

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

What Does *Sefer Yesira* Have to Do with the Jewish Calendar?

Y. Tzvi Langerman

This paper discusses a short Yemenite treatise on the 247 cycle, a purported perpetual calendar often referred to as “The Circle of Rabav Nahshon”. The treatise under examination was written in the nineteenth century, at least a millennium after the theory had been rejected. The opening pages of the treatise draw analogies between the Jewish calendar and *Sefer Yesira* on the basis of the significance for each of the numbers seven and twelve. The author was clearly familiar with the commentaries of Saadia Gaon and Yehudah haLevi (in his *Cuzari*) to *Sefer Yesira*, thus supplying new information on the reception of *Sefer Yesira* in Yemen.

Book Producing in the Galilee During the Middle Ages

Michael Riegler

This article discusses the books produced in the Holy Land in the Middle Ages. It is based on colophons of manuscripts which originated in the Galilee. According to those colophons which survived, we learn that, from the tenth century until the end of the sixteenth century books were copied in the Galilee, both in urban centers and in villages where the Jews lived side by side with the local population. Most of the manuscripts described originate in Safed, many of them dated before the arrival of the Spanish Jews who fled the Inquisition. The details given for each manuscript include the place where it was copied, the name of the copyist, and additional details added by the copyist that give important historical information.

Twenty-three manuscripts were found that survived. Most are scattered in libraries throughout the world. They are on a variety of subjects: Bible and commentary, Babylonian Talmud, Kabbala, *piyyut*, philosophy and linguistics. Some were copied for the copyist’s own use, some by professional copyists according to specific requests.

The information in the colophons enriches our knowledge of the history of the Holy Land and of the people who lived in the Galilee during the stormy

years there throughout the Middle Ages, when the area was conquered and ruled by the Crusaders and the Moslems.

The material is arranged chronologically to give a broad, historical picture of the intellectual culture of this period.

The Contribution of MS Hamburg 52 for Improving the Text of Rashbam's Torah Commentary

Itamar Kislev

Rashbam's important commentary on the Torah is known from various editions, especially Rosin's critical edition (1882). However, they are all based on a single manuscript (MS Breslau) that is no longer available. This manuscript was incomplete to begin with, and it was also full of textual corruptions. In order to overcome this problematic situation, one should look for indirect textual witnesses of Rashbam's Torah commentary. Such sources can be found in other Torah commentaries that quote some of Rashbam's comments. An important such textual witness is MS Hamburg 52, which quotes many of Rashbam's comments literally. It can therefore be of much text-critical help in improving the text of Rashbam's commentary. In addition to its contribution for clarifying the text of some comments, this procedure also highlights the character of MS Breslau, which, in the light of this research, appears to reflect scribal habits characteristic of medieval Ashkenaz and France, namely, a typical inaccuracy in copying the *Vorlage*.

The Tosafot to Chapter *Arvei Pesahim*: Identification of the Editor and His Sources

Shalem Yahalom

For the large majority of tractate *Pesahim*, Tosafot Tucheim mention teachers and students known from the Academy of Ri and R. Shimshon of Sens. By contrast, the scholars mentioned in the Tosafot to the last chapter ("*Arvei Pesahim*") belong to later generations. The Tosafot to *Arvei Pesahim* quote the scholars of Evreux and R. Yehiel ben Yosef of Paris. The question is, why were the comments of the original Tosafist scholars, from the academy of the Ri, substituted by a later collection of his students' students? One may

assume that this action of editing was due to the well-known phenomenon whereby the ends of works in medieval manuscripts were cut off or fell into disrepair. Even copies of Tosafot Sens to *Pesahim* which we have today are missing the last chapter, and it seems that even the medieval arrangers of Tosafot were subject to that same absence of text. The absence of text of Tosafot of Sens was completed in Tucheim by a later collection of Tosafot commentaries.

Scholars have already debated regarding the identification of the author of Tosafot to *Arvei Pesahim*, and this debate reflects on the very essence of the association between the various parts of Tosafot printed on the pages of *Pesahim*. Y.N. Epstein argued that the author of Tosafot to *Arvei Pesahim* who quotes R. Yehiel of Paris is his student, R. Peretz ben Eliyahu of Corbeil, whose teacher's traditions are preserved in his Tosafot. According to Epstein, the chapter *Arvei Pesahim* taken from the Tosafot of R. Peretz is not related to the Tucheim Tosafot of the rest of the tractate, reflecting a technical combination of an unrelated Tosafot meant to fill in the gap at the end of the tractate. By contrast, E.E. Urbach claimed that the editor who quotes R. Yehiel is another student of his, namely R. Eliezer of Tucheim. Thus, even *Arvei Pesahim* relates to the Tucheim Tosafot, although, as opposed to the rest of the tractate, the raw material with which the editor worked was the Tosafot of R. Yehiel and not Tosafot of R. Samson of Sens.

