,” with which he opened his treatise on punctuation. To make his meaning perfectly clear, he avoided here and in his other works the stylistic adornments customary in the Arabic prose of the period. “My only desire has been,” he declared, “to make my purpose clear, to express my thoughts in suitable words, which should bring out the full meaning of the author” (Nutt, p. 5).

50. See Halper’s remark in his “Jewish Literature in Arabic” (Hebrew), Hatekufah, XXIV, 359. Ḥayyuj’s influence on the following grammarians is evident already in the writings of Ibn Janah, who not only started his career with a book on Ḥayyuj’s work, but also quoted him more frequently than any other author. In Abu’l Walid’s K. al-Luma’ alone Ḥayyuj’s name occurs ninety-four times, while his works are cited in ninety-five instances, not always in the same context as the name. See Wilensky’s index to Sefer ha-Riqmah, II, 490, 492.

51. Ibn Janah’s Opuscules, pp. 1 ff.; his K. al-Luma’, Intro., xviii (xix), xxiv (xxv), pp. 2 ff., 207, 261 (Sefer ha-Riqmah, I, 11 ff., II, 226 f., 277; Metzger’s French trans., pp. 3 ff., 195, 232); and supra, nn. 11, 24–25. Needless to say, Ibn Janah’s explanations indirectly contributed greatly to the understanding of the Bible and significantly influenced the subsequent exegetical literature. See supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 77.

52. Most of the data now available for the philological work of Samuel ibn Nagrela are assembled in Kokovtsov’s K’istorii, II, esp. pp. 205 ff., 233 f. (see supra, n. 27). Much can also be reconstructed from the remnants of Ibn Janah’s con-
troversial writings, included in the Derenbourgs’ ed. of his Opuscles. Because the Saragossan proved ultimately victorious, modern scholarship failed to lavish all the care and concentrated attention the Nagid’s philological work apparently deserves; if not for its own sake, then at least for that of the numerous older sources which it might have preserved for posterity. Perhaps the example of M. Margulies’s successful search for residua of Samuel’s Hilkhata gibra (see supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 80) and his recovery thereby of many older sources deemed irretrievably lost, may stimulate some specialists to institute a similar inquiry in the world’s libraries, private as well as public, for some additional residua of Samuel’s twenty-two treatises which a connoisseur like Ibn Ezra called (in his intro. to Moʻznayim, fol. 2a), perhaps with an overdose of enthusiasm, “second to none in excellence.” In fact, some of the theories espoused by the Nagid have successfully been revived by modern grammarians. For one example, his assumption that the remarkable forms Yuqqah (Isa. 49:24) and Yuttan (Lev. 11:38) were passives of qal, rather than hifil, found quite a few champions among modern Semitists. See David Qimhi’s quotation from the Nagid in his Mikhloz, reproduced in English by W. Chomsky, p. 89, with Chomsky’s note thereon, p. 103 n. 146.


54. Dunash ibn Tamim’s Commentary on Yeṣirah, ed. by Grossberg, p. 18; or the fragment ed. by Vajda in “Le Commentaire kairouanais,” REJ, CVII, 127 f.; and Menáḥem ben Solomon’s Eben boḥan (The Touchstone; on Hebrew roots), ed. by L. Dukes in his collectanea entitled Qoṭeb ‘al yad. See also W. Bacher’s analysis of the latter work in “Der Prüfstein des Menachem b. Salomo,” Jubelschrift Graetz, pp. 94–115.

55. See Ibn Chiquitilla’s trans., ed. by J. W. Nutt, pp. 2 (Hebrew), 21 (English). Nutt, whose English version incidentally likewise lacks precision, indicated the additions of the Hebrew translator by square brackets. Poznanski, in his Ibn Chiquitilla, pp. 1 f., 71 f., assumed that the Frenchman Isaac ben Solomon ha-Nasi had commissioned Moses to prepare the Ḥayyuj translations while Moses was visiting in the Provence, perhaps as an itinerant preacher. It appears more likely, however, that Isaac visited Spain and secured there these versions of Ḥayyuj’s works. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain why, apparently fairly popular on the Iberian Peninsula, they seem to have remained almost unknown north of the Pyrenees. Joseph Qimḥi and the Tibbonides knew very little about Ibn Chiquitilla’s translations and not much more about his Bible commentaries. By 1140 the former were so com-
pletely unknown in Italy that the Roman community induced Abraham ibn Ezra to translate anew these two treatises by Ḥayyuj, and to add to them also a version of the book on punctuation. It should be noted, however, that a thirteenth-century Hebrew-French-German glossary (cited by F. Delitzsch in his “Zur Geschichte der hebräischen Grammatik und Masorétek, I,” *Literaturblatt des Orients*, V, 297) did quote an opinion of Ibn Chiquitilla taken from his grammatical work. Ibn Ezra’s translation of the treatise on punctuation is likewise available in Nutt’s edition, while that of the other two works had previously been published by L. Dukes in his *Grammatische Werke des R. Jehuda Chajjug aus Fez* (H. Ewald and his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der ältesten Auslegung und Spracherkürzung des Alten Testaments*, III). Nutt (pp. x f.) cites from another Bodleian MS an excerpt of still another translation prepared by one Isaac ha-Levi ben Eleazar, but this version seems to have consisted of but random passages included by the author in his own grammatical treatise, *Sefat Yeter* (Overbearing Speech), in which he also quoted other authorities.

56. Moses ibn Chiquitilla’s *K. Fi at-tadhkir w'at-t'anit* (Book on Masculine and Feminine Genders) is lost and can be only partially reconstructed from subsequent quotations, particularly in the works of Ibn Ezra. See the fragments assembled by Poznanski in his *Ibn Chiquitilla*, pp. 118 ff., with the comments thereon, pp. 20 ff., 39 ff., 55 ff., 185 ff. Even David Qimḥi, who unlike his father knew Ibn Chiquitilla’s translation of Ḥayyuj and occasionally quoted the former’s notes thereon, was familiar with the views expressed in Moses’ own work only through Ibn Ezra. As usual, however, Ibn Ezra often used Ibn Chiquitilla’s findings without citing their author, a procedure so common that, in view of the paucity of extant records, we can never be sure that Ibn Chiquitilla was, indeed, their true originator. See David Qimḥi in W. Chomsky’s *English rendition*, pp. 88, 102 n. 43, 115, 117, 119 f. nn. 181 and 186. We may merely surmise that an original mind like that of Ibn Chiquitilla, who was frequently so independent in his exegetical work (see supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 107), was fully capable of reaching new conclusions, particularly since he could utilize to good advantage the vast comparative materials available to him from Arabic philology. Poznanski has rightly stressed our author’s good familiarity with the Arabic language and philological literature. As we shall see, Moses was one of the relatively few professing Jews in Spain who even wrote distinguished Arabic poetry. See *infra*, Chap. XXXII.

57. Ibn Ezra’s *Sefer Mo’nayim*, ed. by Heidenheim, fol. 13b; Ibn Bal’am’s grammatical treatises published by P. Kokovtsov (see supra, n. 26); Bacher’s data thereon in his “Bemerkungen über die dem Jehuda Ibn Balaam zugeschriebene Schrift zur hebräischen Laut- und Accentlehre,” *MGWJ*, XXXIV, 498–80, 497–504; and Ibn Yashush’s fragment cited by the Derenbourgs in their ed. of Ibn Janaḥ’s *Opuscula*, pp. xix f. n. 1. Needless to say that Ibn Bal’am did not necessarily agree with all of Ibn Chiquitilla’s grammatical views. In his *Commentary* on Isa. 28:16, for example, he did not hesitate to attack Moses’ interpretation as contrary to both grammar and context. See his *Gloses*, ed. by Derenbourg, pp. 81 f.

58. Ibn Gabirol’s *Anaq*, long a classic of Hebrew poetry as well as of the philological literature (see the long list of editions in I. Davidson’s *Thesaurus*, I, 495 No. 8937), is available with a German translation and critical notes in E. Neu-
mark’s Würzburg dissertation, entitled Ibn Gabirol’s ‘Anak. See in particular, semistichs 11 ff., 29, 159ff. The meanings of Gabirol’s anagrams are controversial. Their translation here follows a suggestion by D. Kaufmann, based upon Arabic usage. See the bibliographical references, ibid., p. 11. Various other anagrams, very popular among the Spanish grammarians, are cited by David Qimhi in his Mikhliol.

59. Ibn Ezra’s introduction to his Yesod diqduq (with reference to Isa. 57:19), published by Bacher in the appendix to his comprehensive analysis of Abraham ibn Ezra als Grammatiker, pp. 148 ff., which work, although three quarters of a century old, has not yet been superseded. Bacher had at his disposal only manuscript transcripts by Pinsker. However, other manuscripts of the Yesod are now known. See, e.g., H. Hirschfeld, Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew MSS. of the Montefiore Library, p. 121 No. 404, and N. Allony, “An Unpublished Grammar of Ibn Ezra,” Sefarad, XI, 91–99 (on the Yesod diqduq; based on Pinsker’s copy and two additional MSS). Despite its generally elementary character, this work may well deserve publication. Similarly, Ibn Ezra’s Safah berurah (Pure Language), ed. from a Munich MS by G. H. Lippmann, had to be supplemented by eight pages from the first edition by N. Ben-Menahem in his Hebrew essay “R. Abraham ibn Ezra’s Safah berurah,” in Sinai, IV, No. 7, pp. 43–53. Ibn Ezra’s penchant for naturalistic explanations of grammatical phenomena, although in part anticipated by Saadia and others, was noted already by his early successors. Yedaiai Penini ha-Bedarethi (of Béziers, southern France), reminiscing a century and a half afterwards on the impact of Ibn Ezra’s sojourn in his community, observed, “He [Ibn Ezra] also composed grammatical works, in which he explained many principles of grammar, especially the vowels and forms of letters by laws borrowed from the science of man.” See his Iggeret ha-hitnaselut (Letter of Vindication), addressed to R. Solomon ibn Adret and published in the latter’s Responsa, No. 419, fol. 53b ff., 57bc. See also infra, n. 65.

60. Ibn Ezra’s Sahot, fol. 18a; his Sefat Yeter (Overbearing Speech), fol. 17a, No. 52; and his Commentary on Gen. 56:31; Rashi’s Commentary on Ps. 195:17. In his defense of Saadia he often sharply repudiated Dunash’s view, using such descriptive nouns as “silliness” or “stupidity.” At the very outset he declared, “The beginning of his [Dunash’s] words is nonsense,” because Dunash ventured to use the term patar in the meaning “interpret” or “explain” (Sefat Yeter, Introduction, fol. 1b). This rejection of a long accepted rabbinic term (see, e.g., I. Heinemann’s analysis in his “On the Development of Technical Terms in Bible Exegesis” [Hebrew], Leshonenu, XVI, 20 ff.) is typical of Ibn Ezra’s uncompromising purism. See also supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 59. From the same feeling for linguistic precision came also his great interest in grammatical terminology, upon the exactitude of which he laid constant stress. In fact, his first philological treatise, Mo’ezayim is devoted mainly to the clarification of fifty-nine grammatical terms. See L. Prijs’s comprehensive study of Die grammatikalische Terminologie des Abraham ibn Ezra. One need but compare the utter terminological helplessness of Rashi and his disciples, which often forced them to use broad circumlocutions to express some fine but basically simple grammatical ideas, to note the significance of this quest for terminological precision.

61. See Joseph Qimhi’s introduction to his Sefer ha-Galui (Open Book), ed. by H. J. Matthews, p. 2. On Qimhi’s significant contribution to the understanding of
Hebrew vowels, see his Sefer Zikkaron (Book of Remembrance), ed. by W. Bacher, pp. 17 ff. (both these editions contain critical glosses by one of Jacob Tam’s disciples, Benjamin); and S. Epfenstein’s “Studien über Joseph Kimchi,” MGWJ, Vols. XL–XLI. Only a short time before Ibn Ezra had devoted the concluding section of his Yesod diqduq to an analysis of the seven “kings” (on the term see Ben Asher’s Diqduq ha-te’amim, pp. 11 ff.), which, with his general penchant for astrological parallels, he compared with the sun, moon, and five planets—a comparison previously drawn by the author of Yesirah (tv.7) with the seven consonants subject to doubling by a dagesh (BGDKPRT). See Ibn Ezra’s Sahot, fol. 2b, and other references furnished by Bacher in Abraham ibn Ezra, pp. 13, 57 ff.

62. Moses Qimḥi’s Mahalakh shebile ha-da’at (The Course of the Road to Knowledge), first published in Mantua in 1478, was later republished with a Latin translation by Sebastian Münster and a commentary by Elijah Levita in Basel in 1531. David’s main works, too, were frequently both reprinted and translated into other languages. Only his ‘Eṭ sofer (The Scribe’s Pen), dealing with the technical problems of Masorah, was less popular and had to be edited from a Paris MS by A. Goldberg in 1864. Perhaps because such good analytical work about these two grammarians was done in the nineteenth century, they have been the subject of fewer investigations in recent years. Apart from W. Bacher’s general review in Die hebräische Sprachwissenschaft, esp. pp. 76 ff., see in particular the older, but still very useful, analysis by J. Tauber, Standpunkt und Leistung des R. David Kimchi als Grammatiker, and W. Chomsky’s recent introduction and notes in his English rendition of David Qimḥi’s Mikḥol. Since both brothers lived at the turn from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, they mark the beginning of the later medieval era as much as the completion of the work initiated by Saadia three centuries earlier. Their impact on the later period will have to be discussed, therefore, in a later volume.

63. S. Poznanski’s ed. of Eine hebräische Grammatik aus dem XIII Jahrhundert, p. 6 (text). From stray references in this booklet, Poznanski argued that the author’s name was David, and that he was personally acquainted with the Bohemian gramian and student of liturgy, Abraham bar ‘Azriel, who in 1234 completed his treatise, ‘Arugat ha-bosem (Bed of Spices; reference to Cant. 5:13; commentary on Piyyuṭim). However, because of his occasional references to Karaites views, he probably was a resident of a Balkan rather than of a Central European community, where Karaites teachings were hardly known. See Poznanski’s introduction, pp. 6 f. The tenuous nature of this argument is obvious. See also E. E. Urbach’s ed. of Abraham bar ‘Azriel’s Sefer ‘Arugat ha-bosem. It should be noted that, reciprocally, Karaites scholars like Hadasī did not hesitate to learn from Rabbanite grammarians. Hadasī quotes Ḥayyuj and Ibn Janah and uses particularly his own contemporary, Ibn Ezra, “whose grammatical textbook [Mo’znayim] he wholly appropriates.” See his Eshkol ha-hofer, fols. 60c ff., 69c, 70b; and W. Bacher’s analysis of “Jehuda Hadasi’s Hermeneutik und Grammatik,” MGWJ, XL, 14–32, 68–84, 109–26.

64. Ibn Ezra’s Commentary on Cant. 8:11; and other sources cited by Bacher in Abraham ibn Ezra, p. 33 n. 2; his Commentary on Gen. 11:11, etc. In the latter passage Ibn Ezra adduces the familiar proof for the antiquity of the Hebrew language from the Hebraic names of Adam, Eve, Cain, and others as explained in the Bible. In this connection he also tries to establish the chronology of the Tower of Babel,
in accordance with the computations of the Seder 'olam, "on which we shall rely." Although convinced that Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic were originally but one language, he nevertheless tries to prove the priority of the "holy language" by the frequent permutations of he and tav, also found in the two other languages. He explains this phenomenon by the similarity of the two letters in the Hebrew square characters. See his Safah berurah, fol. 23a. These opinions, emphatically restated by Ibn Ezra in many other connections (see Bacher's data in his Abraham ibn Ezra, pp. 33 ff.), reflected deep-rooted convictions of most Jews of that time. Cf. Ibn Gabirol's and Halevi's views cited supra, nn. 28 and 58.

65. Ibn Ezra's Šaḥot, fol. 11b (going beyond rabbinic opinion in Sanh. 21b–22a); his Commentary on Gen. 25:3; and supra, n. 18. With his scientific bent he even tried to prove a connection between the anatomic origin of individual sounds and the shape of the corresponding letters in the square script. For example, the lamed sign was pointed upwards because the "l" sound can only be uttered by raising the tongue. The designation lamed was derived from "study of the highest wisdom, namely that pointing upwards to the cause of all things." He admitted, however, that "because of insufficient knowledge" he could not furnish similar explanations for other letters of the alphabet. See his Šaḥot, fol. 28ab. At times popular fancy attributed to Ibn Ezra clever, though absolutely fallacious, grammatical epigrams. For example, the distinguished sixteenth-century physician Abraham de Balmes quoted his alleged saying that inanimate objects could interchangeably be used in the masculine and feminine genders (zokhoren va-nequveh, a pun on "remember and name it"), merely because Gen. 32:9 betrayed such an inconsistency. See N. Allony's Hebrew essay "Inanimate Objects Are Masculine or Feminine," Leshonenu, XVI, 29–33; and, with special reference to Spinoza, M. Wilensky's essay "La Source de la proposition . . . ." REJ, XCVIII, 66–71. The abysmal ignorance of the Jewish past of some outstanding grammarians is well illustrated by several passages culled by Bacher from the lexicographical work of Tanḥum Yerushalmi. This philosophically well-informed eastern scholar thought of Herod as of a Greek-pagan monarch, had a garbled recollection of Onias and his Temple, and believed that the various ancient Jewish coins found in different localities all dated from the preexilic period. See Bacher's Aus dem Wörterbuche Tanchum Jeruschalmi's, pp. 18 ff.

The only comprehensive attempt to describe the historic evolution of the Hebrew language from ancient times to the present was made by M. B. Snehder in his Torat ha-lashon be-hitpaltutah (The Lore of the Hebrew Language in Its Historic Evolution). Apart from the usual difficulties of pioneering ventures, however, the author was confronted by an almost total lack of Vorarbeiten for most periods of Hebrew linguistic creativity. Even the historical grammar of the biblical language has not yet achieved the status of other biblical disciplines. Bedevilled by the endless controversies on the dating of crucial scriptural passages, modern scholars have progressed little beyond H. Bauer and P. Leander's Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache which, published in 1922, revealed, apart from other serious shortcomings, the general weaknesses of excessive reliance on the Wellhausenian chronology of biblical letters. On the tannaitic language, on the other hand, there are only occasional asides in M. Z. Segal's systematic, rather than historical, analysis of A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew (or in the revised Hebrew ed., Diqduq leshon ha-Mishnah); and J. N. Epstein's Mabo le-nusah ha-Mishnah (An Introduction to
the Mishnah Text). See also the auspicious beginning made by Z. Har-Zahav in his Diqduq ha-lashon ha-ibrit (Grammar of the Hebrew Language). Notwithstanding the enormous difficulties inherent in linguistic material transmitted orally over many generations and "processed" by various editors, persistent efforts of specialists over a period of years are likely to shed new and unexpected light on the gradually changing forms of the Hebrew language in the course of ages, as well as on their underlying historical trends.

66. Moses ibn Ezra's K. al-Muḥadhara (Shirat Yisrael) in Halper's trans., pp. 147 ff.; Abraham ibn Ezra's Commentary on Eccles. 5:1. See also supra, nn. 14, 37; and infra, Chap. XXXI, n. 57. The inconsistency of the two Ibn Ezras was pointed out by J. Kanani in his interesting, though incomplete, Hebrew essay on "The Linguistic Influence of the Older Payyeṭanim on the Spanish Poets," Leshonenu, X, 173-82. This formal rejection of the payyeṭanim is put into bolder relief by the general reverence with which the same Spanish writers treated the former's contemporaries of the masoretic schools. See, e.g., the data assembled by Bacher in his Abraham ibn Ezra, pp. 36 ff.

CHAPTER XXXI: WORSHIP: UNITY AMIDST DIVERSITY

1. The psalmist’s exclamation, “Seven times a day do I praise Thee” (119:164), which underlay Abu ‘Isa’s decision, naturally did not escape the attention of the more orthodox members as well. But they explained it away by associating it with the seven benedictions of the Sabbath ‘Amidah, the four benedictions before and after Shema’ superimposed upon the three biblical paragraphs constituting the Shema’ itself, and many other liturgical heptads. Incidentally, seven-word benedictions had featured the ancient ‘Amidah. See L. Finkelstein’s pertinent observations on “The Development of the Amidah,” JQR, XVI, 11 ff.; and F. C. Grant’s “Modern Study of the Jewish Liturgy,” ZAW, LXV, 59–77, esp. pp. 65 f. The fullest enumeration of such ceremonial “sevens,” combined with the stress on the cosmic importance of that number, is found with special reference to the structure of the qerobah (liturgical poem on the silent prayer of Sabbath or holiday) in the so-called Sefer Qerobah, apparently written by a thirteenth-century German student of liturgy from the school of Eleazar bar Yehudah (Roqaḥ) of Worms. See the text, ed. by A. M. Habermann in SRIHP, III, 104 ff. Ironically, most qerobot seem to have consisted of nine rather than seven poems. (On the etymology of qerobah and its frequent misspelling see infra, n. 55; and Chap. XXXII, n. 89.)

There is no way of ascertaining, however, to what extent such sectarian teachings as those propagated by Abu ‘Isa influenced later Jewish liturgical speculations. See also, more generally, supra, Chaps. XXV, nn. 36, 38, 54; XXVI, nn. 10, 47; and infra, nn. 8, 66. To the studies listed there add N. Wieder, “The Qumran Sectaries and the Karaites,” JQR, XLVII, 97–113, 269–92. At the same time it appears that these sectarian deviations, however sharp, were less pronounced than in antiquity when they had affected the very Pentateuchal passages used for liturgical purposes. An interesting example is offered by the differing readings and forms found in the Qumran phylacteries as against those detected among the more orthodox followers of Bar Kochba which were in full consonance with the tannaic regulations. See K. G. Kuhn’s detailed analysis Phylakterien aus Höhle 4 von Qumran, contrasting them with those found at Murabba’at.

2. Amram’s responsum cited by J. N. Epstein in his “Sur les ‘chapitres’ de Ben Baboi,” REJ, LXXV, 184 (also in B. M. Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, p. 70); Pirqei ben Baboi’s harangue as reconstructed by Ginzberg in his Ginze Schechter, II, 504 ff., 544 ff., 551; Nažronai’s responsum in Sha’are ṣedeq, fol. 63b No. 40; a Palestinian responsum in Ginzberg’s Geonica, II, 53 ff. See also other sources cited by A. I. Schechter in his Studies in Jewish Liturgy, pp. 22 ff. Schechter goes too far, however, in assuming in another context (ibid., p. 70) that the well-known Aramaic prayer, Yequm purqan (May Salvation Be Vouchsafed), in the form preserved in Seder Ḥibbur berakhot, apparently compiled by the twelfth-century Italian homilist Menahem ben Solomon, was a Palestinian importation from Babylonia. Its democratic undertone, imploring the divine grace to descend on “the holy communities,
who are in the land of Israel, and in the land of Babylonia and in all the lands of their dispersion," with the pointed omission of any reference to the princes of captivity, seems on the contrary an indication of its Palestinian origin. This was suggested by S. J. L. Rapoport in his supplementary Hebrew essay on "The Existence of R. Ḥeḳeḳ and the Story of His Books" in Qeḇusat ḥakhamim (Wissenschaftliche Aufsätze), ed. by W. Warnheim, p. 50. To be sure, its present wording is influenced by the Babylonian usage, especially with reference to the "judges in the gate," which essentially was a Babylonian institution. But the replacement of the single word di-mata (of the city) by di-baba (of the gate) is more easily explained than the substitution of "the teachers of the order" (ḥaburātah) by princes of captivity, placed entirely out of their hierarchical seniority after the "heads of the academies" (kalle; a title conferred in Babylonia on third-ranking officials in Sura and Pumbedita). One need but note the formula in the Adler MS No. 4053 to realize how a real Babylonian text must have read. See C. (J. K.) Duschinsky, "The Yekum Purkan," Poznanski Mem. Vol., p. 189. See also K. A. Frankel, "The Prayer Yequm purqan on the Sabbath" (Hebrew), Ha-Kerem, I, 18-24.

3. Pirque de-R. Elixeer, xxvii end, xxxi, xxxv end, ed. by M. Higger in Horeb, X, 186 ff. (in Friedlander's trans., pp. 196, 228, 267); the qerobahs on the first three benedictions of the silent prayer during the afternoon services of the Day of Atonement (beginning Ṣitan hikkir, continued in Mo'ahab ye-ḥahid, and Ḫelil be-shem; see I. Davidson's Oṣar ha-shirah, I, 150 No. 3204, 338 No. 7453; III, 70 No. 37) and other services; Teshubot ha-geonim, ed. by Harkavy, pp. 132 f. No. 258 (also in Lewin's ᪂ṭẓar ha-غاון, I, Part 1, p. 77). See also supra, Vol. II, p. 7. The English translations of the various incipits and other passages of the daily prayers are, as a rule, cited here from S. Singer's rendition of The Authorized Daily Prayer Book. The patriarchal origin of the first three benedictions may indeed be implied in Sirach's remark concerning hodu, as pointed out by W. (Zeeb) Jawitz in his Megor ha-berakhah (Die Liturgie des Siddur und ihre Entwicklung), p. 18 n. 1. However, the genuineness of that entire passage, available only in the Hebrew text following the Greek Sirach 51:12 (see R. Smend's ed., pp. 60 last 3 lines [Hebrew], 99 lines 10-12 [German], and his commentary, pp. 502 f.) is somewhat dubious. Medieval legend ultimately supplied an historical sanction for all other benedictions and ascribed them to biblical heroes from Joseph to Solomon. See Zedekiah Anav degli Mansi, Shibbole ha-leqeq ha-shalem (Ears of Gleaning; on laws and rituals), ed. by S. Buber, pp. 17 f. See also M. Liber, "Sur les origines de la prière publique dans le judaïsme," Traité d'Union, V, 3-12; and the literature listed supra, Vol. II, p. 365, n. 41.

4. M. Soṭah viii.11; b. 32b-33a; Teshubot ha-geonim, ed. by Harkavy, No. 373 pp. 188 ff.; A. E. Cowley, Samaritan Liturgy, passim; S. L. Hurwitz's popular summary of The Sefer Hakadish (History of the Kadish); Z. Karl, Ha-Qaddish (The Qaddish: From the Creation of That Prayer Until It Received Its Present Form); M. Gaster, "Ein Targum der Amidah," MGWJ, XXXIX, 79-90 (with notes thereon by A. Epstein and C. Mendelsohn, ibid., pp. 175-78, 303-5); H. Gollancz, "The Translation of a Targum of the Amidah," Semitic Studies . . . Kohut, pp. 186-97; supra, Vol. II, pp. 84 f., 145 f., 365 n. 41, 386 n. 24; and infra, n. 62. An ancient legend brought the prayer for mourners in connection with a weird story told about R. 'Aqiba's encounter with a hard-working ghost. Ginzberg is doubtless right in
denying this nexus (Ginzhe Schechter, I, 235), but the ancient origin of that prayer remains uncontested. Apart from contributing some curious arguments to the question of the command of Aramaic by the ministering angels, Sherira also mentioned in his responsuum liturgical formulas recited at his academy either bilingually (Hebrew and Aramaic), or in Aramaic alone. The less official but undoubtedly popular poems designed to comfort mourners by showing that even the greatest of ancient men had to die, were likewise written in Aramaic. One such Aftara was published with a German translation by M. Zulay in his Zur Liturgie der babylonischen Juden, pp. 19 ff., 24 f., 37 f., 60 ff. In view of the antiquity of such poems (see Ketubot 8b), it seems likely that Jewish prototypes influenced similar compositions among medieval Christians and Muslims, samples of which are assembled in C. H. Becker’s “Ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuere,” in his Vom Werden und Wesen der islamischen Welt Islamstudien, I, 501–19. Other “Aramaic Poems and Piyyuṭim” were published by J. L. Fishman (Maimon) in his Hebrew essay in Sinai, VIII, Nos. 88–91, pp. 30–36 (was to have included Zedekiah Anav’s commentary on some such Aramaic piyyuṭim for the Festival of Weeks). Most such poems, including those by the Spaniard Isaac ben Yehudah ibn Gayyat and by R. Meir ben Isaac of Worms were but literary exercises in a language long unspoken. On Meir ben Isaac’s well-known poem Aqdamut millin (Introduction to the Recitation of the Targum) and its influence on West European poetry, see supra, Chap. XXV, n. 48; and infra, Chap. XXXII, n. 75. See also the literature listed in I. Davidson’s Ḫosar, I, 332 No. 7314. This problem of vernacular prayers was to become the subject of heated controversy during the Reform movement of the nineteenth century, both parties being able to quote ample testimony from ancient and medieval sources.

5. Ginzberg, Ginzhe Schechter, II, 161 ff.; Saadia’s Siddur, p. 154, and the introduction thereto, p. 29; the numerous sources cited by C. Z. Taubes in his Hebrew compilation of Lekulay (Liqqute; Collectanea by R. Isaac ben Judah ibn Gayyat to the tractate Berakhot), pp. 31 ff.; and infra, nn. 53 ff. Ginzberg argues here convincingly against A. Büchner’s theory (in “Le Mot Ve-yitqales dans le Kaddish,” REJ, LIV, 194–203) that Ve-yitqales was an original Palestinian usage taken over by the academy of Sura but not by that of Pumbedita. The tone of the inquiry itself, as summarized here, suggests that those were individual rather than regional variations. See also S. Lieberman’s detailed Hebrew analysis of the various shades of meaning of “Qalles, Qiltusin,” Schocken Jub. Vol., pp. 75–81. It may be noted that, despite Hai’s authority, the prevailing practice replaced the ambiguous word Ve-yitqales, by the simpler Ve-yithalel. Zedekiah Anav degli Mansi, an outstanding Italian student of Jewish liturgy, quoted an older statement of Yehudai Gaon running sharply counter to Hai’s view and declared, “It is a simple custom among us not to say it [Ve-yitqales].” See his Shibbole ha-Leqet, ed. by Buber, p. 8; and other sources listed in Saadiah’s Siddur, p. 56 n. 1. Ve-yithalel is, indeed, regularly used in most modern prayer books.

6. To be sure, the element of time saving is but tangentially mentioned in the Talmud in connection with the substitution for the evening ‘Amidah (see Berakhot 29a) and, with special reference to the prayer “Blessed Be the Lord for Evermore, Amen and Amen,” also by the thirteenth-century Barcelona rabbi Solomon ibn
Adret. Yet this theory is far more plausible than the other explanations offered, such as (1) its being but a purely Babylonian variation from Palestinian custom (Rashi and Yehudah bar Barzillai); (2) its insertion out of consideration for the great distance and dangers of night travel for villagers attending synagoge services (Moses of Coucy and Asher ben Yeḥiel; this is clearly but another variant of the time-saving rationale); or (3) the unavoidable argument from (unrecorded) persecutions (Asher ben Saul of Narbonne and Abudarham). See the sources cited by Elbogen in *Der jüdische Gottesdienst*, p. 529 n. 8; and the commentaries on Siddur Oṣar tefilot (Treasury of Prayers of the Ashkenazic Rite), Vilna, 1928 ed., pp. 545 ff. See also Levin's *Oṭzar ha-gaonim*, I, Part 1, pp. 7 f. The length to which the persecution theory sometimes went is illustrated by Asher ben Saul of Narbonne's Sefer ha-Minḥagot briefly alluded to in David ben Joseph Abudarham's Ḥibbur Perush ha-berakhot ve-ha-tefilot (A Commentary on Benedictions, Prayers, and Weekly Lessons), better known as Sefer Abudarham, Warsaw, 1877 ed., p. 77a. The Gentile oppressors, we are told, outlawed specifically the evening prayer because, according to different rabbinic legends, this prayer had been first introduced by the patriarch Jacob who was the special protector of the Jews during the present, third exile (Abraham had protected them in Egypt, Isaac during the Babylonian Exile). In other words, this particular prohibition of evening services, recorded in no authoritative source, stemmed from some Gentile legislator's intensive study of the Aggadah!

7. Shabbat 118b; Berakhot 4b; Amram's Seder, xii, ed. by Frumkin, I, 168; ed. by D. Hedegard, I, 14 (Hebrew), 33 f. (English); Saadiah's Siddur, pp. 10 ff., 13 ff., 32 ff.; the sources cited by Taubes in his comments on Ibn Gayyat's Lekutay, pp. 14 f.; and L. J. Liebreich, "An Analysis of U-ba le-Šiyon in the Liturgy," *HUCA*, XXI, 176-209. It is known that the ancient prayer beginning Yehi kebod (Let the Glory of the Lord) is but a combination of disjointed biblical verses, selected largely from the book of Psalms. The only unifying principle, next to the expression of pious sentiments, seems to be the occurrence in them all of the Ineffable Name. The inclusion by Saadiah (p. 33) of both Psalms 78:38 and 20:10 at the end of that prayer, as it also appears in our prayer books, may be indicative of a ritualistic design to encompass therein nineteen biblical "reminiscences." See Abraham ben Isaac's Sefer ha-Eshkol, ed. by S. Albeck, Vol. I, p. 11 n. 12 (pointing out that, while the author counts a total of 28 "reminiscences" corresponding to the 21 verses after Barukh she-amir [Blessed be He who said], the kabbalists figured both at 18); and Y. Zimmels's Hebrew studies "On the Margin of R. Saadiah's Siddur" in *Rav Saadya Gaon*, ed. by Fishman, p. 399. If so, this may bear some remote resemblance to the nineteen benedictions of the 'Amidah current in Babylonia and perhaps reflect Babylonian practice. This assumption would further weaken Z. Karl's contention that Saadiah's formulation of the psalmic selections (pesuqe de-zimra) stemmed from Palestinian usage. Certainly Karl's explanation (Mehqarim, p. 45) that the omission of Psalms 146-47 in private, but not in public, services was owing to the psalmist's "Zionist" aspirations (Ps. 146:10, 147:2) and the ensuing fear of denunciation to Roman authorities, is decidedly far-fetched. Apart from the fact that a fragment of an Oriental MS of Saadiah's prayer book, now at Cambridge, includes Psalm 146, as does Amram's Seder, xii (ed. by Frumkin, I, 168 ff.; ed. by Hedegard, I, 14 [Hebrew], 34 [English]) and most later prayer books, neither direct
evidence nor logic favors the assumption that it was more dangerous to recite "subversive" prayers in the privacy of Jewish homes than at public services in synagogues.

8. Qirqisani’s *K. al-Anwar*, 1, 8, pp. 15 f. (English trans. in *HUCA*, VII, 333): vii-17, 1 (Vol. III, pp. 608 ff.); Salmon’s *Commentary* on Psalms in the excerpt, ed. from a Firkovitch MS by A. Neubauer in “The Authorship and the Titles of the Psalms according to Early Jewish Authorities,” *Studia biblica*, II, 18 ff.; Amram's *Seder*, Preface and Section xix, ed. by Frumkin, I, 49, 138 ff.; ed. by Hedegard, I, 2, 11 ff. (Hebrew), 4, 26 ff. (English). On the Karaite use of Psalms, in their opinion enjoined in Ezra 3:10, see Harkavy, *Zikhron*, VIII, 19 f., 151 No. 11; “‘Anan’s liturgical regulations in the excerpts published by Mann in his “‘Anan’s Liturgy,” *Journal of Jewish Lore*, I, 349 ff.; and the text published by Ginzberg in his *Ginz Sechechter*, II, 459 f. Neither the latter author, nor Qirqisani and Salmon, actually accused their Rabbanite opponents of prohibiting the recitation of psalms, but rather of their lowering the dignity of that biblical work in comparison with the obligatory silent prayer which evidently was a creation of postbiblical rabbis. True to their general attitude, the Karaites, on their part, considered the biblical psalmody the most essential part of their liturgy, while permitting individuals and communities to add freely any number of prayers.

The passage relating to David in the Rabbanite ritual, cited by Qirqisani, need not have been taken from any of the then known prayer books. This Karaite student may have heard it recited in some of the local synagogues in Babylonia or Persia, which even as a Karaite he could have attended. The texts cited by A. Scheiber in “The Rabbanite Prayer-Book Quoted by Qirqisani,” *Goldziher Mem. Vol.*, I, Hebrew section, pp. 27-40 (also in *HUCA*, XXII, 307-20); and those published by Assaf in his “From the Order of Prayers in Palestine” (Hebrew), *Dinaburg Jub. Vol.*, pp. 116-31, merely attest the existence of such formulas in the Jewish liturgy of the period, but not that they were quoted by Qirqisani from a regular prayer book. The existence of such a work other than Saadia’s before 937, is yet to be proved. Even Amram’s compilation probably long circulated as a responsa, rather than as a regular liturgical handbook. See infra, n. 67.


