

THE STORY OF THE FOUR CAPTIVES*

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I

The seventh and final section of Abraham ibn Daud's chronicle, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*,¹ opens with the following story, the renowned tale of "The Four Captives."

Translation²

"Prior to that³ it was brought about by the Lord⁴ that the income of the academies⁵ which used to come from Spain, the land of the Maghreb, Ifrīqiya, Egypt, and the Holy Land was

* In addition to those whose specific help has been acknowledged in the notes, I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Saul Lieberman and to Professor H. Z. Dimitrovsky for their critical advice. I am especially indebted to Professor Abraham S. Halkin, who contributed unsparingly of his time and learning at every stage of the writing of this paper.

The following abbreviations have been used: Baron, *SRH* = S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (8 vols. and Index. New York and Philadelphia, 1952-60); *EI* = *Encyclopedia of Islam*; *HUCA* = *Hebrew Union College Annual*; *JE* = *Jewish Encyclopedia*; *JQR(NS)* = *Jewish Quarterly Review (New Series)*; *MGWJ* = *Monatsschrift fuer Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*; *MJC* = *Medieval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes* (2 vols. Edited by A. Neubauer, Oxford, 1887-95); *MS(S)* = *Manuscript(s)*; *PAAJR* = *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*; *SHQ* = *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* by Abraham ibn Daud. Biblical and classical Rabbinic works have been referred to by standard abbreviations.

¹ Edited by A. Neubauer, *MJC*, I, 47-82. All references to the text are to this edition and are designated by page and line. The following study was written in connection with a new edition of *SHQ*, which I have been preparing on the basis of all available MSS. Where my text differs with Neubauer's I have indicated this in the notes.

² The first portion of the story (*MJC*, I, 67:18-69:6) was translated into English by B. Halper, *Post-Biblical Hebrew Literature* (2 vols. Philadel-

discontinued. The following were the circumstances that brought this about.

"The commander of a fleet, whose name was Ibn Rumāḥiṣ,⁶

phia, 1921), Translation [vol.], pp. 123–126. A fragment (*MJC*, I, 67:21–68:1) was translated by J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire* (Athens, 1939), p. 165 no. 111. For a German translation (of *MJC*, I, 67:19–69:1), cf. M. Auerbach, "Die Erzählung von den vier Gefangenen," *Jahres-Bericht des Rabbiner-Seminars zu Berlin fuer 1925, 1926, 1927* (5686–88) (Berlin, 1928), pp. 2–6. The story is also to be found in the German translation of the whole of *SHQ* by M. Katz, *Abraham Ibn Dauds Sepher Hak-Kabbala* (s.l., 1907), pp. 41–46, and in the Spanish translation of *SHQ* by J. Bages Torrida, *Sefer Ha-Kabbalah (El Libro de la Tradición)* (Granada, 1927), pp. 50–55. In the translation, I have annotated only those words and passages requiring clarification for the understanding of the story or for the purposes of this study. A fuller commentary will be supplied in the forthcoming edition and translation.

³ Sc., prior to "the termination" of the Babylonian Gaonate with the death of R. Hai in 1038 and of his successor, Hezekiah the Exilarch in 1040, according to Ibn Daud (*MJC*, I, 66:23–24; 67:10–13, 18–19). The seventh section of *SHQ* follows immediately upon the previous one, which deals with the period of the Geonim, without any indication in the text of a new period. In Ibn Daud's scheme of things, the new period of Jewish history actually begins with Samuel ibn Nagrela and his contemporaries (cf. *MJC*, I, 73:24–25; 78:11). Technically speaking, therefore, the story of the four captives falls within the Gaonic period, while it serves as an introduction to the new and final era.

⁴ Some MSS: "The Holy One Blessed be He." For the style, cf. I Ki. 12:15.

⁵ Sc., of Babylonia; cf. n. 3.

⁶ There can be little doubt that this is the name underlying the various corruptions recorded in the MSS.—The MSS of *SHQ* fall into two classes, one of which is distinctly inferior to the other. The following are the readings of the name in question here and below, p. 58. (The sigla are the ones to be employed in the new edition.): of the superior class of MSS (= ש) אבן רמחאץ ה אבן דחמאץ < ק אבן רחמאץ > below > אבן רמחאץ ה אבן דחמאץ < אבן רחמאץ > of the inferior group (= ת) אבן רמחאץ < אבן דחמאץ > below > אבן רמחאץ ה אבן דחמאץ < אבן רחמאץ > here only > אבן רמחאץ

Disregarding the inconsequential variant of א for א at the beginning of the name (these two letters often being indistinguishable from each other in early Hebrew MSS), the admiral's name is recorded in three forms: Ibn Rum(a)ḥāṣ (אבן רחמאץ), Ibn Ruḥ(a)-māṣ (אבן רחמאץ), and Ibn Rumāḥiṣ (אבן רחמאץ). In א the final א was mistakenly read

as ק, an error that is understandable enough in scribal transmission). Thus, there is absolutely no evidence in the MSS to support the emendation of the name to Ibn Riyahīn (אבן רייאחין), as suggested by Jacob Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature* (2 vols. Cincinnati and Philadelphia, 1931-35), I, 86, 110, and adopted by V. Aptowitz, "R. Chuschiel und R. Chananel," *Jahresbericht der Israelitisch Theologischen Lehranstalt in Wien*, XXXVIII-XXXIX (1933), 24 n. 4, and by H. Z. Hirschberg in the Introduction to his edition of Nissim b. Jacob, *Hibbur Yafeh me-ha-Yeshu'ah* (Jerusalem, 5714), p. 14 n. 20. Moreover, this emendation requires a further emendation of the dates of these events given by Ibn Daud (cf. below p. 63) and a correction of the name of the Muslim ruler in whose reign the events occurred, as fully recognized by Mann, *loc. cit.* and *JQR*, NS, (1918), 169. These emendations and corrections are predicated on the assumption that the story before us contains an account of actual events, and that only Ibn Daud and his copyists brought confusion into the data. However, the evidence adduced below will indicate that Ibn Daud's dating of the events is deliberate and "accurate." Furthermore, Ibn Daud's choice of 'Abd ar-Rahmān's reign for the capture of the four scholars was equally deliberate and "accurate." Since it was in his reign in which the capture was placed, Ibn Daud referred to a distinguished naval commander of the Spanish Caliph's regime. Lebrecht, Graetz and Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 4, 9, 34 (where refs. to earlier discussions are given) recognized full well that the "ben Damāhīn" recorded in the editions represents a corruption of the name of the admiral of the fleet [Abd ar-Rahmān] ibn Rumāhīs, who served under 'Abd ar-Rahmān III an-Nāṣir and under al-Ḥakam; cf. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah* (3 vols. Translated by F. Rosenthal. New York, 1958), II, 40; al-Makkari, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (2 vols. Translated by P. de Gayanges. London, 1840-43), II, 159; A. Ashtor, *Qorot ha-Yehudim bi-Sefarad ha-Muslimit* (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 289 n. 11. However, in view of the testimony of MSS קה (and the transposition of the long vowel in עה), there is a second possibility, which I suggest with all diffidence. The reading אבן רחמאן may represent an abbreviation of the name or *Kunya* of another (?) distinguished admiral of these regimes, [Ghālib] *ibn* ['Abd ar-] *Rahm[ān] aṣ-Ṣ[iklabī]*. If Ibn Daud had any real events in mind when he gave the names of the Caliph and admiral, he may have been referring to the forays of 955-57 conducted by Ghālib under the orders of 'Abd ar-Rahmān III, when a Spanish vessel captured a Fatimid ship en route from Sicily to Alexandria, an act which precipitated a series of naval conflicts; cf. R. Dozy, *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne* (3 vols. Edited by E. Lévi-Provençal. Leiden, 1932), II, 164f. (=R. Dozy, *Spanish Islam*. [Translated by F. G. Stokes. London, 1913], pp. 438f.). If that is the case, Ibn Daud's date for the capture of the four scholars is still "correct"! Cf. below, p. 106. Ibn Daud, of course, is not to be held responsible for accurate knowledge

left Cordova, having been sent by the Muslim king of Spain, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān an-Nāṣir.⁷ This commander of a mighty fleet set out to capture the ships of the Christians and the towns that were close to the coast. They sailed as far as the coast of Palestine and swung about to the Greek sea and the islands therein. [Here] they encountered a ship carrying four great scholars, who were travelling from the city of Bari to a city called Sefastīn,⁸ and who were on their way to a Kallah convention.⁹ Ibn Rumāḥiṣ captured the ship and took the sages prisoner. One of them was R. Ḥushiel, the father of Rabbenu

of the admiral's travel orders ("to capture Christian ships"), which are seemingly contradicted by the conflict with Fatimid vessels; cf. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, p. 34. Ibn Daud had to designate "Christian ships" to explain the capture of scholars traveling on a "Christian" vessel.

⁷ Reigned 912-961 (Proclaimed himself Caliph in 929).

⁸ No such place is known. For the various conjectures, cf. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 (where it should be added that Rapoport finally suggested Sebaste of Cilicia), 16, 34f. (to which should be added a ref. to N. Bruell, *Jahrbuecher fuer Juedische Geschichte und Literatur*, IX (1899), 105, who first suggested that the name is a corruption of Siponto). The most likely equivalent of the Hebrew name is something corresponding to Sebastin. To be sure, there was a city of Sebastea in Asia Minor (cf. G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* [Cambridge, 1905], p. 142 and A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* [Madison, Wis., 1952 (1958)], p. 351), but why should four Jewish scholars have gone there in connection with the purpose given by Ibn Daud?

⁹ For the various interpretations of this phrase, cf. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 8ff., 35. To these may be added A. Kohut, *Aruch Completum*, III, 205, s.v. הכנסה, IV, 228 s.v. כלה; B. Halper, *op. cit.*, p. 123; J. Starr, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 and 22f., n. 3, all of whom understand כלה הכנסת as "the collection of money for an academy." Aptowitz contends that unless this explanation is adopted, Ibn Daud's introductory statement—that as a result of the capture the income of the Babylonian academies was cut off—is left hanging in mid-air. The story can only be understood on the theory that since the income of the academies has been cut off, the four scholars had to be despatched to raise funds. However, Aptowitz's contention is his own theory, not Ibn Daud's. The latter makes it quite clear that were it not for the capture of the four scholars, the income of the academies would probably have continued to flow without interruption; cf. *MJC*, I, 68:23-69:1; 69:18-19. Most scholars have rejected the explanations of Frankel and Halevy, cited by Auerbach, that כלה הכנסת means here what it usually does, attending to and at wedding ceremonies, on

Ḥananel; another was R. Moses, the father of R. Hanokh, who was taken prisoner with his wife and his son, R. Ḥanokh (who at the time was but a young lad); the third was R. Shemariah b. R. Elḥanan. As for the fourth, I do not know his name. The commander wanted to violate R. Moses' wife, inasmuch as she was exceedingly beautiful. Thereupon, she cried out in Hebrew to her husband R. Moses and asked him whether or not those who drown in the sea will be quickened at the time of the resurrection of the dead.¹⁰ He replied unto her: "The Lord said: I will bring them back from Bashan; I will bring them back

the grounds that "the leading of a bride to the bridal chamber" should hardly constitute a suitable motive for four scholars to undertake the kind of trip described by Ibn Daud. Granted! However, this picayune motive has at least idiomatic usage to support it. On the other hand, the loftier motive read into the phrase by the modern scholars listed above rests on a far-fetched meaning of *Kallah*, one which Ibn Daud uses nowhere else. Had Ibn Daud wanted to say academy, he would have employed the term "yeshibah," as he does regularly. Nor it is valid to contend that הכנסת כלה is an idiomatic term for fund-raising activities of the academies, for that remains to be proved. On the other hand, the translation suggested here rests on a well attested usage of the term *Kallah*; cf. Kohut, *op. cit.*, IV, 227-228; JE, VII, 423 s.v. "Kallah"; *MJC*, II, 87-88. The use of הכנסה for "an assemblage" is one of the many Arabisms in which *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* abounds and represents a Hebrew counterpart to اجتماع or جمع. Moreover, our translation is indirectly supported by the reference to the *Kallah* assemblies in the "editions" of Midrash Tanḥuma Noah, par. 3:

ולפיכך קבע הקב"ה שתי ישיבות לישראל שיהיו הוגין בתורה יומם ולילה ומתקבצין שתי פעמים בשנה באדר ובאלול מכל המקומות
 ... לצורך הוצאת התלמידים הבאים מכל המקומות שהם יושבים ומתקבצים ובאין מכל המקומות בחודש כלה

The Arabic equivalent of מתקבצין would be يجتمعون and the derived substantive would be اجتماع or جمع. This, in turn, could easily become הכנסה in medieval Hebrew. Our translation supplies a worthy motive for the trip of the four scholars and retains the spirit of Ibn Daud's insistence that the trip is a case of God's disposal (dispersion) and man's proposal (an assemblage). Ibn Daud assumes, of course, that his reader will understand how close a connection there was between *Kallah* conventions and the income of the academies; cf. *MJC*, II, 87f.

¹⁰ I.e., might she hope for resurrection despite the fact that her body would be consumed by the fish of the sea? On the widespread notion that

from the depths of the sea."¹¹ Having heard his reply, she cast herself into the sea and drowned.¹²

"These sages did not tell a soul about themselves or their wisdom. The commander sold R. Shemariah in Alexandria of Egypt;¹³ [R. Shemariah] proceeded to Fostat¹⁴ where he became head [of the academy]. Then he sold R. Hushiel on the coast of Ifrīqiya. From there the latter proceeded to the city of Qairawan, which at that time was the mightiest of all Muslim cities in the land of the Maghreb, where he became the head [of the academy] and where he begot his son Rabbenu Hanel.

"Then the commander arrived at Cordova where he sold R. Moses along with R. Hanokh. He¹⁵ was redeemed by the people¹⁶ of Cordova, who were under the impression that he was a man of no education. Now there was in Cordova a synagogue that was called the College Synagogue,¹⁷ where a judge¹⁸ by the name of R. Nathan the Pious, who was a man of distinction,¹⁹ used to preside.²⁰ However, the people of Spain were

complete destruction of the body precludes the possibility of resurrection, cf. S. Lieberman, *Shkiin* (Jerusalem, 1939), p. 58; M. Stein, "Mother Earth in Old Hebrew Literature (Hebrew)," *Tarbiz*, IX (1937-38), 257-277, who associates this conception with the widespread fear of lack of burial; cf. esp. p. 273 where our story is cited.

¹¹ Ps. 68:23.

¹² As noted by many scholars, this story is virtually a verbatim reproduction of the account in B. Gittin 57b (and parallels) of Jewish martyrs who committed suicide to preserve their chastity. Cf. below, p. 78.

¹³ Sc., to Jews who ransomed him and set him free, a common phenomenon in the middle ages.

¹⁴ Heb., *Miṣrayyim* (Egypt) = Arabic, *Miṣr*; cf. *JE*, V, 60-61; J. Mann, *JQR*, NS, VII (1917), 479f.; M. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, p. 4 n. 11.

¹⁵I.e., R. Moses. It goes without saying that the young Hanokh was ransomed along with his father.

¹⁶ Sc., the Jews.

¹⁷ Most MSS and eds. (other than *MJC*) read כְּנֶסֶת הַמְדֻשָּׁה; *midrash* = *bet ha-midrash*, the house of study or college.

¹⁸ The Jewish *dayyan* (judge) performed the same functions as the Muslim *qādī*; he adjusted litigations and lectured on law and religion.

¹⁹ MSS ש read here היה < היה גדול > היה גדול > היה גדול. MSS ך read here היה > היה גדול > היה גדול. MSS ך read here היה > היה גדול > היה גדול. MSS ך read here היה > היה גדול > היה גדול.

²⁰ "Used to preside": lit., there was there.

not thoroughly versed in the words of our Rabbis, of blessed memory. Nevertheless, with the little knowledge they did possess, they conducted a school²¹ and interpreted [the traditions] more or less [accurately].²² [Once] R. Nathan explained [the law requiring] "immersion [of the finger] for each sprinkling," which is found in the tractate Yoma,^{22a} but he was unable to explain it correctly. Thereupon, R. Moses, who was seated in the corner like an attendant, arose before R. Nathan and said to him: "Rabbi, this would result in an excess of immersions!"²³

²¹Heb., *היו עושין מדרש*, which has been translated "they arranged discussions" (Halper), and "stellten sie Untersuchungen an" (Auerbach). Although the phrase is reminiscent of the classical *עשה תורה* (on which, cf. S. Abramson in *Leshonenu, Qobez Meyuhad* [Jerusalem, 5714], pp. 61-65), the phrase *עשה מדרש* in that sense would be totally inappropriate here. Moreover, *midrash* does not mean "discussions" or "Untersuchungen." Had Ibn Daud wished to say "they acquired knowledge" or "discussed law," he would have said so much more simply and directly. Here again, I would suggest we have an Arabism, corresponding to *جعلوا مدرسا* (or *مدرسة*) "they conducted a school."

²²The Hebrew, *ועלין ויורדין*, makes no sense if translated literally ("they went up and down"). The translations of Halper ("[conducted] arguments") and of Auerbach ("und disputierten dabei") are manifestly makeshift efforts to read some sense into an impossible phrase. My own translation is also makeshift, but approximates a metaphoric usage of "the sacrifice of greater or lesser value" known as *קרבן עולה ויורד*. Cf. also the comment of R. Gershon on *עולה ויורד*, a slaughtering knife that is "uneven" (Hullin 17b), cited by E. Ben Iehuda, *Thesaurus*, IX, 4501 n. 2. Maimonides *Hilkot Shehitah* 1:17 interpretes the latter phrase to mean a knife that is curved "like a snake." Perhaps Ibn Daud means *ועלין ויורדין* in the sense of "tortuously, not very smoothly, unevenly."

^{22a}*Tosef. Yoma* 4(3):2, ed. Zuckerman, p. 187 l. 1. That Ibn Daud does not specify the Tosefta as the source of the statement is not surprising in view of the mass of evidence adduced by Prof. Saul Lieberman showing that many medieval authorities wove quotations from the Tosefta into their discussions of the text of the Talmud quite freely and without specifying their sources; cf. S. Lieberman, *Tosefeth Rishonim* (4 vols. Jerusalem, 1937-39), II, 8-15; *idem*, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah, Zera'im* (2 vols. New York, 1955), II, 637 n.1.

²³R. Nathan apparently explained the passage to mean that the high priest must immerse himself in the ritual bath before each sprinkling of blood on the altar on the Day of Atonement. To this, R. Moses objected

When he and the students heard his words, they marvelled to each other and asked him to explain the law to them. This he did quite properly. Then each of them asked him all the difficulties which they had, and he replied to them out of the abundance of his wisdom.

"Outside the College there were litigants who were not permitted to enter until the students had completed their lesson.²⁴ On that day, R. Nathan the judge walked out,²⁵ and the litigants went after him. However, he said to them: "I shall no longer be judge. This man who is garbed in rags and is a stranger²⁶ is my master,²⁷ and I shall be his disciple from this day on. You ought to appoint him judge of the community of Cordova." And that is exactly what they did.

"The community then assigned him a large stipend and honored him with costly garments and a carriage. [At that point] the commander wished to retract his sale. However, the king would not permit him to do so, for he was delighted by the fact that the Jews of his domain no longer had need of the people of Babylonia.²⁸

that the number of immersions would be in excess of the five prescribed in *M. Yoma* 3:3. Cf. A. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 n. 16, 36f; S. Assaf, *Meqorot le-Toledot ha-Hinukh be-Yisrael* (4 vols. Tel Aviv, 1930-47), II, 16nn. 3, 5, and esp. Prof. Saul Lieberman's forthcoming commentary on *Tosefta Mo'ed*, where R. Nathan's error is discussed fully. I am profoundly indebted to Prof. Lieberman for the source of the quotation and for elucidating this whole passage to me.

²⁴ Heb., פסיקה. In its original sense פסיקה (Aram. פסיקה) denotes "a section" or "a chapter"; cf. L. Zunz, *Ha-derashot be-Yisrael* (Edited by C. Albeck. Jerusalem, 5707,) pp. 84f., 348 nn. 52-55; H. L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Philadelphia, 1931 [1945]), p. 211. However, in the present context the word makes far better sense if it is understood as corresponding to the Arabic قضية. The whole clause would thus correspond to an Arabic حتى يقضوا التلامذة قضيتهم "until the students had completed their case (i.e., the legal problem covered in the lesson of the day)."

²⁵ I.e., instead of waiting for the litigants to enter and present their cases, as was his wont (Auerbach).

²⁶ Lit., guest; i.e., not a regular member of the academy.

²⁷ Sc., inasmuch as he taught R. Nathan the meaning of the law; cf. *Pereq Qinyan Torah* (= *Abot* 6:) 3 and B. M. 33a (view of R. Yose).

²⁸ I.e., directing their legal inquiries abroad; cf. immediately below.

"The report [of all this] spread throughout all of Spain and the Maghreb, and students came to study under him. Moreover, all questions which had formerly been addressed to the academies were now directed to him. This affair occurred in the days of R. Sherira,²⁹ in about³⁰ 4750 [A.M.],³¹ somewhat more or less.

"R. Moses allied himself by marriage with the Ibn Falija family,³² which was the greatest of the families of the community of Cordova, and took from them a wife for his son R. Hanokh. [Subsequently,] the daughter of R. Hanokh was married to one of the Ibn Falija family. Because of this, they³⁹ are known by the name of Ibn Falija to this day.

"R. Moses acquired³⁴ numerous disciples, one of whom was R. Joseph b. R. Isaac b. Shatnāsh,³⁵ alias Ibn Abitur. He inter-

²⁹ Gaon of Pumbeditha, 968-1006 (or 1004); cf. J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, I, 109 n. 2.

³⁰ Reading with MSS ש: < הַ מְשֻׁנָּה > בְּקִרְוֵי לְשׁוֹנָה

³¹ = 989/990 C.E.—Since this date is of crucial importance to our study, we give here the various MS readings. MSS ת read דְּתַשְׁרִין. Of the ש class, the readings are: דְּתַשְׁרִין י' דְּשִׁילִי while ש is corrected on the margin to דְּתַשְׁרִין. Cf. below, p. 109.

