

## The Manuscripts of Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’s Second Commentary on Genesis in the Context of Censorship in Sixteenth-Century Italy\*

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The Second Commentary on Genesis is an unfinished exegetical-grammatical work written in Rouen by the Andalusí scholar Abraham ibn ‘Ezra. Unlike the first commentary written in Lucca, to date only six manuscripts from between the fourteenth and seventeenth century containing this work are known, three of which were censored. The codices that contain the censored text were produced in Italy during the period of the Counter-Reformation, when Hebrew literature was supervised by the Catholic Church. This paper analyses the presence of internal and external censorship in the manuscripts of Ibn ‘Ezra’s Second Commentary on Genesis in the context of sixteenth-century Hebrew textual output in Italy. The paper also tries to establish a possible relationship between the contents of the lost sections and the so-called *Sefer ha-Ziqquq*, the most important *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* of Hebrew books written by the apostate rabbi Domenico Yērušalmi, whose signature is found in the codices.

KEYWORDS: censorship; Abraham ibn ‘Ezra; Domenico Yērušalmi.

LOS MANUSCRITOS DEL SEGUNDO COMENTARIO A GÉNESIS DE ABRAHAM IBN ‘EZRA EN EL CONTEXTO DE LA CENSURA EN LA ITALIA DEL SIGLO XVI.— El segundo comentario a Génesis es un trabajo incompleto exegético-gramatical escrito en Ruán por el erudito andalusí Abraham ibn ‘Ezra. A diferencia de su primer comentario compuesto en Lucca, de esta obra se conocen hasta el momento tan solo seis manuscritos de entre los siglos XIV y XVII, tres de los cuales han sido censurados. Los códices que contienen el texto censurado fueron elaborados en Italia durante el período de la Contrarreforma en el que la

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literatura hebrea fue supervisada por la Iglesia Católica. El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar la presencia de censura interna y externa en los manuscritos del Segundo Comentario del Génesis de Ibn ‘Ezra en el contexto de la producción textual hebrea del siglo XVI en Italia. Además, este trabajo intentará establecer una posible relación entre el contenido de las secciones perdidas y el llamado *Sefer ha-Ziqquq*, el *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* más importante de los libros hebreos escrito por el rabino apóstata Domenico Yērušalmi, cuya firma se encuentra en los códices.

PALABRAS CLAVE: censura; Abraham ibn ‘Ezra; Domenico Yērušalmi.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sometime around 1153,<sup>1</sup> the Andalusí intellectual Abraham ibn ‘Ezra (1089-c.1165) arrived in the Norman city of Rouen after more than a decade spent wandering about Italy and southern France. For a long time, scholars argued over the geographical location that corresponds exactly to “רדום”, and all the variants found in the different printed and manuscript texts, which indicates Rouen as the place where Ibn ‘Ezra wrote some of the second versions of his biblical commentaries.<sup>2</sup> In his supercommentary<sup>3</sup> on the Pentateuch (13<sup>th</sup> c.), El‘azar ben Mattityah located the composition of the work in England, while two centuries later, Yiṣḥaq Abravanel placed the Second Commentary on the Minor Prophets in Rouen, following a tradition apparently established since the

<sup>1</sup> Irene Lancaster dates Ibn ‘Ezra’s arrival in Rouen sometime after he passed through Narbonne in 1152. See Irene LANCASTER, *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra’s introduction to the Torah* (London: Routledge, 2003) pp. 13-17.

<sup>2</sup> On the problem related to this script, see Norman GOLB, *Les Juifs de Rouen au Moyen Âge: Portrait d’une culture oubliée* (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Publications de l’Université de Rouen, 1985) pp. 171-207.

<sup>3</sup> Uriel Simon defines a supercommentary thus: “A supercommentary, as a commentary superimposed on a commentary, does not refer directly to the primary text being glossed and explained. Whereas a commentator on Scripture deals with a single text, the supercommentator has in front of him two texts of quite unequal status: one is sacred and obligatory, whereas the other is merely revered and indispensable”. Uriel SIMON “Interpreting the Interpreter: Supercommentaries on Ibn Ezra’s Commentaries,” in *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra: Studies in the Writings of a Twelfth-Century Jewish Polymath*, ed. Isadore TWERSKY and Jay M. HARRIS (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993) pp. 86-128.

twelfth century.<sup>4</sup> In his chronicle *'Emeq ha-Baka*,<sup>5</sup> Yosef ha-Kohen mentions that Ibn 'Ezra finished that work in 4917 in Rhodes (Greece), possibly due to the confusion caused by the orthographic variant with a final *samek* (סמק). Currently, there is no doubt that the Andalusí exegete spent a number of years in the capital of Normandy writing works like his second versions on Psalms, Daniel, the Minor Prophets, Genesis and Exodus. This paper will attempt to contextualise the composition of Abraham ibn 'Ezra's second commentary on Genesis in the city of Rouen and to identify the manuscripts found so far in various libraries. It will then address the question of the censorship of the commentary during the Counter-Reformation, when most of the copies in which the text is preserved were produced, as well as its relationship to the main index of forbidden Hebrew books. Finally, an edition and translation of the censored fragment will be offered.

As for the documentation available on the origins of the Jewish presence in Rouen – or Rodom, as it was called by the medieval Jews – a few documents have been preserved that provide highly important information about the status of the community and shed light on Ibn 'Ezra's journey to the French region. Amongst the documents in the Cairo Genizah, a signed letter was found that explains in detail the events that led a French Jew by the name of Mar Rëuben b. Yişhaq to leave the city of Rouen and spend his final days in Jerusalem. Mar Rëuben is described as an affluent Jew who had inherited feudal lands from his family and whose only descendant had been killed along with his two servants while they were walking to their fields. Because he lacked a male heir, Mar Rëuben was consequently disposed of his goods before he died by the then Duke of Normandy, Robert I (1005-1035), violating the Norman

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<sup>4</sup> The use of the Arab name Radūm for the city of Rouen can be found in the mid-tenth century in the travel book by Ibrahim ibn Yaqub of Tortosa. The Hebrew toponym Rodom, on the other hand, is derived from the Latin Rotomagus, which has its own variants, and appears in texts that predate the thirteenth century, such as the manuscript of the letter written by Mar Rëuben, held in the British Library (Or. 5544, fol. 1) and studied by Jacob Mann. This text appears to narrate events that occurred before the First Crusade, meaning that it can be dated back to the late eleventh century. Cf. GOLB, *Les Juifs de Rouen au Moyen Âge*, pp. 51-70.