9. Amram’s *Seder*, lxv, ed. by Frumkin, I, 299 ff.; ed. by Hedegard, I, 53 ff. (Hebrew), 127 ff. (English); Saadia’s *Siddur*, pp. 24 f., 39; Maimonides’ *M.T. Seder tefillot* (appendix to the Second Book of “Ahabah”), before the text of the *Qaddish*; Yehudai’s, *Moses*, and Na’tonai’s responsa in Lewin’s *Otzar ha-gaonim*, I, Part 1, pp. 31, 76 f.; and, more generally, I. Elbogen’s *Studien zur Geschichte des jüdischen*
Gottesdienstes, pp. 40 ff. Medieval legend, too, offered various alleged incidents as the reason for the adoption of one or another of these prayers of petition in congregational services—but another illustration of the popular bent forsupplying fictitious origins to a puzzling phenomenon. See Karl's Mehqarim, pp. 99 ff.

10. Amram's Seder, viii, ed. by Frumkin, I, 109 f.; ed. by Hede gard, I, 10 f. (Hebrew), 24 f. (English); Ibn Gayyat's Leekutay, ed. by Taubes, pp. 19 f. It may also be noted that, despite the unceasing reiteration, the entire liturgical order was intended to replace sacrifices by prayers, the only service referring directly to such substitution and stressing prayers for the restoration of the sacrificial system is the so-called Musaf (Additional) service on Sabbaths, new moons, and holidays. The latter includes a special confession of Jewish sins which had led to the destruction of the sanctuary (U-mipene hata'enu; But On Account of Our Sins). See Elbogen, Der jüdisches Gottesdienst, pp. 194 f., 238, 248 f., 263 f. Whether or not this service was finally formulated by Rab (see J. Berakhot iv.6, 8c), it thus clearly betrays its origin after the destruction. See Z. Karl's reconstruction in his Mehqarim, pp. 129 ff.

11. B.Q. 82a; Saadia's Siddur, p. 561; his Oeuvres, IX, 162 (J. Müller points out that, though fully concurred in by Maimonides, this view is opposed by R. Jonah Gerondi on purely formalistic grounds); 'Anan's Book of Commandments in Harkavy's Zikhron, VIII, 38; and J. Mann's comments on "'Anan's Liturgy," Journal of Jewish Lore, I, 350 f. One may note in this connection the differences of geonic opinion concerning the right of the scholar immersed in study to disregard the required scriptural readings. Perhaps irked by the Karaite insistence on the latter, Paṭṭi Gaon answered a pertinent inquiry in the affirmative by referring to a precedent set by R. Sheshet in the third century (Berakhot 82a). Mattathiah Gaon, however, apparently followed by the majority, decided that "deeply as one may yearn for study, one must not sin by failing to complete one's scriptural lessons." See Lewin's Otzar ha-ga'onim, I, Part 1, pp. 18, 20. Nor does Samuel ibn Nagrela's protestation against the alleged Spanish neglect of the Aramaic Targum, and his denial that this was one of the instances when the law was relaxed "on account of foreign visitors, the pressure on the public, or poor attendance at the academy," ring quite true. See Lewin, ibid., pp. 19 f.; and supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 38. On the gradual elimination of the priestly blessing from the daily services (still required in Saadia's Siddur, pp. 99, 94 ff.) in all except Yemenite synagogues, see Elbogen, Der jüdische Gottesdienst, p. 523; and supra, Vol. II, p. 119. Although nowhere expressly recorded, the element of time saving must have played a certain role in the abandonment of this ancient and revered ritual, the more so as there was a growing popular belief, reflected in contemporary midrashim (e.g., Pesiqta de-R. Kahana, ed. by S. Buber, fol. 49a, also cited in Simḥah bar Samuel's Mahzor Vitry, ed. by S. Hurwitz, p. 104), that the divine presence (shēkhinah) rested between the priests' peculiarly outstretched fingers, directly bestowing its blessing on the assembled worshipers. See also I. Löw's brief remarks in "Die Finger in Literatur und Folklore des Juden," Gedenkbuch . . . David Kaufmann, pp. 68 f.

XXXI: WORSHIP

13. Saadiah’s Beliefs and Opinions, v.4, 6, pp. 177, 180 (Arabic), 89, 90 (Hebrew), 219, 224 (English); R. Hananel’s comment on Berakhot 13a in Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 3, p. 13; Babya’s Duties of the Heart, viii:3; ed. by Yahuda, pp. 398 ff.; in Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew trans., ed. by Zifroni, pp. 211 ff.; Maimonides’ M.T. Tefillah iv.16; Paljoi Gaon, cited together with subsequent modifications by Zedekiah Anav in his Shibbole ha-leqet, p. 20 No. 20; and the conflicting opinions cited by Ginzberg in his Ginze Schechter, II, 100 f., 106 f. From early times (see Berakhot 13b) it became customary to dwell at some length on the pronunciation of the crucial word ehad (one) in the profession of the unity of God. According to some geonim the accent was to be laid on the second and third letters; the time to be apportioned was roughly computed at 1:3:6 units. See Lewin, Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 2, p. 12. Amram felt the necessity, however, of warning his readers, “One may not prolong it more than is sufficient . . . to declare him [God] king in the heaven, and on the earth, and over the four quarters of the world.” See his Seder, xxiii, ed. by Frumkin, I, 205 ff.; ed. by Hedegard, pp. 25 (Hebrew), 60 (English). Saadiah, too, ruled that one ought to allow only sufficient time for turning one’s head “toward heaven, earth, and the four quarters.” See the text published by N. Wieder in his “Fourteen New Genizah-Fragments of Saadya’s Siddur” in Rosenthal’s Saadya Studies, p. 262. Clearly, the reference here is to the numerical value of the three letters: 1 stands for the unity of God, 8 for the earth and seven heavens, 4 for the four quarters. See also, more generally, H. G. Elenow’s “Kawvana: the Struggle for Inwardness in Judaism” in his Selected Works, IV, 252-88.

14. Berakhot 13a, 15a, 31a; Amram’s Seder, xxi, xxiii, ed. by Frumkin, I, 199 ff., 205 ff.; ed. by Hedegard, pp. 21, 25 (Hebrew), 55, 60 (English); Saadiah’s Siddur, p. 17, and the editors’ note thereon; Maimonides’ responsa, ed. with a Hebrew trans. by F. Friedlaender in JQR, V, 12 ff. (Resp., No. 56); and supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 137. Curiously, the very ceremony of prostration described by Maimonides in M.T. Tefillah v.13, differed not only among various countries but even between the two Babylonian academies. See Teshubot ha-geonim, ed. by Assaf, 1942, p. 89 No. 84, and the editor’s n. 1. See also Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, pp. 25 ff., 57; Rashi’s Siddur, pp. 14 f. No. 17; and, more generally, J. Zimmels’s “Zur äusseren Haltung im Gottesdienste,” Nathan Stein Schrift, pp. 140-54; and supra, Vols. I, 350 n. 28; II, 282. We must not believe, however, that the geonim were generally preoccupied with problems of decorum, as the proceedings were quite informal. Although since talmudic times (Berakhot 24b) there was some concern for quiet congregational prayers so that fellow members not be disturbed, Sar Shalom Gaon reported as a matter of course that there often were in the synagogue persons who, evidently because of their late arrival, recited prayers other than those then read by the congregation or its reader. Cf. his responsum in Sha’are teshubah, No. 334; and Lewin, Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, p. 57.

15. M. Abot ii.18; Berakhot iv.3-4; j. fol. 5ab; b. 29b, 40b; Midrash Tehillim iv.6, ed. by Buber, p. 45; Joseph ibn Abitur’s poem cited from an Oxford MS by M. Zula in his Hebrew essay, “Within the Walls of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry,” Schocken Jub. Vol., p. 108. The rabbis’ discouragement of the use of psalms for the concluding services (see supra, n. 9) must also have nurtured the
creative urge of those worshipers who wished to see the congregation linger in the synagogue after the ‘Amidah.

16. Berakhot 17a; j. R.H. 1.9, 57a; ‘A.Z. 1.2, 39c; Saadiah’s Siddur, pp. 221 f.; and Elbogen’s Der jüdische Gottesdienst, pp. 80 ff. The fact that in many congregations the word hamonam (their multitude) was accompanied by a derogatory expectation, did not enhance the prayer’s popularity in Christian Europe after its denunciation by converted Jews, although the same gesture toward unbelievers is recorded also in the Syrian churches.

Private creativity continued to the modern era. The well-known poem Lekhah dodi (Come, My Friend, to Meet the Bride; i.e., the Sabbath), occupying a focal position in the Friday evening services, was composed by the sixteenth-century poet, Solomon Alqabs, evidently first for his own self-edification. This and other instances of the influence of the Safed kabbalistic circle in Jewish liturgy will be discussed more fully in their early modern context.

17. See the old, though undatable, text published by S. Assaf in his “Old Prayers at the Tomb of the Prophet Samuel” (Hebrew), Jerusalem (quarterly), I, 71–73; with additional comments by M. Seidel and S. H. Kook, ibid., pp. 135–38; II, 102; M. Zulay, “Prayers Recited at the Tomb of the Prophet Samuel” (Hebrew), Yerushalayim (annual), II–V, 42–53; B. M. Lewin, Otzar ha-geonim, I, Part 1, pp. 35 f.; and Ginzberg, Ginze Schechter, II, 105, 183. Like their ancient predecessors, medieval Jews were often apprehensive of the basic antagonism to them of even good angels, whom they tried to placate by the recitation of certain magic formulas. A remarkable illustration of such antagonism is attributed to Judah the Patriarch by the medieval compiler of Midrash Tehillim (viii.2, ed. by Buber, p. 73 f.). The apologetic import of “The Discussions of the Angels with God” is ingeniously explained in A. Marmorstein’s Hebrew essay in Melilah, III–IV, 93–102.

18. Berakhot 16b f.; Fragment from the Sefer Hekhalot (Book of Sanctuaries), ed. by A. Jellinek in his Bet ha-Midrasch, III, 161 (see also p. xxxii), or in the slightly improved text quoted from MS by A. M. Habermann in his Be-Ron yahad (When They Sang Together, with reference to Job 38:2; an Anthology of Old and New Liturgical Poems), p. 2; Ḥagigah 12b; Ginzberg’s Ginze Schechter, II, 183 f., 186 f.; Amram’s Seder, Ivi, ed. by Frumkin, I, 277 f.; ed. by Hedegard, I, 47 f. (Hebrew), 113 ff. (English).

19. Saadiah’s Siddur, pp. 20, 98, 121; Teshubot ha-geonim, ed. by Harkavy, p. 261 No. 529, with reference to B.B. 25b. The Talmud seems to have used these locations as a mere mnemotechnical expedient. See Rashi ad loc. See also Ginzberg’s Geonica, II, 262; and, on the fairly universal custom of stepping back at the end of the ‘Amidah, Yoma 55b; Lewin’s Otzar ha-geonim, VI, 24 (Naḥson and Hail); and Simḥah bar Samuel’s Maḥzor Vitry, p. 18. Of course, in its essentials the Qedushah had been formulated in ancient times. We recall the rabbinic view that the various Qedushot had been introduced by the Men of the Great Synagogue (there are three different ones in the morning services alone, and in a broader sense they also include the blessings recited at the sanctification of the new moon, at betrothals, circumcisions, and the redemption of the first-born; see W. Jawitz’s Megor ha-berakhot, p. 44). The fact that no controversy on it is recorded in the
talmudic literature is an indication of that prayer's antiquity and universal accept-
ance, rather than of its late date. So is its similarity to the Christian Sanctus, first
mentioned by Tertullian (De oratione, III, in PL, I, 1257 ff.). See W. O. E. Oesterley's
data in The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy, pp. 68 ff.; and, especially,
Eric Werner's remarks in "The Doxology in Synagogue and Church," in HUCA, XIX,
292 ff. However, the differences in formulation in the various early prayer
books, and the continued divisions on this score among the communities of diverse
rites, indicate that the formulas presently in use had undergone considerable change
in the early Middle Ages. See also B. Italiener's recent analysis of "The Musaf-

The general interrelations of Jewish and Christian liturgies have attracted con-
siderable attention in recent years. Apart from the general reviews by Gavin,
Dugmore, and others mentioned supra, Vol. II, p. 365 n. 41; and infra, n. 30, there
appeared a host of monographic studies partially listed in F. Stummer's "Beziehungen
der Liturgie zum israelitisch-jüdischen Kult und zum Alten Orient," Archiv für
Liturgiewissenschaft, IV, 97-126; and K. Hruby's "Autour du plus ancien rituel
juif," Cahiers sioniens, IX, 303-36 (with reference to Hedegard's edition of Amram's
Seder). See also P. Fiebig's somewhat older studies, Das Vaterunser: Urspun,
Sinn und Bedeutung des christlichen Haupteitbeteres, esp. pp. 28 ff.; his "Sinn der
Beraka [Benediction]," Monatsschrift für Gottesdienst, XXXIV, 201 ff.; F. C.
Grant's aforementioned "Modern Study of the Jewish Liturgy," ZAW, LXV, 59-77
(with special reference to some newer trends in the "liturgical" interpretation of the
Gospels); and such semipopular essays, slanted toward contemporary conditions, as
558-69; and M. R. Bede, "The Blessings of the Jewish Prayer Book," The Bridge,
II, 224-38. Many comparative data may also be found in such general surveys as
H. W. Codrington's Studies of the Syrian Liturgies; and T. Krauser's "reflections
on recent studies" on The Western Liturgy and Its History, English trans. by
F. L. Cross.

20. Hai Gaon's resp. in Teshubot ha-geonim, Lyck ed., fol. 51 No. 99; Naṭronai in
Amram's Seder, ed. by Frumkin, II, 314; Sheshna and other geom in Levin's
Otzar ha-geonim, VI, 62 ff.; and other sources cited by P. Bloch in "Die Mystiker
der Gaonzeit, und ihr Einfluss auf die Liturgie," MGWJ, XXXVII, 18-23, 69-74,
257-66, 305-11; and by Ginzberg in his Ginze Schnechter, II, 120, 123. Complete
mystic poems, imbued with the spirit of the Hekhalot literature, likewise made
their appearance in the geonic age. See, e.g., those published by A. Altmann in his
"Qedushah Hymns in the Earliest Hekhalot Literature" (Hebrew), Melilah, II,
1-24; and the supplication, partially extant in Cambridge, Oxford, and Sassoon
MSS, mentioned by M. Zayl in his "Poetry Fragments from the Genizah in the
Sassone Collection" (Hebrew), KS, XXVII, 91, No. 219, 11. On the later age of the
Kol nidre tune, see infra, nn. 86 and 93. The persistence of the tradition concern-
ing Saadiah's approval of Kol nidre in both Spain and Yemen (see Assaf's intro-
duction to Saadiah's Siddur, pp. 28, 31) makes it likely that he decided in its favor
in a special responsa since lost. This may, indeed, be intimated in the formulas
that Saadiah had "said" or "written" to this effect. Incidentally, he seems to have
used the Hebrew version, Kol nedarim, rather than the Aramaic Kol nidre. See also
Jacob ben Asher's discussion in Tur, O.H., 619; Karo's Bet Yosef, ibid.; and
supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 143.
21. These internal struggles and the general prevalence of more or less rationalistic approaches in the Jewish liturgy were overlooked by A. J. Wensineck when, following the fashion of biblical folklorists, he wrote on “Animismus und Dämonenglaube im Untergrunde des jüdischen und islamischen rituellen Gebets,” Der Islam, IV, 219-35. In fact, only in the Christian Middle Ages did such outright kabbalistic prayers as Samuel the Pious’ Shir ha-yiḥud (Poem of Unity) become part and parcel of the official liturgy. See A. M. Habermann’s ed. of a collection of Shire ha-yiḥud ve-ha-kabod (Poems of Unity and Adoration; includes old commentaries thereon). On the other hand, few if any Jewish mystics were concerned about the dichotomy between God’s loftiness and His accessibility to prayer, such as disturbed some Muslim mystics. See A. Schimmel, “Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer in Islam,” Die Welt des Islams, II, 112-25; and, more generally, supra, Chap. XXVII, nn. 12 ff.; and infra, Chap. XXXIII, n. 11.

22. Tertullian’s Apologeticetus, xxx.4, in PL, I, 504 (CSEL, LXIX, 79); Teshubot ha-geonom, ed. by Assaf, 1942, pp. 88 f. See also Sherira’s responsum in Lewin, Oṭzar ha-geonom, I, Part I, p. 58. The phenomenon of villagers congregating in some major district synagogue for High Holiday services became particularly common in the sparsely settled areas of Jewish settlement in medieval Europe. Sherira’s objection (echoed by the Spaniard Ibn Gayyat and the Provençal Aaron ben Jacob ha-Kohen, author of the costumal Orebot hayyim) concerned only the reader’s recitation of the prayers before the beginning of the services, but was not directed against his familiarizing the uninformed with the sequence and other crucial arrangements of the services (hashit). This term did not lose its original meaning (recorded, for instance, in Megillah 17b) and hence did not necessarily imply complete recitation by the reader, which was often but the simplest form of showing the congregation how to recite its prayers. That is why there is no conflict between the geonic responsa cited in Lewin’s Oṭzar, I, Part I, p. 73; and Maimonides’ aforementioned Resp., pp. 34 ff. No. 36. See I. Friedlaender’s remarks in “A New Responsum of Maimonides Concerning the Repetition of the Shemoneh Esreh,” JQR, V, 1 ff.

23. See M. Yoma iii.8; j. iii.7, 40d; viii.9, 45c; b. 36b, 37b; Ginzberg, Ginze Schechter, I, 198 f. Amram seems still to have included but the original eight sentences. See his Seder, ed. by Frumkin, II, 331 (enlarged greatly by copyists ibid., pp. 332 ff., 340 ff.). But an Ashkenazic glossator of the Maimonidean Code already displayed a text of twenty-four sentences, covering the entire alphabet, with two doubles. See M.T. Seder Tefillot on Viddui with the variants in the Trivulzio MS (14th cent.), cited in J. Hamburger’s Shin muye nush'a'ot (Abweichungen des gedruckten Textes der Jad Hachaska von einer Handschrift), pp. 15 ff.; S. Assaf’s comments in the introduction to Saadia’s Siddur, p. 37; and the related Cambridge MS published and translated by R. Edelmann in his Zur Frühgeschichte des Mahzor, pp. 7, 32 f., Hebrew section, pp. 11 ff. Meantime Saadiah, omitting entirely the paragraph beginning ashamnu, proposed four sentences beginning ‘al net and six beginning ‘al ḥata’im (connoting a confession of a “sin” or “sins,” both used, however, in their generic sense). See his Siddur, pp. 259 f.; and Y. Zimmels’s comments thereon in Fishman’s Rav Saadya Gaon, pp. 555 f. Saadiah added thereto a pīyyut of his own (Siddur, p. 409), expanding the traditional theme. However, this liturgical piece seems not to have been widely recited, and it is extant today
only in a single incomplete fragment in Cambridge. As a result of subsequent accretions the present Ashkenazi ritual includes forty-five ‘al ḥet and nine ‘al ḥata’tim sentences. See Siddur Ḥasid ha-tefillot, pp. 110ff. See also Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaonim, VI, Part 1, pp. 18 ff., 38 ff. (especially the quotation from Yehudah bar Barzillai’s Sefer ha-Ḥittim in No. 105; and Sherira’s decision that every member be made to confess on the Day of Atonement in whatever language he understands well; ibid., No. 99); and, more generally, G. Ormann’s dissertation, Das Sündenbekennnis des Versöhnungstages; and A. Marmorstein’s analysis of the talmudic forms in “The Confession of Sins for the Day of Atonement,” Essays Hertz, pp. 293–305. Examples of Karaita “confessions,” generally shorter and largely consisting of biblical phrases, are found in I. Davidson’s ed. of Ginze Schechter, III, 174 ff. See M. Zulay, Zur Liturgie der babylonischen Juden, p. 68.

24. Mann’s edition of a fragment of Sefer ha-Ma’asim in Tarbiz, I, Part 3, p. 8; Naṭronai’s responsa in Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, p. 79 (although formally but an antiquarian explanation of tannaitic phraseology, this responsa has a contemporary sound); Amram’s Seder, LXXII, ed. by Frumkin, I, 280 f.; ed. by Hedegard, I, 48 f. (Hebrew), 117 f. (English). The frequently divergent older sources are discussed in M. Higger’s introduction and notes to his ed. of Masseket Soferim, pp. 52, 264 n. 72, 267 n. 81; Lewin’s Otzar, V, Part 2, pp. 27 f.; Mann’s Texts and Studies, I, 122, 151 f. In his letter, addressed in 1006 to Kairwan, Hai Gaon tried to entice his friend and former classmate, Nahum the reader, son of Joseph “the great reader,” to return to Baghdad, for “the elders have met and he is now the chief [muqaddam] of all the readers in Babylonia.” See also S. Spiegel’s remarks in A. Diez Macho and his “Fragmentos de Piyutim de Yannai en vocalización babilonica,” Sefarad, XV, 316. At times a cantor could abuse the community’s trust. If we accept S. M. Stern’s reconstruction of two poems published by I. Davidson (in his Ginze Schechter, III, 220–23), we have here before us a biting description of the trial of a hazzan convicted of selling communally owned Scriptures to satisfy extortions by blackmailers. See Stern’s note “On Understanding the ‘Poem on the Cantor Selling Scripture’” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XIX, 62–63. On the general development of the office of hazzan, especially in the later Middle Ages, see my Jewish Community, II, 100 ff.; III, 155 f.; and other passages listed in the index on p. 428. See also the more recent study by H. H. Harris, Toledoṭ ha-neginaḥ ve-ha-hazzanut be-Yisra’el (Hebrew Liturgical Music); and supra, Vol. II, pp. 280 ff., 422 f.

25. Amram’s Seder, beginning; Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, pp. 139 ff.; Maimonides’ M.T. Tefillah vii.g. Although not specifically stated, Maimonides’ opposition is best explained as aimed less at uninformed individuals than at readers wishing to help congregants by anticipating the likely benedictions of the day. This is in line with Maimonides’ censure of a custom prevailing “in most eastern countries” for the reader to recite at the beginning of the morning services the benediction over the “washing of hands,” although his own hands had been washed long before. See his Resp., p. 22 No. 25.

26. Yehudah al-Ḥarizi’s Tahkemoni, xxiv, ed. by Lagarde, p. 108; Lev. r. xxx.1. See also Buber’s note on his ed. of the Pesiqta de-R. Kahana, fol. 179 n. 23; and S. Lieberman’s Hebrew study of “Yannai’s Ḥazzanut” in Sinai, II, Nos. 22–23, pp. 222 ff. On Romanos’ Kontakia, see N. Kadri’s Arabic essay on “The Betrayal of
Judas: a Poem by Romanos the Melodos," Al-Machriq, XLII, 413–33; S. Baud-Bovy’s related study of "Sur un ‘sacrifice d’ Abraham’ de Romanos et sur l’existence d’un thàtre religieux à Byzance," Byzantion, XIII, 321–34 (denying such direct influence in opposition to M. Carpenter and others); and E. Mioni’s biography of Romano il Melode. According to P. Lemelre, one of his pupils, Grosdidier de Maton, was preparing a complete edition and French translation of Romanos’ extant works. See his brief communication on “Etudes d’histoire de Byzance,” Annales, X, 545. See also, more generally, Krumbacher’s Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur, pp. 665 ff.; and P. Maas’s analysis of “Das Kontakion,” BZ, XIX, 285–306.

27. Maimonides’ Guide, 1.59 (this passage is more fully quoted infra, n. 55); Samau’al ibn Yahya’s Ifhām, in the excerpt ed. and trans. by Schreiner in MGWJ, XLII, 217 ff. (see infra, n. 28); Samuel ibn Nagrela, cited supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 38; J. List, Studien zur Homiletik Germanos I, p. vii: M. Zulay’s text of “An Ancient Poem and the Prooemia to Ekhah Rabbati” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XVI, 190–95; Ginzberg, Ginze Schechter, I, 136 ff., 145 ff., 246 ff., 253 ff.; Midrash Haggadol on Gen., ed. by M. Margulies, pp. 17 ff., etc. Even if one rejects Ginzberg’s arguments in favor of Tobiah ben Eliye’s authorship of that fragment, one must admit the priority of Qalir’s qerobah, on which see infra, n. 47. Similarly, the indebtedness of the later compiler of the introductions to Lam. r. to the author of the qinah, rather than the other way around, explains many of the difficulties pointed out by the former’s editor, Solomon Buber. Especially the nineteen poems for which Buber was unable to find rabbinic sources or parallels (see “The Character of the Proems in the Midrash Ekhah Rabbati,” Festschrift Steinschneider, Hebrew section, pp. 27–32) doubtless owed much to our poet or his colleagues. Even when the name of an ancient sage is quoted in the text, if not altogether fictitious, it probably refers only to the kernel of that homily, with much elaboration from later preachers or poets. See W. Bacher, Die Pröömen der alten jüdischen Homilie, especially p. 107. See supra, Chap. XXVIII, nn. 12–13.

28. Yehudah bar Barzillai’s Sefer ha-’Ittim, p. 252. Ever since S. Z. H. Halberstam, this passage has been associated with Justinian’s prohibition of the Jewish deuteronomy. In Der jüdische Gottesdienst, pp. 282 ff., however, I. Elbogen argued against this identification by pointing out that Yehudah’s likely source, Samuel ibn Nagrela, had undoubtedly received this information from such a Babylonian author as Samuel ben Hofni, and that hence the persecution more probably referred to some unfriendly act by the government of Sassanian Persia. Since, moreover, the convert Samau’al ibn Yahya specifically connected some such liturgical changes with Persian persecutions, Elbogen suggested that that great change took place during the darkest period of Jewish life under Persian rule, namely some time between 450 and 589. See Samau’al’s Ikhām in Schreiner’s trans. in MGWJ, XLII, 280; and, on Yehudah’s sources, probably similar to those used by Ibn Daud and other chroniclers, A. Epstein’s “Sources to the History of the Geonim and the Babylonian Academies,” Festschrift Harkavy, Hebrew section, pp. 168 ff. Elbogen could have been more specific and related the liturgical transformation to the period of Mar Zutra III, whose transfer from Babylonia to Tiberias may indeed have stimulated the new liturgical creativity thenceforth centered in northern Palestine. See supra, Vol. II, pp. 196, 399 nn. 14–15; and Chaps. XXVIII, n. 61; XXIX, n. 14. Although an ardent Muslim controversialist, Samau’al often reveals good familiarity with
Jewish life, in which he had grown up. He may have been particularly well informed about Hebrew liturgy if, as has often been suggested, he was the son of the well-known Hebrew poet Yehudah ibn 'Abbas (died about 1167 in Fez). See e.g., the Hebrew essays by S. Bernstein, "Unknown Poems by Yehudah ben R. Abbun ('Abbas)" in Essays Hertz, Hebrew section, pp. 15–33; and A. Scheiber, "An Unknown Sabbath-Song by Yehudah ben Samuel ibn 'Abbas (from the Kaufmann Genizah)," Tarbis, XXIII, 127–29. However, Samau'al's report is too garbled to allow for any reliable conclusions. Moreover, Persian objections to monotheistic synagogue liturgy could hardly have been met by poems of essentially the same content. Only the Byzantine suppression of Oral Law, coupled with the toleration of Jewish divine services, makes understandable such a shift from Midrash to liturgical poetry. As Benjamin ben Samuel of Constantinople expressed it, "they replaced the Midrash and versified its subject matter." That is also why Palestine, and not Babylonia, became the center of the new liturgy, whereas Babylonian leadership, as we shall see, bitterly resisted the new forms for centuries after the rise of Islam. See also infra, nn. 45 and 47.

29. While we have no documentation for such mutual influences in early medieval Christian countries, Alfasi, writing in eleventh-century Spain, taught that a cantor singing Arabic songs ought to be deposed. See his Resp., No. 281. The number of Christian converts to Judaism seems at times to have been quite considerable. In Persia, especially, nothing prevented a Christian, orthodox or sectarian, from joining the Jewish faith. Such conversions may have been particularly numerous in periods of anti-Christian persecutions, and might in part explain the frequent Christian accusations of alleged Jewish instigation. More remarkably, even in the Byzantine Empire, where apostasy from Christianity had been sharply outlawed ever since 337 (see supra, Vol. II, pp. 149 f., 188 f.), at least two of Yannai's poems (in Piyuṭe Yannai, ed. by M. Zulay, pp. 9 f. No. 4, 9; 121 No. 70, 9) seem to refer to a considerable number of proselytes. See Zulay's interpretation in his "Studies in Yannai" (Hebrew), SRIHP, II, 268, as opposed to M. Kober's purely historical explanation in his Zum Machsor Jannai, p. 53. Zulay's suggestion, however, that only descendants of Ham, that is Egyptians, were counted here as proselytes, seems to be too literal. The two preceding passages relating to descendants of Japhet, extolling the beauty of their diction and calling them mamlīje dat (paraphrasts of the law in choice language), probably likewise included professing Jews. Unless we assume that those poems were later interpolations reflecting only Palestinian conditions during the Persian occupation of 614–28, when indeed many Christians turned to Judaism as the faith favored by the invaders (see supra, Chap. XVI, n. 25), we must not completely gainsay the effectiveness of Jewish proselytism before Mohammed. See also supra, Chap. XXIV, n. 40.

30. See E. Peterson's analysis of "Jüdisches und christliches Morgengebet in Syrien," Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, LVIII, 110–13. See also supra, n. 19; and Vol. II, pp. 84 f., 188 f., 365 n. 41, 400 f., to which add J. Daniélou, "Une Antique liturgie judéo-chrétienne," Cahiers sioniens, IV, 293–302. Needless to say, the differences between the Christian and the Jewish rituals were as significant as the similarities. It suffices to review the practices of the North African churches in the days of Tertullian, as reconstructed in E. Dekkers's Tertullianus en de geschiedenis der Liturgie, to realize how far the Church had already traveled
at that time in her deviations from the Palestinian prototypes. Of course, Christian liturgy may have been just as much indebted to sectarian as to orthodox Jewish prototypes. See, e.g., F. Baumgärtel, "Zur Liturgie in der ‘Sektenerolle’ vom Toten Meer," ZAW, LXV, 263–65; and J. A. Jungmann’s succinct observations on “Alchristliche Gebetsordnung im Lichte des Regellebuchs von ‘En Fescha,” Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie LXXV, 215–19, with the reservations mentioned supra, n. 19. See also the extensive material accumulated in K. Kirchhoff’s voluminous study, Die Ostkirche betet: Hymnen aus den Tagezeit der byzantinischen Kirche; R. D. Richardson’s “Eastern and Western Liturgies: the Primitive Basis of Their Later Differences,” HTR, XLII, 125–48; and esp. A. Baumstark’s manifold insights into Liturgie comparée: Principes et méthodes pour l'étude des liturgies chrétiennes, 3d ed., rev. by B. Botte.

31. For a time the existence of two different poems relating to the same benediction and written by the same author gave rise to doubts about his Palestinian origin. His two poems, it was argued, proved that he lived in the dispersion which observed double holidays. This debate was settled, however, when a third poem turned up; written by the same author for the same holiday service, it could not possibly refer to the observance of a third day. Even more striking is the survival of four different qerobot for the Ninth of Ab, written by Qalir. Of course, no one observed even two fast days in succession. See M. Zulay’s observations in SRIHP, II, 221 n. 1. See also infra, nn. 34 and 47.

32. See the numerous editions of Oḥilah (ascribed by some scholars to Yose ben Yose), as listed in Davidson’s Ḥas, I, 78 f. No. 1701; IV, 228; and Saadia’s Siddur, p. 188. In this azharah for the Festival of Weeks Saadia, appropriately enough, extolled the Torah, the giving of which to Israel was celebrated on that day. He used the crucial words in the pertinent three verses of Psalms 19:8–10 as a refrain for this alphabetic poem of six four-verse strophes.

33. The use of the simple and multiple alphabetic acrostics dates back to the beginning of the piyyut, and was found in some recently discovered poems by Yose ben Yose ha-Kohen. Its antecedents go back not only to the Psalms and other biblical writings, but also to such liturgical functions as those recorded in connection with the first-century tannea'im Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Joshua ben Hanaiah, who allegedly helped intone so-called alphabetaria, that is liturgical songs provided with alphabetic acrostics. See also R. Marcus’s data on “Alphabetic Acrostics in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods,” JNES, VI, 109–15; and A. Dihle’s Studien zur byzantinischen Metrik und Rhythmic. In time the technique became more complicated and a variety of new modes came into general use, such as the alphabet in reverse order, exemplified in the well-known prayer of the Sabbath Musaf ‘Amidah, beginning Tikkanta shabbat (Thou Didst Institute the Sabbath). Sometimes the first letter was followed by the last, the second by the penultimate letter (known in Hebrew as the at bashi). There also existed other combinations. Before long the use of the acrostic became so characteristic of the new poetic creativity that a contemporary homilist spoke without much ado about “that poyyeṭan who turns out his alphabets.” See Eccles. r. 1.13; and, on the spelling, infra, n. 35. At times alphabeta or, more briefly, febeta was used to designate the acrostic poem itself. On the use of crucial catchwords and other far more complicated ex-
pedients, see the numerous examples assembled by Zunz in *Die Ritus des synagogalen Gottesdienstes*, pp. 120 ff.; and *infra*, n. 39 and Chap. XXXII, n. 82. A fuller analysis of these and other technical problems would be greatly facilitated, if M. Zulay’s “Plea for a ‘Corpus of Geniza Piyyutim’” (*JJS*, I, 111-15; also in Hebrew in *Ha-Kinnus ha-olami*, I, 261-66) were to be heeded. See *infra*, n. 41.

34. Judges 16:23-24; Isaiah 27:3-5; *Iliad*, II.37-88; IX.286-37. The origins of rhymed poetry are still shrouded in darkness. Long-term efforts to find its nucleus in the Bible have proved unsuccessful. Equally uncertain are the findings concerning the rabbinic letters, such as those quoted by H. Brody in his edition of Immanuel Frances’ *Meteq sefatayim* (Hebräische Prosodie), p. 32 n. 10. Somewhat more to the point are K. G. Kuhn’s observations of the rhymes in the ‘*Amidah* (see *supra*, Vol. II, p. 330 n. 5), but these occasional rhymes, too, may have been purely accidental. See also the numerous examples of “the Rhyming Ancients,” cited in A. M. Clark’s *Studies in Literary Modes*, pp. 142 ff. Yet it is quite possible that such recurrent accidents aroused one of the “messengers” to apply this technique consciously to some of his poems, so as to fortify them against both corruption and total oblivion. However, precisely because the rhymes and acrostics so greatly facilitated memorization, they postponed the day of reckoning when confining the new creations to writing would become an inescapable necessity. That is why so much of that initial evolution must remain in the realm of conjecture. See also M. Wallenstein’s brief remarks in his *Some Unpublished Piyyutim from the Cairo Genizah*, pp. 7 f.

