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English abstracts

Xavier Maese i Fidalgo; Jordi Casanovas i Miró: **A new approach to the chronology of the Jewish cemetery at Montjuïc (Barcelona)**

The existence of a Jewish necropolis in Barcelona, located somewhere on the Montjuïc mountain, between the 9th century and the end of the 14th century, is mentioned in ancient documents. Throughout the archaeological intervention of 1945-1946, Duran i Sanpere was concerned chiefly with the chronological aspects of the Jewish cemetery of Barcelona. Traditionally, the chronological limits of the necropolis have been fixed between the 11th and 14th centuries, although there is no confirmation of the first of these two dates. It should also be added that the dating of the graves on the basis of Duran i Sanpere's classification into three groups is more a matter of intuition than of sufficiently proven fact. Between 1999 and 2000, two digs were carried out at the Jewish cemetery in Girona, enabling the physical limits to be established as between 10,000 and 12,000 m2 and 192 graves typologically very similar to those in the Barcelona cemetery to be identified. The fact that no epigraphic element was discovered *in situ* makes it very difficult to establish a clear chronology for the whole of the area now excavated, a difficulty which has been common to all archeological interventions carried out on Jewish cemeteries. Inscriptions normally appear out of context, only a few having been found *in situ*. In fact, it was in Barcelona in 1945-1946, that three gravestones were found in the Jewish cemetery.

Despite certain shortcomings, the 2001 dig at Montjuïc in Barcelona result-

ed in the extraordinary recovery of a stone bearing a Hebrew inscription associated to an anthropomorphous grave. This rare discovery was made even more so by the fact that the stone is clearly marked with the date, thus allowing some aspects of the chronology of the site to be clarified. The aim of the present article is, on the basis of the results of the 2001 dig, to review the chronologies previously established by Duran i Sanpere in 1946. Taking into account the new data and interpretations arising from the excavations carried out at the Montjuïc areas of Girona and Barcelona, together with data from other sites, our aim is to clarify some aspects concerning the various typologies found at the Barcelona site, establishing both its chronology and its physical limits. These clarifications, at present confined to the cases of Barcelona and Girona, will in future enable us to carry out a general review of the currently scant information concerning the medieval Jewish cemeteries in Catalonia.

Thanks to the excavations (2001) carried out at the Jewish cemetery in Barcelona, it has been possible to identify among the excavated graves four major types of tomb. Duran i Sanpere grouped the 171 tombs excavated in Barcelona into three clearly differentiated categories, «perhaps corresponding to different chronological periods; although the differences might also be explainable, if the tombs belonged to the same period, in terms of the occupants' belonging to different groups of different origins.» These three groups of tombs were defined as *lateral cavity*, *anthropomorphous* and *coffin*. Following the most recent excavations at Montjuïc, we retain Duran i Sanpere's classification, although we extend it to include a further group of *bath-shaped tombs*, which for reasons that are not clear were not included in Duran i Sanpere's typology.

In Catalonia, the *anthropomorphous tombs* are the type most characteristic of medieval Christian cemeteries and are also frequently found in Jewish cemeteries of the medieval period in Catalonia. With regard to the Montjuïc necropolis, the anthropomorphous pit tombs would appear to be the most ancient and – as we know from the date on the inscribed stone belonging to Tomb no. 423 – were in use until the 13th century. The *oval or bath-shaped pit tombs* have no particular structure except their oval shape, which resembles that of a bath. In the Montjuïc cemetery in Barcelona, these correspond to the most modern burials. As for the *simple pit tombs with lateral cavity*, they appear to be highly characteristic of medieval Jewish cemeteries in Catalonia. This type of tomb consists of a pit of similar dimensions to the human body, at the bottom of which the corpse was placed to one side and at a level slightly lower than the floor of the pit. It was very probably used until the 14th century. Finally, the *trapezoid pit tombs with a wooden casket or coffin* were characterised by a rectangular or trapezoidal hole dug in the ground in which the corpse was buried

in a wooden casket. The coffin graves correspond to the later chronologies of the Barcelona cemetery, that is, the 13th and 14th centuries.

