

The Byzantine Biblical Commentaries from the Genizah: Rabbanite vs. Karaite*

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At the end of 1994, Y. M. Ta-Shma ז"ל invited me to join him in studying a pair of commentaries (one on Ezekiel, the other on the Minor Prophets) preserved on Genizah fragments found in Jerusalem and Cambridge. The fragments come from a pair of scrolls, dated by experts to ca. 1000 C.E., of the type known as “rotuli,” in which the writing is parallel to the seams. The text is written in Hebrew with Judeo-Greek glosses.

In 1995, I reported on some unusual features of the language of this text, many of which Ta-Shma had pointed out to me when he first showed me the portions that he had copied.¹ A number of them have parallels in contemporary Hebrew documents from Anatolia, but not in documents from southern Italy. In 1996, N. de Lange published the surviving 1445 lines of the text together with fifteen other texts—all accompanied by high-quality photographs and an English translation.² Both Ta-Shma and I have devoted review articles to this edition.³ In 2003, I published a discussion of the theory of biblical redaction

* The roots of this article are in a paper entitled “The Byzantine Commentary to Ezekiel and Minor Prophets and its Place in the History of Biblical Exegesis,” read to the Talmud Plenary Session of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, on July 31, 1997. After expanding the paper, I asked Professor Japhet to read it and comment on it. Based on her insightful comments, which I gratefully acknowledge, I decided to divide the paper into three articles. One of them has already been published; see n. 4 below. It is a great pleasure for me to publish this second article in a volume honoring this distinguished scholar.

1 The first results of my study were reported on March 13, 1995, in a lecture to the Academy of the Hebrew Language, “בחינות לשון בפירוש ליחזקאל ולתרי-עשר שבמגילות העבריות מביזנטיון.”

A revised version of the lecture was subsequently published under the same title in *Lešonenu* 59 (1995–96): 39–56.

2 N. R. M. de Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 51; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1996); henceforth *GJT*.

3 R. C. Steiner, “Textual and Exegetical Notes to Nicholas de Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts from*

that is one of the most striking characteristics of Byzantine exegesis.⁴

The *Commentary on Ezekiel* and the *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* are formally distinct works. The former has a short colophon (. . . חזק רעואל עבד),⁵ and the latter has a heading and short introduction (. . . עשר: נתחיל בשם יי). On the other hand, even though there are two scrolls, the transition comes on the verso of the first scroll, and no blank lines have been left after the colophon. This raises the question of the relationship between the two commentaries.

It has been assumed that the two commentaries have the same author—a Byzantine Jew by the name of Reuel. In support of this assumption, we may point to a number of shared stylistic features and ideas. For example, both commentaries contain the idea that false prophets used to terrorize righteous individuals with a specific oracle of doom. The formulation of the oracle, perhaps inspired by Jer 28:16 (השנה אתה מת), differs by only one letter between the two commentaries: in the *Commentary on Ezekiel* (Ezek 13:19), it reads כי אתם תמותו בשנה זאת; in the *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (Zeph 3:4), we find אתם תמותו בשנה הזאת כי. Similarly, both commentaries (at Ezek 10:4 and Zeph 1:9) gloss מפתן ‘threshold’ with מפתח ‘opening’.⁶ This parallel is particularly instructive, because in the *Commentary on Ezekiel*, the author seems to present the interpretation as his own original contribution.⁷ In my review of *GJT*, I discussed characteristic expressions found in both

the Cairo Genizah,” *JQR* 89 (1998): 155–69; Y. M. Ta-Shma, “פרשנות מקרא עברית-ביזנטית,” *Tarbiz* 69 (2000): 247–56. Through my study of the texts in *GJT*, since 1998, I have found more new readings and interpretations, some of which I have included in this article.

- 4 R. C. Steiner, “A Jewish Theory of Biblical Redaction from Byzantium: Its Rabbinic Roots, Its Diffusion and Its Encounter with the Muslim Doctrine of Falsification,” *Jewish Studies, an Internet Journal* 2 (2003): 123–67.
- 5 It is not impossible that the last word is to be read עבד־יה, even though there appears to be a space after עבד. In that case, the name of our author is Reuel Obadiah.
- 6 At Ezek 10:4, de Lange writes: “*miftan*: it is not clear how this word is understood. . . .” The source of his problem there is the difficulty of reading the last letter of מפתח. De Lange’s translation assumes that the word is מפתן again, but the legs of the final ח are visible in his photograph. De Lange missed the point at Zeph 1:9 as well, taking מפתח to mean ‘key’, i.e., מפתח. The word intended is מפתח ‘opening’, as in Prov 8:6.
- 7 The formulation used for this purpose is not found elsewhere in the commentary: על מפתן. On the meaning of מפתן of the Temple. What is (the meaning of) מפתן? We say (the meaning is) ‘at the opening of the Temple.’” The phrase אנו אומרים is apparently equivalent to אני אומר in other medieval commentaries. Indeed, אני אומר is not totally impossible as a reading here, but it is unnecessary, since the authorial “we” is found in נתחיל בשם יי at the beginning of the *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*.

commentaries, such as ה(י)ן בתימה כלומ(ר) ‘in astonishment, i.e., yes’; and אופו = ὄπου ‘because’.⁸ Such examples could easily be multiplied.

Of the other texts published in *GJT*, only three or four are Hebrew commentaries on the Bible in the strict sense. The *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus* (de Lange’s “Scholia on the Pentateuch”) has around 230 preserved lines, extending from Gen 8:7 to Exod 34:26. The *Commentary on Genesis and Joshua* (de Lange’s “Scholia on the Hexateuch”) has only around 90 preserved lines, extending from Gen 6:14 to 28:17 (very fragmentary) and from Josh 11:16 to 13:8. The *Commentary on 1 Kings* has around 300 preserved lines, extending from 1 Kgs 7:25 to 10:21. Finally, there is the work that de Lange calls “Glosses on 1 Kings” comprising 56 lines and extending from 1 Kgs 6:20 to 8:37. Although it may technically count as a Hebrew commentary, the number of Hebrew comments in it is very small. It consists mainly of Judeo-Greek glosses, “hardly going beyond the format of a glossary.”⁹ I shall therefore have nothing further to say about it.

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Let us turn now to the question that is the subject of this article: Are the Byzantine commentaries published in *GJT* Rabbanite or Karaite? For the *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus* (henceforth *CGE*), the answer is obvious from the following comments, cited here with parallels from Rabbinic literature:¹⁰

CGE to Gen 37:24: והבור רק אין בו מים. מים אין בו. הא נחשים ועקרבים יש בו. *b. Šabb. 22a*: אין בו מים—מים אין בו, אבל נחשים ועקרבים יש בו.