³² Both spelling and pronunciation of this name are uncertain. In each instance where the name appears, the MSS vary so widely that any measure of certainty appears beyond reach. I have adopted the form פְּלִיגָא, which is the one recorded, albeit not consistently, by MSS קפ (of the ש class). Professor Shraga Abramson has called my attention to his note in *Sinai*, XXVI (1949-50), 208 on a poem by Isaac b. Khalfon addressed to a Joseph פְּלִגָּה, who, he suggests, may be a member of this family.

³³ Sc., the descendants of R. Moses and R. Hanokh.

³⁴ Lit., had.

³⁵ Here again (cf. n. 32), the MSS give no certain evidence on the exact pronunciation of the name. Ibn Abitur himself claimed that the name represented a combination of two words, שֵׁשֶׁת אֲנָשׁ, "the whip (or scourge) of man" and that it was applied to an ancestor of his because of the latter's powers of capital punishment; cf. Ibn Abitur's letter as edited by J. Mann, "Varia on the Gaonic Period (Hebrew)," *Tarbiz*, VI (1934-35), 87 l. 18-88 l. 24. Whatever the merits of this etymology, the first and final letters must clearly have been pronounced as "sh." This conclusion seems to be supported by the pejorative interpretations given this name by Ibn Abitur's enemies; cf. J. Mann, *loc. cit.*, and *JQR*, NS, XI (1921),

preted the whole of the Talmud in Arabic for the Muslim King al-Ḥakam.^{35a} Because of his prominence³⁶ and his learning, he rejected R. Ḥanokh the Rabbi,³⁷ who had occupied his father's post. Accordingly, after the death of the great Nasi, R. Ḥisdai b. R. Isaac,³⁸ the community was divided by a bitter dispute. (In the days of R. Ḥisdai there was not a man in the world who could have disputed the authority of R. Ḥanokh.) Every day³⁹ there used to go out of Cordova to the city of al-Zahrā'⁴⁰ seven hundred Jews in seven hundred carriages, each of them attired in royal garb and wearing the headdress of Muslim of-

456 n. 19; S. Assaf, *Meqorot u-Meḥqarim* (Jerusalem, 5706), p. 115 n. 4.—In transliterating the name, I have adopted the form suggested by the spelling (חננוח) in the fragment published by J. Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine Under the Fatimid Caliphs* (2 vols. Oxford, 1920–22), II, 59; cf. also, Judah al-Ḥarizi, *Tahkemoni* (Edited by I. Toporovsky. Tel Aviv, 1952), ch. 3, p. 44.

35a Son and successor of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān III, reigned 961–976.

36 I.e., his lineage, cf. n. 35.

37 Although awkward in English, I have retained the order of the Hebrew to show how he was referred to.

38 Sc., Ibn Shaprut.

39 What follows illustrates the external manifestation of the factional fight.

40 Madīnat al-Zahrā' was the royal city some five miles west of Cordova founded by 'Abd ar-Raḥmān III in November 936; cf. R. Dozy, *op. cit.*, II, 174 (Eng. trans., p. 446). E. Lévi-Provençal, "Madīnat al-Zahrā'," *EI*, III, 92–93; *idem*, *La Péninsule Ibérique Au Moyen-Age* (Leiden, 1938) French trans. p. 117; G. C. Miles, *The Coinage of the Umayyads of Spain* (New York, 1950), pp. 43–46. I have given preference to al-Zahrā', for Ibn Daud seems to hint that the Muslim ruler involved was al-Ḥakam. On the other hand it is conceivable that Ibn Daud had in mind *madīnat al-Zahīra* (cf. *EI*, *loc. cit.*), the capital established by al-Manṣūr in 978. Whatever the case may be, it is illegitimate to argue in favor of the latter identification from Ibn Daud's statement that Ibn Abitur made off to "the academy of R. Hai," for, as is already fairly obvious, Ibn Daud was not particularly careful about the synchronization of names. R. Hai did not become Gaon until 1003–04 (J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, I, 109 n. 2), which is far too late a date in which to place Ibn Abitur's expulsion. By 992 Ibn Abitur was already well established as a judge in Egypt; S. Assaf, *Meqorot u-Meḥqarim*, p. 116.

ficials, all of them escorting the Rabbi.⁴¹ A second faction would escort Ibn Shatnāsh. Finally, the party of the Rabbi⁴² gained the upper hand, excommunicated Ibn Shatnāsh and banned him. [At that point] the King said to him: "If the Muslims were to reject me in the way the Jews have done to you, I would go into exile.⁴³ Now you betake yourself into exile!"

"Ibn Shatnāsh went from Spain to Pechina⁴⁴ and encountered there R. Samuel ha-Kohen b. R. Josiah, a member of the community of Fez. The latter was mindful of the ban of the Rabbi, R. Ḥanokh, and refused to converse with Ibn Shatnāsh. Thereupon, Ibn Shatnāsh angrily wrote him a long letter in Aramaic, in which he made a [grammatical] error. R. Samuel ha-Kohen replied to him, pointing out his error to him, but in a mild and tranquil tone. So Ibn Shatnāsh boarded a ship and went to the academy of Rabbenu Hai, being under the impression that Rabbenu Hai would receive him and that the latter was an enemy of R. Ḥanokh. [That impression] derived from the fact that the aforementioned four scholars had cut off the income of the academies, with the result that the academies had been reduced to impoverishment. Nevertheless, Rabbenu Hai let him know that he should not come, for if he should come he would observe the ban declared by the Rabbi. Accordingly, Ibn Shatnāsh went off to Damascus where he died.

"However, prior to that⁴⁵ the faction opposing the Rabbi, in-

⁴¹ This entourage (whether factual or not) was patterned after that of the Exilarch in Bagdad; cf. Benjamin of Tudela, *Itinerary* (Edited by M. N. Adler. London, 1907) Hebrew text p. 40, Eng. trans. p. 40. The purpose of these trips to al-Zahrā' was for each side to argue its case before al-Ḥakam, who finally decided the issue in favor of R. Ḥanokh.

⁴² Cf. n. 37.

⁴³ For ברה in this sense, cf. *MJC*, I, 66:9.

⁴⁴ MSS פק פק read באגנה א, which J. Mann, "Varia," *Tarbiz*, V (1933-34), 283 n. 156 suggested emending to עיר, since Pechina was not an island. This emendation is totally unwarranted, even if א is not a later gloss, for Pechina was a kind of peninsula and could be referred to as *jezira* (= א); cf. E. Lévi-Provençal, *La Péninsule Ibérique*, Translation pp. 47-50.

⁴⁵ Sc., to the death of Ibn Shatnāsh.

cluding those who supported Ibn Shatnāsh, had declined. Among these were two brothers, merchants [and] manufacturers of silk, Jacob ibn Jau and his brother Joseph. They once happened to enter the courtyard of one of the king's eunuchs, who was in charge of the land⁴⁶ of Tākurunna,⁴⁷ at a time when the Muslim elders of the territory under his charge had come to register a complaint against the officer he had appointed over them. They had also brought him a gift of two thousand Ja'afariya gold pieces.⁴⁸ No sooner did they begin to speak than the minister issued an order to humiliate them, beat them with clubs, and have them hustled off to prison. Now in the entrance to the palace there were a number of tortuous recesses into one of which the two thousand gold pieces fell. Although they⁴⁹ protested vigorously, no one paid them any attention. However, immediately [afterwards], Jacob ibn Jau and his brother Joseph entered [the palace], found the gold pieces and went off. Once they had arrived home, they took counsel [on the matter], saying: "[Since] we have discovered this money in the royal

⁴⁶ I.e., province.

⁴⁷ MSS ת read here ארץ תרכונה = Tarragona. Of the ש MSS בפק read הארץ an obvious evasion of a misunderstood name. Two remaining MSS give suggestive corruptions: א. לארץ תבראנה ה. ארץ תאכדנא. As noted by Bages, *op. cit.*, p. 53 n. 2, the reading of ה clearly suggests Takurunna, the province in the southern part of Spain; cf. E. Lévi-Provençal in *EI*, IV, 631; *idem*, *La Péninsule Ibérique*, Trans. p. 78. Although Tarragona was also the name of a province, it appears to me unlikely that that is what Ibn Daud meant here. The Arabs always spell Tarragona طرّكونة for which the Hebrew equivalent would be תרכונה; the distinction between ט and ת was usually carefully maintained in Spanish Hebrew translations. Moreover, the corruption of the relatively unknown תאכדנא to תרכונה is far more easily explained than vice versa. Finally, it should be noted that Takurunna (Ronda) and its mountain range were a fairly recalcitrant area and difficult to control. It is precisely from such an area that one might expect protestations against taxes; cf. R. Dozy, *op. cit.*, II, 3ff. (Eng. trans. pp. 308ff.).

⁴⁸ These are the *darāhim ja'fariya*, gold dinars minted at Madīnat al-Zahrā' (cf. n. 40) by al-Ḥakam between 967/68 and 969/70; cf. G. C. Miles, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-330.

⁴⁹ I.e., the humiliated delegation of Takurunna.

palace, let us make a solemn agreement⁵⁰ to return it there, coupled with gifts and offerings.⁵¹ Perhaps we shall be able in [that way] to rid ourselves of the abuse of our enemies and gain the support of the king." So they did just that, and they became successful in the silk business, making clothing of high quality and pennants that are placed at the tops of standards⁵² of such high quality as was not duplicated in all of Spain. They brought presents to King Hishām and to King al-Manṣūr ibn Abi 'Amir, his guardian,⁵³ with the result that King al-Manṣūr became very fond of Jacob b. Jau. Accordingly, the former issued him a note⁵⁴ placing him in charge of all the Jewish communities from Sijilmasa⁵⁵ to the river Duero,⁵⁶ which was the border of his realm. [The decree stated] that he is to adjudicate all their litigations,⁵⁷ and that he is empowered to appoint over them whomsoever he wishes and to exact from them any tax or payment to which they may be subject. Furthermore, he placed at his disposal eighteen of his eunuchs clad in uniform

⁵⁰ Lit., let us swear.

⁵¹ Viz., of funds and of goods.

⁵² Apart from eds. and MS י, all other MSS read: ונסים שמעלים על. However, ראשי הדגלים is obviously corrupt here, for it records the clause as ופסטים כמנהג ישמעאלים הלוברים מלבושים. This reading is not attested by any other MS and is consequently of no weight.

⁵³ Heb., אומנו, which SHQ probably uses for the Arabic *ḥājib* ("chamberlain"), al-Manṣūr's official title; cf. the legends on coins in G. C. Miles, *op. cit.*, pp. 60f.

⁵⁴ Lit., wrote him a sheet (= كتب له رقعة).

⁵⁵ In 976/77 or 979/80, Sijilmasa in Morocco fell to the Umayyad armies; cf. G. S. Colin, "Sidjilmasa," *EI*, IV, 404; G. C. Miles, *op. cit.*, pp. 46f.

⁵⁶ MSS ש spell the name in the following ways: דוירא ב דויררה. The correct spelling is thus preserved only by ב whose orthography corresponds to the Arabic نهر دويره. cf. Ibn Idhāri, *Kitāb al-Bayān al-Mughrib* (2 vols. Edited by G. S. Colin and E. Lévi-Provençal. Leiden, 1951), II. 295; cf. also *ibid.*, p. 178 (very bot.) وادي دوير. MSS נ and ה reflect the change of ו and ו respectively into a נ, while פ and MSS ת reflect the corruption of דויררה to דוירנה.

⁵⁷ Lit., over all of them. For the rendition of this and other phrases of the document, I have drawn on the translation in Baron, *SRH*, V, 44.

who conducted him in the carriage of a vicegerent. Then all the members of the community⁵⁸ of Cordova assembled and signed an agreement [certifying] his position as Nasi, which stated: "Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also."⁵⁹ Upon taking office, he despatched a messenger to the Rabbi, R. Ḥanokh, [threatening him] that should he adjudicate [a litigation] between two people he would cast him into the sea in a boat without oars!

"Thereupon, all those who had opposed Ibn Shatnāsh switched to the latter[*'s* side]. All [now] wrote letters to Ibn Shatnāsh [urging him] to return to Cordova and [assuring him] that they would remove the Rabbi, R. Ḥanokh, and appoint him as Rabbi over them. To these he replied sternly, saying of the Rabbi: "I call upon heaven and earth as my witnesses that there is no one in all of Spain as worthy as he of presiding over the academy."

"However, at the end of the first year of his rule as Nasi, Ibn Jau was thrown into prison by King al-Manṣūr. The latter had been under the impression that Ibn Jau would produce great profits⁶⁰ for him by taking money from Jews in all the communities by hook or by crook and then present it to him. Since [Ibn Jau] failed to do so, [al-Manṣūr] threw him into prison, where he remained for about one year. Finally, on the day of a Muslim festival, King Hishām happened to pass by the prison on his way from the palace to his house of worship, while Ibn Jau was standing in the entrance to the prison directly in the view of King Hishām. When the latter saw him he asked his guardian al-Manṣūr why he had done this to him. He replied: "Because he does not turn in any tribute from all his domain." Thereupon, King Hishām ordered that he be released and restored to his office. Although this was done, he did not regain quite the same [powers] which he had previously had.

"Because of this situation and because Ibn Shatnāsh had sent

⁵⁸ "Community" (קהל) signifies here as elsewhere in *SHQ* the Jewish community.

⁵⁹ This formula is taken verbatim from Jud. 8:22.

⁶⁰ Lit., gifts.

a stern reply to the community of Cordova, the Rabbi was not removed following Ibn Jau's reinstatement in office. Finally, [Ibn Jau] died within the lifetime of the Rabbi. The Rabbi, saint that he was, was extremely grieved at his death [as can be seen from the following.]. [Ibn Jau] died on a Friday evening, and one of the Rabbi's in-laws of the Ibn Falija family came to him, believing that he would be bearing good tidings with the announcement of Jacob's death. However, the Rabbi burst into loud weeping. Ibn Falija said to him in amazement: "I came to bear you the good tidings of the death of your enemy, but you obviously love the man who hated you."⁶¹ The Rabbi replied to him: "I am distressed about the poor who ate regularly at his table. What are they to do tomorrow? If you support them, I shall not weep; as for myself, I am unable to give them support." [This last remark stemmed from the circumstance] that the Rabbi was not a man of means. Because of his saintliness, he had refused to derive any profit from the honor of the Torah and consequently lived a life of austerity.

"The Rabbi, R. Ḥanokh, passed away in 4775, thirteen years before the passing of Rabbenu Hai, of blessed memory.⁶² Nevertheless, the communities of West and East did not resume the sending of gifts to the academies,⁶³ inasmuch as these scholars⁶⁴

⁶¹ Cf. II Sam. 19:7, from which may be derived the force of Ibn Falija's complaint. The Ibn Falijas had probably labored hard and suffered great humiliation for the sake of their kinsman, R. Ḥanokh. The latter now showed less concern for their relief than he did for Ibn Jau's fate.

⁶² As has been noted by many scholars, there is an obvious error in this statement, for, as Ibn Daud himself states (*MJC*, I, 66:23), R. Hai died in 4798, or twenty-three years after R. Ḥanokh. The reading of Abraham Zaccuto, *Yuhasin ha-Shalem* (Edited by H. Filipowski, London, 1857 [Frankfurt a.M., 1925]), p. 211 placing R. Ḥanokh's death in 4785 is an obvious correction. On the other hand, the reading at this point in the abridgement of *SHQ* by Samuel ha-Nagid (in the chronological section of his *Mebo ha-Talmud*, cf. below, p. 127 f.) is ה'תקל"ח , which is the way most scholars prefer to emend our text; cf. A. Harkavy, "Le-Toledot R. Samuel ha-Nagid," *Meassef* (Edited by L. Rabinowitz, St. Petersburg, 1902), p. 43 n. 3; A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, p. 308 n. 30.

⁶³ Sc., of Babylonia.

⁶⁴ The four captives and R. Ḥanokh.

raised many disciples, and [the knowledge of] the Talmud spread throughout the world.⁶⁵

"Now the custom of the Rabbi, R. Ḥanokh, of blessed memory, was as follows: Every year, on the last day of the Festival,⁶⁶ he used to go up [to the pulpit] to complete the reading of the Torah, accompanied by the outstanding men of the generation and the pillars of the congregation. In 4775 he went up in accordance with his custom, accompanied by the others. Since the pulpit⁶⁷ was old, it broke and caved in. [In the accident] the Rabbi's neck was broken, and he died a few days later—after having raised up many disciples."

II

Some one hundred thirty years have passed since Solomon Judah Loeb Rapoport first sought to elicit the historical data from this account of the capture and sale of the four captives. Since that time the story has engaged the attention of virtually every Jewish student of the Gaonic period. It suffices to recite the names of some of the major scholars who have tackled the problem of "the four captives" to realize how significant and how elusive it has remained: Rapoport, Lebrecht, Graetz, Hallevy, Schechter, Eppenstein, Poznanski, Blau, Aptowitz, Marx, Assaf, and Mann—to mention only twelve of those who are no longer living—have offered one or more solutions to the problems raised by this simple and yet baffling tale.⁶⁸ By and large,

⁶⁵ Sc., thus making them independent of the academies of Babylonia.

⁶⁶ Sc., of Tabernacles. The day of R. Ḥanokh's accident was the one now known as *Simḥat Torah*; cf. *JE*, XI, 364f. The annual completion in Diaspora communities of the cycle of the reading of the Torah on this day dates back to the Talmudic times; cf. B. Meg. 31a.

⁶⁷ Lit., the ark.

⁶⁸ For a survey of opinions and bibliographical references until 1928, cf. M. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 ff. For further studies, cf. V. Aptowitz, *op. cit.*; S. Assaf, "Li-Ṣemīḥat ha-Merkazim ha-Yisraeliyyim bi-Tequfat ha-Geonim," *Ha-Shiloah*, XXXV (1918), 276 f., 408 f., 506 f., *idem*, Review of Aptowitz's "R. Chuschiel and R. Chananel," *Kirjath Sepher*, X (1933-

the opinions of these scholars are divisible into two groups. The one dismisses the story as pious legend, based perhaps on a grain of truth, and contends, therefore, that students need not trouble themselves about squaring internal contradictions.⁶⁹ However, in the absence of conclusive evidence that the story is pure fiction, the other and minority group refuses to discredit the story and accepts it as basically correct. Where there are internal contradictions, the statements are emended; where there are patent misstatements of fact, they alone are summarily rejected.⁷⁰ In short, the choice has lain between impugning Ibn Daud's credibility as historian, or doing violence to his text in order to save his reputation. It is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that, on the one hand, the account is a fiction and was probably not intended by its author to be read as factual history and that, on the other hand, the text and data which have come down to us in *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* are essentially as Ibn Daud wrote them. Ibn Daud, of course, did make use of facts and genuine documents, and his story inevitably sheds light on historical events. However, the facts that do emerge are not necessarily the ones Ibn Daud wished to communicate.

34), 356; L. Blau, *op. cit.* below, n. 73; H. Z. Hirschberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 f.; Z. Jawitz, *Toledot Yisrael* (14 vols. Berlin and Tel-Aviv, 5725-5740), X, 122-126, 238-243; J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, I, 86, 110 f., 205; *idem*, "Varia on the Gaonic Period" *Tarbiz*, V (1933-34), 286 f.; M. Margulies, ed., *Halachoth Kezuboth* (Jerusalem, 1942), p. 9 n. 68; Baron, *SRH*, V, 46 f.; H. H. Ben Sasson, *On Jewish History in the Middle Ages* (Hebrew) (Tel-Aviv, 1958), pp. 107-108; A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, pp. 155 f.

⁶⁹ The grain of truth would seem to be that only R. Moses and his son suffered the mishap of capture and the subsequent good fortune as recounted by Ibn Daud. Two notable exceptions to this cautious stand are represented by Ludwig Blau (cf. below, n. 73) and Simon Eppenstein, *Beitraege zur Geschichte und Literatur in geonaeischen Zeitalter* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 149 ff., and esp. 211 ff., who dismiss the whole story outright.

⁷⁰ The most vigorous defense of the story in recent times has been made by Jacob Mann, who did not hesitate to emend names and dates, and to devise a theory of two Hushiels in Qairawan in order to smoothe the embarrassing contradictions to Ibn Daud posed by the letter published by Schechter; cf. next note. For Mann's theory, cf. refs. in M. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 15 f., 19 f. and above, n. 68.

It is perhaps best to begin with a summary of the acknowledged objections to the story as it stands. First, the event could not have occurred in 4790 A.M. (i.e., 990 C.E.), as Ibn Daud says, for 'Abd ar-Raḥmān died in 961. The chronology is further complicated by Ibn Daud's added statement that the events occurred in the days of R. Sherira Gaon, since R. Sherira did not become Gaon until 968, or seven years after the death of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān. It was essentially with these internal contradictions that Jewish scholarship concerned itself until the epoch-making publication in 1899 by Solomon Schechter of a letter from R. Ḥushiel to R. Shemariah b. Elḥanan.⁷¹ That letter demonstrated conclusively that R. Ḥushiel had come to Qairawan quite willingly in connection with a trip that originally was to take him to Cairo. There is not the faintest suggestion in the letter of any mishap, such as capture by pirates or foreign navies. Moreover, R. Ḥushiel prolonged his stay in Qairawan only to await the arrival of his son Elḥanan and in response to the request of the Jewish community there. In other words, Ibn Daud's story with regard to at least one of the principals was patently untrue.

Thanks to the discoveries from the Geniza, the end of the story has not escaped questioning. After his banishment from Spain, Ibn Abitur did not lead as sorry an existence as Ibn Daud would have us believe. Many doors were opened to him, among them that of R. Shemariah b. Elḥanan, that of the Gaon of the Palestinian community, and apparently even that of R. Hai, who corresponded with him and treated him with great courtesy.⁷²

⁷¹ S. Schechter, "Geniza Specimens. A letter of Chushiel," *JQR*, XI (1899), 643-650.

