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NEW DISCOVERIES

IN

THE «EUROPEAN GENIZAH»: THE GERONA ARCHIVES.

PROLEGOMENA TO A SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

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edited by
Mauro Perani

CATALAN JEWRY BEFORE 1391: ARCHIVAL AND HEBREW SOURCES

Catalan Jewry before 1391 occupied a major position in the religious, intellectual and literary history of medieval Jewry¹. A quick examination of the rabbinic figures who led Catalan Jewry during a period of two hundred years before a fatal blow was inflicted on it during the massacres of 1391 illustrates well the point. Yehudah ben Yaqar, Ezra and Azriel of Gerona, Abraham ben Yiṣḥaq ha-Hazzan, Ya‘aqov ben Sheshet, Yosef ben Shemuel, Meshullam da Piera, Mosheh ben Naḥman, Yonah Gerondi, Aharon ha-Levi de Na Clara, Shemuel ha-Sardi, Shelomoh ben Aderet, Yom Tov Asevilli, Abraham ben Shelomoh Tazarte, Nissim Gerondi, Yiṣḥaq ben Sheshet Perfet are

some of the most famous Catalan scholars whose kabbalistic, halakhic, talmudic, exegetical, ethical and homiletical works constitute a very essential part of the medieval Jewish creation².

The importance of Catalan Jewry lies in its geographical position between Andalusian and Castilian Jewry on the one hand, and Provençal and Franco-German Jewry on the other. Many of its scholars were familiar with, and influenced by, Judeo-Arabic culture that reached its peak on Iberian soil³ and at the same time were in close contact with Provençal

¹ For a general overview on Catalan Jewry see Y. BAER, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols, Philadelphia 1966; Y. ASSIS, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry: Community and Society in the Crown of Aragon, 1213-1227*, London & Portland (Or.) 1997; Y. ASSIS, *Jewish Economy in the Medieval Crown of Aragon, 1213-1327 – Money and Power*, London, New York, Köln 1997. Baer's book deals with the Jews in «Christian Spain» by which the great historian of Iberian Jewry meant the entire Iberian peninsula except Portugal, that is today's Spain in its boundaries ever since the sixteenth century, comprising the medieval Crowns of Castile and Aragon and the Kingdom of Navarre. The material on Catalan Jewry is scattered in the different chapters or found in the chapters related to the Crown of Aragon. My own books deal with the Jews in the Crown of Aragon which included Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Roussillon, with special emphasis on Catalonia. While the book is primarily dedicated to communal and social history, Part 6 (Religious Life) covers briefly the subject. My intention is to publish eventually a third book, a companion of the above-cited two, which will be devoted to the intellectual, educational and religious history of the Jews in the Crown of Aragon.

² There exists no intellectual or religious history of Catalan Jewry that includes a thorough study of these rabbinic figures. There exist some works on individual scholars, some of which are rather old. Men-

tion should be made of the following: I. M. TA-SHEMA, *Ashkenazi Hassidism in Spain: R. Jonah Gerondi – the Man and His Work*, in A. MIRSKY, A. GROSSMAN, and Y. KAPLAN (eds.) *Exile and Diaspora*, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 165-194 (Hebrew); I. EPSTEIN, *Responsa of Rabbi Solomon ben Adreth of Barcelona (1235-1310) as a Source of the History of the Jews of Spain*, London, 1925; 2nd ed.: *Studies in the Communal Life of the Jews of Spain*, London, 1968; A. HIRSCHMAN, *Rabbi Isaac ben Sheshet Perfet and his Times*, New York 1943.

³ Catalonia was a region that was least influenced by Arabic culture due to the short Muslim rule which left far less impact than other zones in the peninsula. Nevertheless the knowledge of Arabic by some Catalan Jews may be the best illustration of the strong Arabic influence that existed there. One important example is the family Bonsenyor. Yehudah Bonsenyor was appointed in 1294 the official notary for public documents in the territory of Barcelona. See Archivo de la Corona de Aragon [=ACA], R. 194, f^o 108v [= J. RÉGNÉ, *History of the Jews in Aragon*, ed. Y. ASSIS, Jerusalem 1978, N^o 2556. The same Yehudah prepared for the king his *Llibre de paraules e dits de savis e filosofos* which contained many maxims and sayings translated from Arabic. Another example is Vidal Benveniste de Porta who was the *baile* of Barcelona. See F. BAER, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien, Urkunden und Regesten, I, Aragonien und Navarra*, Berlin 1929, pp. 100-102.

kabbalah⁴, French talmudic erudition and German pietism⁵. While it absorbed southern and northern influences, Catalan Judaism served as a bridge between various branches of medieval Judaism. Its role as a mediator between different trends of Jewish cultures and its position as the focus of various and sometimes contradictory Jewish influences should not mislead us into thinking that Catalan Judaism was only a mediator and a passive factor. Quite to the contrary, Catalonia was a centre of Jewish creativity, a centre of Torah learning which excelled in halakhah and kabbalah, in Bible and Talmud, in Hebrew letters, in medicine, in science and Arabic scholarship, a centre which had its own outstanding *yeshivot* in Barcelona and Gerona which attracted students from all over the Iberian peninsula, from Provence, France and Germany.

It was in Catalonia where the religious polemics that tore apart the western Mediterranean communities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries reached their concluding stage with the proclamation of the 1305 ban in Barcelona re-

stricting study of secular studies and philosophy⁶. It was in Catalonia that contradictory trends met and clashed.

Their knowledge of Arabic enabled many Jews to serve the kings of Aragon or counts of Barcelona in several capacities. Most relevant positions Jews occupied thanks to their expertise of Arabic were those of interpreters, translators and diplomats. It is noteworthy that in Latin and Romance documents the word *trujaman* (translator or interpreter in Arabic) is used to denote such Arabic-speaking Jews from Catalonia and Aragon. The Arabic word *alpaquim* was frequently used as their title⁷.

In communal organization and social institutions Catalan Jewry had its unique character and special achievements. Several institutions are specifically Catalan. Such was the *collecta*, the inter-communal organization that was originally created for tax collection purposes. This organization, called תִּיבָה in Hebrew sources, served internal Jewish purposes too⁸. Another institution which was especially Catalan was the com-

⁴ On the relations between Jewish mystics from Provence and Catalonia and the influence of the former on the latter, see G. SCHOLEM, *Kabbalah*, Jerusalem 1974, pp. 42-52; I. TISHBY, *Studies in Kabbalah and its Branches*, Jerusalem 1982, I, pp. 3-35 (Hebrew); M. IDEL, *Jewish Thought in Medieval Spain*, in H. BEINART (ed.), *The Sephardi Legacy*, I, Jerusalem 1992, pp. 272-275; ID., *La història de la Càbala a Barcelona*, in *La Càbala*, Barcelona 1989, pp. 59-74; ID., *We Have No Kabbalistic Tradition on This*, in I. TWERSKY (ed.), *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1983, pp. 51-73; ID., *Nahmanides: Kabbalah, Halakhah and Mystical Leadership: «Tarbiz»* 64 (1995), pp. 535-580.

⁵ On the relations between the Jews of Sepharad and Franco-Germany, see A. GROSSMAN, *Between Spain and France – Relations between the Jewish Communities of Muslim Spain and France*, in A. MIRSKY, A. GROSSMAN & Y. KAPLAN (eds.), *Exile and Diaspora*, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 75-101 (Hebrew); ID., *Relations between Spanish and Ashkenazi Jewry in the Middle Ages*, in H. BEINART (ed.), *The Sephardi Legacy*, Jerusalem 1992, I, pp. 220-239.

⁶ On the 1303-1305 controversy see, Ch. TOUATI, *La controverse de 1303-1306 autour des études philosophiques et scientifiques: «Revue des Etudes Juives»* 127 (1968), pp. 21-37; ID., *Les deux conflits autour de Maimonide et des études philosophiques*, in *Juifs et judaïsme de Languedoc*, Toulouse 1977, pp. 173-184; BAER, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, I, pp. 289-305.

⁷ On Jewish diplomats, representatives of the Crown of Aragon in Muslim lands, see Y. ASSIS, *Jewish Diplomats from the Crown of Aragon in Muslim Lands (1213-1327): «Sefunot»* n.s. 3 (18) (1985), pp. 11-34 (Hebrew). See also in Catalan Y. ASSIS, *Diplomàtics jueus de la Corona catalanoaragonesa en terres musulmanes (1213-1327): «Tamid»* (Barcelona) 1 (1997), pp. 7-40; on interpreters and translators, see D. ROMANO, *Judíos escribanos y trujamanes de arabe en la Corona de Aragón (Reinados de Jaime I a Jaime II): «Sefarad»* 38 (1978), pp. 83-87. The debate whether *alpaquim* refers to interpreters or physicians is futile since in almost all cases Jews bearing the title fulfilled both these functions.

⁸ On the *collecta* in Catalonia see ASSIS, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, pp. 163-191.

munal council, called in Hebrew עצה, the supreme institution in the Catalan communities, the *Concell*, the Council which was modeled on the Catalan municipal Council. Thus עצת השלושים of the Jewish community in Barcelona was a parallel institution to the municipal *Concell de Cent*⁹. In Catalonia, and only there, the Jewish quarter was called *call*, and not *judería* as it was called in the rest of the Iberian peninsula¹⁰. It was in Catalonia where the name *muqaddemin*, equivalent to the Spanish *adelantados*, the title of one of the leaders of the community, was not found. In Catalonia, invariably, we find the word *secretariü* or נאמנים¹¹. The list is long and shows the very specific character of Catalan Jewry, distinct from the rest of Sephardi Jewry.

