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THE  
JEWISH QUARTERLY  
REVIEW

APRIL, 1899

I.

PSEUDO-JOSEPHUS, JOSEPH BEN GORION.

THIS chronicle of the Jewish race, from Adam to the time of Titus, is written in Rabbinical Hebrew, which, however, approaches nearer to the classical language than the majority of mediaeval prose compositions, and was much read by the Jews of the Middle Ages. Only four MSS. of the text are known to me—two in the Vatican Library<sup>1</sup>, which, however, are defective, one in Turin, and one in Paris, all of which agree with the *editio princeps*, besides some fragments in the Bodleian Library (MSS. no. 793, ff. 218<sup>b</sup> to 246; no. 2585, ff. 104 to 106; d. 64, ff. 118 to 120; e. 30, fol. 56). The printed editions, on the other hand, are by no means few. The earliest are those of Mantua (1476-9), which has the best support from the MSS., of Constantinople (1510), divided into books and chapters, and containing considerable additions, and thirdly the Venice edition (1544). The numerous later editions are mostly based on the Constantinople text. The preface, written in the thirteenth century by

<sup>1</sup> The title על דברי הימים וקריבות היהודים, quoted by Dr. Vogelstein (*Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, I, p. 186, n. 6), does not belong to the original MS., but is merely due to the compiler of the index, a converted Jew named J. Baptista Jona.

Yehudah Leon ben Moses Mosconi (see *Magazin Berliner*, 1878, אוצר טוב, p. 17), mentions a shorter and a longer text, to which I shall refer later. The date of the original composition has been a matter of much dispute. The veteran Professor Chwolson (in the *Sammelband* of the *מקצעי נרדמים*, שריד ופליט, 1897, p. 5) contends that the Hebrew text, as found in the *editio princeps*, was written towards the latter half of the ninth century, on the following grounds: (1) the learned Mussulman Ibn Ḥazm, who died in the year 1063 A.D., was acquainted with the translation from Hebrew into Arabic made by a Jew in Yemen. The passage in which he mentions it is found in a Leyden MS. (*Catal.*, no. 1982), and was kindly sent to me by Dr. Steinschneider, who received it from Dr. Schreiner in Hebrew characters. I subjoin the extract in Arabic characters, as copied for me by Dr. Kampffmeyer, with some slight variations.

وكان قد ادرك امر المسيح عليه السلام اسمه يوسف بن قريون فذكر  
ملوكهم وحروبهم الى ان وصل الى قتل يحيى بن زكريا عليه السلام  
فذكره اجمل ذكر وعظم شأنه وانه قتل ظلما لقوله الحق وذكر امر المعمودية  
ذكرا حسنا لم ينكرها ولا ابطلها ثم قال في ذكره لذلك الملك هردوس  
ابن هردوس قتل هذا الملك من حكما بنى اسرايل وخيارهم وعظماهم  
جماعة ولم يذكر من شان المسيح عيسى بن مريم عليهما السلام  
اكثر من هذا ❖

“Yusuf ibn Koryon lived until the time of Christ (on whom be peace), and gave an account of their kings and wars till the murder of Yahya son of Zacharia (on whom be peace), of whom he speaks most favourably, and whom he praises highly, asserting that he was unjustly killed for speaking the truth. He also speaks favourably of baptism, which he does not disapprove, nor regard as useless. Speaking of that king (Herod son of Herod), he says: ‘This king put to death many of the sages of Israel, and of their great and good men.’ And he mentions no more than this of the history of Jesus Christ the Son of Mary (on whom be peace).”

Professor Chwolson next argues (2) that “from the time of the composition of the original work in Italy until its