⁷² Cf. J. Mann, "Varia," *Tarbiz* V, 283 ff., VI, 84 ff.; S. Assaf, *Meqorot u-Meḥqarim*, pp. 115-118. On his prolific poetical writing in the Orient, cf. M. Zulai, "Bayn Kotlay ha-Makhon le-Heqer ha-Shirah ha-'Ibrit," *Alei Ayin: The Salman Schocken Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem, 5708-5712), pp. 91, 100, 110, 114.—In Egypt Ibn Abitur continued to fight against his Spanish opponents, who apparently tried to give him no rest; cf. J. Mann, *The Jews in Egypt*, I, 69 f., II, 59 f. and the refs. at the beginning of this note; cf. also A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-242, 246.—Is the vitriolic poem by Joseph b. Isaac Sefaradi published by I. Davidson by him? If so, is R. Ḥa-

In the light of these objections, most modern scholars have agreed that the first portion of this account, the one narrating the story of the capture, redemption and rise to fame of four captives, is a historical romance in which fact and legend are skillfully interwoven. Ludwig Blau sensed that the story is in reality but a specimen of a legendary genre, but he was unable to point to anything resembling Ibn Daud's story other than the legend about the founding of the medical school of Salerno. According to this legend, the medical school was founded by the Roman Magister Salernitanus, the Jew Elius, the Greek Pontus, and the Saracen Abdallah. However, Blau frankly cautioned that his suggestion was at best a conjecture and hardly a convincing parallel.⁷³ Nevertheless, Blau did point to a number of internal features of Ibn Daud's story that made it strongly suspect as the product of oral legend, if not of Ibn Daud's own imagination. Since these have occasionally, but by no means universally, been overlooked by other scholars, it would be well to list these also.

It is curious that four great scholars, each of whom was to become the head of a Jewish community, should be assembled

nokh its target? Cf. I. Davidson, *Liturgical and Secular Poetry* (= *Genizah Studies in Memory of Doctor Solomon Schechter*, III. New York, 1928), p. 320. The poem is hardly a satire, but a series of violent oaths!

⁷³ Cf. L. Blau, "Die Vier Gefangenen Talmudlehrer," *Festkrift I. Anledning af Professor David Simonsens 70-Aarige Foldesdag* (Copenhagen, 1923), pp. 129-133. The legend of the Salerno medical school was taken by Blau from W. v. Brunn, "Die Bedeutung Salernos fuer die Medizin," *Neue Jahrbuecher fuer das Klassische Altertum Geschichte und Deutsche Literatur*, XLV (1920), 385. V. Brunn states that in reality nothing is known of the origins of the school of Salerno other than the names of its legendary founders. "Daraus ersehen wir hoechstens, dass die Schule von vornherein auf freiheitslichster Grundlage errichtet war und dass die Zugehoerigkeit zur irgendeiner fremder Nation oder einer andern Konfession kein Hindernis fuer den Eintritt in die Schule gebildet hat." Blau, following v. Brunn, gives no date for this legend. In any event, the motif of this tradition is precisely the opposite of Ibn Daud's. The latter speaks of the dissemination of knowledge from one spot to remote corners of the Mediterranean area. The Salerno legend represents the accumulation of the wisdom of all peoples within the walls of one school.

on one ship. Ibn Daud tried to account for the problem by saying that they were going to a Kallah assembly. How thin this device was, Ibn Daud himself realized, for in the last analysis he had to admit that the whole affair was part of the divine plan.⁷⁴ Incidentally, it should be noted that Ibn Daud does not usually invoke the intervention of God into history except as a pious turn of speech.⁷⁵ But in this case he had to begin his story with the statement that what follows can only be explained as a kind of miracle. Indeed, only the Almighty could be called upon to explain why in the second instance the admiral was so kind to Jewish needs as to sell one scholar at a time, precisely in the area where he would be of greatest service.

Thirdly, the story of R. Moses' rise to the *dayyanate* of Cordova is strongly reminiscent of Hillel's rise to power as a result of the failure of the B'nay Bathyra to solve a ritual problem.⁷⁶ Moreover, the martyrdom of R. Moses' wife aboard ship is almost a verbatim reproduction of the incident reported in classical Jewish sources of children or adults who, after the destruction of the Temple, resorted to suicide by jumping from aboard ship to avoid compulsory prostitution and pederasty.⁷⁷

As indicated above, despite all these objections and suspicious circumstances, some modern scholars, of whom the most outspoken was Jacob Mann, have resolutely continued to defend the basic authenticity of the story. Now the only way to prove that the story is really a fanciful tale composed from typological themes is to isolate each of the motifs and to indicate exactly from where Ibn Daud or his source may have drawn them. Only in that way can the general impression that the story is not a

⁷⁴ Cf. above, n. 4 ; for the significance of "the divine plan" cf. below, pp. 90 f.

⁷⁵ Cf. *MJC*, I, 56:17; 63:23; 75:3; 80:4, 8 f., 23.

⁷⁶ Cf. Tosefta Pes. 4:1-2 (ed. Zuckerman, pp. 162 f.); B. Pes. 66a; Yer. Pes. 6:1, f. 33a. — Baron, *SRH*, V, 315 n. 65 rightly calls our story "a typical folk-tale about a career from rags to riches"; cf. also the midrashic motif discussed below, pp. 111.

⁷⁷ B. Gittin 57b. For midrashic parallels, cf. below, n. 87. This and other suspicious circumstances were emphasized by S. Eppenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

record of events either be confirmed or, if necessary, be debated. We begin, therefore, with the first suspect circumstance, namely, the presence of four scholars as captives on one ship, each of whom was landed at a separate location.

In the early years of the thirteenth century a number of writers in Provence and Germany explained the origins of the custom of reciting the long *we-hu Raḥum* prayer in the morning service of Mondays and Thursdays. Their explanation was based on a legend recorded in three principal forms, each of them clearly variations on the same basic theme.⁷⁸ One feature common to all of the forms is that the prayer was composed at a time of tribulation by three men, each of whom contributed one section.⁷⁹ A second feature common to all of the full accounts is that the authors of the prayer were exiles of Jerusalem who had been cast abroad to foreign parts by Vespasian or Titus.

In several of these legends, there appears an added motif: After the destruction of the Temple, Titus (or Vespasian) cast into the sea three ships filled with men and women, without a helmsman. The Almighty sent a stormy wind which drove the ships to the shores of three different kingdoms. The legends then proceed to tell how following their safe landing the Jews on one of the ships were subjected to terrible persecutions, from which they were miraculously delivered, and in connection with which three wise and pious men of their group composed the *we-hu Raḥum* prayer.

⁷⁸ For a full bibliography and classification of the forms of the legend, cf. I. Davidson, *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry* (4 vols. New York, 1924-1933), II, 183, No. 152, IV, 301 No. 152. To Davidson's scheme there may be added a possible fourth type, according to which the prayer was explained as a memorial for persons who actually died as martyrs; cf. Asher b. Saul of Lunel, "Sefer ha-Minhagot" in S. Assaf, *Sifran shel Ri-shonim* (Jerusalem, 1935), pp. 144-145. This "Sefer ha-Minhagot" was composed ca. 1210-1215, according to Assaf, *ibid.*, p. 125. Most recently, versions of types 1 and 3 were reprinted by B. Klar, ed., *Megillat Aḥima'aš* (Jerusalem, 1944), pp. 55-56. Cf. also next note.

⁷⁹ To the brief form of the legend cited by Davidson, *loc. cit.*, from *Šedah la-Derek*, may be added the similar statement in Nathan b. Judah, "Sefer ha-Maḥkim" (Edited by J. Freimann), *Ha'Eshkol*, VI (1909), 126.

Although some versions of the legend omit the motif of three helmless ships, and, consequently, of their landing in different ports, the theme does appear in at least one form of each of the three principal traditions on the origin of the *we-hu Raḥum* prayer.⁸⁰ It makes no difference, as we shall see, whether the theme of three ships driven by divine winds was indigenous to one recension and was later grafted on to the others, or whether the copyists of some of the recensions omitted an original theme of the three ships as irrelevant to the immediate story of the origin of the prayer. Of equally little consequence is the great variation between the different versions on the specific ports at which the ships landed.⁸¹ What is important is that in each version transmitting the theme of the three ships, they were helmless and helpless, and driven to different shores by a miracle.

Here we encounter a motif clearly related to the miraculous landing of the four captives. In both stories helpless captive Jews are placed by divine plan on different and remote spots of the earth. Secondly, in each of the stories, *three* landings are recorded: in the *we-hu Raḥum* story, by means of three separate ships, in the story of the four captives, from one ship. In any event, the landing of the three ships is *typologically equivalent* to the landing of the three captives in Ibn Daud's story.

The late Joshua Starr was the only one, I believe, who noticed the parallelism of motifs between the legend of *we-hu*

⁸⁰ 1) The theme is present in the form in which the sages are not named (Davidson's type 1); cf. A. Neubauer, "The Early Settlement of the Jews in Southern Italy," *JQR*, IV (1892), 616-619 (second story beg. with נִשְׁמָה). In this source the theme of helmless ships may have been grafted on to an original form in which the Jews arrived at one port on one ship. 2) The motif is found in connection with the tradition ascribing the prayer to Joseph, Benjamin and Samuel (Davidson's type 2). 3) It appears in the form recorded by Samuel of Bamberg, ascribing the prayer to Amittai, Shefatyah, and Yosifyah; cf. J. Perles, "Bibliographische Mittheilungen aus Muenchen," *MGWJ*, XXV (1876), 373.

⁸¹ Cf. H. Gross, *Gallia Judaica* (Paris, 1897) pp. 74f.; A. Neubauer, *loc. cit.*, in n. 80; J. Perles, *loc. cit.*

Rahum and Ibn Daud's story of the four captives.⁸² However, since Starr assumed that the *we-hu Rahum* legend was first reported in the middle of the thirteenth century by Samuel of Bamberg (died ca. 1250), he cautiously tended to dismiss that legend as late and possibly even as having been formulated under the influence of Ibn Daud's story of the four captives.

This, then, is the crux of the issue. Which version is earlier: Ibn Daud's story or the legend of *we-hu Rahum*? A closer examination of the origins and transmission of the *we-hu Rahum* legend will indicate that any question of influence by Ibn Daud is, to say the least, most unlikely.

There is weighty evidence that the Franco-German legend on the three helmless ships antedates Ibn Daud's story by at least a century. As Hans Lewy noted in quite another connection,⁸³ the motif of Jews being put to sea in three ships by Titus (or Vespasian) goes back to early Rabbinic accounts of the destruction of the Temple, specifically to *Abot de R. Nathan*,⁸⁴ where it is told that Titus dismantled the sacred vessels of the Temple "and filled three ships with men, women and children⁸⁵ in order to boast of his triumph abroad." Hence, the theme of three ships filled with captive Jews is an ancient one, probably of Tannaitic origin.⁸⁶

A second motif in the *we-hu Rahum* legend is the stress on the tri-partite formation of the prayer, and this, too, is traceable to classical Rabbinic legends of the destruction of the Temple.

⁸² J. Starr, *op. cit.*, pp. 115, 165.

⁸³ H. Lewy, "Imaginary Journeys from Palestine to France," *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, I (1937-38), 252 n. 2. — I owe the reference to Lewy's paper to Professor Elias Bickerman.

⁸⁴ *Abot de R. Nathan* (Edited by S. Schechter. Vienna, 1887. [New York, 1945]), II, 7, p. 20.

⁸⁵ Note the use of the identical words [וְשִׁים וְנָשִׁים וְיָלְדִים] in the *we-hu Rahum* legends published by Neubauer and Perles; cf. above, n. 80.

⁸⁶ In the passage in *Abot de R. Nathan* the three ships are an incidental detail representing the round number three; cf. Schechter's note there, p. 20 n. 23.

"Vespasian," the Midrash on Lamentations states, "filled *three ships* with eminent men of Jerusalem to place them in Roman houses of shame. The captives arose and said: 'It is not enough that we have provoked Him to anger in His Sanctuary, that we shall now do so also outside the Holy Land [by consenting to such immoral practices]!' They said to the women [who were in the ships], 'Do you desire such a fate?' They replied: 'No.' " They then said: 'If these women whose [fate is to be used] for normal coition refuse, how much more must we [men refuse to be used for perverted purposes]! Do you think that if we throw ourselves into the sea, we will enter into the life of the age to come [i.e., the Resurrection]?' Thereupon, the Holy One, blessed be He, enlightened their eyes with the verse: "The Lord said: I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea (Ps. 68:23)." 'I will bring them back from Bashan' [i.e., I will bring them back] from between the teeth of [*bayn shinay*] lions; 'I will bring them back from the depths of the sea' is to be understood literally.

"The first company [in the first ship] stood up and said: 'Surely we have not forgotten the name of our God, or spread forth our hands to a strange god (Ps. 44:21),' and they threw themselves into the sea. The second company [in the second ship] stood up and said: 'Nay, but for thy sake are we killed all the day (*ibid.*, v. 23),' and they threw themselves into the sea. The third company stood up and said: 'Would not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart (*ibid.*, v. 22),' and they threw themselves into the sea."⁸⁷

⁸⁷ *Midrash Ekhah* 1:45 (to Lam. 1:16); *Midrash Ekhah Rabbah* (Edited by S. Buber. Vilna, 188), pp. 81-82. The two recensions of the Midrash differ here in minor details. The translation is taken with some minor modification, from *Midrash Rabbah. Lamentations* (Translated by A. Cohen. London, Soncino Press, 1939), pp. 124-125. — Other versions of this legend appear in *Midrash Zuta* (Edited by S. Buber, Berlin 1894), p. 64 par. 13 and B. Gittin 57b. — The characteristic common to all of these sources is that they speak in terms of round numbers: B. Gittin 57 mentions 400 children, a stock round number in Rabbinic literature (cf. below, n. 115); *Midrash Zuta* speaks of 70 virgins, while the sources cited in the text speak of 3 shiploads of people. — The motif of punishment by exile in ships goes back, of course, to Deut. 28:68, in explanation of which *Midrash Haggadol ad loc.* cites the passage from *Midrash Ekhah*. Ibn Daud, or his source, may, indeed, have had this verse in mind, for the story of the four captives contains a fulfillment of the second part of the verse, "and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies." That this is not the plain sense of the verse is of no consequence to a homiletician.

Here we encounter two of the basic motifs present in the *we-hu Raḥum* legend: 1) three ships of exiles put to sea by Vespasian (or Titus) and 2) the recitation of three verses by three groups of martyrs. There is a third motif in this midrash, which is not in the *we-hu Raḥum* tradition, but which is in the story of the four captives—namely, suicide to preserve chastity.⁸⁸ But to concentrate for the present on the comparison with the *we-hu Raḥum* tradition, one element is lacking in the Midrash on Lamentations, the motif of helmless ships, which in the *we-hu Raḥum* legends is bound up with the miraculous landing in three different ports. However, this third element is also much older than Ibn Daud and the legendary motifs of the Franco-German school.

Hans Lewy⁸⁹ has shown that the story of three helmless ships was known to Christians of France and Spain by 1100, or more than half a century before the writing of *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* in 1161,⁹⁰ and at least a century before the recording of the *we-hu Raḥum* legend by its earliest transmitters.⁹¹ Thus, Petrus Alphonsi of Toledo, in his diatribe against the Jews (written ca. 1106–1110), cites in evidence of God's rejection of the Jews the fact that at the time of the Destruction many were cast to sea

⁸⁸ Cf. below, pp. 84 f. — On the other hand, the dependence of the *we-hu Raḥum* tradition upon early Jewish martyrological genres (of which the suicide to preserve chastity is one form), may be indicated further by the presence (in Davidson's type 1) of the motif of the taunt by the captor, "If you are of the seed of Abraham, I shall test you by fire as Abraham was tested," or "I shall test you with the test of fire to which Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were subjected." On this taunt in early martyrologies, cf. G. D. Cohen, "The Story of Hannah and Her Seven Sons in Hebrew Literature (Hebrew)", *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume* (2 vols. Edited by M. Davis, New York, 1953), Hebrew Vol. p. 116 and n. 38 there. The taunt is thus an alternate form for the martyrology of suicide recorded in Midrash Ekhah. The authors of the *we-hu Raḥum* legend appropriated one form, while the author of "The Four Captives" appropriated the other.

⁸⁹ H. Lewy, *op. cit.*, pp. 251–253.

⁹⁰ Cf. *MJC*, I, 61:21.

⁹¹ Cf. below, pp. 81 f.

in helmless ships.⁹² Alphonsi, who was trying to convince the Jews of their rejection on their own ground, would hardly cite a legend which the Jews themselves did not know as part of their tradition.⁹³ In other words, the motif of Jews being cast to sea in helmless or rudderless ships was known in Spain considerably before 1100. Now the motif of the helmless ships is bound up in the *we-hu Raḥum* legend with the miraculous landing on three different shores. Since Petrus Alphonsi, and hence, the Jews of Spain long before Ibn Daud knew the legend of the helmless or rudderless ships being cast to sea by Vespasian, it is only logical to assume that they also knew the legend of the ships arriving on different shores, indeed on *three* different ones, as Ibn Daud himself has it in his four captives story.

Lewy has also shown that towards the end of the eleventh century this legend was adapted by the monks of Vézaly, France, to explain the veneration of relics, which the monks claimed were of Mary Magdalene. To be sure, this motif of miraculous conveyance of saints across oceans goes back to pagan myths,⁹⁴

⁹² Petrus Alphonsi, *Dialogi* in J. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, CLVII, 571c: "In secunda [sc. captivitate] autem tot et tanta eis opprobra, et tam inaudita intulerunt . . . Occisi quidem sunt, sunt et cremati, et captivorum more venditi, adeoque crevit illa venditio, donec pro uno argenteo triginta darentur captivi, nec tamen inveniebatur qui emeret, sicut promisit Moyses dicens: *Venderis inimicis tuis in servos et ancillas et non erit qui emat* (Deut 28:68); Naves etiam ipsis impletæ, sine ullo remige vel gubernaculo vagari per pelagus sunt dimissæ, ad ipsorum dedecus et vilitatem. Præterea postquam in hac captivitate dejecti estis, intolerabilia vobis dabantur mandata etc." The parallelism between the motif of the four captives and the passage in Petrus Alphonsi was first pointed out to me by Professor Saul Lieberman.

⁹³ For Alphonsi's use of Jewish material, cf. S. Lieberman, *Shekiin* (Jerusalem, 1939), pp. 19 f., 27 f.; A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judæos* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 235 ff.

⁹⁴ Cf. H. Usener, *Die Sintfluthsagen* (Bonn, 1889), chs. III-IV, esp. pp. 108, 136; N. Delehayé, *The Legends of the Saints* (New York, 1907), pp. 30 f., 52. On myths of exposure and rescue in a boat set adrift, cf. S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (6 vols. Bloomington, 1955-58), V, 300 S 141. A closely related motif is one in which the sea (= god) cares for a hero or treasure; cf. B. Nelson and J. Starr, "The Legend of the

but the Christian legend of Vézaly has some of the peculiar earmarks of the Jewish form. Once again, we are driven to the conclusion that the story of the origin of the *we-hu Raḥum* prayer is neither the fabrication of Franco-German Jews of the thirteenth century, nor even the product of reworking by these Jews. It is rather an old Jewish motif, which may derive originally from pagan motifs, but which by medieval times was part of Jewish tradition the world-over.

The antiquity of the *we-hu Raḥum* legend can be further supported by the statements of those reporting the story. A close examination of the names of the transmitters of the *we-hu Raḥum* legend points not to a late German or Spanish source, as was believed, but to an Italian, i.e., a pre-Franco-German, provenance. The story of the three shiploads of exiles is reported in the first instance by R. Eleazar b. Judah of Worms (died 1238), who transmits the story in "the name of the Geonim,"⁹⁵ which means that he knew it as a much older tradition, if not indeed as a written one. The fact that in R. Eleazar's version of the legend all three ships land in French ports points to minor reworking of the story, but this is offset by other versions that speak of other countries.⁹⁶ On the other hand, these other versions point to the same source of information as R. Eleazar does. The latter, as is well known, reports that he received his copious lore on the origin and significance of the prayers from his father (died by 1199) and from R. Judah he-Ḥasid (died 1217) who, in turn, maintained that his traditions on the liturgy go back to Italy, to which they were brought by Abu Aaron of Bagdad.⁹⁷ A second version of the report, the

Divine Surety and the Jewish Moneylender," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, VII (1939-44), 304 ff., and esp. 306.

⁹⁵ A. Neubauer, "The Early Settlement," pp. 619-620.

⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 618, 620; J. Perles, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

⁹⁷ Cf. A. Neubauer and A. E. Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (2 vols. Oxford, 1886-1906), I, 418 no. 1204; and cf. the statement of R. Eleazar Roqeaḥ on the tradition of his masters in S. Assaf, "Li-Ṣemiḥat ha-Merkazim," pp. 282 f.; B. Klar, *op. cit.*, p. 57 and notes *ad loc.*, p. 128.

one noted by Starr, is transmitted by R. Samuel b. Barukh of Bamberg (died ca. 1250),⁹⁸ whose father and teacher, R. Barukh ben Samuel of Mainz, studied under R. Judah b. Kalonymos, the father of the aforementioned R. Eleazar of Worms.⁹⁹ This version points again to the same circle for its transmission, but more interestingly gives two of three points of debarkation as Italy and Africa.¹⁰⁰ There are two further points about Samuel of Bamberg's version that merit attention. In the first instance, his report ascribes the prayer *we-hu Raḥum* to Amittai, Shefatya and Yosifya, whose names clearly point to Italian origins.¹⁰¹ Secondly, even granting that Samuel of Bamberg's version is the product of a grafting of the theme of the three ships on to the story of Amittai, Shefatya and Yosifya—with reference to whom, the institution of the *we-hu Raḥum* prayer appears also without the legend of the ships¹⁰²—it is inconceivable that Jews of France and Germany would alter the names of the ports of debarkation from Franco-German ones to totally foreign ones, particularly in the light of the propagandistic overtones which their legend could serve.¹⁰³ If names have been altered, it is in the "earlier" version of R. Eleazar of Worms.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ J. Perles, *op. cit.* On Samuel of Bamberg, cf. M. Brann, A. Freimann et al., *Germania Judaica* (Frankfurt a.M. and Breslau, 1917-1934), p. 18; V. Aptowitz, *Mabo le-Sefer Rabiah* (Jerusalem, 1938), p. 408; E. E. Urbach, *The Tosaphists* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1955), pp. 354 ff.

⁹⁹ Cf. E. E. Urbach, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. H. Gross, *op. cit.*, p. 75; A. Neubauer, "The Early Settlement," p. 618 n. 1. Whatever the second point of debarkation was in this version, it manifestly was not a French or German one!

