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A Commentary on the Book of Daniel. By JEPHET IBN ALI the Karaite.
 Edited and Translated by D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.¹

WE are indebted to the Laudian Professor of Arabic in the University of Oxford, for this excellent contribution to the Literature of the Karaites. Jepheth ben Ali Hallevi flourished in the latter half of the tenth century, and was the author of commentaries on several books of the Bible, and the editor of a ספר המצוות of the Karaites. His ability as a writer has been variously estimated. Graetz speaks of his "Wortschwall und Weitschweifigkeit." Neubauer is inclined to esteem highly his knowledge of Hebrew, and his power as an exegetist. The commentary on Daniel which Professor Margoliouth has edited, gives us the best example we can have of Jepheth's critical and exegetical powers. The text has been most carefully edited by the collation of no fewer than ten MSS., and the translation, though not attempting literalness is very exact and very readable.

The present commentary on Daniel is interesting on account of its historical allusions, of its polemics against "the man of Fayyum," as Saadiah was called by his opponents, and its polemics against Christianity and Islam. The general reader who is acquainted with Gibbon's 52nd chapter, will find references in the commentary to Karmath, to the revolt in Arabia, through which the land which had given birth to an empire, separated herself from the empire she herself had formed. It is interesting to find from one of Margoliouth's notes, how the name Karmath is brought into connection with the Hebrew קרמ and the Arabic Qarmata.

The polemic against Saadiah is a polemic against Rabbinical Judaism. We know how bitterly the controversy was carried on between the upholders of tradition, and the followers of the strict letter of Scripture. אהיכם שונאיכם "Your brothers and your haters," in Isaiah lxvi. 5, was applied by a Karaite commentator to his brethren in race and faith. The same want of self-restraint existed on the side of the Rabbanites. Karaism was a retrogression and not a reform; but irrespectively of the merits of the controversy we must deplore the harsh words, the hatred to which the schism of Anan ben David gave birth. In one passage in the commentary on Daniel, we find, after the name of the man of Fayyum, the word הים. Margoliouth is undoubtedly right in translating this word by "also" in his valuable glossary of curious words, but we should have liked to hope that they were a clerical error for ה"ע, equivalent to the Hebrew ע"ה (Peace be upon him), which Jepheth applied to the names of his Karaite predecessors. We find in this commentary that just as the Rabbanites called the Karaites Sadducees, so the latter called their opponents Pharisees.

The publication of Jepheth ben Ali's commentary is, as I have said, an interesting contribution to the Jewish polemical literature against the two younger religions. Neubauer was of opinion that the older Karaites were more bitter against Islam than against Christianity, but Steinschneider thinks that the evidence does not quite support this view. We know how very fierce the opposition was to Islam. It was Jepheth who scornfully called the Koran קלון (shame,) who spoke of Mohammed the Rasūl

¹ *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, Clarendon Press.

(apostle) of God as Pasul. We forget sometimes that it was the companionship in sorrow after the Spanish persecutions, which made Jews and Moslems more friendly; but we need only turn to the comment of Jepheth on Daniel, cap. xi. verse 27, or remember how the "son of the handmaid" was despised, or recall Jehudah Hallevi's *double entendre* in his well-known Zion dirge *בפי עורבים נשרין* "How can I see thy eagles in the mouth of the Ravens (Arabs)," to understand how little, in spite of the identity of belief in the Unity of God, the religion of "Resignation" was respected by the children of the mistress, how the yoke of the child of the handmaid weighed heavily on their necks. Christianity was not more beloved. Margoliouth quotes a passage from Jepheth's Arabic commentary on Obadiah 3, where the "pride of the heart" of Edom is made to refer to the presumption of Christianity in giving God a son, in inventing the Trinity, in abolishing the law. Neither daughter religion was respected. Were not the worshippers of wood and stone those who bowed before the Cross, or kissed the black stone at Mecca? But the fierceness was not unshared. The followers of Mohammed accused the "Ahl al-Kitab," the "People of the Book," of forgery, of wilful obstinacy, of blindness to the mission of God's beloved servant.

Surely, in one respect at least, the exegesis of our days is to be commended. It is judicial, it is impartial. In the days of orthodox interpretation, the commentator was like an advocate holding a brief for his religious party. "Shiloh," Jews have held to mean the Messiah; Christians have referred it to Jesus; Moslems to the "Apostle of God." So again the difficult verses in Psalm ii. are referred to the future deliverer of Israel, the founder of Christianity, or Mohammed according to the religion of the commentator. Modern exegesis at least endeavours to discover what the writer of the inspired record really meant. It is not perpetually working up evidence to gain a case and defeat an opponent.