<sup>5</sup> Yosef HA-KOHN, *El valle del llanto: crónica hebrea del siglo XVI*, trad. León TELLO (Barcelona: Riopiedras, 1989) p. 71.

feudal laws that only authorized confiscation in the case of crime or disloyalty.<sup>6</sup> Events that predate this episode are recounted in an anonymous thirteenth-century chronicle held in the Library of Parma. During the First Crusade, the Jews in northern France, who suffered persecution under King Robert II (972-1031) and the barons, were forced to choose between death or conversion. Ya‘āqob bar Yēqutiēl, an influential figure in the Rouen community, confronted the nobles, arguing that the authority to issue such an edict lay with the pope alone and requesting a meeting with the pontiff.<sup>7</sup> When he arrived in Italy, he was taken in by the Roman community, and stayed in the city for a few years until he managed to halt the harassment of the French Jews by offering the pope a large sum of money and financing for his missions.<sup>8</sup>

The data provided by these documents confirm that as far back as the eleventh century, there was an important, well-established community in northern France,<sup>9</sup> whose members enjoyed not only a high economic status, but also a distinguished position with respect to neighbouring communities. The migration<sup>10</sup> of the Jewish population northward was motivated by both trade concerns and by the support and protection provided by the political authorities in the regions where they lived, be that the king, a representative of the crown or a lord.<sup>11</sup> Initially, it seems, the economy of the Jews was based on local business or, in the case of Rouen, trade related to the city’s seaport, famous since antiquity for its strategic logistical position. During the twelfth century, their eco-

<sup>6</sup> GOLB, *Les Juifs de Rouen au Moyen Âge*, pp. 51-70.

<sup>7</sup> Robert CHAZAN, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom: 1000-1500* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) pp. 122-123.

<sup>8</sup> GOLB, *Les Juifs de Rouen au Moyen Âge*, pp. 31-50.

<sup>9</sup> Even though most of the sources that provide information about the status of the Jewish population in northern France come from the thirteenth century, they suggest a possible progressive growth of the community between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries until the expulsion in 1306. Cf. Robert CHAZAN, “Jewish Settlement in Northern France 1006-1306,” *Revue des études juives* 128, 1 (1969) pp. 41-65: 42-43.

<sup>10</sup> On migration movements and changes in the Jewish community during the Middle Ages, see Robert CHAZAN, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 85-106.

<sup>11</sup> Anna SAPIR ABULAFIA, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2014) p. 67.

conomic activity focused on loans and banking, with the assistance of the lords and barons who clearly benefited from the tax revenue related to these transactions.<sup>12</sup> There was a need to create a business communications network between the coreligionists, and their benefactors fostered the organization of the local Jewish community itself, as well as interactions with other communities outside the region and with their own Christian neighbours. This population exchange also fomented cultural exchange and stimulated intellectual life in the North, something reflected in references to synagogues and academies, which were often not limited to only one per community.<sup>13</sup>

In France and the areas near the Rhine, unlike other communities like those in al-Andalus, studies focused above all on the Bible and the classic rabbinic texts instead of other disciplines like philosophy and science. In the late eleventh century, it was possible to find the Talmudic scholars known as Tosafists all around northern France. This generation of disciples of Raši (1040-1105), which was educated at the Troyes Academy, took it upon themselves to complete his commentaries on the Talmud and the Bible and disseminate his exegetic methods.<sup>14</sup> R. Šelomoh ben Yišhaq, better known by the acronym Raši, founded the Yěšibat Gě'on Ya'āqob academy around 1070, when he was scarcely thirty years old. As the corpus of his *responsa* indicates, his aim was to make his school an important intellectual and spiritual centre for the Jewish world, as shown by its name, which was reminiscent of the historical schools of Babylon.<sup>15</sup> Raši was interested in the grammar of the Hebrew language and introduced the *pěšať* method, which had no precedent in Europe, but without disregarding the Midrashic interpretations characteristic of Ash-

<sup>12</sup> Ángel SAÉNZ-BADILLOS, "El pensamiento económico de los judíos en la Edad Media," *Mediterráneo económico* 9 (2006) pp. 117-133.

<sup>13</sup> CHAZAN, "Jewish Settlement in Northern France 1006-1306," p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> Ángel SAÉNZ-BADILLOS and Judit TARGARONA BORRÁS, *Los judíos de Sefarad ante la Biblia*, (Barcelona: Herder, 2016) p. 131.

<sup>15</sup> *Yěšibat Gě'on Ya'āqob* was also the name of the academy located in Baghdad and directed by R. Yišhaq b. Mošeh b. Sakri, which had its origin in the Sura Academy founded in 219. Cf. Mayer I. GRUBER, *Raši's Commentary on Psalms*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004) p. 19.

kenazi circles.<sup>16</sup> The *pěšať*, or literal, interpretation became a useful hermeneutic tool in the polemics against Christianity for Jewish exegetes who were being read at the time by Christian intellectuals interested in exploring the *sensus literalis* of the Scriptures.

Despite the tension created by the Crusades, both Jewish and Christian cultures flourished in northern Europe, giving rise to what is usually called the Twelfth-Century Renaissance.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, it is no surprise that Abraham ibn ‘Ezra moved from Narbonne in the South up to Rouen in search of new patrons to sponsor him. At that time, interest was also growing in learning about the intellectual output from the Islamic world, and the Jews from al-Andalus played a key role in its dissemination when they, like Ibn ‘Ezra, moved to Christian lands over the course of the twelfth century.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the archaeological remains found in Rouen in 1976 and the available documents on its Jewish community suggest that the city academy was a monumental structure, built for Jewish higher education.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that this very *yěšibah* was being directed by Samuel ben Me’ir (c.1080-c.1174), Raši’s grandson,

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<sup>16</sup> The method used by Raši and his adherence to the *pěšať* method has been widely debated, due to the dependency on midrashic exegesis in his interpretations. For new perspectives on the concept of *pěšať* in Raši’s work, see Mordechai Z. COHEN, *The Rule of Peshat: Jewish Constructions of the Plain Sense of Scripture and Their Christian and Muslim Context 900-1270* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).

<sup>17</sup> In her book, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, Anna Sapir Abulafia examines the different factors that led to the consideration of the twelfth century as a Renaissance in northeast Europe. On this question, see also Ivan G. MARCUS “The Dynamics of Jewish Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century,” in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-century Europe*, eds. Michael A. SIGNER and John van ENGEN (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001) pp. 27-45.

<sup>18</sup> Gad FREUDENTHAL, “Abraham ibn Ezra and Judah Ibn Tibbon as Cultural Intermediaries: Early Stages in the Introduction of Non-Rabbinic Learning into Provence in the Mid-Twelfth Century,” in *Exchange and Transmission across Cultural Boundaries: Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean World. Proceedings of an International Workshop Held in Memory of Professor Shlomo Pines at the Institute for Advanced Studies. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 28 February-2 March 2005*, eds. Haggai BEN-SHAMMAI, Sarah STROUMSA and Shaul SHAKED (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2013) pp. 52-81.