The above observations were written before the author heard a lecture delivered at the American Academy for Jewish Research by J. Schirmann on “Hebrew Liturgical Poetry and Christian Hymnology,” subsequently published in *JQR*, XLIV, 125-61. Some of Schirmann’s arguments along astounding similarities have served to confirm his opinion that the Jewish poets of the talmudic and posttalmudic eras were instrumental in introducing the rhyme into Western poetry. Schirmann has not stopped to inquire, however, into the reasons why Jewish poets should have felt the need to invent this technique any more than their Christian or pagan neighbors. This phenomenon becomes understandable, however, in the light of the Jewish concentration on oral transmission. Certainly Christian liturgical authors did not have to resort to mnemotechnic expedients, when they themselves, or some of their assistants, could immediately write down their new poems. Their liturgical improvisations fared no less well than their homiletical outpourings, and, for instance, the twelve secretaries employed by Origen could with equal ease record his liturgical efforts along with his homiletical or exegetical works. Jews, as we recall, had no such assistance. See *supra*, Chap. XXVIII, n. 4. The number of books published by them was generally extremely small, and, even when unhampered by legal objections, ancient and early medieval Jewish poets had little opportunity to spread their works in written form among the masses. In the case of liturgy, we remember, opposition to written prayers was long and sustained. Hence, unlike their Greek or Syriac counterparts, the Jewish poets had to invent some new ways of preserving in the memory of men their ever growing and more complicated liturgical output. This urgent necessity thus became the mother of another significant invention. The story of the Hebrew rhyme and other techniques will be more fully discussed in the next chapter in connection with the various other aspects of the Hebrew *ars poetica*.
35. See the aforementioned fragment of Midrash Leqah tov published by Ginzberg in his Ginze Schechter, I, 256 f., 281, 289, and, for the proof of its authorship, ibid., pp. 246 ff. The term hizanah is used, often with reference to Yannai’s work, by Saadia, Qirqisani, and the unknown author of an old book list. See Harkavy’s Zikkron, V, 107 f.; Qirqisani’s K. al-Anwar, i.2, 14; 1.4, 11, ed. by Nemoji, I, 15. 35 (HUCA, VII, 329, 335); supra, Chap. XXVI, n. 79; and the text published by S. Pomanski in JQR, [o.s.] XV, 77 line 12. See also Davidson’s Mahzor Yannai, pp. xii ff., xlii ff.

36. Sha’are teshubah, No. 178; M.Q. 25b; M. Zulay’s “Contribution to the History of the Liturgical Poetry in Palestine” (Hebrew), SRIHP, V, 108 ff. See also Z. Jawitz’s significant attempt to link the origins of the pifyut with liturgical forms recorded in the Talmud in “The Earliest Liturgical Poems,” Festschrift David Hoffmann, Hebrew section, pp. 69–82; his Toledot, IX, 169 ff.; and S. B. Freehof’s demonstration of how private prayers of the ancient sages influenced the later supplications in “The Origin of the Taḥanun,” HUCA, II, 339–50. Such alterations of ancient prayers, to suit the changing tastes of subsequent generations are also illustrated by A. Mirkis in his essay cited infra, n. 52. It is noteworthy that these chants had more devotees among the priests than the levites, the chief songsters of the ancient sanctuary. Apparently the priests succeeded in preserving their identity and cohesiveness much better than any other group after the fall of Jerusalem. That they included some spurious claimants appears likely, though this must have happened far less frequently in the Holy Land than in other countries. Even centuries later Hai Gaon would hardly have addressed to the Palestinian priests a letter written in a vein as sarcastic as his alleged epistle to the priests of Iriqiya, which was published by B. M. Lewin in GK, IV, 51–56, 111. See supra, Vol. I, 414 n. 30.

37. See Zulay’s remarks in SRIHP, V, 112, 118 ff.; and his “New Poems of R. Ḥadutha” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XXII, 28–42. The question of the identity of Ḥadutha with Ḥaduta is still unsolved. The fact that the acrostics in different poems have preserved the distinction between H and Ḥ at the beginning, and H and A at the end, and the other arguments adduced by Zulay in favor of their separation, while fairly strong, have not dispelled all doubts in such a startling coincidence. Each of these names is unique in the annals of Jewish letters. Almost all the Palestinian poets of the period bore long-accepted Hebrew or Aramaic names, for the most part of biblical origin. Among the score of names, including some dubious ones adduced by Zulay himself in his former essay, we find only those of Moses (two poets), Aaron, Joseph (two, including Yose), Joshua, Yeshu’a, Eleazar (two), Yehudah (three, including Yudan), Solomon, Samuel (two), Simon, Johanan, Mishael, Yannai, and Meborakh. To assume, therefore, that two poets bearing the strange names of Ḥadutha and Ḥaduta should have lived in Palestine in approximately the same period and written the same kind of poetry with no noticeable stylistic or rhythmic variations, rather overtaxes our credulity. However, the specific arguments advanced by J. N. Epstein and others for their identity are even less conclusive. One must also bear in mind that such remembrance of the ancient orders and readiness to resume the priestly services at the Temple was not limited to Palestine. We have the expressive geonic testimony that Ḥaninah, gaon of Sura and disciple of Yehudai Gaon the protagonist of Babylonian supremacy, was him-
self a priest belonging to a particular priestly family, who used to let his nails grow saying, “The Temple will soon be rebuilt, and they will require a priest qualified for meliqah” (the pinching off of a bird’s head). See Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaanim, V, Part 2, p. 30. See also S. Abramson’s “Qerotot for the Bridegroom” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XV, 50 ff.

38. See Lewin’s Otzar ha-gaanim, VI, Part 1, p. 41; and Saadiah’s Siddur, pp. 264 ff., giving the relatively most authentic texts of Azkîr geburot and Attah konanta (on the numerous other editions see Davidson’s Oṣar, I, 105 No. 2250, 399 No. 8815; IV, 233, 286). But Saadiah fails to mention Yose’s third ‘Abodah, beginning Asperer gedolot (I Shall Narrate Great Things about the Maker of Great Things), of which only a few verses are now extant. See Davidson, I, 316 No. 6965; IV, 272. This poem alone is designated in one Oxford MS as intended for use during the afternoon services. See Elbogen’s Studien, pp. 81, 118. Since Saadiah, Yose’s great admirer, knew nothing of this poem, or of any poem to be recited in the afternoon, this annotation by a subsequent copyist suggests at the most that some medieval community had adopted that practice. Yose’s ‘Abodahs, it may be noted, had to compete with several others for public attention. A geonic source mentions the titles of three others in use in contemporary synagogues; one of them thus far not otherwise identified. See Lewin’s Otzar, VI, Part 1, p. 18 (Amram’s Seder, ed. by Frumkin, II, 352). See also S. Widder, “A List of Piyuyim and Poems in the Genizah Collection of the David Kaufmann Library of the Hungarian Academy of Science,” Löw Mem. Vol., Hebrew section, pp. 39 No. 26, 69 No. 71, 113. It may also be noted, that Yose ben Yose made good use not only of the Mishnah’s description of the services at the Temple, but also of a few telling passages in Sirach, whose work, as we recall, was still known in Palestine during the early Middle Ages. See the plausible arguments presented on this score by C. Roth in his “Ecclesiasticus in the Synagogue Service,” JBL, LXXI, 171–78.

39. Schechter’s Saadyana, p. 136; W. Bacher’s trans. with comments thereon in his “Aus einer alten Poetik (Schule Saadja’s),” JQR, [o.s.] XIV, 742 f.; M. Yoma 111.8, etc. After Yose it was particularly Yannai who divided his poems by acrostics of the first twelve and the last ten letters. This method is so frequently used that Zulay considers it a typical characteristic of Yannai’s qedusha (poem on ‘Amidah at which the trishagion is recited). See his introduction to Piyyuṭe Yannai, p. xiv. See also “The Qedusha of Pinhas for ‘Asser te-asser,” published by A. Scheiber in JQR, XLII, 219–16; and, on the latter recitation, Simḥah bar Samuel’s Mahzor Vitry, pp. 445 f. As a parallel one might also cite the ten acrostics at the beginning and end of each verse in the Syriac poet ‘Abd Isho (‘Ebedjesu) bar Berikha of Sobha’s Paradaisa dh A Edhen (Paradisius Eden), ed. by G. Cardahi, p. 16. See also F. V. Winnert’s introduction to his English translation of the first fourteen homilies entitled Paradise of Eden, incidentally stressing that the latter’s avowed purpose was “to display the resources and elegances and subtleties” of the Syriac tongue. On this and other technical expedients used by the medieval Hebrew poets, see infra, Chap. XXXII, nn. 77 ff.

40. The Etten tehilla is conveniently available in H. Brody and M. Wiener’s anthology, Mibḥar ha-shirah ha-‘ibrit (Anthology of Hebrew Poetry), 2d ed., pp. 24 f. See the medieval midrash entitled Aggadeta de-Shimeon Ka’ipha (Legend of
Simon Kaipha) in Jellinek's Bet ha-Midrasch, VI, 156 (also in Eisenstein's Ozar Midrashim, p. 559); and Zulay's "Studies," SRIHP, II, 231. On the other hand, J. Szövérffy, "The Legends of St. Peter in Medieval Latin Hymns," Traditio, X, 275–322, does not refer to Peter himself as an author of Hebrew hymns. See also supra, Vol. II, pp. 74 ff., 561 n. 27.

41. Both these poems by Yose are reprinted in Habermann's Be-Ron Yahad, pp. 7 ff. Cyrillonas' poem, beginning as a formal madrasha but continuing as a simple menra, written in poetic prose, was first published by G. Bickell in "Die Gedichte des Cyrillonas nebst einigen anderen syrischen Ineditis," ZDMG, XXVII, 583 ff. (with minor corrections, ibid., XXXV, 531 ff.) and is also available in his German translation as well as that by P. S. Landersdorfer in the latter's Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Dichter, pp. 11 ff. The passage here quoted may be found in ZDMG, XXVII, 587; Landersdorfer, p. 15.

Zulay's publication in 1940 of Yose's Erasheh has deeply altered our outlook on the early piyyutim. While as late as 1931, Elbogen (in Der jüdische Gottesdienst, p. 307) repeated that Yose "had no knowledge of the acrostic [ ] and made no use of rhymes," Zulay's discovery has pushed back the record of Hebrew rhymed poetry to the beginning of the piyyut. Curiously this fact was long known, but discounted because of an overdose of criticism, from two quotations of Yose's rhymed passages in Ibn Janah's K. al-Uṣul, ed. by Neubauer, pp. 436, 505 (Sefer ha-Shorashim, ed. by Bacher, pp. 303, 419). The latter quotation is indeed taken from Erasheh, and it stands to reason that the other passage (characteristically attached to the introductory prayer of the morning psalmody) was found by the great Spanish grammian in another authentic poem of Yose, since lost. If J. Marcus's suggestion (without supporting evidence) that the 'Abodah, published in his Ginze shirah u-fiyut (Liturgical and Secular Poetry of the Foremost Mediaeval Poets), I, 69 ff., was written by Yose should prove correct, we would have here an instance of more complicated and, hence, more advanced rhymes. See also Marcus's ed. of "A New Poem by Yose ben Yose" (Hebrew), Horeb, II, 201 ff. (far simpler in its technique); and infra Chap. XXXII. Of course, all the authors here mentioned made use of the acrostic.

The answer to many such queries may be given when the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem has completed the listing of its 4,000 photostats of MSS containing Hebrew poems from the world's libraries. The dream of many decades may come true, and all medieval poems may be listed not only by their incipits, for which Davidson's Ozar still is an excellent guide, but also by their endings and rhymes. Since the beginnings of many medieval poems are lost, such a list alone would enable even a non-specialist to identify many a fragment as belonging to a poem otherwise known only in part. See Zulay's report in Schocken Jub. Vol., pp. 83 ff.; his essays cited supra, n. 93; and esp. I. Davidson's "Rhymes in Hebrew Poetry," JQR, XXX, 299–398. In this posthumous essay, edited and introduced by I. Elbogen, Davidson presented a lengthy, though incomplete, list of rhymes occurring in many verses of certain medieval and early modern poets.

42. Rapoport's Hebrew biography of R. Eleazar ha-Qallir in his series of Toledot (Biographies of Distinguished Rabbis), p. 218 n. 19 (referring to a statement by R. Gershom, the Light of the Exile, that Yannai had "composed gerobot for each order of the whole year"); and Zulay's ed. of Piyyuṭe Yannai. "Additional Poems
by Yannai" have been published by Zulay in his pertinent Hebrew essay in *Lōw Mem. Vol.*, pp. 147-57 (listing also the intervening publications by Mann, Sonne, and S. Widder). See also Zulay's remarks in *Schocken Jub. Vol.*, pp. 85-124; Yannai's poems cited *infra*, n. 53; and M. Kober's earlier study, *Zum Machsor Jannai*, with S. Spiegel's comments "Zum Machsor Jannai," *MGWJ*, LXXIV, 94-104. To be sure, not all the poems definitely ascribed to Yannai by the various editors were necessarily his. Only a few contain the acrostic Yannai, whose Palestinian spelling with three *yods* strengthens its authenticity. Since our author may have been the first Hebrew poet to indicate in this way his proprietary rights, we need not be astonished by his sparing use of this novel device. Most other poems are attributed to him on the basis of the nine criteria developed by Zulay in his "Studies" in *SRIHP*, II, 234 ff. Of course, such criteria are rarely conclusive; especially the distinction between the poet's genuine creations and those of his disciples and imitators will often remain more or less arbitrary. A conscious imitation, for example, of one of Yannai's best known *qerobot*, beginning *One bitrate rahamatayim* (The First-Born to Fathers and Mothers), the seventh poem of which (*az rob nissim*; Then Thou Didst Perform Numerous Miracles) has been recited by untold millions during the Passover celebration (see the entire text in *Piyute Yannai*, pp. 88 ff.), has a similar beginning (*On koel peter rehem*) and generally follows Yannai's pattern very closely. See the text published by I. Davidson in his *Ginze Schechter*, pp. 24 ff. Were it not that the third poem here has the unmistakable acrostic Shemuel (Samuel), doubtless Samuel the Third of the tenth century, one could never have confidently denied Yannai's authorship on the basis of the few differences in style and method or the fact that the imitation reveals little of the original's anti-Byzantine animus. See also F. Bar's *Liturgische Dichtungen von Jannai und Samuel*, pp. 89 ff. Doubts would have lingered on, particularly, if Yannai's own work had for some reason been lost and the imitation alone had survived. One should also bear in mind that Samuel the Third was a prolific poet in his own right, and that no less than four hundred of his own poems have been identified in some 170 different MSS at the Research Institute in Jerusalem. See Zulay's data in *Schocken Jub. Vol.*, p. 100. Nevertheless Zulay's criteria have already proved extremely helpful in segregating the wheat from the chaff, and especially in reinforcing the genuiness of all those poems attributed to our poet by a more or less persistent tradition. See also *infra*, n. 77; and on more recent publications in this and related fields, H. Schirrmann's current bibliographies of "Studies in Hebrew Poetry" (Hebrew), annually published in *KS*.

43. The halakhic content of Yannai's poetry has often attracted attention. Although not devoid of allusions to midrashic teachings (some poems are altogether aggadic in nature), the works of Yannai stand out in the entire history of the *piyyut* by their didactic content with respect to ritualistic requirements. Upon closer examination they have actually served to elucidate certain stages in the post-talmudic legal evolution for which no other sources are extant. See in particular S. Lieberman's aforementioned Hebrew study of "Yannai's *Haazanut*" in *Sinai*, II. On Hai ben David's detection in Yannai's poems of the source of two puzzling decisions by 'Anan, which he had been unable to trace back to any other rabbinic source, see Qirqisani's statement cited *supra*, Chap. XXVI, n. 79. Yannai's expertness in Jewish law underscores, therefore, his radical departure from tradition.
44. Justinian's Novella 146, 3, in Corpus Juris Civilis, III, ed. by R. Schoell and W. Kroll, p. 717; and in J. Parkes's English trans. in The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue, p. 593 (here slightly altered). Justinian's missionary animus helps explain also the intimate interrelations between Yannai's poetry and the so-called Palestinian Targum. The latter seems to have grown through constant aggadic accretions to several times its original size. Since the government insisted on the reading of a translation, the Jewish leaders seem to have reasoned, they could with its aid communicate to the congregants the desired homiletical teachings by simply inserting into the existing Aramaic version many of those aggadic lessons whose independent exposition was now forbidden by law. In one case, Yannai's poem Elohe 'olam (God of the Universe) is the prototype for or a translation of a lengthy excursus in the Palestinian Targum of Gen. 35:9. See the two texts in Piyuté Yannai, pp. 48 f. No. 21, 5; and Kahle's Masoret des Westens, I, Hebrew section, pp. 24 f.; II, 12 ff.; and Zulay's comments thereon in his Zur Liturgie der babylonischen Juden, pp. 64 f. The connection between Yannai's liturgical poetry and Justinian's Novella has also been vigorously stressed by Y. M. Guttmann in his review of Zulay's edition of Piyuté Yannai in Ha-Sofer, V, 127-31.

45. See Pirqei's treatise in Ginzberg's Ginze Schechter, II, 551 ff.; and B. M. Lewin's supplement thereto in Tarbiz, II, 397 ff. Some such limited Persian interference with Jewish worship is confirmed by the account, otherwise equally confused, in Samu'al ibn Yahya's Ifham in Schreiner's edition and translation in MGWJ, XLII, 218 ff. See also supra, n. 28.

46. Samu'al's Ifham in Schreiner's excerpt in MGWJ, XLII, 219 f. See also Yehudah al-Ḥarizi's Tahkemoni, xxiv, ed. by Lagarde, pp. 108 ff.; ed. by Toporowski, pp. 223 ff. The substitution of new prayers for the 'Amidah was not as abrupt a departure from tradition as it might appear. Already in talmudic times occasions arose necessitating such substitution, particularly when the worshiper was in a great hurry. Mar Samuel devised a prayer, beginning Habinenu (Make Us Understand), which condensed the thirteen middle benedictions of the weekday prayer into a single blessing. See the slightly varying text given in j. Berakhot iv, 3, 8a; and b. 29a; another tripartite text, cited in behalf of Yehudai by Semaḥ Gaon as a very old tradition in Lewin's Ottar ha-gaonom, I, Part 1, p. 72; and E. Levi's comments thereon in his Yesodot ha-tefilah, p. 142. There also existed other substitute prayers in ancient and medieval times, even after the opposition to all standardized prayers had long died down. See esp. Elbogen, Der jüdische Gottesdienst, pp. 585 f.; and Z. Karl, Meḥqarim, pp. 81 ff. On the two loud recitations of the 'Amidah which, in some Byzantine communities, continued down to the days of Maimonides, see supra, n. 14.

47. The Yoẓerot, apparently introduced with some hesitation into Jewish liturgy by Eleazar Qalir (see, e.g., J. Marcus's Ginze shirah, pp. 59 ff.), proliferated greatly soon after. They included, as special subdivisions, poems designated by such names as (1) ofan, with reference to the mystical "wheels and the celestial beasts" invoked by the early medieval congregations in connection with the Qedushah; and (2) zulat, with reference to the declaration "There is no God beside Thee" (zulatentkha), which follows the recitation of Shema'. On these poems, and particularly the very
complicated problem of the trishagon and its use in the Shema' cycle, see Elbogen’s Der jüdische Gottesdienst, pp. 61 ff.; Mann’s comments on “Changes in the Divine Service of the Synagogue Due to Religious Persecutions,” HUCA, IV, 261 ff.; and Karl’s Mehgarim, pp. 32 f. Ultimately, some poets even composed prayers for week days which, though clearly elective, must have appealed particularly to such an ascetic leisure class as the “Mourners for Zion.” See M. Zulay, “Yoserot for Weekdays” (Hebrew), Qobes ’al yad, XIII, Part 1, pp. 9–21; and A. Scheiber, “Everyday Qerobot from the Kaufmann Collection” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XXII, 167–73.

On the basis of Pirqei’s report, R. Edelmann was quick to explain the differences between Yose’s early poems intended merely to supplement the existing liturgy and the more complex piyyutim of Yannai and Qalir, which easily lent themselves for substitution of forbidden prayers. See his “Bestimmung, Heimat und Alter der synagogalen Poesie,” Orients christianus, 3d ser. VII, 16–31. Edelmann failed to explain, however, the equally pronounced difference between Yannai’s concentration on qerobot to the ‘Amidah and the scriptural lessons and Qalir’s incipient interest, as was postulated above, in yaserot connected with the recitation of the blessings before and after Shema’. Nor does he offer any reason why any Byzantine administrator should have prohibited the recitation of the latter while permitting Jewish services. In fact, the “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. 6:4) often was invoked by Christian theologians as a confirmation of the divine three-in-oneness. See supra, Chap. XXIV, n. 49. Both these difficulties are removed if we assume that Qalir was stimulated to offer some substitutes for the Shema’ services on Sabbaths and holidays during the Persian occupation of Palestine, and that he possibly continued with this creativity after 628 as well. On other liturgical changes introduced in connection with the outlary of Shema’, see J. Mann’s “Changes in the Divine Service of the Synagogue,” HUCA, IV, 241–310, where, however, no consideration is given to the basic distinction between Byzantine and Persian persecutions, the latter also affecting Palestine in 614–28. See also the other monographs listed supra, Vol. II, p. 399 n. 14.

Regrettably, nothing is known about the life of Eleazar Qalir, by all counts the most prolific and best known payyekan. His very name—or rather that of his father, Qalir, Qillir, or Qilar—has been given a variety of explanations, although its identification with Cyrill, first suggested by J. Perles (in his “Jüdisch-byzantinische Beziehungen,” BZ, II, 582 f.) has much to commend it. The fact that some poems are attributed in manuscripts to the son of Qilar, rather than Qalir, and even possess such an acrostic, has induced Zulay to suggest the existence of two poets separated by some two centuries. See his remarks in SRIHP, II, 221 f.; his review of J. Marcus’s Ginze shirah in KS, X, 481 ff.; and the more recent comments in his “New Poems by R. Haduta” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XXII, 28 f. After an endless debate initiated in the poet’s still noteworthy biography written a century and a quarter ago by S. J. L. Rapoport, scholars have now agreed upon regarding him as a resident of Palestine during the seventh century. Much more fortunate than Yannai, he found permanently responsive audiences in later times, and a great many of his piyyutim have found their way into Jewish prayer books throughout the world. Yet quite a few new poems have come to light in recent years, especially from the Cairo Genizah. A complete critical edition of his works, in preparation for many years by S. Spiegel, would fill a major lacuna in the history of medieval Hebrew literature and liturgy. For the time being, see the sources listed already by Zunz for more than two hundred of Qalir’s poems in his Literaturgeschichte, pp.
29 ff.; and such more recent publications as I. Elbogen’s “Kalir Studies,” *HUCA*, III, 215-24; and “Kalir Studien,” *ibid.*, IV, 405-51; his “Kalir’s Geschem-Komposition mit unbekannten Einlagen,” *Kohut Mem. Vol.*, pp. 159-77; J. Marcus’s “R. Eleazar berabbi Qalir and His New Poems” (Hebrew), *Horeb*, I, 21-31, 151-66; his “Eleazar Ha-Qallir’s Poems for New Year’s Day and the Day of Atonement” (Hebrew), *ibid.*, II, 6-16; a number of additional poems included in his edition of *Ginze shirah*, I (cf., however, Zulay’s reservations in his aforementioned review of this work) and in R. Edelmann’s *Zur Frühgeschichte des Mahzor*, especially the first Cambridge fragment published by him which, he suggests, may be a remnant of a comprehensive *Mahzor Qalir*. On Qalir’s messianic poem, see *supra*, Chap. XXV, n. 14. We must bear in mind, however, that not all poems attributed to Qalir were really his. Especially poems written by his namesake Eleazar, son of Abbun, a poet otherwise little known, were often intermingled with his genuine creations. See S. Spiegel’s analysis of “Eleazar berabbi Abbun in the Liturgical Poems of Haqilliri” (Hebrew), *SRIHP*, V, 267-91. On the much-debated Qalirian style, see M. Zulay’s succinct characterization in his “R. Saadia Gaon’s Poetic School” (Hebrew), *Orlogin*, VI, 142 ff.

48. The change in Yannai’s poem was noted by M. Kober in his *Zum Machsor Jannai*, pp. 17, 37. On the reference to the “pig” in Zion, see Kahle’s *Masoreten des Westens*, I, Hebrew section, pp. 17 ff.; and *supra*, Vol. II, p. 152. Other fairly clear-cut allusions are listed by Edelmann in *Oriens christianus*, 9d scr. VII, 27 n. 4. See *Piyute Yannai*, p. 339 No. 132, 12; 382 No. 23. Some of these allusions are, of course, quite ambiguous. In his beautiful German translation of one of Qalir’s poems, M. Sachs allegorized the “foe” as relating to sin, rather than to the imperial enemy. See *Die religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*, pp. 206 ff. He probably would not have suggested this forced interpretation, however, had he dated Qalir’s life in the tense period of the outgoing Byzantine regime over Palestine.

One wonders how, under these circumstances, Jews could continue praying for the welfare of the kingdoms under which they lived. Such prayers are very old; they date back to the days of Jeremiah, Cyrus, and the Elephantine soldiers. Even in antiquity they served Jewish apologists well, when these had to prove to a hostile environment that Diaspora Jews were patriotic citizens. See *supra*, Vol. I, pp. 190, 245, 353 n. 37, 404 n. 41. Christians, too, doubtless inherited from the synagogue such prayers as were reformulated already in the first century by Clement of Rome. See his *Epistola I ad Corinthios*, 61:1-2, ed. by F. X. Funk in *Die apostolischen Väter* (rev. ed. by K. Bihlmeyer), I, 68 (missing in *PG*, I, 325 ff.). See also Tertullian’s *Apologeticum*, xxx.4 in PL, I (CSEL, LXIX, 79). Of interest also is Emperor Julian’s epistle “To the Community of the Jews,” asking “that everywhere during my reign you may have security of mind, and in the enjoyment of peace may offer more fervid prayers for my reign to the Most High God.” See *Epistolae* 397 C, ed. by Wright, No. 51, III, 178 ff.; and, on its authenticity, *supra*, Vol. II, p. 392 n. 41. For this reason we have no grounds for doubting that the prayer *Ha-Noten teslut’ah* (He Who Gives Salvation unto Kings), found in prayer books of various rites and essentially given in ancient texts (see A. L. Frumkin’s comment on his edition of Amram’s *Seder*, II, 78), reaches back to remote antiquity. And yet it does not seem likely that the Jews could go much further than pray for both international peace and the cessation of persecutions—the two alternating themes in the ancient Christian liturgy. They need not have mentioned specific hated rulers and their families and
confer blessings upon them, any more than did their Christian compatriots. We know that in Constantinople, the very citadel of caesaropapism, the Church dared to delete from its rituals the names of emperors it considered heretical. Similarly, a Byzantine patriarch could admonish his coreligionists in Muslim lands to refrain from mentioning the caliphs in their prayers. See L. Biehl's documentation in *Das liturgische Gebet für Kaiser und Reich*, pp. 93, 98 f. Needless to say, even while contrasting, as they often did, the wicked reign of Edom, Edom-Persia, or Edom-Ishmael, with the downtrodden state of the Jewish people, the Hebrew liturgical poets had none of those political overtones (at least not for the period before the advent of the Messiah) which characterized much of Christian liturgy even before Constantine. See G. Tellenbach's "Römischer und christlicher Reichsgedanke in der Liturgie des frühen Mittelalters," *SB Heidelberg, 1934–35*, I, especially pp. 9 f. Nor must one underestimate the power of patriotic appeals which often overrode many an antagonistic group interest. Did not in recent generations the fervor of countless Russian Jews in praying for the welfare of their Czarist oppressors, including Nicholas I and II, deeply perplex outsiders?

49. This somewhat unwieldy poem which, written in simple and unadorned language, testifies to the author's deep emotional involvement in the revolutionary transformations of that age, was published by Ginzberg in his *Ginze Schechter*, I, 310 ff. While Ginzberg looked to the equally portentous period of the Crusades for an explanation of this apocalyptic clash between the titans of East and West, J. Marcus has shown that a poem beginning *Oto ha-yom asher yabo mashiah* (On the Day of the Redeemer's Advent) is recorded as the last of four poems by Qalir, listed in an Adler MS (*Horeb*, I, 22 ff., 29 f.). His explanation of the contemporary background during the Arab invasion of Palestine is strengthened by the phrase relating to Israel's forcible alienation from its sanctuary, which was particularly poignant under Christian domination, when the Hadrianic prohibition for Jews to visit Jerusalem was often sharply, if not always effectively, enforced. See *supra*, Vol. II, pp. 107 f., 374 n. 23, 377 n. 38. Related to this poem is another piece by Qalir, beginning *'Arba malkhiot* (Four Kingdoms), published by Edelmann in his *Zur Frühgeschichte*, pp. 5 (Hebrew), 20 f. (German). Unfortunately, this fragment is cut off in the middle of the fifth verse, the acrostic indicating that it probably had twenty-two or more verses. With unmistakable reference to Daniel 8:22, the author reviewed the four successive empires which had oppressed the Jews. "While they took counsel," he exclaimed triumphantly, "how to eliminate them [the Jews] from among the peoples [mi-goy], they themselves disappeared from the earth [mi-goy], and Thou hast increased the people [of Israel]."

Otherwise, the contemporary allusions which can be detected in Qalir's often oblique poems seem to refer to the Byzantine, rather than Muslim, domination. Certainly, his complaint of governmental pressures (*torah*) in his poem *Ansikha malki* (I Shall Offer Libation to My King), usually recited during the *Musaf 'Amidah* of New Year's day, and other allusions in various poems have decidedly anti-Byzantine rather than anti-Muslim connotations, as suggested by Rapoport in his aforementioned R. Eleazar ha-Qallir included in his biographical series *Toledot*, pp. 201 f. n. 5. The derogatory epithet *'obede sekhiot* (worshippers of icons) likewise more properly referred to the Christian, than to the imageless Muslim ritual. Even if it were proved, on the other hand, that the poem published by A. Marmorstein in his "Ancienneté de la poésie synagogue," *REJ*, LXXIII, 83 f., was written by Qalir
himself, rather than by one of his pupils, this might merely mean that an original composition of about 618 (it specifically mentions that the Temple had been destroyed for 550 years, p. 84 line 24) was revised by the poet, or one of his disciples some two decades later to reflect the new situation when the fate of the Jewish people had been "handed over to Edom and Ishmael" (p. 83, line 4). See Edelmann's comment in Oriens christianus, 3d ser. VII, 28 n. 1.

50. The first and the last strophes of Qalir's Ţal ten, a rhymed poem of twenty-four verses written in an inverted alphabetic acrostic are here cited from Israel Zangwill's translation (with a minor variation in the last verse) in J. Davis and N. Adler's Mahazor (Service of the Synagogue), p. 148. This poem is a part of a multipartite qerobah to the beginning of the second benediction. As a counterpart thereto Qalir composed also the aforementioned qerobah for the prayer for rain during the Feast of Tabernacles. See the text published by Elbogen in Kohut Mem. Vol., pp. 162 ff. Here, too, petitions for a change in weather, such as "Depart in peace, O dew, and arrive in peace, O rain!" alternated with nationalistic prayers for the redemption of the people through the rain of God's grace.

51. Zulay's Zur Liturgie der babylonischen Juden, pp. 19 ff.; J. Marcus's ed. of Qalir's poem in Horeb, I, 163 f. Most of the poems, related to death and resurrection, published by G. Dawidowicz in his Liturgische Dichtungen der Juden (Nos. i-iv, vi, xii), were clearly intended for public recitation in the synagogue, although some also lent themselves to reading during burial services. One (No. iii), written in an alphabetic acrostic and provided with a rhyme for every two verses, briefly summarized the laws governing mourning for the dead. It gives the impression of a brief versified manual for the use of mourners. Also intended for private rather than synagogue use were the various qerobot recited in connection with blessings after meals. Several such have been published in A. M. Habermann's "Poetic Blessings after Meals" (Hebrew), SRIHP, V, 45–105 (includes such blessings at weddings, circumcisions, and houses of mourners). On the other hand, a poem on the circumcision ceremony, such as was published by A. Scheiber (in his Hebrew essay on "Everyday Qerobot from the Kaufmann Collection," Tarbiz, XXII, 168), was apparently intended for recitation at the morning services of the synagogue to which the infant's family belonged. See also, more generally, L. Zunz's Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters, 2d ed., pp. 171 ff.

52. Ever since 1892, when Harkavy published the fragment of Saadiah's Egron mentioning the names of Pinhas and Joshua (Zikhron, V, 50 f.), scholars have endeavored to find out more about these writers and their works. The quest has thus far proved unrewarding. The few poems bearing the acrostic or a heading containing either of these rather common names may, or may not, have been written by our authors. See, e.g., Davidson's Ginze Schechter, III, 307 f.; M. Zulay's data in Schocken Jub. Vol., pp. 84 ff. (the prince Joshua); Habermann, Be-Ron yahad, pp. 15 f. (a beautiful poem beginning Arba'ah ra'u [Four Have Seen] and describing the celestial visions of Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; Joshua's authorship is conjectured from the proximity of other poems attributed to him); Marcus's Ginze shirah, p. 79 (with the characteristic acrostic, Pinhas, written with the mater lectionis, yod); Dawidowicz's Liturgische Dichtungen, No. iv, pp. 4 f. (Hebrew, lines 25–27 have the same acrostic), 19 ff. (German); A. Scheiber's ed. of Pinhas' Qedeshta
cited supra, n. 39; and especially Zulay's succinct analysis in SRIHP, V, 121 ff. (listing 38 known poems by Pinhas ben Jacob ha-Kohen), 155 ff. (mentioning 9 poems by Joshua ha-Kohen); his "Palestine and Pilgrimages Thereto in R. Pinhas's Liturgical Poems" (Hebrew). Jerusalem (quarterly), IV, 51–81; his "Original and Imitation in the Piyut" (Hebrew), Sinai, XIII, Nos. 147–48, pp. 92–52; and M. Wallenstein's felicitous reconstruction of "A Piyut by Samuel the Third" (Hebrew), Melilah, V, 149–62. Of interest also is "A Piyut from the Cairo Genizah," analyzed by Wallenstein in the Journal of the Manchester University, XXV, 20–24; and supra, n. 42.

Of course, there also were later poets named Joshua, and such an acrostic, particularly on a Yoser, leaves the question of the date wide open. Among the several poets named Solomon are the eleventh-century Palestinian gaon, Solomon ben Yehudah, who combined halakhic learning with extensive poetic creativity, and Sulaiman al-Sanjari whose numerous extant poems were prepared for publication by Zulay. See the latter's observations in Schocken Jub. Vol., pp. 92 ff., 100 f., 116 f. Both of these poets, however, really belong to the later stage of Hebrew poetry to be generally discussed in the next chapter. The fact that original poems of great renown were often used by later poets as a vehicle for the expression of similar sentiments in a closely related form is well illustrated (on the basis of three poems on the theme of Anshe emunah [or Amanah, Men of Faith] included in Saadiah's Siddur, pp. 290, 309, 338 f.) by A. Mirski in his Hebrew essays "On Parallel Poems," Tarbiz, XXI, 47–52; and "Parallel Creation in the Old Poetry," Ha-Kinnus ha-'olami, I, 207–73. At times even the genre of the poem was changed by the imitator. Two qerobot by Yannai were effectively transformed into yoserot by Solomon-Sulaimana or Yehudah ben Benjamin. See Zulay's analysis in Lûw Mem. Vol., pp. 148 f. On the other hand, we must bear in mind that a name found in an acrostic does not necessarily refer to the author. We shall see that such poets as Saadiah and Hai preferred to designate by the acrostic not their own name but that of the person, especially the reader, for whom the poem was written.

53. Saadiah's Siddur, p. 251. An interesting example of such Palestinian importation is given by M. Zulay in "Eine Hanukkah-Qeroba von Pinchas ha-Kohen," SRIHP, I, 159 ff. This Palestinian poem, intended for use during the Hanukkah services, is extant in a Palestinian MS provided with a few Tiberian vowels and clearly referring to 'Amidah benedictions in their Palestinian recension. At the same time a Babylonian MS, though supplying some Babylonian vocalization, adheres to that form of the benedictions and thus clearly betrays its indebtedness to the Palestinian prototype. The same holds largely true also for the Babylonian MS used as a basis for the edition of the Liturgische Dichtungen by Dawidowicz; and the "Fragmentos de Piyutim de Yannay en vocalización babilonica," ed. and interpreted by A. Diz Macho and S. Spiegel in Sefarad, XV, 287–340. Although Dawidowicz's collection of poems, largely of funereal content, apparently served a special purpose in a Babylonian community (there is no full Palestinian counterpart to it), the poems themselves seem to have been composed for the most part by such Palestinians, as Pinhas. Dawidowicz may be right that not only the fourth poem, provided with Pinhas' characteristic acrostic, but also the first poem, not so identified, stemmed from that author, who had apparently lived in the vicinity of Tiberias. See Dawidowicz, pp. 7 ff., 17 f. (German), 1 ff. (Hebrew). On the other hand, only a few of the extant early poems can definitely be traced back to Babylonian authors. The fact that one or another poem may relate to a weekly lesson according to the annual cycle current
in Babylonia need not be conclusive proof that it was originally composed there. We know that there were congregations of the Babylonian rite in both Palestine and Egypt, and that even those that followed the Palestinian ritual gradually shifted to annual recitation, at least in private worship, while the reader continued to recite the briefier triennial lessons in congregational services. See Lewin’s *Otzar ha-gaonim*, I, Part 1, p. 22. The fact, moreover, that most of these poems were found in the Cairo Genizah, and that hence they were at one time brought to or copied in Egypt, adds to the improbability of their purely Babylonian provenance. Only when the pertinent manuscript is also distinguished by the Babylonian punctuation, as in the case of the three *gerobahs* on the weekly lessons beginning with Numbers 25:10, 30:2, and 53:1 published by Zulay in his *Zur Liturgie*, pp. 2 ff., 27 ff., 39 ff., can we claim for it likely Babylonian origin. That even such punctuation is inconclusive may be seen from the Yannai fragments, published and analyzed by A. Diez Macho and S. Spiegel in *Sefarad*, XV, 287 ff.