¹⁰¹ Cf. I. Elbogen, *Der Juedische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 77; J. Starr, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 ff.; B. Klar, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

¹⁰² A. Neubauer, "The Early Settlement," p. 616; M. Grosberg, ed., *Sefer Hoazmim* (London, 1901), pp. 51 f.

¹⁰³ Cf. H. Lewy, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that the version transmitted by R. Isaac b. Joseph (of Corbeil?), published by Grosberg *loc. cit.*, which is the same as that published by Neubauer in *JQR*, IV, 616, also goes back to R. Judah he-Ḥasid. This may well apply also to the second report on the three ships, in which the men who instituted the prayer are unnamed. In any case,

The reason for this change in R. Eleazar's version is not far to seek, for apart from the claim of antiquity which such changes lent a community, they had eschatological overtones.¹⁰⁵ The internal evidence of the version of Samuel of Bamberg, coupled with the fact that his traditions and those of Eleazar of Worms go back to the first generation of Jewish pietists in Germany, points not only to at least a mid-twelfth century *terminus a quo* for the legend of the three ships, but more probably to an Italian-Jewish source.¹⁰⁶ This conclusion coincides with everything we know about the sources of Franco-German Jewish lore in halakhah, mysticism, and not least of all, the Italo-Franco-

the observations on the names of the ports of debarkation hold for this version, too. Finally, the version transmitted in the name of R. Judah b. Eliezer Zevi in I. Baer, *Seder 'Abodat Israel* (Roedelheim, 5628), p. 112 is a verbatim reproduction of the version of R. Eleazar of Worms.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. S. Klein, "Mi-Saviv le-Milhamot Bethar," *Horeb*, III no. 1-2 (April-Sept., 1936), 54-55.

¹⁰⁶ B. Z. Benedict, "On the History of the Torah Centre in Provence (Hebrew)," *Tarbiz*, XXII (1950-51), 86 has contended that "the Geonim" in whose name R. Eleazar of Worms cites his tradition must have been the scholars of Narbonne. In support of his view, he cites the fact that the scholars of Narbonne were called "Geonim" (p. 86) and notes the great esteem in which the scholars of Northern France-Germany held the scholars of Narbonne (pp. 91, 94). Accordingly, he urges (p. 95) that many of the influences on Franco-German Jewry hitherto traced to Italy now he retraced to Provence. Whatever the merits of this contention in general, it certainly has not been argued convincingly with regard to the *we-hu Raḥum* tradition. In the first case, "Geonim" in the usage of R. Eleazar of Worms did not refer exclusively to Narbonnese scholars. Secondly, Benedict himself has pointed to the early close contact between Italian and Provençal Jewry (pp. 90 f., 95), and by his own canons it is possible to conjecture that the *we-hu Raḥum* tradition came to Northern France from Italy by way of Provence. However, even this explanation is not quite acceptable, in view of the fact that the Provençal scholars do not have the identical traditions on the subject as the Jews of the north. The Provençal codes record either a story of a single ship (Davidson's type 1), or refer to persecutions in a vague sort of way (the fourth type; cf above, n. 78). In other words, the motif of the three ships must have come from a non-Provençal source. It is at least this part of the tradition which, I contend, must have come from Italy.

German *payyetic* tradition and the concern of these communities with the origin of post-Talmudic prayers.¹⁰⁷

Thus, the evidence from classical Rabbinic tradition, from Petrus Alphonsi, from French-Christian sources, and from the Frano-German-Jewish traditions points to a common source much older than the twelfth (and certainly the thirteenth) century for the motifs appropriated independently by Ibn Daud and by the Jews of Northern France and Germany. For his story of the four captives, Ibn Daud drew on an old recension of the legend telling of Vespasian's deportation of Jews by ship.

That the motifs of three ships and helmless ships were in the mind of Ibn Daud will serve to explain two further aspects of the story of the four captives. First, in the account of the midrash on Lamentations of how Vespasian filled three ships with men and women,¹⁰⁸ the martyrs commit suicide to avoid sexual

¹⁰⁷ For characterizations of the Franco-German pietists, cf. M. Guedemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Kultur der abendlaendischen Juden waehrend des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit* (3 vols. Vienna, 1880-81), I, chs. IV-VII; G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1941), ch. III; Baron, *SRH*, VIII, 42. It should be noted, too, that the *we-hu Raḥum* tradition coincides in spirit with the general tendency of the Franco-German pietists and esp. of R. Judah he-Ḥasid to account for post-Talmudic rituals and prayers on mystical and homiletical grounds; cf. Guedemann, I, 93 f., 158 f.; Judah b. Kalonymos, *Sefer Yiḥusay Tannaim wa-Amoraim*. (Edited by J. L. Fishman. Jerusalem, 5702), pp. 13 f. That the *we-hu-Raḥum* prayer also had mystical (or, at least, symbolic) significance may be seen from the statement of R. Aaron ha-Kohen of Lunel, *Orhot Hayyim* (Jerusalem), 5717), I, 47a:

ויש בפסוק ["והוא רחום"] י"ג תיבות כנגד י"ג מדות וכנגד שמות האבות שהם י"ג.
In the light of all that has been said on the probable Italian provenance of the *We-hu-Raḥum* LEGEND, a word of caution is in place lest this be interpreted to mean that the prayer itself is of Italian origin. If it is, it certainly was a local rite that later spread far and wide. The Italian *Seder Ḥibbur Berakhot* (MS JTSA, acc. no. 48003; cf. A. Schechter, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy* [Philadelphia, 1930]) p. 79 states:

יש קהילות שנוהגין בשיני בשבת ובחמישי בשבת ליפול על פניהם אחר שמתפללין שמונה עשרה בתפילת הרבים ומבקשין רחמים מלפני הקב"ה לאחר עושה השלום
This may be an oblique reference to the prayer in question, but there is no mention of the *we-hu-Raḥum* prayer as such.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. above, n. 87.

profanation, and only after hearing the reassurance on resurrection in Psalm 68:23. Here is clear evidence that Ibn Daud had the midrash in mind, for how otherwise shall we explain the curious combination of coincidences—three captives, three ports, and the martyrdom of R. Moses' wife precisely according to a literary pattern?¹⁰⁹ Secondly, the conclusion that Ibn Daud was working from a literary paradigm will illuminate the peculiar threat of Jacob ibn Jau to R. Ḥanokh to cast him into the sea in a boat without oars, i.e., helpless!¹¹⁰ Coming from a Jew, this is a most peculiar threat, for nowhere, to my knowledge, do we find any reference to this form of punishment in Jewish communities. Here the author of the story of the four captives has given himself away, for the imagery that seemed most appropriate to him was one which lay close at hand in the model he had adapted to his immediate use. Moreover, in its context, Ibn Jau's threat is a defiance in kind of the divine plan: R. Ḥanokh had come to Spain through God's design aboard a ship. In retribution for his defiance of R. Ḥanokh, Ibn Abitur had to go into exile across the sea "in a ship."¹¹¹ Ibn Daud would, therefore, have Ibn Jau take his revenge against R. Ḥanokh by *lex talionis* and put the Rabbi into a boat, this time, à la Titus or Vespasian.¹¹² That Ibn Daud is fond of such literary symmetry will be demonstrated even more clearly in the analysis of his story.

Ibn Daud, of course, did not copy the midrashic prototype in its original form. He introduced two basic alterations. First, he rationalized the story by denuding it of miraculous qualities and presented the motif in its simplest classical form, capture

¹⁰⁹ Cf. above, n. 88.

¹¹⁰ Cf. above, p. 68.

¹¹¹ Cf. above, p. 65.

¹¹² It goes without saying that Ibn Daud had no way of knowing, except from possible unreliable hearsay, how Ibn Jau had threatened R. Ḥanokh, or whether he had merely deposed him without any threat whatever. As a medieval historian, Ibn Daud would supply the words appropriate to the occasion; cf. the observations of S. W. Baron, "Saadia's Communal Activities," *American Academy for Jewish Research, Texts and Studies II. Saadia Anniversary Volume* (New York, 1943), p. 64 n. 123.

by pirates, thereby passing off a likely tale which has troubled scholars down to our own day. The three scholars were placed on one ship, captured and ransomed in forms which were all too common and familiar to everyone in the medieval world,¹¹³ and brought to their respective ports in a most "fortituous" manner.

Of even greater interest is the second and major innovation of Ibn Daud's account, the change of the number of captives from the paradigmatic number three to four. For the past century, scholars have been at a loss to determine who was this fourth scholar whose name Ibn Daud says he does not know. But in reality, it was not only the name of the fourth scholar that Ibn Daud did not know. Of a fourth scholar, who should, by the needs of the story, have been sold in a fourth port of entry, Ibn Daud knew nothing. In the story of the four captives, there are only three scholars who landed at three points. Why, then, did Ibn Daud assert and reiterate that there were four?

Here, it must be admitted, we are confronted by two possibilities, but each of them will lead to the same conclusion that is already manifest from this discussion. To begin with, Ibn Daud's source on the helmless ships set adrift by Vespasian may have contained a variant tradition stating that there were four ships instead of three. Nor is this mere idle conjecture, for the number four (or its multiples) as a round and formalistic num-

¹¹³ Cf. the letter published by J. Mann, "The Responsa of the Babylonian Geonim as a Source of Jewish History," *JQR*, NS, XI (1922), 454 f., in which a communal representative on the way from Rome to Bari (! cf. above p. 58) announces that he has been robbed of his funds by pirates. Piracy and kidnapping were, of course, semi-official occupations during the reign of 'Abd ar-Rahmān; cf. R. Dozy, *op cit.*, II, 154 (Eng. trans., p. 430); E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane* (3 vols. Paris, 1950-53), II, 154 ff. On the regular redemption of captives by the Jewish communities, cf. Baron, *SRH*, IV, 177 f., 326 n. 34, and Index, s.v. "Captives," and "Ransom of Captives." Cf. also S. D. Goitein, "Autographs of Yehuda Halevi (Hebrew)," *Tarbiz*, XXV (1955-56), 397-401, 403-407.

ber is frequently encountered in Rabbinic sources¹¹⁴ and, significantly enough, has even left its traces in the story of Vespasian's ships. In the account of this story in the Babylonian Talmud it is not three shiploads but *four hundred* boys and girls.¹¹⁵ It is, therefore, quite conceivable that just as there was

114 In Rabbinic usage, "four" has several connotations: 1) It reflects the ancient concept of encirclement, "four" representing all directions (cf. below, n. 116), as in *Pirqay R. Eliezer* 4, *ד' כמות של מלאכי השרת מקלסין*; B.B.B. 74 b (end) *לפני הקב"ה; שבעה ימים וארבעה נהרות שמקיפין את א"י* (On the relationship between four and seven, cf. below, n. 116.) 2) "Four" figures prominently in ritual and legal contexts and thus reflects an ancient usage of "four" as a "sacred" number; cf. *JE*, XII, 117 f.; *Encyclopaedia Talmudit*, II, 153 ff. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York, 1960), p. 27 n. 17. 3) "Four" served frequently as a stock or formulistic number of schematization; cf. L. Finkelstein, "The Sources of the Tannaitic Midrashim," *JQR*, NS, XXI (1941), 225; *idem*, *Mabo le'Massektot Abot ve-Abot d'Rabbi Natan* (New York, 1950), pp. 83 f., 97 f.; and the collections in *Pirqay Rabbenu ha-Qadosh* in S. Schoenblum, *Shelosha Sefarim Niftahim* (Lemberg, 1877), f. 21a ff., L. Gruenhut, *Sefer ha-Liqqutim*, III (1899), 64 ff., and M. Higger in *Horeb*, VI (1941), 128 f., and 118 where other such collections are listed. Cf. also the modern collections of Z. Lerinman, *Oṣar Imray Abot* (Jerusalem, 1959), I, 372 ff.; I. Zeligman, *The Treasury of Numbers* (Hebrew), (New York, 1942), pp. 135 ff., which includes Biblical refs. — All this evidence, we believe, makes the conjecture on a possible variant of the story of Vespasian's ships with four as its schematic number all the more plausible. In the context of *SHQ*, the number clearly signifies the four ends of the earth. — "Four" as a formulary and sacred number is, of course, not an exclusively Jewish phenomenon; cf. S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, A 1029.2, Z 71.2; W. Wundt, *Mythus und Religion*, III (= *Voelkerpsychologie*. 2ed. 6 vols. Leipzig, 1904-1915, VI), 338 f., 354 f.; M. Plessner in *Sefer Yohanan Lewy* (Edited by M. Schwabe and J. Gutman. Jerusalem, 1949), p. 134; F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy* (New York, 1957), pp. 204 ff. The same observation holds true for many of the other motifs incorporated in our story. However, our purpose here is not to trace the general dissemination of these motifs but to show their accessibility to, and possible influence on, Ibn Daud.

115 Cf. above, n. 77. — "Four hundred" represents a magnification of the symbolism represented by the number "four." On multiples (or fractions) of a number signifying ideas closely related to the primal number, cf. R. Gordis, "The Heptad as an Element of Biblical and Rabbinic Style," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXII (1943), 17 ff. — Multiples of four by ten, one hundred, etc. are frequently encountered: 1) For "forty," cf. Z.

a variant recension that spoke of three ships and a third variant that spoke of seventy virgins,^{115a} so there was a fourth form

Lerinman, *op. cit.*, pp. 385 ff. and I. Zeligman, *op. cit.*, pp. 273 ff.; W. H. Roscher, "Die Zahl 40 im Glauben, Brauch und Schriftum der Semiten," *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historische Klasse der koenigl. Saechsischen Gessellschaft der Wissenschaften*, XXVII (1909), 100-116. Roscher has shown that in Jewish as well as in other Semitic cultures, "forty" itself became a primal symbolic number. Thus, the frequently encountered expressions of forty days and years represent Rabbinic continuations of the Biblical usage of "forty" as a cultic unity of time or as a generation. Similarly, the usage of "forty" in B. Gittin 57b (end)-58a is a metaphorical extension of the levitical usage of "forty *se'ah*" (cf. M. Miqwa'ot 1:7; 2:1), which Roscher, p. 102 n. 14, connects with "forty" as a cultic symbol of purification and atonement. Roscher's contention for the independent significance of "forty" is strengthened by the wide prevalence of this number as a significant one in Semitic and classical antiquity; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 93-138 and R. Hirzel, "Ueber Rundzahlen," *Berichte Ueber die Verhandlungen der koeniglich-Saechsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig Philologisch-Historische Classe*, XXXVII (1885), 6 ff. Consequently, it may be contended, "forty" cannot always be traced directly to the symbolism of "four." On the other hand, there can be little doubt that the number "four" and its symbolism lie at the root of the Biblical legal and schematic usages of "forty" and can, therefore, never really be dissociated from the number "forty" even in later Rabbinic usage; cf. Hirzel, *op. cit.*, pp. 62 f. and below, n. 116 for a fuller explanation. This assumption will explain the usage of "forty" as a round number in M. R. H. 1:6 and in the expression of B. Ber. 28a. תני מיניה ארבעין ומנין. "Forty" and the four directions are explicitly connected by R. Simai in his homily on the tablets of the Decalogue, which he describes as "tetragons" in Yer. Sheq. 6:1, f. 49d (ed. A. Schreiber, p. 71); 2) for "four hundred," cf. *Zion* (Hebrew), I (1840), 30. I. Zeligman, *op. cit.*, pp. 355 ff.; Z. Lerinman, *op. cit.*, pp. 373 f. In this connection it may be observed that even an "erroneous" figure may serve as partial confirmation of the frequency with which stock figures were used and, consequently, accepted. For examples, cf. L. Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* (3 vols. New York, 1941), III, 39 f.; R. Margaliot, "Le Heqer ha-Misparim ba-Talmud," *Sinai*, XLIV (1958-1959), 31 ff., and esp. 35 ff. Cf. also B. Gittin 57b where the victims of Bethar are said to have numbered four hundred myriads or four thousand myriads. To sum up, however the numbers are interpreted, "four" and its extensions are frequently encountered in Rabbinic literature, and we should not eliminate the possibility of another version of the Midrash on the shiploads of exiles containing the number "four."

^{115a} Cf. above, n. 87.

that spoke of four ships, representing the age-old Jewish symbolic number four.¹¹⁶ I venture to offer this conjecture in view of the many instances in Rabbinic literature where the numbers three and four are variants of each other.¹¹⁷ Ibn Daud

¹¹⁶ On the "four" winds, directions and ends of the earth, cf., e.g., Is. 11:12; Ezek, 7:2; Zech. 2:1-4, 6:1 (and cf. Y. Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-'Emunah ha-Yisraelit* [8 vols. Tel Aviv, 1936-1956] VIII, 235, 258 ff.). The same symbolism underlies the four-sided creatures of Ezek. 1; cf. G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (= I.C.C. New York, 1937), p. 11. In the book of Daniel, of course, "four" attains a new significance representing "kingdoms" or stages in history; cf. Dan. 2:38-39; 7:1 f. — As a symbol of the four winds and hence of the four corners of the earth, "four" has pre-Israelite roots; cf. J. and H. Lewy, "The Origins of the Week and the Oldest Asiatic Calendar," *HUCA*, XVII (1942-43), 8 f., 18 f. The evidence adduced there shows that "four" is an ancient variant of "seven." This would explain the frequent connection between multiples of four and seven. Thus, forty and seventy years signify stock events of time in the Bible, as in other literatures; cf. W. H. Roscher, *loc. cit.* Note, also, the relationship of "seven" to "forty" in the chronology of the Flood (Gen. 7:4, 10, 12) and in the theophany at Sinai (Ex. 24:16, 18). The reason that "four" itself is less prominent in the Bible than "forty" is because "four" as a culturally significant number was totally displaced by "seven," which was sanctified by the Creation. Hence, the "four"-scheme remained prominent and obvious only in larger units of time, i.e. forty days or years. In any event, I see no reason to explain the origin of "forty" in any way other than one would explain that of "seventy," namely as a multiple of the primal number; cf. above, n. 115.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Pirqay Rabbenu ha-Qadosh*, ed. Schoenblum, f. 21b, no. 5, f. 22a nos. 6, 7, 10, f. 23a nos. 20, 24, 26, f. 26b no. 4, f. 28a no. 24; S. Lieberman, "Hazanut Yannai," *Sinai*, IV (1938-39), 227 f. Further examples may be found in Z. Lerinman, *op. cit.*, pp. 372 ff. In the same vein, cf. the three-fold injunction in Abot 3:1 with the four-fold parallel in Abot de R. Nathan, I, 19 p. 69, II, 35; M. Sanhed. 10:2 שלשה מלכים and Tosef. Sanhed. 12:11 (ed. Zuckerman, p. 433) ארבעה מלכים. (As in nn. 114-116, these are random examples, and no pretense is made here at full and systematic recording.) — An interesting variant of this sort is the discrepancy on the number of followers assembled by the Egyptian prophet: Josephus, *Wars*, II § 261 refer to 30,000 while Acts. 21:38 reports 4,000! — Two possible objections need to be anticipated. First, the fact that other numbers have variants, or that three or four have other variants, does not gainsay our observation that four as a variant of three is a discernible phenomenon. Secondly, the fact that the variant statements have corresponding

would thus have retained the form of his source, but could not fill in on the details. It surely could not have escaped Ibn Daud that his confession of ignorance with respect to the fourth name would actually serve as an argument in his favor. Having conceded ignorance on one point, no one would be likely to question his air of certainty with respect to the remainder of the story.^{117a}

The second and by far the more likely possibility is that Ibn Daud himself altered the number three to four. In the first instance, this change would at once disarm any reader who would accuse him of appropriating outright an old form for the events Ibn Daud wants to have his audience believe. More important, the change was to a number that was not a vague, round number in Ibn Daud's mind, but a symbolic figure. In a passage in *Mishnat R. Eliezer* on the symbolic significance of the four species of vegetation employed ritually on Tabernacles, the text states:¹¹⁸

"Another interpretation [is that the four species] symbolize the four righteous men whom the Holy One, blessed be He, has placed within each and every empire to bring them [i.e., the Jews] salvation and to spread the Torah among them. They are the following: in the Babylonian empire—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; in the Persian empire—Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Nehemiah; in the Greek empire—the four sons of the Hasmonean, [of whom there had been five,] but of whom Judah the eldest had already been killed;¹¹⁹ in the Roman empire—Rabban Gamaliel, R. Joshua, R. Eleazar b. Azariah and R. Akiba. Similarly, after these [empires] the Holy One, blessed be He, will not forget them, as it is written: 'For the Lord will not forsake His people. (I Sam. 12:22).'"

differences in the number of details explanatory of the numbers also does not gainsay our contention. All we need establish is that in oral traditions three and four often interchange. Obviously, when the tradition is spelled out an effort will be made to supply a corresponding number of details.

^{117a} On the confession of ignorance as a mark of critical scholarship in Ibn Daud's milieu, cf. G. E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam* (Chicago, 1946), pp. 242 f.

¹¹⁸ *The Mishnah of Rabbi Eliezer* (Edited by H. G. Enelow. New York, 1933), pp. 103-104.

¹¹⁹ Lit., since Judah the eldest had already been killed. The tradition

This symbolism has made the four righteous in each of the four kingdoms the pivotal point in an old Rabbinic theme on God's eternal covenant with Israel.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the general promise in the Talmudic prototype of this midrash that God's covenant will endure for the age to come, or for the battle of Gog and Magog, is now subtly converted to a promise that the covenant will continue in empires subsequent to the Roman dominion. As is well known, the Jews of Spain regarded Ishmael (Islam) as the small or last born of the fourth kingdom foreseen in the book of Daniel.¹²¹ Hence, in keeping with the symbolism of *Mishnat R. Eliezer*, Ibn Daud could very logically extend the homily by pointing to the *four* scholars who initiated the salvation and spread of Torah among the Jews of the Muslim world after the eclipse of Jewish learning in Babylonia.¹²² In other words, four is the number symbolic of divine

is based on *Megillat Antiochus*; cf. S. A. Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot* (2 vols. Edited by A. J. Wertheimer. Jerusalem, 1950-1953), I, 327 n. 51. Note that in n. 53 there, Judah himself is reckoned as the equivalent of his four brothers.