<sup>19</sup> Norman GOLB, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy: A Social and Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 154-169.

when Ibn 'Ezra arrived in Rouen.<sup>20</sup> Once there, he wrote, amongst other works, the commentaries on Esther II, Daniel II, Psalms II, Song of Songs II, Exodus II, the Minor Prophets II and Genesis II,<sup>21</sup> all revisions of works written previously,<sup>22</sup> in which he demonstrated his maturity after years of study and education in Italy and Provence. The new commentaries had shorter introductions, more detailed explanations and a much less critical positions towards traditional rabbinic interpretations than in his earlier phase, reflecting the needs of his new students and patrons.<sup>23</sup>

According to the introductory poem to Genesis II, it seems that Ibn 'Ezra, who was ill at the time, intended to write a second commentary on the Pentateuch in Rouen for his patron at the time, Mošeh ben Me'ir:<sup>24</sup>

בְּזִקְנוֹתוֹ מְכָרוֹהוּ עוֹנְיוֹ / בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה בֶּן־מֵירָה גַם יְשֻׁנָּה  
 וְרַב מִלְּשָׁה בְּנֹו מְאִיר סְמִכּוֹ / וְיָשָׁב גֵּוֹ כְּכֶפֶה הַרְעֵנָה  
 וְנִדְרָתִי לְאֵל נִדְרֵי בְּחֵלְיִי / לְבֹאֵר דַּת בְּהַר סִינַי נְתוּנָה

In his old age his sins sold him/ to an illness that was both  
 young and old/ But Master Moses son of Me'ir sustained him/  
 until he again resembled a green shoot/ Then I vowed, when I lay  
 ill/ to comment on the Law given at Sinai

However, no evidence has been found that he was able to complete this project or, for that matter, any reasons to justify why only one long commentary on the Book of Exodus (Exodus II) and another on Genesis

<sup>20</sup> Norman GOLB, "Addendum (to Paajr, XLVIII [1981], Pp. 101-182): Nature et Destination Du Monument Hebraique Decouvert a Rouen," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 53 (1986) pp.71-89.

<sup>21</sup> Abraham ibn 'Ezra would also write other scientific works here, like *Sefer Re'sit Hoḳmah*, *Luḥot III*, *Sefer ha-Te'amim*, *Sefer Mišpeṭe ha-Mazzalot*, *Sefer ha-Moladot II*, *Sefer ha-šē'elot II*, *Tractatus de astrolabio*, *Liber de nativitatibus* and *Sefer Yesod Mispar*.

<sup>22</sup> On the exegetic output of Abraham ibn 'Ezra, see Mariano GÓMEZ ARANDA, "Los comentarios bíblicos de Abraham ibn Ezra," *Iberia Judaica* 4 (2012) pp. 81-104.

<sup>23</sup> Mariano GÓMEZ ARANDA, "Abraham ibn Ezra o el saber errante," *El Olivo* 85-86 (2017) pp. 49-74.

<sup>24</sup> The text of the manuscripts is followed here. This translation into English comes from GOLB, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy*, p. 268, and a translation into French can be found in GOLB, *Les Juifs de Rouen au Moyen Âge*, p. 184.



that ends abruptly with the *parašat leḳ leḳa* have been preserved. The latter work was supposedly written before the commentaries on Exodus II, Psalms II and Song of Songs II, which indicates that,<sup>25</sup> if this commission truly did materialize at some time, the result was not preserved in its original form.<sup>26</sup> Abraham ibn ‘Ezra did not stop working after the illness described in his poem; a few years later he moved to England, where he continued his efforts to transmit Judeo-Andalusi culture, writing at least three more works. While reconstructing Ibn ‘Ezra’s itinerary after he left al-Andalus is arduous, establishing his place of death is near impossible, since his trail is completely lost after he reached London. According to the news passed on by the Tosafist Mošeh Taku (1250-1230) in his polemical treatise *Kētab Tamim*,<sup>27</sup> the author died in that city around the age of 75, putting an end to a journey of more than 20 years during which he wrote some of the most important biblical commentaries of Andalusi Judaism.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE SECOND COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

In his *Essays on the Writings of Abraham ibn ‘Ezra*, Michael Friedländer identifies three manuscripts with the Second Commentary on Genesis that were, in turn, used for an appendix edition in the book:

<sup>25</sup> This chronological listing is from Shlomo SELA and Gad FREUDENTHAL, “Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing,” *Aleph: Historical Studies in Science & Judaism* 6 (2006) pp. 13-55. Friedländer, taking Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’s state of health into consideration, questions whether he would have produced any work at all in 4916 (1155-56) and argues that Genesis II must have been written later than the commentary on the Minor Prophets, sometime around the summer of 4917 (1157). Cf. Michael FRIEDLÄNDER, *Essays on the writings of Abraham Ibn Ezra* (London: The Society of Hebrew Literature by Trübner, 1877) p. 161.

<sup>26</sup> FRIEDLÄNDER, *Essays on the writings of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, p. 162.

<sup>27</sup> Enrique CANTERA MONTENEGRO, “Abraham ibn Ezra en las crónicas hispanohebreas,” *Kalakorikos* 9 (2004) pp. 241-255.

<sup>28</sup> The work by Mošeh Taku is the closest source chronologically to the death of Abraham ibn ‘Ezra. On the other hand, both the chapter on Jewish chronology in *Qiššur zeḳer Šaddiq* by R. Yosef ben Šaddiq and *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* by Abraham ben Šēlomoh de Torruviel place his death in Calahorra, northern Spain, in 4925 (1165).



British Library Add. Ms. 27038,<sup>29</sup> Bodleian Library Ms. Opp. Add. Qu.22 and Bodleian Library Mich. 238. Additionally, three more copies exist, two held by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (Ms. 961<sup>30</sup> and Ms. 2321<sup>31</sup>) and one belonging to the private collection of the Boesky family, available on microfilm from the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts. Generally speaking, all the manuscripts appear in codices that contain other works by Ibn 'Ezra like *Iggeret ha-Šabbat*, *Yesod Mora*, *Sefer ha-Šem* and the commentaries on Exodus.

The information provided by these copies is not particularly conclusive with regard to the formation and transmission processes. The introductory poem included above only appears in the three later copies (Bodleian Library Mich. 238, JTS Ms. 2321 and British Library Add. Ms. 27038), while four of the copies include an appendix of the *parašat va-yehi* written by Yosef b. Ya'āqob of Maudeville<sup>32</sup> (Ms. 2321, Mich. 238, Add. Ms. 27038 and Boesky, the last of which does not mention the author of the appendix), which states that he recorded Ibn 'Ezra explanations in London and wrote them down in his language.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the oldest copies, dated between the fourteenth (Ms. Opp. Add. Qu.22) and fifteenth (Ms. 961) centuries, contain Sephardic script.

<sup>29</sup> Available for online consultation. NLI Film no: F5716.

<sup>30</sup> Available for online consultation. NLI Film no: F24067.

<sup>31</sup> Available for online consultation. NLI Film no: F28574.