History of the Jews of Catalonia is probably the best documented of all the medieval communities¹². This is due to the wealth of sources that are at the disposal of the historian. The Latin and Catalan archival sources that refer to Catalan Jews are probably the richest on any medieval community in the world. We

are more and more aware of the numerous sources found in all types of archives that have still not been examined by historians. The *Archivo de la Corona de Aragón* (=ACA), which offers the most important documentation on the Jews, offers a very rich and systematic series of sources. The establishment of a royal chancellery in the middle of the thirteenth century is the basis of this archive. While the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth have been well studied as far as Catalan Jews are concerned, the fourteenth century has not been thoroughly and systematically examined. Important documentary collections from the ACA on Catalan Jewry, often including the Jews of Aragón, Valencia, Majorca and Roussillon, all part of the medieval Crown of Aragón, have been published during the past century. Among these collections mention should be made of the Colección de Documentos Inéditos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón¹³, the works of Bofarull y Sans¹⁴, Fidel Fita¹⁵, Miret i Sans, Schwab¹⁶, González Hurtebise¹⁷, Rubió i Lluch¹⁸, Carreras i Candi¹⁹, Loeb²⁰, Duran i Sanpere²¹, Jacobs²²,

⁹ ASSIS, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, pp. 128-131.

¹⁰ D. ROMANO, *Aljama frente a judería, call y sus sinónimos*: «Sefarad» XXXIX (1979), pp. 347-354; J. R. MAGDALENA NOM DE DÉU, *Etimología no semítica de 'call'*: «Calls» 2 (1987), pp. 7-16; ASSIS, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, pp. 199-209.

¹¹ ASSIS, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, pp. 110-112.

¹² Y. ASSIS, *Los judíos de Cataluña: Fuentes y posibilidades de estudio*, in *Actes del Ier Col.loqui de Història dels Juheus de la Corona d'Aragó*, Lleida 1991, pp. 139-155.

¹³ The most important volumes in this collection for the history of the Jews in Catalonia are the following: vol. 4, *Procesos de las antiguas cortes*; vol. 11, *Repartimientos de Mallorca, Valencia*, Barcelona 1856; vol. 39, *Rentas de la antigua Corona de Aragón*.

¹⁴ F. DE BOFARULL Y SANS, *Los judíos en el territorio de Barcelona (siglos X al XIII)*, *Reinado de Jaime I (1213-1276)*, Barcelona 1910; ID., *Judíos en Montblanch*: «Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de de Barcelona» 6 (1898), pp. 560-573.

¹⁵ F. FITA, *España hebrea*, Madrid, 1898.

¹⁶ J. MIRET I SANS & M. SCHWAB, *Documents sur les Juifs catalans des XI, XII et XIII siècles*: «Revue des Etudes Juives» 68 (1914), pp. 48-83; 174-194.

¹⁷ E. GONZÁLEZ HURTEBISE, *Libros de tesorería de la casa real de Aragón, I, Reinado de Jaime II*, Barcelona, 1911.

¹⁸ A. RUBÍO I LLUCH, *Documents per la història de la cultura catalana mig-eval*, 2 vols., Barcelona 1908-1921.

¹⁹ F. CARRERAS I CANDI, *Evolució històrica dels juheus y juheissants barcelonins*: «Estudis Universitaris Catalans» 3 (1909), pp. 404-428; 498-522; IV (1910), pp. 45-65; 359-373.

²⁰ I. LOEB, *Actes de vente hébreux en Espagne*: «Revue des Etudes Juives» 4 (1882), pp. 226-235; ID., *Actes de vente hébreux originaires d'Espagne*, «Revue des Etudes Juives» 10 (1885), pp. 108-122; ID., *Liste nominative des Juifs de Barcelone en 1392*, «Revue des Etudes Juives» 4 (1882), pp. 57-77.

²¹ A. DURÁN I SANPERE, *Referències documentals del call de juheus de Cervera*, Barcelona 1924.

²² J. JACOBS, *An Inquiry into the Sources of the History of the Jews in Spain*, New York 1924.

Régné²³, Baer²⁴, Millás y Vallicrosa²⁵ and the works of a new generation of scholars: Romano²⁶, Riera²⁷ and myself²⁸.

Most of the published documents belong to the thirteenth and early fourteenth century. The fourteenth century has been rather neglected simply because of the huge amount of material available. The history of the Jews under Pedro IV, el Ceremonioso (Pere III of Catalonia), who ruled from 1336 until 1387, for more than 50 years, is still waiting for a full treatment. It is no easy task for any scholar to cope with the huge amount of documents found in the numerous *Registros* of the *Cancillería Real*. There are also other sections in the archive and the *Archivo del Real Patrimonio* which is housed in the same archive.

Apart from important ecclesiastical archives, like the *Archivo Capitular de Barcelona*²⁹, those of Gerona and Lérida, the *Archivo Diocesano de Barcelona*, there are the municipal archives and most important of all there are the *Archivos de Protocolos* which contain the notarial records. The information provided by

local and notarial archives is different from that derived from the royal or other archives. I have shown how a small Catalan community, like Santa Coloma de Queralt, which is hardly mentioned in the royal documents, is so well documented in the notarial records that provide ample data on the economic activities of the Jews and on the demography of the community³⁰.

The history of the Jews of Gerona, so well documented in the ACA, would have been far poorer had it not been for the documents from the local archives, the *Archivo Municipal*, the *Archivo Diocesano*³¹, the *Archivo de la Catedral* and the *Archivo Histórico Provincial* which were used by Girbal³², Batlle i Prats, Sobrequés Vidal, Marqués Casanovas and others³³. The amount of information that the *Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Tarragona* [=AHPT] adds to our records on the Jews of Tortosa emanating from the ACA is impressive as we have shown in the volume dedicated to these Jews published in the series *Sources for the History of the Jews in Spain* which *Hispania Judaica* and the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People publish jointly³⁴.

²³ Régné's 3454 regesta of documents and original documents were published in «Revue des Etudes published in one volume in J. RÉGNÉ, *History of the Jews in Aragon, Regesta and Documents 1213-1327*, ed. Y. ASSIS, Jerusalem 1978.

²⁴ F. BAER, *Die Juden im chrislichen Spanien, I, Aragonien und Navarra*, Berlin 1929.

²⁵ J. M. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, *Documents hebraics de jueus catalans: «Memòries de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans»*, Barcelona, 1927, vol. I, fas. 3.

²⁶ D. ROMANO, *Judíos al servicio de Pedro el Grande de Aragón (1276-1285)*, Barcelona, 1983; ID., *Los hermanos Abenmenassé al servicio de Pedro el Grande de Aragón*, in *Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa*, Barcelona 1956, II, pp. 243-292.

²⁷ J. RIERA I SANS & F. UDINA I MARTORELL, *Els documents en hebreu conservats a l'Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó: «Miscel.laia Barcinonensia»* 49 (1978), pp. 21-36.

²⁸ I am referring primarily to the volumes published in the series *Sources for the History of the Jews in Spain* which I edit. *The Jews in the Crown of Aragon; Regesta of the Cartas Reales in the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Part I: 1066-1327*, Compiled

by M. CINTA MAÑE & G. ESCRIBÀ, Jerusalem 1993; *Part II: 1328-1493*, Compiled by G. ESCRIBÀ, Jerusalem 1995.

²⁹ See, for instance, the first volume in the series *Sources: The Jews in Barcelona 1213-1291: Regesta of Documents from the Archivo Capitular*, Compiled by M. CINTA MAÑE & ed. by Y. ASSIS, Jerusalem 1988.

³⁰ Y. ASSIS, *The Jews of Santa Coloma de Queralt, An Economic and Demographic Study Case Study of a Community at the End of the Thirteenth Century*, Jerusalem 1988 [There is a Catalan translation].

³¹ See the sources from the *Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat* and *Arxiu Diocesà de Girona* published in G. ESCRIBÀ I BONASTRE & M. P. FRAGO I PÉREZ, *Documents dels jueus de Girona 1124-1595*, Girona [1992].

³² C. GIRBAL, *Los judíos en Gerona*, Gerona 1870.

³³ Many of their works have been conveniently put together in *Per a una història de la Girona jueva*, 2 vols., Compiled by D. ROMANO, Girona 1988.

³⁴ *The Jews of Tortosa, 1373-1492; Regesta of Documents from the Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Tarragona*, Compiled by JOSEFINA CUBELLS I LLORENS, Jerusalem 1991.

It is on the basis of sources from local archives that the history of the Jews in small Catalan communities is known to us. In this category are included the following: Corbella's *L'aljama de jueus de Vic* and Ollich I Castanyer's *Aspectes econòmics de l'activitat dels jueus de Vic*. The works of Grau Montserrat on Besalú³⁵ are based on material that is found in the archive of Olot. The works of Secall i Güell on the Jews of Santa Coloma de Queralt³⁶ and Valls³⁷ are based on sources from the AHPT.

All the archival sources, however, do not give the type of information that is provided by the Hebrew sources. All the works that are based exclusively on Latin and Catalan sources suffer from a serious shortcoming as do works based entirely on Hebrew sources³⁸.