54. Eleazar of Worms in his unpublished commentary on the prayer book, cited by Joseph Solomon Delmedigo in his *Masref le-hokhmah* (Refinement of Wisdom, a defense of Kabbalah), Odessa, 1865 ed., pp. 42 ff.; R. Nahshon’s, Amram’s, and Šemah’s responsa quoted by J. N. Epstein in “Sur les ‘Chapitres’ de Ben Baboi,” *REJ*, LXXV, 184; also in Lewin’s *Otzar ha-gaonim*, I, Part 1, p. 70; Yehudah bar Barzillai’s *Sefer ha-Ittim*, p. 252. In his *Ginze Schechter*, II, 509 f., Ginzberg argues that the sharp geonic responsion could not have been written by Nahshon, head of the pro-Palestinian academy of Sura which was relatively friendly to the *piyyut*, and suggests either Nehemiah or Nathan of Pumbedita as the real author. Ginzberg’s distinction between the two academies is too sharpened drawn, however. On the one hand, he himself had published the violent attack on the *piyyut* by Pirqei ben Baboi, who constantly invoked the testimony of Yehudai Gaon of Sura. On the other hand, next to the “foreigner” Saadiah of that academy, it was the native Babylonian Hai of Pumbedita who composed much liturgical poetry himself. It seems that the attitude at either academy was not fully crystallized, but that considerable leeway was left to personal idiosyncrasies. See also A. A. Wollf’s ‘*Ateret shalom ve-emet. Die Stimmen der ältesten glaubwürdigsten Rabbiner über die Pijutim*. Although a century old and reflective of the then raging controversy over the use of *piyyutim*, this vast array of opposing voices shows the intensity of the *piyyuts*’ early upsurge and the irresistible pressure of its popular backing against the wishes of an influential leadership.

55. Maimonides’ *Resp.*, Nos. 32, 360, 370; his *Guide*, 159, in Friedländer’s translation, p. 86; Abraham Maimuni’s *Kifayat al-‘abadin*, Sections xxiv–xxv, ed. by S. Eppenstein in *Festschrift Israel Lewy*, Hebrew section, p. 49; and his *Resp.*, pp. 192 ff. No. 87. Despite D. Z. Baneth’s weighty objection, we may assume that Abraham referred here to the beginnings of his official tenure as *nagid* of Egyptian Jewry. See also Maimonides’ *Commentary* on M. Abot 1.16, ed. by E. Baneth in *Hildesheimer Jub. Vol.*, Hebrew section, pp. 72 ff.; and *infra*, n. 81. Needless to say, so far as the masses were concerned the legal arguments carried greater weight than such philosophical compunctions. Maimonides himself had to admit that at times “the populace did not want to do without” the *piyyutim*. He and the later medieval rabbis, moreover, had to contend with what had in the meantime become a hallowed tradition. See the sources cited by Jacob ben Asher in *Ṭur*, O.Ḥ., lxvii; and
Karo's comments thereon. Incidentally, Karo also records in this connection the medieval misreading qerobes, in lieu of qerobah, and explains it by its folk etymology as but an abbreviation of Ps. 118:15.

56. Simḥah's Mahzor Vitry, pp. 445 f., and Appendix, pp. 59 No. 101, 84. See also I. Jeiteles, "Die Bedeutung der Pijutim als halachische Quellen," JILG, XIX, 293-306 (listing some forty pertinent halakhic quotations from the pīyyūt, mainly by the Tosafists); S. Lieberman's essay mentioned supra, n. 43. Medieval folklore explained the disappearance of Yannai's poems from the accepted liturgy in its own anecdotal way. According to Ephraim of Bonn, the Lombardian communities refused to recite one of Yannai's poems, "because they say that he was jealous of his pupil, Eleazar [Qalir], placed a scorpion in the latter's shoe and killed him. May God forgive all those who spread this rumor if it is untrue." See Rapoport's additions to the biography of Qalir in his Toledo, pp. 177 f.

57. Moses ibn Ezra's K. al-Muḥadharah, viii middle (Şirat Yisrael, pp. 147 f.; doubtless aimed at the older pāyyeṭanim, as well as at more recent poets); Abraham ibn Ezra's Commentary on Eccles. 5:1. In his Safah berurah (fol. 142b), the latter objected especially to the pāyyeṭanim's use of "difficult words having no biblical origin." To an enlightened Spanish student of Hebrew, exclusively relying on the few monuments of the ancient language accessible to him, the vocabulary of Yannai and Qalir appeared very abstruse, indeed. Many unusual words and forms found in the pīyyūṭim are listed by Zunz in Die synagogale Poesie, pp. 372 ff.; and Die Ritus, pp. 234 ff. Another list was culled by I. Davidson from the poems published by him in Ginze Schechter, III, 325 ff. See also A. Stutschinsky's dissertation, Elasar Kalir und die Neubildungen des Verbums in seinen Pijutim (the appended two lists of Qalir's poems and verbs, still unpublished, can be consulted in typescript in the Zurich Zentralbibliothek). No systematic attempt, however, has thus far been made to analyze in detail the peculiarities of the pāyyeṭanic idiom and its position within the general evolution of the Hebrew language. An important preliminary step in that direction, namely the publication of a comprehensive dictionary of the pīyyūṭim, was undertaken several years ago by Isaac Kanaani. But only a brief sample thereof, entitled Millon qonqordănsiōni li-lešon ha-piyyūṭim (A Concordance Dictionary to the Language of the Liturgical Poetry), has appeared in print.

Curiously, despite this fairly general contempt of the Spanish for the pīyyūt's linguistic abuses, the great Spanish poets themselves were deeply indebted to it. See Kanaani's study of "The Linguistic Influence of the Older Pāyyeṭanim on the Spanish Poets" (Hebrew), Leshonenu, X, 173-82 (incomplete). See also supra, Chap. XXX, nn. 66-67. Older MSS of the pīyyūṭim can also be used to good advantage for textual criticism of the Bible. In "The Pīyyūṭ, with Special Reference to the Textual Study of the Old Testament," BJRL, XXXIV, 469-76, M. Wallenstein has furnished several examples in which these liturgical poems differ from the masoretic text and, in part, agree with either the Dead Sea Scrolls or some ancient versions. To be sure, the ambitious parallel undertaking to cull all variants in the scriptural text from the extant medieval rabbinic sources, begun some half a century ago by V. Aptowitzter in Das Schriftwort in der rabbinischen Literatur, has never been completed by him, nor by anyone else. The comparatively small use to which Apto-witzer's findings have since been put by biblical scholars is likewise discouraging. In the case of medieval poetry, on the other hand, we must discount the effects of
poetic license even in biblical quotations. If rabbinic authors often cited biblical verses from memory, this is doubly true of poets quoting biblical phrases during the cantorial improvisations. Yet, in view of the present availability, at the Research Institute in Jerusalem, of most pertinent manuscript materials from the Western libraries, a concerted effort to analyze the biblical texts quoted therein would contribute significantly to our knowledge of the recorded variants, as well as help elucidate certain phases in the development of the Masorah during the crucial Byantine and early Muslim eras. Reciprocally, it would shed some new light on the meaning of many an obscure passage in that liturgical poetry.

58. Saadia’s Siddur, pp. 110 f., 251, 289; Maimonides’ letter to Jonathan ben David ha-Kohen in his Resp., pp. lviii ff.; and his statements mentioned supra, n. 55; and infra, n. 81; and Chap. XXXII, n. 94. See also his quotation from a poem in his well-known letter to Samuel ibn Tibbon in Qobes, ed. by Lichtenberg, II, 27b; and W. Bacher’s “Hebräische Verse von Maimuni,” MGWJ, LIII, 581-88. We must bear in mind, however that only one of the three liturgical poems often ascribed to Maimonides has an acrostic Moshe berabbi Maimon, and that even here the spelling Maimon without the usual vav raises grave doubts as to its genuineness. See A. I. Schechter’s Lectures, p. 30. See also H. Schirmann’s “Maimonides and Hebrew Poetry” (Hebrew), Mo‘znayim, III, 435-36 (also quoting additional bibliography). “The Commentary on the Petition for Rain by Eleazar ben Ha-Qalir Attributed to Rashi” was published from a Vatican MS by A. M. Habermann in a Hebrew essay in Tarbiz, VII, 186-216. Its provenance from the school of Rashi and especially Eliezer bar Nathan is strongly defended by A. Mirski in “The Commentary on the Geshem Poems Attributed to Rashi” (Hebrew), KS, XXIX, 262-69. Sometimes purely aesthetic considerations decided the issue. On one occasion Saadia apologized for including, contrary to his reiterated intention, a lengthy poem for the ‘Abodah of the Day of Atonement by saying, “Were it not for its extraordinary beauty I should not have reproduced this piyyut” (p. 289).

59. David ben Joseph Abudarham, Sefer Abudarham, Warsaw, 1877 ed., p. 59a (this passage is quoted with approval two centuries later by Joseph Karo in his Commentary on Ṭur, O.H., 2828 end); Saadia’s Siddur, pp. 10 f. Abudarham’s counting of the words of the ‘Amidah evidently continued the practice of the ancient scribes who thus fortified the reliable transmission of biblical texts. See supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 4. The German kabbalists, however, turned such figures to mystic uses. See Jacob ben Asher’s report, in his brother Yehiel’s name, in Ṭur, loc. cit.; and, more generally, G. Scholem’s Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp. 99 ff. See also infra, Chap. XXXIII.

60. T. Shabbat xiii, 4, p. 128; b. 115b; Zedekiah ‘Anav’s Shibbole ha-leqet, p. 12 No. 12. In his Commentary on M. Menahot iv, 1, Maimonides explained the absence of liturgical hand books by the complete familiarity of both public and “messengers” with all matters relating to prayers. This may be true with respect to the main prayers, which the congregations memorized through daily repetition, but certainly could not apply to the more extensive recitations on holidays. A special preliminary introduction on the part of the congregational leader seems to have been necessary to enlighten the uninformed members even about the texts of the morning blessings preceding the Shema’. This was the task of a rather nondescript functionary,
called in the talmudic sources the pores 'al Shema', according to Z. Karl's interpretation of this term in his Meliqarim, p. 41. Cf., however, the different meanings suggested by various medieval and modern scholars and analyzed by L. Finkelstein in "The Meaning of the Word Paras in the Expressions Pores 'al Shema,'" JQR, XXXII, 389 ff.

61. Hai's responsum cited by Abraham ben David in his Temim de'im, cxix, fol. 193; Ibn Gayyat's Sha'are simhah, ed. by I. B. (D.) Bamberger, I, 29ab; also cited by Asher ben Yehiel in his Halakhot (Halakhic Commentary on the Talmud) on R.H. iv.14. In his Milhamot Adonai (Book of the Wars of the Lord; a defense of Alfas), on R.H. end, Nahmanides merely denied the universal obligation to recite nine benedictions, although he concluded sharply that "anyone who doubts this negation, undermines the chain of tradition." See also Sha'are teshubah, No. 66; and A. I. Schechter's Studies, pp. 46 ff. Although not specifically referring to the "house of our teacher in Babylonia," Nahmanides very likely had in mind Rab's old synagogue which had been rebuilt by R. Ashi according to Sherira's Iggeret, ed. by Lewin, p. 90. See A. Marx's "Untersuchungen zum Siddur des Gaon R. Amram," JJLG, V, 347 f. The other explanations of that geonic phrase here mentioned have little to commend them. See also supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 141; and infra, n. 84.

62. T. Berakhot vii.18, p. 16; j. ix.2, 13b; b. 60b; Menaḥot 43b. See the text cited by S. Schechter in "A Version of the Qaddish," Gedenkbuch Kaufmann, Hebrew section, p. 53; supra, n. 4; and Vols. I, pp. 278 ff., 414 n. 36; II, pp. 242, 272, 282, 288. On the highly probable connection between Paul's exclamation (Gal. 5:28) and the Jewish morning benediction, see D. Kaufmann's suggestive note, "Das Alter der drei Benedictionen von Israel, von Freien und vom Mann," MGWJ, XXXVII, 14–18; and, on the latter's Near Eastern background, J. Darmesteter's Une Prière juddéo-persane with J. M. Mitchell's comments thereon in "Une Prière judéo-persane," The Academy, XLII, 16–17, pointing out similar utterances attributed to Thales and Plato.

63. M. Abot 11.6; Amram's Seder, v, ed. by Frumkin, I, 85; ed. by Hedegard, I, 7 (Hebrew), 18 f. (English); Saadiah's Siddur, p. 89. See Simḥah bar Samuel's Mahzor Vitry, p. 5. An informant of Abraham Maimonides found an old text of the Talmud which required the recitation of the three morning benedictions only if the worshiper encountered a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. According to this version, these three blessings were to be recited only when an occasion arose, as was the case with most other benedictions. This version allegedly was also reproduced in a MS of Amram's Seder. See Moses ben Maimon's Qobes teshubot, I, fol. 52bc; and Abraham's Resp., pp. 120 ff. No. 83. None of our texts of Talmud or Seder, however, mention this qualification.

64. Menaḥot 43b. Noting the remarkable initiative taken by the Spanish communities—incidentally, western Europe was to remain, as we shall see, the main center of liturgical codification in the subsequent centuries—Marx tried to explain it by the absence of well-rooted liturgical traditions in the younger western communities and the ensuing greater need of an authoritative prayer book (JJLG, V, 342). This is less likely, as Spain by that time had had a considerable number of Jewish settlements for at least half a millennium, which, despite Visigothic perse-
cutions, must have maintained a measure of continuity, particularly in their divine services. We have just seen how tenaciously Ibn Gayyat and some of his successors clung to such an old observance with respect to the Musaf 'Amidah of the New Year's day. From an interesting, though unfortunately undated, geonic responsum we learn that, some sixty-five years previously, Spanish immigrants had brought with them to Ifriqiya a special prayer for the Day of Atonement. They were allowed to recite it undisturbed in the local synagogue for two generations before some rigid conformists endeavored to stop that practice. The unnamed gaon, probably head of the more tolerant academy of Sura, decided the controversy in favor of the Spaniards. See S. Assaf's ed. of Teshubot ha-geonim, 1942, pp. 47, 49 f. On the contrary, it was precisely the persistence of local customs which made so thoroughly bewildering the impact of the talmudic writings and their geonic interpretations when they first began to penetrate in written form the western provinces of the Caliphate. Under the guidance of talmudically trained rabbis, some of them students of the Eastern academies, the talmudic-geonic patterns before long displaced many, but not all, of the local rituals. In the liturgical domain, in particular, the older local customs often reasserted themselves by conscious or unconscious alterations of and interpolations in Eastern liturgical works. See also supra, n. 14.

The situation was again different in Khazaria, whose converted group required novel instruction in every phase of Judaism. In his communication to Hisdai, Khagan Joseph rightly reported that his ancestor had "brought Jewish sages from all places who explained to him the Torah and arranged [sidderu] for him the commandments." A similar emphasis on personnel, rather than literature, is reflected in Yehudah bar Barzillai's narrative in his Sefer ha-'Ittim. See both texts in P. Kokovtsov's Evreyisko-khazarskaya perepiska, pp. 30, 128 (Hebrew), 97, 131 (Russian).

65. Naṭronai's responsum in Ginzberg, Geonica, II, 109 f., 115 ff.; and Lewin, Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, pp. 125 ff. Amram opens his prayer book with a slightly different recension of that responsum while still another version is given in Eliyzer bar Joel ha-Levi's Sefer Rabiah, ed. by V. Aptowitz, I, 140 f. Aptowitz has briefly examined all three versions in his detailed comments on Ginzberg's Geonica, Vol. II, in MGWJ, LV, 668. See also Hedegard's remarks in his notes on Amram's Seder, pp. 5 f. The literary antecedents of Naṭronai's liturgical composition are still very obscure. A century before Naṭronai, Yehudai Gaon seems to refer to some recent works resembling prayer books (see Ginzberg's Geonica, I, 119 ff.). Kohen Zedek of Pumbedita (ca. 843) is said to have "ordered" a prayer in the Passover Haggadah (Ibn Gayyat's Sha'are Simḥah, ed. by Bamberger, II, 100b). This may have been done in the form of a responsum to an inquiry, as in the case of Naṭronai's and Amram's later compositions, and hence the difference between sidder (ordered) and shadar (sent) is not necessarily so serious as is assumed by Marx in JLG, V, 343 f. However, too little is known about these early works to justify their classification as "prayer books" anticipating those by Amram and Saadiah.

66. See the fragments of 'Anan's Book of Commandment in Harkavy's Zikhron, VIII; Schechter's Documents, II; and Mann's essay in the Journal of Jewish Lore, I, 348 ff. See also supra, nn. 1, 35; and Chap. XXVI, nn. 10, 47. With his main emphasis on as close emulation of the Temple ritual in Jerusalem as possible, and the ensuing stress on recitation of pertinent lessons from Pentateuch and Psalms, 'Anan did not require many additional prayers. He merely had to substitute some benedic
tions for those current among the Rabbannites to have a fairly adequate ritual for his synagogue. That the new blessings betrayed the heresiarch's profound indebtedness to the language and spirit of the traditional Rabbanite prayers is no more surprising than his constant use of the talmudic idiom and technical terms for his legalistic arguments. Before long, however, the rising opposition among the Karaites themselves, led by Daniel al-Qumisi, to the treatment of the synagogue as a direct substitute for the ancient Temple (see supra, Chap. XXVI, n. 47), stimulated a new liturgical creativity among the later generations of these sectarianists, and ultimately it resulted in the emergence of regular Karaite prayer books. By that time, however, Rabbanite liturgy had been so fully developed, and its main features, both legal and liturgical, so well summarized in handy manuals, that the Karaite authors, rather than setting the pace, clearly showed their indebtedness to these Rabbanite prototypes.

67. See Frumkin's and Hedegard's introductions to their editions; Elbogen, Der jüdische Gottesdienst, pp. 333 ff.; and especially Marx's "Untersuchungen" in JILG, V; Ginzeberg's observations in Geonica, I, 103 ff.; his analysis of "Saadia's Siddur," JQR, XXXIII, 315-63 (with constant reference to Amram's earlier compilation; incomplete); J. N. Epstein's careful reexamination of the "Seder R. Amram, Its Redaction and Redactors" (Hebrew), Ṣiyunim (J. N. Simhan Mem. Vol.), pp. 122-41; and Y. Zimmels's observations in Fishman's Rav Saadya Gaon, pp. 552 ff. The term seder, probably used already by Amram's correspondents, harked back to talmudic usage. See S. Krauss's "Zur Literature der Siddurim," Sancedo-Bläuter, II, 1 f. It seems never to have been used by Saadia who gave his compilation the nontechnical Arabic title K. Jawami' as-ṣalawat w'at-tasabil (Collection of Prayers and Hymns) or, according to a later book list, the somewhat more descriptive designation K. as-ṣalawat w'ash-sharaya (Book of Prayers and Laws). Even the later gaon and his correspondents, who in a responsa published by Ginzberg (Ginze Schechter, II, 52, 56) refer to siddurin, need not have had Amram's or Saadia's works in mind. The inquiry speaks, in fact, of a siddur misvot (order of commandments), a more appropriate designation for a halakhic code or monograph than for a prayer book. Moreover, none of the manuscripts of Amram's Seder contains any discussion relating to the crux of the inquiry, namely, the separation of hallah from dough (see also Ginzeberg's Geonica, I, 145 n. 2), while Saadia discourses briefly on the matter (in his Siddur, pp. 101 f.) but has nothing to say on the subject of such separation being principally the obligation of female bakers. This was the burden of the argument which the questioners had "found" in the geonic "order of commandments." In short, there is no evidence that either seder or siddur had yet become technical liturgical terms in the geonic age.

68. In his essay in Ṣiyunim, pp. 122 ff., J. N. Epstein has made a strong case for attributing the halakhic decisions in the prayer book to Ṣemah, rather than to Amram himself. Only so may we understand why those decisions which happen to be cited in the subsequent literature, are as a rule quoted in Ṣemah's name. Ginzeberg's criticisms of this view (in JQR, XXXIII, 522 ff.) are on the whole well taken. It would, indeed, be astonishing if, acting at variance with prevalent custom, Amram had specifically mentioned his vice-chairman as co-author of the responsa. His extreme generosity in quoting no less than thirty times his predecessor Naṭronai, whom he had succeeded after a bitter fight (see Sherira's Iggeret,
ed. by Lewin, p. 115), is likewise suspect. Ginzberg’s own hypothesis is, however, beset with equal difficulties. He assumes that Amram sent to Spain only a compilation of prayers annotated with a few brief quotations from the Babylonian Talmud. Afterward, Ṣemah provided the copy left in the academy archives with extensive halakhic comments, adding some verbatim quotations from geonic (including Naṭronai’s) responsa. This assumption presupposes, however, the circulation of two entirely independent versions in the East and the West, for which there is absolutely no evidence. Had Ṣemah’s more elaborate work been circulated at the seat of the academy, it certainly would not have escaped Saadiah’s, Sherira’s, and Hai’s attention in the following century (see Epstein’s quotations, p. 131; and infra, nn. 70, 73). In fact, Ṣemah was quoted by Iberian scholars (the Spanish redactor of Ḥalakhot gedolot, Samuel ibn Nagrela, and Isaac ibn Gayyat) much more frequently than he was by those in the East.

We may perhaps come closer to the resolution of these difficulties if we note that practically all such quotations of Ṣemah’s views, as well as the direct references in the book to Amram, stem from the second part of Amram’s responsum dealing with the holiday rituals (in Frumkin’s ed., Vol. II). It has long been noted that this section was subjected to much greater alteration and amplification than the first part dealing with weekday services. See Marx’s observations in JJLG, V, 331 ff.; and his note on Krauss’s article in Soncino-Blatter, II, 29. It is not impossible, therefore, that this section indeed owed its origin principally to Ṣemah, rather than to Amram. The former seems to have combined the office of vice-chairman of the academy with that of the “judge of the court” of the exilarch (dayyana de-bABA). Perhaps for this reason he was singled out for specific mention by Amram at the beginning of his reply (there is complete agreement on this score among all manuscripts), as he was in Amram’s responsum to Barcelona, published in Teshubot ha-Geonim, Lyck ed., No. 56, and confirmed by the Cambridge MS which is cited by J. Mann in “The Responsa of the Babylonian Geonim as a Source of Jewish History,” JQR, XI, 446 n. 9. An intimation of such authorship may indeed have been given at the beginning of the second section, although it is missing from our late medieval manuscripts, which were more likely to omit here such a legally “irrelevant” personal reference than to insert one at the beginning of the whole work. Later authorities quoting some decisions from this section, therefore, rightly attributed them to Ṣemah. One might even suggest that the Spanish inquiry had been addressed to Sura during the last years of Naṭronai’s administration, as a follow-up of the earlier question concerning the one hundred benedictions. In his reply, therefore, Naṭronai’s successor, Amram, started with a copy of the former’s responsum and mentioned the cooperation of Ṣemah, who was doubtless known to the Spanish correspondents as Naṭronai’s intimate collaborator.

69. The morning selections from Numbers 28, M. Zebahim v, and the introduction to Sifra; Amram’s Seder, viii, ed. by Frumkin, I, 109; ed. by Heddegard, I, 10 (Hebrew), I, 24 f. (English); Ginzberg’s Geonica, I, 124. The insertion, “in Spain,” although attested by all manuscripts, evidently was but a local scribe’s gratuitous addition or a replacement for Amram’s reference to the usage “in Babylonia.” The contrast between the relative faithfulness in the transmission of the halakhic comments, with the anarchical diversity of the liturgical texts, likewise militates against Ginzberg’s aforementioned theory. Had Amram really
sent to Spain a complete set of liturgical texts fully spelled out, the local scribes would hardly have dared to alter them so completely and at such variance with one another. But if, as we assume, the geonic responsum contained chiefly halakhic observations and, for the most part, alluded to prayers only by some identifying watchwords, the copyists may indeed have felt free to amplify these hints from their own store of knowledge.

70. See Hai’s responsum quoted in Ibn Gayyat’s Sha’are simḥah, I, 65a. See also Sha’are teshubah, No. 67. First published by Judah Rosenberg, Saadia’s poem on the 613 commandments is reprinted in his Siddur, pp. 157 ff., 179 ff. In his introductory summary, Saadia observed that such an enumeration of the commandments had become customary during the Musaf services of the Festival of Weeks, but that the existing texts were not only verbose and repetitious, but also failed to present the correct number. On closer examination he had come to the conclusion that this total included 200 positive and 277 negative commandments, in addition to 71 prohibitions with a death penalty and 65 precepts applying only to special occasions. Neither this general classification, nor Saadia’s detailed enumeration of individual commandments, ever enjoyed wide acceptance, and the subject continued to be debated for several more centuries. See supra, Vol. II, p. 421 n. 51; and Chap. XXVII, n. 105.

71. Saadia’s Siddur, p. 11; and supra, n. 59. The introduction’s entire tenor clearly indicates that Saadia wrote his work on his own initiative. Consequently, his texts and legal decisions did not have to conform to the practice of any particular congregation. His native Egypt itself hardly possessed a uniform ritual. Although generally under predominantly Palestinian influence, it also embraced communities of the Babylonian rite and undoubtedly cherished certain peculiar observances of its own. None of the customs mentioned in Saadia’s work, whether sharply rejected by him (pp. 21 f., 100) or tolerated with a nod (pp. 34 f., 40, 109 ff.), can be clearly documented as being of Egyptian provenance. Some are evidently of Palestinian origin; others grew up in Babylonia. Cf. also I. Elbogen’s brief observations in his “Saadia’s Siddur,” Saadia Annuv. Vol., pp. 256 f.; S. Bernstein’s equally succinct analysis of “Saadia’s Siddur” (Hebrew), Bitzaron, III, No. 54, pp. 845–56; and M. Zulay’s essay cited infra, n. 77. The argument frequently adduced from certain similarities between Saadia’s and Maimonides’ liturgical regulations, which are allegedly best explained by their common derivation from the Egyptian ritual (see A. I. Schechter’s Lectures, pp. 25 f.), overlook (1) the literary influence of Saadia’s work on the sages of Fustat; (2) the equally serious differences between them; and, most significantly, (3) the fact that the Maimonidean Code itself hardly reflected Egyptian realities. See also S. Assaf’s remarks in his introduction to Saadia’s Siddur, pp. 24 ff.

72. In his comments on Saadia’s text (pp. 1 f.), S. Assaf suggested a reconstruction of the missing reasons. Of course, without support of documentary evidence, all such restorations must needs remain conjectural. Nor must one overlook the difference in tone and quality between the three reasons found in our manuscript, all of which have a more or less direct connection with the silent prayer, and some of the other reasons which, though attested from outside sources, have only a superficial and mechanical similarity with the “eighteen” benedictions.
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73. Compare Amram's Seder, lxx ff., ed. by Frumkin, I, 341 ff.; ed. by Hedegard, I, 59 ff. (Hebrew), 159 ff. (English), with Saadiah's Siddur, pp. 102 ff. There is no way of telling whether the two prayers of petition, included in the only extant manuscript of the Siddur (pp. 47 ff.), were part and parcel of the gaon's original composition. Nor do we know when the two other similar compositions published by Habermann (in his "Two Poems by R. Saadiah Gaon," Tarbiz, XIII) were written, and whether they were intended for inclusion in the prayer book. A tone of great despondency permeating the entire second prayer (Siddur, pp. 64 ff.), and the fact that Saadiah himself translated it, and apparently it alone, into Arabic, might suggest that it was the product of the years of Saadiah's exile after his deposition by David ben Zakkai. See my remarks in Saadia Anniv. Vol., pp. 69 f. Of equally uncertain date are the "Twelve Selihot [Penitential Prayers] Attributed to Saadiah" published by M. Zulay in his Hebrew essay in Tarbiz, XXIII, 112-19. Most other parts of the Siddur, on the other hand, seem to have been prepared some time before his appointment to the geonic office in 928. Since we know, however, that Saadiah was in the habit of constantly revising his earlier writings, the present work may indeed be a composite of liturgical pieces and legal observations produced at different times and subsequently inserted into the original text.

74. See the text recovered by N. Wieder and published in his "Fourteen New Genizah-Fragments of Saadya's Siddur" in Rosenthal's Saadya Studies, p. 254; and the manuscripts of Amram's Seder, quoted in the notes of Hedegard's edition, I, 19. See also Saadiah's similar objections to brief insertions in the 'Amidah in his Siddur, pp. 21 f. The scribal notes in Amram's Seder indicate that the "new light" blessing was deleted from the earlier prayer book only out of deference for Saadiah's categorical prohibition. See Ginzer's Geonica, I, 127 f. The fact that this formula is also absent from many medieval rituals, as pointed out by A. I. Schechter (in his Studies, pp. 55 ff.), merely proves that Saadiah's objections, directly or indirectly, also affected the authors of these later prayer books. Schechter himself noticed that the twelfth-century Italian homilist, Menahem ben Solomon, the probable author of the ritualistic Seder hibbur berakah, was familiar with Saadiah's objection and tried to meet it by inserting the additional phrase "And we shall all soon be privileged to enjoy His light." There certainly is no reason for assuming that Amram failed to quote the original formula, since we have Sherira's testimony that "although R. Saadiah, blessed be his memory, had been head of the academy of Sura, they had not accepted his view, and never discontinued reciting 'And the new light' and are still reciting it today" (Lewin's Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, pp. 32 ff.). Evidently, Saadiah was here more Babylonian than the Babylonians themselves. See my remarks in Saadia Anniv. Vol., pp. 47 n. 84, 69; and supra, Chaps. XXIII, n. 25; and XXVII, n. 144.

75. See Lewin's Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, p. 33; III, Part 2, pp. 7 f., 127 f.; VIII Part 1, pp. 26 f.; Saadiah's Siddur, p. 37. If it be true that Hai compiled his prayer book (occasionally mentioned by Zedekiah Anav) for the benefit of some foreign congregations (see Ginzer's Geonica, I, 175), one might see here another instance of the impact of the new talmudic revolution on the long-established rituals in Byzantium or the Crimea. See supra, n. 64. Assaf (Intro. to Saadiah's Siddur, pp. 33 ff.) and Ginzer (JQR, XXXIII, 334 ff.) have assembled considerable data on
the influence of Saadia's prayer book on the subsequent writers. Although neither list claims completeness, it is evident that, unlike Amram's work, Saadia's compilation was known in Western lands chiefly from quotations in later works. Such a great admirer of the gaon as Abraham ibn Ezra evidently knew Saadia's prayers not from the Siddur but from some independent anthology. Isaac Alfasi, well-informed student of geonic letters, often betrayed complete unfamiliarity with the great gaon's liturgical work. Later jurists like R. Jacob Tam knew of the existence of Saadia's Siddur, but extolled only the merits of Amram's compilation. Tam considered only the latter on a par with the tractate Soferim, the major midrashim, or Simon Qayyara's Code as a final authority concerning rituals not mentioned in the Talmud. "We observe many customs," he concluded, "because of their dicta." See his Sefer ha-Yashar (Responsa), ed. by F. Rosenthal, pp. 81 f.; and Assaf's comment in Saadia's Siddur, Intro., p. 37.

76. Among these liturgical works, only that of Solomon ben Nathan of Segelmessa has been known to scholars for some time. It is extant in an Oxford manuscript written in 1202 and briefly mentioned by M. Steinschneider in his Hebrew "Letter to the Editor Senior Sachs" in Keren Chemed, IX., 97 ff. Solomon was familiar with Saadia's prayer book and quoted it expressly eight times. See Assaf's intro. to the latter, pp. 37 f. But, with respect to the earlier North African authorities, Assaf was able to adduce only one express and one oblique testimony by Ibn al-Jasus (ibid., pp. 35 f.). In his numerous exchanges Ibn al-Jasus must occasionally have discussed Saadia's work with his master, Nissim, but we find no direct reference to it in the latter's own published works. See also Assaf's ed. of a "Fragment from a Work by Ibn al-Jasus (or Gasum) on Liturgy" (Hebrew), KS, XXVIII, 101—9. As to the prayer books allegedly written by R. Nissim himself and other contemporary North Africans, see the dubious sources quoted by Krauss in Soncino-Blätter, II, 4 f., 26. For example, the prayer book, attributed to R. Hananel ever since Rapoport, turned out to be a mere misreading of an abbreviation in Mordecai bar Hillel's compendium (R. H. in lieu of R. T., that is, R. Tam). See S. Poznanski's remarks in his essay on "The Men of Kairuwan," Festschrift Harkavy, Hebrew section, p. 196.

77. In some respects Saadia was more successful as a liturgical poet than as the compiler of a prayer book. Not only were many of his prayers recited in various communities, but he created a style of his own which found ready imitators, for example, in Samuel the Third. See esp. the illustrations assembled by M. Zulay in his "R. Saadia Gaon's Poetic School" (Hebrew), Orligion, VI, 142—52; VIII, 197—209; X, 17—29, although this essay is largely devoted to an analysis of Saadia's own works. Since we know very little about most authors of these poems, we may assume that their association with Saadia's "school" consisted largely in spiritual and technical emulation, rather than in physical membership of any kind. Such influence could extend over many generations of poets to Yehudah Halevi and beyond. See the interesting examples adduced by Zulay also in his Hebrew essay on "Source and Imitation in Liturgical Poetry," Sinai, XIII, Nos. 147—48, pp. 37 ff. As in his biblical work, Saadia's liturgical creativity left its greatest imprint among Yemenite Jews, whose numerous liturgical poems of later years show unmistakable traces of the gaon's influence. See the publications listed by Y. Ratzaby in his "Yemenite Liturgical Poetry: a Bibliography" (Hebrew), KS, XXII, 247—61; XXVII, 378—81.
78. See J. Schor’s and S. Albeck’s introductions to their respective editions of Yehudah bar Barzillai’s Sefer ha-Ittim, and Abraham ben Isaac’s Sefer ha-Eshkol; Albeck’s Hebrew essay on the Sefer ha-Ittim, picturesquely entitled “The Lawgivers of Judah” in Festschrift Israel Lewy, Hebrew section, pp. 104-31; and D. Simonsen’s brief remarks “Ueber die Vorlage des Sefer ha-Eshkol,” Freidus Mem. Vol., pp. 291-92. On Ibn al-Jasus’ (al-Gasum’s) prayer book, see Maimonides’ Resp., p. 8o No. 81, which assumes its availability in twelfth-century Baghdad; and supra, n. 76.

79. In “Der Ritus im Mischna Thora,” in Jakob Guttmann et al., Moses ben Maimon, I, 319-31, I. Elbogen correctly pointed out that despite its brevity the Maimonidean summary corresponds fully to neither the Spanish, nor the Babylonian, nor the Palestinian ritual, but that it took over certain parts of each. This conclusion has been borne out by more recent evidence. In fact, even Elbogen’s assumption that the Fuṣṭaṭ jurist-philosopher closely followed in Saadiah’s footsteps has proved to be an overstatement. Certainly, whatever Maimonides remembered of the customs and literature of his Spanish homeland, and whatever he had learned from such teachers as Ibn Megas and, indirectly, Alfasi, was not very propitious for his ready submission to the gaon’s influence. See supra, n. 75.