CGE to Gen 38:1: ויהי בעת ההיא וירד יהודה ירד מגדולתו למען הדבר שאמ(ר) מה בצע כי נהרג את אחינו וכס(ינו) א(ת) ד(מו). לכו ונמכרנו לישמעאלים. ויהי בעת ההיא וירד יהודה מאת אחיו מלמד *Tanḥuma (Warsaw) Wayyiggaš 9*: שנתגדה מאחיו שבשעה שאמר להם לכו ונמכרנו אם אמר להם לכו ונחזרנו היו שומעין לו. לפיכך ירד יהודה וגו' שהורידוהו מגדולתו.

CGE to Gen 38:15: כי כסתה פניה. כי היתה מקְּסָה פניה בבית חמיה. *Gen. Rab. 85*: ויראה יהודה ויחשבה לזונה. למה? כי כסתה פניה עד שהיא בבית חמיה.

8 See Steiner, “Textual and Exegetical Notes,” 160, 164.

9 *GJT*, 155.

10 I have attempted to find the closest parallel for each.

ויחלמו חלום שניהם. היה טוב לומר המשקה והאפה. למה אמ(ר): *CGE to Gen 40:5*.
איש חלומו בל(ילה) אח(ד). אלא כך הוא איש חלמו שלחבירו. איש כפיתרון חלום חבירו.
b. Ber. 55b: מלמד שכל אחד ואחד הראוהו חלומו ופתרון חלומו של חבירו.

אברך. אב בחכמה. ורך בשנים. *CGE to Gen 41:43*.
Gen. Rab. 90: ויקראו לפניו אברך אב בחכמה ורך בשנים.

למה אמ(ר) ורצע אדניו את אזנו. ולא דבר אחר אלא כך האזן: *CGE to Exod 21:6*.
ששמע. כי לי בני יש(ראל) עבדים. ולא עבדי עבדים. נרצע.
מה נשתנה און מכל אברים שבגוף? אמר הקב"ה: און ששמעה קולי על הר: *b. Qidd. 22b*.
סיני בשעה שאמרת כי לי בני ישראל עבדים ולא עבדים לעבדים, והלך זה וקנה אדון
לעצמו—ירצע.

The above collection of examples, which is not meant to be exhaustive, should be sufficient to demonstrate that *CGE* is Rabbanite. Three of the comments appear with the label מדרש or אגדה in Rashi's commentary (Gen 38:15, 40:5, 41:43); it is not likely that comments considered midrashic by Rashi would have appealed to a Karaite exegete.

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Concerning the *Commentary on 1 Kings*, de Lange writes:

There are various indications that the writer was an Arabic-speaker writing for Greek-speakers. Such commentaries are particularly associated with Byzantine Karaites, such as Tobias ben Moses and Jacob ben Reuben.¹¹

There are indeed many Arabisms in this text, only some of which are noted by de Lange in *GJT*, e.g.:

1. היה + imperfect in the sense of Arabic 'to be' + imperfect (4 verso line 8: *היו יחקרו וידרשו*, 8 recto line 16: *היו יקבצו*).¹²
2. מענה (alongside פיתרון) in the sense of Arabic 'meaning' (8 recto line 14: *ומענהו כי*, 8 verso line 3).¹³

11 *GJT*, 127.

12 See A. Maman, "העברית של טוביה בן משה הקראי" (MA thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1978), 105–7; idem, "הקראים ולשון חז"ל: נוסח המובאות ושימוש הלשון", *Lešonenu* 55 (1990–91): 243 n. 128.

13 See Maman, "העברית של טוביה", 201. The form מענהו is distinctively Karaite, according to

3. *יעבר* in the sense of Arabic *יגז* 'is possible' (7 verso line 16).¹⁴
4. *והקרוב כי* in the sense of Arabic *ואלאקרוב אן* 'the most plausible (opinion) is that' (7 verso line 11).
5. *תפל על* (המלה/הלשון) in the sense of Arabic *תקע עלי* 'is used of' (5 verso lines 10–11, 19–20; 7 recto lines 7–8, 10; 7 verso lines 17–18).
6. *זולת* (without accompanying negation) in the sense of Arabic *גיר* 'non-' (5 verso lines 11–12: *ועל זולת יש[ראל]*).¹⁵
7. *עם . . . כי* in the sense of Arabic *ענד . . . אן* 'it is the opinion of . . . that' (5 verso line 21: *ועמי כי*).¹⁶

As de Lange notes, in a Byzantine text such Arabisms are generally associated with Karaites,¹⁷ and several of these features are known from the writings of Tobias b. Moses.¹⁸ It is true that many of these Arabisms are also found in Tibbonid Hebrew, but the first two are unique to the Karaites.¹⁹

The exegesis in this text points in the same direction, for it fits squarely into the Karaite tradition. Take for example the bold expressions in the following passage from the *Commentary on 1 Kgs* (8:8–31):

ויהיו שם עד היום הזה. בזה המקום עד עת שנג<>נ<> הארון²⁰ בימי יאשיהו בעת שאמר) ללזים המבינים לכל יש(ראל) הקדשים ליי' תנו את ארון הקדש בבית אשר בנה

M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, "תחבירה ומילונה של הלשון העברית שבתחום השפעתה של הערבית" (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1951), 223–24 n. 27, since Rabbanites usually use ענין for מעני.

14 Cf. *GJT*, 149 n. I am indebted to A. Maman for this interpretation of *יעבר*, which differs from that of de Lange. See Maman, "העברית של טוביה," 196; and idem, "הקראים ולשון חז"ל," 241.

15 Cf. *GJT*, 142 n.

16 Cf. *כי עמכם* used by Yeshu'ah b. Yehudah (Goshen-Gottstein, "תחבירה ומילונה," 102).

17 According to Z. Ankori (*Karaites in Byzantium: The Formative Years, 970–1100* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1959], 118, 388), the Karaites were recent immigrants to the Byzantine Empire, unlike most Byzantine Rabbanites.