The Hebrew sources belonging to the 150 years prior to the massacres of 1391 are very rich. The *Responsa* of Mosheh ben Naḥman (Naḥmanides)³⁹, Shelomoh ben Abraham ben

Aderet (the Rashba)⁴⁰, Yom Ṭov ben Abraham Asevilli (the Ritba)⁴¹, Nissim ben Reuven Gerondi (the Ran)⁴² and Yiṣḥaq ben Sheshet Perfet (the Ribash)⁴³ are invaluable for the history of the Jews of Catalonia. The *Responsa* of the Rashba – 3,800 in print, 10,000 in all – are the richest collection of medieval *Responsa*. The Hebrew sources, most particularly the *Responsa*⁴⁴, give us much data on matters that do not appear in the Latin and Catalan sources and vice versa.

It is only through the sources from ACB that we know that at least until 1277, the Rashba lent money⁴⁵. This piece of information is of crucial importance not only for Rashba's biography but also for the history of the rabbinate in Spain. Of great interest is the information that Rashba's *Responsa* contain on the validity of the «*Shetarot públics*», that is the notarial documents⁴⁶.

The necessity to use both Hebrew and Latin-Catalan sources can be well illustrated in the crisis that tore apart the Jewish community

³⁵ See, for instance, M. GRAU MONSERRAT, *Medicina a Besalú (segle XIV), Metges, apotecaris i manescals*, in *Patronat d'Estudis Històrics d'Olot i Comarca, Annals 1982-83*, Olot 1984, pp. 99-133.

³⁶ G. SECALL I GÜELL, *La comunitat hebrea de Santa Coloma de Queralt*, Tarragona 1986.

³⁷ G. SECALL I GÜELL, *Els jueus de Valls i la seva època*, Valls 1980.

³⁸ I have demonstrated the necessity to use all the available sources, Hebrew and Latin or Romance, in Y. ASSIS, *Crisis in the Community of Saragossa in the Years 1263-1264 according to Hebrew and Latin Sources*, in «*Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*», vol. IV, Jerusalem 1981, pp. 37-42 (Hebrew).

³⁹ MOSHEN BEN NAḤMAN, *Še'elot u-Tešuvot* (*Responsa*), in S. ASSAF, *Sifran šel Rišo'nim*, Jerusalem 1935, pp. 51-119.

⁴⁰ SHELOMOH BEN ADERET, *Še'elot u-Tešuvot* (*Responsa*), vols. I, Bologna 1539; II, III, Leghorn 1657, 1778; IV, Vilna 1881; V, Leghorn 1885; VI, VII, Warsaw 1868; VIII (Attributed to Naḥmanides), Warsaw 1883. Very few of Aderet's *Responsa* have been published in a critical edition. See H. DIMITROVSKY, *The Responsa of the Rashba*, 2 vols., Jerusalem 1990.

⁴¹ YOM ṬOV BEN AVRAHAM ASEVILLI, *Še'elot u-Tešuvot*, ed. Y. KAFAR, Jerusalem 1959.

⁴² NISSIM BEN REUVEN GERONDI, *Tešuvot ha-RaN*, ed. L. A. FELDMAN, Jerusalem 5744-1984.

⁴³ YIṢḤAQ BEN SHESHET PERFET, *Še'elot u-Tešuvot*, Riva di Trento 1559. A recent edition of the *Responsa* of the Rivash is: ID., *Še'elot u-Tešuvot*, ed. D. METZGER, Jerusalem 1993, 2 vols. See also ID., *Še'elot u-Tešuvot ha-Rivas ha-Ḥadašot*, ed. D. FRAENKEL, Munkács 1901.

⁴⁴ On *Responsa* in general, see S. FREEHOF, *The Responsa Literature*, Philadelphia 1959; ID., *A Treasury of Responsa*, Philadelphia 1963; J. BAZAK, & S. PASSAMANEK, *Jewish Law and Jewish Life: Selected Rabbinical Responsa*, Cincinnati 1979. On the use of *Responsa* as historical sources, see B. WEINRYB, *Responsa as a Source for History (Methodological Problems)*, in *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie*, London 1967, pp. 399-417; H. SOLOVEICHIK, *Še'elot u-Tešuvot ke-Maqor Histori*, Jerusalem 1990.

⁴⁵ See CINTA MAÑE, *The Jews in Barcelona*, Doc. N° 168, 177, 182, 184, 193-4, 200, 205, 209, 215-6, 239-40, 248, 254-5, 259, 271, 277, 279, 283, 285, 288-9, 327.

⁴⁶ SHELOMOH BEN ADERET, *Responsa*, III, N° 15-16.

of Saragossa in 1263-4 and led to the spread of the social agitation in the communities of the Crown of Aragon⁴⁷. The wealth of the Latin and Romance documents in the Catalan archives⁴⁸ and the abundance of the Hebrew sources from Catalonia offer the historian a wonderful opportunity to draw a picture of the Jewish past which is superior to anything that is known in medieval Jewish history. The information obtained from the different categories of sources is by far nearer to the historical reality than any description based only on one or limited type of sources⁴⁹.

The discovery of Hebrew sources found in the bindings of medieval books and regis-

ters can transform our understanding of the history of the Jews in medieval Catalonia. Sources that have been literally hidden in the bindings can unfold before us new information that may enable us to grasp the Jewish past better. The historical information that is still waiting to be redeemed in the archives of Gerona, for example, can be of invaluable importance⁵⁰.

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SUMMARY

The history of the Jews of Catalonia is very well documented. No other medieval Jewish community has such an abundance of Hebrew, Latin and Romance texts. Historians cannot afford to base their research on just one type of source. The Hebrew and Latin-Romance sources compliment each other and provide different types of information that are needed for a holistic understanding of any chapter of this history.

KEY WORDS: Catalan Jewry before 1391, archival documents, Hebrew sources.

⁴⁷ ASSIS, *Crisis in the Community of Saragossa in the Years 1263-1264 according to Hebrew and Latin Sources*, pp. 37-42 (Hebrew). See also Y. ASSIS, *Responso Rabínicos y Cartas Reales: fuentes para el estudio de la historia de los judíos en la Corona de Aragón: «Espacio, Tiempo y Forma»*, Revista de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia, Serie III, 6, Historia Medieval, UNED, 1993, pp. 363-376.

⁴⁸ For a brief discussion on the Catalan archives, see ASSIS, *Los judíos de Cataluña: Fuentes y posibilidades de estudio*, pp. 150-152 (see n. 12).

⁴⁹ See ASSIS, *Los judíos de Cataluña: Fuentes y posibilidades de estudio*, pp. 152-155.

⁵⁰ The efforts to materialize the project of revealing the Hebrew sources found in the bindings of volumes in the archives in this city are to be encouraged and intensified. Their eventual publication will have undoubtedly a great impact on our understanding of the Jewish history of Catalonia in general, and of the Jews in Gerona, in particular.

THE «GENIZOT» OF GERONA AND ITALY: TOWARDS A TYPOLOGICAL COMPARISON

In this paper I would like to refer to an important discovery of a new «Genizah» kept for seven hundreds years in the Spanish archives. I am referring, in particular, to the Archives of Gerona, the town of Nahmanides where an important qabbalistic centre flourished in the 13th century. It is superfluous to point out that, in this context, we use the term «Genizah» only by analogy if compared with the classic Genizah found in Cairo a century ago. In fact, the phenomenon of the re-employment of the material of book, particularly in bindings, is substantially different from that of putting aside in a real Genizah the old warned manuscripts in order to avoid their profanation. The re-use is, in fact, par excellence a violent form of profanation of the sacred books, usually condemned by the Rabbis, but the result is the same: that is the preservation for centuries of parts and fragments of old manuscripts. But, first, I will refer to the «Italian Genizah», in order to make a comparison between the typology of Hebrew manuscript fragments found in the Italian archives – which represent a significant example for those discovered in the entire Europe – and the fragments of the newly found Geronese counterpart.

In my previous publications¹ I did write several times that only in Italy we found up to now about 7,000 fragments while the number of those uncovered in all the other European countries was only of about 1,700. This datum, after the discoveries of Gerona, is no longer valid, and our statistics have to be updated. In fact, only in the notarial registers kept in the Gerona Histori-

cal Archive, we will recover several thousands of fragments.

As far as the typology of the «Italian Genizah» is concerned, first of all we have to point out that, the re-use of medieval Hebrew manuscripts as book-binding, as in other European countries, was done in the second half of the 16th and in the 17th centuries. The probability to find fragments re-used in bindings before this period is very difficult, and at best of my knowledge, I remember no more that 2 or 3 cases.

The phenomenon of re-cycling parchment Hebrew and non-Hebrew manuscripts in Italy is connected with the spreading of the printed book and with the confiscation of Hebrew books carried out by the counter-reformation Church. As far as the subjects contained in the Italian fragments about 30% belong to biblical manuscripts, 24% to halakhic literature represented by the traditional *Sifre mitzwot*; 12% contain biblical commentaries, 12% *Mishnah*, *Talmud*, and other talmudic compendia, 10% contain liturgical texts, while 4% represent philosophy and 2% *Qabbalah*; 4% contain dictionaries or lexicographical works, and, finally, 2% scientific texts about medicine, astronomy and geometry. A characteristic of the «Italian Genizah» is the heterogeneity of the origin of the fragments. While, in fact, the fragments found in Austria and Germany are exclusively Ashkenazi and those of the Iberian peninsula are Sephardic, those found in Italy are partially of Italian origin (less than one third), most Ashkenazi (more than one third) and Sephardic (about one third). Most of the fragments come from what can be considered the typical works contained in the libraries of the Jews settled in Europe in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, that is, the Bible, the Talmud and prayer books.