80. Maimonides’ amazing success and the ensuing growth of liturgical uniformity in the synagogues of the entire Arabic-speaking world has been pointed out by L. Zunz in Die Ritus, pp. 26 ff. While the evidence recovered during the last hundred years has shown that greater local variations had persisted after 1200 C.E. than were known to this founder of the historic investigation of Jewish liturgy, it has basically confirmed his well-considered judgment. Bartenora’s observations are included in his oft-quoted Epistle, reprinted in A. Yaari’s Iggerot Eres Yisrael, pp. 115 ff., 119; and in the English translation by E. N. Adler in Jewish Travellers, pp. 222 ff.

81. Maimonides’ M.T. Qeri’at shema’ I.7; Tefillah vii.9; his Resp., pp. 28 ff. Nos. 51-52; Abraham Maimuni’s Resp., pp. 62 ff. No. 62, 120 ff. No. 83 and the editor’s notes thereon. See also, more generally, A. I. Schechter’s Lectures, pp. 23 ff.; M. S. Geshuri’s “Music and Poetry in Maimonides’ Works and His Time” (Hebrew) in Rabbenu Mosheh ben Maimon, ed. by J. L. Fishman, pp. 288-302; supra, n. 58; and infra, Chap. XXXII, n. 94. Even Moses Maimuni was forced to allow considerable leeway for local and personal variants, in so far as they did not affect the regular sequence of basic prayers. He admitted, for instance, that “everything is according to custom” in regard to the daily recitation of the Song of the Red Sea (Exod. 15), or Ha’azinu (Give Ear; Deut. 32), or both (M.T. Tefillah vii.13). Nor did he seem to object to deviations in the generally accepted benedictions which did not run counter to his dogmatic preconceptions or the overt intentions of the Talmud. That is probably why he refrained from spelling out every inconsequential detail in the brief liturgy which he appended to the second book of his Code. He not only left out numerous “voluntary” prayers, but also failed to supply the full texts of the required recitations, except in so far as they were needed for closer identification or in order to avoid some dogmatic or legalistic pitfalls. For this reason, it appears, the widely held opinion that the present abridgment of the prayers cited in the Maimonidean Code is the work of careless or
paper-saving copyists has no justification in fact. Nor is it borne out by the manuscript tradition. All the manuscripts of the Maimonidean Code, some going back to autograph versions partially extant today, are in fair agreement as to the basic readings, although they vary in numerous minor details. Certainly copyists abbreviating a given text would hardly have hit on precisely the same abridged forms. See also supra, n. 69; and Chap. XXVII, nn. 114 ff.

Of considerable interest also is Maimonides' decision with respect to Karaite worshipers in Rabbanite synagogues or homes. While objecting to the inclusion of such sectarians in the required quorum of ten or three, "because they do not recognize that requirement," he did not object to their participation in Jewish services as such. See his Resp., pp. 14 f. No. 14. Both the inquiry and the tone of the reply indicate that this was not a purely academic question in twelfth-century Egypt. See also supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 16.

82. See S. Buber's extensive introductions to his editions of Rashi's Sefer ha-Orah and (with revisions by J. Freimann) Siddur; S. Hurwitz's intro. to his ed. of Simḥah of Vitry's Maḥzor Vitry; and supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 84. On the other hand, Rashi's Sefer ha-Pardes, perhaps the relatively most authentic record of the master's views, has never been issued in a modern scholarly edition. That by H. L. Ehrenreich is merely a reprint of the first edition (Constantinople, 1707). While better than the intervening Warsaw edition (1870), which, entirely derived from the latter, was distinguished only by many errors and some arbitrary reshuffling of the chapters according to a preconceived scheme, the accuracy of the new edition leaves even more to be desired than does that of the other works. Ehrenreich's introductory comments, too, though rather useful, are far less exhaustive. That is why one may doubly welcome I. S. Elfenbein's plan to edit from a Munich MS, or rather a copy thereof, Rashi's Sefer ha-Sedarim (Book of [Liturgical] Orders). See the first installment published in Horeb, XI, 123-56. While adding little to our substantive knowledge of Rashi's liturgical decisions, this work, together with Elfenbein's extensive notes, adds certain data to the documentation of Rashi's views and modifies them in some details. The same holds true of Rashi's Teshubot (Respanda) which, though covering the entire range of halakhic interests, shed considerable light on liturgical problems as well. Here, too, Elfenbein's extensive introduction and notes, together with some additional notes by L. Ginzberg, help clarify and decide many detailed problems left open in the other works. Rashi's Sefer Issur ve-hetter (Book of Forbidden and Permitted Matters) is analyzed from a Merzbacher MS and compared with MSS of the Sefer ha-Orah and Maḥzor Vitry by S. Buber in his introduction to Rashi's Sefer ha-Orah, pp. 35 ff., 40 ff. See also the more general literature on Rashi and his school's legal and exegetical work mentioned supra, Chaps. XXVII, nn. 54 ff.; XXIX, nn. 56-57.

83. See Rashi's Siddur, ed. by Buber and Freimann, pp. 86 ff., 274 ff., 295 ff.; and the Liqquṭe ha-Pardes (Ritualistic Collectanea), first published in Venice, 1519, and frequently reprinted since. In its present form the latter work seems to be an early thirteenth-century compilation by one Samuel of Bamberg. But Samuel evidently used earlier manuscripts current in his country of the original work from Rashi's school. See I. A. Benjaacob's note in his Ozar ha-sepharim (Thesaurus librorum hebraicorum), pp. 265 ff.; and Buber's introduction to Rashi's Sefer ha-Orah, pp. 94. 141 ff.
84. Jacob Tam's *Sefer ha-Yashar*, ed. by F. Rosenthal, p. 82. This grandson of Rashi here expressly names R. Simhah as the *Mahzor*’s author. There is no question, however, that in its present form the work contains a great many additions from later hands, including materials taken from authorities living long after R. Simhah. The author seems also to have been greatly influenced by R. Shemayah. Rashi’s close relative and confidant, although the evidence hitherto adduced does not suffice to attribute to Shemayah any direct part in the composition of the *Mahzor*. See the theories summarized in V. Aptowitzer’s *Mabo*, pp. 414 f. (suggesting that there were two works by the same title written by Shemayah and Simhah). The title, as well as the author’s interchangeable use of the designation Amram’s *Mahzor* and *Seder* (see *Mahzor Vitry*, pp. 444 f. and other passages listed in Hurwitz’s introduction, pp. 74 f., 79 f.), are likewise noteworthy. Clearly, the later distinction between *Siddur*, principally devoted to weekday and Sabbath prayers, and *Mahzor*, supplying liturgical material for holidays alone, does not apply to our compilation, most of which deals with daily and Sabbath problems, and includes a large commentary on the “Sayings of the Fathers” (pp. 461 ff.). These chapters in the Mishnah used to be recited on Saturday afternoons in Rab’s ancient synagogue in Sura, according to Shalom Gaon’s testimony. See *Sha’are teshubah*, No. 220; and Saadia’s *Siddur*, pp. 122 f. This custom, widely adopted and subjected to manifold regional variations, doubtless inspired our author to his exegetical effort. All this goes far in confirming the impression, gained from other sources, that even at the beginning of the twelfth century prayer books were not yet clearly distinguished as a group from other halakhic works.

85. Ginzberg’s *Geonica*, I, 119 f.; Saadia’s *Siddur*, I, 152 f.; Rashi’s responsum cited in Simhah’s *Mahzor*, p. 358, and in Rashi’s *Teshubot*, ed. by Eileenbein, p. 76 No. 65; and Abudarham, *Sefer Abudarham*, Prague, 1784 ed., fol. 73bc (on *mi-pene hata’enu* in the holiday Musaf). See also my brief remarks in *Rashi Anniv. Vol.*, p. 51. Ginzberg’s objections to this interpretation, and his own explanation that the sole reason for the continued recitation of the ‘*Amidah* by heart sprang from the worshiper’s apprehension lest he drop his prayer book and thus lose his concentration (*JQR*, XXXIII, 916 ff.), are too mechanistic. Certainly the medieval Jews could have introduced lecterns or some other supports for the prayer book, as did their successors after the invention of printing. On the use of ordinary codices even for the reading of required scriptural lessons, see Rashi’s *Teshubot*, pp. 312 f. No. 276.

86. Mordecai ben Abraham Jaffe (Yafeh), *Sefer ha-Lebushim* (Vestments; on Jewish law and ethics), *Lebush ha-tekelelet*, Prague, 1711 ed., fols. 297 f. No. 619; T. Megillah iv.21, p. 227; *Massekhet Soferim* xiv.9, ed. by Higger, p. 269; Nathan the Babylonian’s Report in *MJC*, II, 83; and A. Z. Idelsohn, “The Kol Nidre Tune,” *HUCA*, VIII-IX, 498-509. Nathan’s emphasis on *bakhurim* (young men) seems to indicate the presence of boys’ choirs in some larger synagogues of the tenth century. Such choirs, customary in the later communities, cannot otherwise be documented from early medieval sources. See also *supra*, Chap. XXVII, n. 143.

87. *Testamentum Domini*, cited by J. Mearns in his careful analysis of *The Canticles of the Christian Church*, pp. 7 f.; Pirqei’s diatribe in Ginzberg’s *Ginz Schechter*, II, 552; Samau’al’s *Ifham*, in the excerpt ed. and trans. by Schreiner in
MGWJ, XLII, 218 f. See supra, n. 28. Unfortunately, the available sources enable us to reconstruct neither the origin of the *te'amim*, nor the precise musical sounds which they were to denote. Even the general beginnings of the so-called ekphonic notation, and the question of Jewish or Syro-Byzantine priority in its discovery, are shrouded in almost total darkness. Since the cantillation itself undoubtedly antedated the rise of Christianity, and since such informed medieval authors as Isidore of Seville readily admitted that the “laudation, that is the singing of *halleluyah*, is a Hebrew chant” (*De ecclesiasticis officiis*, 1.15, 1 in PL, LXXXIII, 750), there is no reason to deny some sort of initiative also to the early Jewish Masorites in the invention of symbols to guide students and readers. See supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 8. How such early ekphonic symbols could later be transcribed into the younger Byzantine notation was well illustrated at the hand of a tenth or eleventh-century MS (Sinaiticus 8) by C. Høeg in *La Notation ekphonétique*. See also H. J. W. Tillyard’s twin essays, “The Stages of the Early Byzantine Musical Notation,” BZ, XLV, 29–42; and “The Byzantine Modes in the Twelfth Century,” *Annual* of the British School at Athens, XLVIII, 182–90; and, more generally, the older literature reviewed by R. Aigrain in his “Musicologie byzantine,” *Revue des études grecques*, LIV, 81–121. On the other hand, some two centuries later, the Hebrew copyist of a poem for the Festival of the Rejoicing in the Torah provided his text with neumes developed by the Roman Church. See E. Werner, “The Oldest Sources of Synagogue Chant,” *PAAJR*, XVI, 225–32. Another century passed, and the copyist of a beautifully illuminated Catalan Bible reproduced the contemporary cantillation in Western notation. See B. Szabolcsi’s brief analysis of “A Jewish Musical Document of the Middle Ages,” *Löw Mem. Vol.*, pp. 131–53 (with reference to the fuller description of “Eine spanisch-jüdische Bilderbibel von 1400,” by Z. Amiensowa in *MGWJ*, LXXXI, 193–209). However, even with the aid of these late medieval records it is next to impossible to reconstruct the original sounds which corresponded to the masoretic accents. Only by working backward from modern ritualistic practices in various communities could A. Z. Idelson argue plausibly that the extraordinary resemblance in the sounds uttered by Torah readers from Persia and Bukhara to Morocco and the western Sephardic, as well as Ashkenazic, synagogues presupposes a single ancient or early medieval prototype. See the very interesting “comparative table of accent motives for the intoning of the Pentateuch” in his *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, pp. 44 ff. A systematic attempt to come to grips with the historical evolution of Jewish Bible cantillation, pursued for many years by S. Rosowsky, who used the present-day recitation in synagogues of the Ashkenazic rite (particularly in Lithuania) as a point of departure, has finally resulted in the publication of his volume *The Cantillation of the Bible: the First Books of Moses*. See also his earlier study, “The Music of the Pentateuch: Analytical Theory of Biblical Cantillations,” *Proceedings of the Musical Associations*, LX, 58–66.

88. See Ben Asher’s *Diqduqe ha-te’amim*, fol. 15 ff. No. 15; Petaḥiah of Ratisbon, quoted infra, n. 91; *Manuel de lector*, ed. by J. Denerbourg, p. 75; Aaron ben Jacob of Lunel’s *Oreḥot hayyim* (*The Ways of Life; a customal*), I, fol. 6b No. 26; Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel’s *Sefer ha-Manhig* (*Guide; on customs and rituals*), ed. by J. M. Goldberg, fol. 33b. The latter author gives the recitation of Psalm 91 (called “the song of evil spirits” in *Shebuot* 15b) on Saturday nights a lugubrious meaning, namely that such prolonged chanting extends the period of grace for the
souls of the damned who do not have to return to hell until after the completion of these post-Sabbath services. Jacob ben Asher, on the other hand, following the lead of Midrash Tehillim (on 91:1, ed. by Buber, p. 396), considered this very psalm as a song of blessing, and hence an appropriate initiation for the coming week. See Tur, O.H., 295. See also Amram's Seder, xcv, ed. by Frumkin, I, 393; ed. by Hede gard, I, 75 ff. (Hebrew), 171 (English). Despite numerous questionable and now often obsolete views, W. Wiek's Treatise on the Accentuation of the Three So-Called Poetical Books of the Old Testament (includes the Arabic text of Ibn Ballam's essay on this subject) and Treatise on the Accentuation of the Twenty-One So-Called Prose Books of the Old Testament still offer the most comprehensive data on the origin and meaning of these symbols relating to both pronunciation and intonation. Cf., however, the serious reservations suggested, especially on the basis of manuscripts containing the Babylonian and old Palestinian accents, in P. Kahle's Masoriten des Ostens, pp. 171 ff.; his Masoriten des Westens, I, 24 ff., 52 ff.; A. Spanier's more tangential, and rather overcritical, observations on the musical aspects of Die masoratischen Akzente; and the musicological comments thereon in Høeg's Notation, pp. 139 ff. Kahle has shown that especially the so-called mesharetim, or subsidiary accents, were introduced at a later stage. However, they had been fully developed in the early Middle Ages.

While rightly emphasizing that the primary purpose of the masoretic accentuation was elocutionary rather than musical, H. M. Lazarus pointed out that several early rabbis insisted on the musical rendering not only of the Bible, but also of talmudic lessons. This evidently was but a reaction to the Graeco-Roman schools of rhetoric, which had deprecated the oriental forms of speaking in singsong (Cicero, Quintilian, and others). See Lazarus, "The Rationale of the Tiberian Graphic Accentuation (XXI Books)," Essays Hertz, pp. 271-91. See also, for other angles, B. Heller's "Von tropos und troparion zum Tropp," MGWJ, LXXX, 125-27; E. Werner's "Preliminary Notes for a Comparative Study of Catholic and Jewish Musical Punctuation," HUCA, XV, 335-66; and the large older literature listed in A. Sendrey's Bibliography of Jewish Music, pp. 82 ff. See also E. Werner's forthcoming volume, The Sacred Bridge. The comparative neglect in the intonation of psalms is the more remarkable as the vox psallentium coming from a neighboring synagogue had so greatly disturbed Pope Gregory the Great. See super, Vol. II, p. 282. However, when we study carefully the description of psalmody in early seventh-century churches given by the Pope's contemporary, Isidore of Seville and especially the statement that in the primitive church the singer "made his voice resound by so moderate an inflection, that he was closer to declamation than singing" (De ecclesiasticae officiis, 1.5.2, PL LXXXIII, 742 ff.), we may find a clue for the early, more declamatory recitation of the psalms in the ancient synagogues as well. It may be noted, however, that Abraham ibn Ezra was so certain that individual psalms were sung to different tunes that he explained the meaning of the numerous headings as referring to particular melodies. See his Commentary on Ps. 71:1, 22:1, and other passages, and, more generally, A. Neubauer's data in Studia biblica, II, 35 ff., and passim. But Ibn Ezra's observation, although historically correct, reflected the practice of medieval poets, rather than the traditional synagogue ritual. See also L. Levi, "Sul rapporto tra il canto sinagogale in Italia e le origini del canto liturgico cristiano," Scritti in memoria di Sally Mayer, pp. 139-93; and, for comparative purposes, E. Wellesz's Eastern Elements in Western Chant; and the literature listed supra, Vols. I, pp. 362 ff. n. 22; II, pp. 330 n. 5, 389 n. 34, to
which add H. Hucke, "Die Entwicklung des christlichen Kultgesangs zum Gregorianischen Gesang," Römische Quartalschrift, XLVIII, 147–87; W. Apel's general review of the Gregorian Chant; and U. Bomms bibliographical survey of "Gregorianischer Gesang," Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft, IV, 184–222, esp. pp. 195 ff. Also of considerable importance, of course, is the literature relating to the development of secular music in the Jewish community as well as in the outside world and the theoretical works on music written by Muslim authors, on which consult the general works listed infra, n. 93; and the numerous monographs discussed infra, Chap. XXXII, nn. 96 ff.

89. Rashi on Berakhot 62a; and Idelsohn's Jewish Music, pp. 67 f. The Yemenite precentors seem long to have cultivated the memory of some special signs accompanying the respective tunes. According to the Manuel de lecteur, ed. by J. Derenbourg, grammarians attributed to the biblical accents both special intonations and a variety of gestures with one or more fingers (p. 108). See also Idelsohn's Toledot ha-neginah ha-'ibrit (History of Jewish Music), I, 95 ff.; and, on Saadiah's use of accents in his pamphlets, supra, Chap. XXIII, n. 21.

90. Hai Gaon, cited by both Ibn Gayyat and Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel, in Lewin's Otzar ha-gaonim, VI, Part 2, p. 58 No. 144 (relating to a "messenger" who recited an uncalled-for blessing). One wishes that we had a detailed description of the ancient and early medieval Jewish responsoria. In his brief reference to the Church responses, Isidore of Seville ascribes them to ancient Italian origins (De ecclesiasticis officiis, I, PL, LXXXIII, 744), but he undoubtedly had in mind only the particular exchange between a choir and one, two, or three singers singing in unison. The description of the parts sung by the cantor and the choir's responses during the installation ceremonies of a new exarch in Nathan the Babylonian's Report (MJG, II, 89) gives no indication of the sections recited or sung by the congregation at large. See E. Werner's "Notes on the Attitude of the Early Church Fathers towards Hebrew Psalmody," Review of Religion, VII, 339–52. In "The Origin of the Eight Modes of Music (Octoechos)," HUCA, XXI, 211–55, Werner points out that Saadiah interpreted Psalm 6:1 to mean that Levites used these eight modes in their Temple chants. A medieval p'yye'tan and Petaḥiah likewise referred to those modes which underlie several known synagogue chants. However, Werner admits that material at hand does not allow for a reconstruction of the original octoechos of the synagogue. See also Werner's other studies listed supra, Vol. II, pp. 380 n. 5, 589 n. 34; and B. J. Cohon's brief general characterization of "The Structure of the Synagogue Prayer-Chant," Journal of the American Musicological Society, III, 17–32 (analyzing various modes in four basic scales). On the refrains in the p'yyu'im, see, for example, the aforementioned Qalirian prayer for dew, supra, n. 50.

91. F. Altheim and R. Stiel, "Eine Bekehrungsschrift aus der Synagoge von Dura-Europos," Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte, VII, 193–224; Petaḥiah's Sibbub, xxv, ed. by L. Grünhut, pp. 24 (Hebrew), 32 f. (German), or in the English translation by A. Benisch, p. 47; Soṭah 48a; Berakhot 24a; Ta'anit 16a b; Maimonides' M.T. Tefillah vii.11; Yehudai Gaon in Lewin's Otzar ha-gaonim, V, Part 2, p. 27. In his German note, p. 33 n. 111, Grünhut suggested, in opposition to L. Löw, that even in Baghdad instrumental music was allowed only on the half holidays of the
Feast of Tabernacles, in memory of the ancient water procession, but not on Passover. However, by his failure to stress this distinction Petahiah would have suppressed the most important part of his story. Among the ten extraordinary feats of piety attributed to Rab and recorded by Hai Gaon was also his habit of using his beautiful voice by frequently descending to the pulpit and also by serving as an interpreter for his teacher or for anyone else who needed his services. See Sha'are teshubah, No. 178. Maimonides (loc. cit.) and other rabbis agreed, however, with Amram's aforementioned decision that, where no better "messenger" was available, any boy of thirteen was eligible to conduct services. See supra, n. 24. On the medieval rabbis' general antagonism to instrumental music even for liturgical purposes, and the theories of music expounded by some of them, see infra, Chap. XXXII, nn. 94 ff.

92. Pesiqta r., xxv, ed. by Friedmann, fol. 127a; Immanuel ben Solomon of Rome's Maḥbarot (Maqamas), xv, xxvi.16, xxviii, ed. by A. M. Habermann, pp. 419 ff., 752 ff., 810 f.; Alfasi's Resp., No. 281. See also Midrash Tehillim, xvi.5, ed. by Buber, pp. 128 ff. Gullible cantors sometimes contributed mightily to the spread of superstitious customs. Sharing an old conviction that the public recitation of the Qiddush on a Sabbath eve had beneficial medicinal effects, some cantors began pouring the ceremonial wine on the hands of congregants, who then rubbed it into their eyes. Hai Gaon, however, protested sharply against such magic use, and the practice seems not to have spread. See the data cited in Lewin's Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, p. 97 Nos. 170-71.

93. See Abraham ben Nathan's Sefer ha-Manhig, pp. 23 f.; Simḥah bar Samuel's Mahzor Vitry, p. 388 (giving a purely psychological explanation); Lewin's Otzar ha-gaonim, I, Part 1, pp. 12 ff., 70; Part 3, pp. 3 f.; Saadiah, quoted in Yehudah bar Barzillai's Commentary on Yeṣirah, pp. 34 f.; Sefer Hasidim (Book of the Pious), ed. by Wistinetzki, No. 11, pp. 8 f.; and the data assembled by A. Z. Idelsohn in "The Kol Nidre Tune," HUCA, VIII-IX, 493 ff. The constant lengthening of the services often led to the exhaustion of the precentors, especially since old men were preferred. That is why Hai, for example, relaxed his requirement that the "messenger" also lead the priestly blessing. If a cantor was too tired, the gaon decided, he could be replaced by someone else for this part of the service. See Sha'are teshubah, No. 177. It also became customary to entrust to two different precentors the morning and the Musaf services, the men in charge of the latter service usually being the more highly esteemed officials. In large congregations they subdivided the services further, but this was often done not in order to spare the precentor's efforts, but rather to accommodate a larger number of willing candidates. See also, in general, Zunz, Synagogale Poesie, pp. 113 ff.; Idelsohn, Jewish Music; P. Grdenwitz, The Music in Israel: Its Rise and Growth through 5,000 Years; A. M. Rothmüller, The Music of the Jews: an Historical Appreciation; and H. Harris, Toledot ha-neginah, passim. Although containing little directly Jewish material, such general handbooks as G. Reese's Music in the Middle Ages: With an Introduction on the Music of Ancient Times (includes an extensive bibliography, pp. 425 ff.); and J. Combarieu, Histoire de la musique des origines au début du XXe siècle, Vol. I (to the end of the sixteenth century), are also to be consulted with profit.
CHAPTER XXXII: POETRY AND BELLES-LETTRES

1. Sukkah 26a; A. Baumstark, Geschichte der syrischen Literatur, pp. 35, 103, 105. The Greek and Latin authors of the Byzantine Empire, including such close neighbors of the Palestinian rabbis as Eusebius and Jerome, were no less prolific. See also supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 54.

2. L. Finkelstein, Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages, pp. 48, 178, 188, 195, 201; and supra, Chap. XXII, n. 21. In his Be-Ohole Ya'aqob, pp. 1 ff., S. Assaf has assembled a number of interesting data on the relations between "The People of the Book" and the Book," but his sources are chiefly European, of medieval and early modern vintage. See also J. L. Maimon, "The People of the Book and Its Book Treasures" (Hebrew), Sinai, XVII, Nos. 201–3. pp. 47–66; supra, Vol. II, 390 n. 35; and infra, n. 5. A comprehensive and detailed study of ancient and medieval Jewish books and libraries clearly is much to be desired.


4. Hai Gaon's Shire Musar haskel (Poems of Wise Conduct), verse 172 (on Hai's authorship of this work, see infra, n. 42); Ibn Daud's "Chronicle," in MJC, I, 72 f.; Samuel ibn Nagrela's Ben Mishle (Son of Proverbs) as edited by S. Abramson in Kol Shire (Collected Poems), ed. by A. M. Habermann and S. Abramson, IV, 9 No. 25, 159 No. 555; Yehudah ibn Tibbon's "Will" in I. Abrahams's Hebrew Ethical Wills, pp. 57 f., 64. Ironically, Samuel ibn Nagrela's own grammatical treatises circulated only in few copies and speedily disappeared from the market. Even his fine Introduction to the Talmud was salvaged from total oblivion only by its brief Hebrew synopsis. See supra, Chaps. XXVII, n. 35; and XXX, n. 52. Because of the stringent requirements governing the use of parchment in scrolls of Law, even entire communities, particularly in the younger, sparsely populated Jewish settlements, were unable to procure scrolls for their services. True, there were many regional variations, and few rabbis were prepared to subscribe to Pirqei ben Baboi's extremist denunciation of the Palestinian scrolls because they had been written on parchment manufactured at variance with the Babylonian practice, but all agreed that the materials used must meet certain exacting conditions. See the sources cited by L. Ginzb erg in his Ginze Schechter, II, 527 ff. Combined with the even stricter requirements for scribal exactitude, which disqualified for liturgical use any scroll containing minute scribal errors, the production of scrolls often became very costly. Many a small and struggling congregation, unable to acquire an adequate scroll, had to recite the weekly lesson from an ordinary codex. Although urging all communities to purchase scrolls "satisfactory in every point of law," Maimonides not only recognized the existence of such emergency situations, but also declared that the use of parchment scrolls was required only
"for the honor of the public." He decided, therefore, that at public recitations from ordinary copies the worshipers be allowed to recite the usual blessings. Something of a novelty in the populous Near Eastern communities, he contended that such practice had long been known among Western scholars, including his teacher, Joseph ibn Megas, and Isaac Alfasi. See his Resp., pp. 42 ff. No. 43. West European communities even more frequently had to resort to this unwelcome expedient. See Rashi's Teshubot, pp. 312 f. No. 276; and supra, Chap. XXXI, n. 85.


6. Abraham ben Isaac’s responsum, in Sifran shel rishonim (Book of Medieval Rabbis), ed. by S. Assaf, pp. 32 f. Nos. 30, 32; Immanuel of Rome’s Mahbarot (Maqamas; a poetic miscellany), VIII, ed. by Habermann, pp. 250 ff. Among the extant book lists from the Genizah that recording the collection of the Egyptian scholar Abraham ben Hillel is of particular interest. In 1223, less than a year after the owner’s death, his library was disposed of, apparently by public auction in two sessions, at the Palestinian synagogue of Fustat. See the texts published by E. J. Worman in his “Two Books-Lists from the Cambridge Genizah Fragments,” JQR, [os.] XX, 460 ff.; S. Poznanski in his “Jüdisch-arabische Bücherlisten aus der Geniza in Cambridge,” ZHB, XII, 112 ff.; and Mann in his Jews in Egypt, II, 327 f. None of these lists contained more than some two hundred codices, some of which, of course, contained more than one title. See, e.g., the extensive, and yet incomplete, lists published by Mann in his Texts and Studies, I, 651 ff., and by S. Assaf in his “Ancient Book Lists” (Hebrew), KS, XVIII, 272–81 (includes one long and three shorter lists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries). Mann (p. 643) and Assaf mention also the book lists previously published. Of more recent vintage is M. Zulay, “A Book-List in Which an Unknown Work of Saadia Gaon is Mentioned” (Hebrew), KS, XXV, 203–5; and S. Abramson’s aforementioned Hebrew study of “R. Joseph Rosh ha-Seder” in KS, XXVI, 72–95. Even if we should add the number of books left behind by R. Joseph in Baghdad, the total collection of this bibliographically well-informed scholar hardly exceeded a few hundred volumes.

7. I. Abrahams, Hebrew Ethical Wills, pp. 63, 80 ff. Because of the difficulty of reconciling the social need of extensive book-lending with the private owner’s discretion over his property, the attitude of various rabbis differed in accordance with changing conditions or their varying personal temperaments. While Ibn Tibbon hedged the advice to his son to lend books freely to all “who can be trusted to return the volumes” (ibid., pp. 81 f.), a fourteenth-century Spanish judge fined a reluctant lender 10 guilders for each day he withheld his books from general circulation. Asher ben Yehiel approved of this action, merely suggesting that the borrower supply security for whatever damage might accrue to the owner, accord-
ing to the estimate of three appraisers. See his Resp., xiii.3. Since most of our pertinent sources come from the later medieval communities, this subject will be more fully discussed in a later volume.

8. See J. Weiss's suggestive observations in his brief preliminary essay on Tarbut hašranit ve-shirah hašranit (Court Culture and Court Poetry). The fuller treatment of Spanish Hebrew poetry from this angle promised by the author has thus far failed to appear. See infra, n. 19; and for comparable illustrations among medieval Spanish Arab poets, M. M. Antuña, "La Corte literaria de Alhaquem II en Cordoba," Religion y Cultura, 1929. See also, more generally, H. Schirrmann's comprehensive anthology, with its very informative introductions on the various poets, entitled Ha-Shirah ha-ibrit bi-Sefarad u-be-Provence (Hebrew Poetry in Spain and the Provence).

9. Saadiah's Siddur, pp. 45 ff., 64 ff.; Abrahm ibn Ezra's Commentary on Eccles. 5:11; Maimonides' Resp., pp. 39 f. No. 41 (the reply ignores the part of the question relating to standing during the recitation). Explaining the need for an Arabic translation of the first prayer of petition, Šemah ben Joshua stated, "Many students have learned both these prayers by heart because of their profit in this world and their good reward in the world to come. Some of these students, however, have lost the understanding of a few expressions of this laudation intended for joyous days and yet wish to comprehend them" (Siddur, p. 46). The fact that no Arabic translations of the two other prayers of petition by Saadiah (published by Haberman in his "Two Poems by R. Saadiah Gaon," Tarbiz, XIII, 52–59) are recorded anywhere, reinforces the editor's view of their independent composition (against Zunz's Literaturgeschichte, pp. 95 ff.).

10. See M. Zulay, "Saadiah Gaon as Payy'etan under Pseudonym" (Hebrew), Melilah, III–IV, 166–84. Aided by some headings in medieval fragments, but relying largely on linguistic criteria, Zulay believes he has identified twenty such poems by Saadiah giving the name of Solomon. Some of the gaon's other poems were apparently written for another cantor, David. See Siddur, pp. 21 n. 16, 395 ff., 430.


12. See B. M. Lewin's new edition of the various extant fragments of Essa meshali in Fishman's Rav Saadya Gaon, esp. pp. 518 ff.; and, on its very complicated technique, Lewin's intro., pp. 501 ff.; and I. Davidson's comments in his "Further Fragments of Saadiah Gaon's Essa meshali," Kohut Mem. Vol., Hebrew section, pp. 10 ff. See also supra, Chaps. XXIII, n. 21; XXIX, nn. 15, 88; XXX, n. 13. Apart from Saadiah's learned allusions, the extraordinary richness of his language and style, combined with his sovereign disregard of the accepted interpretations and rules, must have made his poems extremely arduous reading even for well-informed contemporaries. In fact, many expressions were derived from some of Saadiah's peculiar explanations of biblical words twisted into a new and wholly unprecedented poetic form. Handicapped by the loss of most of Saadiah's biblical
commentaries, modern students are often unable to extract any meaning from 
these intellectual acrobatics. But even contemporaries and early successors, to 
whom Saadia's works were still fully accessible, required some such aids as the 
gaan's or his disciples' Arabic paraphrases. See S. Abramson's analysis of "Saadia's 
Language in Essa meshali" (Hebrew) in Fishman's Rav Saadya Gaon, pp. 677-85; 
B. Chapira's comments on the style of the fragment of the prose pamphlet, Sefar 
ha-Galui, published by him in REJ, LXVIII, 9; and Zulay's observations in Melilah, 
III-IV, 167 ff. No wonder Saadia's linguistic innovations readily lent themselves 
to misinterpretation and repudiation, as in Mubashshir's and Dunash ben Labrat's 
aforementioned attacks. See supra, Chap. XXX, n. 15.

13. This wedding song, first published by S. A. Wertheimer, was republished 
with an English trans. by S. Solis-Cohen in Malter's Saadia Gaon, pp. 337 ff. Even 
Saadia's outright liturgical poems cannot be entirely divorced from his personal 
experiences and battles. Particularly his sufferings and exposure to constant dan-
ger during his conflict with the exilarch inspired him to compose some of his most 
moving prayers. A passage such as: "Suffering and oppression have afflicted me, 
and Thou hast saved me. Strangers have risen against me, and Thou hast rescued 
me from their hands. Many times have I reached the gates of death, and Thou 
hast revived me" (Siddur, p. 69) included in the second prayer of petition, has 
a decidedly contemporary ring. Similarly, his lamentation beginning Ata ha-yom 
(The Day I Feared Has Arrived; ibid., pp. 412 ff.) includes the melancholy admis-
sion that his inborn love of controversy had brought him to the brink of ruin 
(verses 12 ff.). Despite the use of biblical clichés, such outcries came from a heart 
wounded by the struggles of the day, and now tired and resigned. See my remarks 
in Saadia Anniv. Vol., pp. 70 n. 155, 74 n. 142.

supra, Chap. XXIII, n. 21; and, on the contemporary objections to the employment 
Curiously, although Saadia seems to have written exclusively Hebrew poetry, only 
one of his extant liturgical pieces (a yofer beginning Az bi-betoah, or Then In 
Reliance on Hollow Support, in his Siddur, pp. 382 ff.) concludes with the Hebrew 
acrostic Saadia or Saadiah. In all others his authorship, if indicated at all, is 
given by an acrostic forming the name Sa'id ben Joseph, often amplified by his 
aademic title alluf. Sometimes, in the case of Saadia's Aṣharot (exhortations on the 
theme of the 613 commandments) the author is obliquely indicated by the 
opening line having a total numerical value of 469, the gematria of that name 
and title. As pointed out by Rapoport, Saadia imitated here Qalir's methods of 
self-identification. See his Siddur, p. 185; and Malter's Saadia, pp. 150, 152 n. 356, 
351.

15. See Joseph al-Baradani's poem identified in S. Bernstein's "Who Is the Poet 
'R. Joseph' in the Maḥzor 'Hizzumin'?" (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XIII, 150-64, and 
the literature listed there (on that rare Maḥzor, see infra, n. 30); and in Mann's Texts 
and Studies, I, 151 ff.; A. M. Habermann's ed. of Simon bar Isaac's Piyutim (Liturgi-
cal Poems; includes also those by Moses bar Kalonymos); and Meir bar Isaac's 
poems analyzed in Zunz's Literaturgeschichte, pp. 145 ff., 248 ff., 610 (Note 13).
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See also supra, Chaps. XXV, n. 48; XXXI, n. 24. Fuller light on Sulaiman and his position in the community may be expected only from the publication of his numerous extant poems, once promised by Zulay.

16. See Habermann's introduction to his edition of Simon bar Isaac's Piyyutim, p. 21; Brody's list in his appendix to Mahzor Vitry. Without further evidence, the existence of a synagogue of Ashkenazi rite in medieval Cairo will remain very dubious. It is far safer to assume either borrowings of Western poems by an Eastern congregation, as suggested in the text, or the chance survival of a manuscript left behind by an Ashkenazi visitor in Egypt.