Finally, we outline the various types of burials with their respective chronologies, specifying the degree to which the latter differ from the dates proposed by Duran i Sanpere: [1] *lateral cavity tombs*, corresponding to the cave tombs of Duran i Sanpere's nomenclature. According to the archaeological data obtained from the current excavation, together with other documentary data, these are the oldest burials in the Barcelona cemetery (9th century) and continued to be used until the cemetery was abandoned in 1391; [2] *anthropomorphous tombs*, which also appear to belong to the oldest group in the cemetery; thanks to the dating made possible by the stone associated to Tomb 423, we may conclude that they continued to be used until at least the 13th century, and it cannot be ruled out that they were used right up until the 14th century; [3} *bath-shaped tombs* which, together with the coffin tombs, are the most modern group, both in use from the 12th to the 14th centuries; [4] *coffin tombs*, which did not succeed the anthropomorphous tombs, as Duran i Sanpere proposed, but were rather contemporaneous with them during the final centuries of the cemetery's existence.

The stone associated to Tomb 423: During the work to remove the superficial levels of the site, a large inscribed stone was discovered bearing an almost complete epitaph. Tomb 423 is of the anthropomorphous pit type and contains the remains of a young woman who was buried in a prono supine position. The text inscribed on the stone is almost complete and reads as follows: «This is the tomb of Myriam, a pious and honest woman, the wife of rabbi Isaac ha-Levi, blessed be the memory of the just! She died in the month of Kislev [November-December], in the year four thousand nine-hundred-and-ninety [1229].»

Josep M. Llobet i Portella: **Preaching the gospel to the Jews of Cervera (1339-1492)**

Numerous documents refer to the preaching carried out in Cervera by various friars of different orders, as well as other individuals, during the Middle Ages. In general, these preaching activities were addressed to Christian audiences during Lent and other major festivals. Nevertheless, sometimes the preaching was aimed not at the Christian faithful, but at the Jews among the local population, as is obvious from the documents themselves.

In this study, we transcribe nine documentary texts, preceded by a commentary, which provide information concerning those preachers, many of

whom were converted Jews. We have taken into account only those documents which explicitly state that the preaching was aimed at Jews; the one exception is the case of Vincent Ferrer, who, as medieval texts suggest, and provided that he was one and the same as the Dominican friar by that name, very likely preached to the Jews during the time he spent in Cervera.

According to the documents consulted, the preachers who addressed their efforts to the Jews were the following:

1339. **Pere Ferràndiz**, convert. He may have been the converted Jew, Pedro Fernández de Tudela, who was probably born in Tudela, Navarre.

1410. **Vincent Ferrer**, a teacher of holy scripture. There is documentary evidence that in 1409 Friar Vincent Ferrer, together with several companions, spent some time in Cervera. According to the account given by Jaume Villanueva, we believe that the Master Vincent Ferrer referred to in the records of Cervera is the same Dominican friar who was later elevated to sainthood.

1417. **Gil Benet**, convert. This teacher preached in the church of Santa Maria, Cervera, over a period of three days, to both Jews and Christians. In 1426, this same preacher again gave sermons in the church of Santa Maria, Cervera, before a congregation of Jews and Christians.

1431. **Lucas**. We find that, at least in 1431, the Jews of Cervera were obliged by a court order to attend the sermon given by this preacher.

1431. **Gilabert**, convert. All the Jews of Cervera attended his sermon.

1492. **Major**. This preacher must have been the same person who, under the name of Antoni Joan Major, is mentioned in a municipal record of 1492. According to the text of that record, he was born in Cervera and was a teacher of theology. His was the last sermon to be preached.

Bearing in mind the scant number of converted Jews mentioned in the Cervera documents —except for the year 1492— these preaching activities do not seem to have been particularly fruitful. The conversion of some Jews to Christianity may have been generally due to those individuals attempting to stabilise their financial or social position, rather than to the sermons or the eloquence of the preachers concerned.