But let us now refer to a first report on the new «Gerona Genizah». In the month of March 1998 I discovered by chance in Gerona a new important «Genizah» which could deliver us great surprises. I knew of some Hebrew manuscript fragments found in the Municipal Archive, in the Capitular and Diocesan Archives in Gerona, Bar-

¹ For a general survey see: A. DAVID and J. TABORY (edd.), *The Italian Genizah. Proceedings of the Conference held under the auspices of The Israel Academy of Science and Humanities and The Jewish National and University Library*, Jerusalem, January 9, 1996 (17 Teveth 5756), Orhot Press, Jerusalem 1998 (Hebrew); Italian enlarged and updated translation: M. PERANI (Ed.), *La «Genizah italiana»*, Il Mulino/Alfa Tape, Bologna 1999.

celona and other places in Spain, partially published by A Duran i Sanpere, J. M. Millàs Vallicrosa, E. Cortes and other scholars².

In the Historical Archive in Gerona I found thousands of Hebrew paper manuscript fragments in notarial registers of the years 1330-1500. Thanks to a precious suggestion of the Diocesan archivist Josep Maria Marçès, I did carry out an inspection and I was amazed by the impressive numbers of paper sheets dismembered from Hebrew manuscripts and pasted together by dozens to obtain the cardboards of the bindings of the notarial registers I saw. The absolutely new datum, if compared with the thousands of folios found in the «European Genizah», particularly in Italy, is the date of the re-employment, preceding that of Europe of more than two centuries. In fact, what is very impressive in the Gerona discoveries is the early date of the first reuse of the manuscripts beginning from the first decades of the fourteenth century, which, at best of my knowledge has no parallel in Europe. If we consider that it happened only seventy years after the flourishing of the Geronese kabbalistic school and the Disputation of Barcelona of the 1263, we can hope to find in the thousands of sheets, after their detachment and restoration, ancient or even rare, lost or unknown works. As it is well known, the Hebrew books and the documents belonged to the Jews of Spain before the expulsion which have survived up to now are indeed very rare. In fact, many, perhaps most of the manuscripts now in Spain were brought there from Italy and other sources, and only a few never left Spain:

this consideration clearly shows how important the fragments are, representing a large proportion of manuscripts that never left Spain. Another characteristic of the different typology of the «Gerona Genizah» is that almost all the fragments come from paper Hebrew manuscripts reused to form the binding cardboards, whereas all of those found in Europe were written on parchment and re-used as wrappers to cover books and registers. Normally on parchment the scribes did copy the most important and venerated books, such as *Bible*, *Talmud*, *Maḥzorim*, *Siddurim* and the canonized biblical and talmudic commentaries; on the contrary paper manuscript was used for private documents or less important works.

The finds up to now examined among the fragments of the «Gerona Genizah» are of considerable importance both for the various fields of the Jewish Literature, and for the history of the Jewish community in Spain before the expulsion. In fact, beside the most common literary works, in Gerona are well represented also private and public historical documents, such as some registers of Jewish communities and of Jewish money lenders.

Contrary to the Italian and European similar phenomenon, it seems that the re-employment of Hebrew manuscripts in Gerona was done – not only, but also – by some Jewish bookbinders. In fact, studying the dates of re-use, we have no evidence, as in Italy, of a particular connection between re-cycling of Hebrew manuscripts and pogroms against the local Jewish community or confiscation of their books. As a matter of fact, the

² See the following studies: A. DURAN I SANPERE, *Documents aljamats de jueu catalans*: «Buletí de la Biblioteca de Catalunya» 5 (1918-1919), pp. 137; J.M. MILLÀS VALLICROSA, *Petita llista d'un prestamista jueu*: «Estudis Universitaris Catalans» 13 (1928), pp. 288-290; ID., *Restos de antiguos libros hebraicos*: «Anales del Instituto de Estudios Gerundenses» 6 (1951), pp. 323 [= «Sefarad» 12 (1952) pp. 156-158]; ID., *Un fragmento del Talmud Gerosolimitano*: «Anales del Instituto de Estudios Gerundenses» 3 (1948), p. 193; FR. PEREZ CASTRO, *Fragments de còdices del Antiguo Textamento hebreo en el Archivo Histórico Nacional. I*: «Sefarad» 30 (1970), pp. 251-288; E. CORTÈS, *Fragments de manuscrits*

hebreus i arameus descoberts de nou a l'Arxiu Diocesà de Gerona: «Revista Catalana de Teologia», 7 (1982), pp. 1-56; ID., *Una poesia cabalística desconeguda i uns fragments d'Ibn Guiat procedents de l'Arxiu Diocesà de Gerona*: «Arxiu de Textos Catalans Antics» 2 (1983), pp. 7-21; ID., *Fragments de manuscrits hebreus i arameus descoberts de nou a l'Arxiu Diocesà de Gerona. II*: «Revista Catalana de Teologia» 9 (1984), pp. 83-100. ID., *Fragments de manuscrits hebreus i arameus descoberts de nou a l'Arxiu Diocesà de Gerona. III*: «Revista Catalana de Teologia» 10 (1985), pp. 31-52; J. L. LACAVE, *Importante hallazgo de documentos hebreos en Tudela*: «Sefarad» 43 (1983), pp. 169-179.

number of notarial registers with Hebrew bindings is attested in homogeneous way continuously since the year 1332 until several years after the expulsion of 1492. Nevertheless, if such a connection is at the present not proved, it could not be generally excluded.

Moreover, as already pointed out, all the fragments are written in Sephardic writing, a small part in square letters (mostly on the few parchment folia attested about 5%), while most are written in semi-cursive and cursive writings of the 13th and 14th centuries copied on paper sheets.

Among the fragments found in the Municipal Archive in Gerona, some interesting documents were found containing lists of the members of the local Jewish community in the early fourteenth century, noting the fees they should pay to occupy their assigned place in the synagogue. In the Capitular and Historic Archives of that town, pages from two unknown commentaries on the Talmud by a Spanish author of the fourteenth century were also found. A significant example is that of the binding of the notarial register compiled in 1394 by the notary Berenguer Cappella. The cardboard of the binding was obtained pasting 20 bifolios for a total of 80 pages dismembered from a manuscript written in semi-cursive Sephardic writing from the 13th century.

Thousands of pages now still in the bindings of Spain have kept for six or seven centuries a significant part of the Hebrew manuscripts owned by the Jews of the Iberian peninsula before their expulsion. I am almost sure that if systematic inquires would be undertaken, we could uncover interesting remnants of historical documents, rare, lost or even unknown works. We are

now planning to carry out a project of censoring, detaching and cataloguing bindings constituted by Hebrew paper manuscript sheets. After the detachment, the cardboard formed by dozens of pages pasted together have to be immersed in an hydro-alcoholic solution, in order to dissolve the glues so that all the pasted sheets could be separate from each other. But the work to be done is long, complex, patient and needs a consistent financial support. In fact, all the hundreds of the Hebrew manuscript fragments found in Gerona have to be detached from the registers they cover; a new binding must be made to the registers. At this point all of the fragments are put between two pieces of absorbent hard cardboard, so to become dry and ironed. If a folio or bifolio is lacerated into some fragments, they have to be restored, reconstructing the entire sheet. Afterwards to each fragment has to be attributed an identification number and, finally, microfilmed or photocopied. At this point begins the work of re-composition of all the fragments belonging to the same manuscript, their identification and dating.

As it clearly appears, all this process need not only a restoration laboratory inside the Historical Archive, but also a formal permission by the archival Spanish authorities and a lot of money. It is exactly for this that I will conclude this lecture with a call for financial support addressed to any interested Catalan, Spanish, European and international Institution or Foundation, in order to rescue a such treasured heritage, which could bring to light a precious unknown witness of the Catalan Jewry in the last two centuries before the expulsion.

NEW PUBLICATIONS ON THE «ITALIAN GENIZAH»

The important work of census and cataloguing of the thousands of medieval Hebrew manuscript fragments, carried out with surprising results by *The «Italian Genizah» Project*, just in the last months marks some important new publications. I am referring, first of all, to the catalogue of the fragments found in the Capitular and Curia Archives in Modena and those of the Municipal Historical Archive of Correggio, near Reggio Emilia³. This catalogue is to be added to the previous two published in the same centennial series «Inventari dei manoscritti delle Biblioteche d'Italia» published by the Olschki Press in Florence. In this volume, 467 fragments are illustrated – mostly entire folia and bifolia – reused by the Modenese bookbinders, during a twenty-years period from 1632 till 1653, to bind as wrappers 220 registers now kept in the mentioned archives.

These *disiecta membra* come from 127 manuscripts containing biblical texts (32%), books of religious precepts (26%), commentaries on the Scripture (11%), and in a smaller quantity talmudic, liturgical, philosophical, linguistic, midrashic, kabbalistic and scientific works. The manuscripts, from which the parchment sheets were dismembered for this secondary reuse, were copied from the 11th to the 15th centuries in the Ashkenazic lands (36%), in Italy (40%), in the Sephardic area (31%) and in Byzantine one (2%). Many among the represented manuscripts were already known to us thanks to the catalogued fragments found in other archives of the Modenese area, such as those found in Nonantola and in the Municipal Historical Archive in Modena. The newly found fragments, catalogued in this volume, did enable us to reconstruct partially these manuscripts, recover-

ing sometimes dozens of pages. In his preface, Benjamin Richler, director of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem, points out the most important fragments, which contain rare or unknown works, representing sometimes the unique extant manuscript. So for example the glosses of Isaiah of Trani to the talmudic treatise *'Eruvin*, of which the pages found in Modena and Correggio constitute now the unique witness in our hands.

