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## ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

### THE DATE WRITTEN ON SEAL IMPRESSIONS USED IN THE TEMPLE

Avi Shveka

The Mishnah in tractate Sheqalim (5 3-5) describes the procedure for the selling of supplies for sacrifices, which took place in the Temple, using seal impressions that included mention of the date. This article deals with writing the date on those seals, and with the passage in Talmud Yerushalmi associated with it. The author suggests that the use of expensive dated seals was meant to prevent forgery. The main question discussed is what exactly was the form of the date. According to the Yerushalmi, the note on the seals included both a full date – the day of the week, the number of the week in the month, and the month – and the name of the priestly division (*mishmar*) of that week. However, it appears that the assertions of the Yerushalmi about this matter are not based on an authentic tradition, but on theoretical speculations. The Mishnah, read in its own terms, suggests that the date written included only the month and the day in the month. Following this discussion, the author claims that Shlomo Naeh's recent suggestion, that a newly discovered clay seal impression was one of the seals used for trade in the Temple, cannot rely on the Talmudic source. This finding, then, still awaits a satisfactory explanation.

### BERESHIT RESHIT IN GEMATRIA: NEW SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF THE JEWISH ESOTERIC TRADITION IN THE TALMUDIC AND GAONIC PERIODS

Gideon Bohak

The Genizah fragment T-S Misc. 27.4.11, which contains a collection of magical recipes, was edited by Naveh and Shaked. One passage embedded in it is worthy of special attention. It opens with the restrictions on the transmission of the secrets of “Ma’aseh Bereshit” and “Ma’aseh Merkabah” as found in the Mishna, Hagiga 2.1, and moves on to show how the Explicit Name may be derived through gematrias (letter-permutations) of the type ATBASH, ALBAM and AHAS BATA’. This passage is found in other sources as well, and especially in the printed edition of Sefer Raziel and in manuscripts that contain the passages of Sefer Raziel which deal with the Baraita de-Ma’aseh Bereshit. This passage also was known to a Tiberian author of the ninth or tenth centuries, parts of whose Judaeo-Arabic composition on matters of grammar and gematrias is preserved in the Genizah fragment T-S Ar. 44.95. In this composition, our passage is described as a part of the “secret writings of the wise fathers”, i.e., as a part of the ancient rabbinic esoteric tradition. The writer of this composition admits that he did not fully understand our passage, and the same ignorance is admitted in the

printed edition of *Sefer Razi'el*, in Naveh and Shaked's edition, and in the present paper. And yet, the very existence of our passage sheds much light on the rabbinic esoteric tradition in the Talmudic and Gaonic periods, parts of which also reached Europe and influenced the development of the Kabbalah.

TEXTUAL PROBLEMS AND METHODS OF  
INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION IN *HILCHOT RE'U*

Yochanan Breuer

*Hilchot Re'u* is a Hebrew translation of *Halachot Pesuqot*, most of which is written in Babylonian Aramaic, including many citations from the Babylonian Talmud. The present article describes the translator's methods, focusing on instances where the translator deviated from expected procedure. The first part of the article examines errors, some of which were caused by the copyists, while others were mistakes of the translator himself. The second part of the article considers differences between the original and the translation that derive from the translator's methods: idioms are changed into their Hebrew equivalents; the Hebrew word may be an interpretation rather than a translation; and place names may be changed, for certain reasons. In the last instance, the translation contradicts the common understanding, but a careful reading reveals that the translator's understanding is no less plausible than the common one.

YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE SAME AS YOUR ANCESTORS': A RESPONSUM  
FROM THE GENIZA ON THE ADDITIONAL FESTIVAL DAYS IN THE DIASPORA

Mordechai Akiva Friedman

After the calendar was fixed by calculation rather than sightings of the new moon, there was evidently no reason to continue observance of the second day that had been added to the festivals in the Diaspora. The article consists of an edition and study of several pages from a long responsum on the introduction of the added day and its continued observance, written in Judeo-Arabic and preserved in the Geniza (TS 8 G 2 + TS 8 G 7.7). The juriconsult's unique approach required certain historiographical revisions and novel interpretations of sources, and his text of the Babylonian Talmud apparently included otherwise-unattested variants.

In his opinion there had never been any uncertainty in the Diaspora as to the exact day on which the festival was observed in Eretz Israel. The Jews exiled at the time of King Jeconiah instituted the additional day to compensate for their inability to fulfill the festival pilgrimages and participate in the joyous celebrations of the Holy Days in Jerusalem. After the return to Zion under Cyrus the Great, Babylonian Jewry asked the priests and Sanhedrin of Eretz Israel if the second festival day could be discontinued. This suggestion was rejected with the response that even though the return to Zion introduced a new era for the Jews of Eretz Israel, the situation of the Jews who remained in Babylonia had not changed. Consequently,

they were required to continue observance of the added festival day, while its observation in Eretz Israel was prohibited. The responsum provides evidence for the observance of Rosh ha-Shana on one day in Eretz Israel. The author of the responsum was evidently a savant from Eretz Israel and probably a Head of the Palestinian Yeshiva contemporary with Hai Gaon.

### ‘כְּתָב סְתוּי’ AND OTHER POEMS MISATTRIBUTED TO IBN GABIROL

Jonatan Vardi

MS. Berlin 103, a Yemenite manuscript from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, contains hundreds of Hebrew poems written in the Golden Age of Muslim Spain, alongside Hebrew poems from Yemen. Since many of the poems are unattributed in the Manuscript, they require a careful examination of their authorship in comparison to other manuscripts and sources.

A hundred years ago, the scholar J.N. Simchoni recognized few of R. Shelomo Ibn Gabirol's poems in that Manuscript. Hastily generalizing from this discovery, Simchoni suggested that all of the adjacent poems were also written by that poet, and thus attributed to him a group of 14 poems. It was soon discovered, however, that the group contains a poem composed by R. Yehuda Halevi rather than Ibn Gabirol. Nevertheless, Simchoni's suggestion was accepted. All the other 13 poems of the group were included in Bialik and Ravnitzki's edition of Ibn Gabirol's poems. Even the critical edition of Brodi and Schirman, though it omits three poems from the group, includes others without substantial evidence.

This essay reexamines all the poems that Simchoni attributed to Ibn Gabirol and proves that at least two of them – ‘כְּתָב סְתוּי בְּדוֹ מְטָרָיו וּבְרִבְיָיו’ and ‘רוּדֵי אֲשֶׁר לְבִי בְעֵינָיו הַחֲלִיא’ were actually written by R. Shemuel Ha-Nagid. The authorship of some other poems should be declared unknown according to the existing information. In the course of discussion, the essay also addresses textual issue, putting forward new and improved readings of some of the discussed poems.

### NEW FRAGMENTS FROM *SEFER OR ZARU‘A* AND *SEFER HA-NE‘LAM*

Avishai Bar-Asher

The present article describes newly identified fragments that contain further evidence about *Sefer Or Zaru‘a* in its entirety, and *Sefer ha-Ne‘lam*: two anonymous texts recently discovered and attributed to R. Moses de León. One fragment preserves an early proof of *Or Zaru‘a*'s original structure (recently restored), while the other serves as new evidence for identification of *Sefer ha-Ne‘lam*'s. Finally, the two fragments contribute to the textual criticism of these works, and shed new light on their reception history.