

A JEWISH THEORY OF BIBLICAL REDACTION FROM BYZANTIUM: ITS RABBINIC ROOTS, ITS DIFFUSION AND ITS ENCOUNTER WITH THE MUSLIM DOCTRINE OF FALSIFICATION*

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לידידי היקר ישראל תא-שמע: יאריך ה' את ימיו ויסיר ממנו כל מחלה וירפא לכל גופו
וישלח ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשה ידיו עם כל ישראל אחיו

During the past decade, it has become clear that the standard account of the rise of medieval Jewish biblical exegesis is incomplete, because it does not reckon with the contribution of the Jews of Byzantium. Nicholas de Lange has made it possible to study this contribution by publishing a number of fragmentary biblical commentaries from the Cairo Genizah, some Rabbanite and some Karaite.¹ The two Rabbanite commentaries—the Commentary on Genesis and Exodus

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¹ See Nicholas de Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Tübingen, 1996). See also I. M. Ta-Shma, סביב, פרשנות מקרא עברית-ביזנטית קדומה, *Tarbiz* 69 (2000) 247-256 and my בחינות לשון בפירוש ליהזקאל, מן הגניזה, *Lešonenu* 59 (1995-1996) 39-56; “Textual and Exegetical Notes to Nicholas de Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah*,” *JQR* 89 (1998) 155-169; and “The Byzantine Biblical Commentaries from the Genizah: Rabbanite vs. Karaite,” forthcoming.

(de Lange's "Scholia on the Pentateuch") and Reuel's commentary on Ezekiel and Minor Prophets—seem at first glance to have little in common beyond Greek glosses and an early date.² The latter is a *peshat*, commentary, while the former is heavily influenced by Rabbinic midrash. However, closer examination reveals that they have one striking characteristic in common: both mention the editor of the biblical book upon which they are commenting.³ In part 1 of this article, I shall attempt to show that the Byzantine Rabbanites had a rudimentary theory concerning the work of these editors, a theory which was rooted in Palestinian sources (especially *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*) and which spread to Germany and Northern France. In part 2, I shall deal with Provence and Spain, arguing that the theory was transformed in the former but rejected in the latter under the pressure of Muslim polemics.

1. Palestine, Byzantium, Germany and Northern France

For the purposes of this discussion, I shall define a biblical editor as one who produces a biblical book mainly from a preexisting source or sources, whether written or oral, whether originating from a prophet or not.⁴ Reuel uses the term סדרן to refer to such an editor, and he attributes three anomalies in the Book of Ezekiel to him. In treating two of them, Reuel presents the *sadran* as editing a single source; in dealing with the third, he portrays him as dealing with multiple, divergent sources. We shall discuss these two activities separately.

² An expert paleographer who glanced at photographs of the Commentary on Genesis and Exodus thinks that the manuscript predates Rashi, but this will have to be studied further. The fragments that contain Reuel's commentary have been dated by experts to the tenth (or early eleventh) century on both codicological and paleographic grounds; see my *בחינוח לשון*, 40.

³ This subject is discussed briefly in my *בחינוח לשון*, 51-54, and in *Ta-Shma*, פרשנות מקרא, 250.

⁴ This definition includes many types of editors, e.g., the text critic, the compiler, and even the author who incorporates large amounts of archival material, etc. into his work. We shall call an editor of the last type an "author-editor." Whether or not U. Simon's "author-narrator" (see below) was viewed as an author-editor in the Middle Ages depends on the book and perhaps on the exegete, as well. Both Judges and Ezra have an author-narrator, but medieval exegetes were probably less likely to view him as an author-editor in the case of Judges. It should be noted, however, that medieval exegetes frequently use the same term for authors and editors. We shall, therefore, include the author-narrator in our discussions of terminology.

Editing a single source

An important task of the *sadran* was to regulate the flow of information to the audience, to decide on the order of presentation. A *sadran* working with a preexisting text might attempt to clarify it by inserting information that would be helpful to the reader at a given point. Reuel assumes that this information was already present in the text, and that the *sadran* merely repeated it at an earlier point for the reader's convenience, in anticipation of a question.

One such comment is found at Ezek 8:5: סמל הקנא (אה) הזה בביאה. מן "that image of zeal in the approach—From here the *sadran* learned of it and mentioned it above." Reuel's concern is the relative clause in 8:3: אשר שם מושב סמל הקנאה המקנה. He feels that that relative clause was not in the *sadran*'s source but was added by him based on the information given two verses later. A similar comment is found at Ezek 10:8: מיכן למדם בטוב היאך היו ואמרם "from here he (the *sadran*) learned well what they (the cherubs) were like, and mentioned them above." Although the *sadran* is not actually mentioned here, the language of this comment is so similar to the first that there can be little doubt about the subject of this sentence. Here again, Reuel feels that the detailed description of the cherubs in 1:8-21 was not written by Ezekiel but was added by the *sadran*, apparently for the benefit of the curious reader, based on the information given in 10:8-17. Reuel's view, then, is that the author of Ezekiel left temporary lacunae in the reader's knowledge and that the *sadran* filled them with information found later in the book.

The problem in Ezek 8:5 that Reuel hopes to solve by this strategy appears to be literary in nature. How is it possible for Ezekiel to describe the location of a gate in terms of the location of the סמל הקנאה when the latter is introduced only later, in verse 5 (והנה מצפון לשער) "and lo" in that verse indicates that this was a *new* sight for Ezekiel;⁵ hence, in

⁵ Cf. Rashbam to Gen 29:25: "והנה היא לאה—בדבר שלא נודע תחילה אומר 'והנה'." "and lo, it was Leah—For a thing not known previously it says 'and lo.' So too 'and lo, it was a dream'"; and ספר תוספות השלם, ed. J. Gellis (Jerusalem, 1982-) 3. 41 to Gen 26:8: "והנה 'הנה' הוא—כל מקום שנאמר 'הנה' הוא 'והנה הוא יוצא לקראתך and lo, Isaac was dallying—Wherever it says 'lo,' it is a thing (someone) did not know before, like 'and lo, it was Leah,' and 'and lo, he is coming towards you' (Exod 4:14)"; *ibid.*, 3. 129 to Gen 29:2: "והנה באר—כל מקום שנאמר 'הנה' לא ידע הדבר עד עתה כמו 'and lo, a well—Wherever it says 'lo,' (someone) did not know the thing until now, like 'in the morning, lo, it was Leah.'"

Reuel's view, Ezekiel could not have used it as a known reference point in a relative clause two verses *earlier*. It must be an editorial interpolation into Ezekiel's first-person narrative.

Reuel's difficulty with Ezek 10:8ff is, at least in part, its redundancy: it parallels the detailed description of the cherubs in 1:8ff. This is not the only place that Reuel and other medieval exegetes invoke the *sadran* to account for redundancy in the Bible, but, as we shall see below, it was more common to assume in such cases that the *sadran* was working with *two* sources.

Another Byzantine, R. Tobiah b. Eliezer of Castoria, invokes the *sadran* in his *Midrash Leqah Tov* (c. 1100) when faced with a literary problem at Gen 42:34:

והביאו את אחיכם הקטן וגו' ואת הארץ תסחרו. ללמדך שיש לדרוש להוסיף על דברי האגדה בכל מקום, לפי שהסדרן מקצר הענין, שהרי לא אמר למעלה ואת הארץ תסחרו, והם סיפרו לאביהם ואת הארץ תסחרו.⁶

And bring your youngest brother to me ... and you shall traffic in the land. (This is) to teach you that it is necessary to expound (and) to add to the narrative⁷ in every place, since the *sadran* abbreviates, for he (Joseph) did not say above (in the *sadran*'s narrative) "and you shall traffic in the land" and (yet) they reported to their father (that he said) "and you shall traffic in the land."

Here too the *sadran*, presumably Moses, regulates the flow of information, deciding whether or not to provide the reader with information now that will not be needed until later (when the time comes to persuade Jacob). In this case, the decision is negative. He abbreviates (מקצר הענין); he leaves a temporary lacuna in the reader's knowledge by failing to provide a full report of an event or

⁶ Tobiah b. Eliezer, מדרש לקח טוב, ed. S. Buber (Vilna, 1880) 1. 210-211. I am indebted to Ta-Shma for calling this source to my attention. Another Byzantine usage shared by Reuel and Tobiah is משמשין in the sense of "are used interchangeably." Buber's introduction (p. 30) lists many occurrences, e.g., ע' and ה' are used interchangeably as (in the expression) חשקה לי (Isa 38:14), whose interpretation is חשקה "desire." Reuel writes: ה' כ' משמשין כמו שתאמ' והיה כעם ככהן. ופתרון[גו] הכהן עשקה (like people, like priest, whose interpretation is 'like the people is the priest'; see my "Textual and Exegetical Notes," 161.

⁷ The expression האגדה is equivalent to ההגדה.

conversation at the point of its occurrence in the story. He assumes that the reader will be prepared to deduce the missing details later, from subsequent events, and not be puzzled by the discrepancies.

R. Tobiah's *sadran*, unlike Reuel's, does not feel that it is his job to pamper the reader. He leaves lacunae for the reader to fill with the assistance of the *darshan/parshan*. He creates "discontinuities between the order of narration and the order of occurrence," to use M. Sternberg's phrase.⁸ The term סדרן could not be more appropriate. As for R. Tobiah's *darshan/parshan*, he employs the exegetical technique described as דבר שאינו מתפרש במקומו ומתפרש במקום אחר "a thing not clearly expressed in its place but clearly expressed in another place" in *Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer*, even if the latter work gives examples that cannot be attributed to a single *sadran* (e.g., Chronicles filling a lacuna in the Torah).⁹

R. Menahem b. Solomon invokes the *sadran* in five places in his *Midrash Sekhel Tov* (1139).¹⁰ In two of these places, his *sadran* is an author-narrator: ויקץ פרעה—זה סיפור הסדרן "and Pharaoh awoke—this is the narration of the *sadran*" (Gen 41:4) and עד היום הזה—אלו דברי הסדרן "to this day—these are the words of the *sadran*" (Gen 47:26). In the others, he is an editor. In telling the story of Isaac's wells, the *sadran*, in accordance with the principle of אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה "there is no chronological ordering (lit., early and late) in the Torah,"¹¹ decides not to interrupt the flow of the narrative with dialogue: סיים סדר הבארות "he finishes the entire series of wells and (only) then makes a (fresh) start, setting forth the words of Abimelech" (Gen 26:32). In dealing with the eight kings of Edom who preceded Saul, the *sadran* is guided by considerations of a theological nature. Instead of mentioning each Edomite king in his proper place in the historical narrative of the Israelites, he decides to gather all of them together in one place in order to dispose of them quickly: וכתבם "the *sadran* put them together in order to finish off the matter of the straw and stubble, removing them from the grain" (Gen 36:31). Thus, the *sadran* had a good reason for creating this puzzling anachronism. The fifth reference to the *sadran* in *Midrash Sekhel Tov* is from *Midrash Leqah*

⁸ M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN, 1985) 237.

⁹ משנת רבי אליעזר או מדרש שלשים ושנים מדות, ed. H. G. Enelow (New York, 1933) 30.

¹⁰ Menahem b. Solomon, מדרש שכל טוב, ed. S. Buber (Berlin, 1900).

¹¹ In his words: לא שייך מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה.

Tov, but its formulation makes the relationship of the *darshan/parshan* to the *sadran* a bit clearer: מיכן שיש רשות לגיבורי כח לדרוש ולהוסיף על דברי הגדת העניין בכל מקום לפי כחן, כי דרך הסדרן לקצר הענין ובא במקום אחד ושונה "From here (we learn) that the mighty (*darshanim/parshanim*) have license to expound and to add to the words of narrative in every place, since the practice of the *sadran* is to abbreviate and then, in another place, to repeat and add new things" (Gen 42:34). To R. Menahem, evidence that biblical dialogue has been abbreviated by the *sadran* justifies the midrashic practice of putting words into the mouths of biblical protagonists. Indeed, *Midrash Sekhel Tov* includes dozens of examples of this practice, introduced by the words אמר/אמרה/אמרו.

Another medieval author who attributes abbreviatory activity to a *sadran* is Zedekiah b. Abraham Anau of Rome. In his *Shibbolei ha-Leqet* (c. 1250), he argues that the *sadran* of the Passover Haggadah did not do violence to the biblical text when he made בעבור זה עשה ה' לי (Exod 13:8) the answer to the wicked son's question, מה העבודה הזאת לכם (Exod 12:26). In fact, he says, the answer to the wicked son has two parts, tied together by the phrase העבודה הזאת and the resumptive introduction והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר (Exod 13:8). The first part is זבה פסח הוא לה' וגו' (Exod 12:26), but since that part is irrelevant to the character of the wicked son, the *sadran* decided to omit it:

ולא הוצרך הסדרן לכתוב בשאלת הבן הרשע "ואמרתם זבה פסח" שאין בזה תשובה כנגד רשעו, לפיכך קיצר בלשונו וכתב בעבור זה עשה ה' לי, לי ולא לו, ודיו.¹²

The *sadran* did not need to write, in (the answer to) the question of the wicked son, "You shall say 'it is the passover sacrifice'" (Exod 12:26), because this contains no response appropriate to his wickedness. Therefore, he abbreviated its/his language and wrote (only), "Because of this, the Lord acted on my behalf" (Exod 13:8)—on my behalf and not on his behalf," and that was sufficient.

In this case, unlike the others we have considered, we actually possess the preexisting text used by the *sadran*; it is the biblical text itself.

¹² Zedekiah b. Abraham Anau, שבלי הלקט השלם, ed. S. Buber (Vilna, 1886) 189.