Eduard Feliu: **Solomon ben Adret, Master of Jewish Law**

One of the distinctive manifestations in the very long history of Jewish literature is the collections of legal opinions or *responsa* given by the great Talmudic masters; these *responsa* constitute a major branch of Jewish literature which cannot easily be compared to any of the branches of the literature of other peo-

ples. These collections exist for all ages and countries, from Talmudic times to the present day, whenever and wherever there has been a Jewish community. The most characteristic feature of such texts is that they were written in response to questions of a practical nature relating to the everyday life of individuals and families which, since they arose from different historical circumstances, both political and social, were not specifically dealt with in the Jewish legal codes. The rabbi consulted would try to find in the Bible, the Talmud and other ancient rabbinical texts authoritative arguments to justify his decision or the proposal he advised. During the Middle Ages, the judges sitting in rabbinical courts would submit the most difficult cases to these expert masters of Jewish tradition, and the latter would then deliver an opinion which would be copied and reserved for future reference in case some other party asked the same question. It should be remembered that these specialists in the Talmud were not themselves judges of the rabbinical courts, but spiritual masters and legal advisers whose advice was given to both judges and private individuals and communities on whatever topic might be raised.

Before delivering their opinion and defending it with repeated references to verses in the Bible and the Talmud, these masters of the law would give a detailed account of the matter in hand on which they had been consulted, including a literal transcript of the words uttered by the person or party requesting an opinion. Thus, these opinions offer an albeit unwitting and sometimes colourful chronicle of their times, providing a valuable source of information not only on the social, economic, political and cultural context of their particular moment in time, but also concerning the ideas and the philosophical and religious movements which challenged the peace of Jewish orthodoxy.

Solomon ben Adret, one of the outstanding figures of Catalan Judaism, was born in Barcelona around 1235 and died there around 1310. Undoubtedly, he surpasses all the other representatives of rabbinical culture in Catalonia during the second half of the13th century. So great was the acclaim he won during his lifetime, and so long has his influence endured since his death, that even today his opinions in the field of the *halakhah*, or religious jurisprudence, are regarded as authoritative all over the Jewish world. For centuries, his opinions in matters of religious jurisprudence (*halakhah*) have been adduced to guarantee the correct solution to the thorniest legal problems and as a touchstone to distinguish what is just, in other words what is in keeping with Jewish law, from what is unjust.

An eminent Talmudic scholar among the most eminent of the medieval period as well as an expert adviser on jurisprudence, Solomon ben Adret wrote thousands of opinions in response to the questions posed to him by Jews from

all over the ancient kingdom of Aragon, Provence, Spain, France and even Germany. However, he was consulted on all kinds of subjects not only by Jews, but also by the Catalan-Aragonese Crown. Sifting through the documents published by Baer and Regné, we find important accounts of this service rendered to the Catalan kings.

Adret believed in the Talmudic tradition above all else. He was a man in touch with the problems of his time; he was also a pugnacious man who had to combat those who attacked orthodox Judaism and the Jewish people. Not only did he strive to ensure that individuals and families lived in peace and harmony, as can be seen time and again in his opinions, but he also purposefully confronted the philosophical and religious problems facing Jewish society. For instance, Adret acted expeditiously in the case of the prophetic and messianic claims of the impetuous Abraham Abulafia, which he rejected out of hand, dismissing Abulafia as an impious ignoramus. In 1305, now an old man, and amid the conflicting views that the ideas of Maimonides had sown among Jewish communities, he put his name to the excommunication (*herem*) against all those Jews who studied «the Greek books», in other words, Greek philosophy, before the age of twenty-five. Called upon by the king to deliver a ruling in accordance with Jewish law, he also courageously and honestly acted in the death sentence against a slanderer in Barcelona in 1280.