Of great importance are also the pages of *Sifre* and *Mekilta*, and those of an early *Mishnah* codex from the 11th – 12th centuries as well, in addition to other fragments. In another preface, Edna Engel, of the Hebrew Palaeography Project in Jerusalem, does examine the contribution of these fragments to the Hebrew palaeography, whereas in my Introduction I illustrate the characteristics of the three catalogued collections. A wide apparatus of indexes makes easy the consultation of the volume, enriched with 16 colours plates and 100 Figures in black and white.

The second publication I would like to mention, edited by myself, is the book *La «Genizah italiana»*⁴. It presents the Italian enlarged and updated translation of the proceedings of the international congress held in Jerusalem in January 1996 edited by Abraham David and Joseph Tabory and published in Hebrew in 1998 by the Orhot Press in Jerusalem. In the about seventy additional pages, a new study is devoted by Edna Engel to some notes on the palaeography of the fragments found in the «Italian Genizah» in addition to a review by the same author of the two previous catalogues of the fragments found in Bologna and in another archive in Modena, published in 1997 by Olschki⁵.

³ M. PERANI e S. CAMPANINI, *I frammenti ebraici di Modena, Archivio Capitolare – Archivio della Curia, e di Correggio, Archivio Storico Comunale*, Leo S. Olschki Editore, Firenze 1999 (Inventari dei manoscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia 111), pp. 250, 16 colour plates and 100 b/w.

⁴ M. PERANI (ed.), *La «Genizah italiana»*, Il Mulino/Alfa Tape, Bologna 1999.

⁵ E. ENGEL, *Alcune note di paleografia sulla «Genizah italiana»*, *ibid.*, pp. 253-259; EAD., *I cataloghi dei frammenti ebraici di Bologna e di Modena*, *ibid.*, pp. 275-283.

But the most important study added to the Italian version is that of the *Tosefta* fragments found in Norcia which constitute the oldest one up till now found in Europe among the manuscript re-used as book bindings. On the basis of a palaeographical comparison, in fact, its oriental square script is datable back to the 11th or, according Edna Engel's opinion, probably to the 10th century, constituting also the most ancient witness of this work now in our hands. In my study I point out the codicological and palaeographical characteristics of this fragment⁶, whereas Günter Stemberger, of Vienna University, points out the contribution of Norcia *Tosefta* to the study of the textual tradition of this work⁷. Stemberger concludes his examination noting that the Norcia fragment belongs to the same textual tradition of the Erfurt codex and the fragments of the Cairo Genizah, different from that of the Vienna codex and the *editio princeps*. Norcia seems to be the oldest witness of the tradition attested in Erfurt codex, but there are also some cases in which Norcia agrees with Vienna manuscript against Erfurt. It is, therefore, necessary to soften the assertion that the Vienna text is the result of a systematic revision of a pre-existing text.

The additions to the Italian version contain, finally, an updated census of all the Italian Archives in which Hebrew manuscript fragments have been found, a complete bibliography on the «Italian Genizah» in chronological order⁸, and a first report on the newly found «Gerona Genizah»⁹.

⁶ M. PERANI, *Il più antico frammento della "Genizah italiana": la Tosefta di Norcia (ca. 1000 e.v.). Rilievi codicologici e paleografici*, *ibid.*, pp. 261-265.

⁷ G. STEMBERGER, *I frammenti della Tosefta di Norcia e il loro contributo allo studio della tradizione testuale*, *ibid.*, pp. 267-273.

⁸ M. PERANI, *I frammenti ebraici scoperti in Italia: censimento degli archivi e bibliografia aggiornati al 1998*, *ibid.*, pp. 285-304.

⁹ *Id.*, *Un nuovo importante giacimento nella «Genizah europea»: gli archivi di Girona*, *ibid.*, pp. 305-313.

¹⁰ S. ORAZI, *Manoscritti salvati dal rogo: le pergamene ebraiche di Cagli: «La rassegna mensile di Israel»* 64 n. 2 (1998), pp. 29-68.

In 1998 Stefano Orazi, with my help, published the catalogue of a new collection of Hebrew fragments, recently found in Cagli (Pesaro)¹⁰.

In the same year Uriel Simon published an important article demonstrating that the fragments of a commentary to Ezekiel and Isaiah, found in the State Archive of Bologna and possibly attributed by Abraham Grossman and myself to Abraham ibn Ezra or to one among his disciples, are indeed the commentary to the Prophets of Menaḥem ben Shim'on of Posquières¹¹, a disciple of Mosheh ibn Ezra.

New fragments found in the Archivio Arcivescovile di Ravenna, have been catalogued by myself in a short article¹². Moreover, at the beginning of 2001 new important Hebrew fragments have been discovered in the book-bindings of Ravenna, including an entire bifolio, the central one of quire, with four consecutive pages of the *Midrash Tanḥumah* (Buber), and other early fragments of the Talmud and of *Sheiltot* of Rabbi Aḥa.

The last publication is the catalogue of the exhibition *Fragments from the "Italian Genizah"*, inaugurated just today at Jewish National and University Library. In it, after an introductory text, all of the 57 exhibited fragments are illustrated in fine colour photos¹³. The visitors of the exhibition will be able to see for the first time in Israel some of the most important fragments found in the archives of Italy. Also a videotape illustrating the findings in the Italian

¹¹ U. SIMON, *Qit'e ha-peruṣ le-Yirmeyah wi-Yehzeqel she-yuḥasu le-R. Abraham ibn Ezra hinnam le-R. Menahem b. Šim'on mi-Posquières: «Tarbiz»* 67 (1998), pp. 563-572; for my previous study attributing these fragments to Ibn Ezra or his school, see: M. PERANI, *Frammenti del commento perduto di Abraham ibn Ezra o di un suo discepolo a Geremia ed Ezechiele dalla "Genizah" di Bologna: «Henoch»* 18 (1996), pp. 283-326.

¹² M. PERANI, *Nuovi frammenti ebraici a Ravenna presso l'Archivio Arcivescovile: «Ravenna. Studi e ricerche»* 5 (1998), pp. 35-40.

¹³ *Fragments from the "Italian Genizah". An Exhibition, Jerusalem Jewish National and University Library December 12, 1999 – January 12, 2000*. Catalogue edited by M. PERANI, Crevalcore (Bologna) 1999.

archives and some phases of the detachment and restoration of the Hebrew covers carried out in a Modenese laboratory can be seen.

Finally, I would like to mention also another exhibition of medieval Hebrew manuscript fragments together with Latin manuscripts, open just in these days in Massa Carrara, and displaying the Hebrew covers found in this town and in Pontremoli Archive, catalogued by Hillel Sermoneta¹⁴.

Another important study to be published is devoted by Günter Stemberger and myself to the fragments of an early copy of the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, recently discovered in the Library of the Diocesan Archive in Savona. They are the remnants of a manuscript of the *Yerushalmi* (only of its order *Neziqin*) written in the 13th century in a Sephardic hand. Due to the scarcity of

Yerushalmi manuscripts and Genizah fragments, every new discovery is important. In the case of the fragments of Savona, the soon discovered fact of their textual relationship with the Escorial manuscript (15th century) renders them even more important and justifies a more detailed analysis of their text, presented by the authors in their article *The Yerushalmi Fragments Discovered in The Diocesan Library Of Savona*, to be printed in «Henoch» 2001.

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SUMMARY

The article compares the typology of the Hebrew manuscript fragments found in the Italian archives, the so-called «Italian Genizah», and those recently discovered in the «Gerona Genizah». The re-employment of Hebrew manuscripts in Gerona – whose beginning antedates its Italian counterpart by about three centuries – probably was also done by some Jewish bookbinders. In the «Gerona Genizah» there is no evidence, as in Italy, of a connection between the re-use of the texts and pogroms against Jews. The fragments found in the «Italian Genizah» well represent the three most important types of script that were widespread in the Western world: Sephardic, Ashkenazic, and Italian. In contrast, all of the fragments discovered in Gerona are written with Sephardic script. The Italian fragments exclusively contain literary texts and are on parchment. On the contrary, the Gerona fragments are mostly written on paper and contain, together with literary texts, many private or historical documents of the Jewish communities.

KEY WORDS: «Italian Genizah», «Gerona Genizah», comparison.

In the supplementary note the newly appeared publications on the «Italian Genizah» are illustrated, together with new catalogues and the first exhibition of fragments, inaugurated in Jerusalem at JNUL the same day of this conference.

KEY WORDS: «Italian Genizah», Manuscripts Fragments, New Publications.

¹⁴ H. SERMONETA, *I frammenti ebraici scoperti nell'Archivio di Pontremoli*, in P. RADICCHI e I. ZOLESI, *Codicum fragmenta. Sul ritrovamento di antiche pergamene negli Archivi di Stato di Massa e Pontremoli (Secoli XII-XV)*, con la collaborazione di Rav Hillel

M. Sermoneta per i manoscritti ebraici, ETS Press, Archivio di Stato di Massa, Massa 1999; on the Hebrew fragments see: *Introduction* pp. 72-82, catalogue in the Section D, pp. 213-225, and the plates 33-48.