18 See the references to Maman, "העברית של טוביה," above.

19 I am indebted to Maman for this point.

20 Note that, throughout this article, <<>> enclose letters added by me (on the assumption that the scribe accidentally omitted them), while <> enclose signs inserted by the scribe. For the emendation *נג<>נ<>ז*, see Steiner, "Textual and Exegetical Notes," 158. In a letter dated Nov. 4, 2000, E. Qimron cautiously notes the existence of a different possibility: that the verb *נגנז* may have had a by-form *נגז* derived from the noun *גז*, itself a by-form of the Iranian loanword *גנז* 'treasury'. He points out that *גז* appears with the meaning 'treasury' in Late Aramaic and, according to Rabin, in the *Damascus Covenant* from the Geniza (11:3). This

שלמה בן דויד מלך יש(ראל) אין לכם משא בכתף.²¹ והענן מלא את בית יי' הוא כמו שאמ(ר) במשכן משה. ולא יכול משה. כי שכן עליו הענן. וכאשר כלה שלמה להתפלל והאש ירדה מהשמים ותאכל העולה והזבחים. אז אמ(ר) שלמה יי' אמ(ר). מה הוא שאמ(ר) כי שכון כבודו בערפל אמרו הוא שאמ(ר) ושכנתי בתוך בני יש(ראל). ומצאנו כי טרם המשכן כבוד בתוך ערפל ככ(תוב) ומשה נגש אל הערפל אשר שם הא-לים. יש אומ(רים) כי בענן אראה על הכפרת. . . . כי האמנם וגו(מר) ישב א-לים על הארץ בתימ(ה) כלומ(ר) לא ישב. . . . ובא האֱלֹה. והאֱלֹה לשון נקבה. ועל כן אמ(ר) ובא בעל האֱלֹה. . . .²²

They are there until this day (1 Kgs 8:8)—in this place until the time that the ark was hidden away in the days of Josiah at the time when he said to “the Levites, the teachers of all Israel, who were sacred to the Lord, ‘Place the holy ark in the Temple built by Solomon son of David, king of Israel; it should not be carried about on your shoulders’” (2 Chr 35:3). The cloud was filling the Temple of the Lord (8:10), just as it says concerning the Tabernacle of Moses—“Moses was unable (to enter the Tent of Meeting) because the cloud had settled on it” (Exod 40:35). And when “Solomon finished praying, fire descended from the sky and ate up the whole-offering and the sacrifices” (2 Chr 7:1). “Then Solomon said, ‘The Lord has said . . .’” (8:12)—What is it that he has said? That his Glory should dwell in a thick cloud. They say that this is what it (means when it) says, “I shall dwell in the midst of the children of Israel” (Exod 29:45, 1 Kgs 6:13). And we find that before the Tabernacle the Glory was inside a thick cloud, as it is written, “Moses approached the thick cloud where God was” (Exod 20:17). Some say (it is like), “For in the cloud I appear above the cover” (Lev 16:2) . . . Is it true [etc.] that God will dwell on earth (8:27)?—In astonishment, i.e., he will not do so . . . And the oath shall come (8:31)—but (the word for) ‘oath’ is feminine; hence, it means “and the taker (lit., possessor) of the oath shall come.”²³

ingenious suggestion would require us to assume that Aaron b. Joseph substituted the more common form in borrowing this comment (see below).

- 21 It would appear that the source of this comment (including the proof-text from Chronicles) is either *t. Sofa* 13:1 or *S. 'Olam Rab.* 24.
- 22 *GJT*, 141–43 (5 recto 11–5 verso 9).
- 23 This translation of the *Commentary on 1 Kings* and the translations of the other texts from *GJT* below are adapted from those of de Lange.

They are remarkably similar to the comments on those verses in *Mivḥar Yesḥarim*, by the Karaite exegete Aaron b. Joseph Ha-Rofe (c. 1250–1320):

עד היום הזה. עד יום שנגנו הארון. אז אמר שלמה. כי ה' אמר ושכנתי בתוך בני ישראל. וי"א רמז כי בענן אראה על הכפרת וכתוב ולא יכול משה לבוא אל אהל מועד . . . כי האמנם תשב (!). בתימה. . . ובא אלה. יבוא בעל האלה שחייבוהו ב"ד שבועת אלה.²⁴

Until this day (1 Kgs 8:8)—until the day that the ark was hidden away. Then Solomon said (8:12)—that the Lord has said, “I shall dwell in the midst of the children of Israel” (Exod 29:45, 1 Kgs 6:13). Some say, an allusion: “For in the cloud I appear above the cover” (Lev 16:2). . . . Is it true that God will dwell?—In astonishment. . . . And the oath shall come (8:31)—the taker (lit., possessor) of the oath, the one upon whom the court has imposed an oath, shall come.

The Byzantine *Commentary on 1 Kings* also has much in common with Yefet b. Eli’s *Commentary on Kings*.²⁵ For example, the interpretation of 1 Kgs 8:31 וקאל ובא אלה shared by the Byzantine commentary and *Mivḥar Yesḥarim* was known to Yefet as well: וקאל ובא אלה ולם יקל ובאה פקיל אנה אראד בה דבר אלה וקיל צאחב: “It says and not ובאה. It has been said that it means ‘the matter/word of the oath (shall come).’ And (alternatively) it has been said (that it means), ‘the taker (lit., possessor) of the oath (shall come).’”²⁶

In the following cases, Yefet (cited first) and the Byzantine exegete say virtually the same thing, except that the Byzantine is sometimes less succinct and/or lucid:

24 Aaron b. Joseph, מבחר ישרים (Goslov [Eupatoria], 1834), 15a–b.

25 The latter commentary is preserved in fragmentary form in Ms. St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Hebr.-Arab. 0158. A second, better preserved, manuscript of Yefet’s commentary is found in London in the British Library; see G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 1899–1935), no. 335. Although it is not identified as such by Margoliouth, it differs from the other manuscript in only minor details. I transcribe the text of the London manuscript; significant variants from Ms. St. Petersburg are inserted with a slash. It should be noted that the pages of Ms. St. Petersburg are out of order.

26 Ms. London 335, f. 62a lines 11–12; Ms. St. Petersburg 0158, f. 152a last line–f. 152b lines 1–2.

1 Kgs 8:2: בירח האתנים

ואמא אתנים פקיל אנהם ישראל נטיר קו והאתנים מוסדי ארץ פאסמאה בהדא אלאסם מן חית אן ישראל יגתמעון פיה אלי בית אללה וקיל מן אגל אן אלאעיאד פיה.²⁷

And as for אתנים, it has been said that they are Israel, as in the expression “O אתנים, foundations of the earth” (Mic 6:2), and it (=the month of אתנים) was called by this name, since Israel assemble in it at the House of God. And (alternatively) it has been said, (and it was called by this name) since the festivals are in it.

בירח האיתנים הם יש(ראל) גדולי העולם שהיו יקבצו בחדש הזה בחג אל בית יי'. ומצאנו איתנים על הגדולים והחזקים ככ(תוב) והאיתנים מוסדי ארץ. ויש אומ(רים) כי טע(ם) בירח האיתנים הוא ירח המועדים וקרא מועדי יי' שהם מקרא קדש איתנים כי הם ימים יקירים נכבדים.²⁸

In the month of איתנים—They are Israel, the great ones of the world, who would assemble in this month, in the festival (Sukkot), at the House of the Lord. And we find איתנים used of the great and strong in the expression “O איתנים, foundations of the earth” (Mic 6:2). Others say that the sense of the month of איתנים is the month of the festivals; it calls the festivals of the Lord, which are holy convocations, איתנים, since they are precious and important days.