A disciple of Moses ben Nachman, Adret was a vehicle for the ideas of his master, which he often used to add decisive support to his own judgments. Although he left no strictly kabbalistic writings of his own (with the exception of one prayer), according to a reliable ancient tradition he was also responsible for continuing the Kabbalah of Girona and passing on its theosophical wisdom to his disciples, as is recognised by the latter.

Not only did Adret try to lead Jewish communities along the paths of their own history, but he also vigorously defended them against those Christians who, with unbridled missionary zeal, attempted to lure them away from the path of Judaism. One of the disputations with Christians in which he was involved might have been with the famous Dominican friar Ramon Martí, the author of *Pugio fidei*. Although he was not fond of innovation, his opinions in matters of religious jurisprudence reveal, amid the subtleties of Talmudic writing, a remarkable equanimity and sense of focus which lead him never to lose sight of the individual and his circumstances.

From the many questions raised by family disputes, moral scruples and religious doubts that were deemed appropriate to bring before the celebrated Jewish master of Barcelona, we can derive a good deal of information concerning the everyday life of Jews living in the Catalan, Aragonese and Provençal territo-

ries, as well as others, in terms both of their personal conflicts and material interests, and the philosophical and theological problems that preoccupied the Jews who lived at that time in those particular areas. Adret also often had to tackle the difficult question of the relations between Jews and Christians.

The article includes a selection of thirty-seven *responsa* translated from the Hebrew into Catalan, with notes and a bibliography.

Margalida Bernat i Roca: **The Jewish quarter of the City of Majorca around 1350: urban area and population**

Although the presence of Jews on the island is documented since the the so-called Dark Ages, their role during the period of al-Andalus is completely unknown, and of the time before the Christian conquest only a few sporadic details are known. With regard to the Middle Ages, the raids on the Jewish quarters of the City of Majorca and Inca in 1391 would seem to have eclipsed any other focus of attention. What in fact is known about the Jews in the period immediately preceding 1391? The answer, albeit only partial, can be found by analysing a very specific source which has hitherto been little used in historical analysis, namely, the transcription by J. Miralles i Montserrat, published in 1997, of the *Monedatge del Call de la Ciutat de Mallorca,* dating from 1359, which is conserved in the Archives of the Crown of Aragon.

The urban area of the Jewish quarter. Our most frequent image of the Jewish quarter of the City of Majorca comes from the 19th century and does not entirely agree with the one that emerges from the document under study, although it does more or less conform to the vague definition of an area «*qui est intre frates minores et sorores santa Clare*», according to the plans of 1286, and those of 1290, which identify it as the «*partita vocata Templum et Calatrava*». The information provided in the property register of the Monedatge, or tax roll, of 1350 enables this description to be verified and more clearly defined. Analysis of the document in question shows that the Jewish quarter of the City of Majorca in the year 1350 was an urban area (see Map 1) bounded on the north by *Plaça de Sant Francesc* and what is now *Carrer Ramon Llull*, and on the south by the modern-day streets *Montserrat* and *Born de Santa Clara* (the latter now known as *Sant Alonso*); on the east side it was bounded by the streets *Botons*, *Caldes* and *Salom*, while on the west it was bounded by the present-day street *Santa Clara*, which runs into *Carrer del Sol* and finally opens into the modern Carrer del Call, forming a small, unnamed square. The Jewish quarter was enclosed by a wall and access was by means of four gates.

In those times, the district consisted of six large blocks. Due to the fundamentally closed nature of the Jewish community, these six blocks were arranged in a circle of buildings (probably consisting of a ground floor, the *botiga*, or shop, and an upper storey, or *algorfa*) around an open central area consisting of gardens, courtyards and patios, with a single side access leading to the streets within the walled enclosure, the potential for expansion being chiefly vertical. This configuration involved living in close proximity to one's neighbours, since the windows and exits of the dwellings and other premises opened onto the inner spaces; consequently, a whole series of measures designed to ensure privacy were put in place.