<sup>32</sup> Some argue that this could be a third commentary. SELA and FREUDENTHAL, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing", p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> "אני יוסף בר יעקב ממודייל שמעתי מפי זה החכם פירוש זאת הפרשה בלונדון וכתבתי בלשוני" Cf. ASHER WEISER, *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Torah*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1976) p. 194. Yosef b. Ya'āqob of Maudeville, or Morville, was both a student and patron of Abraham ibn 'Ezra during his time in England. Although there is no evidence that he studied under him in Rouen, it is possible that the relationship somehow began around this period, considering that there was a close connection between the Jewish communities in Normandy and England. He was the dedicatee of the theological treatise *Yesod Mora*, which Ibn 'Ezra wrote in London in 1158 with a panegyric in which the author himself recognizes Yosef b. Ya'āqob as a pupil and benefactor for whom he had written various works. The manuscripts of the Second Commentary on Genesis are not the only ones that contain explanations added by Yosef b. Ya'āqob; the commentaries on the Exodus, Psalms and the Minor Prophets written in Rouen also include notes written by his student. Cf. GOLB, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy*, pp. 304-307.

Although they have fewer additions and include a fragment omitted from the others,<sup>34</sup> these are incomplete or in bad condition.

With the exception of the poem, the text maintains the same structure in all the copies that are complete. The commentary begins with an introduction similar to that which opens his well-known commentary on the Pentateuch in which Ibn ʿEzra explains the exegetic methods of the Christians, the Karaites, the Geonim and the *děraš* of the rabbinic writings, respectively.<sup>35</sup> Finally, he describes his own methodology and its special focus on the grammar of the Hebrew language, along with the way in which he is going to present the commentary:

On this principle, I will base my commentary in order to elucidate all that is written in accordance with its norm, grammar and literal meaning. Only for the laws and precepts will I rely on the ancestors, emending the grammar of our language according to their words. [...] At the beginning of each *parašah* I will cite the grammar of the words that are difficult and then I will expound upon the commentaries in order.

Thus, the text is divided according to the chapters that correspond to each *parašah*, which are, in turn, divided into two clearly differentiated sections: one called *diqduq*, with short grammatical clarifications and annotations, and one called *peruš*, which contains the exegetic explanation of the portion of interest.

### 3. CENSORSHIP

Unquestionably, the particular features of the Second Commentary on Genesis make this an enigmatic text that still holds many questions. One is related to the location and dating of the manuscripts known to date. Although the commentary was written in northern France, half of the few extant copies are Italian and quite late, specifically from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that time, two phenomena in Italy were significantly affecting textual output in Hebrew: Protestantism and the rise of the printing press. The Protestant Reformation fuelled an

<sup>34</sup> FRIEDLÄNDER, *Essays on the writings of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, p. 203.

<sup>35</sup> The order of the presentation varies from one commentary to another.

interest in Hebraism amongst Christian academics, who not only wanted to read the Scriptures in their original language, but also to mould a reformed identity that would enable them to break with Catholicism. Studies of the Hebrew language became an indispensable part of any education for members of the clergy leading the nascent congregations, and professors of Hebrew – initially converts to Judaism – began to fill positions in universities.<sup>36</sup>

The Reformation attitude towards Judaism was not uniform during its formative period, and the views of its highest representatives could even be called ambivalent. While Martin Luther went from cordial and tolerant in essays like *Dass Jesus Christus ein geborener Jude sei* (*That Christ was Born a Jew*, 1523) to hostile in *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* (*On the Jews and their Lies*, 1543), John Calvin did not expressly focus on the Jews in his writings. Although he emphasized the positive aspects of the Law in some of his commentaries on biblical passages, he did not hesitate to affirm that it had been abrogated during the messianic era and that, therefore, the descendants of Abraham had lost their status as the chosen people because of their lack of faith and crimes as a nation.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, the zeal for biblical studies that had allowed Protestantism to put itself on an intellectual par with Jews and Catholics also extended to rabbinic literature throughout the seventeenth century, especially amongst the Calvinists, who stressed the importance of this tradition in interpreting the Bible and were looking for a way to relate their own history as a denomination to the experience of the people of Israel.<sup>38</sup> Latin translations of Maimonides and Yēhudah ha-Levi, editions of rabbinic commentaries, histories of ancient Israel and the Bible accompanied by masoretic notes and their *targumim* were just some of the works published across the Holy Roman Empire. Another sign of Protestant interest in rabbinic literature was the case of Johannes Buxtorf

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<sup>36</sup> Ronald PO-CHIA HSIA, “Judaism and Protestantism,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. Jonathan KARP and Adam SUTCLIFFE (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) p. 59.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Alice L. ECKARDT, “The Reformation and the Jews,” *Shofar* 7:4 (1989) pp. 23-47.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Adam SUTCLIFFE, “Hebrew Texts and Protestant Readers: Christian Hebraism and Denominational Self-Definition,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 7:4 (2000) pp. 319-337.

and his son, Johannes Buxtorf the Younger, members of a family of Hebraists, who between them held the post of Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis at the University of Basel for a century.<sup>39</sup> The most important contributions made by this family to the field of Hebraism include the edition that the family patriarch produced, with Abraham Braunschweig, of the *Biblia Sacra Hebraica et Chaldaica*, a text that incorporated commentaries by David and Mošeh Qimḥi and Abraham ibn ʿEzra, amongst other works.

The controversies around this sympathy towards Judaism and the possible contamination inherent in the study of the rabbinic tradition soon arose within the Reformation itself, which, in the meantime, was accused by Catholic theologians of being a Judaizing heterodoxy.<sup>40</sup> In response to this new form of heresy that was quickly spreading across Europe, Leo X promulgated the papal bull *Inter sollicitudines* in 1515 during the Fifth Lateran Council that institutionalized the practice of censorship throughout the Catholic Church, authorizing the review of books prior to printing and controlling those already published. The Church viewed the printing press as an instrument created by God to spread the good doctrine, but also one that could, in turn, be used by opponents of the true Christian faith; consequently, the order was given that all types of works, regardless of genre, be examined by the heads of the Church in Rome, local bishops or some authorized Inquisitor.<sup>41</sup> The Church's concern about containing Protestant heresy, which was becoming increasingly widespread in Italy, led to the promulgation of the papal bull of 21 July 1542, *Licet ab initio*, by Paul III, creating the Sacred Roman and Universal Inquisition responsible for controlling the printing, sale and distribution of books.<sup>42</sup> Two years later, the Theological Faculty of the University of Paris published the first index of banned books, aimed at compiling all the titles condemned by the

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<sup>39</sup> On the Buxtorf family, see Víctor OLALLA MOLINERO, "Una familia de hebraístas: los Buxtorf de Basilea," *MEAH Hebreo* 23 (1974) pp. 81-92.

<sup>40</sup> Adam SUTCLIFFE, "Hebrew Texts and Protestant Readers," p. 321.

<sup>41</sup> Jennifer HELM, *Poetry and Censorship in Counter-Reformation Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2015) pp. 1-16.

<sup>42</sup> Jesús MÁRTINEZ DE BUJANDA, *Index Librorum Prohibitorum 1600-1966*, (Sherbrooke: Centre d'études de la Renaissance, Editions de l'Université de Sherbrooke, 2002) p. 28.