Northern French exegetes, too, mention biblical editors on occasion.¹³ Rashbam refers to them in his commentary to Ecclesiastes, at the beginning (1:2) and the end (12:8):¹⁴

שתי מקראות הללו. דברי קהלת. הבל הבלים. לא אמרן קהלת כי אם אותו שסידר הדברים כמות שהן.

These two verses, “The words of Koheleth” and “Vanity of vanities” were composed not by Koheleth but by the one who put the words into their current order.

הבל הבלים. עכשיו נשלם הספר. ואותן אשר סידרוהו אמרו מיכאן ולהבא. לומ' כל דברי העולם הנוהגין בו הבל הבלים אמר [ה]קוהלת.

Vanity of vanities—Now the book is completed. Those that edited it composed (what comes) from here on, saying: “Everything that goes on in the world is vanity of vanities, said Koheleth.”

Similarly, R. Eliezer of Beaugency finds an editorial interpolation at the beginning of Ezekiel:

ואראה מראות א-להים (...) והנה רוח סערה—לא היו דברי יחזקאל מתחלתן יותר ואף שמו לא פירש, לפי שענין ספרו יפרשנו למטה, כגון "והיה יחזקאל לכם למופת", ועל זה סמך לקצר ... אבל הסופר שכתב כל דבריו יחד הוסיף לפרש מה שסתם וקיצר בשני מקראות הללו.

“I saw visions of God (...) and lo, a stormy wind” (1:1, 4)—This is all Ezekiel said originally; he did not even give his name, since it is mentioned in the body of the work below, viz. “Ezekiel shall be a portent for you” (24:24), and he relied on this (later mention) in abbreviating (at the beginning)... But the scribe who put all of his words together went on to make explicit in these two verses (1:2-3) what he left unsaid and abbreviated.

¹³ See R. Harris, מודעות לעריכת המקרא אצל פרשני צפון צרפת, *Shnaton* 12 (2000) 289-310.

¹⁴ See S. Japhet and R. B. Salters, *The Commentary of R. Samuel Ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth* (Jerusalem-Leiden, 1985) 93, 213 and the discussion on pp. 34-35.

Here too we see an editor involved in regulating the flow of information, an editor who, like Reuel's *sadran*, is not satisfied with the presentation of the original author, Ezekiel. The latter, like the *Leqah Tov's sadran*, leaves a temporary lacuna, relying on the reader to fill it in later. The editor, who feels that the name of a prophetic author is not a candidate for gapping, overrules the author's decision. However, instead of supplying the missing information in a heading before Ezekiel's opening sentence, the editor inserts it in the middle of that sentence. Since his insertion breaks the nexus between *והנה* and the verb that governs it, *ואראה*,¹⁵ he is obliged to insert an additional word, *וארא*, at the beginning of verse 4, as a resumptive repetition.

R. Eliezer's analysis builds on the work of Rashi. Rashi had demonstrated that verses 2-3 "are not the words of Ezekiel," and he had attributed them to *רוה הקדש*. Was Rashi using that traditional term¹⁶ to refer to a divinely inspired scribe—one of the men of the Great Assembly who "wrote" the Book of Ezekiel according to b. B. Bat. 15a?¹⁷ If so, the difference between Rashi and Eliezer of Beaugency is mainly terminological; however, this is not certain. In a more general sense, R. Eliezer may be following in the footsteps of Rashbam. According to the latter, Moses did not leave temporary lacunae in narratives; his practice was to provide all necessary information in advance.¹⁸ Thus, in the view of Rashbam, Moses felt

¹⁵ Cf. Gen 41:22, Ezek 1:15, etc.

¹⁶ *רוה הקדש* is the earliest term for the biblical narrator, appearing already in *m. Sot.* 9:6. The biblical passage in question is Deut 21:7-8: *וענו ואמרו ידינו לא שפכה את הדם הזה ועינינו לא ראו. כפר לעמך ישראל אשר פדית ה' ואל תתן דם נקי בקרב עמך לא היו צריכים לומר "ונכפר" ישראל ונכפר להם הדם*. On this the Mishnah comments: *"ונכפר" לא היו צריכים לומר "ונכפר" להם הדם*. "They were not supposed to say, 'and they will be absolved of the bloodguilt'; rather the Holy Spirit informs them: 'When you do this, you will be absolved of the bloodguilt.'" See also *t. Sot.* 9:2-9, discussed by U. Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms: From Saadiah Gaon to Abraham Ibn Ezra* (Albany, 1991) 108 n. 75. Rashi continues this tradition in his commentaries to Gen 2:24, 37:22 and Ezek 1:1 but not Judg 5:31, where he uses the term *כותב הספר*.

¹⁷ According to Rashi's Talmud commentary *ad loc.*, among the men of the Great Assembly who wrote the Book of Ezekiel there were prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, etc. Ezekiel did not write down his own prophecies because he was in exile.

¹⁸ See the appendix entitled "literary anticipation" in M. I. Lockshin, *Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir's Commentary on Genesis* (Lewiston, NY, 1989) 400-421 and the literature (medieval and modern) cited there. In several places in his Torah commentary (e.g., Gen 1:5, 37:2, Deut 2:5), Rashbam attributes the

that a person trying to understand why Noah cursed Canaan (Gen 9:25-27) should not have to wait until Gen 10:6 to find out the relationship between Canaan and Ham, and so he supplied that information at 9:18 (and 9:22). Similarly, in the view of R. Eliezer, the scribe who put all of Ezekiel's words together felt that the reader of the book should not have to wait until 24:24 to find out the identity of the author. Of course, the cases are different in many ways, but there is enough similarity between them to suggest that R. Eliezer may have been inspired by Rashbam.

It is also worth noting that one anonymous early French exegete refers to Ezra's role as editor of the Bible in explaining how a poem about Babylon (Psa 137 על נהרות בבל) came to be included in a collection of David's psalms:

נראה ... שלא אמרו דוד, כי אם, בבית שני כשגלו לבבל, אמרו ירמיה. וכשעלה עזרא מבבל וכתב כל הספרים, כתב גם זה הספר, והוסיף זה שאמ' ירמיה ... זכור ה' לבני אדום—ירמיה הנביא היה תובע עלבוננו לפני הק' מאדום, ששמחו על מפלתן של ישראל. ובזה תוכל להבין שירמ' אמ' על נהרות בבל, שהרי מעניין אילו דברים אמר באיכה, שנא' שישי ושמחי בת אדום גם עליך תעבור כוס וגו' ... עד כאן דבר ירמיה ועזרא כתבו בספר תהלים ומסרו ללויים לשורר בבית שני.¹⁹

It appears ... that David did not compose it (Psa 137), but rather Jeremiah composed it in the Second Temple period (sic) when they were exiled to Babylonia. And when Ezra went up (to the Land of Israel) from Babylonia and wrote (=edited) all of the (biblical) books, he wrote this book as well and added this (work) that Jeremiah composed ... “Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites” (Psa 137:7)—Jeremiah the prophet brought a claim before the Lord against the Edomites, who rejoiced over Israel's downfall. And from this you can see that Jeremiah composed “By the Rivers of Babylon,” since in Lamentations (4:21) he says something similar: “Rejoice and exult, Daughter of Edom ... to you too the cup shall pass, etc.” ... Up to here (is what) Jeremiah composed, and Ezra wrote it into the Book of Psalms, and handed it over to the Levites to sing in the Second Temple.

practice to Moses.

¹⁹ I. M. Ta-Shma, *המקרא בראי in משהו על ביקורת המקרא באשכנז בימי-הביניים*, ed. S. Japhet (Jerusalem, 1994) 457-459. ספר זיכרון לשרה קמין

Let us now examine more closely the terminology employed in Northern France and Germany. In Rashbam's comment to Eccl 12:8, we find the verb סדר with a book as its object. Something similar is found in R. Joseph Bekhor Shor's description of Moses' activity:

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל—סמוך למיתתו סידר להם את התורה ... ולכך מנה אותם מקומות שנתנה בהם תורה שהוא רוצה לסדר, כי תורה מקומות מקומות נתנה.

These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel—Right before his death he edited the Torah for them ... and for that reason he lists those places in which the Torah that he wishes to edit was given, for the Torah was given (piecemeal) at one place after another.²⁰

And R. Judah b. Kalonymus of Speyer, in his encyclopedia of *tannaim* and *amoraim*, refers to himself as הסודר.²¹

One could argue that this literary use of סדר, attested also in works of Moses Qimhi and Abarbanel,²² does not represent any semantic change (being nothing more than an application of the verb to the arranging of books), but it seems more likely that we have here a new meaning, “to edit.” As noted by Y. Elman, this meaning appears to be unknown before the Middle Ages:

The verb *sadder*, “to arrange,” which in medieval times came to be used in the sense of “to edit,” is in classical Rabbinic literature ... employed in regard to ritual order, including the “arranging” and *recitation* of passages of the Pentateuch or of Rabbinic texts. This meaning seems to be the import of the oft-cited self-description of the fourth-generation Amora, R. Nahman b. Yitzhak, as a *sadrana*, an “arranger” (Pesahim

²⁰ Harris, מודעות, 303. To Harris' discussion, we may add that the expression תורה מגילה מגילה נתנה alludes to the view that תורה מגילה נתנה “the Torah was given one scroll at a time” (b. Git. 60a) and, thus, that Moses had to compile the material revealed at each place. Note, however, that the terms used by Bekhor Shor for the author-narrator are בעל הספר (at Gen 32:21 and 35:20) and הכותב (at Gen 1:26, unless this is a later insertion) rather than מסדר or the like; Harris, מודעות, 303-304.

²¹ See the introduction to Judah b. Kalonymus, יחוסי תנאים ואמוראים, ed. J. L. Fishman Maimon (Jerusalem, 1963) 7-8. I am indebted to H. Soloveitchik for this reference.

²² See below.

108b)—“I am not a sage (*hakima*) not a prophet (*hoza'a*) but a transmitter (*gamrana*) and an arranger (*sadrana*) [of traditions].” Despite various attempts, this statement does not refer to any large-scale arranging or editing, or even small-scale editing in written form....

When the term *sadder* is employed in regard to texts, as opposed to material objects (ritual objects, beams, and so on), it refers to oral recitation or, in the case of schoolchildren, the reading of those texts that was carried out “in the presence of” a teacher or other authority....

While both terms, *sadder* and *'arakh*, eventually came to include various nuances of editing, this development did not take place until the medieval period.²³

It is therefore possible that the use of the verb סדר in the sense of “edit” is a Byzantine innovation,²⁴ just as the use of the noun סדרן in the sense of “editor” is a Byzantine innovation.²⁵ If so, the use of this term would be evidence of Byzantine influence, direct or indirect. Thus, Rashbam’s phrase אותו שסידר הדברים כמות שהן may well be a paraphrase of the term סדרן. He may have encountered that term in *Midrash Leqah Tov* and/or *Midrash Sekhel Tov*.²⁶ Rashbam, in turn,

²³ Y. Elman, “Orality and the Redaction of the Babylonian Talmud,” *Oral Tradition* 14 (1999) 66-67. See also S. Z. Havlin, על 'החתימה הספרותית' כיסוד מחקרים בספרות התלמודית: יום עיון לרגל מלאת שמונים שנה in החלוקה לתקופות בהלכה לשאול ליברמן (I am indebted to A. Koller for the former reference and to L. Moscovitz for the latter.) The use of סדר in the sense of “edit” must be distinguished from an earlier literary sense of סדר. Thus, the Palestinian Talmud (y. Meg. 1.1, 70b; y. Pes. 4.1, 30d) attributes a halachic decision to מי שסידר את רחום בעל טעם—רחום היה; here the meaning of the verb seems closer to “compose” than to “edit.” This use may go back ultimately to BH expressions like ערך מלין (Job 32:14) and ערך משפט (Job 13:18). So too the examples cited by G. Brin (חיבור פרשיות מן) (*Bet Mikra* 171 [2002] 312-313 n. 16) from the commentary to Ezra (4:8) attributed to Rashi: רחום ובעל דברים לסדר המכתב: ושמי ספרא—... וכן דרך המקרא להזכיר סופר ומזכיר שניהם ביחד לפי שהם זקוקים זה לזה הא' מסדר ומזכירו והסופר כותב.... כתבו אגרא—הללו שניהם רחום ושמי האגרת כאשר צוה אליהם מתרדת וטבאל (צ"ל טבאל)... Rehum and Shimshai are not the editor and author, respectively. Rehum is the chancellor who composes the letter (based on the instructions of his superior) and dictates it to Shimshai.

²⁴ Ta-Shma compares Galilean Aramaic סדר, which sometimes has the meaning “gather”; see his פרשנות מקרא, 250 and the source cited there in n. 9.

²⁵ See my בהינות לשון, 51-54.

²⁶ Rashbam cites the former by name at Gen 41:10. According to Buber

may be responsible in part for Bekhor Shor's use of the verb סדר in the sense of "edit." Indirect Byzantine influence cannot be automatically assumed for authors such as Eliezer of Beaugency who speak of editorial interpolations without using this term. On the other hand, Eliezer of Beaugency's connections to Rashbam are well known.²⁷ It is thus possible that Eliezer too should be viewed as a link in a chain of tradition going back to the Byzantines.