By identifying new sources, this study proves conclusively Urbach's view that the Tosafot to *Arvei Pesahim* is an organic part of the Tucheim Tosafot to the tractate. However, as opposed to Urbach, the collection that R. Eliezer of Tucheim worked upon was not the Tosafot of R. Eliyahu, but the Tosafot of R. Peretz. This research study shall demonstrate that the editing and processing work of R. Eliezer on the tractate of *Pesahim* was applicable to its last chapter as well. This does not reflect a technical combination of Tosafot Peretz.

Remnants of Rabbi Shemariya ha-Ikriti's Commentary on the Torah

Dov Schwartz

Shemarya ha-Ikriti was a major Byzantine scholar in the first half of the fourteenth century. His commentary on the Torah has not been found yet. A few quotations have survived in Abraham Krimi's commentary on the Torah. In this article I publish all the quotations and try to characterize Shemarya's hermeneutics.

**The Commentary of R. Avraham ben Shelomo the Yemenite on the
Book of Ezekiel – First Publication**

Eliezer Schlossberg

Yemenite midrashim, mainly dealing with the Pentateuch, are divided into two main types: classical midrash, such as “Midrash Hagadol,” “Midrash Hachefetz,” “Midrash Maor Ha’afela” and “Midrash Habbi’ur,” written in Hebrew and Arabic, and based primarily on midrashim of the sages and interpretations of the Babylonian Geonim and the sages of Spain; and later Midrash, written from the sixteenth century and onward in Hebrew, and based on Midrashic exegesis and mysticism.

The commentary on the Prophets of Rabbi Avraham ben Shelomo, who lived and worked in Yemen in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, belongs to the first category. His commentary on the early and late prophets is the longest and most extensive that we have of Yemenite origin, written in Hebrew and Arabic using the interpretation method of compilation, and in fact concludes the first period of biblical interpretation in Yemen.

Most of the commentary of R. Avraham ben Shelomo on the early prophets has already been published (with the exception of the commentary on the second Book of Kings). However, the commentaries on the later prophets (with the exception of the commentaries on Isaiah, Joel and Ovadiah, which were published by the author of this article) have not yet been published.

The commentary of R. Avraham ben Shelomo on the Book of Ezekiel will hopefully be published in the near future in a critical annotated edition. The article published here is a first sample of this commentary. It contains the commentary on the first four chapters of the book, and demonstrates most of the characteristics of R. Avraham ben Shelomo’s exegesis on the later prophets. The interpretation is based on Rashi, to which were added many Midrashic sources, Aramaic translations, the tracts of the Babylonian Geonim, led by Rabbi Saadia Gaon, the writings of the great medieval Jewish grammarians, such as Rabbi Jonah ibn Janah, interpretations of medieval commentators, including Radak and R. Tanchum HaYerushalmi, and the tracts of other sages, such as Maimonides.

Rabbi Shem Tov ben Joseph Ibn Shem Tov's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs

Doron Forte

Rabbi Shem Tov ben Joseph Ibn Shem Tov (Spain, active second half of the fifteenth century) is mainly known as the author of two major works: Sermons on the Torah and a commentary on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*. In this article, the authorship of a commentary on the Book of Proverbs is examined. This commentary, which survived in two sixteenth century manuscripts (only one complete), was commonly regarded as belonging to the corpus of Rabbi Isaac Ibn Shem Tov, the uncle of the mentioned thinker. In the first part of the article, by combining details from both extant sources, together with scrutinizing biographical details and presenting many textual correlations, the true identity of the author is uncovered.

In the second part, the focus shifts to characterizing Rabbi Shem Tov's hermeneutical method and describing his conception regarding the uniqueness of the Book of Proverbs. Although the author belongs amongst the most devoted members of the Aristotelian philosophical tradition, which tended – following Maimonides' influence – to apply allegoric interpretation to biblical texts, one can discern in his commentary an overall preference towards a literal reading. Nevertheless, he indicates that “mysteries” and “hidden secrets of wisdom” exist in the deeper layers of the interpreted text. Possible explanations are examined in an attempt to understand exactly what discipline Shem Tov's vague utterances allude to.