17. H. Brody, "Religious and Laudatory Poems by R. Hai Gaon" (Hebrew), SRIHP, III, 20 l. 20, 24 l. 14, 45, 46 ll. 14-15. In the remarkable lamentation on the theme Et mi zanakhta (Whom Didst Thou Forsake; on its authorship see infra, n. 18), included in the Avignon prayer book, the author went so far as to claim, "On whom didst Thou inflict exile without redemption / So that it became our [unending] second exile" (Brody, p. 12 line 3). The poet seems to express here more than is imputed to him by S. D. Luzzatto, namely that the Babylonian Exile did not turn into full redemption, because it was so speedily followed by the second, the Roman exile. Hai may rather have wished to complain here of the historic fact that the first, the Egyptian exile, was followed by the second and unending exile, which, begun in Babylonia, was never really interrupted by full-scale redemption. Clearly, the Second Jewish Commonwealth through most of its history remained but a dependency of some larger empire. Although only five of the twenty-one poems edited by Brody are clearly identified by an acrostic Hayy, the others are expressly attributed to this gaon in various extant headings. Senior Sachs's attempt to explain away some of these headings as originating from a mistaken reading of the abbreviation le-R.H. (interpreted as "By R. Hai" instead of "For Rosh ha-shanah," indicating the poem's postulated recitation on New Year's day), has been controverted by several Genizah fragments. In addition to those quoted by Brody, see also the heading cited in S. Widder's "List" in Löw Mem. Vol., p. 25 No. 8/2; and A. M. Habermann's "Supplementary Material on Certain Poems" (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XIX, 185. On Hai's Musar haskel, see infra, n. 42. It should also be noted that the Sha'are dine memonot (Books of Civil Law and Books of Oaths), written in metric form probably by a thirteenth-century European author, were long incorrectly attributed to Hai. See Steinschneider, Arabische Literatur, pp. 99 f. See also Brody's analytical Hebrew essay, "R. Hai Gaon as Payyejan and Poet" in Sinai, I, Nos. 12-13, pp. 517-21.

18. See Davidson's Osar, I, 387 No. 8560 (ascribing the poem Et mi zanakhta to Joseph ibn Abitur rather than Hai); III, 488 No. 1738; J. Marcus's edition of the "Penitential Prayers by R. David the Exilarch" (Hebrew), Horeb, VI, 27-49; VII, 92-102; VIII, 49-59; A. Scheiber's edition of "A Yozer by an Exilarch" (Hebrew), Sinai, XVI, No. 198, pp. 238-43 (attributing it to David ben Zakcai); Solomon ben Yehudah's four poems, ed. by A. Scheiber in his "Everyday Qerobot from Kaufmann's Collection" (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XXII, 171 ff. (see also the literature listed there); and A. M. Habermann's ed. of Gershom bar Yehudah's Selihot u-pizmonim (Penitential Prayers and Odes). None of these poems are included in R. Simhah's Mahzor Vitry, although, for instance, R. Gershom's responsum
concerning the liturgical status of a priestly convert to another faith who had reconverted to Judaism is quoted there in extenso (pp. 96 f.).

19. Moses ibn Ezra’s K. al-Muḥadhara (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 64 f.); N. Allony’s introduction to his edition of Dunash’s poems, pp. 7 f., and the text, ibid., p. 70 verses 33, 37. See also supra, Chap. XXX, nn. 21 ff.; and, more generally, the data collected by B. Klar in his Hebrew essay on “Poetry and Life: the Role of Poetry in the Cultural Life of Spanish Jewry” (1943), reprinted in his Megorot ve-’iyyunim, pp. 85–106; and by J. Schirmann in “The Function of the Hebrew Poet in Medieval Spain,” JSS, XVI, 295–52. Of course, this flattery of powerful individuals was not limited to Spain. We recall the Hebrew panegyrics in honor of an exilarch and another Baghdad grandee published by A. Scheiber. But in Spain the very importance generally attached to poetry, combined with the peculiar Jewish sociopolitical situation, promoted the growth of court poetry in an unprecedented degree. See supra, n. 8; and Chap. XXIII, n. 7. See also K. B. Starkova, “The Panegyric in Medieval Hebrew Poetry” (Russian), Sovetskoe Postokovedenie, IV, 135–56, in which the author somewhat overstresses the contrast between the Eastern emphasis on valor and the Spanish glorification of Jewish learning and righteousness. Much pertinent material is also scattered throughout H. Schirmann’s and other anthologies listed infra, n. 47.

20. Todros ben Joseph Abulafia’s Gan ha-meshalim ve-ha-hiddot (Garden of Parables and Riddles: a Diwan), ed. by D. Yellin, pp. 126 ff. No. 396; Moses ibn Ezra’s K. al-Muḥadhara (Shirat Yisrael); Pérès, La Poésie andalouise, p. 76.

21. See Samuel’s large collection of aphorisms, Ben Mishle, named after the biblical book of Proverbs, Nos. 11, 310, 727, in D. S. Sassoon’s ed. of the Diwan of Shemuel Hannaghid, pp. 154, 205; in S. Abramson’s edition, pp. 106 No. 378, 229 No. 797, 309 No. 1083; and the parallels listed by Abramson, esp. ibid., pp. 380 f., 445. On the social position of the contemporary Spanish-Arab poets, see Pérès, La Poésie andalouise, pp. 23 ff. See also supra, Chap. XVIII, nn. 41–42; and Y. Ratzaby’s recent trans. and analysis of “A New Spanish-Arabic Source for R. Samuel Ha-Nagid and His Son” (Hebrew), Orilogin, XIII, 270–75 (includes translations of several of Muntafi’s poems).

22. Menahem’s letter to Ḥisdai in S. G. Stern’s ed. of the Teshubot of Menahem’s disciples to Dunash, pp. xxxiii ff.; Baha’s Duties of the Heart, v19, ed. by Yahuda, pp. 277 f. (in Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew trans., ed. by Zifroni, p. 189); Maimonides’ Commentary on M. Abot 1.16. See supra, Chap. XXXI, nn. 55 and 58. Moses ibn Ezra, who ruefully reminisced about his own youthful indiscretions in writing satirical poems, later agreed that “their worst feature is to insult important persons, the supreme insult being one which remains for generations.” See his K. al-Muḥadhara, vi (Shirat Israel, p. 92).

field Samuel sent Joseph a selection of Arabic poems for careful study, accompanied by a hortatory Hebrew poem of his own. Ibid., pp. 67 f. Nos. 96-97 (in A. M. Habermann's loc. cit.). Early training of children in poetic arts spread also to the Orient. In his comprehensive educational program, outlined as a part of his views on mental hygiene, Joseph ibn 'Aqin recommended such instruction. He emphasized, however, that laudatory, satirical, and love poems be omitted from elementary school curricula, since their subject matter might prove injurious to the children's morals. See his Tubb an-nufus (Recreation of Souls; in Hebrew, Refuat ha-nefesh), in M. Güdemann, Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen während der spanisch arabischen Periode, pp. 58 f. (German), 10 (Arabic).

24. Al-Ḥarizi's Tahkemoni. See J. Schirmann, "Isaac Gorni, poète hébreux de Provence," Lettres romanes, III, 175-200 (appeared also in Hebrew in Orlogin, III, 91-101). See also the texts of Gorni's poems and those by his opponents published in Appendixes IV and V of H. Gross's "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Arles, Nachträge," MGWJ, XXXI, 506 f.; Pères. La Poésie andalouse, pp. 70 ff.; and supra, Chap. XXX, n. 51. Such dependence on both patrons and public opinion helps to explain also the extraordinary length to which the Spanish poets, Jewish and non-Jewish, went in their self-praise and self-advertising. Blowing one's own horn was considered as legitimate as the praise of wares displayed by merchants in the bazaars. This fashion, taken over from Arabic poetry, became so irresistible that even the financially wholly independent Nagid Samuel time and again extolled his own merits. His Ben Tehillim especially, or rather that part of it which may be reconstructed from his Diwan, is full of such self-laudatory poems. In verses addressed to R. Nissim of Kairuwan, for one example, he assured the distinguished jurist that his poems would be living long after his grandsons had died at a ripe old age (vv. 17-18, ed. by Sassoon, pp. 3 f. No. 6; ed. by Habermann, II, No. 5, p. 12).

25. Sassoon's edition of the Diwan is, like the unique MS from which it is taken, unvocalized and far from complete. Both deficiencies are remedied as far as possible in the edition by Habermann and Abramson. All three editors have refrained, however, from furnishing more than the bare outlines of Samuel's life and creativity. Although somewhat less up-to-date than the latter editors' concise data, J. Schirmann's Hebrew sketch of "Samuel ha-Nagid as Poet," Keneset, II, 393-416, still offers the most authoritative summary. See also the same author's Hebrew bibliographical sketch in KS, XIII, 373-82; his "Samuel Hanagid, the Man, the Soldier, the Politician," JSS, XIII, 99-126; D. Yellin's Ketabim nibharim (Selected Writings), II, 222 ff.; and J. Lewin's "R. Samuel ha-Nagid" (Hebrew), Orlogin, IX, 132-51; XI, 225-50. See also infra, nn. 31 and 40.


27. Ibn Gabirol's Shire, Nos. 41 vv. 21-22, 112 vv. 47-52; his poem Eskerah shimkha cited from a Schocken MS by A. Parnes in his "Dicta concerning the Lord in the Poetry of Solomon ibn Gabirol" (Hebrew), Keneset, VII, 293; Moses ibn
Ezra’s K. al-Muḥadara, v (Shirat Yisrael, p. 71). Ibn Gabirol’s bitterness toward his Saragossan enemies is explained by H. N. Bialik as a continuation, a generation later, of the conflict between the disciples of Menahem and Dunash. See Bialik’s interpretation of “A Stray Stanza of Ibn Gabirol” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, II, 503–6. On the other hand, his glorification of Yequitiel must have conjured up in any learned Jewish reader’s mind the association of that name with Moses in the ancient legend. See Megillah 13a; and infra, n. 54.

Despite numerous weaknesses pointed out by critics, the collection of Ibn Gabirol’s poems by Bialik and Ravnitzky has hitherto remained unsurpassed. It includes a total of more than four hundred authentic poems. Among more recent publications see esp. R. Edelmann’s “Unbekannte Pijutim von Salomo ibn Gabirol,” MGWJ, LXXVII, 437–47; and the poems published by S. Bernstein in his “Two Unknown Poems by Solomon ibn Gabirol” (Hebrew), Hadoar, XXVIII, 537–39; and his “Four New Poems by R. Solomon ibn Gabirol” (Hebrew), ibid., XXX, 476–78. Some improved readings on the basis of manuscripts are offered in J. Schirmann’s textbook edition of Ibn Gabirol’s Shirim nibḥarin (Selected Poems), while I. Davidson’s edition of our poet’s Selected Religious Poems has been provided with English translations by Israel Zangwill, whose pertinent remarks “On Translating Gabirol” (ibid., pp. xliv–liv) point up the difficulties of reproducing the flavor of medieval Hebrew poetry in a Western language. See also A. Mandelbaum’s more recent English translation of “Seven Secular Poems—Solomon ibn Gabirol,” Commentary, XI, 181–83; and H. Abt’s succinct review of “English Translations of the Machzor,” Jewish Affairs, IX, No. 9, pp. 21–24. Even long-known and apparently complete poems have been shown by better manuscripts to have been defectively reproduced by careless or arbitrary copyists. See the three poems by Ibn Gabirol, as well as one each by Moses ibn Ezra and Halevi, more fully restored by A. M. Habermann in his “Supplementary Material on Certain Poems” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XIX, 187 ff. A new comprehensive and critical edition of Ibn Gabirol’s poems is, therefore, definitely indicated, as is also a detailed biography, reexamining the scattered bits of evidence in the light of the present state of our knowledge. For the time being, see the comprehensive Hebrew study by J. N. Simhoni (Simchowitsch), “R. Solomon ibn Gabirol” in Hakekufah, X, 143–223; XII, 149–88; XVII, 245–94; H. Schirmann’s “On the Study of the Life of Solomon ibn Gabirol” (Hebrew), Keneset, X, 244–57; and the biographical sketches by Davidson in the introduction to his edition; by J. M. Millàs Vallèrcosa in his Selomó ibn Gabirol como poeta y filósofo; and by E. Bertola in his Salomon ibn Gabirol (Avicdessin), the latter emphasizing Ibn Gabirol’s philosophy.

28. Moses ibn Ezra’s K. al-Muḥadara, v (Shirat Yisrael, p. 70); his Be-rishpe ha-bekhi (Sparks of Wail) in his Shire ha-hol (Secular Poems), ed. by H. Brody, I, 175 No. 176 v. 7; and Al-Harizi’s Tahkemoni, xviii, ed. by Lagarde, p. 91 (ed. by Toporowski, pp. 189 f., 442). See also supra, n. 22; and infra, n. 57. Although Moses ibn Ezra lived in the full light of history, and his own as well as his confreres’ writings abound with biographical references, many phases of his life are still obscure. Even the romantic legend of his unhappy love for his niece and his ensuing life as a broken-hearted lover has been exploded only in recent years. See esp. H. Brody’s “Moses ibn Ezra—Incidents in His Life,” JQR, XXIV, 509 ff.; and the introduction to his ed. of Selected Poems by Moses ibn Ezra (with an English trans. by S. Solis-Cohen), pp. xxvi f., 180 ff. Nor does there exist so far
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a complete collection of Ibn Ezra's poems. True, the secular poems have found two successive editors in Bialik and Ravnitzky, and, with greater attention to critical detail, in H. Brody. The latter compilation is distinguished also by its arrangement of the poems in the alphabetical order of their rhymes—a system widely practiced in medieval Arabic and Hebrew editions of poetry but long since abandoned in Jewish letters. See I. Elbogen's critique in his "Zur hebräischen Poesie des Mittelalters," MGWJ, LXXXII, 306 ff. Ibn Ezra's prolific output of religious poems, too, has been recently assembled in S. Bernstein's ed. of the poet's Shire ha-Qodesh (Sacred Poems). Yet, much of it still awaits critical evaluation. See infra, n. 51.

The poet's early popularity contributed to the uncertainties of his authorship of certain poems. For example, a well-known liturgical composition, El nora 'alilah (God of Awe-Inspiring Deeds), so deeply impressed a later poet, Joseph bar Isaac, that he prefaced it by a poem twice its length which he identified by an acrostic of his own. This introductory poem misled later scholars into attributing the whole piyut to the younger author. See Bernstein, "Who Composed the Piyut El Nora 'Alilah?" (Hebrew), Hadoar, XXXI, 754-55. See also R. Castillo, "Poesias de Moisés ibn Ezra," Arbor, XVIII, 525-29; D. Yellin, Ketabim, II, 331 ff.; A. J. Borisov, "Observations on the Poetry of Moses ibn Ezra" (Russian), Izvestiya (Bulletin) of the Academy of Science of the USSR, 7th ser., 99-117; D. Gonzalez Maeso, "Semblanza literaria de Mosé ibn Ezra," Miscelleanae de Estudios ardebes y hebraicos of the University of Granada, IV, 241-55; and infra, n. 51.

29. Halevi's Diwan, ed. by Brody, I, 18 No. 14 Vv. 53-54: 154 f. No. 101 Vv. 1-4, 13-16; in his Kol Shire (Collected Poems), ed. by I. Zemorah, I, Part 3, pp. 22 No. 8, 173 No. 2, or in his Selected Poems, ed. by H. Brody, p. 78 No. 41 (Nina Salaman's trans. is based on a different interpretation). The poet's alleged vow in old age to quit versifying, related by his purported disciple, Solomon ibn Parḥon (Mahberet he-arukh, ed. by S. G. Stern, p. xxii and fol. 5ab), if authentic, may have been but a disconsolate outburst reflecting a temporary mood. Halevi's great erudition came to the fore also in his poetic works. Not only were they filled, even more than those of his confreres, with allusions to biblical and rabbinic letters understandable only to well-informed readers, but he also was a learned student of earlier poetic writings. In his Hebrew essay, "Source and Imitation in Poetry," Sinai, XIII, Nos. 147-48, pp. 36-52, M. Zulay has pointed out how greatly Halevi was influenced by poetic patterns first developed by Saadiah. The poet also quoted with great reverence such outstanding rabbinic authorities as Alfasi and Ibn Megas. See supra, Chap. XXVII, n. 94 and the concluding paragraphs of that Chapter. Similarly, Halevi's "Riddle of Birds" (Diwan I, 107 No. 74; ed. by Zemorah, I, Part 3, pp. 239 f.) can only be understood in the light of some Spanish-Arabic correspondence, described by S. M. Stern in his "Two Medieval Hebrew Poems Explained from the Arabic," Seferad, X, 325-58. See also the Hebrew essays by I. Ratzaly, "Collectanea and Addenda to the Poetry of Yehudah Halevi," Tarbiz, XXIII, 16-25; and A. Mirski, "Notes on the Text of Yehudah Halevi's Poems," Sinai, XIV, Nos. 171-74, pp. 43-57, 173-90. It is small wonder, then, that the personality and work of the great poet-philosopher has fascinated generations of scholars. An interesting selection of comments on Halevi by representative writers of several generations was published by I. Zemorah under the title R. Yehudah Halevi: Qobeṣ meḥqarim ve-ha'arakhot (A Collection of Studies and Evaluations). See H. Schirmann's comprehensive study of "The Life of Yehudah
Halevi” (Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, IX, 35-54, 219-40, 284-305; X, 237-39; XI, 125; J. M. Millás Vallicrosa’s *Yehudah ha-Levi como poeta y apologista;* the anniversary volume published on the occasion of the octocentennial of the poet’s death by the American Academy for Jewish Research; and Rabbi Yehudah Halevi: *Qobes toranimaddai,* ed. by J. L. Fishman. See also the collection of essays in the special issue of *Hadoar,* XX, No. 10, pp. 145-66; *infra,* n. 46; Chap. XXXIV, n. 12; and, on the impact of the crusading age, my “Yehudah Halevi: an Answer to an Historic Challenge,” *JSS,* III, 243-72. More recently, S. D. Goitein has published interesting new letters, evidently stemming from the archives of a wealthy Egyptian merchant, Halfon ben Nethanel, who made the poet’s acquaintance on a visit to Spain. These shed much light on Halevi’s last years. See “The Last Phase of R. Yehudah Halevi’s Life in the Light of the Genizah Papers” (Hebrew), *Tarbiz,* XXIV, 21-47, 139-49, 468. At the same time we must bear in mind that the name Yehudah Halevi was not unique. An earlier poet by that name was unearthed by M. Zulay, who published a number of liturgical poems by that Palestinian author in his Hebrew essay “R. Yehudah Halevi Who Is Not Yehudah Halevi,” *Eretz Israel,* IV, 138-44.


In many ways different is the poetry of the Bible exegetes Ibn Chiquitilla and
Ibn Ezra. See S. Poznanski, "Moses ibn Chiquitilla as Poet," *HUCA*, I, 599–601 (with I. Davidson's "Note" thereon, *ibid.*, p. 601); and H. Brody's ed. of "Poems by Moses ha-Kohen ibn Chiquitilla" (Hebrew), *SRIHP*, III, 65–90 (ten poems including such doubtful ones as No. 10, which more likely stemmed from Moses ibn Ezra's pen). Abraham ibn Ezra's poetic creativity, long known from his *Diwan*, ed. by J. Egers and supplemented by D. Rosen's *Reime und Gedichte des Abraham Ibn Ezra* (also from D. Kahana's Hebrew compilation), has been enriched in recent years by many new publications. See esp. S. Bernstein's and J. Marcus's editions of new liturgical poems listed *infra*, n. 52; H. Brody's "Hitherto Unpublished Poems by Abraham ibn Ezra, First Collection" (Hebrew), *SRIHP*, VI, 1–45 (includes 30 liturgical and 2 secular poems; the continuation failed to appear because of the editor's death); and N. Ben Menahem's ed. of "Abraham ibn Ezra's Liturgical Poems from the Genizah" (Hebrew), *Sinai*, XIII, Nos. 153–54, pp. 69–74. See also *supra*, Chaps. XXI, n. 54; XXIX, n. 59.


31. Samuel ibn Nagrela's *Diwan*, ed. by Sassoon, pp. 8 f. No. 10 vv. 52 ff.; ed. by Habermann, I, No. 1, pp. 7 f. The inscription on this poem, doubtless placed there by the original editor, Samuel's son Joseph, indicates that the poem described the battle of Friday, Elul 1, 4798 (August 4, 1037). On the historical background of the Nagid's battle poems assembled by Habermann in the first volume of his edition, see especially the careful analysis by H. Schirmann in "The Wars of Samuel ha-Nagid" (Hebrew), *Zion*, I, 261–83, 357–76; and his aforementioned survey, "Le Divan de Šemuel Hannagid considéré comme source pour l'histoire espagnole," *Hespéris*, XXXV, 163–88. Among the few other contemporary descriptions of military clashes one may note particularly Solomon ben Joseph ha-Kohen's poetic description of the Turkmen defeat in Egypt in 1077 (see *infra*, n. 44); and Al-Ḥarizi's imaginary prose narrative and poems in his *Taḥkemoni*, vii, ed. by Lagarde, pp. 40 ff. (ed. by Toporowski, pp. 85 ff.).

32. Halevi's *Diwan*, ed. by Brody, II, 12 No. 7 (ed. by Zemorah, I, Part 2, p. 28, No. 11; see N. Salaman's trans., p. 51); Samuel ibn Nagrela's *Diwan*, ed. by Sassoon, p. 92 No. 132 (ed. by Habermann, III, 58, No. 18). Halevi's love poems, occupying in Zemorah's edition an entire book (Vol. I, Part 2), are testimony to the ardent desires of his youth. At times quite outspoken, especially in the twenty-one poems
addressed to the ya'alat hen (gracious gazelle), they never transcended the bounds of propriety. They nevertheless must have shocked some of his own puritanical contemporaries, and they allegedly were cause for regret to the poet himself in his declining years.

33. Ibn Gabirol's *Shire*, I, 145 No. 74. Of course, not all Arabic love poems of the period addressed themselves to carnal desires. Many authors, even in Spain, sang the praises of Platonic love, even the mystical love of God. See A. González Palencia's observations in "El amor platónico en la corte de los Califas," *Boletín* of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Cordova, VIII, 1–25. The erotic poems addressed by Halevi and other poets to male friends were, however, clearly the reflection of a poetic fashion taken over from the Arab environment, for there is no evidence that Jewish society ever countenanced any kind of homosexual love, even in its more spiritualized forms. In fact, in a single reconstructed case, a poet-cantor's homosexual attachment seems to have led to blackmail and ultimately to his public disgrace, if we accept S. M. Stern's interpretation of two difficult poems of unknown authorship (published in I. Davidson's *Ginz Sechechier*, III, 220–25) in his Hebrew essay "On the Understanding of 'The Maqama' of the Precentor Selling Sacred Books" in *Tarbiz*, XIX, 62–63. On Jacob ben Eleazar's love stories written in poetic prose, see infra, n. 70.

34. Ibn Gabirol's *Shire*, ed. by Bialik and Ravnitzky, I, 41 ff., especially p. 50 No. 21, and 64 No. 27; Moses ibn Ezra's, *K. al-Muḥadhara*, v (Shirat Yisrael, p. 71). On Yequetiel, see supra, n. 27. Of course, not all of Ibn Gabirol's satire was biting and bitter. Some of it, as his famous song on the substitution of wine by water, *Kikhlot yeyni* (When I Finished My Wine, My Eyes Poured Forth Streams of Water; *Shire*, I, 156 No. 83) was delightfully humorous.

35. Samuel ibn Nagrela's *Diwan*, ed. by Sassoon, p. 28 No. 34 (ed. by Habermann II, 98 f. Nos. 2–3, both relating to Isaac's death in the early morning hours of Thursday, Iyyar 25, 4801 = April 30, 1041); Abraham ibn Ezra's *Diwan*, ed. by Egers, pp. 93 f. No. 205, 166 ff.; Isaac ibn Ezra's *Shirim*, ed. by N. Ben Menahem, pp. 37 ff. Since Isaac's conversion apparently occurred not long after 1143 (see *ibid.*., p. 44), our poem was probably written soon thereafter, many years before Abraham's death. However, Ben Menahem's arguments for Isaac's relatively early death, despite his complaints of old age creeping up on him (*ibid.*., pp. 7, 24, 45), are unconvincing. J. L. Fleischer made a far better case for dating the poet's demise in 1164, but three years before that of his famous father. See his "On the Life Story of Isaac ibn Ezra" (Hebrew), *Sinai*, XI, Nos. 126–27, pp. 265–76. See also A. Mirski's Hebrew review of Ben Menahem's edition in *KS*, XXVII, 300–308; and H. Schirmann's observations in *Ha-Shirah ha-ibrit*, I, 624 ff.

36. Halevi's friendship poems occupy a large part of his *Diwan*, ed. by Brody, and are assigned a substantial special book (Vol. I, Part 3) in Zemorah's edition. See especially *ibid.*., p. 11 No. 3; and supra, n. 29. Muslim Andalusia was often called the "West" in contrast to "Eastern," that is Christian, Spain. See J. M. Millàs Vallicrosa's *Yehudd Ha-Levi como poeta y apologista*, pp. 13 f. The friends to whom these poems were addressed have been subjected to careful scrutiny by modern scholars. See especially Schirmann's detailed biography of Halevi in *Tarbiz*,
IX; and the data assembled in his “Poets, Contemporaries of Moses ibn Ezra and Yehudah Halevi” (Hebrew), SRIHP, II, 117–212; IV, 247–96; VI, 249–347.

37. See Ibn Ezra’s renowned poems, Eyne sela’im (Rocks’ Eyes Have Shed Tears Over Me), and ‘Ad ‘an be-galut (How Long Yet Must My Feet . . . the Path of Exile Tread?) in his Shire ha-hol, ed. by Brody, I, 66 No. 67, 164 No. 164 (the latter also in Solis-Cohen’s translation, pp. 2 ff.); Halevi’s Ekh akhrekha in his Diwan, ed. by Brody, II, 328 ff. (ed. by Zemorah, I, Part 3, p. 11 No. 3); and Moses ibn Chiquitilla’s poem, recited by Brody in SRIHP, III, 67. See also A. Moar’s analysis of “Moses ibn Ezra’s Family Poems” (Hebrew), Mabbua, I, 404–9.


40. Samuel ibn Nagrela’s Diwan, ed. by Sassoon, pp. 117 ff., 136 No. 162, etc.; his Ben Mishle (Offshoots of Proverbs), ed. by S. Abramson, p. 45 No. 161. See M. Seidel’s “Notes and Comments on R. Samuel ha-Nagid’s Ben Mishle” (Hebrew), Sinai, XVI, No. 194, pp. 354–74. In his introductory survey of the contents of these epigrams Abramson shows that more than three-score refer to kings and their service (pp. 19 ff.). Many bear a clearly personal imprint, although they, too, may reflect in part the accumulated wisdom of Arab courtiers, who in turn had learned much from their Persian predecessors. Other Jewish authors of aphorisms paid much less attention to rulers and their behavior. See A. S. Halkín’s brief comments in his “Classical and Arabic Material in Ibn ‘Aqín’s ‘Hygiene of the Soul,’” PAJR, XIV, 28 n. 4. That Samuel borrowed heavily not only from current Near Eastern folklore, but also from Arabic prose and poetic letters, of which he was an avian reader (see supra, n. 25; and infra, n. 73), has long been recognized. In his K. al-Muḥadharā, v (Shirat Yisrael, p. 66) Moses ibn Ezra asserted that Samuel had “introduced in this book [Ben Mishle] many Arabic and Persian proverbs, philosophic wisdom, and gems of peoples long vanished, as well as sayings by our own ancient men of piety.” See the specific examples of such indebtedness to Ibn Qutaiba and others in N. Bar-On’s brief essay, “On the Study of the Sources of Ben Mishle
by Samuel ha-Nagid" (Hebrew) in Ha-Kinnus ha-ʻolami, I, 279–84. Such erudition in Arabic poetry did not interfere, of course, with the Nagid’s even more learned allusions to rabbinic concepts and phrases, which presupposed much talmudic expertise on the part of readers. See the telling illustrations cited by S. Abramson in his “Words of the Sages in the Nagid’s Poetry” (Hebrew), ibid., pp. 274–78. At the same time, their purely secular objectives may help us understand some statements which seem out of line with Samuel’s general orthodoxy. He who in his legal work was a rather rigid halakhist, and even in a poem once expostulated that he did not wish to impute an error to a gaon, allowed himself here some satirical comments on synagogues and academies; he advised his readers not to spend their days in pious works, but rather to “give Him [God] half a day and give the other half to your own pursuits.” See his Diwan, pp. 50 f. No. 73, 110 No. 171 (ed. by Habermann, III, 19 No. 6, 88 No. 26).

Samuel’s failure to indicate his sources required no apology to his contemporaries, even if his rendition from other languages had not sufficed to make the borrowed sections appear as parts of a new work. Generally standards of literary property throughout the medieval world, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish, were far less rigorous than today. Since adherence to traditions and bookish learning were generally more highly appreciated than personal originality, the authors themselves did not necessarily intend to display their own ingenuity in substantive matters. They and their readers were often satisfied with a purely formal, even technical innovation. See also G. E. von Grunebaum’s analysis of “The Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Theory,” JNES, III, 235–53; and supra, Chap. XXIV, n. 4.

41. Moses ibn Ezra’s K. al-Muḥadhara, v (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 67 f.). Among the critics of Samuel’s philological concepts was, as we recall, no less an authority than Ibn Janaḥ. See supra, Chap. XXX, n. 52.

42. Hai Gaon’s Shire Musar haskel, with an English trans. by H. Gollancz (the earlier editions included one annotated by M. E. Vogel, as well as Latin translations by J. Mercier and Jacob Ebert; the latter first appeared in T. Ebert’s Poetica hebraica, and was subsequently republished in B. Ugolini’s well-known Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum, XXXI, pp. iii ff.). Cf. Z. Karob’s affirmative answer to his query, “Did R. Hai Gaon Write the Poems Musar Haskel?” (Hebrew), Mizraḥ u-ma’arab, IV, 347–51; and supra, n. 17.

43. Ibn Gabirol’s Sefer Mibhar ha-peninim (Choice of Pearls), ed. with an English trans. by B. H. Asher (Latin extracts therefrom had appeared in J. Drusius’s Apophtegmata Ebraeorum ac Arabum, 2d. ed., pp. 58 ff.). The numerous other editions of, as well as studies on, this work are listed in A. M. Habermann’s Hebrew bibliographical survey in Sinai, XIII, Nos. 147–48, pp. 53–63. See also N. Bar-On’s “Studies in Gabirol’s Mibhar ha-peninim” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XXIII, 192–97. Despite all these intensive efforts some of the main critical problems, including the very authorship of this work by Ibn Gabirol, still are far from solved. The great similarity of Joseph Qimḥi’s Sfeqel ha-qodesh (Sacred Shekel) to this work has been definitely proved, however, especially by the two lengthy tables of comparison in H. Gollancz’s critical edition of the Sheqel, pp. 127 ff. See also A. Marx’s careful analysis of “Gabirol’s Authorship of the Choice of Pearls and the Two Versions of Joseph Kimḥi’s Sheqeḥ Ḥakodesh,” HUCA, IV, 443–48; and supra, n. 4.
44. See Moses ibn Chiquitilla’s “Poems,” ed. by H. Brody, in SRIHP, III, 85 No. 9 lines 9-11; Mann’s *Jews in Egypt*, I, 30 ff., 155 ff.; II, 30 ff., 176 ff.; and M. Zulay’s “Liturgical Poems on Various Historical Events” (Hebrew), SRIHP, III, 151-85. Of greater interest is Solomon ben Joseph ha-Kohen’s poem describing *The Turkoman Defeat at Cairo* in 1077, which spared the Jewish community, too, much suffering. See J. Greenstone’s edition; and Mann’s comments thereon in his *Jews in Egypt*, I, 207 f. See also supra, n. 29; infra, n. 62; and, on the general problem of history-mindedness among medieval Jewry, supra, Chap. XXVIII, *passim*.

45. Ibn Gabirol’s *Zulat*, first published by R. Edelmann in MGWJ, LXXVII, 438 f., 444 ff.; Halevi’s *Ototenu* in I. Ratzaby’s fuller edition in his “Collectanea and Addenda to the Poetry of Yehudah Halevi” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XXIII, 21 ff. (see N. Salaman’s trans., pp. 196 f.). The Leningrad MS of Ibn Gabirol’s poem is unfortunately in very poor condition, and Edelmann’s efforts to restore the text and give it an adequate interpretation have not proved altogether successful.

46. Halevi’s *Diywan*, ed. by Brody, II, 155 f. (ed. by Zemorah, I, Part 1, pp. 5, 53 ff.). Miss Salaman’s rendition of *Libbi be-mizrah* (My Heart Is in the East) differs from ours, while she herself offers two different versions of *Siyyon ha-lo tish’ali* (Zion Dost Thou Not Ask?). See her trans., pp. 2 ff., 151 ff. But no less than eight English translations of this extremely popular poem, alongside seventeen German, six Yiddish, five French, four Russian, and many other renditions, were listed some twenty years ago by H. Schirmann in his bibliographical study of “Translations of Yehudah Halevi’s *Siyyon ha-lo tish’ali*” (Hebrew), KS, XV, 360-67. On the numerous Hebrew editions of that poem and its even more numerous imitations, see I. Davidson’s *Ozar*, III, 921 ff. See also “Yehudah Halevi’s Letter to Habib al-Makhidevi,” reedited with a Russian trans. and comments by K. B. Starkova in Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie, VI, 425-57; and “R. Yehudah Halevi’s Letter on His Emigration to the Land of Israel” (Hebrew), ed. by S. Abramson in KS, XXIX, 153-44. The nationalist and “Zionist” emphases permeating Halevi’s poetry have frequently been emphasized; they form a major part of every biographical and literary analysis. In addition to works already mentioned, esp. supra, n. 29, see also J. L. Fishman’s study of “The Roots of R. Yehudah Halevi’s Nationalism,” in the collective Hebrew volume *Rabbi Yehudah Halevi*, ed. by Fishman, pp. 67-77; M. Ish-Shalom’s “National-Sacred Poetry (On the Religious-National Poetry of R. Yehudah Halevi),” ibid., pp. 77-95; and I. Efros’s more popular survey, *Judah Halevi as Poet and Thinker*.

47. Ibn Gabirol’s *Shire*, III, 3 f. No. 2, 105 No. 81; IV, 3, 56 (the first also in Zangwill’s trans., p. 67 No. 99). See A. Parnes, “Ecstasy in the Life of Ibn Gabirol” (Hebrew), Mo’znayim, IV, 265-78, 386-98. On the linguistic deviations of his liturgical poetry see the examples analyzed by D. Yellin in his *Ketabim*, II, 305 ff.; and, more generally, the latter’s Hebrew essay on “Solomon ibn Gabirol, the Man and the Poet,” in Sefer Klaumber, pp. 249-66; and Millás Vallicrosa’s *Selomo ibn Gabirol*, pp. 90 ff. Writing religious poetry, Ibn Gabirol and the other authors took for granted the readers’ verbal recollection of Scripture; they often employed biblical phrases in an abbreviated fashion comprehensible only to readers filling in the rest from memory. See the data assembled by Yellin in his Hebrew essay on “Shortcuts in Spanish Poetry,” *Keneset*, IV, 339-44. But they merely followed
therein the example of ancient homilies who briefly cited beginnings of scriptural verses when they sought support for their particular ideas in the unspoken continuation. Evidently both preacher and poet had the right to rely on the biblical erudition of their audiences, just as a modern speaker will usually intimate, rather than spell out, a familiar proverb.

Among the numerous writings on the sacred poetry of the Spanish school, the old volume by M. Sachs, *Die religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*, has retained much of its charm and the value of its fine insights. Subsequently, good semi-popular reviews were offered in German by A. Sulzbach in J. Winter and A. Wünsche's *Jüdische Literatur*, III, 3–216, 904; and in Spanish by J. M. Millás Villacrosa in *La Poesia sagrada hebraico-española*. Cf. H. Schirmann's very instructive Hebrew review of the latter volume in *JS*, XXII, 123–29. For the last half century H. Brody, together with K. Albrecht and later with M. Wiener, has supplied the Hebrew-reading public with excellent anthologies of medieval Hebrew poetry. His and Wiener's *Mibhar ha-shirah ha-'ibrit* (Anthology of Hebrew Poetry) was more recently reissued in a revised, though greatly abridged, form by A. M. Habermann, who has, moreover, added several more specialized selections, referred to in our previous and forthcoming notes. The Brody-Wiener anthology has, in part, been reproduced in a French translation by C. de Moulleron in his *Poèmes hébreux anciens, traduits et annotés*. These publications have been overshadowed, but even in Hebrew not completely superseded, by H. Schirmann's basic anthology, *Ha-Shirah ha-'ibrit*, of which the first volume, covering the period from 950 to 1150, is particularly relevant to our treatment. Among the various critical evaluations of that volume, see esp. A. Mirski, "The Best of Spanish Hebrew Poetry Known to Our Generation" (Hebrew), *Behinnot*, VIII, 63–73. Important additional material has recently been published from the precious Lisbon MS by S. Bernstein in his aforementioned *'Al neharot Sefarad* (Spanish Litanies on the Fall of Jerusalem and Persecutions to 1391).