Before concluding this section, we should note that the *sadran* of the Rabbanites has a partial parallel in the *mudawwin* posited by the Karaite Yefet b. Eli.²⁸ The Arabic term *mudawwin* refers to a person who collects the writings (especially the poems) of a single author (into a *divan*). In Psalms and Ecclesiastes, Yefet's *mudawwin* has the "function ... of an editor, collecting and classifying the material, arranging it and adding on his own headings and colophons."²⁹ In Hosea, the *mudawwin* is a "compiler-editor ... responsible for the selection process in which some prophecies were put down in writing and recorded ... while others were left out."³⁰ In addition to selection of the material, he is also responsible for "its internal arrangement, and the placing of the book within a wider collection."³¹ In the historical books, the *mudawwin* is "an author-narrator, responsible for everything that is not the direct speech of one of the characters, and

(introduction to *מדרש לקח טוב*, 30), there is another citation at Gen 36:12, but if so, Rashbam had a different version than we do; see my "Textual and Exegetical Notes," 157 n. 10. For evidence that he used *Midrash Sekhel Tov* as well, see M. Lockshin, זיקת פירוש הרשב"ם לתורה אל מדרש שכל טוב, *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Division A, Hebrew section (Jerusalem, 1994) 135-142. Little is known about the author of this work, R. Menaḥem b. Solomon, and I am not assuming that he was a Byzantine. However, he was strongly influenced by *Midrash Leqah Tov*; see Buber's introduction to *מדרש שכל טוב* 1. XXXIII and Lockshin, זיקת פירוש הרשב"ם, 135. As such he was a conduit of Byzantine influence.

²⁷ S. Poznański, *Kommentar zu Ezechiel und den XII kleinen Propheten von Eliezer au Beaugency* (Warsaw, 1913) cxxix, cxxxv-cxxxvi.

²⁸ I am indebted to H. Ben-Shammai for calling this to my attention and for directing me to Simon's discussion.

²⁹ Simon, *Four Approaches*, 91.

³⁰ M. Polliack and E. Schlossberg, "Historical-Literary, Rhetorical and Redactional Methods of Interpretation in Yefet ben 'Eli's Introduction to the Minor Prophets," in *Exegesis and Grammar in Medieval Karaite Texts*, ed. G. Khan (Oxford, 2001) 29. I am indebted to A. Koller for this reference.

³¹ Polliack and Schlossberg, "Methods of Interpretation," 28.

for even more than that.”³² Like the *sadran* of *Midrash Leqah Tov*, Yefet’s *mudawwin* leaves temporary lacunae on occasion: “The *mudawwin* did not relate Joab’s words to the Tekoite woman in full, relying on the woman’s account to the king....”³³

Editing divergent sources

The second role which Reuel assigns to the *sadran* is of exceptional importance for locating him in the history of biblical exegesis. It can be seen in his comment to Ezek 35:6:

ב' ספרים [מ]צא הסדרן. אחד היה כתוב לכן חי אני כי לדם אעשך (שך) ודם ירדפך (ך). ובספר האחר [ה]יה כתוב (וב) לכן חי אני נאם יי א-לים אם לא דם שנא (ת) ודם ירדפך.³⁴

The *sadran* found two manuscripts. In one was written: “Therefore, as I live, I shall give you over to blood and blood shall pursue you”; and in the other manuscript was written: “Therefore, as I live, says the Lord God, surely blood you hate and blood shall pursue you.”

Here the editor of Ezekiel is portrayed as working from two manuscripts which have different versions of the same sentence. The editor decides to preserve both of them, creating what S. Talmon has called conflate readings or double readings.³⁵ These double readings are quite apparent in Ezek 35:6: כי לדם אעשך ודם ירדפך אם לא דם שנא (ך) ודם ירדפך. There are two occurrences of the phrase ודם ירדפך in this oath, each introduced by its own oath particle.³⁶ A modern textual critic would stress the fact that the Septuagint doesn’t have the repetition, but there is no evidence that Reuel was aware of that.

Reuel’s approach in this second example has deep roots in Palestinian rabbinic sources. The most important source is a well-known *baraita* in the Palestinian Talmud (y. Taan. 4.2, 68a):

³² Simon, *Four Approaches*, 91.

³³ Simon, *Four Approaches*, 92. Note the expression “rely on,” used also by R. Eliezer of Beaugency in the passage cited above.

³⁴ De Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts*, 227 (15a fragment i, verso 62-64), Ezek 35:6.

³⁵ See S. Talmon, “Double Readings in the Massoretic Text,” *Textus* 1 (1960) 144-184; *idem*, “Conflate Readings (OT),” *IDB Supplement*, 170-173.

³⁶ Abarbanel noticed this problem too and attempted to solve it by portraying the second half as the core of the oath (עיקר השבועה), and the first half as merely a statement (כמדבר עמו).

ג' ספרים מצאו בעזרה באחד מצאו כתוב ... ובשנים כתוב ... וקיימו שנים
וביטלו אחד.

They found three manuscripts in the Temple court: in one was written ... and in two was written.... They accepted the (reading of the) two and rejected the (reading of the) single one.

The *baraita* occurs in other rabbinic sources, including *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* (version B, chap. 46):

ג' ספרים נמצאו בעזרה ... בטלו את האחד וקיימו את השנים....

Three manuscripts were found in the Temple court ... They rejected the (reading of the) single one and accepted the (reading of the) two....

The versions of the *Sifre* and *Masekhet Soferim* also begin ג' ספרים
נמצאו בעזרה.³⁷

In the standard versions of this *baraita*, quoted above, there is no hint as to the identity of the editors; however, Ta-Shma has found citations with עזרא instead of בעזרה.³⁸ Two of these are found in the commentary to Chronicles attributed to Rashi (1 Chr 7:13): כמפורש: וזהו שמפרש בסוף (1 Chr 8:29); בשלהי מגילת ירושלמי ג' ספרים מצא עזרא מגילת ירושלמי ג' ספרים מצא עזרא.³⁹ Another is found in Codex Munich 5

³⁷ For discussions of the text, see S. Z. Havlin, הכרעה על פי רוב או על פי ייחוס: מאה שערים: עיונים ... לזכר יצחק in פרק בדרכי הביורור של הנוסח בתורה ובספרי חז"ל טברסקי, ed. E. Fleischer et al. (Jerusalem, 2001) 244-245 and the literature cited there. I am indebted to L. Moscovitz for this reference.

³⁸ See 52-53, בחינות לשון in הערת פרופ' תא-שמע. One is reminded of the variation between בעזרה in *Moed Q.* 3.4 and בספר עזרא in *Moed Q.* 3.4. For a recent discussion of the latter, see Y. S. Spiegel, עמודים בתולדות הספר העברי (Ramat-Gan, 1996) 25-27. I am indebted to L. Moscovitz for this reference.

³⁹ According to J.-N. Epstein, "L'auteur du commentaire des Chroniques," *REJ* 58 (1909) 189-199 (= מחקרים בספרות התלמוד ובלשונות שמיות, ed. E. Z. Melamed [Jerusalem, 1983] 1. 278-285), the author of the commentary is Samuel b. Kalonymus he-Hasid of Speyer. The expression מגילת ירושלמי is difficult. The same term occurs in סדור רש"י, ed. S. Buber and J. Freimann (Berlin, 1911) 158, where the editors emend it to מגילה ירושלמי, i.e., tractate *Megilla* of the Palestinian Talmud. In the standard text, the *baraita* is found only in tractate *Ta'aniyyot*, but the Ashkenazi text may have been different; see, for example, Y. Sussmann, שרידי ירושלמי—כת"י אשכנזי, *Kobez Al Yad* 12 (22)

(dated 1233), in the commentary to Chronicles attributed to Joseph Qara (1 Chr 3:22): **עזרא מצא ג' ספרים**.⁴⁰ In addition to these witnesses to the Palestinian Talmud, there is a manuscript of *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* that reads **ג' ספרים נמצאו בימי עזרא**.⁴¹

Reuel's comment is a logical extension of this *baraita*. He assumed that the cases mentioned in the *baraita* were just the tip of the iceberg. In his view, there must have been other cases where the editor had an *even* number of sources and could not simply reject the minority reading. In such cases, he would have to be conservative rather than eclectic; he would have to preserve *both* readings in some fashion.

What about cases where the two sources are identical except that one of them has what textual critics call a "plus," i.e., a word or words missing in the other? The creation of double readings is hardly an appropriate solution in such cases.

Here the Byzantines built on another well-known passage from *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* about the editing of the Bible. I am referring to Ezra's soliloquy at the end of the "list of the Points":

עשרה נקודות בתורה ... ויפול על צואריו וי'ש'ק'ה'ו. נקוד, יכול שהיתה נשיקה של אהבה ... לרעות א'ת צאן אביהם בשכם. יכול את צאן אביהם בשכם היו מרעים באמת ... ולמה נקוד על כל האותיות הללו אלא כך אמר **עזרא** אם יבוא אליהו ויאמר [למה] כתבתה אומר אני לו כבר ניקדתי עליהם ואם יאמר (לו) [לי] יפה כתבתה אותה הריני מסלק נקודותיהן מעליהן.⁴²

(1993-1994) 3-120. On the other hand, if מגילת ירושלמי is comparable to the term ספר ירושלמי, it could refer to a scroll of part of the Palestinian Talmud that had made its way to Speyer, perhaps from Byzantium. R. Eliezer b. Joel ha-Levi (Ravya) speaks of a בשפירא ישן בירושלמי; see ספר ראבי"ה, ed. V. Aptowitzer (Berlin, 1913) 2. 256 and Y. Sussmann, מסורת-לימוד ומסורת-נוסח של התלמוד, in הירושלמי—לבירור נוסחאותיה של ירושלמי מסכת שקלים מחקרים בספרות התלמודית: יום in הירושלמי—לבירור נוסחאותיה של ירושלמי מסכת שקלים מחקרים בספרות התלמודית: יום (Jerusalem, 1983) 14 n. 11, where the phrase appears as ירושלמי זקן שבשפירא. (I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for the latter reference.)

⁴⁰ Codex Munich 5, col. 17. For this commentary, its author, and its far-reaching use of the *baraita*, see I. M. Ta-Shma, 5 מינכן in פירוש דברי הימים שבכ"י מינכן 5, ed. I. M. Ta-Shma (Jerusalem, 1996), 135-141. If the author was a student of the author of the commentary attributed to Rashi (*ibid.*, p. 138 l. 7, revising Epstein's thesis), this citation is not an independent witness.

⁴¹ MS Neveh Shalom, f. 45, cited in תורה שלמה, ed. M. Kasher (Jerusalem, 1927-) 19. 254 note to §29.

⁴² I cite version B (chap. 37) from מסכת אבות דרבי נתן, ed. S. Schechter

Ten dotted expressions⁴³ in the Torah: ... “And he fell on his neck and kissed him” (Gen 37:4). (The word וישקהו is dotted, (because) you might think he kissed him out of love. “To pasture their father’s flock at Shechem” (Gen 37:12). You might think they really pastured them.... Why are all these letters dotted?⁴⁴ This is what Ezra said: “If Elijah comes and says ‘Why did you write (them)?’ I will say to him, ‘I have dotted them’; but if he tells me, ‘You have written well,’ I will remove the dots from them.”

Ezra’s explanation of the *puncta extraordinaria*⁴⁵ implies that they express doubt about the correctness of the text. Such use of dots

(Vienna, 1887) 97-98. For הרניי מסלק, version A (chap. 34) has אעבור, but this should read אעביר; cf. the citation in תוספות השלם 2. 124.

⁴³ S. Lieberman (*Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* [New York, 1962], 43) translates “ten dots,” adding in a footnote: “From the context it is obvious that the Rabbis meant to say: ten dotted places.” This assumes that נקודות is an ordinary noun here (cf. נקודותיהן in the last sentence), but it is simpler to assume that it is a passive participle (cf. נקוד in the second sentence and מסלק את הנקודה in y. Pes. 9.2, 36d, cited below) used as a noun.

⁴⁴ Literally: “Why is it pointed on all these letters,” an impersonal passive construction like that in Song 8:8 בה יִדְבַר “she shall be spoken for (lit., it shall be spoken about her),” etc.; cf. my “Ancient Hebrew” in *The Semitic Languages*, ed. Robert Hetzron (London, 1997) 160. Failure to recognize this construction may be at the root of suggestions to vocalize נְקוּד instead of נִקְוּד; cf. Butin, *Ten Nequdoth*, 40.

⁴⁵ According to M. Kister (נוסח עריכה ופרשנות) [Jerusalem, 1998] 159-160), this explanation originally followed the homiletical interpretations of the ten dotted expressions, as an alternative to them. He notes that this state is not preserved in either version. In version A, Ezra’s explanation relates solely to the dotted letters in Deut 29:28, which lack a homiletical interpretation; cf. *Aruch* (ערוך השלם), ed. A. Kohut [Vienna, 1878-1892] 5. 377), *Mahzor Vitri* (מהזור ויטרי לרבינו שמחה), ed. S. Horovits [Jerusalem, 1963] 685), and *Numbers Rabba* (cited below). In version B (chap. 37; מסכת 98), Ezra’s explanation is separated from the discussion of the ten dotted expressions by a discussion of the suspended *nun* in Judg 18:30: וכה"א "ויהונתן בן גרשום בן מנשה" וכי בן מנשה היה? והלא בן משה היה! ... אמר רבי שמעון בן יוהנן בן גרשום בן מנשה. "Similarly it says: ‘and Jonathan son of Gershom son of Manasseh.’ Was he really the son of Manasseh? He was the son of Moses! ... R. Simeon son of Eleazar said: ‘In the future this *nun* will be uprooted from its place.’” I am indebted to J. Kugel and L. Moscovitz for the reference to Kister’s work.

is known from the Qumran scrolls.⁴⁶ A similar explanation of the Masoretic *puncta extraordinaria* is rejected already in an anonymous Greek note to Gen 33:4, a note that is usually ascribed to Origen: “The word וישקהו is dotted,⁴⁷ in every Hebrew Bible, not in order (to indicate) that it is not to be read; rather, through this the wickedness of Esau is hinted at by the Bible: he kissed Jacob deceitfully.”⁴⁸

The text-critical view of the points on וישקהו is presented more fully in the Commentary on Genesis and Exodus (at Gen 33:4):

למה נקוד על וישקהו? יש אומ' שעזרא מצא ספר והיה כתוב בו ומצא אחר ולא היה כת' בו—לכן ניקדו. ואם תוציאה אין הפסוק נעכב מידי פשוטו, וכן כל הנקודים.⁴⁹

Why is וישקהו dotted? Some say that Ezra found a manuscript in which (the word) was written and another in which it was not written, and so he dotted it, and if you take it (the word) out, the verse is not detached from its plain meaning. And so it is with all of the dotted words (in Scripture).