Church and improving the efficiency of the censorship system, which until then had been administered through edicts.

After the Council of Trent, a second Roman *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* appeared in 1564, prepared under Pope Pius IV, which included the ten general rules that regulated Catholic censorship until it was suppressed in 1966. With specific regard to Hebrew literature, the Latin translations of Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and Aramaic to which Christians might gain access had been controlled since 1516, as they were deemed a potential danger to the faith. Throughout the sixteenth century, a variety of measures were put into place to limit the printing of Hebrew texts and their possession; one such case was the Talmud, which was banned in May 1554 by a papal bull issued by Julius III.<sup>43</sup> Expungement and prohibition were used at the time to prevent heretical interpretations from entering Christian discourse, as had occurred with the Protestant Reformation and the penchant for Hebrew shared by its early intellectuals. The publication of a new *Index* by Clement VIII in 1596 marked a turning point, especially in Modena, the focus of the Reformation in Italy and home to the densest Jewish population, where the works of Luther, Calvin, Raši and some of the most important figures from Andalusí Judaism were circulating.<sup>44</sup> This *Index* specified all the reasons why a book might be censored and completely prohibited the Talmud and another 1,000 titles, forcing the Jewish communities to expurgate their own texts.

In this context of the Counter-Reformation, the three extant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century censored manuscript copies of the Second Commentary on Genesis by Abraham ibn 'Ezra were produced. As noted above, the commentary begins with an introduction similar to that of the first version, in which the change in the order of the exegetic methods is notable. Unlike the Italian commentary, in which the Christian exegesis is in third place, in the French recension, Ibn 'Ezra focuses on his herme-

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<sup>43</sup> Amnon RAZ-KRAKOTZKIN, "The Censor as a Mediator: Printing, Censorship and the Shaping of Hebrew Literature," in *The Roman Inquisition, the Index and the Jews: Contexts, Sources and Perspectives*, Stephan WENDEHOST (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 2004) p. 40.

<sup>44</sup> Federica FRANCESCONI, "«This passage can also be read differently...» How Jews and Christians censored Hebrew texts in early modern Modena," *Jewish History* 26:1/2 (2012) pp. 139-160: 140.

neutic method, featuring it at the beginning of the introduction, even before the Karaite exegesis, which was usually the primary rabbinical concern during the Middle Ages. Indeed, this fragment is crossed out in the two sixteenth-century copies and is completely omitted from the seventeenth-century copy. The first two codices contain the signatures of well-known censors from the time like Cardinal Domenico Carretto (1454-1514), the Dominican friar Luigi da Bologna (active from 1598 to 1602), Alessandro Scipione (active from 1593 to 1597) and Domenico Gerosolimitano (1555–1621); the last three were Jewish converts.

In the censorship of Hebrew texts, apostates who provided their services to the Church played a decisive role. Because of the scarcity of academics who were versed in Hebrew, especially in southern Italy, the work of censorship fell to these neophytes, who were familiar with the works that had to be expurgated.<sup>45</sup> While the printers who specialized in the Hebrew book market, like Daniel Bomberg, employed Jews to work as editors and printers, after the censorial decrees, the Jewish communities themselves paid the censors in exchange for revising and eliminating what could be deemed offensive before printing the works, so as to guarantee that they were not destroyed and avoid the legal consequences of owning banned books.

#### 4. DOMENICO YĔRUŠALMI AND *SEFER HA-ZIQQO*

One of the most prominent apostates who worked on the expurgation of Hebrew books was Rabbi Samuel Vivas from Jerusalem,<sup>46</sup> who came to be known as Domenico Gerosolimitano (Domenico Yĕrušalmi) after his conversion sometime around 1593. Domenico Yĕrušalmi was born to a Sephardic family in Jerusalem in 1555 and educated to work as a

<sup>45</sup> Michael T. WALTON and Phyllis J. WALTON, “In Defense of the Church Militant: The Censorship of the Rashi Commentary in the Magna Biblia Rabbinica,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 21:3 (1990) pp. 385-400: 390.

<sup>46</sup> I. Zorattini discovered a group of documents related to his conversion, including his baptism certificate. Domenico Yĕrušalmi voluntarily converted to Christianity on 6 August 1593 after presenting himself for conversion in Venice. On Domenico Gerosolimitano’s conversion, see Pier Cesare IOLY ZORATTINI, “Domenico Gerosolimitano a Venezia,” *Sefarad* 58: 1 (1998) pp. 107-115.

rabbi in Safed, when the city was famed for its important Kabbalah school. Thanks to a manuscript in the Vatican Apostolic Library, it is known that in Safed, he studied with the greatest scholars of the Torah, the Mishnah, the Talmud and the Kabbalah and worked as a *dayyan*.<sup>47</sup> For almost 16 years, he laboured as a physician in the court of Turkish Sultan Murad III (1574-1595), as did many other diaspora Jews, until he moved to Italy at the age of 38, where he converted to Christianity and began his work as a censor for the Church. Throughout the period during which Yěrušalmi performed this activity (1595-1621), he wrote the so-called *Sefer ha-Ziqquq* or *Book of Expurgation*,<sup>48</sup> a list of 476 Hebrew books that cites the sections that must be emended or expurgated, and that reflects his past as a rabbi well-versed in the Sephardic textual tradition.

The *Book of Expurgation* was not the first attempt to create an *Index expurgatorius* of Hebrew books. The oldest known index to date is contained in a manuscript from the seventeenth century and was the work of the Franciscan friar Hippolytus of Ferrara, based on the earlier work done by Rabbi Abraham Provenzali. Around the same time, at the request of the bishop of Mantua, Lorenzo Franguello begin to prepare his own list, the product of his work as a censor.<sup>49</sup> Both indices look more like drafts for personal use that share the goal of eliminating any blasphemy or anti-Christian nuance from texts written in Hebrew.<sup>50</sup> The first version of *Sefer ha-Ziqquq* was finished on 1 August 1596 during an expurgation campaign in Mantua, and was continually brought up to date as the works were revised. In the introduction to the book, which was intended to serve as a guide for censors, the author synthesized the discussions about the practice of censorship from earlier years with a list

<sup>47</sup> Gila PREBOR, "Domenico Yerushalmi: His life, Writings and Work as a Censor," *Materia Giudaica* 15-16 (2011) pp. 467-481: 467-468.

<sup>48</sup> The six preserved manuscripts of the *Index* were studied by Gila Prebor in her doctoral thesis. For an edition of the text, see Gila PREBOR, "Sefer ha-ziqquq šel Dome-niqo Yěrušalmi," *Italia* 18 (2008) pp. 7-296.

<sup>49</sup> Gustavo SACERDOTE, "Deux index expurgatoires de livres hébreux," *Revue des études juives* 30: 60 (1895), pp. 257-283.