48. Samuel ibn Nagrela's *Diwan*, edited by A. M. Habermann, III, 153 No. 24; Ibn Abitur's *qedushahs* (“Holy, Holy, Holy”). Evidently but parts of his reputed full cycle of liturgical poems for the Day of Atonement, the latter are readily available in Hebrew with a German trans. and analysis in M. Sachs's *Religiöse Poesie*, pp. 40 ff., 248 ff., Hebrew section, pp. 9 ff. See also *supra*, n. 50; and Chap. XXXIII, n. 65. Akin to Ibn Abitur's work is that of Isaac ibn Chiquitilla, one of Menahem ben Saruq's three pupils who took up the cudgels in the teacher's defense. Ibn Chiquitilla's *Azharot*, especially, bear the imprint of the school of Saadia. See their partial reconstruction and analysis by M. Zulay in his “Azharat of R. Isaac ibn Chiquitilla" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, XX, 161–76. Since Isaac flourished only a short time after Ibn Abitur's departure from Spain, the latter's poetic creativity cannot be due mainly to his sojourn in the East. Both poets rather illustrate the early penetration of the Eastern *piyyut*, along with the Babylonian approaches to talmudic learning, into the Iberian Peninsula. Both poetic themes, moreover, are found in more fully developed form in Ibn Gabirol's liturgical *Ofanim* and *Azharot*, respectively. See *infra*, nn. 50 and 82.

49. Al-Ḥarizi's *Tahkemoni*, III, ed. by Lagarde, p. 22 (ed. by Toporowski, p. 41); Moses ibn Ezra's *K. al-Muḥadhara*, v (Shirat Yisrael, p. 72). A number of Ibn Gayyat's poems and studies thereon were listed in 1939 by S. Bernstein in his
"New Poems from Spain" (Hebrew), *Tarbîz*, X, 3 n. 11. Since that time considerable new material was published by Bernstein and others. See *supra*, n. 30.

50. Ibn Gabirol’s *Shîrî*, III, 56 ff. No. 58, 62 ff. No. 62, 135 ff. No. 99; IV, 30 ff., 34 ff., 72 ff.; VI, 50 ff. No. 58. See also Zangwill’s trans. of the “Royal Crown,” pp. 82 ff. No. 50; with I. Davidson’s introduction thereto, pp. xxix ff.; Millàs Vallicrosa’s Spanish trans. and introductory remarks in his *Selmo ibn Gabirol*, pp. 152 ff.; and especially the detailed Hebrew commentary by J. A. Seidman in his new edition of Ibn Gabirol’s *Keter malkhut*; and A. Chouraqui’s annotated French trans. and brief analysis of “Salomon ibn Gabirol La Couronne du Royaume,” *Revue thomiste*, LIII, 409–40. Of considerable interest is also F. P. Bargebühr’s analytical study, “Ibn Gabirol’s Poem Beginning ‘‘Ahavikha’ [I Have Loved Thee],” *Review of Religion*, XV, 5–18; and, with minor variations, “Die Bedeutung des Weltalls für Gott nach Ibn Gabirols philosophischem Gedichte,” *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, VI, 18–38. Our poet’s apparent unfamiliarity with Saadiah’s enumeration of the six hundred and thirteen commandments (in the latter’s * Siddur*, pp. 157 ff.; see *supra*, Chap. XXXI, n. 70) is the more remarkable, as Isaac ibn Chiquitilla’s *Acharot* had clearly betrayed the gaon’s influence alongside that of the *Halakhot gedolot* (see *supra*, n. 48). However, Isaac may have learned Saadiah’s views indirectly, rather than from his prayer book, which seems to have become popular in Spain only at a somewhat later date. Even such an ardent collector as Samuel ibn Nagrela, who maintained close contact with the Babylonian academies, seems not to have possessed a copy. The only possible quotation from the *Siddur*, transmitted in the Nagid’s name by Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne (in his *Eshkol*, ed. by Albeck, I, 185), may have stemmed either from somebody else’s earlier citation or from a similar statement in one of Saadiah’s juristic or exegetical writings. The first Spaniard to make full use of Saadiah’s liturgical *magnum opus* appears to have been Isaac ibn Gayyat. See Assaf’s introduction to Saadiah’s *Siddur*, pp. 34, 36.

51. Moses ibn Ezra’s *Shîrî ha-ḥol*, ed. by Brody, I, 237 ff. No. 234 vv. 4–5 (unfortunately Brody’s comments on this poem have remained unpublished); his *Selected Poems*, trans. by S. Solis-Cohen, pp. 105 ff. No. 44; and Meir Abulafia’s poem *Yehidah ḥet’i šurekhi* (My Soul, Know Thy Creator), ed. by Brody in *SRIHP*, II, 79 ff. No. 34. Brody’s fine edition of Moses ibn Ezra’s secular poems includes such philosophic odes as the *Be-shem El* (In the Lord’s Name), quoted here. This poem, the longest of all our author’s extant lyrics, borders on sacred poetry, having been deeply influenced by Ibn Gabirol’s “Royal Crown.” Remarkably, among the highest human attainments Ibn Ezra noted here the combination of correct Hebrew and Arabic speech and Greek learning. Of the more recently published poems, see especially the ten *piyyûtim* ed. by S. Bernstein in his “Two New Liturgical Poems by R. Moses ibn Ezra” (Hebrew), *Hadoar*, XV, 259–61; and in his aforementioned “Poetic Remnants” (Hebrew), *HUCA*, XVI, 150 ff., beginning with a didactic poem on Ḥanukkah, and S. Abramson’s detailed review of Brody’s edition of *Shîrî ha-ḥol*, II, Part i, in *Tarbîz*, XIII, 250–58. See also *supra*, n. 28. On the other hand, more recent investigations have shown that several poems previously ascribed to Moses ibn Ezra were really written by Moses ibn Chiquitilla, the distinguished Bible exegete of approximately the same period. See H. Brody’s introduction to his edition of the latter’s poems in *SRIHP*, III, 67 ff. Brody admits,
however, that one of these poems (No. 10, pp. 86 ff.) is more probably of Ibn Ezra's authorship. If this hypothesis should prove correct, we would have before us one of the relatively few love poems by Ibn Ezra. The paucity of such writings by Ibn Ezra and his brother doubtless stimulated popular imagination to weave the aforementioned amorous legends around both masters. See supra, nn. 26-28.

52. The sacred poetry of Abraham ibn Ezra still awaits a definitive edition. Despite the meritorious efforts of Eger, Rosin, and Kahana several decades ago (see supra, n. 30), so many new poems from the pen of this distinguished polyhist have since come to light that a new critical edition is clearly indicated. See esp. J. Marcus's publication from an Adler MS of "New Liturgical Poems by R. Abraham ibn Ezra" (Hebrew), Mizrah u-ma'arab, V, 273-88; S. Bernstein's edition of "Liturgical Poems from an Unknown Diwan by R. Abraham ibn Ezra" (Hebrew), Tarbiz, V, 61-74; of one additional poem, in his "New Poems," ibid., X, 3, 8 f.; and of eight more in his "Poetic Remnants," HUCA, XVI, 140 ff.


54. Bahya's poems reprinted in Yahuda's and Zifroni's editions of his "Duties of the Heart" (see infra, Chap. XXXIV, n. 11); Joseph ibn Saddiq's Yeminenu be-heq qoser 'asurah (Our Right Hand Is Detained) in Sha'ar ha-shir. The New Hebrew School of Poets of the Spanish-Arabian Epoch, ed. by H. Brody and K. Albrecht, p. 127; Halevi's reply in his Diwan, ed. by Brody, I, 118 f. No. 33 (ed. by Zemorah, I, Part 3, p. 153); H. Brody's "R. Meshullam da Piera against Maimonides: Two Poems" (Hebrew), Sefer Klauser, pp. 67-73 (listing also other anti-Maimonidean poems, in part aimed at the translators); and his "Limericks on Maimonides and His Books" (Hebrew), Mo'azzayim, III, 402-13. The latter include, of course, also pro-Maimonidean poems. On Ibn Saddiq's poetry, see esp. H. Schirmann's comprehensive Hebrew study of "Poets Contemporary with Moses ibn Ezra," SRIHP, II, 163 ff. The poem Yigdal has, ever since Luzzatto's discovery of a pertinent reference in a late medieval Italian MS, been attributed to Daniel ben Yehudah (ca. 1500). The contrary view, emphatically reiterated by H. Hirschfeld, who ascribed the poem to Immanuel of Rome (see "The Author of the Yigdal Hymn," JQR, XI, 86-88), has little to commend itself. On Maimonides' attitude to poetry see supra, Chap. XXXI, nn. 55 and 58.

55. S. J. L. Rapoport's Hebrew introduction to his Purim drama, She'erit Yehudah (the Remnant of Judah) in Bikkure ha-ittim, 5588, p. 184; Amittai's poem, Adon maggid (The Master Foretells), reprinted in the collection of early Italian Hebrew poems in the appendix to B. Klar's ed. of Ahimaaz' Chronicle, pp. 72 ff. See also
infra, n. 61. The same themes pervade also the few surviving poems of Amittai's father, Shemaiah, and of the first known Italian-Hebrew poet, the unfortunate Silano. See supra, Chap. XXIII, n. 65. We must bear in mind that these poets lived in southern Italy under its oppressive Byzantine domination. The transformation under the Norman and Hohenstaufen regimes is well illustrated by the data supplied by S. M. Stern in "A Twelfth-Century Circle of Hebrew Poets in Sicily," JJS, V, 60–79, 110–13. See also J. Schirrmann's *Anthologie der hebräischen Dichtung in Italien*, which is mainly concerned with the later periods, however. An analysis of that later poetry, including Immanuel's, must be relegated here to a later volume.

56. Isaac bar Moses' *Sefer Or zarua* (R. Gershom had acted "out of an excess of mourning"); *Ma'aseh Buch* (Story Book), compiled by an unknown German author, probably between 1580 and 1602 (the date of the first Amsterdam edition) and translated into English by M. Gaster, No. 188 (II, 410 ff.); the collection of *Ma'asiyot* (Stories), ed. by A. Jellinek in his *Bet ha-Midrash*, V, 148–52; VI, 137–39; and his introductory comments, *ibid.* V. pp. xxxvii f.; VI, xxx ff. (both texts are reprinted in Eisenstein's *Ozar Midrashim*, pp. 329 ff. Nos. 12–13). See also J. Meitlis's careful analysis of *Das Ma'asseh buch*. The historical background of Amittai's poem, *Ahabatikha* (in Klar's ed. of the Aḥimaaz chronicle, pp. 95 ff.), has been plausibly reconstructed by I. Sonne in his "Note sur une Keroba d'Amittai publiée par Davidson," REJ, XC VIII, 81–84. See also J. Starr's *Jews in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 5 f., 127 No. 62.

Conversions of scions of distinguished Jewish families were not altogether rare, even under the domination of Islam. In their diverse ways Isaac ben Abraham ibn Ezra and Samuel (Samau'al) ibn 'Abbas al-Maghribi left behind significant literary works shedding considerable light both on the psychological vicissitudes of their authors and the social position of their Jewish contemporaries. On the other hand, a son of the poet Abu 'Amr ibn Ḥisdai, friend of Samuel ibn Nagrela and author of the famous *shirah yetomah* (Orphan Poem, reedited together with Samuel's reply in the latter's *Diwan*, ed. by Sassoon, pp. 70 ff.), turned to politics and, after his conversion to Islam, assumed the name of Abu'l Fadhl ibn Ḥisdai. As a Muslim he became an Arab polyhistor and influential statesman at the court of three Muslim kings of Saragossa (end of the 11th cent.). See Millás's *Poesia sagrada*, pp. 44, 85; and infra, n. 95. However, such conversions in the north, especially among the leading families, made a more lasting impression in so far as the communities themselves were far smaller and more closely knit. While in Spain and in the Near East such tragedies could still be shrugged off as individual whims and misfortunes, they loomed as major communal calamities in the weak and struggling Ashkenazic communities. Incidentally, the legend of the Jewish pope Elijanan and his father's successful mission to Rome doubtless arose from a curious combination of Jacob ben Yekuti'el's intervention in 1067–10 and the election of the "Jewish" Pope Anacletus II in 1150. See supra, Chap. XX, nn. 8 and 74. It could not have originated, therefore, until several generations after Simon's death.

57. Simon bar Isaac's *El El hai arannen* (I Shall Sing to the Living God) verse 8; and his *Eleh ba-rekheeb* (They Glory in Chariots) in his *Piyyute*, ed. by Habermann, pp. 40, 159 ff. (see also B. Klar's review of that edition reprinting in his
Meḥqarim ve-‘iyyunim, pp. 145-49); Amittai’s Eshkerah Elohim (I Remember the Lord) in Klar’s ed. of Ahimaaz’ Chronicle, pp. 108 ff.; and “Some Religious Poems by R. Solomon the Babylonian” (Hebrew), ed. by D. Goldschmidt in Tarbiz, XXIII, 198-204. Very effective also is Gershom’s Elekha nigra (We Cry Out to Thee), describing in unmixed language the terrific conversionist pressures and the stout resistance of the Jewish communities. Habermann’s ed. of Gershom’s Selihot u-pizmonim, pp. 12 ff.; supra, Chap. XXI, n. 5; and, in the context of his other works, S. Eidelberg’s aforementioned biographical sketch of “R. Gershom” in Sinai, XVIII, No. 214, pp. 57 ff. Christian censorship, which might have interfered with the circulation of such outspoken declarations, was not to become effective until the age of printing presses.

58. Amittai’s En lanu Elohim (We Have No other God but Thee), vv. 21-22, in Klar’s ed. of Ahimaaz’ Chronicle, p. 97; Gershom’s Ayyeh kol nifleotekha (Where Are All Thy Miracles?), vv. 29-30, in his Selihot, p. 8. Needless to say, the messianic problem was not absent from the Muslim-Jewish controversies. However, it obviously could not play quite the same role there as it did in the Judeo-Christian debate as to whether the Messiah had already come. That is why the anonymous “Polemical Poem on the Messianic Idea,” beginning She’aluni doreshai (My Inquirers Asked Me), and published by I. Davidson in a pertinent Hebrew essay in Sefer Klausner, pp. 274-76, very likely stems from a Christian, rather than a Muslim, environment. That the end of the poem is indicated by an Arabic term merely betrays the Arabic speech of the copyist. The poem’s utter simplicity and the absence of a rhyme or a self-identifying acrostic might even point to an early Byzantine milieu. See also the messianic poems discussed supra, Chap. XXV, nn. 13 ff.

59. The poem Titnem le-ḥerpah (Put Them to Shame), published on the basis of three MSS by A. H. Freimann in his Hebrew essay under this title in Tarbiz, XII, 70-74 (attributes it to Rashi; see below); Baruch bar Samuel’s “Litururgical Poems,” ed. by A. M. Habermann in SRIHP, VI, 47-160 including (on pp. 133 ff. No. 25) the penitential prayer Esh okholoḥ esh (Fire Devouring Fire) on the martyrs of Blois. See also S. Spiegel’s aforementioned stimulating essay, “In Monte Dominus Videbitur: the Martyrs of Blois and the Early Accusation of Ritual Murder,” Kaplan Jub. Vol., Hebrew section, pp. 267-87. Ephraim bar Jacob of Bonn’s Sefer Zehhirah (Book of Remembrance), has frequently been cited above from the Neubauer and Stern edition, as well as from A. M. Habermann’s anthology, Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz ve-Šarefat (Persecutions in Germany and France), pp. 115 ff. Reprinting here also Titnem le-ḥerpah (pp. 105 ff.), Habermann points out (p. 254) its similarity with the poem Aniah ve-ta’aniah (Lament and Wailing) by Joseph ben Isaac (probably Ibn Abitur), published by I. Davidson in his Ginze Schechter, III, 520. But the differences, both formal and substantive, are greater than the similarities. That is why the possibility of Rashi’s authorship of that vindictive poem is not entirely disproved by the argument adduced by Habermann in his critical edition of Piyyute Rashi (Rashi’s Liturgical Poems), p. 34. Although more sharply formulated, the sentiments here expressed do not differ materially from those in the poem Torah ha-temimah (The Integral Torah), vv. 41 ff., 49 f., the latter obviously aimed at the conquering Crusaders in Palestine. See ibid., p. 23. In any case, both poems emanated from the school of Rashi not long after the tragic events of 1096. See also R. F. Aronstein’s Hebrew review of
Habermann’s *Sefer Gezerot* in Orlogin, IV, 265; S. Bernstein’s earlier succinct observations on “Rashi as a Poet” (Hebrew), *Hadoar*, XX, 205–7; and *supra*, Chap. XXI, nn. 60 and 65.

60. Gershom’s *Gadol ‘avoni* (My Transgression Is Great) in his *Seliḥot*, pp. 24 ff. See *supra*, Chap. XXXI, n. 94. On the antecedents and manifold variations of the chain verse technique see *infra*, n. 84.

61. Amittal’s *Attah hu* (It Is Thou Whose Years Are Never Ended) in Klar’s edition, p. 101. See *supra*, n. 55, and, on the apologetic aspects of medieval sexual ethics, *supra*, Chap. XXIV, n. 67. Ashkenazic poetry is, indeed, filled with passages like the following: “Into my transgressions before Thee I pry, / My people’s failings, too, I sadly decry. / Lord! have mercy on penitents gone awry.” See Gershom’s *Eshpokh sihi lefanckha* (I Pour Out My Prayer before Thee), vv. 4–6, in his *Seliḥot*, p. 17. In fact, even before the era of the great massacres, northern letters were filled with self-recrimination, testifying to the overpowering sense of guilt permeating these Jewish communities. This guilt model evidently was but the counterpart to, and rationale of, the Jewish sufferings.

62. Moses bar Kalonymos’ poems, in part newly published in the appendix to Habermann’s ed. of Simon bar Isaac’s *Piyuṭe*, pp. 191 ff.; the latter’s Passover *qerobot*, *ibid.*, pp. 62 ff.; and numerous poems included in Habermann’s *Sefer Gezerot*, *passim*. Among these northern poets, it was Gershom bar Yehudah who seems to have endowed with a particularly keen historical sense. Of his ten extant poems two (*Attah mi-qedem* [From of Old Thou Hast Been Our God and Master] and *Zekhor berit Abraham* [Remember the Covenant of Abraham] in his *Seliḥot*, pp. 21 ff., 30 ff.) are wholly based on brief historical surveys demonstrating the divine guidance of history. Several others contain at least some historical allusions. In contrast thereto one feels far less immediate urgency even in the beautiful and learned poem, *Elohim mi-qedem* (God, Thou Hast Reigned from of Old) by Yehudah Halevi, which ends in the triumphant finale of Exodus. See the text recently recovered by Ratzaby in *Tarbiz*, XXIII, 16 ff.

63. Amittai’s *Er’elim u-mal’akhim* (Divine Spirits and Angels) and in his *El ‘ir gibborim* (To the City of the Mighty; that is, Heaven, according to the aggadic interpretation of Prov. 21:22), in Klar’s collection, pp. 75 ff., 91 ff., both with reference to *Pesiqta rabbati*, xx, ed. by M. Friedmann, fols. 86 ff.; and “The Shema’ Hagadah” (Hebrew), ed. by A. Jellinek in his *Bet ha-Midrasch*, V, 165–69 (with his comments, *ibid.*, pp. xl f., 54–56); Simon bar Isaac’s *Ve-‘attah banim* (And Now, My Sons) in his *Piyuṭe*, pp. 44 f. In his Hebrew “Studies in Yannai,” *SRIHP*, II, 235. M. Zulay has rightly discerned strong traces of both Yannai’s and Qali’s poetry in Amittai’s liturgical compositions. Of course, Jewish mysticism, in its newer kabbalistic forms, soon penetrated also the Iberian Peninsula. Yet one need but compare these Italo-German poems with Ibn Gabirol’s “Royal Crown,” Abraham ibn Ezra’s astrological poems, or even those more closely related by the twelfth-century author Oheb ben Meir ha-Nasi (e.g., his *Er’elim ve-hashmalim* [Divine Spirits and Glittering Angels] in Habermann’s anthology *Be-Ron yahad*, p. 66) and the still later distinguished kabbalistic exegete, Naḥmanides (e.g., his *Mitnasch ‘al kisse* [He Who Sits Erect upon the Throne], *ibid.*, p. 79), to note
the differences in tone and degree of sophistication. Neither does Nahmanides' famous liturgical poem on the peregrinations of the human soul from heaven to earth and back again, recited as a memento on New Year's day, have a counterpart in the earlier Ashkenazic liturgy. See the text and translation in M. Sach's Religiöse Poesie, pp. 155 ff., 328 ff., and Hebrew section, pp. 50 ff.; as well as G. Scholem's German translation of the "Hymnus vom Schicksal der Seele" in Schocken Almanach, 5696, pp. 86-89. See also Scholem's "Tradition und Neuschöpfung im Ritus der Kabballisten," Ernans-Jahrbuch, XIX, 121-80 (also more briefly in French in Evidences, VI, 34-39) which, although dealing with later periods, also sheds light on the liturgical approaches of earlier mystics. These differences will become somewhat clearer infra, Chaps. XXXIII and XXXIV.

64. A collection of these poems was assembled and critically edited by A. M. Habermann in his volume Shire ha-yihud ve-ha-kabod (Poems of Unity and Adoration). See esp. pp. 11 ff. (including the introductory statement to R. Tabyomi's commentary), 46 ff., 99 ff.


66. Hariri of Bosra's Maqamas, first published under the title Les Sèances by Sylvestre de Sacy in 1822, has since been the subject of numerous scholarly investigations; its first part appeared in the English translation by Thomas Chenery. Al-Ḥarizi's translation, too, under the name Mahberot Ithiel, was edited by Chenery, and more recently reedited, on the basis of the same unsatisfactory but so far unique Bodleian manuscript, by I. Perez. Perez also furnished a brief bio- and bibliographical sketch of Al-Ḥarizi's life and his work as translator of Hariri. See esp. Perez's edition, pp. 48, 221 ff.; and J. Schirmann's careful analysis of Die hebräische Uebersetzung der Maqamen des Hariri. Schirmann points out that while many other Hebrew authors did not hesitate to reproduce entire verses from the Qur'an in Hebrew translation, Al-Ḥarizi, with minor exceptions, either omitted such citations entirely or replaced them by appropriate biblical passages. If Hariri, for example, praised highly the effects on the readers of the first sura, the Hebrew translator recommended instead the recitation of the ninety-first psalm (Maqama, xii; ed. by Perez, p. 99). On this literary genre and its Arabic and Hebrew terminology, see also S. D. Goitein's Hebrew essay on "The Maqama and the Mahberot" in Mahberot le-sifrut, V, 26-40; and B. Klar's "Titles of Four Books," reprinted in his Mehqarim ve-iyyunim, pp. 343 ff.

67. Al-Ḥarizi's Taḥkemoni (Maqamas; a poetic miscellany), xviii, L, ed. by Lagarde, pp. 88 ff., 184 ff. (ed. by Toporowski, pp. 173 ff., 187 ff., 384 ff., 441 f.; the latter poems are not reproduced in Lagarde's ed.). The shortcomings of the existing editions of this Hebrew classic, whose extraordinary versatility, "unknown to the ancients," was so greatly extolled by Immanuel of Rome, Al-Ḥarizi's worthy successor, are analyzed by A. M. Habermann in "The Book Taḥkemoni" by R. Yehudah al-Ḥarizi" (Hebrew), Sinai, XV, Nos. 183-84, pp. 112-27. See also Habermann's earlier comments on "Al-Ḥarizi's Poems" (Hebrew), Mizrah u-na'$arab, IV, 18-21. In his "On the Sources of Al-Ḥarizi's Taḥkemoni" (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XXIII, 205-9, H. Schirmann rightly points out that, the author's professions of
originality to the contrary, his miscellanies included a great many passages which can still be traced back to some of his sources, particularly Hamadani’s famous work. Among poems in the latter section of Al-Ḥarizi’s book, quite a few have a decidedly homosexual coloring. This is particularly true of those he indirectly exculpates as poems of his youth. There is no way of ascertaining whether this was a genuine reflection of their author’s personal sentiments or the result of his conscious or unconscious imitation of the accepted literary fashions (on the pertinent passages in his trans. of Hariri, see the examples cited by Schirmann in his Hebräische Übersetzung, p. 22). See also, from another angle, S. Bernstein’s observations in his “New ‘Maqamas,’” Horeb, I, 179 ff.; and S. M. Stern’s analysis of “The Arabic Source of the ‘Maqama of the Cock’ [x] by Al-Ḥarizi” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XVII, 87–100.

As has frequently been noted, the technique of many maqamas, a dialogue between the narrator and the hero of the tale, has the earmarks of dramatic presentation. And yet there was no link between this poetic genre and either the Renaissance Hebrew drama or what is known of its ancient biblical and Hellenistic antecedents. In fact, there was nothing resembling a drama in medieval Hebrew literature. Undoubtedly, the connection between pagan as well as Christian worship and the existing public presentations discouraged emulation. Not even the Muslims, despite certain rites cultivated by the Shi’ites and other sectarianS, ever developed a religious drama of their own, and hence they also lacked all the stimuli necessary to the rise of secular dramatic arts as well. See the interesting discussion on W. Hoenerbach’s query “How may the complete absence of an Arab drama be explained?” summarized in G. E. von Grunebaum’s Studies in Islamic Cultural History, pp. 20 ff.; and B. Hunningher’s correct emphasis on the liturgical background of the Western theatrical arts in The Origin of the Theater. This problem will be more fully analyzed in connection with the rise of the Hebrew literary drama, if not yet the Hebrew theater, in the early modern period.

68. Al-Ḥarizi’s Tahkemoni, xii, in a Leningrad manuscript (not in the published editions); Joseph ben Meir Ibn Zabara’s Sefer Sha’шу’im (Book of Delight), vii.88–89, viii.160–61, ed. by I. Davidson, 2d ed., pp. 66 n. 4 (Intro.), 76 (citing in n. 6 interesting parallels from Hebrew letters, both original and translated), 90. In his English version of The Book of Delight, pp. 109, 117, M. Hadas offers a somewhat different translation. Davidson seems to go too far in denying Ibn Zabara’s authorship of almost all the poems inserted in the Book of Delight, merely because one, beginning Er’eh demut odem (I See the Image of Red over Sapphire), can definitely be proved to be part of a poem included in Halevi’s Diwan (ed. by Brody, II, 7 ff. No. 4; Mah lakh seviyah, or Why, O Gazette; also in Zemorah’s ed., I. Part 2, pp. 18 ff.). See Davidson’s ed. of Sefer Sha’шу’im, p. 134 n. 3. Just because plagiarism in literature was then generally viewed with far greater condensation than today (see supra, n. 40, and Chap. XXIV, n. 4), we ought not to assume that, once a plagiarist, a man was always a plagiarist. Moreover, it is well known that the later compilers of Halevi’s poetic works often sinned by an excess of zeal, and occasionally included poems of other authors. After all, we have to rely on a single manuscript for Ibn Zabara’s work. Other manuscripts may well have contained the full verse, the present fragment of which, as Davidson himself admits, reads better than that given in Halevi’s Diwan. But that as
it may, Ibn Zabara’s general independence in retelling, and in many ways reshaping, even the more common tales which had migrated from one civilization to another over many centuries, is attested by the analytical comments of both Davidson and M. Sherwood in the respective introductions to the edition and translation. Much more comparative work, however, is still needed before the tangled strains in Ibn Zabara’s and his confreres’ folkloristic borrowings will be fully unravelled. See also M. Hadass’s “Joseph Zabara and Diogenes Laertius,” JQR, XXVII, 151–54; and, more generally, I. Berger’s “On the Sources and Influence of the Book of Delight by R. Joseph ben Meir ibn Zabara” (Hebrew), Ha-Zofeh, XII, 227–41; and L. de Malkiel’s Spanish essay on “Yosef ben Meir ibn Zabara,” Davar (Buenos Aires), XXXVI, pp. 5–17.

69. Yehudah ben Isaac Shabbetai’s Minhat Yehudah Soneh nashim (Yehudah’s Offering: The Misogynist) is available only in a far from satisfactory collection of manuscript fragments, Ta’am zekenim (A Taste of the Ancients), ed. by E. Aschenazi, folis. 1–12; and in a German trans. based thereon by L. Stein, which appeared in installments in Der Freitagabend, 1851, Nos. 41–49. Excerpts from the latter are more readily available in A. Sulzbach’s aforementioned essay in J. Winter and A. Wünsche, Jüdische Literatur, III, 150 ff. A new critical edition is clearly indicated. Solomon ibn Şiqbal’s Ne’um Asher ben Yehudah (Thus Spake Asher ben Yehudah) was republished with introductory comments by J. Schirmann in SRIHP, II, 152–62, 193. See Al-Ḥarizi’s Taḥkemoni, iii, xx, ed. by Lagarde, pp. 23, 97 ff. (ed. by Toporowski, pp. 45, 204 ff.), and Schirmann’s comments in Tarbiz, XXIII, 201 n. 10. Yedaiah ha-Penini’s Oheb nashim was edited by A. Neubauer in Jubelschrift L. Zunz, pp. 188–40, Hebrew section, pp. 1–19. See also J. Chotiner’s “Yedaya Bedaresi,” JQR, [o.s.] VIII, 214–25; and I. Davidson’s Parody in Jewish Literature, pp. 8 ff. Of course, antifeminism had long animated the authors of popular sayings among many peoples; e.g., the sayings attributed to Socrates by Joseph ibn ‘Aqnin in his Tubb an-nufus. See his collection of aphorisms in Arabic and English, ed. and trans. by A. S. Halkin in “Classical and Arabic Material in Ibn ‘Aqnín’s ‘Hygiene of the Soul,’” PAAJR, XIV, 128 ff.

70. Abraham ben Samuel ibn Ḥisdai’s Ben ha-melekh ve-ha-nazir (Prince and Dervish), first published in Constantinople, 1518, has been reissued several times, most recently by A. M. Habermann (includes a Hebrew trans. of a brief Arabic fragment of the underlying story of Barlaam and Josaph and a bibliography). Considerable excerpts in German translation were included in the poetic anthology Manna, by the then youthful M. Steinschneider, pp. 1 ff., 41 ff., 72 ff., and partly reprinted in Winter and Wünsche, Jüdische Literatur, III, 172 ff. According to I. Zinberg, however, a Firkovicz MS in Leningrad offers many better readings than the printed editions. See his Geshichte fun der Literatur ba Yidn, I, 172 n. 2. Jacob ibn Eleazar (Abenalazar), on the other hand, was far less fortunate. His very name was regularly given in the Hebrew sources as Ben Eleazar, which could mean a patronymic rather than a family name. Only a part of his translation of Kalilah ve-Dimnah, preserved in a Paris MS, was published with a fragment from another Hebrew rendition by J. Derenbourg in his Deux versions hébraïques du livre Kalilah et Dimnah, pp. 311 ff. Although extant in three complete manuscripts, Ibn Eleazar’s Sefer Pardes rimmona ha-hokhimah (Orchard of Pomegranates of Wisdom) was only partially (Chaps. xiii–xxiii) edited by I. David-
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son in "A Fragment from a Philosophical Work by an Unknown Author," Ha-Zofeh, X, 94–105; XI, 96. His Sefer ha-Meshalim (Book of Parables) is likewise available only in a partial edition (maqamas v–vii, ix) by H. Schirmann, from a thirteenth-century French manuscript now in Munich, in his Hebrew essay on "The Love Stories of Jacob ben Eleazar" in SRIHP, V, 209–66, where the few available data on the life and work of our author are likewise briefly analyzed.

71. Isaac ben Solomon ibn Sahula's Meshal ha-qadmoni (Ancient Parable), ed. by I. Zemorah; Berakhiah ben Natronai's Mishle shu'alin (Fox Parables), first published in Mantua, 1557–59, were often reprinted. A fine new printing, based on the first edition and adorned by woodcuts by Leo Michelson, was published by L. Goldschmidt in 1921 (with a brief, mainly bibliographical introduction in German), while the latest edition by A. M. Habermann is based on four manuscripts and adds a few parables to a total of 119. It contains nineteen Gustave Doré illustrations borrowed from a La Fontaine edition. The book's enormous popularity is also attested by the appearance of a Judeo-German rhymed version by Jakob Koppelmann in Freiburg, 1588, and of a Latin version by Melchior Hanel (of the Society of Jesus) in Prague, 1661. On Ibn Sahula and his circle, see S. M. Stern's "Rationalists and Kabbalists in Medieval Allegory," JJS, VI, 75–86. A fuller consideration of the work of this poet and of his contemporary Berekhiah must be relegated to the period after 1200.

The Mishle Sindicad (Parables of Sinbad), available in several editions including a fairly recent one by A. M. Habermann, and its interrelations with similar tales in both East and West have long intrigued scholars. None of the existing texts and hypotheses are wholly satisfactory, however. For this reason M. Epstein has reexamined the existing manuscripts and reviewed much of the secondary literature in the preparation of a fine critical edition of the text, which he entitled Mishle Sendebar. In this unpublished New York University dissertation, provided also with a good English translation, Epstein argues for the Hebrew origin of this collection of tales and dates it back to between the fourth and the second pre-Christian centuries. This is highly improbable. The editor's main argument, from the similarities in thought and style of some of these tales with the book of Esther, could be readily duplicated from many later tales, since medieval story tellers, and not only those writing in Hebrew, were greatly impressed by this biblical narrative. We have seen that even such Muslim writers as Mas'udi and Firdausi were deeply impressed by the biblical stories and the biblical reconstruction of history. This is of course doubly true in the case of Christians, to whom the Old Testament was a constant source of inspiration. See supra, Chap. XXVIII, esp. n. 96. On the other hand, Sendebar reveals few similarities with the Hellenistic romances, the ancient story of Ahiqar, or the narratives preserved in the Jewish Apocryphal literature.

We shall probably have to resign ourselves to the profession of inability to date all such folk tales which had traveled from country to country in oral form for many generations before they ever found any literary expression. Such chance literary records are, therefore, even if themselves impeccably datable (which is rare), of little assistance in tracing back the true origins of each particular tale or even of parts of any particular collection. The same holds true for such other folkloristic tales as are represented by the Ma'ase Yerushalmi (The Story of the
Jerusalemite) attributed to R. Abraham ben Maimon (not the well-known Abraham Maimonides), which its recent editor, J. L. Zlotnik, ascribes to the geonic age. This date is, of course, conjectural, but at least the form and content of the narrative seem to be truly Hebraic. Certainly the motif of a congregation of demons in a far-off land observing the Sabbath and other Jewish laws has all the earmarks of genuine Jewish origins. These demons sufficiently appreciated Jewish learning to give in marriage their own beautiful princess, daughter of their King Ashmodai, to a shipwrecked Jewish scholar, who had miraculously found his way to them. See also M. Gaster, "An Ancient Fairy Tale Translated from the Hebrew," Folk-Lore, XLII, 156-78; and his older “Fairy Tales from Inedited Hebrew MSS. of the Ninth and Twelfth Centuries” (1896), reprinted in his Studies and Texts, II, 908-42.

In general, it is not easy to distinguish between these anonymous folkloristic tales, akin to those assembled by Nissim ibn Shahin and the other homilists discussed supra, Chap. XXVIII, and the more artistic romances of the Spanish Golden Age. Neither branch of literature has yet been subjected to that comprehensive analytical treatment which it so amply deserves. Apart from the aforementioned general histories of Jewish literature by Winter and Wünsche, Zinberg, and Waxman, one need but refer here to the brief surveys by Y. A. Klauser, Ha-Novelah ba-sifrut ha-‘ibrit (The Novel in Hebrew Literature from Its Inception to the End of the Haskalah Period); and by A. Dier Macho, La Novelistica hebraica medieval (a lecture).