According to this comment, the doubt that led Ezra to put dots over letters arose from a conflict between two manuscripts.⁵⁰ The use of the phrase עזרא מצא ספר suggests that one statement from *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* about Ezra's editorial activities has been interpreted and reformulated in the light of the other.

The author of the commentary introduces the text-critical interpretation with 'יש אומ' “some say.” One is reminded of the presentation of Ezra's soliloquy in *Numbers Rabba* (3. 13):

למה נקוד על לנו ולבנינו ועל עי"ן שבעד? אמר להם: עשיתם גלויים אף אני אודיע לכם את הנסתרות. וי"א למה נקוד? אלא כך אמר עזרא: אם יבא

⁴⁶ See S. Talmon, “Prolegomenon,” in R. Butin, *The Ten Nequdoth of the Torah* (New York, 1969) XVIII-XXV.

⁴⁷ The precise meaning of περιέστυκται here may be “surrounded by dots.” For the placing of *puncta extraordinaria* both above and below the letters in some Qumran scrolls (and the term מלמעלה ומלמטה), see Talmon, “Prolegomenon,” XXII-XXIII.

⁴⁸ See *Origenis Hexaplorum*, ed. F. Field (Oxford, 1875) 1. 49; Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 45; D. Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash: Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (New York, 1991) 146.

⁴⁹ De Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts*, 95 (3 recto 11-13); cf. I. M. Ta-Shma, *פרשנות מקרא*, 250.

⁵⁰ Cf. Butin, *Ten Nequdoth*, 113-117.

אליהו ויאמר למה כתבת אותן אומר לו כבר נקדתי עליהם; ואם יאמר לי יפה כתבת כבר אמחוק נקודותיהן מעליהן.

Why are (the letters of) לנו ולבנינו and the 'ayin of עד dotted? He said to them: "You have taken care of the overt acts, so I will make known to you the concealed acts, as well." And some say: Why are they dotted? This is what Ezra said: "If Elijah comes and says 'Why did you write them?' I will say, 'I have dotted them'; but if he tells me, 'You have written well,' I will erase the dots from them."

D. Weiss Halivni notes that, from the words ויש אומרים, "it is clear that we are dealing with two distinct and disparate opinions."⁵¹ The text-critical interpretation of the points in Deut 29:28 stands in opposition to the homiletical interpretation.⁵² Rabbinic interpretations of the *puncta extraordinaria*, including most of those in *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* itself, are normally homiletical, at least in non-legal passages. They agree with the Greek note quoted above in taking the dots as expressing doubt not about the correctness of the text but about its literal truth or about the sincerity of the action it describes.⁵³

Some have thought that the text-critical interpretation of the *puncta extraordinaria* is attested in a later Byzantine source. Concerning the dotted letters in Deut 29:28, R. Tobiah b. Eliezer writes: "dotted, as if they were not present (in the text)."⁵⁴ Taken out of context, this sounds like a statement that "the points are meant to annul the words."⁵⁵ However, a glance at the context is sufficient to show that R. Tobiah is not engaged in text criticism; he is explaining a midrashic statement cited from b. Sanh. 43b. He uses a word meaning "as if" (כאילו or the like), a hallmark of what we may call the "pseudo-text-critical" approach. Thus in *Tosefot Rosh* (at b. Sanh. 43b) we find: ... דכל נקודה למעט באת ולומר לך דעתיד ... להיות כאלו לא נכתב לי' א-להינו אלא הנסתר והנגלות לנו ולבנינו

⁵¹ Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash*, 140.

⁵² In the view of J. Fraenkel [Tel-Aviv, 1996] 53-55), the homiletical interpretation is tannaitic, while the text-critical interpretation is amoraic.

⁵³ See A. Shinan, 'עשר נקודות בתורה: דרשות חז"ל על המלים המנוקדות מעליהן, in ספר זיכרון לשרה קמין, ed. S. Japhet (Jerusalem, 1994) 198-214. For a different formulation, see Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 45-46; Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash*, 138-141, 144-148.

⁵⁴ Tobiah b. Eliezer, מדרש לקח טוב, 5. 101.

⁵⁵ Talmon, "Prologemon," XVIII.

point serves to exclude and to tell you that in the future it will be as if 'belong to the Lord our God' were not written but only 'the concealed acts and the overt acts belong to us and to our children.'"⁵⁶ In Northern French sources, we find Aramaic phrases meaning "as if they were not present" used of the dotted letters: כמאן דליתיה,⁵⁷ כמאן דליתיה דמי,⁵⁸ דליתיה היא.⁵⁹ Other sources dispense with "as if." Rashi often writes that the dots serve למעט "to exclude," adding in one place: דמשמע סמיוה להא תיבה מהכא "i.e., delete this word/letter from here."⁶⁰ And already in y. Pes. 9.2, 36d we find:

בשעה שהכתב רבה על הנקודה את דורש את הכתב ומסלק את הנקודה.
ובשעה שהנקודה רבה על הכתב את דורש את הנקודה ומסלק את הכתב....
ה"א שב"רחוקה" נקוד. איש רחוק ואין דרך רחוקה.

When the undotted letters are more numerous than the dotted ones, you expound the undotted ones and remove the dotted ones. And when the dotted letters are more numerous than the undotted ones, you expound the dotted ones and remove the undotted ones.... (Only) the *he* of רחוקה is dotted (so you expound masculine רחוק): the man is far away, not the road.

The two cases we have looked at involve short stretches of text—a sentence and a word. What would Ezra do if he found two versions of a *long* passage that differed at many points? This problem arose in Chronicles, especially in chapters 8-11. We do not possess any Byzantine commentaries to that book, but we can reconstruct their approach with the help of other commentaries to Chronicles.

The fullest picture is provided by the commentary to Chronicles attributed to Rashi.

ובגבעון ישבו אבי גבעון. פרשה זו עד כל אלה בני אצל כתובה ב' פעמים
בספר זה. גם פרשת והיושבים הראשונים אשר באחוזתם בעריהם (ט ב)
ופרשת ומן הכהנים ידעיה ויהויריב (ט י) כמו כן בספר עזרא דכתיב ואלה
ראשי המדינה (נחמיה יא ג). וזהו שמפרש בסוף מגילת ירושלמי ג' ספרים
מצא עזרא ... ובטלו דברי האחד וקיימו דברי השנים. וכן מצאו הרבה

⁵⁶ See סנהדרין שבועות 37, ed. S. Wilman (New York, 1975) 37.

⁵⁷ Tosafot to Nazir 23a.

⁵⁸ See פירוש התורה לרבינו חזקיה ב"ר מנוה 447, ed. C. B. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1981).

⁵⁹ See פירוש התורה לר' חיים פלטיאל 43, ed. I. S. Lange (Jerusalem, 1981).

⁶⁰ See his commentary to b. Sanh. 43b, Men. 87b, and (with the addition) Pes. 93b.

ספרי יחוסין. כשנמצא ג' או ה' בטלו המועט וקיימו המרובים.
 וכשנמצאו זוגות כמו ובגבעון ישבו אבי גבעון הוצרך לכתוב שתי פעמים
 שאין סדר יחוסן שוה. וכן היושבים הראשונים מצא זוגות וחלוקים זה על
 זה כתבוהו שני פעמים בכאן ובספרו ...

The father of Gibeon dwelt in Gibeon (1 Chr 8:29). This passage, up to “All these were the sons of Azel” (8:38) is written twice in this book.⁶¹ Furthermore, the passage “the first to settle on their property in their towns” (1 Chr 9:2) and the passage “of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin” (1 Chr 9:10) have a parallel in the Book of Ezra, where it is written, “these are the heads of the province” (Neh 11:3). And this is what it explains at the end of the scroll / tractate *Megilla*⁶² of the Palestinian Talmud: “Ezra found three manuscripts ... They rejected (the reading of) the single manuscript and accepted (the reading of) the two manuscripts.” Similarly, they found many genealogical manuscripts. When there were three or five, they rejected the minority (reading) and accepted the majority (reading). When there were pairs (even numbers of manuscripts), as in the case of “the father of Gibeon dwelt in Gibeon,” it was necessary to write the passage twice, since the genealogies were not identical. And similarly with “the first to settle on their property in their towns,” he found pairs differing one from the other, and so he wrote the passage twice, here and in his book.

Here we have a clear statement of the distinction between the *baraita*'s case of ספרים ג' and Reuel's case of ספרים ב'. It is only the latter case, where no majority is possible, that yields double readings.

The case of ספרים ב' is also mentioned in the commentary attributed to the disciples of Saadia Gaon, which seems to have been written in Kairouan or elsewhere in North Africa in the tenth or eleventh century:⁶³

ובירושלם ... ישבו מן בני יהודה ומן בני בנימין ומן בני אפרים ומנשה ...
 ובספר עזרא (נחמיה יא ד) אינו מזכיר בני אפרים ומנשה שכן הוא דרכן של
 ב' ספרים הללו מה שהזכיר במקום אחד אם בא להזכירי (צ"ל להזכירו)

⁶¹ 1 Chr 8:29-38 and 9:35-44.

⁶² For these two possibilities, see n. 39 above.

⁶³ See פירוש על דברי הימים מיוחס לאחד מתלמידי סעדיה הגאון, ed. R. Kirchheim (Frankfurt am Main, 1874) 29. The commentary mentions the people of Kairouan and the debate between Ibn Quraysh and Yir'am the Magdielite.

במקום אחר מקצר את סדרו כפי מה שיכול. ואנשי מזרח אומרים ב' ספרים
מצא הסדרן וכתב כאן וכאן....

And in Jerusalem dwelt some of the Judahites and some of the Benjaminites and some of the Ephraimites and Manassehites (1 Chr 9:3) ... In the Book of Ezra,⁶⁴ it doesn't mention the Ephraimites and Manassehites, for that is the way of these two books: what they have already mentioned in one place, they abbreviate as much as they can when they come to mention it in another place. But the easterners say, "The *sadran* found two manuscripts (with different versions), and he wrote one here and one there."

Here the approach is attributed to the אנשי מזרח "easterners," a term which normally refers to the Babylonians in contrast to the Palestinians. In this context, however, that interpretation would seem to be very unlikely. After all, the phrase ב' ספרים מצא הסדרן goes back ultimately to a *baraita* attested in Palestinian, but not Babylonian, sources. Two other possibilities come to mind. In the Islamic empire, the "east-west" (*mašriq-mağrib*) split is between Asia and North Africa, the Maghreb. Since this commentary originates in North Africa, the term אנשי מזרח *could* refer to the Jews of Palestine.⁶⁵ The other possibility would be to assume that the author was one of the many Jews who came to Kairouan from southern Italy, i.e., the western half of the *Byzantine* empire.⁶⁶ If so, מזרח in this passage may be the Byzantine Hebrew equivalent of the term "Anatolia," which is derived from the Greek word for "east."⁶⁷

In any event, it must be emphasized that the author does not agree with the approach of the אנשי מזרח. In his view, the differences between the parallel texts in Chronicles and Nehemiah are quite deliberate. As for the repetition of וּבַגְּבוּעוֹן יָשְׁבוּ אֲבִי גִבְעוֹן in Chronicles itself, it is *not* an attempt to preserve a divergent text found in another

⁶⁴ Neh 11:4 ובירושלם ישבו מבני יהודה ומבני בנימן.

⁶⁵ Cf. the term בני מזרח in על רס"ג in בני מזרח, ed. R. Schröter (Breslau, 1866) 31.

⁶⁶ The phrase בטוב "well" found in the comment to 2 Chr 36:13 (איזה מפרש) (בטוב ואיזה מפרש שלא בטוב) could point in this direction, if it is not due to a copyist. The expression is used by Reuel and other Byzantine authors; it appears also in Ashkenaz but not until the middle of the twelfth century. See my *בחינות לשון*, 48-51.

⁶⁷ This idea is based on a comment by Ta-Shma.

source, but a resumptive repetition needed to continue the interrupted narrative about Saul:

ובגבעון ישבו אבי גבעון—לפי שדילג ופסק מעשה שאול על כל מעשה השבטים הראשונים וגלות בבל וספר ענין היושבים ראשונים ופסק בדבריו לכן מתחיל עתה הפרשה ומספר ענינו של שאול ותולדתו ומיתתו כדי להסמך מיתתו וענינו למלכות בית דוד אשר מלך אחריו ומה שחיסר בענין הראשון מזכיר אחריו.⁶⁸

The father of Gibeon dwelt in Gibeon (1 Chr 9:35)—Since it interrupted the story of Saul and skipped to the story of the first tribes and the Babylonian exile and related the affairs of the first to settle and interrupted with their happenings, it now starts the section and relates the affairs of Saul—his lineage and his death—in order to juxtapose his death and his affairs to the dynasty of David, that ruled after him, and whatever it omitted in the first account it mentions now.

Since the notion of resumptive repetition goes back to Saadia's commentary on Genesis,⁶⁹ it would seem that our author sides with the Gaon against the Palestinian-Byzantine school.