¹²⁰ Cf. B. Meg. 11a (and R. N. Rabbinowicz, *Variae lectiones*, p. 41 *ad loc.*); E. Z. Melamed, *Halachic Midrashim of the Tannaim in the Talmud Babli* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem, 1943), p. 323.

¹²¹ Cf. Moses Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen* (Edited by A. S. Halkin. New York, 1952), pp. 18 f., and esp. Halkin's note there, p. 21 n. 21.

¹²² It is pointless to object that there would be a hiatus of some nine centuries between the last link of four mentioned in the passage of *Mishnat R. Eliezer* and the one which we are suggesting as Ibn Daud's extension of the chain. In the first place, homiletical constructions are absolved of conforming to logical canons (אין מקשין על האגדות). Secondly, the passage in *Mishnat R. Eliezer* does not claim that four scholars arise in every generation or even century, but only in every "kingdom." — Professor Moshe Zucker, who is currently preparing for publication the portions of R. Saadia Gaon's commentary on the *Pentateuch*, which he has rescued from Geniza MSS, kindly informs me that in the Gaon's comments on Lev. 23:40 many homiletical interpretations of the four species of vegetation are given but not the one we have cited from *Mishnat R. Eliezer*. Nevertheless, I cannot help feeling that the passage derives from one who was at least an admirer of Saadyanic homily, even as Zucker has shown that a great part of *Mishnat R. Eliezer* itself is derived from actual Saadyanic material; cf. M. Zucker, "Le-Pitron Ba'ayat Lamed-Bet Middot u-Mishnat R. Eliezer," *PAAJR*, XXIII (1954), Hebrew

providence over Israel,¹²³ and the *four* captives are truly the new dispersion, despatched by God to the four corners of the

section pp. 1-39. To begin with, the enumeration of the Hasmonean sons can hardly be an early Rabbinic one, the remonstrances of G. Alon to the contrary notwithstanding; cf. G. Alon, *Studies in Jewish History* (Hebrew) (2 vols. Tel-Aviv, 1957-58), I, 24. As indicated above, n. 119, the passage clearly postdates *Megillat Antiochus*. The interest of R. Saadia Gaon in *Megillat Antiochus* and in the Maccabean warriors is well known; cf. H. Malter, *Saadia Gaon, His Life and Works* (Philadelphia, 1921), pp. 173, 355; S. A. Wertheimer, *op. cit.*, I, p. 312; S. Atlas and M. Perlmann, "Saadia on the Scroll of the Hasmoneans, *PAAJR*, XIV (1944), 1-21. Secondly, the passage in *Mishnat R. Eliezer* has shifted the burden of the homily in B. Meg. 11a from the promise inherent in the covenant between God and Israel, where the saviors of Israel are mentioned by way of example, to the *four righteous* men of each empire. In the homily of *Mishnat R. Eliezer* the central role is assigned to the teachers of Israel (להושיען ולרבץ תורה). This new emphasis coincides strikingly with the one expressed by R. Saadia in his introduction to the *Sefer ha-Galuy*: "The fourth chapter will show that God does not leave his nation at any period without a scholar whom He inspires and enlightens, so that he [in turn] may instruct and teach her [i.e. the nation], whereby her conditions may be improved. The cause for this discussion was what I have witnessed [of His bounty] towards me and towards the people through me." (This translation is by H. Malter, "Saadia Studies," *JQR*, NS, III [1912-13], 492; for the Arabic, *ibid.*, p. 497 ll. 14-18, and A. Harkavy, *Zikron la-Rishonim* [6 vols. St. Petersburg and Berlin, 1879-1903], V, 155, Heb. trans. p. 154). Here, the righteous man, in this case the Gaon himself, is the divine instrument for bringing salvation to the people. This conception is a Jewish expression of feelings that gained wide currency in Muslim circles; cf. M. Zucker, *Rav Saadya Gaon's Translation of the Torah* (Hebrew) (New York, 1959), p. 8 n. 19. Whether or not the passage in *Mishnat R. Eliezer* was composed under Saadyanic influence, direct or indirect, it certainly coincided with ideals that Ibn Daud had absorbed from classical Jewish and from Judeo-Arabic sources, not the least of these being the works of the Gaon. Ibn Daud, accordingly, felt perfectly justified in carrying the homily further. In this connection it is worth noting the symbolic importance of the number four in Saadia's exegesis of verses; cf. Atlas and Perlmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 f., 14 f. (Is it mere coincidence that Saadia chose to speak of his own destiny in the fourth chapter of *Sefer ha-Galuy*?)

¹²³ Incidentally, the literary symmetry of which Ibn Daud is so fond is already inherent in the passage in *Mishnat R. Eliezer*, where each of the *four periods* is granted *four righteous men*.

earth, as it were, to bring the word of the Torah into the new and last stage of the fourth kingdom.¹²⁴ Here was a perfect reason for Ibn Daud to seize upon four scholars, for their arrival on the scene of history was a consolation—and consolation, be it remembered, is one of the prime functions of history¹²⁵—and evidence of the divine favor to Israel. This is what Ibn Daud means when he begins the story of the four captives with the words that it was the Almighty who brought about the collapse of the academies by His own act of sending “four” scholars to the remote corners of the Jewish world.

The fact that the “four” scholars came to their new homes by divine fiat provides the rationale for the break of Jewish communities throughout the world with the Babylonian academies.¹²⁶ Without this rationale, the subsequent behavior of the scholars and the members of their respective bailiwicks would be open to serious question. Not only would they have behaved treacherously to the acknowledged center of Jewish learning, but the four scholars themselves would have assumed their Rabbinic posts without having “received” authorization from a recognized link in the chain of Jewish tradition. Surely the attentive reader of *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* could not have failed to notice that in the whole history of Jewish oral tradition, which is the prime subject of Ibn Daud’s tract,¹²⁷ these four scholars were the only ones, with the exception of the first Moses, who had not “received” their authority from a recognized predecessor.¹²⁸ If the scholars were immune to the charge of be-

¹²⁴ That Ibn Daud shared the view, widely held by Jews in the twelfth century, that the Jews (and for that matter, the world at large) were rapidly approaching the fulfillment of messianic prophecies, specifically those of the Book of Daniel, will be shown in a separate study on the chronological scheme of *SHQ*.

¹²⁵ Cf. below, n. 134.

¹²⁶ Cf. above, pp. 69 f.

¹²⁷ *MJC*, I, 47:1 ff.; 78:15 ff.; 81:10.

¹²⁸ Note how careful Ibn Daud is to repair the breach in the chain of transmission when he comes to the first generation of the new period of Jewish history, the era of the Rabbinate. The disciples of the “four” scholars, who had “received” their authority from the original “four,” are re-

having like schismatics and rebels against authority, they must have had some special form of authorization.

This explanation helps account for another motif in *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, to which scholars have pointed as evidence of Ibn Daud's ignorance or of his tendentious motives.¹²⁹ Ibn Daud insists that the Babylonian Gaonate came to an end with R. Hai and that the academies closed down completely after the death of Hezekiah the exilarch.¹³⁰ Ibn Daud was manifestly aware that this was not quite true, for he himself tells of a Spaniard who presided as Gaon over the academy of R. Hai.¹³¹ Surely, he might have determined that the academies were open and continued to function, even if their influence had been severely curtailed.¹³² But Ibn Daud preferred not to know this, for the sake of his subtler arguments. The mantle of Torah was no longer in Babylonia; it had shifted by means of four scholars—who begin a new era—and finally settled upon the shoulders of the Spanish scholars alone.¹³³

authorized by R. Hai himself; *MJC*, I, 73:12–16. — There is, of course, no way of questioning the coincidence that the name of the scholar who comes to Spain without "authority" was Moses. For the present, therefore, there is no alternative but to assume that the wording in a responsum of Maimonides listing some outstanding authorities of Spain, (†) רבנו חנוך ור' משה בנו is a *lapsus calami* either of Maimonides or of a copyist; cf. Moses Maimonides, *Responsa* (Edited by A. Freimann, Jerusalem, 1934), p. 364. The slip is, of course, explicable in the light of the fact that the name of R. Moses' father was indeed Hanokh; cf. J. Mueller, *Die Responsen der spanischen Lehrer des 10. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1889), pp. 26 ff. and sources cited there; B. M. Lewin, *Otzar ha-Geonim* (11 vols. Haifa and Jerusalem, 1928–43), VIII, 163 no. 411, X, 151 (end). That the name of Hanokh's father was Moses is, of course, also independently attested; cf. Mueller, pp. 30 ff.

¹²⁹ Cf. S. Eppenstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 211 f.

¹³⁰ Cf. above, n. 3.

¹³¹ Cf. *MJC*, I, 75:14–17. Note Ibn Daud's conclusion there that the Torah now had to be imported to Babylonia from Spain!

¹³² On the Gaonate after R. Hai cf. S. Poznansky, *Babylonische Geonim im nachgaonaischen Zeitalter* (Berlin, 1914); J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, I, 202 ff.; S. Assaf, *Tequmat ha-Geonim we-Sifrutah* (Edited by M. Margulies, Jerusalem, 5715), pp. 125 ff.

¹³³ Note the outspoken statement in *MJC*, I, 73:25: וחזר כח התלמוד בארץ

III

"This interpretation of Ibn Daud's use of the number four," I suspect the reader will say, "is quite interesting. But what evidence can be offered that this interpretation is not a modern midrash on Ibn Daud rather than Ibn Daud's homily on history? In other words, can it be shown that Ibn Daud takes such liberties with history elsewhere by utilizing moulds into which he casts his facts and thereby alters them?" The answer is decidedly yes. It was in the first instance the evidence from Ibn Daud's general method of telling Jewish history that made us suspect that what we are dealing with is not a historical account but a homily, a romance with a moral.

It is a remarkable fact that virtually no modern scholar has taken seriously Ibn Daud's repeated contention that history is not a mere record of past events, but essentially a source of consolation for the Jew.¹³⁴ "Behold how trustworthy are the consolations of our God,¹³⁵ blessed be His name," he writes, "for [the number of years that transpired in] the redemption of the Jews corresponded exactly to that of their exile. From the beginning of their exile [at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar]

סדר. The subject of Egypt has been quietly dropped, either for lack of information, which is highly doubtful, or because Ibn Daud is concerned with demonstrating the supremacy of the Maghreb.

¹³⁴ Cf. *MJC*, I, 49:17 (the source of the quotation that follows); 53:7; 81:3-4; 82-1; Abraham Ibn Daud, *Dibray Malkhay Yisrael be-Bayyit Sheni* (Mantua 1514; Amsterdam, 1711), ed. Amsterdam f. 50a-b, 79a-b. The view that the record of history can afford consolation, i.e. can help to uphold the Jew in times of stress and persecution, is also expressed by Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, pp. 8-26. The bleak past foretold by the prophets, he indicates, can serve as assurance that their predictions of comfort will also be realized; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 78 and XV; *idem*, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, II, ch. 29. For the Talmudic roots of this view, popularized by Augustine and Orosius, cf. B. Mak. 24a-b. On the motif of consolation in Jewish literature, cf. A. S. Halkin, "Le-Toledot ha-Shemad Bihay ha-Almu'ahiddin," *Joshua Starr Memorial Volume* (New Yorw, 1953), p. 101.

¹³⁵ The consolations alluded to by Ibn Daud are of the type expressed in Jer. 31:27 (28), 32:42; Zech. 8:13, all of which prophecy a national restoration in a manner (which to Ibn Daud meant the extent of time) corresponding to the downfall of the people.

until the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of the monarchy [of Zedekiah], twenty-one years passed.¹³⁶ Similarly,

¹³⁶ The following is Ibn Daud's explanation of the first half of this statement; *MJC*, I, 49:19-50:2. "This follows, since the year which was partly the third and partly the fourth of Jehoiakim's reign [cf. Jer. 25:1 and Dan 1:1], Nebuchadnezzar began to reign and went up against Jerusalem. The Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, as well as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign. This was the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Seven years later, Jehoiakim died and Jehoiachin began to reign [cf. II Ki. 23:36; 24:12]. Then Nebuchadnezzar came up and carried away Jehoiachin king of Judah and . . . a total of seventeen thousand persons [cf. *ibid.*, 24:10-16]. However, in the book of Jeremiah [only] three thousand and twenty-three are recorded [cf. Jer. 52:28], for Jeremiah merely recorded [the number of] heads of families. . . . Nebuchadnezzar came up again in the sixth year of Zedekiah's reign, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and carried away eight hundred and twenty-two men of Israel [sic! cf. Jer. 52:29]. Again in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, he carried Zedekiah away and destroyed the Temple [cf. Jer. 52:30]. Because of the incomplete years among these [twenty-three of Nebuchadnezzar], only twenty-one complete years elapsed between the captivity of Daniel and the captivity of Zedekiah." That Ibn Daud is certain that Scripture reckoned twenty-three regnal years to Nebuchadnezzar from the third-fourth of Jehoiakim until the eleventh of Zedekiah follows also from the statement in *MJC*, I, 48:4-5. Why, it will be asked, does Ibn Daud insist on so untenable a chronology, one which contradicts Scripture (cf. II Ki 25:8 and Jer. 32:1!) and defies simple arithmetic? Underlying this seemingly bizarre arithmetic is the embarrassing Rabbinic tradition that the first Temple stood 410 years; cf. *Midrash Waiyikra Rabbah* 21:9, ed. M. Margulies, pp. 487 f., and parallels listed there. However, any actual computation of the reigns of the kings from Solomon onward belies this figure. Accordingly, Ibn Daud adopted the following solution. In any reckoning of dates, the figure 410 is the correct one and hence the real working figure. Thus *MJC*, I 48:3-5 gives the date of the Exodus as 2449 A.M. (so MSS \mathfrak{W} except for \mathfrak{N}) and the date of the construction as 2929 (so also *MJC*, I, 49:11) corresponding to the statement in I Ki 6:1. Since the Seleucid era began in 3449 (cf. below, n. 140 b), there elapsed 520 years from the date of the construction of the first Temple until the Seleucid era: \times of the Temple $+$ 70 of exile $+$ 40 of the second Temple, where \times must = 410. However, since the total number of years of the kings during the first Temple did not coincide with 410, Ibn Daud said that with regard to that period of history the 410 referred only to the period when the Jewish kingdom had been free; *MJC*, I, 48:4-5. From the point

of subjection, i.e., the third-fourth year of Jehoiakim, a new era begins and corresponds to the chronology of Nebuchadnezzar's reign recorded in Jer. 52:29-30. Unaware of, or having rejected, the classical interpretation of the chronology of the invasions listed in these verses (*Seder 'Olam* 26: cf. *MJC*, II, 61 or *Seder Olam Rabbah*, ed. B. Ratner [Vilna, 1897], pp. 119 f.), Ibn Daud concluded that the invasion of Palestine in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (Jer. 52:30) must be identical with one in which the Temple was destroyed. From this point Ibn Daud worked backwards in his synchronization of the earlier invasions of Nebuchadnezzar with the data given elsewhere in Scripture. The invasion listed in Jer. 52:29 as having occurred in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar must have been synchronous with the sixth year of Zedekiah's reign (against Jer. 32:1). On the other hand, since the date in Jer. 52:28 obviously could not fit this scheme, Ibn Daud interpreted it as recording the lapse of time following the first invasion in the third-fourth year of Jehoiakim (and not as the regnal year of Nebuchadnezzar). Finally, Dan. 1:1 enabled Ibn Daud to date the actual beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign in the third year of Jehoiakim. This gave Ibn Daud the advantage of reckoning nine years of Jehoiakim's reign in the category of subjection to Babylon, thus enabling him to arrive at a figure of twenty-one years "from the beginning of the exile until the destruction": 9 of Jehoiakim + 1 of Jehoiachin + 11 of Zedekiah. The only problem that remained for Ibn Daud was to resolve the contradiction between his own total of twenty-one years and the twenty-three which Jeremiah records. This he did by stating that Jeremiah records the official number of regnal years claimed by Nebuchadnezzar, while Ibn Daud's own figure represented the actual lapse of time. Those two figures do not tally, for between the terminal points of Nebuchadnezzar's first and last invasions, some of the regnal years of Nebuchadnezzar were "incomplete years." Thus, the first chronological year of Nebuchadnezzar's began at the end of Jehoiakim's third year (Dan. 1:1), let us say in the eleventh month of the year. In Nisan, Jehoiakim began to reckon the fourth year of his reign and Nebuchadnezzar his second regnal year. However, Jer. 25:1 still regarded this as the first actual year of Nebuchadnezzar's rule. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar's rule was credited with at least ten months more than actually belonged to it. In the course of the twenty-one years between the first invasion and the final one, the Jews intercalated their calendar regularly, i.e., seven times in the course of a nineteen year cycle, while the Babylonians did not. (Let it not be wondered that Ibn Daud might entertain the notion that the Jews employed a nineteen year intercalatory cycle in the days of the first Temple. Had not R. Saadia Gaon stated that the cycles were instituted by Moses! Cf. M. Zucker, "Shnay Qeta'im Neged Qara'iyyim," *PAAJR*, XVIII [1948-49], Hebrew Sect. 16 n. 66; S. W. Baron, "Saadia's Communal Activities," pp. 36 f.). This would require a subtraction of another seven months from

from the time that the rebuilding of the Temple had been begun until it was completed, twenty-one years passed."¹³⁷ Early

Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-three years. Finally, the Temple was destroyed in the fifth month of the year, requiring a subtraction of another seven months from Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year, giving a total of twenty-four months to be subtracted from Nebuchadnezzar's reign. To this explanation there are the serious objections that Ibn Daud is tailoring his figures to meet his preconceived needs, for the actual computation of years requires crediting to the chronology of Israel the very months he is denying to Babylon. Furthermore, I am at a loss to see at what point a sufficient number of "incomplete years" accumulated to allow for Nebuchadnezzar's regnal years to jump so far ahead after suffering a handicap of two years of Jehoiakim. It was certainly not at the end of the twenty-third year, for according to Ibn Daud's own explanation (cited at the beginning of this note), by Zedekiah's sixth year Nebuchadnezzar was already reckoning his own eighteenth. In other words, by Zedekiah's sixth year, which would normally correspond to Nebuchadnezzar's sixteenth (at most, seventeenth, according to our explanation), Nebuchadnezzar's official chronology had caught up with the total represented in Jer. 52:30. Indeed, this is not the only or even the most serious objection to his statements, as can be seen from Zacuto's protestations (cf. nn. 138-139). On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that Ibn Daud has an axe to grind and is therefore not overly concerned with details that contradict his theory. The juggling of figures gave Ibn Daud the results he wanted: a "harmonization" of Biblical and Rabbinic data; a total of twenty-one years from the beginning of the destruction until its consummation, thereby giving a period corresponding to the period of rebuilding (cf. next note); a total of 433, which provided him with a symbolic mnemonic (cf. n. 146), but which he never intended to be used as a basis for the computation of dates. It is this last point that Ibn Daud's critics ignored causing them to reject his calculations or to emend his figures.

¹³⁷ This figure is explained in *SHQ* (*MJC*, I, 51:5-10) as follows: The rebuilding of the Temple was begun in the first year of the reign of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1 f.), and final clearance to complete it was secured in the second year of Darius (*ibid.* 4:24). The interval between Cyrus' edict and the second year of Darius was of twenty-one years; 3 of Cyrus (cf. Dan 10:1) + 16 of Ahasureus (which is arrived at by the difference required to make up the 70 years of exile; cf. below) + 2 of Darius = 21. Ibn Daud takes as his terminal date that of Ezra 4:24 (rather than that of Ezra 6:15), because the second year of Darius completed the seventieth year from the Destruction (cf. Dan. 10:2) in the following way: the year of the Destruction (cf. *MJC*, I, 50:21) + 22 of Nebuchadnezzar after the Destruction (since Nebuchadnezzar reigned 45 years [cf. B. Meg. 11b] and 23 before the

in the sixteenth century Abraham Zacuto vigorously protested that this effort at a symmetrical reconstruction of Biblical history involved a contradiction of the explicit chronology of the Bible, and he proceeded to "correct" Ibn Daud's errors.¹³⁸ But surely Ibn Daud must have known the Bible and understood its plain sense. If, therefore, he departed from it to create a parallelism of twenty-one years for each of the two periods he is describing, the symmetry must have been of crucial importance to him—of such importance, in fact, that he would even emend Scripture!¹³⁹

The same symmetrical considerations lie at the bottom of the ostensibly bizarre statement that the first Temple stood for 427 years and was destroyed after a war of seven years.¹⁴⁰ This

destruction [n. 136]) + 22 of Evil Merodach (arrived at by reduction for the 70 years of *Babylon itself*; cf. Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10) + 3 of Belshazzar (Dan. 8:1) + 1 of Darius the Mede (Dan. 6:19, 9:1) + 21 of rebuilding = 70 years of destruction. (I have deviated in one detail from Ibn Daud's own explanation in *MJC*, I, 50:23-25, by including the year of the Destruction. Ibn Daud himself gives the impression there that the first year of Cyrus should be reckoned both to the first 49 years and to the last 21. In *MJC*, 50:25 the erroneous כ"ח of MS פ should be corrected to כ"א of all other MSS; cf. *MJC*, II, 252 *ad loc.*)

¹³⁸ A. Zacuto, *op. cit.*, pp. 81b f. Zacuto took vigorous exception to the chronology explained in n. 136, for Ibn Daud's scheme had compelled him to date the destruction of the Temple in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign contrary to II Ki 25:8 and Jer. 52:8. This premise involves further deviations from the Scriptural account such as the statement that there were two captivities within the reign of Zedekiah; cf. *MJC*, I, 49:25-50:1.

¹³⁹ Viz., in the case of Jer. 34:1, which Ibn Daud corrects to the sixth year of Zedekiah's reign in accordance with the premise explained in the previous note. It should be mentioned in passing that the liberties which Ibn Daud took were not entirely without precedent, cf. the statement of R. Tanḥum b. Ḥanilai in Yer. Ta'an. 4:8 f. 68c, "The chronology of Scripture is in error" (קלקול חשבונות יש כאן) with regard to Jer. 39:2; cf. also Tosafot to B. R. H. 18 b, s.v. *זה תשעה בתמוז*.