1 Kgs 8:8: ויארכו הבדים

תם קאל ויארכו הבדים אראד בה כרגו אלבדים אלי גהה אלשרק חתי צאר טרפיהמא מע אלארון מן גהה אלגר.²⁹

Then it says, “they extended the poles,” by which it means that they pulled out the poles towards the east side until their tips were (level) with the Ark on the west side.

ויארכו הבדים. כי בעת ששמו הארון במקומו משכו הבדים אל המזרח. וטרם שמשכו אותם היה חציים אל המזרח. וכן היה מנהגם בעת שישעו שנ(אמר) ושמו בדיו. כאשר יחנו ויובא הארון אל אהל מועד ומשכו הבדים אל פאת המזרח. כן היו עושים בבית שלמה. משכו הבדים אל המזרח³⁰

27 Ms. London 335, f. 56b lines 14–16.

28 *GJT*, 139 (4 verso 7–13).

29 Ms. London 335, f. 57b lines 2–4.

30 *GJT*, 139 (5 recto 3–9).

They extended the poles—because when they put the ark in its place, they pulled the poles towards the east. Before they pulled them, (only) half of each pole was towards the east, as was the custom when they moved on, as it is said, “they shall put its poles in place” (Num 4:6). When they encamped, the ark was brought into the Tent of Meeting, and they pulled the poles towards the east side. So too was the practice in Solomon’s Temple. They pulled the poles to the east. . . .

ביום השמיני שלח את העם . . . וילכו לאהליהם: 1 Kgs 8:66

פקד חצל אטלאקין אלואחד פי אליום אלהאמן והו אנצראפהם אלי מנאולהם וכימהם אלתי חואלי ירושלם לאנה יום קדש ולא יגוז אלספר פיה. . . .³¹
Two send-offs took place: one on the eighth day which was their departure to their dwellings and tents around Jerusalem (and no further), because it was a holy day and travel was not possible in it. . . .

ביום השמיני שלח את העם וגו(מר). כאשר שלח אותם ברכוהו. והלכו אל אהליהם. ואלה אהליהם הם יריעות אשר סביבות העיר והם נדבקים בקיר החומה ואינם אהלים שלארצותיהם. כי היום הזה הוא יום מקרא קודש ככ(תוב) ביום השמיני שלח את העם וגו(מר). והוא יום שמיני עצרת.³²

On the eighth day, he sent off the people, etc.—when he sent them off, they blessed him “and went to their tents” (8:66). These tents were sheets around the city attached to the wall, not the tents of their (home) countries. Because this day was a holy convocation, as it is written, “on the eighth day he sent off the people,” etc.; this was the eighth day of solemn assembly.

ולשנינה: 1 Kgs 9:7

ולשנינה הו מן לגה אלאעאדה וכדי סביל אלחכאיה.³³
שנינה comes from the word for ‘repetition’ and that (=repetition) is the way of narrative.

31 Ms. London 335, f. 71a lines 18–20.

32 *GJT*, 145 (6 recto 15–21).

33 Ms. London 335, f. 73b lines 3–4.

ולשנינה היא שינוי וסיפור דבריהם כי השיגם כן וכן. ויאמרו כי השיג לפלונים כן וכן. כמות השיג ליש(ראל).³⁴

is repetition³⁵ and narration of their affairs, that such and such has befallen them: they will say that such and such has befallen so and so, just as it befell Israel.

מלכת שבא 1 Kgs 10:1

קיל אנהא ממלכת שבא יעני קום מן אלממלכה וקיל אנהא אמראה מלכה והו אקרב / אל אקרב.³⁶

It has been said that (מלכת שבא) is the kingdom of Sheba, i.e., a party from the kingdom. And (alternatively) it has been said that (מלכת שבא) is a woman, a queen, and that is more plausible / the most plausible.

מלאפת שבא הוא כי עדה מממלכת שבא באה לנסות את שלמה. והקרוב כי היא מלכה והיה בה חכמה יתירה.³⁷

—i.e., a party from the kingdom of Sheba came to test Solomon. But the most plausible is that it refers to a queen who possessed extraordinary wisdom.

נתן מנוחה לעמו ישראל 1 Kgs 8:56

קולה אשר נתן מנוחה לעמו ישראל ישיר אלי קרארהם מן אלאעדא וקיל אנה אשאר אלי ארץ ישראל וקיל אשאר אלי אלקדם.³⁸

The expression “who gave מנוחה to his people Israel” refers to their resting from the enemies. And (alternatively) it has been said that it refers to the land of Israel. And (alternatively) it has been said, it refers to the Sanctuary.

34 *GJT*, 147 (6 verso 16–18).

35 De Lange translates ‘substitution’, but the context requires that שינוי have the meaning of the *qal* form of שנה, viz., ‘repeat’.

36 Ms. London 335, f. 79b lines 5–7; Ms. St. Petersburg 0158, f. 113b last two lines–f. 114a line 1.

37 *GJT*, 149 (7 verso 9–12). De Lange does not stray far from the truth in calling this comment “incoherent”; the parallel from Yefet’s commentary clarifies it considerably.

38 Ms. London 335, f. 69a lines 4–6; Ms. St. Petersburg 0158, f. 160b last line–161a lines 1–2.

מנוחה יש אומ(רים) בית יי'. ואני אומר(ר) היא ארץ יש(ראל). וכן קומה יי' למנוחתך. והוא המקדש ונקרא מנוחה כי ינוח בו הכבוד. וגם תפול זו המלה על שם הנח כמו משובה שהוא שם מקרה. ועמי כי בזה המקום פיתרון מנוחה בטח כוח והשקט כמו שדבר להם אם בחקתי תלכו וישבתם ע(ל) הא(רץ) לבטח בארצכם. וכת(וב) וישבתם על לבטח עליה.³⁹

מנוחה—some say (it refers to) the house of the Lord, but I say it is the land of Israel, as in “Arise, o Lord, to your rest” (Ps 132:8). It is the Sanctuary; it is called מנוחה because the Glory rests in it. This word is also used as the word for (lit., noun of) ‘resting’, like משובה, which is an abstract noun (lit., noun of accident).⁴⁰ But my own view is that in this context the meaning of מנוחה is ‘security’ — ‘strength and quietude’ — as He spoke to them, “If you observe my statutes, you shall dwell on the land in security, in your land” (Lev 26:3, 26:5/25:18),⁴¹ and it is also written, “you shall dwell in security on it” (Lev 25:19).