72. Compare Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew version of Ibn Gabirol’s Tikkun middot ha-nefesh, ed. by E. L. Silber with the Arabic original K. Islaḥ al-akhlaq, ed. by S. S. Wise under the title of The Improvement of the Moral Qualities, and N. Bar-On’s recent Hebrew trans., esp. pp. 41 f. (also his Intro., p. 3 n. 2). Abraham ibn Hisdai’s Hebrew version of Al-Ghazzali’s K. Misran al-amal, entitled Mo’ezne sedeq (Righteous Scales), was first published in 1839. See J. Goldenthal’s introduction to his ed.: M. Steinschneider’s Arabische Literatur, p. 127; and, more generally, his “Introduction to the Arabic Literature of the Jews,” JQR, [o.s.] XII, 608 ff. See also A. S. Halkin’s ed. of Abraham ibn Hisdai’s Hebrew version of Maimonides’ Iggeret Teman (Epistle to Yemen), esp. p. 36; supra, Chap. XXV, nn. 62 ff.; and infra, Chap. XXXIV, n. 17.

73. T. Nöldeke’s Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der alten Araber, pp. 52 ff.; Saadiah ben Maimon ibn Danan’s Seder ha-dorot (Chronicle) in Z. H. Edelmann’s Hemdah genuzah, p. 29; the heading of Samuel ibn Nagrella’s poem, Yehosef qaḥ lekha (Joseph Take the Book), in his Diwan, ed. by Sassoon, p. 67 No. 96 (ed. by Habermann, I, 69); Moses ibn Ezra’s Shire ha-hol, ed. by Brody, I, 299. On Abraham ibn Sahl’s Diwan, and Abraham Isaac ben Meborakh’s Kasida on slaughter- ing, see Steinschneider’s Arabische Literatur, pp. 160 f., 240 f. See also supra, Chaps. XVI, n. 87; XVII, nn. 6-7 and 15. Remarkably, the memory of even Samau’al ibn Adiya was very slight among later Jewish poets; Moses ibn Ezra was among the very few to mention his name. See his K. al-Muhadhara, iii (Shirat Yisrael, P. 49). Yet some Jews, including women, continued to write Arabic poems. See esp. E. Mainz, “Quelques poésies judéo-arabes du manuscrit 411 de la Bibliothèque du Vatican,” JA, CCXXXVII, 51-83 (in vocalized Hebrew Characters; the first
seven poems perhaps by Solomon Aaron ben Pinhas); and W. Bacher, “Eine jüdische Dichterin in arabischer Sprache,” MGWJ, XX, 186–87 (of indeterminate date). Jewish familiarity with Arabic poetry came to the fore also in the numerous overt or tacit translations of Arabic poems into Hebrew. Failure to mention the original authors was owing not so much to the reluctance to admit a poem’s foreign origin, as to the peculiar notions of literary ownership characteristic of the Middle Ages. See supra, n. 40. Certainly, when Todros Abulafia rendered into Hebrew a poem by Ibn Qozman or any other Arab author he was not conscious of any act of plagiarism, since the new product was so much altered in the process of translation. See S. M. Stern’s “Imitations of Arabic Muwashshahat in Spanish-Hebrew Poetry” (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XVIII, 186 (tracing the common origin of poems by Ibn Qozman and Abulafia). Of special interest is the early Hebrew rendition of a poem by Hallaj, the famous martyr of Islamic mysticism. See the text published by Hirschfeld in his “Arabic Portion,” JQR, [os.] XV, 177, 181.

74. Halevi’s Rashe ‘am (When the Heads of the People Foregather) and Pannu derakhenu (Clear Our Way) in his Diwan, ed. by Brody, I, 157 f. No. 102, 176 f. No. 108 (ed. by Zemorah, I, Part 3, pp. 109 f., 324 f.) and the reconstruction of the Castilian texts by Millás Vallicrosa in his Yehudah Ha-Levi, pp. 53 ff. See also his “Sobre los más antiguos versos en lengua castellana,” Sefarad, VI, 362–71. This reconstruction is based upon the fine appreciation of the Spanish Jews in the Age of Yehudah Halevi” in a Hebrew essay by Y. Baer in Zion, I, 6–23. See also supra, Chap. XX, n. 46. A new reconstruction of both these endings is offered by S. M. Stern in his comprehensive studies: “Les Vers finaux en espagnol dans la muwaššahas hispano-hébraïques,” Al-Andalus, XIII, 311 ff., 317 f., 335 f., supplemented by “Some Textual Notes on the Romance jar‘as,” ibid., XVIII, 133–40, and Les Chansons mosarabes. Further discussions on this significant problem have been conducted by F. Cantera in his “Versos españoles en las muwaššahas hispano-hebraïques,” Sefarad, IX, 197–234; by E. García Gomez in his “Más sobre las ‘jar‘as’ romances en ‘muwaššahas’ hebraïes,” Al-Andalus, XIV, 409–17 (summarizing the twenty texts under review); his “Nuevas observaciones sobre las ‘jar‘as’ romances en muwaššahas hebraïes,” ibid., XV, 157–77; his “Dos nuevas jar‘as romanaces (XXV y XXVI) en muwaššahas arabes,” ibid., XIX, 369–91; and by J. Schirmann in “Un Nouveau poème hébreux avec vers finaux en espagnol et en arabe,” Homenaje a Millás-Vallicrosa, II, 347–53 (possibly by Yehudah ibn Gayyat, with additional bibliography). See also E. Lévi-Provençal’s “Arabico-Occidentalia II: Quelques observations à propos du déchiffrement des ḫarqas ‘mosarabes,’” Arabica, I, 201–8; and, more generally, F. de la Granja’s brief review article, “Los Estudios sobre poesía arábigo-andaluz,” Al-Andalus, XVIII, 224–29; and infra, n. 84. The general familiarity of the Spanish and other Western Jews with the Romance languages of their environment will be more fully discussed in its later medieval context.

75. Samuel ibn Nagrela’s letter and poem Ma‘im, in his Kol Shire, ed. by Habermann, III, 161 ff. (see ibid., pp. 177 ff., and the older literature listed by Sassoon in his edition of the Diwan, p. xix); Al-Ḥarizi’s Tahkemoni, xt, ed. by Lagarde, P. 57 (ed. by Toporowski, pp. 116 ff.). See supra, n. 15; Chap. XXIX, n. 38; and Vol. II, 145 f. Incidentally, Meir bar Isaac’s Aqdamut made history. Its key phrase,
"If All the Sky Were Parchment," penetrated also many Western poems, as is shown by I. Linn in a comparative study under this title in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, LIII, 951–70.

76. N. Allony’s *Torat ha-mishqalim* (The Scansion of Medieval Hebrew Poetry: Dunash, Yehudah Halevi, and Abraham ibn Ezra), pp. 9 ff. (offering a good survey of the history of studies of the Hebrew rhythm); Moses ibn Ezra’s *Shire ha-hol*, ed. by Brody, I, 243. No. 234 vv. 131–33; his *K. al-Muḥadhara*, III (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 47 ff.). See also D. Yellin’s *Torat ha-shirah ha-sefaradit* (Introduction to the Hebrew Poetry of the Spanish Period); and the critique thereof in Allony’s *Mi-torat ha-lashon*, pp. 17–32. Even in Spain before the expulsion, Moses ibn Ḥabib, shown in Murviedro the aforementioned ancient funeral inscription supposedly recording the death of an emissary of King Amaziah of Judah, saw therein clear proof that “this method of poetic scansion had existed since the time when our forefathers lived on their soil.” See his *Darkhe no’am* (Pleasant Paths; on Hebrew Prosody), vi.2, cited supra, Chap. XVI, n. 41. This spurious inscription, as well as the underlying acceptance of the antiquity of the Hebrew syllabic meter, found wide currency in contemporary Hebrew letters. See the sources cited by Allony in his *Torat ha-mishqalim*, pp. 16 ff.

77. One of the main objections, voiced by Halevi against the adoption of the Arabic meter in Hebrew poetry (see below), was that the laws governing the use of the two shevas so greatly differed in the two languages. See his *K. al-Khazari*, II.78; ed. by Hirschfeld, pp. 128 ff. (in his English trans., pp. 127 f.; see also *ibid.*, p. 302 n. 46); and the sources mentioned *infra*, n. 86. On the importance of the sheva in the whole structure of the Hebrew language, see supra, Chap. XXIX, n. 20.


79. Samuel ibn Nagrela’s poem, cited supra, n. 75 (see also Habermann’s ed., pp. 173 f.); D. Yellin’s *Ketabim*, II, 190 ff., 205 ff.; S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia literaria*, xviii, in “Everyman’s Library” ed., p. 198. In his comprehensive *Torat ha-shirah ha-sefaradit*, Yellin has also pointed out that whatever the merits of the controversy over the appropriateness of the use of Arabic meters in Hebrew poetry may have been, we ought to be grateful for this widespread imitation not only because it so greatly enhanced the richness of Hebrew metric forms, but also because it helped stem excessive quotations from the Bible. When one compares the prose writings of the period, studded with biblical citations not always appropriate or relevant to the theme, one will indeed appreciate the inability of poets to incorporate entire passages from the poetic sections of the Old Testament, written in an entirely different rhythm. We shall see that even this obstacle did not completely overcome the penchant of medieval poets to detect ever new meanings in the biblical text, and to employ scriptural phrases in some such
novel meanings in their poems. See also M. Hak's "Sproutings of Tonal Rhythm in Hebrew Poetry" (Hebrew), Tarbiz, XI, 91-109 (mainly relating to the later Middle Ages).

80. See H. Schirmann's advice as to "How Is One to Recite the Metric Poems of Our Spanish Writers?" (Hebrew), Ha-Kinnus, I, 296-301; and, with minor variations, in "La Métrique quantitative dans la poésie hébraïque du Moyen Age," Sefarad, VIII, 323-32. On the reading of Syriac poetry, see M. Sprengling's pertinent remarks in his dissertation on "Antonius Rhetor on Versification," AJSL, XXXII, 162 ff. Here the detailed researches on the problem of Syriac meter are carefully reviewed. It is truly astonishing how little work has been done even in the last four decades concerning the interrelations between the Syriac and the Hebrew or Arabic meters.

81. Halevi's Siyyon ha-lo tish'ali, cited supra, n. 46. The ayikh rhyme courses through the entire poem; it appears in all even-numbered verses of the total of sixty-eight. With its accent for the most part on final syllables, Hebrew offered great temptation to rhyme words ending on the same sound. Purists insisted, however, that a proper rhyme must include at least two syllables, and Abraham ibn Ezra, punning on Deut. 22:10, counseled a would-be poet: Lo taharoz be-shor u-ba-hamor (Thou shalt not rhyme with an ox and an ass). See the comparison with Arabic poetry in Yellin's Torat ha-shirah, pp. 11 ff.

In his Studies in Literary Modes (pp. 144 ff), A. M. Clark stresses the differences between the Greek and the Latin or English consonantal structures. Greek is a highly vocalic language, the average ratio of vowels to consonants being 54:45:6. In Latin the opposite is true. Here the ratio is 45:7:54:3. In English the preponderance of consonants is even greater, the average ratio of vowels declining further to 42:4:57:5. "Thus Greek scansion," Clark explains, "came to be based on the comparative duration of syllables, classified into long and short," while the larger number of consonants made both Latin and English far more susceptible to the adoption of rhymes. This is evidently doubly true in the case of Hebrew, where the vowel has a decidedly secondary importance. Although no detailed study of its relative frequency seems to have been published, there is little doubt that it plays an even lesser role than in English. There is, moreover, that intermediary sound, the sheva mobile, which Ben Asher had already described as "serving to indicate about half a tone" (Digduqe ha-te'amim, p. 15), because its audibility depends entirely on the following syllable.

To secure a random but fairly representative sample, we have reviewed the first nine verses of the book of Isaiah and the first chapter of Psalms, disregarding entirely the matres lectionis. The resulting figures were for Isaiah 400 consonants, 242 vowels and 46 mobile shevas (including ha'tafs), or a ratio of about 58:35:7. The count in the first psalm was quite similar: 204 consonants, 129 vowels and 25 shevas, yielding a ratio of almost 57:36:7. Substantially similar results were also obtained in a letter count of two short poems by Ibn Gabirol and Halevi, except that here, owing to the exigencies of the Arabic meter and the use of "pegs," the number of vowels and shevas per verse was fairly constant. In Ibn Gabirol's wedding poem Shilhah le-bat nadib (Send to the Patron's Daughter), the consonants included in each verse ranged from 14 to 18, but there were invariably only 10 vowels and 2 shevas, except for the somewhat garbled sixth verse. No such irregularity occurs in Halevi's similar poem, Se'u shalom (Carry
Ye Greetings to the Choicest of Bridegrooms), each verse of which includes 8 vowels, 3 shewas, and 13-16 consonants. See Ibn Gabirol's Shire, ed. by Bialik and Ravnitzky, II, 34 No. 28 (Selected Poems, ed. by Davidson, p. 18); and Halevi's Diwan, ed. by Brody, II, 13 f. No. 9 (ed. by Zemorah, I, Part 2, p. 115; and in N. Salaman's trans., p. 52). Even these self-imposed shackles, however, did not seriously alter the basic ratios. They are 58:36:6 in Ibn Gabirol's poem, and 57:31:12 in that of Halevi. This obvious vocalic inferiority doubtless greatly facilitated the introduction of rhymes into Hebrew poetry, when for other reasons this expedient was found intellectually and socially desirable. See supra, Chap. XXXI, n. 34.

Nor did the Hebrew poets, unlike their Byzantine and Latin confreres, have to combat a hostile tradition. Although the biblical rhymes were undoubtedly accidental, they could be invoked, if needed, against any likely opposition. The dichotomy, on the other hand, between the educated quantitative rhythm and the plebeian rhymed doggerel, which had proved such an obstacle to the general adoption of rhymed poetry in the classical literatures (see Clark's Studies, pp. 146 ff.), had no counterpart in Hebrew letters, which no longer reflected popular speech habits. See also O. Dingerdein's older study of Der Reim bei den Griechen und Römern; and F. Dölger's more recent analysis of Die byzantinische Literatur in der Reinsprache. Among modern editions arranged according to rhymes, one may mention especially H. Brody's ed. of Moses ibn Ezra's Šīre ha-hol. I. Davidson was right, therefore, in trying to compile a comprehensive list of "Rhymes in Hebrew Poetry." However, his preparatory work was still incomplete at the time of his demise, and I. Elbogen could publish for him posthumously but an incomplete index to selected authors, ranging from Samuel ibn Nagrela to Moses ibn Zur (18th cent.), in JQR, XXX, 299-398.

82. Al-Ḥarizi's Ṭakhkemoni, xi, ed. by Lagarde, pp. 56 ff. (ed. by Toporowski, pp. 115 ff.), and supra, n. 66. Far simpler and more usual was the figure of speech called by Moses ibn Ezra, the "mixture of doubt with certainty and of a positive with a negative assertion." Though quoting, as he always does, a few biblical examples, Ibn Ezra admitted that such mixtures, which he illustrates from both Hebrew and Arabic poems, were rare in Scripture but became frequent in medieval letters because of emulation of Arabic patterns. See his K. al-Muḥadharah, viii.20 (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 195 ff.). See also further illustrations in Yellin's Torat ha-shirah ha-sefaradit, pp. 270 ff.; and the detailed analyses of several of these "adornments," found in Ibn Ezra's Poetics, against their biblical background by A. Díez Macho in his "Algunas figuras retóricas," Sefarad, IV, 255-74; "La Metáfora y la alusión bíblica," ibid., V, 49-81; "Estudio de la házara," ibid., VII, 3-29, 209-50; "La Homonimia o paronomasia," ibid., VIII, 293-321. Of interest also is A. Mirski's dissertation, Šurat noy (Rhetorical Forms and Poetic Elements in the Midrashim as Prototypes for the Palestinian Piyyутim; multigraphed) which were inherited by the later secular poets as well. Of course, here, too, the question of the priority of homilist or liturgical poet remains open. It would certainly appear that the poetic imagination of the creative precentor must have injected also some of these aesthetic adornments into their presentations, and influenced also the delivery of many sermons. See supra, Chap. XXXI.

83. Ibn Ezra's K. al-Muḥadharah, viii.1, 4, 6 (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 160 ff., 169 ff., 172 f.), citing Ibn Gabirol's poem, Ani ha-ish (I Am the Man Who Has Donned
His Girdle), vv. 37–38, ed. by Bialik and Rawntzky, I, 6 f. Ibn Ezra failed to indicate that the opposition undoubtedly objected less to metaphors as such than to the excessive quest for strange and unexpected similes which characterized much of the contemporary Arabic and Jewish letters. A. Mez has rightly pointed out, however, that this “striving after uncommon metaphors . . . powerfully stimulated the tendency to penetrate into the most hidden secrets of things and to see the oddest peculiarities in them.” See his Renaissance of Islam, p. 259. We must bear in mind that, long before the spread of Arab poetry, homilies and poems by oriental authors such as Ephrem Syrus were “filled with metaphors, daring figures of speech, allegories, hyperboles and flights of imagination unknown to Greeks and Romans” (Chabot in his Littérature syriaque, p. 27).

84. The influence of the Arabic muwashshah on Spanish-Hebrew poetry has been carefully examined only in recent years, although occasional references thereto are also found in such earlier monographic studies as B. Halper’s still meritorious analysis of “The Scansion of Medieval Hebrew Poetry,” JQR, IV, 153–224. A brief description of the muwashasha technique is offered by S. M. Stern in his “Studies on Ibn Quzman,” Al-Andalus, XVI, 381. See also the numerous recent publications in this field by, E. Garcia Gomez, and other authors, listed supra, n. 74: and, more generally, the older but still useful study by M. Hartmann, Das arabisiche Strophengedicht, I: Das Muwaššah; and A. R. Nykl’s Hispano-Arabic Poetry and Its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours, especially pp. 266 ff. (on Ibn Quzman). On the biblical antecedents of the medieval Hebrew stanzas, see especially C. F. Kraft’s dissertation, The Strophic Structure of Hebrew Poetry as Illustrated in the First Book of the Psalter (includes a survey of the older literature); and J. A. Montgomery’s “Stanza Formation in Hebrew Poetry,” JBL, LXIV, 379–84 (directed against C. C. Torrey’s Second Isaiah). On the techniques used by the payyetanim, see also the literature cited supra, Chap. XXXI.

85. Ibn Ezra’s K. al-Muhadhara, Intro., and Chaps. v and viii (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 33, 62 ff., 109 ff.). On Saadia’s Egron, see supra, Chap. XXX, n. 14. The Arabic original of Ibn Ezra’s work still awaits publication. A fairly full description of the only extant (Bodleian) manuscript was submitted by M. Schreiner as far back as 1890–91. See “Le Kitâb al-Mouhdhâra wa-l-moudhâkara de Moïse b. Ezra et ses sources,” REJ, XXI, 98–117; XXII, 67–81, 256–49. For the last three decades scholars have, therefore, been limited to B. Z. Halper’s Hebrew translation, which also lists the few Arabic excerpts previously published (pp. 24 f.). Although prepared by a competent student of both the Arabic language and medieval Hebrew letters, this translation is frequently too free to reproduce precisely the author’s ideas. See, e.g., the criticisms voiced in J. N. Simhonii’s otherwise sympathetic review in Hâtekufah, XXXIII, 491–500. See also J. M. Millâs Vallicrosa’s Spanish trans. of Chap. v in “Un Capítulo del ‘Libro de Poética’ de Mosé Abeneza,” Boletín de la R. Academia Española, XVII, 425–47. N. Bar-On’s (Braun’s) intention, therefore, to publish both a critical edition of the Arabic text and a new Hebrew translation is to be highly welcomed.

Not even all the important Arabic works on poetic arts have thus far been published. See the more recent discussions by I. Krachkovsky (or Krakhkovskii) in “Die arabische Poetik im IX. Jahrhundert,” Monde orientale, XXIII, 23–39 (mainly on Al-Mu’tazz, Jaḥîz, and Qudama); and by G. E. von Grunebaum in his
annotated translation of Al-Baqillani's section on poetry in A Tenth-Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism. The significance of the query concerning the inspirational quality of wine can only be understood in the light of the great importance ascribed to drinking in contemporary Arabic letters. Perhaps because of their sense of guilt over the violation of a religious prohibition, the Muslim writers devoted disproportionate space to the pros and cons of imbibing wine. The Kairawan historian Abu Ishaq ibn ar-Raqiq an-Nadim (d. 1026) compiled a comprehensive anthology of Arabic poems discussing its merits and demerits. See W. M. de Slane's comment on his translation of Ibn Khaldun's Histoire des Berbères, I, 292 n. 3. Jews followed suit, although some of their poems extolling the Bacchian qualities of that mildly intoxicating liquor bear the clear imprint of contemporary fashion. Only some of the youthful wine songs of Halevi carry real conviction.

86. The brief fragment of Halevi's treatise, which even in its complete form apparently did not exceed the size of a large broadside, was first published in 1930 by H. Brody under the title Jehuda Ha Levi, Die schönen Versmasse. Brief textual "Notes on the Text of Yehudah Halevi's Article on Poetic Meters" (Hebrew) were supplied by S. M. Stern in Tarbiz, XXI, 62, while Allony, in his Toraḥ ha-mishqalim, pp. 119 ff. subjected the entire treatise and parallel statements in K. al-Khasari to close scholarly scrutiny. Allony analyzed here (pp. 161 ff.) in considerable detail Abraham ibn Ezra's Sefer Šahot which, unlike the works of his namesake Moses or Halevi, was written in Hebrew, and thus helped popularize the metric theories of the Spanish schools among the Jews of Christian Europe. A later Hebrew work on meters, aptly entitled Sheqla ha-godesh (Sacred Shekel, or Measure, to be distinguished from the aforementioned moralistic work by Joseph Qimḥi) is attributed to David ibn Yahya (1440-1524) by Allony in his pertinent Hebrew essay in KS, XVIII, 192-98. See also J. Llamas's "Tres capitulos de métrica rabínica de R. David ben Šelomo ibn Yahya," Sefarad, VIII, 277-91 (from Escorial MSS).

87. Moses ibn Ezra's K. al-Muḥaddara, Intro. and viii.16 (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 34, 185 ff.). On Ibn Bal'am's work, no fragment of which seems to be extant, see the literature listed supra, Chaps. XXIX, n. 76. Of course, all the great Spanish poets included at least some messianic poems in their diwans. See supra, Chap. XXV. The problem of the frequently exaggerating language of the Bible, however, evidently disturbed many pious contemporaries and was grist for the mill of the numerous skeptics. That is why Maimonides felt it necessary to devote an entire lengthy chapter in his Guide (11.29) to demonstrating that such figures of speech, especially in Isaiah, were never intended to be taken literally. The public, however, was generally prepared to accept the metaphorical meaning of poetic descriptions and often repeated the old adage that "the best part of the poem is its lie." See L. Dukes's Nahal qedumim (Ancient Brook; essays on medieval Hebrew poetry), pp. 54 ff.; and I. Davidson's comments in the intro. to his ed. of "The First Chapter of the Book Bate ha-nefesh ve-ha-leḥashim by Levi ben Abraham ben Ḫayyim" (Hebrew), SRIHP, V, 9.

88. Menahem ben Saruq's epistle in Teshubot talmide Menahem, ed. by Stern, pp. xxiii ff.; Abraham ibn Ezra's Zekhor-na (Please Remember), ed. with a com-
mentary in S. Pinsker's *Lickute kadmoniot*, II, 136 (cf. Davidson's *Oṣar*, II, 213 No. 130). That the author was Abrahem (and not Moses) ibn Ezra, two manuscript annotations to the contrary, has been proved by S. Abramson in his "Notes on Medieval Hebrew Poetry" (Hebrew), KS, XVII, 243 f. On the *shibbus* in general, see Moses ibn Ezra's *K. al-Muḥadara*, viii.20 (Shirat Yisrael, pp. 205 ff.); and the more detailed illustrations assembled by L. Dukes in his still useful monograph, *Zur Kenntnis der neuhebräischen religiösen Poetie*, pp. 112 ff.; and Yellin's *Torat ha-shirah*, pp. 118 ff. At times the metaphors became so complicated that few readers were able to divine the poet's intention. This gave rise to commentaries, such as the very learned modern commentary, *Gibe'at Sha'ul* by Saul Joseph on the poems of Yehudah Halevi, or Joseph ibn Waqar's lengthy exposition on his own poem. See *supra*, n. 64. Obviously, when such learned treatises began taking the place of the living communication between author and reader, this was an unmistakable sign of poetry's incipient decay.

89. The Sefer Qerobah has long been known to scholars; it was frequently quoted by Zunz. But it was first published in full, from an Oxford MS, by Habermann in *SRIHP*, III, 91–132. This booklet has preserved a number of older traditions unrecorded elsewhere. Even the spurious reports have considerable value for the understanding of the successive generations' changing appreciation of the early ḥiyyuṭîm. Our author not only equated, for example, Eleazar Qalir with the Tanna Eleazar ben Simon, but also attributed the introduction of liturgical poems to the need of communicating the rabbinic teachings to the unlearned masses who never came to the academy. In this context the term qerobah is explained (apparently for the first time) as derived from qerab, "come near Me, that is engage Satan in combat" (with reference to J. Berakhot iv.4, 8b). See *SRIHP*, III, 101; and *supra*, Chap. XXXI.


91. Ibn abi Ad-Dunya al-Qurashi's *K. Dhamm al-malāḥî* (Disparagement of Musical Instruments), ed. with an English trans. by J. Robson in his *Tracts on Listening to Music, passim*; Abraham ibn Ezra's poem, *Ha-Yishme'elim* (The Ishmaelites) in D. Rosin's ed. of his *Reime und Gedichte*, pp. 222. As late as 1502 a Moroccan author felt it incumbent upon himself to write in the defense of secular singing to a moderate extent. See J. Robson's English trans. of an excerpt from "A Maghribi MS on Listening to Music," *IC*, XXVI, 113–31. By the twelfth century Persian poetry and music had evidently so thoroughly been absorbed in the mainstream of Arabic arts, that even this world traveler did not find it necessary to allude to its particular range of interests. The more provincial Moses ibn Ezra had mentioned in his aforesaid poem only Arabs, Greeks, as well as Jews, although he was of course familiar with some of the literary output of the Spanish Christians,
and with the Indian proverbs and tales which had achieved ever growing circulation among his own coreligionists. That our poet was not consciously parochial, however, is evident in the same poem, when he tried to explain nature's great diversities by the influence of the seven climates and the seventeen thousand cities. See his Shire ha-hol, ed. by Brody, I, 240 No. 234 v. 67.

92. Israel ben Moses Najara's Zemirot Yisrael (Songs of Israel), Venice, 1599 ed.; Intro.; Isaac Gorni's Diwan, cited from a Munich manuscript by J. Schirrmann in Orlovin, III, 93, 95 (in French trans. in Lettres Romanes, III, 180, 184; Improving upon H. Gross' edition in his "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Arles; Nachträge," MGWJ, XXXI, 513 ff.). On the relations between Gorni and the Bedershis, father and son (Abraham and Yedaiah), see Gross, ibid., pp. 507 ff.; and Schirrmann, pp. 95 ff. (Lettres romanes, III, 176 ff., 185 f.). See also supra, n. 69.


94. Alfsi's Resp., No. 281; Sefer Hasidim, ed. by Wistinetzki, Nos. 347-48; H. G. Farmer's "Music" in the Legacy of Islam, ed. by Arnold and Guillaume, p. 358; Maimonides' Resp., pp. 338 ff. No. 370; Jacob ben Asher's Tur O.H., 1.10 and end (Joseph Karo in his comments thereon betrays his unfamiliarity with the text of Maimonides' reply). Maimonidean responsum, first published in the Arabic original with a German trans. by I. Goldziher in MGWJ, XXII, 174-80, is available in a revised Arabic text with the Hebrew and an English version in H. G. Farmer's Maimonides on Listening to Music. Our version largely follows that of Werner and Sonne in HUCA, XVI, 341. Farmer raises, but does not answer, the question as to the possible indebtedness of Maimonides' enumeration of the five stages of forbidden music to Al-Ghazzali's classification of five kinds of music which are prohibited to Muslims. However, the differences are even greater than the similarities, and mere coincidence in number is far more likely. See also Maimonides' Guide 11.8; B. Cohen's analysis of The Responsum of Maimonides concerning Music (also referring to two pertinent responsa by Hai Gaon, ed. by B. M. Lewin in Gk, V, 33-35 and 58-59 No. 59); supra, n. 54; and Chap. XXXI, n. 31. In his Code, Maimonides briefly restated his opinion that the rabbis had long prohibited singing as well as all instrumental music; even mere joyful listening to music was outlawed "because of the destruction" of the Temple. He admitted, however, that one could sing religious songs even over wine. See M.T. Ta'anit 2b. 15. It is doubly remarkable, therefore, that his aversion to instrumental music did not dampen his exegetical ardor as Mishnah commentator. In explaining the various instruments recorded in M. 'Arakhin 11.3, he tried to identify each instrument by its structure and its Arabic equivalents, "as they were explained to us." Incidentally, Rashi, too, as elsewhere, evinced considerable interest in these ancient realia, and on that occasion identified the biblical-talmudic halil with the contemporary French chalumeau. See his Commentary on b. 'Arakhin 10a. Historically inaccurate though this rendition may be, it reveals the great exegete's genuine
effort to approximate for his readers the shape of the ancient flute which the Babylonian Talmud itself had difficulty in identifying. On purely logical grounds, it equated this instrument with the *abbub* likewise mentioned in the Mishnah. See A. Darmesteter and D. S. Blondheim, *Les Gloses françaises dans les commentaires talmudiques de Raschi*, I, 23 No. 182, 82 No. 592; and C. Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments*, pp. 118 ff.

95. Ibn Abi 'Usaibiyah's *'Uyun al-Anba* (Choicest News on the Classes of Physicians), ed. by A. Müller, II, 50; J. Ribera y Tarragó's *Music in Ancient Arabia and Spain*, *Being La Música de las Cantigas*, English trans., p. 72; Mas'udi's *K. at-Tabib*, in De Goeje's *Bibliotheca*, VIII, 105. Other Arabic writings containing much biographical and historical material on musicians and music are listed in Farmer's *History*, p. 153. On Abu'l Fadhl Ḥisdai, see *supra*, n. 56.

96. Ḥunayn ibn Ishaq's *K. Adâb al-falâisâfa* (Die Sinnsprüche der Philosophen), I, 19 end, in Al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew trans. entitled *Musere ha-pilosophim*, ed. by A. Löwenthal, p. 16; and in the English rendition by Werner and Sonne in *HUCA*, XVII, 559 (on its sources, see *ibid.*, pp. 558 ff.): Joseph Albo's *Sefer ha-Iqqarim* (Book of Principles), xxiii, 8, ed. and trans. by I. Husik, IV, 211 (essentially, however, echoing the statement of the German pictist, cited below); and Samuel Archevolte's *'Arugat ha-bosem* (Bed of Spices; on grammar and rhythm), xxi, Amsterdam, 1730 ed., fols. 100 f. See also K. Merkle's dissertation, *Die Sinnsprüche der Philosophen "Kitâb Adâb al-Falâisâfa" von Ḥunain ibn Ishâq in der Ueberarbeitung des Muhammad ibn 'Ali Al-Ansâri*. In his detailed analysis of the various Arabic and Hebrew texts of the musicological passage in Saadia's *Beliefs and Opinions*, x, 18, ed. by Landauer, p. 317 (in Ibn Tibton's Hebrew trans., p. 160; in Rosenblatt's English trans., pp. 402 ff.), H. G. Farmer points out that, although not clearly stating his pertinent views, Saadia, like Al-Kindi, implied his belief in the nexus between colors, perfumes, and melodies which was then being more fully developed by the Brethren of Purity. See his *Sa'adya Gaon on the Influence of Music*, pp. 8 ff.; and E. Gerson-Kiwi's review thereof in *KS*, XX, 206–9.

97. Saadia's *Beliefs, loc. cit.*, in Werner and Sonne's trans. in *HUCA*, XVII, 535 f. (the concluding paragraph is not reproduced in the extracts cited by Farmer in his study of Saadia). Evidently because of this psychological connection, the gaon also insisted that the psalms had to be recited by the levites at the Temple in precisely those tunes which were indicated in the headings. See his *Commentary* on Ps. 5:1, 76:1, ed. respectively by S. H. Margulies, pp. 5 (Arabic), 13, 22 (German), and by S. Galliner, pp. viii, 23; Werner and Sonne's remarks in *HUCA*, XVI, 295 f.

98. Maimonides' *Commentary* on M. Abot, Introduction known as the *Shemonah Peragim* (Eight Chapters), ed. with an English trans. by J. I. Gorfrinkel, pp. 51 (text), 70 (trans.; our deviation from Gorfrinkel's version commends itself by both the Arabic text and the Ibn Tibbon version); Joseph ibn 'Aqnin's *Ṭubb an-nufus*, xxvii, in M. Güdemann's edition in *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen*, pp. 94 ff. (German), 32 f. (Arabic; also in S. Assaf's *Megorot le-toledot ha-hinukh*, II, 38); Shem Tob ben Joseph ibn Falaquera's *Sefer ha-Mebaqqesh* (Book of the Seeker), ed. by Mordecai Tamal, fols. 99b f. (also in the excerpts and trans. by Werner and Sonne in *HUCA*, XVII, 545 ff.). Ibn 'Aqnin's passage, essentially but
a quotation from Farabi, is also reproduced in facsimile from the unique Oxford MS by Farmer as the frontispiece of *Al-Farabi's Arabic-Latin Writings on Music*. The use of music in hospitals is also mentioned by the Brethren of Purity, and H. G. Farmer saw "a Hebrew manuscript with a miniature depicting the lutenist in the anteroom of a physician awaiting, presumably, to effect a cure or allay a dis-temper by means of his art" (*Sa'adyah Gaon, p. 8*).

99. Abraham ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-Mispar* (Book of Numbers), ed. by Silberberg, p. 46; Abraham bar Ḥiyya's version of the excerpts from Saadiah's *Beliefs*, x, in Farmer's *Sa'adyah Gaon*, pp. 49 ff. (offering both a revised text and a detailed commentary); his general introduction to mathematical science entitled *Yesode ha-tebunah* (Principles of Understanding). See infra, Chap. XXXV. It had indeed long been customary among Arab students, for instance Avicenna, to include a section on music in their discussion of mathematical science (*ulum ri'yadiyya*). See Farmer's *History of Arabian Music*, p. 219. Avicenna's chapter is likewise lost, and hence there is no way of ascertaining the extent to which the Spanish Jewish scientist was indebted to his Persian Muslim predecessor.

100. Ibn 'Aqnin in Güdemann, *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen*, loc. cit.; Ibn Falaquera's *Sefer ha-Mebaqqesh*, loc. cit. See also the latter's introductory textbook, *Reshit ḥokhmah* (Beginnings of Wisdom), ed. by M. David, pp. 46 f. (reproduced with an English trans. by Werner and Sonne in *HUCA*, XVII, 542 ff.), discussing the distinction between practical and theoretical music and subdividing the musical theory into five categories. One wonders whether Ibn Falaquera referred to a lute of four strings merely because he uncritically copied the physiological doctrine of Farabi, or whether he really saw such lutes in the Provence, although one of five strings seems to have become much more common in the West. See C. Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments*, pp. 273 f.

101. Moses ibn Ezra's poem *Yah, shekhinatkhha* (Lord, Thy Presence is Among Men) in his *Selected Poems*, ed. by Brody, pp. 97 f.; Abraham ibn Ezra's *Commentary* on Ps. 93:4. The opposition of Farabi (in his *K. al-Musiqi al-Kabir* [Grand traité de la musique], French trans. by R. d'Erlanger in *La Musique arabe*, I, 28) and Maimonides (Guide, 11.8, in Friedländer's English trans., p. 163) is discussed, together with the more numerous affirmative views, by Werner and Sonne in *HUCA*, XVI, 288 ff. The latter also point out that, like the Vulgate, some Jewish interpreters understood the *nible shamayim* (Job 38:37) not as "bottles of heaven," but rather as heavenly violins. See, e.g., Abraham ben David's *Commentary* on *Yeşirah*, 1.1 end, Mantua ed., fol. 27c. See also *supra*, n. 62.

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