¹⁴⁰ *MJC*, I, 49:11-12. Azariah da Rossi, *Me'or 'Enayim* (Edited by D. Cassel. Vilna, 1864-66), ch. 35, p. 392 noted the strange figure here and proposed emending it to three. Ibn Daud's statement may go back ultimately to *Seder 'Olam Zuta* (*MJC*, II, 70) which states that Nebuchadnezzar put the Temple under siege in the fifth year of Zedekiah's reign.

would give the first Temple a life-span of 434 years, which contradicts Ibn Daud's earlier figure of 433 years,^{140a} but which corresponds exactly to the number of years that the second Temple stood.^{140b} Furthermore, although Scripture says the final war

^{140a} Cf. nn. 136 and 146. Of course, the two figures can be harmonized no matter how one interprets Ibn Daud's statement. If the statement means that the seven year war followed the period of 427 years, then it could be reasoned that the last of the 427 years and the first year of the war overlapped. If on the other hand, the war period is included in the 427 years, one could say that the last of the seven years of the construction of the Temple overlapped with the first of the 427 years. In any event, had Ibn Daud really wanted to remain consistent he could easily have done so by stating that the Temple stood for 426 years. That he did not indicates that his scheme was of far greater importance than chronological consistency. In this statement Ibn Daud tells us that the first Temple stood for sixty-two weeks of years ($62 \times 7 = 434$) precisely as the second Temple did; cf. next note.

^{140b} In the case of the chronology of the second Temple, Ibn Daud's figures are so contradictory and puzzling as to have evoked the same type of proposals made with reference to his figures on the first Temple, viz., to emend his text. In reality, the contradictions dissolve once we unravel Ibn Daud's schematology. As in the case of the first Temple, Ibn Daud gives three chronological totals for the duration of the second Temple: an official-traditional one, a "real" total, which in turn, is derived from an exegetical one, at which he only hints. We take up each one in turn: 1) According to Rabbinic tradition the second Temple stood 420 years; cf. B. Yoma 9a. Ibn Daud not only cites this figure in *MJC*, I, 50:13 but uses it throughout *SHQ* as his actual working figure; cf. *MJC*, I, 51:16, 21-22 with the date on 54:21-22. (Incidentally, the statement in 51:22 $\text{וְהָיָה שָׁנָה ג' וְהָיָה לְיַצִּירָהּ אֶלֶפֶים וְחָמֵס וְעָשְׂרִים}$ is lacking in MSS ש and should be deleted.) According to *SHQ*, the second Temple was built, and its chronology begins, in 3409 and was destroyed in 3829. 2) However, Ibn Daud felt required to harmonize the traditional figure of 420 with the divisions of history spelled out in Dan. 9:25-27. In accordance with these verses he allowed 441 years, or 63 weeks, from the beginning of the construction of the Temple until its destruction. This tallied perfectly with the requirements of Scripture and tradition, for it included the 21 years of construction and the 420 of the actual lifespan of the Temple; cf. *MJC*, I, 49:13-16, 50:25-27. The difficulty begins when one tries to fit the traditional figure of 420 years into the scheme described by Daniel. Accordingly, Ibn Daud concocted a new category which would combine both sets of data, "the years that the kingdom stood" or "the years of habitation" (*MJC*, I, 50:26, 27), which numbered 420 years. These were followed by a war of seven years giving

in the days of the first Temple lasted only three years (II Ki. 25:1-2), Ibn Daud doubtless felt that the period of its destruction should correspond to the period of building under Solomon (I Ki. 6:38)^{140c} and to the period of subjection to and war with Vespasian and Titus.¹⁴¹ Both Temples had to have parallel histories.

Symmetry, too, governs his description of the cycles of Roman and Persian dominion,¹⁴² and finally his problematic dates for

the following totals: a) 427 years from the beginning of this era until the destruction of the Temple; *MJC*, I, 50:13, 26-27, 51:1-4; b) 434 years from the beginning of the construction until the war began; c) 441 years from the construction to the destruction. However, in pointing to the era of 434 years corresponding to the 62 weeks of Dan. 9:25, Ibn Daud does not give the correct figure but says instead that 62 weeks of years equal 420 (*MJC*, I, 50:26, 51:1), which I. Loeb charitably corrected to 434; cf. I. Loeb, *Joseph Haccohen et les Chroniqueurs Juifs* (Paris, 1888), p. 90. Now, we submit that Ibn Daud knew that $62 \times 7 = 434$, but that he felt he should not say so, for he would quickly expose and undo his reckoning of an era from 427 years before the destruction. To retain the scheme of 420 in the face of the divisions of Daniel, the beginning of an era would have to be placed fourteen years after the beginning of the 434, or seven years before the end of the twenty-one year period of construction. For this Ibn Daud could produce no Scriptural evidence. Accordingly, he insisted that he was working with the traditional figure of 420 and fitting it in with the divisions of history described in Dan. 9. Thus, according to Ibn Daud, there is a difference between the chronology of the Jewish state and that of the Temple, precisely as there was in the case of the first Temple; cf. n. 136. Finally, he hints, only the real chronologies of the two Temples and kingdoms differed; the first Temple stood 410 or 433 years, while the second stood 420 or 441 years. However, the symbolic figures were very much the same: 427 and 434 and a war of seven years in the case of both.

^{140c} Incidentally, it may be noted that even on so indisputable a matter, Ibn Daud contradicted Scripture, for he repeats himself that the construction of Solomon's Temple began in the *third* year of his reign; cf. *MJC*, I, 48:8, 11-12. Since he needed to arrive at a total of 433, the statement of I Ki 6:1 and II Chr. 3:2 could be ignored. This point was already noted by A. A. Akavia, *Sidray Zemanim Le-fi ha-Masoret* (Tel-Aviv, 1943), p. 287 n.

¹⁴¹ Cf. above n. 140 b and cf. also Ibn Ezra to Dan. 9:24.

¹⁴² *MJC*, I, 59:18 f. For the Arabic source of Ibn Daud's division of

the redaction of the Mishna and the beginning of the Gaonic period.¹⁴³

Since he did not hesitate to depart from Scripture, Ibn Daud would obviously not shrink from tailoring Maccabean chronology to fit the frame he had set for it. In his sermon on Zechariah, he writes:¹⁴⁴ "When the prophet said, 'So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12)' he hinted at the thirty years during which the pious rulers reigned. They are: Matthias, surnamed the Hasmonean, one year; his son Judah, six years;¹⁴⁵ his son Jonathan, six years;¹⁴⁵; his son Simon, eighteen years. These are the thirty-one years (!) during which the faithful kings ruled." Note how unembarrassed our author is by the discrepancy between the figures of his own data and the figures of the verse he interprets allegorically. It is enough for him that they should correspond roughly for the homily to be appropriate. In the same vein, he probably tailored chronological data on the basis of Scriptural words which he translated numerically (*gematria*).¹⁴⁶

the cycles of Persian and Roman domination, cf. G. Levi della Vida, "La Traduzione Araba della Storia di Orosio," *AL-Andalus*, XIX (1954), 286.

¹⁴³ The redaction of the Mishna is dated 500 years after the termination of prophecy; (*MJC*, I, 51:22-23, 57:2, where all MSS, with the exception of ה נ, read correctly ק"ך לחרבן (ושנת ק"ך לחרבן). The Saboraic period is closed 500 years later; *MJC*, I, 62:17. The fact that these are symmetrical figures, and not based on faulty sources emanating from the academy of Sura, at once disqualifies the theory proposed by A. Epstein, "Meqorot le-Qorot ha-Geonim vi-Yeshivot Babel," *Festschrift zu Ehren des Dr. A. Harkavy* (Edited by D. v. Guenzberg and I. Markon. St. Petersburg, 1903), Hebrew section pp. 164-174 (= *Kitbay R. Abraham Epstein*. 2 vols. Edited by A. M. Habermann, Jerusalem 5710-17, II, 410-410). This will be elucidated fully in a paper on the chronological scheme of *SHQ*.

¹⁴⁴ Abraham ibn Daud, *Dibray Malkhay Yisrael*, ed. Amsterdam, f. 79b.

¹⁴⁵ This is the correct reading, recorded in ed. Mantua, 1514; the Amsterdam ed., *loc. cit.*, reads erroneously "seven"; cf. *MJC*, I, 52:18; *Dibray Malkhay Yisrael* f. 53a.

¹⁴⁶ In *MJC*, I, 48:3, 11 (cf. also 49:11-12), the Temple is said to have stood 433 years, which da Rossi, *op. cit.*, ch. 35 pp. 292 f. suggested emending to 430. However, cf. above, n. 136. Accordingly, I believe that the figure 433 derives from a mnemonic גלל which may derive from the defective spelling in Obad. 20. Ibn Ezra *ad loc.* quotes R. Moses Gikatilla for the

Ibn Daud, of course, was not the first to fit chronology into schematized frameworks. He had ample precedent in classical Rabbinic sources both for his symmetrical reading of history¹⁴⁷

interpretation of *גלת ההל* as signifying the first exile. Ibn Daud defends the figure 433 by reckoning 38 years to the Temple in Solomon's reign (cf. *MJC*, I, 48:8, which contradicts I Ki 6:1, II Chr 3:2).—In *MJC*, I, 52:14 the Antiochene persecutions are dated in the year 212 of the second Temple, contrary to the 213 of *Megillat Antiochus*; cf. S. A. Wertheimer, *op. cit.*, I, 319. Ibn Daud may have derived his date from a recension of *Seder 'Olam Zuta*; cf. *MJC*, II, 74:28 (= A. Zacuto, *op. cit.*, p. 92 col. b.). On the other hand, the agreement of *SHQ* with one datum of one recension of *Seder 'Olam Zuta* requires explanation, since Ibn Daud usually draws his information from *Josippon*. I submit that 212 is a mnemonic (ריב) going back to Is. 34:8: "For the Lord hath a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the controversy (לריב) of Zion." Matthias, the emissary of God's vengeance, reigned for one year; *MJC*, I, 52:17. In the absence of early evidence for such an interpretation, this is admittedly only a guess, but one which accounts for the peculiar datum.—The suggestion that Ibn Daud was fond of symbolic mnemonics, particularly at crucial points of chronology, will explain the peculiar feature in the dates of death of R. Ashi and R. Hai Gaon. Normally, dates of death are given in terms of *anno mundi*, but in the case of these two men the equivalent date of the Seleucid era is supplied in addition to the one regularly given; *MJC*, I, 59:4-5; 66:22-23. Why the sudden pleonasm? In the case of R. Ashi, Abraham Zacuto, *op. cit.*, p. 201 col. b, understood the Seleucid date *תשל"ח* as a mnemonic reference to Ps. 80:12, and his suggestion is most plausible. In the case of R. Hai, the mnemonic *ש"ט* (as in MSS *ש*) is suggestive of the withdrawal of Babylonian hegemony over the Jewish world and the end of the Gaonate, points which Ibn Daud belabors in *SHQ*. Thus the date of R. Hai Gaon's death stands in blatant contrast to the mnemonic date recorded by the MSS for the time of the arrival of R. Moses in Cordova; cf. below, p. 109.—Taken individually each of these suggestions may strike the skeptical reader as fanciful. However, viewed as a group, and coupled with all the other puzzling phenomena in *SHQ*, these *gematriaot* are by no means bizarre.

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Daud's scheme of periods of joy compensating for periods of sadness is an extension of the ancient interpretation of Ps. 90:15, "Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, according to the years wherein we have seen evil"; cf. B. Sanhed. 99a; *Pesikta Rabbati*, ed. M. Friedmann, I, f. 4a-b; and esp. the statement of R. Yose b. Ḥalafta in *Midrash Ekhah, Petihta*, par. 21 (ed. Vilna, f. 4d), explained further by Resh Laqish and R. Yoḥanan in *Midrash Ekhah*, ed. Buber, p. 16 (I am indebted to Professor Judah Goldin for calling my attention to the

as well as for his use of *gematria* to refer to crucial dates.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, both of these devices were employed independently by many medieval writers,¹⁴⁹ among them Ibn Daud's contemporaries, Judah ha-Levi¹⁵⁰ and Moses Maimonides,¹⁵¹ as well

passage in Mid. Ekhah). The symmetrical interpretations in these passages are eschatological; cf. below n. 154. Ibn Daud's statement, cited above p. 95, and his symmetrical examples are strikingly reminiscent of the statement in Pesikta Rabatti, 8, f. 24 a בוא וראה נפלאותי של הקב"ה which is illustrated by examples from the symmetrical design of the universe, and then by R. Hanina by examples from *history*. References to passages of this type of interpretation of history as well as of nature could easily be multiplied from classical Hebrew sources and are an outstanding feature of Jewish midrashic genres; cf. I. Heinemann, *The Methods of the Aggadah* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1949), pp. 64 ff. and esp. A. Mirsky, "The Origins of the Forms of Liturgical Poetry" (Hebrew), *Studies of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem*, VII (1958), 11-127.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (Ned York, 1950), p. 69; *JE*, V, 589 f.; *Ozar Yisrael* (10 vols. Edited by J. D. Eisenstein. New York, 1951), III, 208 f.; *Encyclopaedia Hebraica*, X, 683 f.; A. H. Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (New York, 1927; Boston, 1959), pp. 244 f. For use of *gematria* in legal exegesis, cf. also *Encyclopedia Talmudit*, V, 32 f.

¹⁴⁹ For symmetry, cf. A. H. Silver, *op. cit.*, pp. 71, 85 f., 87, 244 type C; for *gematria*, pp. 58 f., 66 f., 85, 210 f.

¹⁵⁰ Judah ha-Levi, *Diwan* (6 vols. Edited by H. Brody. Berlin, 1899-1930), Texts II, 302. Two points about ha-Levi's use of the mnemonic פתח (= 890) should be noted. First, the mnemonic is an old one, as shown by the independent use of it by Franco-German Jews; cf. A. Marx, "Studies in Gaonic History and Literature," *JQR*, NS, I (1910-11), 76. Secondly, the mnemonic itself is based on a symmetrical calculation. The messianic era is dated in a year 890 corresponding to the period that elapsed from the Exodus until the destruction of the first Temple (cf. *Seder 'Olam* 11, ed. Ratner, p. 48; B. Gittin 22a [bot.]: 480 from the Exodus until the construction of the Temple (I Ki 6:1) + 410 of the Temple (cf. above, n. 136).

¹⁵¹ For Maimonides' use of symmetry, cf. S. W. Baron, "The Historical Outlook of Maimonides," *PAAJR*, VI (1935), 100 f. and esp. 101 n. 192; Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, p. 82, where a mnemonic is also invoked. To be sure, Maimonides is citing old traditions (cf. Prof. Halkin's notes there and p. xii), but the point is that this type of tradition was quite in vogue and palatable even to a "philosopher." Note, too, the playful *gematria* possibly employed by Joseph b. Judah in a letter to Maimonides; Moses Maimonides, *Epistulae* (Edited by D. H. Baneth. Jerusalem, 1946), I, 19.-

as by Muslim¹⁵² and Christian¹⁵³ theoreticians of history. Ultimately, these devices are all connected with calculations of the date of the Messianic era or of the end of the present world,¹⁵⁴ a concern which Ibn Daud shared profoundly.^{154a} Ibn Daud merely appropriated a genre of historical writing that was very much in vogue and developed his own system, which he proceeded to conceal.

The significant point about these schematized dates in *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* is that history is always shown to conform to a pattern. It is in this very orderlines of history that Ibn Daud finds a source of consolation,¹⁵⁵ a source of hope that history will yet vindicate the Jewish hope for redemption.¹⁵⁶

Now the history of the four captives, we have seen, is essen-

On Maimonides' use of schematic numbers, cf. L. Strauss, "Maimonides' Statement on Political Science," *PAAJR*, XXII (1953), 125 ff., 129.

¹⁵² Cf. Ibn Khaldun, *op. cit.*, I, 235 f., 238 f.; II, 190 ff., 204 ff. Note the symmetrical eschatology on p. 188.

¹⁵³ Cf. H. Geizer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die Byzantinische Chronographie* (2 vols. Leipzig, 1898), I, 24 f., 54, 66; Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (Translated by I. W. Raymond. New York 1936), II:2-3, pp. 73 ff.; VII:2, pp. 320 f.; VII:27, pp. 360 f. Symmetry plays a basic role in the scheme of Ibn Daud's younger Italian contemporary Joachim of Floris; cf. K. Löwith, *Meaning In History* (Chicago, 1949), p. 149; E. Benz, *Ecclesia Spirituality* (Stuttgart, 1934), pp. 4 ff.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. the brilliant analysis of G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Zevi* (2 vols. Tel-Aviv, 5717), I, 7 ff. and esp. 75-78. Calculation of "the end" by these methods falls in the category of what Prof. Scholem calls (*ibid.*, p. 57) philosophic messianic speculation, for the calculator arrives at his date by application of the laws operating in the universe (= history). Messianic dates that are based on Scripture seek to derive from the revelations of the prophets the date of the fulness of time. In other words, the date of "the end" is not a break in the process of history but a preordained aspect of Creation and thus falls in the category of natural law. That is why "rationalist" philosophers like Ibn Daud and Maimonides, who shied away from what Scholem calls messianic fantasy, i.e., detailed descriptions of the wonders of the messianic age, could nevertheless entertain traditions or even speculate on the date of the end of the present age.

^{154a} This will be shown in a separate paper on the chronological scheme of *SHQ*.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. above, n. 134.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. esp. *MJC*, I, 82:1 f.; Ibn Daud, *Dibray Malkhay Yisrael*, p. 50 a.

tially a composite from old motifs which Ibn Daud refashioned in accordance with a homiletical theme promising regular manifestations of divine consolation for Israel.¹⁵⁷ It is, therefore, a not unreasonable supposition that the puzzling date which Ibn Daud gave for the event was also nothing but a symmetrical figure, i.e., a symbolic one. In the face of modern attempts to correct the date given by Ibn Daud, it should be noted that Ibn Daud knew quite well the names of 'Abd ar-Rahmān, of his fleet admiral, of his successors on the throne, and the circumstances of their rule.¹⁵⁸ He was, therefore, in a position to determine that the dates of 'Abd ar-Rahmān's reign did not correspond with those of R. Sherira's gaonate and certainly not with 4750 A.M. Since this date is not the first so-called "error" in Ibn Daud's chronology, which upon closer scrutiny is seen to be quite deliberate, perhaps there is no real date for the story of the four captives. Perhaps this date, like all the other mystifying dates in *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, is a sermon in itself, a midrash on history. But to validate such a supposition we must first unravel the meaning of this symbolic number.

"This event," Ibn Daud tells us, "occurred in the days of R. Sherira, in approximately 4750 [A.M.] somewhat more or less."¹⁵⁹ The words "somewhat more or less" are all important, for Ibn Daud uses them nowhere else with respect to the several hundred dates in his work.¹⁶⁰ Obviously, then, it means that the figure is not the actual date of the event and that Ibn Daud does not want to be held responsible for it. This is in keeping with the method of a man, who, contrary to the general impression, is extremely careful about the dates he lists for persons and events. Why this sudden vagueness?

Ibn Daud gives the clue to his esoteric meaning by his de-

¹⁵⁷ Cf. above, pp. 90 f.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. above, nn. 6, 7, 40, 47, 48, 53.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. above, p. 63.

¹⁶⁰ Ibn Daud regularly uses כְּמִן, "approximately," to indicate approximate intervals of time or durations of reigns. However, he does not use this word with reference to actual dates. Thus in *MJC*, I, 62:4 כְּמִן חֲמִישִׁים = forty-nine, for the resultant date is given without qualification.

scription of how R. Moses became *dayyan* of Cordova, a description which some scholars have noted is embarrassingly reminiscent of Hillel's rise to the position of *Nasi*.¹⁶¹ However, since Ibn Daud did not spell out any clue to the significance of the way in which, or time when, R. Moses achieved recognition, later generations of readers were thrown off the track. To recapture Ibn Daud's symbolism, we must first understand his theory on the status of some of the great luminaries of Jewish history.

As was already noted by Ch. Albeck,¹⁶² Ibn Daud has an amazing theory about the patriarchs of the house of Hillel. Hillel and his successors, he contends, held two separate posts, that of *Nasi* and that of head of the academy or *Rosh Yeshiba*. However, not always did they hold both positions simultaneously. Thus, when R. Gamliel II was deposed from office in Jamnia, and R. Eleazar b. Azarya elected in his place, the change was made only with respect to the position of *Rosh Yeshiba*. R. Gamliel's authority as *Nasi*, Ibn Daud indicates, was not affected.¹⁶³ Upon R. Gamliel's death, his son R. Simeon b. Gamliel took his place as *Nasi*, while R. Akiba became *Rosh Yeshiba*.¹⁶⁴ Only after R. Akiba's death did R. Simeon b. Gamliel become *Rosh Yeshiba*.¹⁶⁵

To return to our subject, Hillel came to Palestine from Babylonia and became *Nasi* one hundred years before the Destruction of the Temple,¹⁶⁶ i.e., in 3729 A.M.¹⁶⁷ In a later passage, Ibn Daud, quoting a well known Rabbinic statement, tells us that Hillel came from Babylonia at the age of forty, then

¹⁶¹ Cf. above, nn. 73, 76.

¹⁶² Ch. Albeck, "Ha-Sanhedrin U-Nesiah," *Zion*, VIII (1942-43), 166 n. 3.

¹⁶³ *MJC*, I, 54:27, 55:12. This theory was taken up independently by modern scholars; cf. Albeck, *loc. cit.*, and L. Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud*, III, 193 f.

¹⁶⁴ *MJC*, I, 55:15, 17.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 56:12; cf. also the meticulously careful wording in 54:11, 22; 56:17.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 48:15 (cf. also 54:2, paraphrasing B. Shab. 15a).