This last passage must be read in conjunction with another passage from the Byzantine commentary:

<<מושבים>>. יעבר שבתם. ויעבר מקום מושבם. כי מלת מושב תפול על זה ועל זה.⁴²

39 *GJT*, 143 (5 verso 16–6 recto 3). Cf. p. 142: “These various comments on the word מנוחה are particularly clumsily put together.” For הוא כוח de Lange reads כוח כוח.

40 Hebrew מקרה, like Arabic ‘*araḍ* and English *accident*, is a conventional equivalent of the Aristotelian term *συσμμεβητικός*. It refers to abstract nouns (cf. C. del Valle Rodríguez, *Die grammatikalische Terminologie der fruehen hebraeischen Grammatikern* [Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1982], 252–53 s.v. קרה), including verbal nouns. Thus, Ibn Ezra speaks of עצה וגבורה כמו חכמה וגיבורה עצה; see *Sefer Šaḥot* (ed. G. H. Lippmann; Fürth: Tsimdorfer, 1827), 35a. Ibn Tibbon, in his translation of Ibn Janāḥ’s grammar, uses it with reference to טוהר ‘purity’, רעה ‘wickedness’, רוב ‘abundance’, אומר ‘speech’, שְׁמוֹר ‘observance’, and גודל ‘greatness’; see Jonah Ibn Janāḥ, *Le livre des parterres fleuris* (ed. J. Derenbourg; Paris: Vieweg, 1886), 21 lines 1–6, 22 lines 2–11 = יהודה אבן תבון של ר' יהודה אבן תבון (ed. M. Wilensky; Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1964), 31 line 22 to 32 line 4, 32 line 23 to 33 line 5. Jacob b. Reuben uses it in speaking of ביאה ‘entrance’ (Ezek 8:5), etymologically an abstract verbal noun; see his commentary, ספר העשר, to Ezek 8:5 בבאה in Aaron b. Joseph, מבוחר ישרים. According to R. Saadia Gaon, the ‘*araḍ* noun category consists of verbal nouns; see אור ראשון לחכמת הלשון: ספר צחות לשון העברים לרב סעדיה גאון (ed. A. Dotan; ישראל, 1997), 345 line 78.

41 De Lange takes בארצכם as an exegetical gloss, but it is more likely that the word comes from Lev 26:5. It is possible that the original text cited an abbreviated version of 26:3–5 followed by 25:18–19.

42 *GJT*, 149 (7 verso 16–18). As de Lange notes, the lemma is omitted in the scroll.

מושבם—‘their sitting’ is possible and ‘their place of sitting’ is possible, because the word מושב is used of both.

In these two passages, the author makes a rather distinctive linguistic observation that is virtually identical to an observation made in the *Diqduq* of the Karaite Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ:⁴³

לבנות בית מנוחה. אעלם אן מנוחה קד תקע אסם אלמקר. וקד תקע אסם אלקראר.
Know that מנוחה may be used as⁴⁴ the word for (lit., the noun of) ‘resting-place’ and it may be used as the word for (lit., noun of) ‘resting’.

. . . אלכלמה אלתו הי בוזן מודע תקע עלי אלערץ נטיר ומושב בני ישראל. ותקע עלי אלמוצע נטיר בכל מושבותיכם.⁴⁵
. . . a word with the pattern of מודע (Ruth 2:1) may be used of an abstraction (= verbal noun, etc.), as in מושב בני ישראל (Exod 12:40), and it may be used of a place, as in בכל מושבותיכם (Exod 12:20, etc.).

Both authors observe that a single noun with preformative *m-* can have both an abstract interpretation referring to an action or state and a concrete one referring to a place.⁴⁶ They give the same examples of this phenomenon: מנוחה ‘rest; resting-place’ and מושב ‘sitting, dwelling; sitting-place, dwelling-place’.⁴⁷ And they use the same terminology, e.g., תפול על=תקע עלי, מקרה=ערץ, שם הנח=אסם אלמקר, and most distinctively,

43 G. Khan, *The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought, Including a Critical Edition, Translation and Analysis of the Diqduq of Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ on the Hagiographa* (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 32; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 169, to 1 Chr 28:2.

44 Note that Ibn Nūḥ has תקע in this passage, but the usual תקע עלי in the next passage. It appears that the former means ‘used as’ while the latter means ‘used of’. In other words, Ibn Nūḥ seems to have a contrast between תקע עלי אלערץ “it is used of abstractions” and תקע עלי אסם אלערץ “it is used as an abstract noun.” The Hebrew text has תפול על in both.

45 Khan, *Early Karaite Tradition*, 451 to Ruth 2:1.

46 The same idea is found in a Judeo-Persian grammatical commentary on the Bible, a Karaite work closely related to Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq*. At Eccl 12:6 (מבוע), the author writes: “in several places we have said that when *mem* is added to (letters of) substance, (the resulting form) is a noun of place or a noun of abstraction”; G. Khan, *Early Karaite Grammatical Texts* (SBLMasS 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 286.

47 The same interpretations can be found in modern handbooks.

Clearly the Byzantine *Commentary to 1 Kings* is a Karaite work. Can we say more? The similarities to *Mivhar Yesharim* raise the possibility that our Byzantine commentary is one of the long-winded, poorly translated commentaries that, according to Aaron's introduction, he set out to revise:

רק שתי סבות העירוני . . . הא' יען ראותי כי האריכו חכמינו ז"ל כל פירושי המקרא ביותר עד כי לפעמים ילאה הקורא למצוא חפצו וכמדומה לי שזו הדרך ראויה למתענגים אבל באנשים אשר ארכה גלותם ונוספו הצרות איך יסבול זה ואיך יוכל לתור בעניני חכמה אחרת. והסבה השנית שאין פירושיהם על פי הדקדוק . . . כי ידוע כי ספריהם נעתקו מלשון ערבי אל לשון עברי והמעתיק אותם לא היה בקי בשתי הלשונות ונראים דבריהם היקרים משובשים. . . .⁴⁸

Only two factors motivated me . . . One was my observing that our sages, may their memory be a blessing, made all their commentaries on Scripture so long that the reader at times is unable to find what he wants. And it seems to me that this manner is appropriate for the pampered, but for people who have endured long exile and many troubles, how can one tolerate this, and how can one (have time) to investigate any other field of knowledge? The second factor was that their commentaries are not (written in Hebrew that is) grammatical . . . for it is well known that their books were translated from Arabic into Hebrew and that the one who translated them was not well versed in both languages, (making) their precious words seem flawed. . . .