THE SEPHARDIC SCRIPTS OF THE 13TH-14TH CENTURIES
IN VIEW OF THE GERONA FRAGMENTS

The contribution of the «European Genizah» to Hebrew palaeography is immeasurable. The same applies to the contribution of the palaeography to this huge depository. Dating and localizing thousands of fragments existing in this project, which could be established only by palaeographical techniques, is undoubtedly a very important purpose and deserves mention. However, in what follows I will portray the mutual contribution of both areas, particularly referring to the Gerona fragments.

First, an apology: The Gerona project is in its first steps, and since most fragments are still undetached, I have had limited sources for palaeographical examination, as well as for demonstrating my conclusions. Consequently, in many cases I had to use bad photostats for making transparencies.

Dealing with script and material we find that the Gerona collection, as opposed to the fragments of the Italian Archives, is quite monolithic. Similarly to the Italian fragments, the Gerona fragments have to be classified into four types of script – Ashkenazic, Italian, Sephardic and one or two examples of the Byzantine script. However, unlike the Italian, most of the Gerona fragments are written in the Sephardic type of script, while very few fragments are identified as Italian or Ashkenazic. The monolithic characterization of the Gerona collection is well affirmed by their dating, since most fragments could be dated to the 13-14th centuries. After recognizing their type and time of writing, it is not surprising that most of the Gerona fragments are dismembered from paper manuscripts instead of parchment, which is the dominant writing material of the Italian archives. And indeed, paper production was most developed in Spain, and its increasing use in Hebrew manuscripts during the 13th century is well attested.

«Unlike most mediaeval Hebrew scripts, the Sephardic type is not defined only by its geographical boundaries but rather by its stylistic features. The Sephardic script was in use not only in the Iberian Peninsula but also beyond the Pyr-

enees, in Provence. It was the script used in the Magreb and in regions under the Magrebic rule, such as Sicily. By the end of the 14th century the Sephardic script moved to other regions around the Mediterranean, like Northern Italy, first by immigrants and since the end of the 15th century, by expelled Jews».

Confirmed by evidence of 10th century script, it can be assumed that the Sephardic script originated in the Magreb, inspired there by the Oriental script which was probably brought over by the many Jewish Babylonian immigrants. Following this assumption it is fully understandable that the first known remnants of Sephardic writings bear a lot of Oriental features, indicating the “growth period” of the Sephardic script during the 10th-11th centuries (Fig. 1a and Fig. 1b).

Unlike the fully fledged Oriental letters in this period, the Sephardic letters are still lagging behind, showing the affinity to the old Oriental script (see for example the Alef).

It is reasonable therefore that the emergence of the Sephardic script is concentrated in manuscripts written in the Muslim areas. In Northern Spain, Catalonia in particular, we first find a type of script which demonstrates a mixture of Sephardic features with Ashkenazic ones. At the end of the 11th century, presumably due to the cultural changes caused by the Reconquista, this mixture turns out to be a proper Sephardic script. Malachi Beit-Arié discusses this issue in his article “The Hebrew script in Spain” published in *Moreshet Sepharad* (edited by Haim Beinart) in 1992. Beit-Arié comes to a conclusion that in a paradoxical way the conqueror (Christians) adopted the script of the conquered (Muslims), thus, confirming their cultural superiority. Moreover, he states that the Reconquista which unified all the Jewish communities under the same political and religious authorities, also unified the Hebrew script. Consequently, a new type of script was created characterized mostly by features of the Muslim culture of writing.

Fig. 2a is a biblical parchment fragment of the 12th century (or beginning of the 13th), com-

pared to a colophon of a *Mekhilta* text – Fig. 2b – written in Gerona in 1184. These examples portray the transitional period between the incubation period of the 10-11th centuries, and the great break-through of the 13th. They demonstrate the first traces of the square Sephardic script, still preserving a few remnants of the Oriental script, but at the same time already exhibiting the main features of the square Sephardic script. Note the common morphology of most of the letters and the heaviness of bottom lines. However, most important for dating are the protruding thorns at the edge of the upper horizontal lines, conveying the Oriental character.

The Sephardic script reached its peak during the 13th-14th centuries. This is the period to which most of the Gerona fragments could be dated.

The 13th century is called in Spain the «golden age». This is the period of increasing social and cultural flourishing, of religious tolerance and mutual respect between Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Many books were written by Jewish scholars, copied by scribes in many Jewish centers all over the Iberian Peninsula, most of them in the Hebrew letters. There are 69 extant dated Hebrew manuscripts written in the Sephardic script in the 13th century, and about 213 in the 14th.

Crystallization of the Sephardic script during the 13th century brought about a radical change in the character of the square script, first and foremost by losing its similarity to the Oriental script.

Fig. 3a is a talmudic parchment fragment from Gerona archive and Fig. 3b a talmudic manuscript written somewhere in the Iberian peninsula in 1239. Letters in this stage change their proportions and start to become more square. There is a shifting in the weight of letters: letters are made by even strokes, creating a regularity in the thickness of both horizontal and vertical lines and in the inner part of the letter, as opposed to the earlier example, in which base lines were relatively very thick. Here one can see that upper horizontal lines lack the heavy protruding thorns. This is a good example for the classical square Sephardic which starts in the 13th century and goes on to the 14th and sometimes we can follow its traces even in the 15th century.

Besides the Iberian Peninsula, Provence is also an important locality in which the Sephardic script was in use. Like in Spain, the Jewish center in Provence flourished during the 13th-14th centuries.

The influence of three intellectual centers – Spain, Italy and Ashkenaz – created a new meeting point between these three spiritual atmospheres in Provence, establishing a new cultural synthesis. Similar to other areas, this synthesis is also evident in the Hebrew script.

The 13th century in Provence is represented in the Gerona fragments by the classic Provençal script: Fig. 4a is a Gerona parchment fragment including a talmudic text, while Fig. 4b is a manuscript written in Arles (Provence) in 1291.

The Provençal writing is much more delicate than the Sephardic one and the influence of the three main centers affecting the Provençal culture can clearly be noticed. From the Sephardic script it has the main Sephardic features of letters, proportions and elaboration of letters' lines. The influence of the Ashkenazic letters is probably expressed in the shape of the Alef. Note the break of the left leg, demonstrating a quite different *ductus* (meaning direction and number of pen strokes), which corresponds more to the Ashkenazic *ductus*. The Italian impression is manifested in the curved, less stiff and soft even lines.

In addition to the flourishing of the square script, the crystallization of the Sephardic script in the 13th century has also accelerated the development of less stiffened modes of script. In order to find their origin we must go back to the 10th-11th centuries. During this period the square Sephardic script began to evolve into a more convenient style of writing. The inflexible lines and the stiff writing technique gave way to a more fluid writing – subsequently becoming the cursive and the semi-cursive modes. In the beginning, the new scripts were mostly used in private writing, like documents or drafts, but very soon they changed into a new style, and became the dominant mode of writings of either literary or documentary texts.

According to the chart on Fig. 5a one can see the gradual transition of the square script into the cursive and semi-cursive, constructed in two modes of writing: semi-square and proto cursive.

Since the cursive and the semi-cursive of the 13th-14th centuries are an outcome of these two transitional modes I should briefly demonstrate the development of the 10th-11th centuries.

Fig. 5b presents a chart illustrating the process of the square developing into the semi-cursive through the shape of the Alef. The first letter on the upper part of the chart is a fluent square Alef. The second one represents the semi-square and the third one the semi-cursive.

In the square Alef seen in the top row, the right components are made of two separate strokes. These separate strokes join together and form a single stroke, moving upwards on the oblique line of the semi-cursive Alef (the third row). We can also see the stiff curve of the left leg of the square letter, which gradually turns into an open curve.

It seems that two evolutionary routes of the semi-cursive script exist. Looking again at the chart on the right, we can see that the first one develops from the square via the semi-square, while the second grows out of the cursive. In what follows I will demonstrate both of these routes represented in the Gerona fragments.

Fig. 6a is a Gerona fragment on paper, and Fig. 6b a parchment manuscript written in Provence in 1284. Both designate the first evolutionary route of the semi-cursive developing out of the semi-square during the 13th century.

Note for example the Alef which still maintains the impression of the transitional mode: see the curved left leg and its upper thorn.

Fig. 7a is a Gerona paper fragment and Fig. 7b a document written in Barcelona in 1214. Both examples illustrate the second route of the semi-cursive script, emanating from the cursive in a parallel chronological phase.

Note particularly the morphology of the Alef, shaped simultaneously in the two modes. However, it is interesting to find here a mixture of cursive letters, like He or Tav together with the semi-cursive. Also significant are the thorns of the upper horizontals which in this case too are indicative of the Oriental provenance.

We now arrive at the classical semi-cursive, a script which begins in the 13th century but is prevalent in the 14th century and early 15th. Fig. 8a is a Gerona paper fragment and Fig. 8b a manuscript written in Majorca (Spain) in 1352.

The gradual process of the Alef becoming a «classic» one, is mainly manifested in its left leg and the juncture of the two right lines: The concave curve of the vertical leg (seen in the previous example) turns into a straight line. All the while the juncture of the two right lines moves upwards, losing as a result the upper remainder of the vertical line. The classic semi-cursive is made of shaded letters, conveying a contrast between the width of the horizontal lines and the width of the verticals. Consequently, the inner part of the letter increases, providing a new appearance to the texture of the writing.