It is clear from the sources already examined that only the case of *ב' ספרים* is applicable to the double readings of Chronicles. However, the commentary to Chronicles attributed to Joseph Qara in Codex Munich 5 blurs the distinction between *ב' ספרים* and *ג' ספרים*. It frequently takes the formula *ג' ספרים* from the *baraita*, even though it is speaking of Ezra's preservation of double readings. Thus, at 1 Chr 9:1 we find:

ואני הסדרן הייתי עמהם בגולה ומצאתי קצת מן הייחס שלהם בג' ספרים ולא היו דומין זה לזה ומה שיכולתי לחבר זה אל זה כתבתיו כאן בספר זה ומה שלא יכולתי לחבר כתבתיו בסיפרי בעזרא.⁷⁰

And I, the *sadran*, was with them in the Exile and I found some of their genealogy in three manuscripts that were not

⁶⁸ See פירוש על דברי הימים, 31.

⁶⁹ See פירוש רב סעדיה גאון לבראשית, ed. M. Zucker (New York, 1984) 409-410; cf. p. 192.

⁷⁰ Ta-Shma, פירוש דברי הימים, 138-139, cited from Codex Munich 5, col. 35 (col. 44 according to Y. Berger). Y. Berger informs me that there are many additional examples of *ג' ספרים מצא* in chap. 9 (cols. 44-48). I am indebted to him for checking the accuracy of the citations from this manuscript.

identical. Whatever I was able to combine, I wrote here in this book, and whatever I was not able to combine, I wrote in my book, Ezra.

So too at 1 Chr 11:11:

ויש לומ' הסדרן שלש ספרים מצא וכתב כן וכן [=כאן וכאן].⁷¹

One may answer that the *sadran* found three manuscripts and wrote (their readings) here and there.

Elsewhere it uses a more neutral formula: בשביל הספרים שמצא (1 Chr 11:26), מפני הספרים שמצא (1 Chr 21:5).⁷²

When and how did this Byzantine mode of exegesis reach Germany and Northern France? Did Rashi know of it? Was it transmitted by his student, R. Shemaiah? The latter knew Greek and was familiar with Byzantine coins and the customs of Byzantine Jewry; he may have come from southern Italy.⁷³ The commentary to Ezra-Nehemiah attributed to Rashi can perhaps shed some light on

⁷¹ Codex Munich 5, col. 62.

⁷² Ta-Shma, פירוש דברי הימים, 139, cited from Codex Munich 5, cols. 69 and 117 (126 according to Y. Berger). For the second example, Ta-Shma gives the reading מפני הספרים שמצא, but Y. Berger (“A Critical Edition of the Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi to Chronicles with Analytic Introduction, Translation and Supercommentary” [Ph. D. diss., Yeshiva University, 2003] 110 [Hebrew section]) reads מפני הספרים שמצא. In an e-mail communication (Oct. 11, 2002), Berger writes: “Looking at the ms, I see the alternatives are either מפני הספרים or מפני הספרים. I think my reading is right: what could be read as ב' is at the end of a line, and I read it as א (rather than a partially rubbed out ב) followed by a mostly rubbed out ס (rather than a *geresh*). It is thus an unfinished הספרים, which the scribe, as is his policy, rewrote on the next line. Considerations are as follows: The rubbed out part of the ס is discernible if one looks carefully; the proposed *geresh* is too low for this ms; the rubbed out part of the proposed ב would have to be entirely not discernible on my printout; and in similar cases the author, following the rabbinic source on the matter, writes ג' (for three ספרים) rather than ב' even when he is speaking of a contradiction between two readings that are both represented by biblical texts.”

⁷³ A. Grossman, ספר היובל לרב מרדכי in ר' שמעיה השושני ופירושו לשיר השירים, ed. M. Bar-Asher (Jerusalem, 1992) 1. 37. Rashi may have learned Aquila's interpretation of בולס (Amos 7:14) from R. Shemaiah; see my *Stockmen from Tekoa, Sycomores from Sheba: A Study of Amos' Occupations* (Washington DC, 2003) 24 (to appear in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series).

these questions. According to A. Grossman, it was probably based on a commentary written by Rashi, with revisions and additions by students.⁷⁴ At Neh 7:7, the commentary mentions the numerical differences between the two versions of the list of returnees in Ezra-Nehemiah:

הבאים עם זרובבל—... חשבונות הללו פעמים הם מכוונים עם חשבונות של מעלה פעמים יש שאינם מכוונים זה כנגד זה ולא דקדק המקרא בחשבונות כל כך אבל הכלל שוה לכאן ולכאן שנאמר כל הקהל כאחד וגו' ועל זה הכלל סמך כותב הספר ולא דקדק בחשבון הפרטיות כל כך....

Who came with Zerubbabel—... These figures at times agree with the figures above (Ezra 2), but there are times that they do not agree with each other. Scripture was not so precise with the figures, but the total is equal here and there, as it says “the sum of the entire community (was 42,360)” (Ezr 2:64 and Neh 7:66). The writer of the book relied on (the accuracy of) this total, and was not so precise with the individual figures....

This discussion is similar to the others we have seen in two respects: it speaks of an author-editor who included two different versions of a record in his book, and it uses a variant of the phrase כאן וכאן. Here, however, we are not told explicitly that the different versions stem from two manuscripts found by the author-editor, and it is difficult to know what to infer from the verb סמך. In addition, the term for the author-editor is not הסדרן or the like but כותב הספר. This term is not as common as one might imagine. A search for the phrase כותב הספר in four CD-ROMs (Ma'agarim of the Academy of the Hebrew Language; Bar-Ilan Judaic Library; The Torah CD-ROM Library; and תקליטור ש"ס וראשונים of Otsar Haposkim) turns up only one other medieval occurrence: Rashi's commentary to Judg 5:31.⁷⁵ Thus, there is no reason to doubt that Rashi wrote this comment, but it is far from clear what role he attributed to the כותב הספר in Judges.

It has been suggested that the statement ואנשי מזרח אומרים ב' ספרים in the commentary attributed to the disciples of R. Saadia

⁷⁴ A. Grossman, חכמי צרפת הראשונים (Jerusalem, 1995) 183.

⁷⁵ The two occurrences are noted by Brin, חיבור פרשיות, 310. Brin (*loc. cit.*) also notes two occurrences of הכותב used by Radaq. I have encountered כותב הספר with reference to the author-editor of Kings in Joseph Ibn Kaspi, שלחן כסף, ed. H. Kasher (Jerusalem, 1996) 130. The Bar-Ilan Judaic Library shows something similar in a responsum of R. Simeon b. Zemah Duran (סימן א, חלק א, קעב ד"ה אחר היותר כותב ספר מלכים is contrasted with the כותב ספר עזרא).

Gaon is the source of the statement כמפורש בשלהי מגילת ירושלמי ג' ספרים in the commentary attributed to Rashi.⁷⁶ In my opinion, there are too many differences between these two statements to assume direct influence. The suggestion that “notre commentateur paraît avoir confondu les מוצא עם אנשי מזרח avec le Yerouschalmi”⁷⁷ is an attempt to explain away one of these differences, but it seems forced. One result of our investigation is that it is no longer necessary or possible to assume such confusion. It is now clear that pseudo-Rashi's citation from the Palestinian Talmud is a genuine variant, which he could not have concocted out of the statement in the commentary attributed to the disciples of R. Saadia Gaon.

In Ashkenaz, the idea that Ezra found divergent genealogical sources was particularly long-lived. We find it cited in its traditional formulation as late as the eighteenth century by R. Aryeh Leib Gunzberg, the author of *Sha'agat Aryeh*:

וי"ל דעזרא העתיק דברי הימים מכמה ספרים שמצא כמו שכתבתי שם. מש(ום) ה(כי) יחוס הדורות אינן על הסדר; גם יש סתירות הרבה מניה וביה, ומד(ברי) ה(ימים) לס' עזרא, כי בספר א' מצא כן ובספר א' כן, וכמו שמצא כן העתיק.⁷⁸

One may answer that Ezra copied Chronicles from several manuscripts that he found, as I wrote there. Because of this, the genealogy of the generations is not in order; moreover there are contradictions both internally and between Chronicles and the Book of Ezra. For in one manuscript he found one thing and in another manuscript he found another, and he copied (each) just as he found (it).

We see, then, that Palestinian and Byzantine exegetes developed a rudimentary theory concerning the redaction of the Bible. They were particularly fascinated by the question of what the editor did when faced with conflicting sources, whether different versions of a genealogical list to be included in biblical books authored by *him* or textual variants in biblical books authored by his predecessors. In

⁷⁶ Epstein, “L’auteur,” 199 (= מחקרים, 1. 285).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 3.

⁷⁸ See ספר גבורות ארי לבעל שאגת אריה, מלואים על מסכת יומא, עמ' 111 ד"ה תיובתא. I am indebted to S. Cohen for calling my attention to this passage and to S. Z. Leiman for referring me to M. Breuer, תורת התעודות של בעל שאגת אריה, *Megadim* 2 (1987) 9-22. Breuer was unaware that the views expressed in this passage are based on earlier sources.

Germany and Northern France, the theory was adopted by a number of exegetes, especially in commentaries on the Book of Chronicles.

2. Provence and Spain

Provence

The terminology of the Byzantine redaction theory is not common in Provence. I know of only one apparent occurrence of סדר in the sense of “edit” with a book as its object. It is found in Moses Qimḥi’s commentary (attributed to Ibn Ezra) to Ezra 4:8:

כנמא. כאשר נאמר וזה מאמר הסופר ומסדרים הספר.

כנמא—“as we shall say”; this is said by the scribe and the editors (sic) [of] the book.

The younger brother of this exegete, David (Radaq), uses המחבר, and הסופר for the compiler-editor of Psalms; he uses הכותב, הסופר, and מחבר הספר for the author-narrators of Joshua and Samuel.⁷⁹ Similarly, Joseph Ibn Kaspi refers to the author-narrator of Kings as כותב הספר.⁸⁰

Outside of the area of terminology, the picture is somewhat different. Radaq’s well-known explanation of the *ketib-qere* has several things in common with the Byzantine theory:

והמלות האלה הכתובין ולא קריין או קריין ולא כתיבין וכן כתוב וקרי, נראה כי בגלות הראשונה אבדו הספרים ונטלטלו, והחכמים יודעי המקרא מתו, ואנשי כנסת הגדולה שהחזירו התורה לישנה⁸¹ מצאו מחלוקת בספרים הנמצאים, והלכו בהם אחר הרוב, לפי דעתם. ובמקום שלא השיגה דעתם על הבירור, כתבו האחד ולא נקדו, או כתבו מבחוץ ולא כתבו מבפנים, או כתבו אחד מבחוץ ואחד מבפנים.⁸²

⁷⁹ See Brin, *פרשיות*, 310-312 (adding מחבר הספר in 1 Sam 1:11) and see further below. Note, however, that in Radaq’s comment on האבן העזר in 1 Sam 4:1, מקראות גדולות הכתר, זה reading instead of והכתוב אמר זה. In a letter dated May 22, 2003, U. Simon argues for the reading והכתוב based on the context.

⁸⁰ See n. 75 above.

⁸¹ Cf. לא החזיר את התורה לישנה in Radaq’s commentary to 2 Kgs 22:8.

⁸² Radaq’s commentary to 2 Sam 15:21. Cf. the parallel passage in the introduction to his commentary to Former Prophets. For other explanations of *ketib-qere*, see my “*Ketiv-Qere* or Polyphony: The *w-w* Distinction According to the Masoretes, the Rabbis, Jerome, Qirqisānī, and Hai Gaon” in *Studies in*

As for these words, which are written but not read or read but not written, as well as that which is written and read (differently), it seems that in the first exile books were lost and moved around, and the scholars who knew Scripture died, and the men of the Great Assembly who restored the Torah to its original state found disagreement among the extant manuscripts, and they followed the majority in (dealing with) them, in accordance with their understanding. And in places where their understanding did not attain clarity, they wrote one thing but did not point it, or they wrote it outside but not inside, or they wrote one thing inside (in the text) and another outside (in the margin).

R. Menahem Meiri's paraphrase of this passage, in the introduction to his *Qiryat Sefer*, is very instructive. Following the words והלכו בהם אחר הרוב "and they followed the majority in (dealing with) them," he inserts: "ג' ספרים ו': 'ג' ספרים וכמו שאמרו רז"ל במס' סופרים פרק ו': 'ג' ספרים" "as the Rabbis said in chapter 6 of tractate *Soferim*: 'Three manuscripts were found in the Temple court ... They accepted the (reading of the) two and rejected the (reading of the) single one.'" ⁸³ Clearly, he connected the words והלכו בהם אחר הרוב with the *baraita* we have been discussing. Similarly, Simon writes:

It is true that I have not found in Radaq's writings an explicit reference to the account of "three manuscripts were found in the Temple court" ... but it seems that this is the basis both for his conjecture concerning the existence of textual variation that was resolved according to the majority reading and also for his distinction between uncertainties that were cleared up and rectified in the body of the text and those that were not resolved (perhaps because the number of manuscripts was evenly balanced) and were preserved in the form of masoretic notes. ⁸⁴

Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shelomo Morag, ed. M. Bar-Asher (Jerusalem, 1996) *151-*179.

⁸³ Menahem Meiri, *קריית ספר*, ed. M. Hershler (Jerusalem, 1956) 14. Another important insertion by Meiri is לדון אחריו לא נמצא רוב, i.e., the case of even numbers of manuscripts, which Radaq neglected to mention. See Havlin, *ההכרעה*, 246-247.