The first name from the register of these blocks worthy of mention is that of No. 6, the *Sala dels Secretaris*, (Fig. 3). It undoubtedly derived its name from the fact that it was the meeting-place of the *secretaris de l'aljama* (the Secretaries of the Jewish community), which was usually housed in the school or synagogue, this building being converted into a church dedicated to Santa Fe following the events of 1315. It was in that same year, 1315, that the Jewish community applied for permission to convert a private space for prayer and, very probably, for the teaching of religion, according to their custom. This state of affairs must have lasted until 1331, when Jaume II gave permission for a communal, public synagogue to be set up, on condition that it was a modest building to be known by the name of school or house of prayer, and not specifically as a synagogue. In time, this building came to be known as the *sinagoga major* or *sinagoga nova*, the main or new synagogue.

Some data concerning demographic trends. During the period 1329-1336, the City of Majorca grew very little, although such growth was in keeping with the city's evolution at that time. By contrast, however, the figures for the Jewish quarter are surprising. They show a -0.28% variation, which can only be explained in demographic terms as the result of a major epidemic. This variation in the number of property owners liable to the *monedatge* tax in the Jewish quarter cannot be traced to any disaster having befallen the population and must be assumed to have been due to fiscal reasons.

During the period from 1336 to 1343, it was the City of Majorca which showed an overall -0.27% variation in its population, while the Jewish quarter continued to register a negative, albeit less pronounced rate of variation (of around -0.108%). From these data we can deduce that the City of Majorca saw a substantial decrease in its population, whereas the Jewish quarter was beginning to register a 50% recovery compared with the previous period. Again, no epidemic could explain the supposed demographic crisis. The only circumstances worthy of mention in this context are the events leading up to the de-

posing of Jaume III of Majorca and the reincorporation of the kingdom of Majorca into the Crown of Aragon. It may be inferred that the Jewish quarter withstood this crisis more successfully than the rest of the city, especially in view of the fact that a large section of the Jewish population expressed its support for the change in the island's sovereignty.

The final period was marked by the plague of 1348. In this case, the considerable differences in the number of tax-payers may be explained by the coming together of two factors. To begin with, deaths resulting from the plague led to a decrease in the number of tax-payers; however, the ensuing economic crisis led to the impoverishment of a large number of the survivors. Whatever the case may be, the overall decrease in the number of tax-payers was less dramatic than in the previous period. Surprisingly, however, the Jewish quarter registered a positive variation (+ 0.33%). One might speculate that the consequences of the plague were much less dire in the Jewish quarter than in the rest of the city, but, even working on the hypothesis that there had been no deaths due to the epidemic in the Jewish quarter, it would be difficult to attribute the growth rate to natural causes.

If we consider that each register corresponds to a head of household or a fiscal unit, the tax census registers for 1350 total 735 items. If we apply to this figure the traditional coefficients of 4-5 individuals per household, the result is an absolute Jewish population of somewhere between 2,940 and 3,675 individuals, the average being 3,307. On the basis of the generally accepted estimate of households proposed by F. Sevillano Colom, the City of Majorca in the year 1350 can be reckoned to have numbered between 14,768 and 18,460 inhabitants (depending on the coefficient applied). In the light of these data, therefore, Jews would have accounted around 20% of the population.

The question of the density of the population.. Bearing in mind that, according to the *monedatge*, a rough estimate of the density of the population of the City of Majorca in 1350 would give around 0.0032 inhabitants per m2, the Jewish quarter emerges as over-population, numbering some 0.0215 inhabitants per m2: almost ten times the overall average for the city. On the basis of this estimate, individual figures can be calculated for each block. The most densely populated is No. 1, all the others except No. 4 having a higher than average density. This state of affairs is explained by the fact that all public spaces are included in the calculation; this inclusion has the advantage of making it possible to discern more clearly the problem of over-population. At this point, we should go back to the fiscal nature of the source being analysed. It is very unlikely that, despite the restrictions, there would be densities higher than 1000 inhabitants per km^2 in confined areas, a situation which would have led to an

absurd degree of vertical building for the 14th century. We should therefore conclude that the figures are based on addresses for tax purposes rather than reflecting the actual physical dwellings of those taxed: all those paying taxes in the Jewish quarter were classified as inhabitants, irrespective of their true place of abode.