According to the supercommentary of Abraham Firkowicz, the phrase המעתיק אותם "the one who translated them" is a reference to Tobias b. Moses.⁴⁹ This is not unreasonable. Tobias was the leading Karaite translator, and Aaron gives Tobias the title המעתיק elsewhere in his commentaries.⁵⁰ Moreover, Tobias himself apologizes for his grammatical mistakes:

ואתם אחי (י) אל תאשימוני אם ימצא שבוש בלש(ון) בין זכר ונקבה. כי אינו מקצרון יד כי אם שגגה. כי מלש(ון) ישמעאל הייתי כותב אל לש(ון) עברי.⁵¹

48 Aaron b. Joseph, מבחר ישרים, 2a.

49 Aaron b. Joseph, מבחר ישרים, 2b.

50 Ankori, *Karaites*, 449 n. 237.

51 Ankori, *Karaites*, 418 n. 171.

And you, my brothers, do not blame me if there be found in (my) language confusion between masculine and feminine, for it is not due to incompetence but rather an oversight, since I was translating (lit., writing) from Arabic to Hebrew.

We have already seen that the Byzantine commentary contains a grammatical mistake of Arabic origin that occurs frequently in the writings of Tobias: the use of היה + imperfect instead of היה + participle.⁵²

In the colophon of Tobias' single surviving biblical commentary, the unpublished *Oṣar Neḥmad*, he describes his use of Yefet's commentary:

אני טוביה הסופר האבל מאבילי ציון כתבתי זה הספר שהוא א' מספרי אוצר נחמד והוא סדר כהנים. ובו דברי אדוננו דוד הנשיא ז"ל והמלמ(ד) יפת הלוי ז"ל. והוספתי עליהם מה ששמעתי מדברי בעלי הדעת והמפרש(ים) הפותרים. . . .⁵³

Ankori translates as follows:

I, Tobias the Scribe, a Mourner of the [Order of] "Mourners of Zion," have written this book, which is one of my books [*or*: one of the books of] *The Delightful Treasure*. . . . It is [a commentary on] the Priestly Lore [i.e., on Leviticus]. It contains the sayings of our Prince, the Patriarch David [ben Bo'az], of blessed memory, and of the Teacher, Yefeth [ben 'Alī] Halleṽī, blessed be his memory. To the [sayings of these sages] I have added what I had heard of the pronouncements of the Philosophers. . . and the Commentators [and] Interpreters [of Scripture]. . . .⁵⁴

According to this passage, Tobias, who studied philosophy and exegesis at the Karaite academy in Jerusalem founded by Ibn Nūḥ, added comments from these fields to the material that he took from Yefet and David. According to Ankori, Tobias also added linguistic discussions and other material.⁵⁵

This is a perfect description of the Byzantine commentary. Based on the parallels discussed above, we may say that its comment on the word מנוחה has

52 See at n. 12 above.

53 Ankori, *Karaites*, 418 n. 171.

54 Ankori, *Karaites*, 418–20.

55 Ankori, *Karaites*, 421. For the possibility that he studied linguistics with Abū l-Faraj Hārūn, see *ibid.*, 50.

two parts: (1) a list of three possible interpretations similar to a list found in Yefet's *Commentary on Kings* and (2) the sentence תפול זו המלה על שם הנה translating the sentence אלקראר אסם וקד תקע אסם found in Ibn Nūh's linguistic commentary on the Hagiographa.

Another thing we can say about the author of the Byzantine commentary is that he had first-hand knowledge of Jerusalem's topography. That is why he is puzzled by the fact that 1 Kgs 8:1 uses the verb להעלות in describing the transfer of the Ark from Zion to the Temple:

אמ(ר) להעלות וציון היא עלה מירוש(לים) ולא אמ(ר) להוריד. אמרו הטעם בו. . . אחר⁵⁶
רדתו מציון. יעלה אל ירוש(לים).⁵⁷

It says “to bring up”—even though Zion is higher than⁵⁸ Jerusalem—and not “to bring down.” They have said that the reason for this is . . . after one's descent from Zion, one ascends to Jerusalem.

By the Middle Ages, the name “Zion” had long since been transferred to the western hill of Jerusalem. Our author knows that that hill is higher than the Temple Mount and that there is a valley in between.⁵⁹ He must be one of the Byzantines who came to study at the Karaite academy in Jerusalem before its destruction in 1099. Based on the evidence cited above, we may identify him with Tobias b. Moses.⁶⁰

* * *

The *Commentary on Genesis and Joshua* (henceforth *CGJ*) is very fragmentary; hence, there are very few clues as to its author's affiliation. According to de Lange, the author (or copyist?) knew Arabic:

56 De Lange reads אחד, which makes no sense here. The word follows a dittography, which de Lange does not point out. These two factors account for de Lange's sense that “the argument does not read well here and the text may well be corrupt.”

57 *GJT*, 139 (4 verso 4–7).

58 The phrase עלה מ- is apparently equivalent to עלא מן ‘higher than’ in Dan 6:3.

59 See, for example, the topographical map of Jerusalem in N. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 25.

60 There may be another hint. In the aforementioned colophon (Ankori, *Karaites*, 418), Tobias asks God to forgive his mistakes: ומהי אשאל שלא יחייבני באש' דברתי כי לא חפצתי כי אם לטובה. ואל אכשל בדברי לפני א-להי כי הוא יודע תעלומות. ואם שגיתי הוא יסלח וימחול לי. The last sentence is very similar to the last sentence of a similar prayer found in the Byzantine commentary (*GJT*, 137 [4 recto, caption 4]): זכרה לי א-להי לטובה בכל אשר עשיתי אם שגיתי יי' יסלח לי. And in both prayers the first sentence contains the word לטובה. Did Tobias use this word to allude to his authorship? Did he cite זכרה לי א-להי לטובה from Neh 5:19 and 13:31 because of its similarity to זכרה א-להי לטובה in Neh 6:14?

The pointing of the name “Baalbek” is surprising, and indicates an Arabic rather than a Greek background. . . . As for the *qubbut*s under the final *kaf*, Dr. Khan has suggested to me that, curious though it seems, it may be an attempt to represent the Arabic case.⁶¹

In my view, it is unlikely that the vocalization of the final *kaf* is an attempt to represent the Arabic nominative case ending; the reading ק seems more likely than קי.⁶² This pointing too may indicate an Arabic background. Many Judeo-Arabic texts use ק to represent Arabic final *k* (in contrast to ה).⁶³ Indeed, we find Baalbek twice written בעלבך in one manuscript of Yefet’s *Commentary on Kings*.⁶⁴

In any event, familiarity with the Arabic toponyms Baalbek and Rafaḥ taken together with Greek glosses may again point to a Karaite. More telling is the identification of Baal-Gad with Baalbek in *CGJ* (to Josh 11:17). This identification is made by Yefet as well. In his commentary to Josh 11:17, Yefet writes: “וקיל אן בעל גד ובעלת אסמין למדינה באעלבך” “it has been said that Baal-Gad and Baalath are two names for the city of Baalbek.”⁶⁵ So too in his commentary to 1 Kgs 9:18: “תם דכר בעלת והי בעלבך וסמית איצא בעל גד” “then it mentions Baalath, which is Baalbek and is also called Baal-Gad.”⁶⁶