Identity of the Author of *Tehila LeDavid*, Attributed to David ben Judah Messer Leon

Eli Gurfinkel

Tehila LeDavid is a systematical literary work that deals with a large number of central philosophical and theological issues in Jewish thought. This work was first printed in Constantinople in 1576 by Rabbi Aharon Messer Leon, who attributed the work to his grandfather, David ben Judah Messer Leon (hereafter known as the RDM'L; 1470–1530 approximately), one of the most prominent scholars and leaders of Italian Jewry around the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the author of an extensive literary body of work in

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Jewish philosophy, Kabbalah, Bible commentaries, and grammar. Although comments and doubts were raised by bibliographers for generations, *Tehila LeDavid* is considered one of the works of the RDM"l, and the fact that most of the essays were handwritten has become the most important source for the description and analysis of the philosophical and theological method of RDM"l.

This study seeks to re-examine the identification of the RDM"l as the author of *Tehila LeDavid*, based on the review of manuscripts and using bibliographic, linguistic, stylistic, structural and theoretical tools. The research paper includes an appendix that examines the question of the identity of the author using a specialized computer program.

An Additional Commentary to the Alphabet by R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid and *Sefer ha-Temunah*

Moshe Idel

A Kabbalistic commentary on the alphabet, found in Ms Oxford-Bodleiana 2221, and attributed to a certain R. David, plausibly R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, has been identified as the source of a discussion found in the anonymous *Sefer ha-Temunah*. The assumption is that this passage is found in that manuscript together with another passage, to be identified as authored by R. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, a Kabbalist whose views are close to R. David.

A Section from Pseudo-Dionysius' *Book of Divine Names* and its Metamorphosis in Hebrew Literature

Moshe Idel

The Hebrew translation from a Latin version authored by Aegidius Romanus of a section from Pseudo-Dionysius' *Book of Divine Names* is identified in a book of the early fourteenth century R. Yehudah Romano. It has been copied by R. Elnathan Qalqish in a book written in mid-fourteenth century Constantinople, and then in a critique of Kabbalah written by R. Leone da Modena in Venice in the early seventeenth century, and then in defense of Kabbalah by R. Elijah ben Amozeg at the end of the nineteenth century.

On the Biography of R. Salomon Zalman Netter (1801–1879)

Gad Freudenthal

R. Salomon Zalman Netter is known today mainly owing to two books of which he was the publisher: a luxury edition of the Rabbinic Bible *Miqra'ot Gedolot* (1859) and Tractate Shabbat with Menachem ha-Meiri's commentary (1862). Scholars have occasionally noted that nearly nothing is known about his biography. This article fills the gap.

Netter was born in 1801 (it is unknown where) and died in Vienna on 2 January 1879. As a young man he lived in Jerusalem for a few years and often (nostalgically) described himself as a Jerusalemite; he lived in Vienna from 1838. His private letters reflect that he suffered from various phobias and shaky mental health. He was not only a publisher, but also a bookseller who travelled the Orient bringing back Hebrew manuscripts (some of which he sold to the Bodleian Library). His edition of *Miqra'ot Gedolot* includes a new supercommentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra's twelfth-century classic commentary on the Pentateuch, which Netter presents as his own (even though this author establishes different authorship for at least a section of it) and which was severely criticized at the time for its level. Netter was an opponent of Hasidism and an admirer of the Gaon of Vilna. His son, Jacob Mordecai Netter, was an adventurer who travelled around the world and described his exceptional voyage in a book published in 1875 (Hebrew). One of the grandsons of Jacob Mordecai Netter was the surgeon and well-known medical illustrator Frank H. Netter (1906–1991), whose biography (in English) was published by his daughter Francine Mary Netter in 2013.

**Abraham Nager's Supercommentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra's
Commentary on Leviticus and its Erroneous Ascription to
R. Salomon Netter**

Gad Freudenthal

In 1859, R. Salomon Zalman Netter (1801–1879) published in Vienna a luxurious edition the Rabbinic Bible *Miqra'ot Gedolot*. It included, inter alia, a new supercommentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra's twelfth-century classic commentary on the Pentateuch, to which Netter refers as his own. Archival documents relating to R. Abraham Nager (1831–1887), then a student in

Vienna and one of the “correctors” (מגייה) of the volume, clearly show that at least the part relating to Leviticus was written by him (albeit on the basis of earlier supercommentaries) and not by Netter. The paper establishes Nager’s authorship and explains why the supercommentary was misattributed ever since the publication of the volume.