Eduard Feliu: **A Responsum of Simon ben Zemah Duran concerning the two synagogues that existed in the City of Majorca**

Simon ben Zemah Duran was one of the greatest religious authorities of his day. Born in the City of Majorca in 1361 into a wealthy family that had arrived from the Languedoc a generation earlier, he fled destitute but safe and sound to North Africa as a result of the pogrom against the Jews in1391. In Algiers in 1408, after the death of another illustrious exile, R.Isaac ben Sheshet Barfat of Barcelona, he became the spiritual leader of the Jewish communities of Hispanic origin until the time of his own death as an old man, steeped in years and wisdom, in 1444.

Simon ben Zemah Duran was essentially a religious thinker, moderately critical of Maimonides, who developed his doctrines by combining more or less skilfully the elements he drew from the various philosophical, kabbalistic and exegetical traditions. However, thanks to the liberal education he had received in his youth, he was a man of encyclopaedic knowledge, fully conversant with the sciences of his day. His intellectual endeavours were focussed not only on spreading knowledge of the basic doctrines of Judaism among the Jews, but also on defending Jews against Christians and Muslims through important apologetic works.

He also enjoyed considerable authority in matters of *halakhah*. His eight hundred or so *responsa* contain valuable information about the Jewish communities of the western Mediterranean. Although it is impossible to say with certainty in which year it was written, responsum III:5 gives retrospective information concerning the two synagogues of the City of Majorca. We reproduce the original traditional text together with the Catalan translation as a complement to the article by Margalida Bernat i Roca, published in this issue of *Tamid*, which at one point alludes to the frequently disputed question of the two synagogues.

Eduard Feliu: **Dahlia Ravikovitch or the liberty of imagination**

Since the publication of her first collection of poems, entitled *Ahavat tapuah ha-zahav* [‘*The love of the orange*’], in 1959, Dahlia Ravikovitch has steadily progressed along a path which has led her to the front line of the leading contemporary poets writing in Hebrew. Born in Ramat-Gan in 1936, her family moved to a kibbutz when she was six years old, following the death of her father in a traffic accident, an irreparable loss which had a profound and traumatic impact on the personality of the future poet, who alludes to the incident in several of her poems. Later, when she was twelve, she lived in Haifa and went on to study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem at a time (before the so-called Six Day War in June, 1967) when the new city was still separated from the old by a cement wall. She now lives in Tel-Aviv. She has worked as a teacher and a drama critic and has translated numerous works of children’s fiction, a field in which she is also the author of a dozen or so original works. She has received two of the most prestigious awards in Hebrew culture: the Bialik Prize and the Israel Prize, and her work enjoys great popularity.

All the great Hebrew-language poets of our time, but especially Alterman, Shlonsky, Ratosh, Goldberg, Zakh, Amihai and Guilboa (the latter having overtaken the former in her scale of preference), as well as the non-Jewish poets, Yeats and T.S. Eliot, have left their mark on the poetry of Dahlia Ravikovitch, who has nonetheless found a style all her own in which to express, not without a measure of provocativeness, her human experience as a Jewish woman who was born and lives in Israel. The hardships of her childhood, suffering, frustration, the distress caused by death, her unhappy relationship with adults, her resignation when faced with adverse personal circumstances and, in recent years, a keen awareness of the need to work and be personally committed to peace between Israelis and Palestinians, are recurrent themes in her poems.