⁸⁴ U. Simon, *Bar-Ilan* 6, ראב"ע ורד"ק—שתי גישות לשאלת מהימנות נוסח המקרא, (1968) 196. Cf. Havlin, *הכרעה*, 246: "This *baraita* certainly underlies Radaq's

There may well be other connections between Radaq's discussion and the *baraita*. It is probable that Radaq knew the reading ג' ספרים מצא עזרא from the commentary to Chronicles attributed to Rashi, for it is generally agreed that Radaq used that commentary in preparing his own commentary to that book.⁸⁵ Radaq does not refer directly to Ezra in his discussion of the *ketib-qere*, but he does mention the men of the Great Assembly, a group that he presumably viewed as led by Ezra. That is certainly the way other medievals viewed the men of the Great Assembly. Rambam speaks of בית דינו של עזרא הם הנקראים אנשי כנסת הגדולה.⁸⁶ Ramban refers to הגדולה (=עזרא) ובית דינו אנשי כנסת הגדולה.⁸⁷ Jonah b. Abraham Gerondi comments: ונביאים מסרוה לאנשי כנסת הגדולה—זה הוא עזרא וסיעתו ונביאים מסרוה לאנשי כנסת הגדולה ואילו הן: עזריה—הוא עזרא שעלה מבבל וגלותו עמו—זרובבל ישוע נחמיה מרדכי בלשן.⁸⁹

Thus, one suspects that the words אנשי כנסת הגדולה שהחזירו התורה ג' ספרים מצא עזרא may be Radaq's expansion of בית דינו של עזרא. That suspicion is strengthened by two medieval paraphrases of Radaq's expansion. One is by Maharal:

יש אמרו כי טעם הקרי והכתיב כי עזרא הסופר מצא בלבול הספרים בזה כתוב כך ובזה כתוב כך וכאשר היה מסופק כתב אחד בפנים ואחד מבחוץ.⁹⁰

Some have said that the reason for (discrepancies between) what is read and what is written is that Ezra the scribe found the manuscripts in disarray—in one was written one thing and

words.”

⁸⁵ See Epstein, “L'auteur,” 194 n. 4 (= מחקרים 1. 282, n. 35) and Y. Kiel, ספר דברי הימים (Jerusalem, 1986) 2. 94-95 (appendix). I am indebted to Y. Berger for these references.

⁸⁶ Introduction to *Mishneh Torah*.

⁸⁷ See ספר המצוות להרמב"ם עם השגות הרמב"ן, ed. C. B. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1981) 47.

⁸⁸ See פירושי רבינו יונה מגירונדי על מסכת אבות, ed. M. S. Kaiser (Kasher) and Y. Y. Blecherowitz (Jerusalem, 1969) 1 (Avot 1:1).

⁸⁹ See מחזור ויטרי לרבינו שמחה, ed. S. Horovits (Jerusalem, 1963) 463; cf. Neh 7:7 and *Tg. Cant* 7:3.

⁹⁰ Judah Loewe b. Bezalel (Maharal of Prague), ספר תפארת ישראל, ed. J. D. Hartman (Jerusalem, 2000) 1021. For the attribution to Radaq, see the editor's notes *ad loc*. Maharal is far from sympathetic to Radaq's explanation.

in another was written another—and when he was in doubt he wrote one inside and the other outside.

The other, pointed out by Ta-Shma,⁹¹ is in Meiri's commentary to Nedarim 37b:

קריין ולא כתיבן וכתבן ולא קריין לא מפי סופרים יצא הדבר אלא מצד ספיקות וחסרונות או יתורים שנמצאו בימי עזרא ופקפקו בהם ורצו לרמוז עליהם.

Words which are read but not written or written but not read came from the mouth of scribes only on account of doubts and minuses or pluses that were found in Ezra's days. They were uncertain about them and wanted to point them out.

It appears that Radaq altered the traditional formula in order to allude to a well-known Talmudic statement attributing a kind of text-restoration to the men of the Great Assembly: למה נקרא שמן / נקרו אנשי: “Why were they called the men of the Great Assembly? Because they restored the crown/greatness to its original state.”⁹²

In any event, the role that Radaq assigns to the men of the Great Assembly is reminiscent of that which the Palestinian-Byzantine-Ashkenazic school assigns to Ezra. There is a difference, however: instead of double readings Radaq speaks of *כתוב וקרי*; instead of words with dotted letters he speaks of *קרי וקרי ולא כתיב*; instead of *כאן* and *וכאן*, he speaks of *מבחוץ* and *מבפנים*. The significance of this difference will be discussed below.

Additional evidence of Radaq's dependence on this school is found in his commentary to 1 Chr 1:7:⁹³

ורודנים—כתוב ברי"ש ראשונה ובספר בראשי' כתיב בשני דלתין ודדנים לפי שהדלת"ת והרי"ש קרובים בכתבן והרואים בספרי היחסים הנכתבים בימים הקדמונים יש שהיו קוראים בדל"ת ויש שהיו קוראים ברי"ש ונשאר

⁹¹ See I. M. Ta-Shma, פירוש אנונימי ביקורתי (בכתב-יד) לספר תהלים, *Tarbiz* 66 (1997) 421.

⁹² See b. Yoma 69b, y. Ber. 7.3, 11c, etc. Radaq's awareness of the Talmudic expression is demonstrated by his use of a very similar expression in his commentary to Ezek 21:32: הושבה העטרה לישנה. I am indebted to M. T. Novick for this point.

⁹³ I am indebted to M. J. Bernstein for this reference.

השמות לפני (צ"ל בפ"י)⁹⁴ בני אדם בדל"ת וברי"ש. לפיכך נכתב בספר בראשית באחת מהקריאות ונכתב בספר הזה באחרת להודיע שהכל שם אחד, ואם זה קורא בדל"ת וזה קורא ברי"ש. וכן רבלת' ברי"ש ודבלת' בדל"ת. וכן רעואל ברי"ש ודעואל בדל"ת. וכן תשתנה הקריאה בוי"ו וביו"ד לפי שהן קרובים בכתיבתן....

And Rodanim—Written with an initial *resh* but in the Book of Genesis it is written with two *dalet*'s, Dodanim (Gen 10:4), for *dalet* and *resh* are similar in writing, and some of those who looked at the genealogical manuscripts written in ancient times read with a *dalet* and some read with a *resh*, and the names remained in popular speech with *dalet* and with *resh*. Accordingly, it was written in the Book of Genesis with one of the readings and in this book with the other to make it known that they are the same name, even though one reads *dalet* and the other reads *resh*. The same goes for Riblah with *resh* (2 Kgs 25:7) and Diblah with *dalet* (Ezek 6:14) and for Reuel with *resh* (Num 2:14) and Deuel with *dalet* (Num 1:14). And similarly the reading varies between *waw* and *yod* because they are similar in writing....

The idea that the Bible preserves the variant readings of pre-biblical genealogical sources is, as we have seen, found in several commentaries on Chronicles, and the expression נכתב בספר בראשית נכתב כאן באחת מהקריאות ונכתב בספר הזה באחרת וכאן. Here, however, the variant forms are not copied directly from the genealogical texts themselves; they are transcriptions of popular oral forms which, in turn, are derived from those texts. In this way, what was originally a misreading is transformed by popular usage into a legitimate, albeit later, linguistic variant.⁹⁵ In his commentary to Gen 10:4, Radaq attributes the idea of recording the later variant to Ezra, the author of Chronicles:

ודדנים—... ומשה רבינו קראו בדל"ת, לפי שבאתהו רוח הקדש, ועזרא כתב ברי"ש, להודיע כי הם הם הכתובים אלא יש קוראים בדל"ת ויש ברי"ש....

And Dodanim—Moses our master wrote it with a *dalet* because the Holy Spirit came to him, while Ezra wrote it with a *resh* to make known that they are the same ones mentioned

⁹⁴ This is the reading of most manuscripts, according to Y. Berger, "Critical Edition," 8 (Hebrew section).

⁹⁵ I am indebted to D. Berger for this idea.

(in the Torah) with some people reading (their name) with *dalet* and some with *resh*....

Ezra's role is not quite the same here as it is in the Palestinian-Byzantine-Ashkenazic tradition. The uncertainty that causes Ezra to record a variant form is not his own, nor does it pertain to the question of correctness. The only such uncertainty that Radaq attributes to Ezra concerns textual variants identified as such by the Masoretes: כתיב וקרי, and כתיב ולא קרי.⁹⁶ In other words, far from being a “pioneer of lower criticism,”⁹⁷ Radaq's views are actually less radical than those of his predecessors.⁹⁸ Radaq knew the Palestinian-Byzantine-Ashkenazic tradition from the commentary to Chronicles attributed to Rashi, but he felt the need to alter it, in both form and content.

Spain

We find little or no awareness of the Byzantine theory and its characteristic terminology among Andalusian Jews. In Christian Spain, at the end of the Middle Ages, we do find סדר in the sense of “edit” with a book as its object. In Abarbanel's commentary to Maimonides' Guide, he writes: ולכן פירשתי אני בספר שמואל שדוד בזקנותו **סדר ספר תהלים** להנהגת המתבודד בתפילותיהם ושאר השלמותו מת דוד המסדר **אותו הספר והמזמורים ההם** “therefore I explained in the Book of Samuel that David, in his old age, edited the Book of Psalms to guide those who seclude themselves in their prayers, and that after its completion, David, having edited (lit., who edited) that book and those psalms, died.”⁹⁹ In Muslim Spain, however, examples of this usage are

⁹⁶ There is no mention of such uncertainty in Radaq's treatment of 1 Chr 9:2, 9:35, 11:11 or 21:5 as there is in the commentaries cited above.

⁹⁷ So Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, XXXII (English abstract).

⁹⁸ I am indebted to D. Berger for the ideas in this paragraph.

⁹⁹ Y. Elman, “The Book of Deuteronomy as Revelation: Nahmanides and Abarbanel” in *Hazon Nahum: Studies in Jewish Law, Thought, and History Presented to Dr. Norman Lamm*, ed. Y. Elman and J. S. Gurock (New York, 1997) 242. The incomplete reference in n. 59 is to עם ארבעה ... ספר מורה נבוכים ... עם ארבעה ... (Warsaw, 1872) 80b. (I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for his help with this reference.) The original explanation, in the commentary to 2 Sam 22:1, uses a different verb for “edit”: **ספר תהלים** ... **חברו** דוד המלך עליו השלום בסוף ימיו להנהגת המתבודד ולסדר לפניו התפלות והתחנונים אשר **יאמר**.... “... King David—peace be upon him—edited the Book of Psalms at the end of his days to guide those who seclude themselves and to set out before them the prayers and supplications they should say....” Note that **חבר** cannot be

difficult to find.¹⁰⁰ Instead, we encounter *הבר* “put together” used as an equivalent of Arabic *אלף*, both in the sense of “compile, edit” and in the sense of “compose”.¹⁰¹ Thus, in the first recension of Ibn Ezra’s introduction to his Psalms commentary, after using *הבר* five times in the sense of “compose,”¹⁰² he writes:

והמחקר השני: מי *הבר* זה הספר? אין צורך להשיב; אחר שהחכמים ז"ל העתיקו כי אנשי כנסת הגדולה חברוהו, די לנו.¹⁰³

The second inquiry: Who edited this book? There is no need to reply; inasmuch as the Sages have handed down (the tradition) that the men of the Great Assembly edited it, that is enough for us.

In addition to his linguistic usage, it is worth noting how quickly Ibn Ezra disposes of the question of editing. This “inquiry” (*מחקר*) takes up less than two lines in Simon’s edition, whereas the other three “inquiries” in the introduction take up 43 lines, 14 lines, and 64 lines, respectively. Was Ibn Ezra uncomfortable dealing with this subject? In the rest of this discussion, I shall deal exclusively with Ibn Ezra, leaving it for others to investigate other Andalusian Jews.

The editorial role that Ibn Ezra assigns to Ezra and the men of the Great Assembly appears to have been quite limited. He never invokes them to account for anachronisms. Thus, concerning Psa 106:47, Ibn Ezra writes:

הושיענו—אמר אחד מחכמי מצרים כי זה המשורר היה בימי השופטים לפני מלך מלך לבני ישראל על כן הוא אומ' וקבצנו מן הגוים. וחכם אחד אמר כי זה המשורר היה בבבל והנכון בעיני כי זה המשורר דבר ברוח הקדש והוא מדבר על לשון בני גלותינו הושיענו כאשר דבר ישעיהו על לשון המשכילים למה תתענו ה' מדרכיך.

taken here in the sense of “compose” (since Abarbanel goes on to explain that David composed the psalms in his early years) and that *סדר* cannot be taken in the sense of “edit.” In both versions, the specific act of editing to which the verbs refer is compiling; see further below.

¹⁰⁰ I must stress that I am speaking of *סדר* in the sense of “edit” with a book—not *sections* of a book—as its object. The expression *הפרשיות* in Ibn Ezra’s long commentary to Exod 6:28 is not an example of this usage.

¹⁰¹ I am indebted to B. Septimus for this point.

¹⁰² Simon, *Four Approaches*, 313-315 ll. 45, 50, 52, 61, 68.

¹⁰³ Simon, *Four Approaches*, 315 ll. 80-81.

Save us—One of the Egyptian scholars has said that this poet was in the days of the judges, before the Israelites had a king; that is why it says “and gather us from the nations.” And one scholar has said that this poet was in Babylonia. In my opinion, the correct (explanation) is that this poet spoke with divine inspiration (of the future), speaking in the words of¹⁰⁴ our exiles, “save us,” just as Isaiah spoke in the words of the wise: “Why, Lord, do you make us stray from your ways?”

Ibn Ezra’s solution to the problem of anachronism is very different from that of the anonymous early French exegete quoted above. According to the latter, Psa 137 (על נהרות בבל) is late, but everyone involved with it—both the author (Jeremiah) and the editor who included it in the Book of Psalms (Ezra)—was divinely inspired. For Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, the plea וקבצנו מן הגוים is not a sign of lateness, and, thus, there is no need to invoke Jeremiah or Ezra to account for it.