<sup>50</sup> Amnon RAZ-KRAKOTZKIN, *The Censor, the Editor and the Text: The Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) pp. 84-85.



of 20 rules that had to be applied when expurgating or correcting a Hebrew book.<sup>51</sup> In the colophon to the *Index*, he also wrote that his motivation for writing the work was none other than to persuade Jews to embrace Christianity,<sup>52</sup> a task that he continued to perform until his death in 1621 through other writings and evangelization in Jewish communities.

The name Abraham ibn ‘Ezra, which had already appeared on the list drawn up by Hippolytus of Ferrara, is mentioned several times along with titles by intellectuals who contributed to the development of the Judeo-Andalusi legacy, including Šēlomoh ibn Gabirol, Yēhudah ha-Levi, Maimonides, David Qimḥi, Yiṣḥaq Alfasi and Ibn Paquda. It seems that censorship of Ibn ‘Ezra’s texts was not limited to the various indices, and in May 1557, one of the commentaries was at the centre of an unfortunate event that occurred in Rome. In the wake of the 1554 papal bull, a campaign was organized to confiscate all types of Hebrew books, even those that were unrelated to the Talmud, as reading them had been banned in the document. The convert Andrea de Monte (formerly Yosef Šarfati Alfasi), who was put in charge of inspecting the synagogues in the city, found a copy of a commentary by Abraham ibn ‘Ezra left behind by a visitor to the synagogue from the German community. Although the Roman members knew nothing about the presence of the book, Andrea de Monte’s report resulted in imprisonment for some of them, the closure of the synagogue and a sanction of 1,000 escudos, which the community was forced to pay.<sup>53</sup>

*Sefer ha-Ziqquq* directly began with an indication of the sections of the commentary on the Pentateuch that needed to be eliminated, followed by the parts of the commentaries on the Minor Prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Lamentations and Daniel from the *Miqra’ot Gēdolot* printed in Venice.<sup>54</sup> In other situations, the censor signalled that nothing needed to be removed, as with the grammars *Sefer Šaḥot* and

<sup>51</sup> An English version of this list can be found in RAZ-KRAKOTZKIN, *The Censor, the Editor and the Text*, pp. 121-123.

<sup>52</sup> PREBOR, “Domenico Yerushalmi”, p. 473.

<sup>53</sup> William POPPER, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1899) pp. 41-42.

<sup>54</sup> PREBOR, “Sefer ha-ziqquq šel Domeniqo Yērušalmi,” pp. 113-117.

*Sefer Mo'znayim*. However, the introduction to the Second Commentary on Genesis does not seem to have been included here, possibly because, as it was not yet complete, it had not been included in the first editions of the rabbinic Bibles. It is nonetheless clear that the same principles that govern *Sefer ha-Ziqquq* played a role in the censorship of the manuscripts of that text. As a rule, the biblical commentaries contained in the *Index* had passages that conflicted with Christian interpretations, attacks on Church institutions or metaphors and expressions that could seem insulting to Christian eyes. Terms like גוֹי (“gentile”), אֶדוּם (“Edom”), עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה (“idolatry”), מִיז (“heretic”) and עֶרְל (“uncircumcised”) were replaced by different expressions, so as to avoid any reference to Christians or the Church. The introduction to the Second Commentary on Genesis, which used this terminology to describe how Christianity interpreted the biblical text, was not corrected, but directly expurgated.

The types of censorship differ between the three manuscript copies reviewed by the censors. The introductions from the sixteenth century contain what is called external censorship, while those from the seventeenth century were internally censored. External censorship refers to the work done directly by the censors on the book, whether correcting words or eliminating passages. Once the book had been revised, the censor issued a certificate; in the sixteenth century, this could consist of the censor’s signature, with nothing more, or accompanied by the consent of the Inquisition. The same book may even contain the signatures of several censors, as is the case with the works examined by the Mantua committee made up of Alessandro Scipione, Lorenzo Franguello and Domenico Yērušalmi. However, there was not always agreement between all the censors; nor did they always follow the recommendations in Yērušalmi *Index*. The document British Library Add. Ms. 27038 contains the signatures of up to three different censors, Yērušalmi, Alessandro Scipione and Domenico Carretto, while Ms. 2321 is signed by Yērušalmi and Carretto, along with Luigi da Bologna. On the other hand, with regard to the eliminated fragment, there are signs of a relationship between the rules established at the beginning of *Sefer ha-Ziqquq* and the work of the censors. For instance, the passages that expressed some type of disagreement between the Christian and Jewish faiths or questioned the Christian conception of the Bible were completely eliminated,

even when the religion or its intellectuals were not explicitly mentioned. Similarly, any passage was subject to censorship if it attacked some important figure, including the clergy. In his introduction to the Second Commentary on Genesis, for example, Ibn 'Ezra criticizes the excessive use of allegory in Christian exegesis, using expressions like נוצרים אֱלֵמִים (“mute Christians”) and תלמידים חוטאים (“sinful disciples”), which were eliminated from the text, maintaining only the sections that made no direct reference to Christianity.

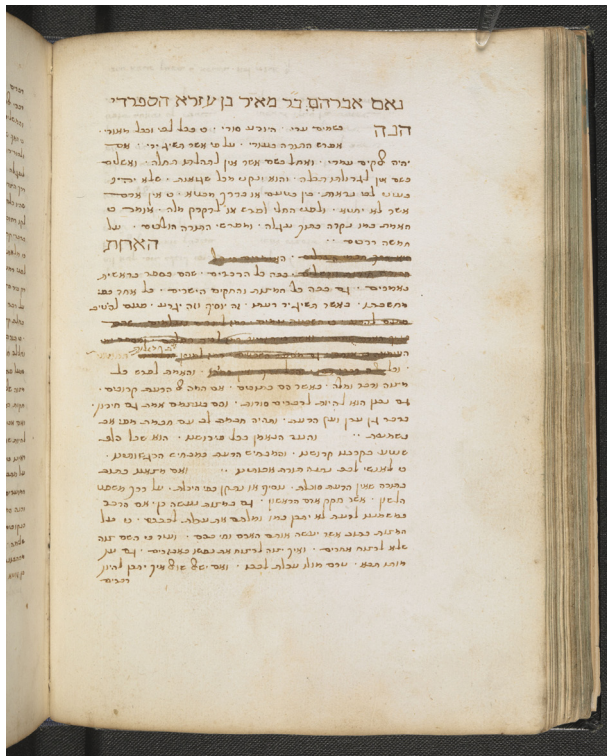


Figure 1. British Library Add.27038 fol.55v. From the British Library collections, Ktiv Project, National Library of Israel.