In the semi-cursive mode, as well as in other modes, one can notice variable styles, some lasting a longer period and others disappearing after a while.

I would like to demonstrate examples of two different styles which I call a “genre”. I use the term genre to indicate a certain combination of features common to several handwritings, not depending on a specific scribe, time of writing, or a specific geographical classification. A genre could exist for a long period. However, it is not impossible to observe, in the course of this period, some modifications in its letters, providing a clue to its chronological boundaries, or its geographical distribution.

Fig. 9a is a parchment Gerona fragment, compared with a manuscript written in Ubeda (Spain) in 1290, Fig. 9b. These examples will show one genre. The texture of this genre reflects harmony, mainly due to regularity of spaces – between letters, words and lines. In addition, it should be noticed that most of the verticals and the oblique lines are made in slanted strokes directed to the left, consequently making the horizontal lines look longer. The Alef again deserves attention, as it looks like an immediate descendant of the semi-square and the proto-cursive.

An example of another genre is illustrated in Fig. 10a: a paper fragment from Gerona, and Fig. 10b: a manuscript written on paper in Spain in 1325.

This genre, prevailing in the 14th century, is characterized by an emphasis of the vertical lines, conveying an illusion of narrowness, enhanced by means of the small spaces between letters in a word.

The final mode we deal with is the cursive script.

Cursive writing developed by the reduction of calamus strokes and the minimizing of the time the hand is raised from the page. The texture of the script is relatively dense and many of its letters are frequently joined together, either by ligatures, in which two or more parts of several letters make a new form, or by connecting a part of a letter to that of the letter ahead. The earliest known dated cursive script is documented in a list of transports from Tunisia written in 1024. Like the other modes the cursive too has been modified through ages and the cursive script of the 13th century is quite different from that written in the 11th.

At this stage of research it looks like the cursive script preceded the semi-cursive, although the morphology of the latter is closer to the square. To confirm this hypothesis I would like to refer to a group of documents, most of them deeds, made in Barcelona between 1164 to 1269.

Examining those documents (about 15) it seems clear that the older ones in this group are written in a script closer to the cursive, while the latter are closer to the semi-cursive.

This can be seen in the next plate: Two Barcelona documents arranged chronologically: the upper one (cursive Fig. 11a) written in 1164 and the lower one (semi-cursive Fig. 11b) in 1214.

An important criterion for dating a cursive writing is the evaluation of the degree of its cursiveness.

A scribe who writes in cursive letters could apply in his handwriting either «separated cursiveness» or «joint cursiveness». The device of separated cursiveness is characterized by letters structured in a cursive morphology but without joining each other.

This fashion precedes the joint fashion and is manifested in the first traces of the cursive writing, when morphological modification of the

square letters has effected the creation of cursive Alef, He, Kof or Tav. Note the cursive morphology without joints in Fig. 11a, especially the Alef, He and Kof.

Indeed, we find separated cursiveness in most of the 11th century cursive scripts. Nevertheless, its occurrence in later writings, mainly in Provençal scripts, leads to the theory that it may be a stylistic feature. The «joint device» is seen in Fig. 12a, a Gerona fragment, and in Fig. 12b, a manuscript written in Spain in 1393. There are many variations of joining letters, some of them depend on scribal manner and others on stylistic features. You can see in the lower specimen the joining of Zadi with Alef, and in the Gerona fragment the joining of Resh with He, or Beth with Resh. It is also important to note the long dimension of letters emphasized by the large spaces between words.

A few words to sum up: The remarkable Gerona collection still largely unrecovered provides a wide scope for analysing the Sephardic script in the Middle-Ages. There are some examples from the 12th century but most of them – corresponding to historical circumstances – manifest the gradual process of crystallization of the three script modes: square, semi-cursive and cursive, during the 13th-14th centuries.

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SUMMARY

The gradual development of the Sephardic script during the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, revealed in Hebrew manuscripts, is clearly demonstrated in the Gerona fragments. The Sephardic script emerged from the Muslim regions of the world in the tenth and eleventh centuries and was concentrated in manuscripts written in square letters. It reached its peak during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in manuscripts written in square, semi-cursive and cursive letters.

KEY WORDS: Hebrew manuscripts, Gerona fragments, Sephardic script.

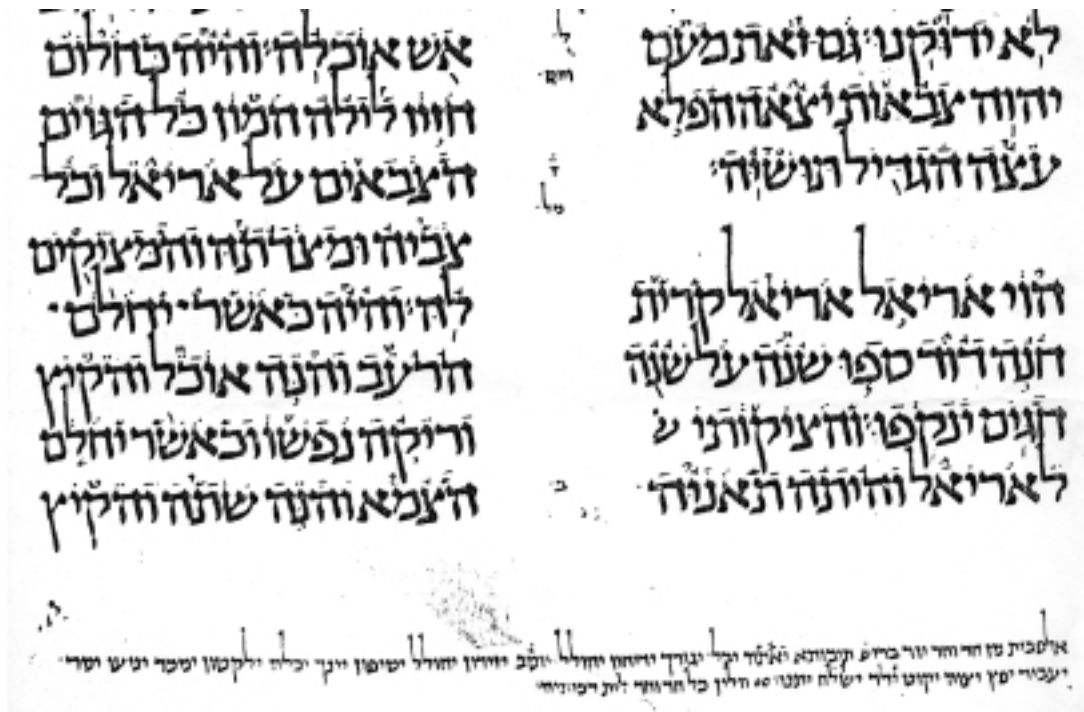


Fig. 1a – Tenth century Oriental square script: Ms. St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, EBP. I B 3.



Fig. 1 b – Tenth century Sephardic square script: Cambridge, University Library, T-S 12.468; Kairouan, 977-78.



Fig. 2a – Gerona, Capitular Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 4.



Fig. 2b – Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 19; Gerona, 1184.

Fig. 2 – Twelfth century Sephardic square script.



Fig. 3a – Gerona, Diocesan Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 57.



Fig. 3b – Ms. Roma, Biblioteca Angelica, Or. 81. Spain, 1239.

Fig. 3 – Thirteenth-Fourteenth centuries Sephardic square script.

ואונם מייזרל משרא שרי רב פפא אב האיתנא היא דתנא בתולה
 יכול ככונה תל אמה אימאשה יכול בונתתל אשה בתולה דאמינר
 ינאה ככל לקטנות ולאבא לכלל בענת רב נחמן בר יצחק אמר תנא
 תנא ינאה דתנא בתולה אין בתולה לא נשדה וכן הוא אומר והנני אנוס
 מרא זכאר בתולה אמר ר' אישור אונם פנוי זכאר על השלא
 לשום אית עשאה זונה אמר רב עמרם אין זולסד ד' אית
 מתנ לא יבמל אדכו מפריה ורביח האיש לובנסו הריח בטיל
 באשה לא בטיל כסייע ליה לרב נחמן בר יצחק אמר שמואל אמר שישיח
 דאדם נביח כנס אסור לעמד בלא אשה שנלא טוב היות ג' יום לבדו
 וכן דאמר האיש לובנסו בטיל מפריה ורביח ובטיל נמי מאשה
 לימא תדון תיזבתא דרב נחמן אמר שמואל לא אין לובנסו נישא אשה בת
 ננסו כי יש לובנסו נישא אשה דלא בתננסו נפקא מניה למיכור ספר
 וזויה בשביל כנסו בית שומאי אום שנ זכרים מאי טעמיהו דבית שמ

Fig. 4a – Gerona, Diocesan Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 3.