Another term from the Byzantine tradition that finds no echo in the writings of Ibn Ezra is מצא ספרים. This is hardly surprising, given Ibn Ezra’s approach to the Masoretic text. According to Simon, that approach was characterized by “rigid acceptance of the hallowed text” and “minimal interest” in textual variation.¹⁰⁵ Unlike Radaq, “Ibn Ezra did not see in *Ketib* and *Qere* a textual phenomenon, regarding them as mere lexical or stylistic variations.”¹⁰⁶ Again unlike Radaq, he “almost completely ignored the variants reflected in Targum Jonathan, assuming the deviation to be ... only Midrashic in nature.”¹⁰⁷ His view of the differences between parallel texts is also very different from that of Radaq. Ibn Ezra rejects the view that some of these differences are textual variants due to graphic similarity:

ויש אומרים בעבור היות הדל"ת והרי"ש דומים במכתב, על כן דדנים רודנים
דעואל רעואל. ולפי דעתי שהם שני שמות לאדם אחד כמשפט....¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ For this use of על לשון, see Simon, *Four Approaches*, 110 n. 86, 193-198, 209. It is also attested in Ibn Ezra’s commentaries to Num 21:30; Mic 7:1, 7:18; Hab 1:1, 1:12, 3:15; Psa 42:1, 44:5, 66:13, 73:2, 82:8, 85:5, 89:48, 90:10, 102:1, 102:24, 118:23, 126:4, 129:1, 132:14, and 137:1.

¹⁰⁵ Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, XXXII and XXX (English abstract).

¹⁰⁶ Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, XXX.

¹⁰⁷ Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, XXXI.

¹⁰⁸ Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, 208. He comes close to abandoning this position in his commentary to Eccl 5:1, in attacking the rhymes of Qillir: ואם סבת חבור ה"א עם ה"ת בעבור היות דמותם קרובות במכתב אם כן יחבר רי"ש עם דל"ת ואף כי מצאנו דעואל

Some say that the graphic similarity between *dalet* and *resh* is the reason for Dodanim ~ Rodanim (Gen 10:4, 1 Chr 1:7), Deuel ~ Reuel (Num 1:14, 2:14). In my opinion, they are two (different) names for one person, as was the norm....

Ibn Ezra also rejects the rabbinic tradition concerning the eighteen “corrections of the scribes” (תיקוני סופרים), labeling it דברי יחיד “the opinion of a single individual.”¹⁰⁹

Ibn Ezra’s discussions of the verse division are particularly revealing. In his commentary to Est 9:27, he writes: עזרא הסופר הפסיק “Ezra the scribe introduced the verse division (lit., separated the verses).” Elsewhere, he attributes the verse division and other features of the Masoretic text to the men of the Great Assembly, whom he describes in glowing terms:

ונחה רוח ה', רוח חכמה ובינה על ... אנשי כנסת הגדולה, לבאר כל חתום במצות ... גם הם היו משיבי טעם וילמדו הבאים אחריהם חפץ כל ענין ע"י טעמי המקרא, והמלכים והמשרתים והסתומים והפתוחים והדבקין והפסוקים, ועינים היו לעור; על כן נצא בעקבותיהם ונרדוף אחריהם, ונשען עליהם בכל פירושי המקרא.¹¹⁰

The spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, rested upon ... the men of the Great Assembly to explain every mystery of the commandments.... They were also conveyers of sense¹¹¹ and taught all who came after them the meaning of every matter through the biblical accents, the rulers and the servants,¹¹² the closed and the open, and the attached and the

“if the reason for rhyming (lit., joining) *he* and *het* is that their appearance is similar in writing, then let him rhyme *resh* and *dalet*, especially since we find Deuel ~ Reuel, Dodanim ~ Rodanim.” However, one should not deduce too much from a *reductio ad absurdum* in a polemical text.

¹⁰⁹ Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, 227-228. For Ibn Ezra’s use of this label to dismiss rabbinic traditions, see Y. Maori, על משמעות המונח 'דברי יחיד' בפירוש ראב"ע למקרא: ליחסו של ראב"ע למדרשי חז"ל, *Shnaton* 13 (2002) 201-246 esp. 222-223.

¹¹⁰ Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, 224.

¹¹¹ A pun on המקרא טעמי, using the language of Prov 26:16.

¹¹² This metaphorical pair probably refers here to the disjunctive and conjunctive accents, explaining the preceding phrase (“the biblical accents”) despite the intervening *waw*. The same pair is used to distinguish the seven vowel signs from the *shewa* sign. There is no need to break up the pair by taking the first term as referring to the vowels and the second as referring to the servile letters, as does Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, 224. In his letter of May 22, 2003,

separated, and they served as eyes to the blind. For that reason, we go in their footsteps and follow them closely and rely on them in all biblical commentaries.

He is quite vociferous in defending the honor of the verse division and the person responsible for it:

יש מפרשים רבים מטעים את המפסיק ... ואני לפי דעתי אתמה מזה תמהון גדול איך טעה המפסיק, ואף כי אם הוא עזרא הסופר. והכלל כי המפסיק לא היה אחריו חכם כמוהו, כי הנה ראינו בכל המקרא לא הפסיק כי אם במקום ראוי....¹¹³

There are many exegetes who declare the versifier to be in error.... And I, according to my understanding, am greatly amazed at this, how (it is possible to believe that) the versifier erred, especially if he is Ezra the scribe.¹¹⁴ The fact is that there was no one as wise as the versifier after him, for we see that, throughout the Bible, he never made a verse division in an unsuitable place.

To sum up: Ibn Ezra stresses the sublime, divinely inspired wisdom of Ezra and his Great Assembly, while minimizing their role as editors. He rejects the concept of *תיקון סופרים*, and he avoids topics related to textual variation. The last of these characteristics has been well explained by F. E. Talmage:

Ibn Ezra's utter confidence in the Tiberian tradition prevented him from giving much consideration to the "microscopic variations" [exhibited by the biblical manuscripts of his time].... It was inevitable that this itinerant scholar would see such in his travels in "Spain, France, and across the sea" but he pays them scant attention.... R. Abraham too spent much of his career in Muslim Spain, where the Jews were frequently accused of tampering with the biblical text for the purpose of obliterating alleged references to Mohammed.¹¹⁵

Simon accepts this interpretation and suggests that the misleading *waw* be deleted.

¹¹³ Simon, ראב"ע ורד"ק, 226.

¹¹⁴ Rather than one of the other men of the Great Assembly.

¹¹⁵ F. E. Talmage, *David Kimhi: The Man and His Commentaries* (Cambridge, MA, 1975) 86.

A. Mondschein has given a similar explanation to Ibn Ezra's rejection of the "corrections of the scribes":

It is likely that Ibn Ezra's reservations about the assumption of "corrections of the scribes" ... are also grounded in fear of providing indirect aid to the Muslim claim that the Bible was falsified by the Jews.... Simon ... interpreted this differently, but he too hints there at the danger that Ibn Ezra saw in this assumption.¹¹⁶

In my view, *all* of the aforementioned characteristics and more are related to the Muslim claim that Ezra falsified the Torah.¹¹⁷ I suggest that Ibn Ezra was deeply affected by this claim, which was current in Andalusia in his youth, and that he continued to be influenced by it, perhaps only on a subliminal level, when he wrote his commentaries in Christian Europe. In the remainder of this article, I shall briefly trace the history of this Muslim polemical claim and its influence on Jews and Karaites in Muslim lands, including Andalusia.

One of the earliest reflections of the negative Muslim view of Ezra is found in a Christian polemical text inserted into Ghevond's Armenian history. The text purports to be the reply of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III to an anti-Christian letter from the Umayyad Caliph 'Umar II early in the eighth century, but is usually considered a work of the late ninth or early tenth century, even if it has a historical kernel.¹¹⁸ Leo's characterization of Ezra is very similar to Ibn Ezra's descriptions of Ezra and his Great Assembly:

You pretend that the Testament was composed by human genius, and I know that you attack the second edition that Esdras composed. Yet this man possessed the grace of the *Holy Spirit*, and all that he composed has the cachet of *infallibility*, as is proved by the fact that when all the people, delivered from captivity, came back to Jerusalem, bringing

¹¹⁶ A. Mondschein, *Te'uda* 8 (1992) 149-150 n. 56. I am indebted to M. Cohen for this reference, which agrees with a conclusion I reached independently. For the use of תיקון סופרים as a weapon in religious polemics, see below.

¹¹⁷ This is not the place to deal with Ibn Ezra's use of the expression והמשכיל ידום (cf. Amos 5:13) in his commentary to Gen 12:6, but I suspect that it may be related in some way to the same Muslim claim.

¹¹⁸ A. Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence Between 'Umar II and Leo III," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944) 273-276.

with them the Testament, there was seen the marvellous work of God, for when it was compared with the edition of Esdras, this was found completely in conformity with the latter.¹¹⁹

In this passage, we see two conflicting versions of a legend about Ezra's restoration of the Torah after it was lost—burned and/or forgotten—in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Both versions go back ultimately to IV Ezra, an apocalyptic work of the late first century C.E. However, Leo's version is more faithful to that source, for in IV Ezra 14:20-22, Ezra says to the Lord:

For behold, I will go, as you have commanded me, and I will reprove the people who are now living; but who will warn those who will be born hereafter? For the world lies in darkness, and its inhabitants are without light. For your Law has been burned and so no one knows the things which have been done or will be done by you. If then I have found favor before you, send the *Holy Spirit* to me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in your Law, that men may be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live.¹²⁰

Ezra's prayer is answered and he dictates the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible plus another 70 books of esoteric wisdom.

It is difficult to overstate the impact of this story on religious polemics throughout the ages. The notion that Ezra's restoration of the lost Scriptures was divinely inspired was accepted by Christians but rejected by their opponents, such as Porphyry and the Jewish-Christian authors of the Pseudo-Clementines.¹²¹ The Muslims, thanks to an Arabic translation of IV Ezra, originally accepted the divine inspiration of Ezra's restoration.¹²² However, Muslim polemicists had

¹¹⁹ Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 289-290.

¹²⁰ B. M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra ... A New Translation and Introduction" in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY, 1983) 1.554.

¹²¹ C. Houtman, "Ezra and the Law: Observations on the Supposed Relation Between Ezra and the Pentateuch," in *Remembering All the Way* (Oudtestamentische Studiën, 21; Leiden, 1981) 91-93; H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds* (Princeton, NJ, 1992) 62-63.

¹²² See A. Drint, "The Mount Sinai Version of IV Ezra. Text, Translation and Introduction" (Ph. D. diss., Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1995) 51-64, 416-

a powerful incentive to change that and give teeth to the Quranic charge that the Jews had falsified the Bible by removing references to Muhammad.

The process of knocking Ezra off his pedestal in the Muslim world was not completed until the eleventh century, but by the tenth century the handwriting was already on the wall. The letter to which Leo allegedly responded hints at Ezra's fallibility without mentioning him by name.¹²³ Abū Naṣr Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maḡdisī writes in his *Book of Creation and History* (ca. 966) that, after Ezra restored the Torah without changing so much as a letter, he handed it over to one of his disciples. Al-Maḡdisī adds: "They claim that it was this disciple who corrupted [the text], adding to it and distorting it."¹²⁴ In the first half of the tenth century, the Karaite Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī turns this emerging polemical weapon of the Muslims against the Rabbanites. According to him, the Muslim polemicists of his time were already using the story of the burning of the Torah from IV Ezra, while omitting any mention of Ezra's role:

Further, they (the Rabbanites) assert that the Torah which is in the hands of the people is not the Torah which Moses—on whom be peace—brought, but was composed by Ezra, for they say that the Torah brought by Moses perished and was lost and disappeared. This amounts to the destruction of the whole religion. Were the Muslims to learn of this, they would need nothing else with which to revile and confute us, for some of their theologians argue against us saying: "Your Torah is not the Torah brought by Moses."¹²⁵ Against one who makes this claim, we proclaim that he is lying out of a desire to contradict, and that they are reduced to this because they have nothing to say and need an argument. But were they to discover this teaching of the Rabbanites—may God forgive

435; M. Ayoub, "'Uzayr in the Qur'an and Muslim Tradition" in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions*, ed. W. M. Brinner and S. D. Ricks (Atlanta, GA, 1986) 10-11.

¹²³ Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 277.

¹²⁴ C. Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden, 1996) 233; cf. T. Pulcini, *Exegesis as Polemical Discourse: Ibn Ḥazm on Jewish and Christian Scriptures* (Atlanta, GA, 1998) 39. I am indebted to R. Harris for the latter reference.

¹²⁵ This Muslim claim is repeated virtually verbatim in *Kitāb al-'anwār* III.15.7, with the following addition: "because Nebuchadnezzar burned that one, and this one was composed afterwards."

them—the field would be open to them and they would need nothing else.¹²⁶

Al-Qirqisānī repeats this allegation against the Rabbanites in a number of places (e.g., II.18.6, II.22.2). It is not completely clear what Rabbinic statement(s) he has in mind. We can rule out the Rabbinic references to תיקון סופרים, which Al-Qirqisānī takes to mean that Ezra and Nehemiah changed the original text of the Bible in eighteen places;¹²⁷ that is clearly a distinct (and, indeed, seemingly inconsistent) charge.¹²⁸ Nemoy and Chiesa-Lockwood assume, following Harkavy, that Al-Qirqisānī is alluding to b. Suk. 20a: כשנשתכחה תורה מישראל עלה עזרא מבבל ויסדה.¹²⁹ If this assumption is correct, Al-Qirqisānī has fabricated an accusation against the Rabbanites by taking the Talmud's statement about Ezra out of context and, perhaps, reinterpreting יסד.¹³⁰ Read in context, that

¹²⁶ B. Chiesa and W. Lockwood, *Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī on Jewish Sects and Christianity* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984) 105-106. This translation is more faithful to the Arabic original (*Kitāb al-'anwār*, I.3.3) than that of L. Nemoy, "Al-Qirqisani's Account of the Jewish Sects and Christianity," *HUCA* 7 (1930) 331-332.