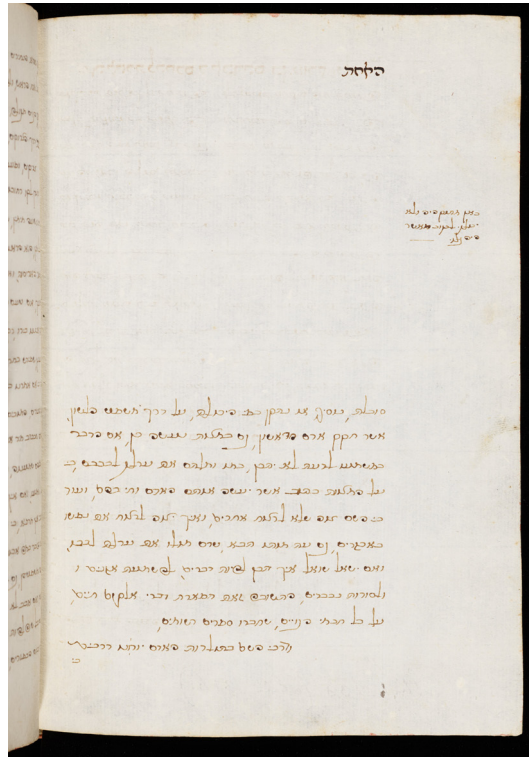


Figure 2. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS Mich 238, fol. 74v.

The introduction from the seventeenth century, however, does not contain any type of information about its censors. The passage in which Ibn 'Ezra describes Christian exegesis is largely omitted, with a note left in the margin by the copyist stating that he was unable to write that section because it had been removed.<sup>55</sup> This type of internal expurgation was done directly by copyists and printers in Jewish communities in order to – to the extent possible – keep the books from falling into the hands of censors and being confiscated or destroyed. The printers had

<sup>55</sup> [Bodleian Library Mich. 238, fol.74v]. "כאן מחוק היה ולא יכולתי לכתוב מאשר היה גלוי". The note implies that the text was being copied from another censored manuscript. According to FRIEDLÄNDER, British Library Add. Ms. 27038 may serve as the antigraph of the manuscript in the Bodleian Library. Cf. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Essays on the Writings of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, p. 203.

already been making these types of alterations and corrections in the texts, even before the imposition of censorship, and as the measures stiffened, this exercise became more systematized.<sup>56</sup> It is also worth noting that some of these members of the Inquisition, who served as censors, were also active in the production of Hebrew books. Perhaps the most well-known case is that of the convert Vittorio Eliano (1528-c.1581), grandson of the Jewish scholar Elia Levita (1469-1549). After his conversion, Eliano not only served as a censor, but also became a printer for the Jesuit order in Cremona. In 1558, together with Ḥayyim Gattinio, he collaborated on the printing of the *editio princeps* of the *Zohar*, the classic text of Jewish mysticism.<sup>57</sup> A third method of censorship consisted of adding marginal notes that explained the text from a Christian perspective or refuted some idea.<sup>58</sup> Subsequently, it is possible to find manuscripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that not only contain omissions and empty spaces, but may also be completely new editions adapted to the requirements of the Church.

Scholars are divided about how regularly *Sefer ha-Ziqquq* was really used as a censorship manual, with some believing that its use was limited and others arguing that the censors were familiar with this book to the point that the *Index* was a reference work, even outside Domenico Yērušalmi Mantua committee. In 2007, Shifra Baruchson-Arbib and Gila Prebor made a statistical analysis of the works mentioned in *Sefer ha-Ziqquq*, studying censored copies currently held in libraries around the world, of which 86 per cent were produced in Italy.<sup>59</sup> Although these copies covered a wide range of disciplines and were influenced by different contextual factors that made the qualitative analysis difficult, the scholars reached the conclusion that although Yērušalmi list did not

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<sup>56</sup> Shifra BARUCHSON-ARBIB and Gila PREBOR, “Sefer ha-Ziqquq (An Index of Forbidden Hebrew Books): the Book’s use and its influence on Hebrew Printing,” *La Bibliofilia* 109:1 (2007), pp. 3-31: 23.

<sup>57</sup> David Werner AMRAM, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy: Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Printing Press* (Philadelphia: J. H. Greenstone, 1909), pp. 306-337.

<sup>58</sup> POPPER, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books*, p. 60.

<sup>59</sup> On this study, see Shifra BARUCHSON-ARBIB and Gila PREBOR, “Sefer ha-Ziqquq (An Index of forbidden Hebrew Books): the Book’s use and its influence on Hebrew Printing,” *La Bibliofilia* 109:1 (2007), pp. 3-31.

impose a restraint on printing, the contents of the works were clearly subject to change. The *Index expurgatorius* helped shape the basic principles that governed the censorship of texts written in Hebrew during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Those examined in this article, which were revised not only by Yērušalmi but also by his peers, represent but a small sample of the phenomenon.

## 5. PROPOSAL FOR EDITION AND TRANSLATION

The Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library of Israel has 602 manuscript copies from different collections that carry the signature of Domenico Yērušalmi.<sup>60</sup> In the edition proposed below, the two manuscripts that appear in the codices revised by Yērušalmi and other censors, 'ג' and 'ד',<sup>61</sup> are in the critical apparatus, while the censored section was rescued from Boesky NY Ms. 67 (ב'), the only complete copy that was not expurgated.

Boesky, NY, Ms. 67 [1r]

**האמת** היא דרך חכמי הערלים : האומרים  
 כי כל התורה חידות ומשלים · ככה כל הדברים ·  
 10 שהם בספר בראשית נאמרים · גם ככה כל המצות והחקים הישרים  
 כל אחד כפי מחשבתו · כאשר תשיג יד דעתו · זה יוסיף וזה יגרע ·  
 פעם להטיב פעם להרע · כי השבעה עמים · רמז ליצרים נעלמים  
 שהם בגוף האדם שמים · ואשה כי תזריע רמז לבית תפילתם ·  
 ומספר ימי טומא<sup>7</sup> כתאותם · גם מספר השבעים<sup>62</sup> · רמז לתלמידים  
 15 החוטאים · וכל אלה דברי תהו · והבל נדף ואין כמוהו · והאמת לפרש  
 כל מצוה ודבר ומלה · כאשר הם כתובים · אם הם אל הדעת קרובים  
 גם נכון הוא להיות לדברים סודות · והם בעצמם אמת גם חידות  
 בדבר גן עדן ועץ הדעת · ותהיה חכמת לב עם חכמת מפי אב  
 נשמעות · והעד הנאמן בכל פירושנו · והוא שכל הלב שנטע בקרבנו  
 20 קדושנו · והמכחיש הדעת מכחיש הרגשותינו · כי לאנשי לבב נתנה  
 תורת אבותינו · ואם מצאנו כתוב בתורה שאין הדעת סובלת נוסף

<sup>60</sup> PREBOR, "Domenico Yerushalmi," pp. 475-476.

<sup>61</sup> The list of manuscripts is: NY JTS 961 (א'), Boesky NY Ms. 67 (ב'), JTSa Ms. 2321 (ג'), British Library Add. 27038 (ד'), Bodleian Library Mich. 238 (ה') and Bodleian Library Ms. Opp. Add. Qu. 22 (ו').

<sup>62</sup> Read as א': השבטים.