translation from Hebrew into Arabic in Yemen, and the return of this translation to Spain (where Ibn Hazm was living), we must allow at least 150 or 175 years." This seems to me a rather liberal allowance of time, and perhaps we might reduce the interval at least to fifty years. Rapoport<sup>1</sup> and Grätz (*Geschichte der Juden*, V, 3rd ed., p. 235, n. 2 and p. 295) propose the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century, and the latter is now the date most generally accepted by scholars. Weiss (*Jüdische Tradition*, IV, p. 224, n. 5) places the author a little earlier than the celebrated liturgist Eleazar Kalir, who lived in the ninth century. Drs. Vogelstein and Rieger (*Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, I, p. 185 sqq.) argue for the tenth century, but the pages which they devote to our author contain little that is new on the subject. I must further mention the ingenious arguments of Dr. Konrad Trierer (*Nachrichten der K. Gesellschaft d. Wiss. zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 1895, Heft 4) in support of the view that the *Yosippon* was composed in the fourth century, on the ground of its pure and classical Hebrew. "Unser Autor selbst schreibt in reinem, biblischem Hebräisch, seine Sprache und sein Ton ist schlicht und sachlich, erhebt sich aber in tragischen Momenten . . . zu künstlerischer Vollendung." This favourable verdict on his style, however, is unfortunately reversed by Professor Siegmund Fraenkel (*ZDMG.*, vol. L, p. 418 sqq.), who shows that the Hebrew is more than half Rabbinic, although the writer borrows the phraseology of the Bible wherever he can do so. In my opinion, the arguments by which the date must be determined are mainly these: (1) That no Jewish writer mentions *Yosippon* before Dunash b. Tamim, whom Munk places about the middle of the tenth century (see *Journ. Asiat.*, 1850, p. 18, n. 2); (2) That it is not named in the writings of the Geonim, although it must be admitted that a great many of these are lost; (3) That there is no trace of it in the collection of chronicles and fragments to which I have

<sup>1</sup> See more fully in Zunz, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, 1892, p. 158, and notes.

devoted two volumes of the *Anecdota Oxoniensia* (1887 and 1895), not even in that of A. D. 1100, written in Arabic and in Egypt. According to Mosconi again (*loc. cit.*, p. 112), the earliest evidence for the text of Yosippon is in connexion with the names of Abraham b. David, Abraham b. אלצדיק and Samuel הנגיד (circ. A. D. 1060), who made abridgements of the book. It may be inferred from Mosconi's preface that he had not seen the Great Yosippon (מאור major) from which the ordinary Hebrew text (מינור minor), as in the *editio princeps*, is abridged. We have in a MS. recently acquired by the Bodleian Library (MS. Heb. d. 11) fragments of a "Great Yosippon" (יוסיפון הגדול) which may possibly belong to this Yosippon מאור. They are there attributed to the little known Yerahmeel b. Shelomoh (see *Med. Jew. Chron.*, I, introd., p. xx sqq.), of whom I propose to speak farther on, giving a collection of his unpublished compositions.

I may mention as a curiosity that Yosippon appears to have been known in Persia at the beginning of the fourteenth century. See Prof. Bacher in the *Rev. des Études Juives*, XXXVII, p. 145.

With regard to the Arabic version, there is no reason to doubt Ibn Hazm's statement quoted above, that it was made by a Jew resident in Yemen. Among the MS. fragments obtained from Cairo in the last few years by the Bodleian Library are six leaves (MS. Heb. e. 45, ff. 101 sqq.) of this version written in the Rabbinical character of Yemen, and containing the history of Aristobulus (אסתרוילוס), &c., and of Crassus. The fragment begins as follows:—

פתחצן פיה פמצי כביאנוס פחאצרה וצייק עליה פכרג אליה אלסכנדר  
 מסתאמנא פקבלה ואחסן אליה קאל ופי דלך אלזמאן הרב אסתרוילוס  
 אכו הורקנוס מן רומיה והרב מעה אבנה אנטנוס וגא אלי בלאד אליהוד  
 אנתמע אליה כלק כתיר ולקי כביאנוס פחארבה פחומה כביאנוס וקתל  
 רגאלה ואכדה אסירא וחמלה אלי רומיה. (See the Arabic version  
 of 2 Maccabees xxxix.) The corresponding Hebrew, on  
 fol. 57 of the Mantua edition, is as follows:—

· · · ויצר גביניאום על העיר וילחם עליה ותבא אליו אם אלכסנדר אשת אריסתובלוס ותבך ותתחנן לו לעשות שלום בין גביניאום ובין אלכסנדר ויעשו שלום · · · בעת ההיא ברח אריסתובלוס ואנטיגנוס בנו מעיר רומה אל ארץ יהודה · ופסיליאום נגיד בירושלם נפל עליו באלף איש גבור כי זכר את כבודו הראשון וירא אריסתובלוס את עם רב אשר אתו ויבדל את דלת העם מעמו ויבחר מכל העם ה' אלפים איש מגבורי מלחמה אשר לא יסובו פניהם ולא ישובו מפני כל · ויצא לקראת גביניאום למלחמה אשר בא בחיל כבוד מאד חיל רומיים וחיל יהודה אשר באו עם גביניאום על אריסתובלוס למלחמה ביד רמה: · · · ויהי ביום השלישי ויפלו גם אלף גבוריו אחר אשר הרבו להכות במחנה רומיים עוד וישאר אריסתובלוס לבדו וילחם וימת רבים ויפצעו אותו בפצעים גדולים עד כי נחתך כובע הברזל אשר על ראשו ויפול לארץ וילכדוהו וישאוהו אל גביניאום וירפאוהו מן המכות ויאסרוהו עוד וישלחוהו אל רומה אסור בנחשתים:

On fol. 102 the MS. fragment begins a new section, thus:

כבר כרסום אלרומי: קאל ולמא עאד כביאנוס אלי רומיה עצת אלפרס עלי אלרום פבלג אלרום דלך פונהו בקאיד גליל מן קואדהם יקאל לה כרסום פסאר מן רומיה בעסכר כביר ונא אלי בית אלמקדס פדכל אלי בית אללה וטאלב אלכנהא באן יעטוה זמיע מא פיה מן אלאמואל וכאן אלכאהן אלכבר פי דלך אלוקת רגלא יקאל לה אלעזר . . . .  
(2 Maccabees xli.) Corresponding to ed. Mant., ff. 57 d and 58:—

ויסע משם וישב אל רומה · ויהי לתקופת השנה וישמע הישיש אשר ברומה ונ מאות וכ יועציו כי פשעו פרס ומדי וישלחו את גרסום בחיל כבוד מאד ויעבור גרסום ויבא ירושלם ויבא אל היכל יי וישלח ידו לקחת את הזהב אשר בהיכל יי וימצא שם אלפים ככרים דרכמוני זהב ובימים ההם היה שם כהן גדול ושמו אלעזר · · ·

A comparison of the Arabic version with the Hebrew text of the Mantua edition will show that the former is considerably the shorter. It agrees, except for slight variations, with the Arabic version contained in two British Museum MSS. (nos. 1, xi and 31), in two Bodleian MSS. (Marshall Or. 139, Hunt. 238), and in the edition printed at Beyrouth about ten years ago. (This edition

is now not to be bought, but I was fortunate enough to obtain the loan of a copy through Mr. H. W. Hogg.) The Arabic Macc. ii also exhibits the same text, though still further shortened. That the Arabic was intended as a compendium of the Hebrew is indeed definitely stated in another fragment (MS. Heb. d. 64, fol. 121), consisting of a single leaf, also in the Rabbinical character of Yemen, and containing on the verso the first nine lines of the Arabic version. The entire passage, so far as it can be read, is as follows<sup>1</sup>:—

בשם רחמ

הדא תרנמה מא אכתצר מן אלכתאב אלמנ[סוב אלי יוס]ף בן גוריון  
 פי אכבאר אליהוד פי מדה אלבית אלתאני ודכר אכבאר מלוכהם  
 ואל . . . . נה פי איאמהם מנר אבתדי עמארה אלבית ועודתהם אליה  
 אלי אן כרב וגלו ענה . [וא]ול אלכתאב אדם אולד שת ושת אולד אנוש  
 ואנוש [א]ולד קינן וקינן אולד מהללאל ומהללאל אולד ירד וירד אולד  
 חנוך וחנוך אולד מ[תושל]ח ומתושלח אולד למך ולמך אולד נח . ונח  
 אולד שם וחם ויפת ויפת אולד גומר ומ[גוג] ומדי ויון ותובל ומשך ותירס .  
 ובני גומר אשכנו וריפת ותוגרמה . ובני יון אלישה ותרישיש כתיים ודורנים .  
 והדה קבאיל בני יפת [וד]כר אלמואצע אלדי סכנו פיהא . פאמא [מ]די  
 פהם אלדי יסכנו פי ארץ כראסאן . ויון הם אליונאניון אלדי יסכנו  
 בארץ נא . . ומאקידוניא .

“This is an abbreviated version of the book attributed to Joseph b. Gorion, consisting of the history of the Jews at the time of the second temple, and the history of their kings and . . . in their days, from the beginning of the restoration of the temple and their return to it, until its destruction and the dispersion. The book begins: Adam begat Seth, . . .”

The Arabic seems to me here to be shorter than any known text of the original Hebrew. Dr. Trieber (op. cit., p. 409) expresses a desire that the “arabische Uebersetzung zugänglich gemacht und für die Herstellung eines gesäuberten Textes verwendet würde,” not knowing of the Beyrouth edition, which is as inaccessible as a MS. Prof. Wellhausen, in his “Der arabische Josippus” (*Abhandlungen d. K. Ges.*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the introduction to MS. Marshall (Or.) 139.