¹⁶⁷ Sc., since the Temple was destroyed in 3829; *ibid.*, 54:22.

spent forty years in study and forty years in teaching.¹⁶⁸ Now unless we are to assume that Ibn Daud did not care whether he contradicted himself or not, the two passages taken together can only mean that Hillel came to Palestine one hundred years before the Destruction, functioned simultaneously as *Nasi* and student for forty years and subsequently, for the last forty years of his life, served as *Rosh Yeshiba* as well as *Nasi*. This construction would coincide perfectly with Ibn Daud's theory of the patriarchate in general.¹⁶⁹ In other words, Hillel became *Rosh Yeshiba* in 3769 A.M., or 981 years before R. Moses came to Cordova and became *Rosh Yeshiba* under circumstances similar to those of Hillel's appointment.^{169a}

We now turn back to Ibn Daud's problematic date for the capture and sale of the four captives: "4750 a bit more or less." Let us take it as "a bit less," or 4749 A.M., and it follows that R. Moses became *Rosh Yeshiba* 980 years after Hillel had attained the same office. Now 980 is twice 490, and is thus a symmetrical figure.¹⁷⁰ However, this figure is all the more significant since 980 is two times 70 weeks of years, a figure which every Jew after Daniel regarded as a revelatory number.¹⁷¹ Turning

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 53:24-25, based on *Sifre Deut.*, par. 357 (ed. L. Finkelstein, p. 429).

¹⁶⁹ Cf. above, nn. 162-165. Incidentally, this explanation accounts for the puzzling statement in *Dibray Malkhay Yisrael*, f. 54b that John Hyrcanus served as high priest for forty years but ruled (= served as *Nasi* or king) for but thirty-one. (In *MJC*, I, 52:25, only ק reads שמונים; all other MSS, except for פ which give no figure at all read מ or ארבעים).

^{169a} Ibn Daud is thus giving a tacit commentary on the tradition in B. Pes. 66a, which reports that after Hillel vanquished the B'nay Bathyra הושיבוהו בראש, To Ibn Daud, the important datum here is הושיבוהו בראש, i.e., appointed him *Rosh Yeshiba*, while the phrase ומינוהו נשיא עליהם, which also appears in the parallel accounts (cf. n. 76) is disregarded. In the light of the contradictions of classic sources encountered elsewhere in *SHQ*, the present divergence from an explicit Rabbinic tradition should occasion no surprise.

¹⁷⁰ I.e., it represents the end of two periods of equal length; cf. above, pp. 95 f.

¹⁷¹ For Ibn Daud himself, cf. *MJC*, I, 50:7 ff.

now to Ibn Daud's alternative date, "a bit more" than 4750 i.e., 4751, we encounter an even more amazing symmetry. The Talmud, Ibn Daud tells us, was given its final redaction in the days of Rabbah Jose in the year 4260,¹⁷² or 491 years after Hillel became *Rosh Yeshiba* in 3769. R. Moses, on the other hand, became *Rosh Yeshiba* of Cordova in 4751 or 491 years after the redaction of the Talmud. In other words, from Hillel to the redaction of the Talmud the same number of years elapsed as from the redaction of the Talmud to the advent of R. Moses in Spain. Spain, Ibn Daud is guardedly telling his reader, had found a new Hillel. The perceptive reader would now see renewed significance in the statement:¹⁷³ "Behold how trustworthy are the consolations of our God, blessed be His name, for [the period of] their redemption corresponded exactly to that of their exile." Every Jew knew, and Ibn Daud had been careful to remind his reader, that 490 was originally a number of doom, for that was the number of years which elapsed between the destruction of the first and second Temples.¹⁷⁴ However, the Almighty had manifested crucial signs of His everlasting covenant with Israel by spacing the agents of salvation—Hillel, the Talmud, R. Moses—at corresponding points in time.

There is another curious coincidence about this date as it is reported in the better MSS of *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*. In the superior family of MSS the date is reported not as דתש"ן, as we should expect and as the poorer MSS have recorded it "correctly," but as בקרוב לשנת דש"ן.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, this curious error occurs in several MSS, none of which copied from the other. Here it is important to note that although the MSS sometimes omit the letter signifying the thousands-cipher, in this case the ד, they never omit the letter representing the figure for a hundreds-cipher, in this case the ת. The error is, of course, easily explicable if we assume that what was originally intended was בקרוב לשני תדש"ן or even more probably בקרוב לשנת תדש"ן. The

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 61:18.

¹⁷³ Cf. above, p. 95.

¹⁷⁴ *MJC*, I, 50:13.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. above, n. 31.

copyists of the better MSS merely shifted the η from the date itself to the preceding word. This virtually certain explanation of the queer recording of the date $\eta\delta\psi\eta$ is all the more striking, for $\eta\delta\psi\eta$ is, of course, a Hebrew verb suggesting increase or blessing. Can it be only pure coincidence, therefore, that on the verse in Ps. 23:5, "Thou hast anointed [$\eta\delta\psi\eta$] my head with oil, my cup runneth over," the midrash offers the following comment:¹⁷⁶

"On what grounds did the sages institute the four cups of Passover? . . . R. Joshua b. Levi said: 'In allusion to the four cups of fury which the Holy One, blessed be He, will make the nations of the world to drink. . . . Corresponding to these the Holy One, blessed be He, will give Israel to drink four cups of salvation in the age to come, as it is written: O Lord, the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup, Thou maintainest my lot (Ps. 16:5); Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou hast anointed [$\eta\delta\psi\eta$] my head with oil; my cup runneth over (*ibid.* 23:5); I will lift up the cup of salvations, and call upon the name of the Lord (*ibid.* 116:13). Scripture does not say 'the cup of salvation,' but 'the cup of salvations'—one in the days of the Messaiah and one in the days of Gog and Magog.' "

If Ibn Daud had this passage in mind, the very form of recording the date would be a hint that R. Moses' arrival was an instance of the divine blessings to Israel.¹⁷⁷ The interesting point about this passage is that the word "salvation" is the same as the one used in the passage cited earlier about the role of scholars in each of the four empires.¹⁷⁸ Once he had arrived at a suitable date based on a symmetrical scheme, Ibn Daud found that the date coincided further with an auspicious mnemonic. He, therefore, recorded the date in a form that would serve as

¹⁷⁶ Gen. R. 88:5 (ed. Theodor Albeck, pp. 1081-83). The translation with minor modifications, is taken from *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis* (2 vols. translated by H. Freedman. London, Soncino Press, 1939), II, 816-17.

¹⁷⁷ It should be noted that the Midrash does not state that all "the cups" will be given to Israel in the Messianic age. In fact, in view of the end of the passage, the $\eta\delta\psi\eta$ might easily be construed by Ibn Daud to mean the future in general.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. above, n. 118.

a commentary on the significance of the event: the very year of the event was an illustration of the divine comfort to Israel, a theme to which Ibn Daud devoted his "History of the Kings of Israel in [the days] of the Second Temple."^{178a} In view of all the other puzzling "coincidences" about the story of the four captives which we have already encountered, I do not think we can dismiss the strange orthography $\eta\psi\omega\eta$ as a mere coincidence. It is probably but one more specimen of mnemonic words (*gematriaot*) with which Ibn Daud liked to play on occasion.¹⁷⁹

Having established the significance of the date and circumstances of R. Moses' rise to authority, we may turn to a further motif which Ibn Daud wove into the story of R. Moses and his companions. While aboard ship, "these sages did not tell a soul about themselves or their wisdom." After arriving in Cordova, R. Moses sat in a corner of the academy like a menial attendant until he was recognized and showered with wealth and honor. What we are encountering in these flourishes is nothing other than a motif well known from classical and medieval literature as well as from the folklore of many nations: the "recognition" motif, whereby the prince or noble is taken for a slave, a menial or a beggar and finally is recognized by "a sign" (*anagnorisis*) which reveals his true origin and station.¹⁸⁰ Here again we are in a position to point to the Rabbinic source on

^{178a} Cf. above, n. 134.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. above, nn. 146 f.

¹⁸⁰ For a summary of these motifs and their dissemination in classical and European literature, cf. S. Trenkner, *The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* (Cambridge U., 1958), pp. 31 ff., 60 ff., 91 ff.—As Prof. A. S. Halkin observed in a discussion of this point, the "recognition motif" was very much in vogue in Ibn Daud's day, as evidenced by the essential role it plays in the *maqama* form; cf. S. M. Stern, "The Arabic Original of the Maqam of 'The Cock' of al-Harizi (Hebrew)," *Tarbiz*, XVII (1945-46), 98. Significantly enough, the *maqama* form occasionally contains the theme of a man who claims that he has fled from a Christian country and appeals on that ground to his sympathetic (Muslim) audience; *ibid.*, p. 89 and n. 8a there. The story of R. Moses is thus a variation of a stereotype much in vogue at the time. Cf. below, n. 185.

which Ibn Daud probably drew. In a homily on Prov. 4:2, "For I give you good doctrine," a Rabbinic midrash offers the following illustration:¹⁸¹

"Once a scholar (חבר) happened to be aboard ship with many merchants, who kept on asking the scholar 'Where are your wares?' To this he would reply regularly: 'My wares are better than yours.' Although the merchants searched through the ship, they were unable to find anything belonging to him, and they began to mock at him. Subsequently, pirates fell upon them and took off with everything that was on board. When the merchants reached port and entered the town, they had nothing to eat or to wear. But what did the scholar do? He went to the house of study and lectured. When the people of the city saw that he was a man of great learning, they got together and began to honor him greatly, by providing him with a worthy stipend [ועשו לו] [פסיקתו בגדולה ובכבוד]. The pillars of the community began to walk to the right and left of him and to accompany him [wherever he went]. When the merchants [who had been aboard ship] saw what had happened, they came to him and pleaded with him, saying: 'We beg of you to do us a kindness and put in a good word for us with the people of the city, since you know who we are and what we lost aboard ship. Please, do us a good turn and ask them for as little as a piece of bread for us, so that we don't die of hunger.' He said to them, 'Didn't I tell you that my wares are better than yours? Yours are lost, but mine are quite intact.' This is what is meant by 'For I give you good doctrine.'"

The first to call attention to this source in connection with the story of the four captives was Z. Jawitz, who felt that the homily was based on Ibn Daud's story.¹⁸² On the other hand, A. Ashtor has recently contended that the likelihood is that Ibn Daud drew on the midrash.¹⁸³ In view of all that we have seen of Ibn Daud's method, there can be no doubt that Ashtor is right. The most that may possibly be conceded is that some glossator added a phrase or two to the midrashic homily from

¹⁸¹ *Mid. Tanhuma*, Terumah, par. 2 (end); cf. also below, n. 184.

¹⁸² Z. Jawitz, *op. cit.*, X, 238 ff.—Besides the obvious parallelism of capture by pirates, "recognition" and change of fortune as the consequence of a public lecture, Jawitz made much of the expression in the *Tanhuma*, ועשו לו פסיקתו וכי, cf. *MJC*, I, 68:22.

¹⁸³ A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, p. 290 n. 14.

Sefer ha-Qabbalah.^{183a} But that the midrashic motif is far older than Ibn Daud is beyond question, for it appears in a somewhat variant form, i.e., with none of the stylistic usages reminiscent of *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, but with no change in basic motif, in compilations that had no access to Spanish sources.¹⁸⁴ Ibn Daud thus adapted an old sermon on the cash-value of Torah to the needs of his subject. What further proof do we need that it is not history that Ibn Daud has written, but a sermon, an artistic allegory on the special providence reserved for Israel and for the guardians of the Torah!

Ibn Daud does not tell us *how* the other captives became heads of their communities not because he did not know—that would not have stumped an artist like Ibn Daud—but because he did not care. Ibn Daud's real concern is the Jewish community of Spain. To the extent that other Jewish communities illustrated and bore out what Ibn Daud was saying, he invokes them, too. What Ibn Daud wants to tell us is that R. Moses' arrival in Spain—and of R. Ḥushiel in Qairawan and of R. Shemiah in Cairo—marks the transition to a new era in Jewish learning, the era of the Rabbinate. The arrival of the "four" captives in their respective new homes spells the end of the Gaonate and hegemony of Babylonia and, on the other hand, the beginning of learning the world over.

To sum up: Our analysis of the story has shown that each

^{183a} Sc., the phrase referred to in n. 182.

¹⁸⁴ *Midrash Tanhuma* (2 vols. Edited by S. Buber), II, Terumah, par. I, p. 89, which is the source of this passage in *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Exodus, par. 363, and *idem* Prov. 4:2, par. 936. The homily also appears in this form, with minor verbal changes, in *Sefer we-Hizhir le-Seder Shemot* (Edited by I. M. Freimann. Leipzig, 5633), p. 153. Those sources lack the phrase cited in n. 182 but have an interesting variant that bears mention. In this version, when the men aboard ship ask the *haber* what his wares are, he replies: "My merchandise is concealed" (מִרְצוּעַת הַיָּא). *Sefer we-Hizhir* says that while all the others boasted of their merchandise, the scholar sat in quiet seclusion (וְזוֹה הָיָה מִרְצוּעַ יוֹשֵׁב וְשׁוֹתֵק). Cf. Ibn Daud's words (*MJC*, I, 68:6) "These sages did not tell a soul about themselves or their wisdom." The motif of *concealment* of the merchandise is not expressed quite so clearly in the *Tanhuma* "edition" (cf. n. 181).

of the motifs and details of "fact" is clearly explicable in terms of sources available to Ibn Daud and, above all, in terms of Ibn Daud's general method of writing "history." The conclusion is inescapable that the story of the four captives has come down to us as it was written by Abraham ibn Daud. In its present form it is not a legend, but a consciously and brilliantly contrived novella or historical romance. Like many another novella it employs ancient motifs, which its author reworked to provide entertainment, edification and solace. Moreover, even the belletristic structure conforms to ancient patterns: the tragedy of capture, rape, wandering, reversal of the fortune of the unrecognized hero for good, retribution for the wicked, and ultimate vindication of the righteous.¹⁸⁵ Within the artistic motifs there have been woven subtle Jewish midrashic ideas and chronological devices—such as historical symmetry and *gematriaot*. Ibn Daud, we submit, should be read for what he was: not a historian, but an artist, a preacher and a moralist, whose aim was to demonstrate that the Eternal of Israel will not fail or forsake his people.

IV

If the story of the four captives must be classified as fiction, its author does hint at certain historical circumstances, which for obvious reasons he was reluctant to spell out. What, then, is the historical substratum of the tale?

First, as has been universally acknowledged by modern scholars, Ibn Daud reflects the sentiment of the leadership of Spanish Jewry that they need not turn to the Babylonian academies

¹⁸⁵ Although each of the elements in the novella can be traced to Rabbinic sources earlier than Ibn Daud, the combination of elements is strongly reminiscent of the form of the Greek novella; cf. ref. in n. 180. It is quite possible that Ibn Daud had a novella paradigm in mind, which he filled in with details adapted from older Jewish sources. The novella form was certainly available to him from Arabic literature, which gave the old Hellenistic motifs new life from the ninth century onward; cf. G. E. von Grunebaum, *op. cit.*, ch. IX and esp. pp. 298 ff.

for legal advice and religious instruction. There can be little doubt that a positive program to make Spanish Jewry religiously and culturally autonomous was pursued, if not indeed initiated, by the courtier Ḥisdai ibn Shaprut. It was doubtless also under his directive that R. Moses attained the *dayyanate* of Cordova. The appointment was but one of a series in a campaign to attract men of learning and literary talent to the community of Cordova.¹⁸⁶ On occasion, Ibn Shaprut withdrew his support from former favorites and transferred his patronage to more acceptable newcomers. The classic case of such a shift of favor is the transference of support from the native Spaniard, Menahem b. Saruq, to an immigrant from Fez and student of the Babylonian academies, Dunash b. Labrat. Moreover, Ibn Shaprut was not above using violence against his former favorite and had Menahem thrown into prison. Significantly, the partisans of both scholars engaged in a bitter factional fight with charges and counter charges of ignorance, ineptitude and even of religious deviation.¹⁸⁷

It is inspiring to read in our story of the readiness with which the native R. Nathan the Pious stepped down from his position before the learning of the unknown "captive." A more realistic surmise would be that if there was such a person as R. Nathan, he was removed by Ibn Shaprut, even as R. Ḥanokh was later deposed by Jacob ibn Jau. R. Moses should be regarded as one of the intellectuals, who came to Cordova in the wake of the large migration of Jews (and non-Jews) during the reign of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān,¹⁸⁸ or who were invited to Cordova by Ibn Shaprut and provided with a livelihood.¹⁸⁹

In pursuing this program, Ibn Shaprut was merely applying to the Jewish community what his master, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān III, had done in his break with the Eastern Caliphate and in his proclamation of himself as Guardian of the Faith and Com-

¹⁸⁶ On Ibn Shaprut's cultural policies, cf. A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Baron, *SRH*, VII, 20 f.; A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-170.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, pp. 146 ff.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 160 and the remarks of Baron, *SRH*, VII, 22 (text to n. 21).

mander of the Faithful.¹⁹⁰ To be sure, Ibn Shaprut did not break openly with the Jews of Babylonia. That was neither necessary nor desirable. With one hand he continued to contribute to the Babylonian institutions,¹⁹¹ but with the other he set about establishing the Jews of Cordova—and all of Spain—as an autonomous unit.¹⁹² However, in establishing this new autonomy Ibn Shaprut would seem to have structured the community under his power after the pattern of the community of Babylonia. He himself retained civil authority, like the exilarch of Babylonia, while religious authority was relegated to the *Rosh Yeshiba*, the Spanish counterpart of the Babylonian Geonim. This, at least, is how Ibn Daud seems to understand the structure of the Spanish Jewish community.^{192a}

The Geonim of Babylonia, of course, could not look with equanimity upon these developments. They cajoled, pleaded and appealed to ancient precedent and sentiments, but they

¹⁹⁰ Ibn Daud makes this quite clear by his statement that the King was delighted by R. Moses' arrival in Cordova. Ibn Daud's testimony is confirmed by Ibn Juljul *apud* Ibn Abi 'Usaibia; cf. P. Luzatto, *Notice sur Abou-Ioussouf Hasdai Ibn-Shaprout* (Paris, 1852), p. 8; J. Mann, "The Responsa of the Babylonian Geonim," *JQR*, NS, IX (1918), 169 n. 163. The fact that Ibn Abi 'Usaibia places the break with Babylonia in the reign of al-Ḥakam in no way conflicts with our thesis. Ibn Abi 'Usaibia may have slipped or he may have attributed the open break to Ibn Shaprut, although the policies first became apparent in the days of al-Ḥakam with the complete triumph of the anti-Babylonian faction. On 'Abd ar-Raḥmān's policies, cf. R. Dozy, *op. cit.*, II, 146 f., 173 f. (Eng. trans., pp. 423 f., 445 f.). That the Jewish break with Babylonian hegemony occurred at the time, and as a consequence, of the Muslim break with the Eastern Caliphate was noted by J. Mann, *Texts and Studies* I, 111 f.; cf. also E. Rivkin, "Some Historical Aspects of Authority in Judaism," *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook*, LXI (1951), 373.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Dunash b. Labrat, *Shirim* (Edited by N. Allony. Jerusalem, 1947), p. 70 l. 35-36, and esp. S. Abramson's note *ad loc.*, p. 134.

¹⁹² How far the break with Babylonia went may be gathered from the report of Ibn Juljul (cf. above, n. 190) that under Ibn Shaprut the Jews of Spain began to regulate the calendar without recourse to the academies of Babylonia; cf. H. J. Bornstein, "Dibray Yemay ha-Ibbur ha-Aḥaronim," *ha-Tequfa* XVI (1922-23), 286 f.

^{192a} Cf. below, nn. 193, 215.

could do nothing.^{192b} The academies of Babylonia declined steadily, while Spanish Jewry continued progressively to stand on its own feet. But the tension continued for centuries. Shortly after the writing of *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, Moses Maimonides would unhesitatingly assert to the Gaon of Babylonia that the Rabbis of Spain were Geonim in their own right and need not wait for guidance from Bagdad.¹⁹³ Moreover, the evidence suggests that Maimonides had imbibed this sentiment early in life, while yet in Spain, from his own teachers.¹⁹⁴ The last thing Ibn Daud would want to do was to play into the hands of the Karaites, who delighted in internal Rabbanite dissension,¹⁹⁵ by

^{192b} Cf. J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, I, 87, 111 f.; A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, pp. 157 ff.

¹⁹³ Cf. Maimonides, *Responsa*, pp. 364-365; cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 43 f., 80 1.2. Maimonides' statements, of course, reflect not only the break with Babylonian hegemony but also the extended application of the term "Gaon" that began with the rise of autonomous academies in Palestine, Egypt and the West; cf. S. Poznanski, *Babylonische Geonim im nachgaonaischen Zeitalter*, pp. 79 ff. and esp. 104 ff. Indeed, Maimonides categorically defines "Geonim" as the scholars of note who flourished after the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud and elucidated it; cf. Maimonides, *Epistulae*, I, 58 n. to l. 4, where refs. are given.—As observed by B. Z. Benedict, *op. cit.*, p. 86, the addition of the title "Gaon" in the West indicates that at least some of these communities tried to set themselves up as a neo- or quasi-Babylonia. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the office of "Nasi" or "Nagid" begins to appear locally at about the very time that the title "Gaon" is appropriated outside Babylonia; cf. H. Z. Hirschberg, "The Salars and Negidim of Kairawan (Hebrew)," *Zion*, XXIII-XXIV (1958-59), 166 ff.

¹⁹⁴ Professor Saul Lieberman kindly called my attention to Maimonides' Commentary on M. Bekhorot 4:4, where Maimonides distinguishes sarcastically between the bearers of titles and the bearers of valid authority. Cf. further, Maimonides, *Epistulae*, I, 54 ff.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. the Prologue to *SHQ*, *MJC*, I, 47:1 f. and esp. 1. 6 f. For the Karaites' charge on this ground, cf. S. Pinsker, *Likute Kadmoniot* (Vienna, 1860), Appendix, pp. 24, 26 f.; J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, I, 558 f., and esp. L. Nemoy "Al-Qirqisani's Account of the Jewish Sects and Christianity," *HUCA*, VII (1930), 377 f., 396. Cf. also Z. Ankori, *Karaites in Byzantium* (New York, 1959), pp. 269, 357 f.; M. Sultanski, *Zeker Şaddiqim* (Edited by S. Poznanski. Warsaw, 1920), Introduction p. 15 n. 2; M. Mar-

speaking openly of a break with Babylonian Jewry. Accordingly, he wrote in terms that thinly concealed the real issue at hand.