8. על חמשה א' לעל ה' || היא-21. הדעת ה'- || היא-21. הדעת ג'- || היא-9. ומשלם ד'- || דרך א' - || 9. התורה א'+ היא || 10. שהם א' אשר || והחקים א' והחקים || 11. כאשר א' כפי אשר || 12. פעם-כפוזג ד'- || (להטיב) פעם א' ופעם || נעלמים א' הנעלמים || 13. שמים א' שומים || 14. השבעים א' השבטים || לתלמידים א' לבניו התלמידים || 15. וכל אלה א' וכולן [...] || תהו א' תהו || ואין א' אין || 16. מצוה א' מלה || ומלה א'- || (אם) הם ד' המה || 17. לדברים א' הדברים || 18. לב א' לבי || מפי אב א' אבי || 19. נשמעת א' ד' נשמעת || פירושו א' פירושו || והוא א' ד' הוא || שנטע א' אשר נטע אותו || 20. קדושו א' קדושו || בכחיש א' ד' בכחיש || 21. תורת-נוסף א'- ||

[1v]

או נתקן כי היכולת · על דרך משפט הלשון אשר חקק אדם הראשון  
גם במצות עשה כן · אם הדבר כמשעמנו לדעת לא יתכן · כמו ומלתם  
ערלת לבככם · כי על המצות כתוב אשר יעשה אותם האדם והי  
בהם · ועוד כי ה' צוה שלא לרצוח אחרים · ואיך יצוה לרצוח נפשו  
באזורים גם עת מותו תבא · טרם מולו ערלת לבבו · ואם ישאל  
5 שואל אין יתכן להיות דברים להשמעת אזנים · ולסודות נכבדים ·  
התשובה זאת תפארת דברי אלקים חיים · על כל חכמי הגוים ·  
שחברו ספרים רשומים · והמשיל על פי נוצרים אלמים · ודרכי  
השם בתולדת האדם יורונו דרכים · כי האף שהוא הנחזרים נברא  
10 בעבור ארבעה צריכים · לנשוב הרוח אל מוח הראש ולהוריד ליתחו  
ולהריח בו וליופי תכונתו והנה דרך הגוים מגולה שהם מחוץ לעגלה

1. או-11. לעגלה א'- || לעגלה כי ג' ד' ה' כפי || היכולת ד' היכלת || עשה ג' ד' ה' נעשה || 2. כמשעמנו ג' ד' ה' כמשעמו || ומלתם ג' ד' ה' את || 3. המצות ה' המצוות || 4. ה' ג' ד' ה' השם || נפשו ג' ד' ה' את || 5. מולו ה'+ את || 6. אין ג' ד' ה' אף || 7. הגוים ה' הגוים || 8. המשיל-אלמים ג'- || נוצרים-אלמים ד'- || והמשיל-אלמים ה'- || 9. בתולדת ג' ד' ה' בתולדות || 11. דרך ה' אף || הגוים ה' הגוים ||

The first is the way of the uncircumcised sages, those who maintain that the whole Bible is riddles and allegories. They assert the same for all the things said in the Book of Genesis, all of the commandments and correct principles. Each one as he sees fit and according to the extent of his knowledge, will add or suppress; at times this is beneficial and at times it is harmful. The seven nations symbolize the hidden creatures given a human body; *if a woman conceive* (Le 12:2), her place of worship and the number of unclean days, in his opinion. Additionally, the number of tribes represents the sinful disciples.<sup>63</sup> All of these are chaotic words, *a fleeting vanity* (Pr 21:6), inimitable. The truth is that all the verses, words and terms must be interpreted as they are written when they are not beyond understanding. It is also a fact that there are words

<sup>63</sup> The apostles.



that contain secrets and that they are indeed true metaphors, like the Garden of Eden or the tree of knowledge.

The wisdom of the heart goes hand in hand with the wisdom heard from the father and the clear proof lies in our interpretation, because our God planted inside us a heart and he who denies knowledge denies our senses, because the Torah of our fathers was given to the Sages. If we find something written in the Torah that contradicts reason, we will add or we will correct, depending on the ability of each one and the rules of grammar established by the first man. Likewise with legal obligations if the matter cannot be understood literally, as is the case with *circumcise the foreskin of your heart* (De 10:16); because about the precepts it is written *which if a man does, he shall live in them* (Le 18:5). The evidence of this is that if God commanded not to kill others, so how could He then cruelly command suicide? What is more, death would even reach him earlier for having circumcised the foreskin of his heart.

If someone were to ask, how is it possible that the words that are heard so clearly contain such deep meanings? The answer is, this is the glory of the words of the living God according to all the Gentile sages who wrote important books and the parables by the mouth of those who can compare with mute Christians. The ways used by God for the nature of the human being show the modes of understanding. Because the nose, which are the orifices, was created for four purposes: to breathe the spirit into the brain, to lessen phlegm, to smell and for the beauty of its nature. Thus, the way of the Gentiles becomes evident, it is outside the circle.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The subject of censorship in Hebrew texts has been looked at from many points of view, leading to a diversity of conclusions. However, there is no doubt about the complexity of a phenomenon that involves agents with different motivations and contexts, making censorship not only the result of a clash between two belief systems, but also a patchwork of ways to receive and understand a text. The inclusion of intellectuals like Abraham ibn 'Ezra, Yēhudah ha-Levi, Maimonides, David Qimḥi, Šēlomoh ibn Gabirol and Ibn

Paquda in *Sefer ha-Ziqquq* suggests that the most representative works of the Judeo-Andalusi legacy were actively circulating around Italian Jewish communities and, possibly, amongst Protestant Hebraists; hence, the ideas that challenged Catholicism could at times be seen as an inducement to heresy. In this respect, some academic currents understand censorship as oppressive and restrictive, while at the same time adapting the text for a Christian readership, without creating a conflict with their own doctrine. In other words, the exercise of censorship did not only regulate what texts could or could not be read, but also how they should be read.

Regarding the Second Commentary on Genesis, of the four manuscripts that have been preserved in good condition and with the complete text, only one of them shows no signs of having been censored. Although reconstructing the process of transmission is extremely difficult, the context around the creation of the copies suggests the need for a re-evaluation of the place of commentary within Ibn 'Ezra's oeuvre, as well as its dissemination and reception amongst Christians, Jews and converts after four centuries. Apparently, the fact that it was not compiled along with the commentaries on the rabbinic Bibles did not keep the text from being copied in other codices, accompanied by more important works, until they fell into the hands of some prominent censors. This suggests that if more copies based on the expurgated manuscripts were circulating in Italy, it became impossible to produce copies of the complete commentary found in the Bodleian Library's Mich. 238. Thus, Jewish readers were deprived of one of the most characteristic passages from the introduction, while the text remained available for reading without entailing the risk of heresy for the Church. The questions related to the reception and adaptation of Hebrew works during the Counter-Reformation have been studied, using Raši's commentaries as an example. It would now be of great interest to analyse the other manuscript copies mentioned in the *Index* in order to gain a broader perspective on how the Judeo-Andalusi legacy was received during this period, and the point to which this was influenced by *Sefer ha-Ziqquq*.

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