Jepheth ben Ali is well known to the students of Ibn Ezra. Ibn Ezra quotes him at least seven times in his commentary on Daniel, and with respect to Jepheth's comment on vii. 4, "he was made to stand like a man," Ibn Ezra adds *יפה פירש*, "he has explained beautifully." Ibn Ezra seems to quote Jepheth here from memory. The quotation agrees with the original in sense only, but the quotation on viii. 2, as given by Ibn Ezra, agrees exactly with the original, even Jepheth's reference to Jeremiah xvii. 8 is given. Possibly Professor Margoliouth overlooked this reference in Ibn Ezra, when he says that the quotations do not correspond with the Arabic originals. They do not as a rule, but this is a notable exception.

For an instance of a most bizarre interpretation it is interesting to turn to Jepheth's comment on ix. 25, where *ביצוק העתים* is translated "the dough of the times." Margoliouth notices too how he takes *הברתו*, in Isaiah liii. 5, as connected with *הבר* an associate, and *ענות*, in Psalm xxii. 25, as being derived from *ענה* to answer; but he quotes with approval Jepheth's grammatical explanation in his commentary on Exodus for the pointing of such a word as *יכלת* "thou art able." I may add that Ibn Ezra quotes with disapproval many opinions of Jepheth, e.g., that on the last verse of Psalm xi. But we must remember Pinsker's suggestion (*Likkhutê Kadmoniyot*, p. 184), that there is more than one Jepheth referred to by Ibn Ezra.

In the comment on chap. xi. 1, Jepheth gives us an illustration of his philosophical opinions. He removes the anthropomorphism in such sentences as "God descended," by supposing the ellipsis of a word, e.g.,

the "Angel of God," "the glory of God," "the Apostle of God." He removes the difficulty in sentences like "God repented," "God was angry," by explaining the predicates. Speaking of a similar method of interpretation to the former in the case of the Karaite Benjamin Nahavendi, who flourished in the early part of the ninth century, Graetz says, "Nach acht Jahrhunderten feierte Philo's Logos in Nahavendi's Engel seine Auferstehung."

In conclusion, let us again congratulate Prof. Margoliouth upon his contribution to Semitic and Karaitic literature. The present number of the *Anecdota Oxoniensia* is a worthy sequel to Dr. Neubauer's *Mediaeval Chronicles*."

LAWRENCE M. SIMMONS.

Rabbi Meir and "Cleopatra."—(See JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, I. 336, note 1). How to explain the anachronism of Rabbi Meir, who lived in the second century, holding a conversation with the Queen Cleopatra on the subject of the Resurrection (*Sanhedrin*, 90*b*), I have already suggested in the *Revue des Études Juives*, V., 185 (compare *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, Vol. II., page 68). The words מלכותא קלפטרע are a corruption of פטריקא רכותא, Patriarch of the Cuthæans, *i.e.*, of the Samaritans. In *Genesis Rabbah* (ch. 4, 70, 94), polemical dialogues between R. Meir and Samaritans are recorded; in *Kohleth Rabbah*, 5, 10, a conversation occurs between R. Meir and a Samaritan on the very subject of the resurrection of the dead. In one of these conversations the "Patriarch of the Samaritans" is mentioned; the Samaritan, to whom Meir had demonstrated that he was not a descendant of Joseph, goes to complain on the subject, לנבי אפטוריקי דיריהון, that is to say, to their Patriarch.

W. BACHER.

Translation of the Talmud in England in 1568?—The library of the late Dr. Lœwe contains so many invaluable treasures of Oriental literature, that a full description of them would fill a small volume. As is well known, Dr. Lœwe himself was an Oriental student of a very high rank, but the fact that he was the friend and confidant of Sir Moses Montefiore, whom he accompanied through his travels in the East, gave him also the opportunity of collecting many rare books and manuscripts, which any great library would be proud to possess. I shall here only draw the attention of the reader to a work seemingly insignificant, but, nevertheless, of great interest both to the bibliographer and the historian. The title of this work is להם הפנים, containing a translation of certain parts of the *Shulchan Aruch* into the Spanish-Jewish dialect (Ladino) by one Meir. It was published in the printing offices of Joseph Jabez, at Salonica, in the year 1568, and re-published in Italy during the seventeenth century. (See Steinschneider's Catalogue, col. 1687). Hitherto the Salonica edition was known only through one copy in the possession of the British Museum, and it is