Dahlia Ravikovitch’s poetry, dealing as it does with the fragile nature of life, resignation, childhood, travel to exotic lands in search of a refuge, which in her early books finds expression in a biblical style, has gradually evolved towards a more mature description —and in a language now stripped of any rhetorical frills— of a world in which men and women continue to be helpless creatures, always on the brink of collapse and waiting for some redeeming love. Although the Mediterranean landscape of the land of Israel —its sand, seaweeds, brambles, trees, hills, sunsets, etc.— continues to provide important expressive elements in the poems of Dahlia Ravikovitch, the excessively bucolic evocations of her early poetry are a thing of the past. There is now an abundance of more or less explicitly sexual images, which at times acquire a redemptive character

amid the sadness or drabness of daily life. However, the poet's lament is also a feminist outcry against a society which relegates women to an unjust state of subordination to men, whose superiority is described through countless overrealistic metaphors.

The war in Lebanon in 1982, regarded as an unnecessary military venture by many Israeli intellectuals, was the turning-point and the touchstone which inspired numerous protest poems (the similarity to the case of American poets and the Vietnam war is perfectly valid). Dahlia Ravikovitch, who until then had never written politically committed poetry, decided that she had to use her tools as a poet to participate in the outcry against the war and the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank territories, now a political entity called Palestine. These poems express a sincere rejection of futile bloodshed, but also the temptation to look away and flee to the exotic lands which have always formed part of her poetic imagination.

As in other Israeli poets, we occasionally come across explicit references to the gospels. The figure of Jesus of Nazareth is not entirely absent in the world of modern Jewish culture, particularly in the work of its poets.

Bibliographical notes

Bibliography on the use and study of Hebrew in the Middle Ages

Although the use of Hebrew as a written language has never really been interrupted throughout the slow and age-old process leading from Biblical times to its re-instatement as a spoken language in the modern age, the term *Biblical Hebrew* is generally used to refer to the most ancient stage in its history, *Mishnaic or Rabbinical Hebrew* to refer to the post-Biblical language in which the Mishna was written (a language still in use in the early centuries of our era), *Medieval Hebrew* to refer to the language used by the Jewish sages of the Middle Ages and *Modern Hebrew* to refer to the language used today. Yet, although the Middle Ages marked an important stage in the very long history of development of the Hebrew language, the term *Medieval Hebrew* applied to the language of that period is not entirely appropriate, nor, indeed, is it universally accepted, unless it is used in a purely chronological sense, that is to say, it should be understood as medieval in the sense that it refers to Jewish writers and scholars of the Middle Ages, not because it has a distinct consolidated linguistic system with morphological and syntactical characteristics of its own, in a manner comparable to the so-called *Biblical Hebrew* and *Mishnaic Hebrew*.

In fact, Medieval Hebrew is the result of the use made of Mishnaic Hebrew by different authors from many countries and cultural zones, both Muslim and Christian, at that particular time in history, who were influenced by the social, political and linguistic contexts in which they lived. Thus, subject to such a wide range of different influences, the Hebrew of the Middle Ages presents what might be called regional characteristics. When written under Muslim rule, it reflected numerous lexical and semantic influences from Arabic; when written in Christian cultural zones, particularly in the western Mediterranean area, Hebrew bore evident traces of Latin and the various vernacular languages of the various regions. Nevertheless, its fundamental grammatical structure continued to be that of Mishnaic Hebrew, which at no time was substantially modified or replaced.

In principle, this bibliography —consisting of some six hundred references— brings together only those works, books or articles, which contain information of a linguistic nature, in other words, those which discuss the grammatical doctrines of authors or deal with some specific linguistic aspect, or edit grammatical texts written during the medieval period. We have therefore excluded works of a strictly bio-bibliographical nature dealing with the lives of authors or the attribution of literary works. We have also excluded studies on the language of the *piyyutim* and on modern works dealing strictly with the Massorah, as we consider them to be outside the chronological limits established: our cut-off point has been Saadia Gaon and the Andalusian grammarians. Nor have we included the numerous studies on metre, versification and rhetoric in medieval Hebrew poetry, since these do not strictly belong to the field of linguistics or grammar. In the section on translations and translators we have included only those studies which refer to linguistic aspects or translation methods; works on purely philological and historical aspects have therefore been excluded.

Extract of the contents