The Rabbanites agree with this only in part. For them, Baalath is indeed Baalbek, but Baal-Gad is Gebal. This is clearest in the twelfth-century travelogue of Benjamin of Tudela: “. . . תחת הר הלבנון. . . ומשם שני ימים לגבאל היא בעל גד תחת הר הלבנון. . . ומשם חצי יום לבעלבך והיא בעלות (ע"ל בעלת) בבקעת הלבנון אשר בנה שלמה לבת פרע' “Thence it is two days’ journey to Gebal (Gebela), which is Baal-Gad, at the foot of Lebanon. . . . Thence it is half a day’s journey to Baalbec, which is Baalath in the plains of Lebanon, and which Solomon built for the daughter of Pharaoh.”⁶⁷ The identification of Baalath with Baalbek is also found in the fourteenth-century Judeo-Arabic translation of the Former Prophets from

61 *GJT*, 120–21n.

62 The vocalization of the *lamed* also needs to be re-examined. De Lange reads ל, but to A. Maman and to me, it looks more like ל in the published photograph.

63 J. Blau, *דקדוק הערבית-היהודית של ימי הביניים* (2d ed.; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1980), 47 n. 12.

64 Ms. London 335, f. 75b lines 7 and 15; cf. also מלודך and בדלך in line 16.

65 Ms. London, Margoliouth catalogue no. 277, f. 118b lines 9–10.

66 Ms. London 335, f. 75b line 7.

67 *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (ed. M. N. Adler; London: Henry Frowde, 1907), §§27 and 48.

Mardin, which renders בעלה with באעלבך at 1 Kgs 9:18.⁶⁸ Baal-Gad and Baalath also occur as toponyms in Hebrew letters from the Genizah, the former in a well-known letter of Saadia Gaon. In publishing these letters, S. Schechter and J. Mann relied on Benjamin of Tudela for the identification of the names.⁶⁹

CGJ and Yefet's commentary are also similar in their treatment of בא בימים in Josh 13:1. Yefet translates דכל פי איאם אלהרם "he had entered into the days of decrepitude"⁷⁰ and *CGJ* glosses בא בימי בלות הגוף אשר לא יוכל עוד לצאת ולבוא "he had entered the days of physical decrepitude so that he could no longer come and go."⁷¹

These parallels are suggestive but far from conclusive. The identification of Baal-Gad with Baalbek may well have been current in Jerusalem and/or Baalbek itself.⁷² Alternatively, it may also have occurred to both exegetes independently, just as it occurred to a modern scholar.⁷³ Moreover, the commentar-

68 התרגום הקדום לנביאים ראשונים בערבית יהודית (ed. Y. Avishur; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1995), 230.

69 S. Schechter, *Saadyana* (Cambridge: Deighton and Bell, 1903), 25 n. 1; J. Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fātimid Caliphs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920–22), 1:246 n. 1; 2:323 n. 5.

70 Ms. London 277, f. 126a lines 11–12.

71 *GJT*, 121 (2 recto 7–8).

72 For the existence of a Jewish community in Baalbek in the ninth and tenth centuries, see K. E. Schulze, *The Jews of Lebanon* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), 13; and A. F. Naccach, "A Ninth Century A.D. Judeo-Aramaic Epitaph from B'albak," *Orientalia* 58 (1989): 243–45.

73 O. Eissfeldt, "Die ältesten Bezeugungen von Baalbek als Kultstätte," *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 12 (1936): 51–53 = idem, *Ras Shamra und Sanchunaton* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1939), 31–36. The phrase בעל גד בבקעת הלבנון (Josh 11:17, 12:7) led Eissfeldt (p. 52 = p. 35) to conclude that "Baalbek ist wahrscheinlich nichts anderes als *bāal biḳāh* 'Herr der Ebene'." However, Eissfeldt was unaware that Baalbek appears in the Mishnah (*m. Ma'as.* 5:8) as בעל בבי. The identification of בעל בבי with Baalbek was made five centuries ago by R. Obadiah Bertinoro, but his transcription of Baalbek (בעל ביד according to a manuscript reading) was corrupted in the printed editions of his Mishnah commentary; see the notes to the commentary *ad loc.* in *משנה זרעים עם שינויי נוסחאות מכתבי יד של המשנה* (ed. N. Sacks; Jerusalem: Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud, 1972–75), 1:246. Modern scholars of rabbinic literature have rediscovered this identification, but have ignored its implications for the etymology of the name *Baalbek*. Thus, A. Sammtner (*Die sechs Ordnungen der Mischna* [ed. E. Baneth, et al.; 2nd ed.; Wiesbaden: H. Kanel, 1927], 1:149 n. 13) writes that בעל בבי is "Baalbeck, einer Stadt zwischen dem Libanon und Antilibanon gelegen, wo früher Heliopolis, dem Sonnengotte = בעל geweiht, und auf einer Ebene = בקעה stand." However, בבי can hardly be derived from בקעה. As recognized by S. Wild (*Libanesische Ortsnamen* [Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1973] 222–23), בעל בבי is more likely to be a Canaanite

ies disagree on the biblical name of Rafaḥ = Raphia (which also had a Jewish community in the eleventh century). For Yefet, the district of Rafaḥ is Avvim (Josh 13:3);⁷⁴ for the Byzantine commentator, Rafaḥ is Aphek (Josh 13:4). In short, the author may have been a Karaite, but there is not enough evidence to prove this.

* * *

The same criteria that prove that the *Commentary on 1 Kings* is Karaite create a presumption that the *Commentary on Ezekiel and Minor Prophets* is not. Reuel's Hebrew is free of Arabic influence.⁷⁵ Aharon Maman, an authority on Karaite Hebrew, agrees that it is not that of the Byzantine Karaites.⁷⁶

Reuel's exegesis contains no Karaite polemical themes, and even the *non*-polemical exegesis is completely different from that of Karaites such as Daniel Al-Qumisi, Yefet b. Eli, David Al-Fasi, and Jacob b. Reuben. Take, for example, the word זמורה in Ezek 8:17 והגם שלחים את הזמורה אל אפם. One of the interpretations given to this word by Reuel is "their wind (gas) that they were expelling towards the Temple of the Lord" and (at 8:16) "wind (gas) that they were expelling from their bottoms."⁷⁷ This is the interpretation of virtually all Rabbanites (with the exception of Joseph Qara and Joseph Ibn Kaspi): Mena-

name meaning 'Baal of weeping'; cf. the mourning for Hadad-rimmon = Baal in Zech 12:11 and the weeping for Tammuz in Ezek 8:14.