¹²⁷ This view of the תיקון סופרים agrees with that of some schools of Masoretes; see C. D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (London, 1897) 350-351; אכלה ואכלה, ed. S. Frensdorff (Hannover, 1864) 113 (list 168).

¹²⁸ This is clear both in II.18.6-7 (where the charges are presented separately) and in II.22.2. G. Khan ("Al-Qirqisani's Opinions Concerning the Text of the Bible and Parallel Muslim Attitudes Towards the Text of the Qur'an," *JQR* 81 [1990] 61-62) appears to blur this distinction in his summary: "Al-Qirqisānī then deals with the claim of the Rabbanites that the present text of the Torah is not the one which was produced by Moses but is a later version written by Ezra (II.18.6). The Rabbanites support this doctrine by the eighteen 'corrections of the scribes' (*tiqqune soferim*)." So too Adang, *Muslim Writers*, 246: "Al-Qirqisānī rebuts the Rabbanite claim that the current text of the Torah is not the one produced by Moses, but is a later version written by Ezra, who is said to have changed the original text in eighteen places."

¹²⁹ Nemoy, "Al-Qirqisani's Account," 331 n. 45; Chiesa and Lockwood, *Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī*, 162 n. 14. For a citation of this talmudic passage in a polemical work, see below.

¹³⁰ In theory, it is possible to assume that Al-Qirqisānī was familiar with this statement from a secondary source, written or oral, and that he never saw it in context; however, the many accurate quotations from Rabbinic texts in his book would seem to show that he had firsthand knowledge of the original sources. As for יסד, the fact that Al-Qirqisānī repeatedly uses the Arabic word

statement says that Ezra is one of a series of Babylonian scholars who reestablished—not composed—the Torah in the Land of Israel:

כשנשתכחה תורה מישראל עלה עזרא מבבל ויסדה. חזרה ונשתכחה עלה הלל הבבלי ויסדה. חזרה ונשתכחה עלו רבי חייא ובניו ויסדה.

When Torah was forgotten in Israel, Ezra went up from Babylonia and (re)established it. When it was forgotten again, Hillel the Babylonian went up and (re)established it. When it was forgotten again, R. Ḥiyya and his sons went up and (re)established it.¹³¹

By publishing this charge in a language that Muslims could understand, Al-Qirḡisānī may well have been instrumental in bringing about what he professed to fear.¹³²

In the eleventh century, Ezra's star reached its nadir in the Muslim world. 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaini (1028-1085) tries to show that Ezra had a motive to make changes in the Torah:

So there was only one doer of this deed, either Ezra himself or, if one puts it after Ezra, whoever it was who recopied Ezra's copy. More, an alteration on his part was possible from the fact that he was eager to see his power extended and by the fact that he was not credited with that kind of impeccability which would have prevented his commission of either light or serious faults.... And anyone who knows well the chronicles of world history and has followed their extraordinary developments finds there that men greater than Ezra have been moved by the love of power to act senselessly, rejecting the bonds of reason and religion.¹³³

for "compose," אָלַף, in his allegation suggests the possibility that he took יסד in this passage to mean "compose" instead of "(re)establish." The former is a medieval meaning well known from Rashi; see I. Avinery, היכל רש"י (new enlarged edition; Jerusalem, 1979) 554.

¹³¹ The specific *halakhot* that were reestablished by Hillel (b. Pes. 66a) and R. Ḥiyya (not R. Hai, as reported in Chiesa and Lockwood, *Ya'qūb al-Qirḡisānī*, 162 n. 14!) are in the realm of Oral Law, far removed from textual questions. The same goes for the specific *halakhot* to which the cliché שכחום ויסדום applies in b. Yoma 80a and Suk. 44a.

¹³² According to Adang (*Muslim Writers*, 246), Ibn Ḥazm's claim that the Jews themselves admit that Ezra made changes to the text may be a reference to Al-Qirḡisānī's discussion; cf. also Pulcini, *Exegesis*, 44.

¹³³ See F. E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton, NJ, 1994)

‘Alī ibn Ḥamad ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī (ca. 994-1064) was an even harsher critic of Ezra. Ibn Ḥazm’s major polemical work is *Al-fīṣal/faṣl fī al-mīlal wa-l-ahwā’ wa-l-niḥal*, part of which is a *Treatise on obvious contradictions and evident lies in the book which the Jews call the Torah and in the rest of their books and in the four Gospels, through which it may be ascertained that they have been corrupted and altered and that they are different from what God, mighty and exalted, revealed*.¹³⁴ In this treatise, Ibn Ḥazm’s vilification of Ezra is largely by implication, perhaps to avoid giving offense to more traditional Muslims or giving an opening to Jews. In some places, he writes that the author of the new Torah, written after the return from exile, was a heretic, liar, ignoramus, and scoffer, who deliberately corrupted and falsified the Torah; in other places, he writes that Ezra was the author of the new Torah.¹³⁵ Little is left to the reader’s imagination.

Lazarus-Yafeh has argued that such accusations against Ezra affected a number of Jews of Andalusian origin. The clearest case involves a contemporary of Ibn Ezra, Abraham Ibn Dā’ūd of Toledo, who mentions the charge and responds to it:

הנה נניח שעזרא בא מבבל וכתב התורה המוחלפת—היאך הודו אותה לו
 העם? ואיך הסכימו להישמע אליה הקרובים והרחוקים? ... ולא הגיע אלינו
 מעולם מי ששם דופי על עזרא וכדומה לזה....¹³⁶

162-163. For the Arabic original and a French translation of this passage, see M. Allard, *Textes apologétiques de Juwaini* (Beirut, 1968) 46-49. I am indebted to B. Septimus for these references.

¹³⁴ See C. Adang, *Islam frente a Judaísmo: La polémica de Ibn Ḥazm de Córdoba* (Madrid, 1994) 68-71; Adang, *Muslim Writers*, 65, 237-248; Pulcini, *Exegesis*, 9-11, 90-95.

¹³⁵ Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 67-68; Adang, *Muslim Writers*, 245-246.

¹³⁶ H. Lazarus-Yafeh, עזרא—עזיר: גלגולו של מוטיב פולמוסי, *Tarbiz* 55 (1986) 377. Cf. also M. Schreiner, “Zur Geschichte der Polemik zwischen Juden und Muhammedanern,” *ZDMG* 42 (1888) 630-631, reprinted in M. Schreiner, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. M. Perlmann (Hildesheim, 1983) 114-115; N. Roth, “Forgery and Abrogation of the Torah: A Theme in Muslim and Christian Polemic in Spain,” *PAAJR* 54 (1987) 208-209. (I am indebted to D. Berger for the latter reference.) Maimonides is less relevant to our discussion, because he does not mention Ezra in referring to the Muslim charge of falsification in his *Epistle to Yemen* and in one responsum (no. 149). I shall therefore not discuss claims that he was influenced by this charge.

suggests that Ibn Ḥazm distorted the meaning of b. Suk. 20a: 'כשנשתכחה תורה מישראל עלה עזרא מבבל ויסדה וכו' ¹³⁹. As we have already seen, Harkavy made a similar claim concerning Al-Qirqisānī.

There is evidence that Ibn Ezra too was aware of Ibn Ḥazm's polemic. In his short commentary to Exod 13:18, Ibn Ezra writes:

והמושימים—... ודרש שעלו אחד מחמש מאות דבר יחיד הוא, ועליו מהלוקת, ואיננו קבלה כלל. ודי לנו הצער שאנחנו בו עם חכמי ישמעאל, שהם אומרים איך יתכן מחמשים וחמשה זכרים שיולידו (צ"ל שיולדו) במאתים ועשר שנים שש מאות אלף זכרים מן עשרים, והנה היו כפל הכפל עם הטף והנשים....

...—המושימים. And the midrash (according to which the word means) that (only) one in 500 (of the Israelite population) went up (out of Egypt) is the opinion of a single individual, and is disputed, and is not (based on) tradition at all. We have enough grief (already) with the Muslim scholars, who say: "How is it possible that, from fifty-five males in 210 years, six hundred thousand males aged twenty and above should be begotten, and four times that number with women and children included...?"

The question that Ibn Ezra attributes to the Muslim scholars is very similar to a question asked by Ibn Ḥazm in arguing that the Torah was falsified (by Ezra):

How is it possible that, from the procreation of only fifty-one men ¹⁴⁰ in a period of only 217 years, more than two million people should be begotten? ¹⁴¹

shed light on a controversy surrounding a work by Ibn Ḥazm entitled *Exposure of the Alteration of the Torah and the Gospel by Jews and Christians*; see Pulcini, *Exegesis*, 10-11 n. 8 and Adang, *Muslim Writers*, 6.

¹³⁹ Perles, R. *Salomo*, טז-יז; Dimitrovsky, תשובות, 1/1. 140-141; שאלות ו"א 5/1 (=part 9). 152-154; or 5/2 (=part 10). 121-122.

¹⁴⁰ Ibn Ḥazm's total is smaller than Ibn Ezra's because he does not count the four great grandsons of Jacob who came to Egypt with Jacob, according to Gen 46:12,17.

¹⁴¹ 'Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-fīṣal/faṣl fī al-milal wa-l-ahwā' wa-l-niḥal* (Cairo, 1899-1903) 1. 173 ll. 22-24. In summarizing this passage, Pulcini (*Exegesis*, 79) writes: "the total number of Jacob's descendants (i.e., including female and younger males) by this time would have approached two million." However, Ibn Ḥazm's expression is 'azyadu min 'alfay 'alfi 'insān "more than two million people." When Ibn Ḥazm (173 l. 25 - 174 ll. 1-2) states

Ibn Ezra's subsequent discussion includes the phrases ותשובתנו "and our answer," אז השיבו לנו עוד "then they answered us further," and גם אנחנו השיבנו "we too answered," indicating that he is reporting an actual debate in which he was personally involved.

Ibn Ezra's use of the phrase דבר יהיד here is also of interest, because he uses virtually the same phrase in rejecting the rabbinic tradition concerning the eighteen "corrections of the scribes."¹⁴² It is easy to see how that tradition could have breathed new life into the falsification canard.¹⁴³ Ibn Ezra may well have been worried about that possibility,¹⁴⁴ and rightly so. The "corrections of the scribes" did become a polemical issue in Spain in the thirteenth century, and Rashba was forced to deal with it in a second treatise.¹⁴⁵ However, it was not a Muslim who raised it but a Christian, Raymond Martini.¹⁴⁶ In so doing, he revived a Karaite polemical issue from the time of Al-Qirqisānī.

In view of this evidence, we may be justified in viewing other statements of Ibn Ezra as reactions to Ibn Ḥazm. We have seen, for example, that Ibn Ezra stresses the divinely inspired wisdom of the men of the Great Assembly and declares himself "amazed at ... how (it is possible to believe that) the versifier erred, especially if he is Ezra the scribe." This may be a reaction to Ibn Ḥazm, who writes that the

that to the total of 603,000 adult males one must add a like number of male children and then a like number of women, he apparently means that one must add 1,206,000 females (adults and children) to the previous total of 1,206,000 males (adults and children).

¹⁴² See n. 109 above.

¹⁴³ No explicit reference to this tradition by Muslim polemicists has been cited by scholars. Adang (*Muslim Writers*, 246) believes that there is an implicit reference: "Ibn Ḥazm states that the Jews themselves admit that Ezra made changes to the text, probably a reference to the *Tiqqune Soferim*...."

¹⁴⁴ See at n. 116 above.

¹⁴⁵ For the Hebrew text of the passage, see Perles, *R. Salomo*, לב-לד; Dimitrovsky, תשובות, 1/1. 176-184; or ספר שאלות ותשובות הרשב"א, 5/2 (=part 10). 333-335.

¹⁴⁶ See I. M. Resnick, "The Falsification of Scripture and Medieval Christian and Jewish Polemics," *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996) 373-375 and the references cited there. The identification of Rashba's opponent was made by Perles, who cited Martini's discussion of the "corrections of the scribes" (Perles, *R. Salomo*, לב-לד n. 2).

Jews “admit ... that Ezra, who wrote (the Torah) for them from his memory after it was lost, was only a scribe ... and not a prophet.”¹⁴⁷

Clearly Ibn Ezra was sensitive to the Muslim charge of falsification;¹⁴⁸ he discusses one aspect of it explicitly. We do not find similar, overt reactions to the Byzantine theory of redaction in his writings. If he had encounters with it, in the *Leqah Tov* (which he mentions in the introduction to his Torah commentary) or in his travels, he did not feel the need to reject it explicitly.

It is striking that a theory of redaction took root in Ashkenaz but not in Sepharad. The counterintuitive nature of this finding makes an appeal to polemical factors all the more necessary.

¹⁴⁷ Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 68.

¹⁴⁸ For additional examples of Ibn Ezra’s sensitivity to Muslim polemics, see Mondschein, *ליחסו של הראב"ע*, 147-150 and add Ibn Ezra’s comment to Gen 2:11. (That comment, as noted by U. Simon in his letter of May 22, 2003, suggests that Ibn Ezra viewed himself as less influenced by such polemics than R. Saadia Gaon.) Following Simon, Mondschein (*ליחסו של הראב"ע*, 149) notes that this sensitivity is only one manifestation of Ibn Ezra’s failure to cut his ties to Muslim Spain after leaving it. Cf. also M. Orfali, *ראב"ע והפולמוס היהודי-נוצרי*, *Te’uda* 8 (1992) 193-205.