אגו נילין בהמן מסודתא פאותה שטיב ערוך מאתמל תפתה אר חמנה בזכות להנלות נר
 תמיד אתם זוכים לחקנול טרול מלך המשיח מאי טעם שם אעמיח קרן לדוד עד כתיב למשיח וא
 שבתו באמצים לבית י' ער פרשה ר' ויצחק אשה ישראלית חוד סביב ר'
 רשעים יתלכין יהודה ור' נחמיה ר' יהודה אום סביב רשעים תידיקב
 מהלכין האביד נשיעו שהעריקים ויצחק מן עך ורואין שהרשעים שדוקים בתוך ערבים נפשו
 טעה עליהם ויד ויצא וראו בפני האנשים טאותה שגעהם נהגן שבה וחזויה להקבה עלהיא
 האיסוראם שהביא עליהם בעולם הזה הוד אנך ייכי אנפתי ישוב אפך באומות העולם ותחמרי
 כום אימתי כיום זאת לבני אדם לכשיחזום הקבה כיום כזו כו בעלמ שאומות העולם מזלדין בו
 ואין כרמו של הקבה אלא ישו טנכ כום יינא ורבי ישור אלו רמיה כרבי עדמותי אתה זומק את
 הנתובב אלא סביב לעריקים הרשעים מהחבל יד סת סביב הרשעים יתלכין האביד בשעה שהרשעים
 עולין מתוך נהיג ורואין אתה עריקים חטפין בשלוח נגן ערך נפטם מהעגמת עליהן הוד רשעי ואת
 זכום כיום זאת לבני אדם אימתי לכשיחזום הקבה בזכות כויות בעולמו מה לך יצא ליקל על שומט
 את בניו על אשך על שטמרת את השבת מה לך יצא לידג על שאגדתי משתמה לך לוקח בטרע
 על שגשגי סוס על שגטלתי לולב על שהסלתי חסלת על שישחיתני עין אבי שבטמים חוד מה המכות

Fig. 4b – Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, hébr. 149; Arles (Provence), 1291.

Fig. 4 – Thirteenth-Fourteenth centuries Provençal square script.

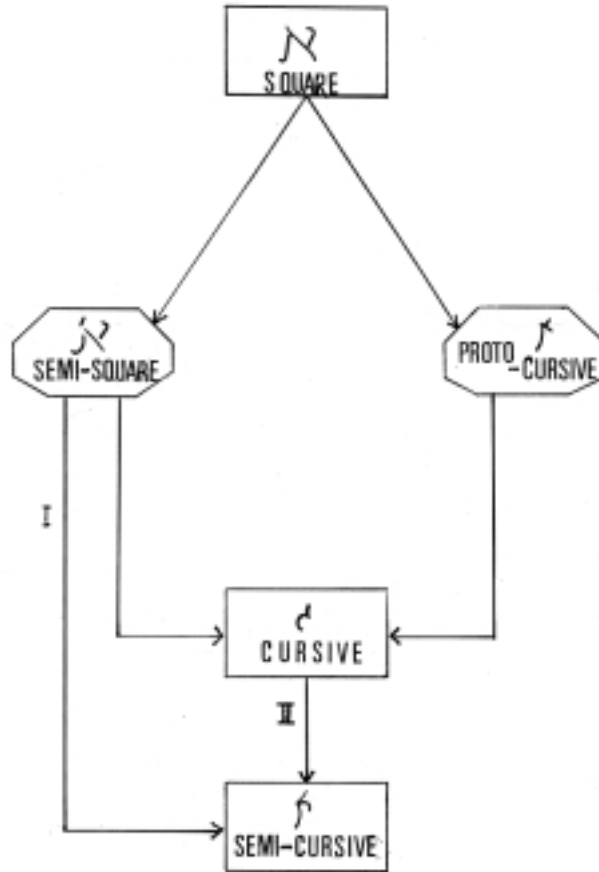


Fig. 5a – The gradual transition of the square script into the cursive and semi-cursive.

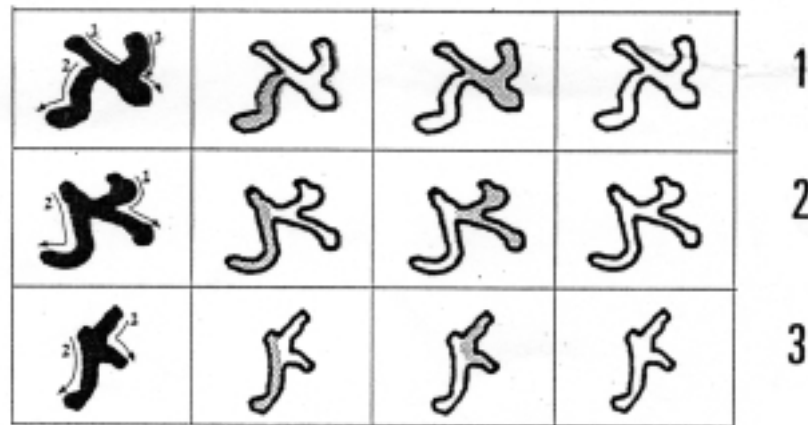


Fig. 5b – The developing process of the square into the semi-cursive through the shape of the alef.



Fig. 6a – Gerona, Capitular Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 5.



Fig. 6b – Ms. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 3239; Tarascon (Provence), 1284.

Fig. 6 – The first route of the semi-cursive.

Fig. 7a – Gerona, Municipal Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 136.

Fig. 7b – A document written in Barcelona in 1214.

Fig. 7 – The second route of the semi-cursive script.

רס ער די וידועה רעה נש לומעסל
 ענה בער זיך און הטענהן טעמך ירח
 "אוד צבועהו וקרבן עריו" רועה
 הפסס סתך הועם וקעטו צען וקח
 רודקוס טהרה זען ירח חויסל
 וקעטו לך
 זעטען חויר ירחי ענה וטע חרע וטע
 וקוס וחיסה רחם עג טר עג טע
 נחטו טח מעז "חע"
 סרוחה

Fig. 8a – Gerona, Municipal Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 134.

אמתי שהכל הפועל שאינו עוף ולא כח בעוף ואעפ"י שישק
 עתה לא יעשה הפועל הקוים שתחתיה קיימת בכתב חי זיה
 דבר שתהיה לא יאמר ט שיצא מנהכה אל הפועל ולא יחיד
 בעצמו אפשרות ולא שיהיה צריך לעוצו יוצאין מן הסב
 אל הפועל הנה כבר נדחה מעלנו זה הקפק תבול אשר
 כפק עליו האומר בקדמות העולם אחר אשר אטונו שש
 שהיא ית' עוף ולא כח בעוף ולמה לא יתחייב לו שבו כשעשה
 אחר אשר לא עשה "הדרך השני" קוים אשר
 חייבו קדמות העולם

Fig. 8b – Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, hébr. 684; Majorca (Spain), 1352.

Fig. 8 – The Sephardic classical semi-cursive script.



Fig. 9a – Gerona, Diocesan Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 6.



Fig. 9b – Ms. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, Rab. 15; Ubeda, 1290.

Fig. 9 – A genre of Sephardic semi-cursive script.



Fig. 10a – Gerona, Capitular Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 14.



Fig. 10b – Ms. London, British Library, Add. 17056; Agramunt (Spain), 1325.

Fig. 10 – Another genre of Sephardic semi-cursive script.



Fig. 11a – A Barcelona document written in 1164.



Fig. 11b – A Barcelona document written in in 1214.

Fig. 11 – Two Barcelona documents demonstrating the development of the Sephardic semi-cursive script from the cursive script.



Fig. 12a – Girona, Diocesan Archive, Hebr. Fragm. n. 19.

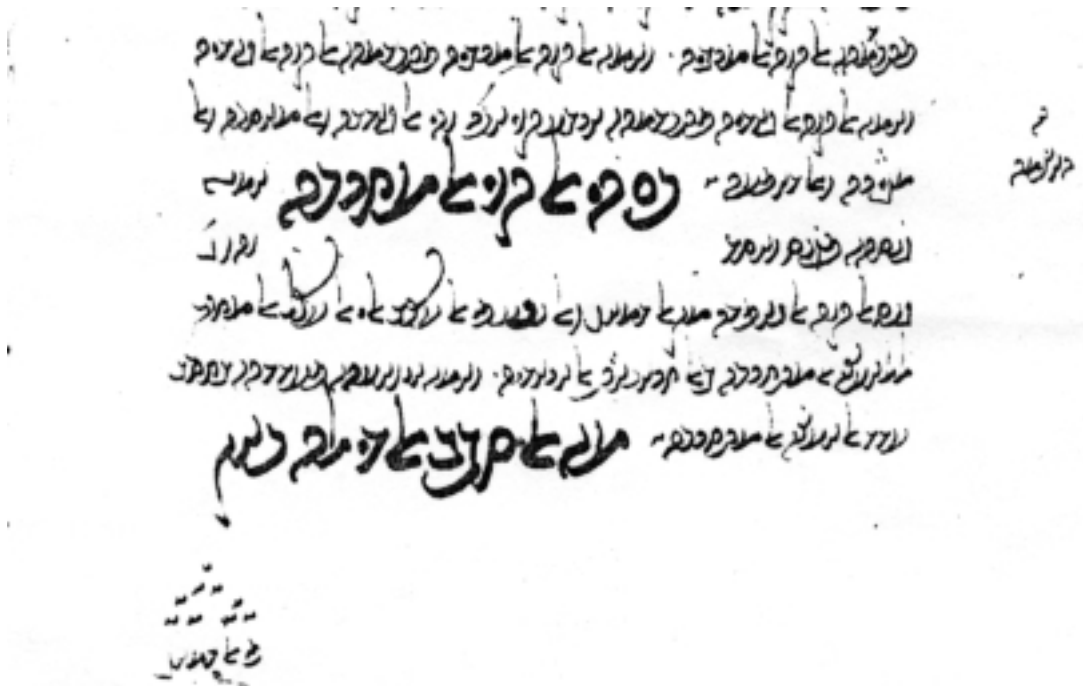


Fig. 12b – Ms. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Ebr. 348; Huesca (Spain), 1393.

Fig. 12 – The ‘joint device’.