*d. Wiss. zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, neue Folge, Bd. I, no. 4, Berlin, 1897*), rightly concludes that the version was made from the Hebrew, although he had only the inferior Paris MS. at his disposal.

It remains to consider the possible date at which such a work might have been produced in Yemen. That settlements of Jews existed there certainly before the eleventh century is shown by the early epitaphs given by Prof. Chwolson in his *Corpus Inscriptionum Hebraicarum* (p. 126 sqq.) of the years 687 to 749. We have positive evidence that a congregation existed there early in the twelfth century; see the article on Nathan'el al-Fayyūmī, by Dr. R. Gottheil, in the *Festschrift zum 80<sup>sten</sup> Geburtstag M. Steinschneiders*, p. 144.

In order not to omit anything, I shall conclude with a list of names of places in Yemen occupied by Jews. Besides being important in connexion with the above remarks, perhaps it may also serve as a contribution towards the Jewish geography of Yemen. The list has been collected, with the help of Prof. Büchler (Vienna), from the colophons of all the known Yemen MSS. except those in America. The names are arranged alphabetically, with an indication of the MSS. in which they are found. Professor Margoliouth kindly compared them with the forms found in Hamdani (H.) and Yakut (Y.), and his comparisons are added.

בית אום Brit. Mus. Orient. 2746. Cf. Glaser, *die Abessinier*, p. 11 sq.

אלבוסי Oxford 2346. Cf. بیت بوس Hamdani.

אלבחלאני or אלכחלאני Brit. Mus. Orient. 2417. H. كحلاني

ענל (בראשית) מדרש הגדול, Ramsgate, מתא בית ענל.

נהר בריון MS. Schechter.

אלניל Oxford 2338. H. الغيل

אלנריבי 1483 Brit. Mus. Orient. p. 62; Berlin, מתא קרית אלנראבי

Cf. حصن غراب.

אלנראניש Brit. Mus. Orient. 2387.



- אלנרסי Oxford 2498.
- אלרדאני Brit. Mus. Orient. 2227.
- דיבונס Berlin, p. 61. *ذبيان* ? H.
- דראע Oxford 2333.
- מתא די פאן Oxford 2523, 2.
- דמאר Brit. Mus. Orient. 1479; Add. 9398; Berlin, p. 61. *ذمار* H.
- אליסיאני Oxford 2328. *سيان* H.
- אלהנרא Berlin, p. 95.
- אלועלאני Brit. Mus. Orient. 2365. *وعلان* H.
- הונדי or הכנדי Berlin, p. 68.
- קריט זקאבאי MS. Schechter.
- חבאש Brit. Mus. Orient. 2348, 2365; 2350 *חבישי* and *חביש* H.
- حبيش* proper name? cf. *حبوس* H.
- אלחזאני Brit. Mus. Orient. 2218. *حجاج* ? Freedman of
- אלחזרא Berlin, p. 115. *المجر* ? H.
- מתא חמדא Oxford 2493. *حمدان* ?
- חנצל Brit. Mus. Orient. 2348. *حَنْظَلَة* ? Y.
- אלחצארא Oxford 2523. *الصحاري* ? H.
- מתא אלחצנין Brit. Mus. Orient. 2212. *حضان* H.
- זבאל חראל MS. Schechter.
- מדינת אלטוילה Brit. Mus. Orient. 2422; Berlin, pp. 62, 68.
- طويلة* H.
- אלטוילי Oxford 2346; Brit. Mus. Orient. 1470, 2349.
- אלטירי Brit. Mus. Orient. 2212. *طور* ? H.
- אלטריב Brit. Mus. Orient. 1472. *طريب* H.
- אלבאוי Oxford 2517.
- אלכחוי Brit. Mus. Orient. 2746.
- אלכליבי Oxford 2346.
- בית אלזכאר Brit. Mus. Orient. 1472.
- מיי אלכרוין MS. Wertheimer.
- אלכרנבה Brit. Mus. Orient. 2212.
- מנדל אלחקל Brit. Mus. Orient. 2218. *حقل* H.; *مجدل* H.
- אלמוהרי or אלמוצרי Brit. Mus. Orient. 2672. *مُصَر* (tribal name?).
- ביר אלמוממה Berlin, p. 62.
- אלמוסאירי Brit. Mus. Orient. 1483.