***Shu”t Hochma Utvuna: An Unknown Composition by
R. Shalom Mansura***

Aharon Gaimani

R. Shalom Mansura was among the eminent sages in San’ā in the nineteenth century. This article introduces remnants of an unknown book of responsa written by him, *Shu”t Hochma Utvuna*, and focuses on the case of a divorce which was the subject of a halachic controversy in his time between members of the rabbinic court and the yeshiva sages in San’ā. It appears that the differences in opinion originated from different points of view regarding the question of which authorities should be followed in Yemen.

The divorcee was the daughter of one of the members of the rabbinical court and the controversy concerned payment of the Ketuba sum. The development of the divorce case is presented in *Shu”t Hochma Utvuna* with mention of the names of the members of the rabbinical court and some of the yeshiva sages who took part in this event, and mention of the time and other details, and details of this case make up most of the manuscript.

The list of sources in the composition *Shu”t Hochma Utvuna* which R. Shalom Mansura used to support his decision testifies to the breadth of his learning and to the great wealth of books which arrived to Yemen from the whole Jewish diaspora. The give and take which he wrote on this matter highlights the depth of learning of the yeshiva sages in San’ā, and shows that R. Mansura was one of the great Jewish sages in the Jewish diaspora in his generation.

Clandestine Printing of the *Pitchei Tshuva*

Chanan Yitzchaki

R. Avraham Tzvi Eisenstadt (Lithuania 1815–1868) compiled the book *Pitchei Tshuva*, which is one of the most important commentaries on the *Shulhan Arukh*. This work contains responsa gathered from hundreds of works of responsa, and is organized according to the chapters and paragraphs of the *Shulhan Arukh*. From the cover pages we learn that the section on ‘Yoreh Deah’ was published in Vilna in 1836 by the Segal (Rotenburg) publishing house, while the second edition, which includes a few changes and emendations as a result of censorship, was published in Zhitomer, 1852, by the Shapiro Brothers’ publishing house.

On the cover page to the ‘Even HaEzer’ section, the year of publication, publisher and location are not listed, and this article will deal with clarification of these details. In particular, we will look at the question why these details were “removed” from the cover page, whereas the name of the printing press, place and year of publication are prominently displayed in the two editions of the ‘Yoreh Deah’ section.

In this article we will prove that the entire work was completed by Eisenstadt long before its publication. It was smuggled to Prussia by three of his students who published it anonymously, leaving out the name of the publisher and location, and without giving the year of publication, with the addition of approbations from two Rabbis who lived and worked outside the borders of the Russian Empire.

The reason for this publication outside the boundaries of the Russian Empire and without noting the publisher is the decree on publishing in Russia (1836–1862), which allowed only two printing presses in the whole Russian Empire to engage in printing Hebrew books, and then only under the close supervision of the censor.

The prohibition on the printing of Hebrew books in Russia ended only in 1862, and before that censorship was tight and barely allowed printing books, and even then only after major changes. For this reason, the students of Eisenstadt smuggled the book to Prussia, where they published it anonymously, and not via the official publishers in Russia, in Vilna and Zhitomir.

Investigations into R. Joseph Dov Soloveitchik's Philosophy in the Light of his Postmortem Published Writing

Dov Schwartz

After R. Soloveitchik's death, much of his writing has been edited and published. This article explores the philosophical and theological innovations in these writings. Moreover, the article claims that these writings solve a few problems that remained unsolved in the Rav's life. Thus Otzar ha-Rav Institute enables us to get a richer image of the Rav's ideas.

Concerning R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik's Recently Published Novellae and Commentaries to the Talmud and Jewish Law

Shlomo H. Pick

The article reviews the recent publications of R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik's novel interpretations and commentaries to the Talmud and Jewish Law, enumerating them and noting their characteristics. The article goes on to discuss the editors' biases in the nature of their translations and editions. One issue raised is what exactly did R. Soloveitchik say, and do these editions reflect his explanations? Selections of various editions dealing with the same material are compared and contrasted to demonstrate the differing methods used in their presentation. The question of presenting his insights according to subject matter or in accordance with R. Soloveitchik's actual delivery is raised.

An appendix analyzes the relationship between R. Soloveitchik and his uncle R. Menachem Krakowski as reflected in the latter's *Avodat ha-Melech*.