74 Ms. London 277, f. 127b line 9. This identification is no doubt derived from the targums to Deut 2:23, which have the Avvim dwelling in רפיח (*Onqelos*) or, in its Galilean Aramaic form, כופרניא דרפייע (*Pseudo-Jonathan*). For the Galilean Aramaic shift *h* > '*, see E. Y. Kutscher, *Studies in Galilean Aramaic* (trans. M. Sokoloff; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1976), 70–78.*

75 It is true that, in this commentary, we often find demonstrative adjectives preceding their noun instead of following it, but this feature is not proof of Arabic influence. It is already found in rabbinic Hebrew, where it is due to Aramaic influence; see M. H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), 201; M. Azar, *תחביר לשון המשנה* (Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1995), 212.

76 Personal communication.

77 For the time being, see Steiner, "בחינות לשון," 54–56; I hope to publish a revised edition of Reuel's comments in my next article on Byzantine exegesis. At 8:16, Reuel writes: "Their back(side)s were to the Temple of the Lord, and they broke wind towards the Temple of the Lord." Cf. the story told by Josephus in *Jewish War* 2.12.1 §224: "Thereupon one of the soldiers [on the roof of the portico of the Temple], raising his robe, stooped in an indecent attitude, so as to turn his backside to the Jews, and made a noise in keeping with his posture." Contrast the version in *Antiquities* 20.5.3 §108.

ḥem b. Saruq,⁷⁸ Jonah Ibn Janāḥ,⁷⁹ Ḥananel b. Hushiel,⁸⁰ Judah Ibn Bal'am,⁸¹ Rashi, Menaḥem b. Simeon, Isaiah of Trani, David Qimḥi, etc. The Karaites, on the other hand, do not even acknowledge the existence of this interpretation,⁸² presumably because it is based on a midrash.⁸³ Reuel exhibits the influence of midrash in a *number* of places.

Another non-Karaite feature of Reuel's *Commentary on Ezekiel* is that it ends with chapter 39. Parallels are known only among Rabbanites. Another Byzantine exegete, Isaiah of Trani, ends his commentary at the same point, explaining that it will not be possible to comprehend Ezekiel's description of the Third Temple until it is actually built.⁸⁴ Joseph Qara's *Commentary on Ezekiel* ends there as well. And what we have of Rabbenu Ḥananel's *Commentary on Ezekiel* begins with chapter 40 and bears the heading פירוש מן המשכנה.⁸⁵ Ye-

78 Menaḥem b. Saruq, *Mahberet* (ed. A. Sáenz-Badillos; Granada: University of Granada Press, 1986), 154* lines 23–25.

79 Jonah Ibn Janāḥ, *Kitāb al-'uṣūl* (ed. A. Neubauer; Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), 197 lines 25–29.

80 In his commentary to *b. Baba Meṣi'a* 90a (as preserved in שיטה מקובצת), his gloss to מתרות reads: בגון שדוחקות הרוחות בבטנה ומשלחת הזמורה. The definition is also cited in the *Aruch*, s.v. תרו and by Ibn Bal'am (see next footnote).

81 Judah Ibn Bal'am, פירוש ר' יהודה אבן בלעם לספר יחזקאל (ed. M. Perez; Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2000), 42.

82 Instead, they take זמורה to mean 'branch(es)' (literal or figurative), based on the meaning of the three other occurrences of זמורה in the Bible (Num 13:23, Isa 17:10, and Ezek 15:2). See Yefet's commentary to Ezek 8:17, Ms. St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Hebr.-Arab. I 3496, f. 42a, line 23–f. 42b, line 3; Jacob b. Reuben, ספר העשר, *ad loc.* in Aaron b. Joseph, מבחר ישרים; David Al-Fasi, *Kitāb Jāmi' al-Alfāz of David ben Abraham al-Fāsi* (2 vols.; ed. S. L. Skoss; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936–45), 1:493 lines 69–71. The view of Abū l-Faraj Hārūn is less clear. In the seventh (lexical) section of the *Muštamil*, his third meaning for the root זמר is "firewood gotten from the pruning of vines," exemplified by זמורה in Num 13:23, Isa 17:10, and Ezek 15:2; see Ms. London, British Library Or. 2592, f. 9a, lines 14–18. (I am indebted to Y. Dubitsky for sending me a photocopy of the entry.) Although he does not mention the occurrence in Ezek 8:17, he does give the impression that he knows only one meaning for זמורה. Cf. also Theodotion τὸ κλάμα 'the vine-branch' and Jerome *sarmentum* 'twig (esp. of vine)' in F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), 2:789–790. The interpretation 'rod (for beating)' belongs here as well; it is found in the commentaries of Joseph Qara, Joseph Ibn Kaspi, and Reuel (first interpretation).

83 See Steiner, "בחינות לשון," 55.

84 I am indebted to B. Richler for calling this to my attention.

85 מגדל חננאל (ed. J. Hildesheimer; Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1876), 45, cf. xxvi.

fet's division of the book is different: part 3 of his commentary consists of chapters 38–48.⁸⁶

From a codicological and paleographic point of view, Reuel's manuscript is very similar to that of the Byzantine *ketubba* of 1022 from the town of Mastaura in Asia Minor, published by Mann and other scholars and published again in *GJT*.⁸⁷ Ada Yardeni believes that the same scribe may have written the two documents at different times in his life; Malachi Bet Arieḥ concurs.⁸⁸ If so, that scribe must have been a Rabbanite, since the *ketubba* is Rabbanite; Karaite *ketubbot* are quite different.⁸⁹

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In light of the above, it seems quite certain that Reuel is a Rabbanite. His commentary and the *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus* appear to be the best representatives of the native Byzantine Rabbanite tradition, relatively untouched by developments in the Islamic world. The *Commentary on 1 Kings* is by a Karaite, probably Tobias b. Moses; the *Commentary on Genesis and Joshua* may be Karaite as well.

86 In Ms. London, Margoliouth catalogue no. 286 (Yefet's *Commentary on Ezekiel*), the colophon for אלגו אלהאני "the second part" precedes chapter 38; see Margoliouth, *Catalogue*, 214. Similarly, in Ms. St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Hebr.-Arab. I 3464, the heading ספר יהזקאל מן תפסיר אלגו אלהאלת "the third part of the commentary to the Book of Ezekiel" appears at the beginning of chapter 38.

87 See Steiner, "בהינות לשון," 43 n. 13.

88 Personal communications.

89 This was pointed out to me a number of years ago by Y. M. Felman; see now J. Olszowy-Schlanger, *Karaite Marriage Documents from the Cairo Geniza* (Études sur le judaïsme médiéval 20; Leiden: Brill, 1998).