- אלמיידאני Brit. Mus. Orient. 1475. میدان.
- מתא אלמעאינה Oxford 2631, fol. 54. H. ? מעינ.
- מעבר Brit. Mus. Orient. 1475; Oxford 2328. H. מעבר.
- מתא אלמצמאר Brit. Mus. Orient. 1483; MS. Wertheimer. H. مضمار.
- אלמצמוני Oxford 2498.
- בית אלמקלה Berlin, p. 95.
- מתא אלמרוואחה Oxford 2346. H. ? مرواح.
- כפר אלננד Brit. Mus. Orient. 1483.
- אלנהארי Oxford 2346. H. النهار.
- אלנקאש Brit. Mus. Orient. 2223. Name of a place or person ?
- אלסוילי or אלטוילי Oxford 2328. For טוילה above.
- אלסורי Oxford 2333; Berlin, 8° 338; Brit. Mus. Orient. 2215; אלסארי 2354. H. ? سور.
- עאשיר Oxford 2498. H. عاشر.
- ערן Oxford 1451, 1521; Berlin, pp. 95, 97. H. &c. عدن.
- דאר עמר Berlin, p. 95.
- בייר אלענב Berlin, p. 95.
- אלענסי Berlin, p. 68.
- אלעראמי Oxford 2328. H. عرامي.
- מתא אלערום Oxford 2346; Brit. Mus. Orient. 2746.
- מתא גרף אלערום Oxford 2346; Brit. Mus. Orient. 2354.
- אלפתוחי Brit. Mus. Orient. 2350.
- אלצאהר Oxford 2377, 2397; Brit. Mus. Orient. 2212. H. الظاهر.
- אלצביר Berlin, p. 95.
- צדאב Oxford 2488.
- מתא צדאב Oxford 2488.
- אלציחי Oxford 2382.
- מתא בית צלבי Oxford 2497, 2498.
- צנא Oxford 2328, 2488, 2514; Berlin, pp. 67, 68, 95; Brit. Mus. Orient. 2227, 2349; Kohut 6. For صنعاء H.
- אלצנאני Brit. Mus. Orient. 2417. For صنعاني.
- צנא אלמקדסה Brit. Mus. Orient. 2223. H. ? صنعاء.
- אלצעדי Brit. Mus. Orient. 2349. H. معدة.
- ק . . . מדע Berlin, p. 68.

- אלקיסו Berlin, pp. 61, 71, 104. Tribal name.  
 מתא אלקצבה Oxford 2522, 2523. H. القصة  
 מחא רבאח Oxford 2498. H. رباحة  
 ארעיבי Brit. Mus. Orient. 2365. ? رعين  
 שעתמה Oxford 2328.  
 חנעם Oxford 2338; Brit. Mus. Orient. 1482. H. تناعم  
 אלתנעמי Brit. Mus. Orient. 2212. Id.  
 אלתרכי Berlin, p. 73.

## II.

## YERAḤMEEL BEN SHELOMOH.

SINCE the year 1887 new evidence has come to light for the history of the Yosippon-text. In that year the Bodleian Library acquired, from the late R. N. Rabinowitz, a manuscript (now MS. Heb. d. 11) consisting of 388 leaves on vellum, quarto, written in an old German Rabbinical character. (The general number will be found in the Supplement to my Catalogue, which will shortly be completed.) I have already spoken of this MS., and given some quotations from it in Grätz's *Monatsschrift* for 1887, p. 504 sqq. According to the fragment of a calendar at the beginning of the volume it appears to have been written in the year 1325 A.D. by Eleazar b. Asher hal-levi. Among the various treatises which it contains is the greater part of the text of Yosippon, in which the name of the compiler, Yerahmeel, frequently occurs, and a יוסיפון הגדול is also mentioned<sup>1</sup>. The writer is sometimes called in full, Yerahmeel ben Shelomoh הירחמאלי, and sometimes simply ירחמאל. Thus on fol. 26 the copyist says יישר בעיני אלעזר הגדול לכתוב כאן מתחילת היוסיפון הגדול לפי שהוא עניין כעניין זה והוא תחילת ספר היוסיפון. Then follows a short passage of Yosippon, agreeing in the main with the ed. princeps, from יבני יפת נומר

<sup>1</sup> On ff. 152<sup>b</sup> and 153 are marginal references, in an Italian cursive hand, to a ייסיפון נוצרי (see my *Med. Jew. Chron.*, I, p. xx, note 5).