The story, I believe, reveals a second and more immediate purpose, which first emerges from the sequel, namely the account of the vicissitudes of R. Moses' son and successor. Behind the partisan description of R. Ḥanokh's career, there probably lay a bitter feud between the Ibn Falija—Ibn Shaprut faction, on the one hand, and the Ibn Abitur—Ibn Jau party, on the other. R. Moses and R. Ḥanokh, Ibn Daud makes it clear, were members of the Ibn Shaprut faction, who could not be touched so long as "the great Nasi" was alive.¹⁹⁶ Only after Ibn Shaprut's death, there began a struggle for power in which the Rabbinate took open sides with the contenders for civil leadership over the Jewish community, R. Ḥanokh siding with the Ibn Falijas,¹⁹⁷ to whom he was related by marriage,¹⁹⁸ and Ibn Abitur with the Ibn Jaus.¹⁹⁹ The real reason for the Caliph's condemnation of Ibn Abitur to exile may well have been not so much his defiance of R. Ḥanokh as an ill-timed espousal of Ibn Jau.²⁰⁰ One can only hazard the further guess that in his

gules, *The Difference Between Babylonian and Palestinian Jews* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1938), pp. 20–23, 52–56; Baron, *SRH*, V, 22, 282.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. above, p. 64; *MJC*, I, 69:8–9.

¹⁹⁷ It is worthy of note that in a poem addressed by Isaac b. Khalfon to Joseph Falija (?) (cf. above n. 32), the poet omits the name of the addressee because of the fear of enemies; cf. A. Scheiber, 'Qeta 'Ḥadash mi-Diwan ha-Meshorer R. Isaac b. Khalfon,' *Sinai*, XXVII (1950), 219, no. 5, and S. Abramson's notes thereto, *ibid.*, XXVIII (1950–51), 125. If the poet is serious about his fears, and the addressee is indeed a member of the Ibn Falija family, we have an additional sidelight thrown on the intrigues that were carried on between the contending parties. Ibn Khalfon wrote at the very time that the Ibn Falijas and the Ibn Jaus would have been in the thick of their battle; cf. H. Schirmann, "Isaac ibn Halfon (Hebrew)," *Tarbiz*, VII (1935–36), 294 ff.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. above, p. 63.

¹⁹⁹ Baron, *SRH*, V, 45 suggests that Ibn Abitur lost face with the Jewish community by betting on Ibn Jau, who could not retain his hold on the position of Nasi for more than a year.

²⁰⁰ Ibn Daud appears to hint that prior to its rise to power the Ibn Jau family had been suffering serious disability owing to the activity of their

fight against R. Ḥanokh, Ibn Abitur appealed to the Jews of Spain by invoking their tradition of loyalty to the academies of Babylonia, with which R. Ḥanokh had broken quite openly.²⁰¹ If he did, he most certainly evoked the suspicion of the Western Caliph, who quickly ordered him out of Spain.²⁰² In the Orient, Ibn Abitur fought back with all the tools he could muster, and may have attempted to proclaim a counter-excommunication of R. Ḥanokh and his party.²⁰³

Even after Ibn Abitur and R. Ḥanokh died, their factions doubtless continued to quarrel bitterly for generations. Samuel

enemies; cf. above, p. 67, "Perhaps we shall be able to rid ourselves of the abuse of our enemies."

²⁰¹ Ibn Abitur, who claimed an exalted genealogy (cf. above, n. 35), doubtless appealed to nativist sentiment among Spanish Jewry in his battle against R. Ḥanokh, the foreign interloper. Paradoxically, but quite understandably, this conservative nativism would appeal to the tradition of loyalty to Babylonia, while the foreigner, R. Ḥanokh, would not feel bound by such sentiments. This nativist sentiment is reflected particularly in the defense of Menaḥem b. Saruq by his disciples against the foreign school headed by Dunash; cf. above, n. 189 and esp. A. Harkavy, "Le-Toledot R. Samuel ha-Nagid," p. 38 n. 3. Note, too, the formulation of the fifth question in Moses ibn Ezra's work on Hebrew prosody: "Why are the children of the Spanish exile [i.e. the Jews of Spain] superior to those of other exiles in their composition of Hebrew poetry, rhymed prose and letters" [*Italics mine*]; Moses b. Ezra, *Shirat Yisrael* (trans. by B. Z. Halper. Leipzig, 5624), p. 62. On nativism in medieval Jewish and Arab society, cf. S. W. Baron, "Saadia's Communal Activities," p. 51 n. 93.

²⁰² It cannot be over-emphasized that the intervention of the King in the Jewish dispute is not an extraordinary event that resulted merely from the Jews washing their linen in public. The fact is that the case had to come before the Caliph, for all appointments to major religious offices within his domain had to be approved by him, particularly if they involved a public dispute; cf. N. Edelby, "L'autonomie législative des chrétiens en terre de l'Islam," *Archives d'Histoire du Droit Oriental*, V (1950-51), 320, 325. Note also the incident recorded by R. Dozy, *op. cit.*, I, 340 (Eng. trans. p. 289). Although the refs. cited deal with Christians, Prof. S. W. Baron (to whom I owe the ref. to Edelby) quite properly observes that the same conditions must have obtained with respect to the Jews; cf. Baron, *SRH*, V, 294 n. 2.

²⁰³ Cf. above, n. 72. I hope to deal with Ibn Abitur's propaganda against R. Ḥanokh in a separate paper.

ibn Nagrela, an arch-disciple of R. Ḥanokh,²⁰⁴ pursued his master's policy and doubtless continued to buttress it with heated sentiment.²⁰⁵ As a spiritual descendant of R. Ḥanokh and Ibn Nagrela,²⁰⁶ Ibn Daud took up his masters' cause.

Accordingly, R. Ḥanokh—as the later Samuel ibn Nagrela²⁰⁷—is pictured by Ibn Daud in exclusively laudatory terms. R. Ḥanokh's saintliness is demonstrated by his reaction at the announcement of Ibn Jau's death. However, once again Ibn Daud's credibility is vitiated by the fact that the story is practically a verbatim reproduction of an earlier incident recorded by an Arab chronicler. When in December, 897, Sa'id, the Emir of Granada, was murdered, a man who had been unjustly treated by him mourned him in verses which said: "Who will

²⁰⁴ Cf. *MJC*, I, 7:16 and A. Harkavy, "Le-Toledot R. Samuel ha-Nagid," pp. 3, 43 n. 2.

²⁰⁵ The evidence for this statement is collected in Prof. Mordecai Margulies' forthcoming edition of Samuel ibn Nagrela's *Hilkhatha Gabratha*. I am profoundly indebted to Prof. Margulies for having permitted me to read the manuscript of his introduction in 1957. Cf. also below, Appendix.

²⁰⁶ Ibn Daud himself was trained by his maternal uncle, R. Baruk Albalia (*MJC*, I, 77:13), the son and pupil of R. Isaac Albalia of Cordova (*ibid.*, 77:1-2). As a young man, the elder Albalia has been the recipient of Ibn Nagrela's favor, and he later maintained close relations with, and received material support from, the Nagid's son Joseph (*ibid.*, 74:12 ff.).

²⁰⁷ *MJC*, I, 71:16-73:4. Moreover, even Ibn Nagrela's relations with R. Hai Gaon are referred to as quite favorable; *ibid.*, 73:15. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that Ibn Daud's description of Samuel's rise to power is but one more instance of a "rags to riches" tale (cf. above, n. 76). In this instance the literary paradigm for the story in *SHQ* was discovered fairly recently by S. M. Stern, "Life of Shmuel Ha-Nagid (Hebrew)," *Zion*, XV (1950), 135-138. As Stern observes, the story is told originally of al-Manṣūr and is as untenable for him as the one told of Ibn Nagrela. Moreover, J. Schirmann, "Isaac ibn Halfon," p. 300 noted much earlier that Ibn Daud's dates on Ibn Nagrela's early life are unacceptable in the face of manuscript evidence to the contrary; cf. also *idem*, "The Wars of Samuel Ha-Nagid," *Zion*, I (1935-36), 266-67 and *ibid.*, II (1936-37), 185-6. In the case of Samuel ibn Nagrela, as in that of the four captives, Ibn Daud wrote history with his own criteria of what the public ought to believe. He did not hesitate to adopt a stock tale that sounded plausible and to improvise dates.

feed and clothe the poor, now that he who was generosity itself lies in the grave!" "What!" cried an Arab who heard these verses, "dost-thou sing these verses of him who had thee beaten?" "By Allah!" replied the poet, "even his unjust sentence benefits me. . . ." ²⁰⁸ Ibn Daud need not necessarily have had this incident in mind, but he certainly applied to his subject the stereotype reaction appropriate to the man and the occasion. ²⁰⁹ In the end, even Ibn Abitur is made to acknowledge the superiority of "the Rabbi," thereby vindicating R. Ḥanokh's claims.

R. Ḥanokh's opponents, by contrast, are discredited openly and by subtle digressions. Ibn Abitur's learning is acknowledged but then quickly tarnished by the report of faulty Aramaic in his letter to the Rabbi of Pechina. ²¹⁰ Such, Ibn Daud seems to say obliquely, was the "great" Talmudist and poet who would set himself up against R. Ḥanokh. Very likely, too, the report that Ibn Abitur interpreted the whole Talmud in Arabic for al-Ḥakam is also inserted to reflect discredit upon him, particularly since the report, at least as Ibn Daud transmits it, can hardly be true. ²¹¹ The digression merely indicates that Ibn Abitur had been currying favor with the Muslim ruler even at the price of violating the injunction implied by the Rabbinic homily that God had forbidden Moses to commit the

²⁰⁸ R. Dozy, *op. cit.*, II, 79 (Eng. trans. p. 370).

²⁰⁹ Cf. above, n. 112.

²¹⁰ For a much more impartial, and apparently widely entertained, evaluation of Ibn Abitur's style, cf. al-Harizi, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 44. This is not to say that Ibn Abitur could not have slipped grammatically. However, Ibn Daud has given the error a prominence it could hardly have deserved. (One need but recall the importance attached to such errors in other disputes among Spanish Jewish men of letters to realize how exaggerated an importance was attributed to linguistic imperfection.) More than likely, the "error" was a neologism of which Ibn Abitur was fond. For the probable style, cf. J. Mann, "Varia," *Tarbix* V, 283 n. 157.

²¹¹ Cf. J. Mueller, pp. 5, 22 n. k; A. Marx's note in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, III (1900), 134 n.; S. P. Rabbinowitz's note in H. Graetz, *Dibray Yemay Yisrael* (10 vols. Warsaw, 1916), III, 365 n. 2; Baron, *SRH*, VI, 264.

oral tradition to writing lest it fall into the hands of Gentiles.²¹² By breaking the tradition associated with Moses, Ibn Abitur showed himself unworthy of succeeding R. Moses b. Hanokh.

Ibn Jau is depicted as a scheming and ruthless villain. He gains his power by chicanery,²¹³ supports a dissident Rabbi and threatens the legitimate one with brutality. Not a hint is dropped of his great popularity among poets and men of learning.²¹⁴ Can it be but a coincidence that in transmitting the text of the agreement of the Jews for the appointment of Ibn Jau as Nasi, Ibn Dau cites the text of the proposal made to Gideon?²¹⁵ The latter had piously replied, as befits a righteous judge: "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you. (Jud. 8:23)." Not so Ibn Jau.

²¹² Cf. Midrash Tanhuma, ed. Buber, II, 116 and n. 120 there.

²¹³ The story of Ibn Jau's rise to power through bribery is not transmitted merely as a fact but has invidious overtones. Ibn Daud's opinion of *nesiim*, who buy their way into office may be seen from *MJC*, I, 65:16-17; 67:1-3. To be sure, these statements are based on *Iggeret R. Sherira Gaon* 92:13 ff., but they are much more poignantly worded than the latter.

²¹⁴ Cf. J. Schirmann, "Isaac ibn Halfon," p. 296; Dunash b. Labrat, *Shirim*, pp. 92, 162; A. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

²¹⁵ Cf. above, n. 59. It is hardly likely that Ibn Daud has transmitted the text of the Jewish agreement verbatim. In the first place no Jewish community could commit itself to a dynasty of its own choice, for its Nagid had to be appointed by the Caliph; cf. above, n. 202 and esp. H. Z. Hirschberg, "The Salars and Negidim of Kairawan," p. 166. Ibn Daud makes no such claim for Ibn Nagrela or for his son Joseph, for he knew the real basis of their claim to power. Secondly, if the community did indeed present Ibn Jau with some testimonial expressing the hope that he and his family would rule forever, it would have been worded much more circumspectly, and probably in Arabic. This testimonial corresponds to the Arabic *bay'a* or agreement of investiture ideally required by Muslim tradition for the legitimization of a Caliph; cf. E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 31 f., 44 f. Note, too, that Ibn Daud says that the Jews agreed to his appointment to civil authority (*nesi'ut*), thus implying that Ibn Jau had no moral right to impose his will on R. Hanokh, the head of the academy; cf. above, p. 107. At best, therefore, one may suggest that Ibn Daud translated or paraphrased, but, alas, how cleverly he did it.—Character assassination, of which Ibn Daud's treatment of Ibn Abitur and Ibn Jau is a specimen, is a well known motif in medieval Hebrew poetry; cf. Baron, *SRH*, VII, 149.

His only saving graces were his liberality with the poor, a virtue in which he had achieved renown,²¹⁶ and his loyalty to the Jews in refusing to exploit them for al-Manşūr's coffers. But alas, even the latter virtue was gained only at the cost of failing to live up to the trust he had won after a solemn promise to his Muslim employer, al-Manşūr.

Viewed in this light, the story of the four captives is not told for the purpose of vindicating R. Moses, so much as to justify R. Ḥanokh and the Ibn Falīja family. It was their cause and their activity which followed in the path laid out by the Author of all history, the path bringing the salvation and consolation of the Torah to Spain.

The modern student will doubtless look askance at the liberties Ibn Daud took with his facts, or, what is worse, dismiss him as a superstitious medieval who could not distinguish between fact and fancy. To anticipate any objections along these lines, it is but necessary to remember that Ibn Daud was a rationalist and critical philosopher and that *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* was written to validate Rabbinic polity.²¹⁷ In the tradition of the philosophers of his day, Ibn Daud felt that fables were a means to a higher end—the education of the masses to good conduct. Historical facts as such were probably of little value to him. What mattered most was their effect.²¹⁸ However, even in his moralistic tale he left the door open to the initiates of his day to see the fictional character and religio-political significance of a story he attributed to the divine plan.

²¹⁶ Cf. above, p. 69 and refs in n. 214.

²¹⁷ Cf. *MJC*, I, 47:1 ff.; 78:9 ff.; 81:3 ff.

²¹⁸ Cf. L. Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, 1952), pp. 10, 34 f., 65 and esp. pp. 16, 30, 61 f. on the literary devices used by philosophers to hint at esoteric significance, among them "errors" and self contradiction. The purpose of stories and history was the consolation of the community and the furtherance of public morale; cf. above, n. 134 and esp. L. Strauss, "Farabi's Plato," *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume* (2 vols. New York, 1945) English Section pp. 377 ff., 382 ff.; *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic* (Edited and translated by E. I. J. Rosenthal. Cambridge, 1956), I:11:1 f. pp. 30, 125 f., II:16:6 f. pp. 77, 202 f. That Ibn Daud stands in the medieval philosophic tradition of al-Farabi, Maimonides

APPENDIX

Independent Sources on the Four Captives

Obviously, no amount of literary criticism can undo positive testimony. This whole paper is, therefore, subject to the retort that it has not taken account of two pieces of evidence that would seem to confirm the basic veracity of the story. Granted that Ibn Daud "embellished" the story, it may still be contended, he almost certainly did not fabricate the basic fact that R. Moses and R. Hanokh came to Spain as captives and after their release rose to the religious leadership of the community of Cordova. Indeed, one might go even one step further and say with a fair measure of certainty that R. Moses and his son were probably one part of a foursome, who were captured and later ransomed by the Jews of different communities. For these two facts we have independent testimony by men who did not draw from Ibn Daud. If that is the case, Ibn Daud's embroideries appear in a new light. He merely converted a series of *historical* incidents into typological ones and then proceeded to amplify on the facts with motifs taken from archetypal stories that would fit the *dramatis personae* of the tenth century. If that is so, all we can hope to have succeeded in establishing is what most modern scholars had already assumed intuitively: to wit, that the dates, conversations and other fanciful facts should be ignored, while the events themselves must be accepted as basically credible.

We grant readily that we may have to be content with this

and the younger Averroes is today a truism; cf. J. Guttman, *Die Religionsphilosophie des Abraham ibn Daud aus Toledo* (Goettingen, 1879), *passim*, esp. pp. 14 f. J. Guttman, *Ha-Filosofia shel ha-Yahadut* (Jerusalem, 1951), pp. 134 ff., M. Arfa, *Abraham Ibn Daud and the Beginnings of Medieval Jewish Aristotelianism* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Columbia University, 1954).

possible result. There is always the possibility of new evidence turning up to confirm one or more of the details related by Ibn Daud. On the other hand, it must be insisted that the independent evidence invoked hitherto in support of the story in *SHQ* is not really acceptable and that, in the final analysis, Ibn Daud is still the sole witness to the story.

And now to the independent "confirmations" of the story:

A

Writing probably in Egypt, ca. 1675, R. David Conforte reports the following:²¹⁹

וּכְתָב רַבִּינוּ שְׂמוּאֵל הַלֵּוִי הַנֶּגִיד בְּמִבּוֹא הַתְּלִמּוּד וְהַרֶאֱבִיד בְּס' הַקְּבֵלָה כִּי בִימֵי רַב שְׂרִירָא גֵּאוֹן ז"ל קְרוֹב לְשַׁנַּת ד' אֲלָפִים תִּשְׁעֵן הָן פָּחוּת הָן יֵתֵר אִירַע מַעֲשֵׂה שְׁהִי הוֹלְכִים בְּסַפִּינָה מִמְּדִינַת בֶּאֱרֵי לְמִדְיַנַּת סַבְּסְתָאן ד' חֲכָמִים גְּדוֹלִים וְכו'.

Nor is this the only item of importance that Ibn Daud would seem to have drawn from Ibn Nagrela's Introduction to the Talmud. Elsewhere Conforte reports:

220 אַךְ הַרֶאֱבִיד ז"ל בְּס' הַקְּבֵלָה כְּתָב סֹדֵר רַבְּנָן סְבוּרָאֵי הַדּוֹר הָא' רַב יוֹסִי הוּא רֹאשׁ רַבְּנָן סְבוּרָאֵי הִיָּה לְרֹאשׁ אַחֵר רַבִּינָא ל"ד שָׁנָה וּבִשְׁנַת כ"ד לְגִדּוּלְתוֹ שְׁהִיא ד' אֲלָפִים וּר"ס לִיצִירָה נַחְתָּם הַתְּלִמּוּד וְכ"כ בְּמִבּוֹא הַתְּלִמּוּד לְרַבִּינוּ שְׂמוּאֵל הַלֵּוִי הַנֶּגִיד ז"ל שְׁנַת דְּתַלְמוֹ לִיצִיר' רַבָּה יוֹסִי הוּא רֹאשׁ רַבְּנָן סְבוּרָאֵי בְּסוּרָא ל"ח [עַד] ש' דְּרַע"ד וּבִשְׁנַת כ"ד לְגִדּוּלְתוֹ נַחְתָּם הַתְּלִמּוּד חֲתִימַת הַתְּלִמּוּד דְּר"ס. וּמִשָּׁם עַד שְׁמַת רַבָּה יוֹסִי י"ד שָׁנָה שְׁנַת דְּרַע"ד.

221 וּבְס' הַקְּבֵלָה כְּתָב בְּעֵנִין זֶה הַדּוֹר הַב' תְּלִמְיָדֵי רַב סִימוֹנָא וְרַב עֵינָא וְלֹא הוֹזְכְּרוּ בְּשִׁמּוּתֵיהֶם כִּי הִישִׁיבוּת בְּטִלוּ כְּמוֹ חֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת ר' יוֹסִי

219 Cf. D. Conforte. *Qoray ha-Dorot* (Edited by D. Cassel. Berlin, 1846; New York, 1944), f. 5a. For the date of Conforte's work, cf. *ibid.*, p. iv.

220 *Ibid.* f. 2b = *MJC*, I, 61:17 f. The following is the text of R. Samuel ha-Nagid's report, MS Sassoon (for full ref., cf. below n. 225), p. 58:

רַבְּנָן סְבוּרָאֵי דְרַל"ו. רַב יוֹסֵף הוּא רֹאשׁ רַבְּנָן סְבוּרָאֵי בְּסוּרָא ל"ח שָׁנָה סִימֹן דְּרַע"ד. וּבִשְׁנַת כ"ד לְגִדּוּלְתוֹ נַחְתָּם הַתְּלִמּוּד. חֲתִימָה [!] הַתְּלִמּוּד דְּר"ס. וּמִשָּׁם וְעַד שְׁמַת רַבָּה יוֹסִי י"ד שָׁנָה שְׁנַת דְּרַע"ד.

221 Conforte, *loc. cit.* = *MJC*, I, 62:3 f. MS Sassoon, pp. 58-59 reads: הַדּוֹר הַשְּׁנַי תְּלִמְיָדֵי דְרַב סִמָּא וְרַב עֵינָא וְלֹא הוֹזְכְּרוּ בְּשִׁמּוּתֵיהֶם כִּי הִישִׁיבוּת בְּטִלוּ כְּמוֹ שְׁנָה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת רַב סִמָּא עַד שְׁנַת דְּשִׁמ"ס מִפְּנֵי שְׁנַת מַלְכֵי פָּרַס וּשְׁמִדּוּתֵיהֶם.

סימונא מפני שנאת מלכי פרס וגזרותיהם ע"כ. וכ"כ במבוא התלמוד לרבינו שמואל הלוי הנגיד ז"ל.

222|111 ואחריהם בסורא היה ר' שישנא ונקרא משרשיא בר תתליפא זרב בוסתנאי בפומבדיתא וכתב רבינו שמואל הלוי הנגיד במבוא התלמוד כי אלו הם סוף רבנן סבוראי וכ"כ הראב"ד בס' הקבלה כי אלו הם סוף רבנן סבוראי והם חמשה דורות ושנותיהם קפ"ז.

223|117 ובמבוא התלמוד לרבינו שמואל הלוי הנגיד ז"ל ובס' הקבלה להראב"ד ז"ל משמע שהדור הא' מראשי הישיבות של הגאונים מר (בר) רב חיינא גאון מנהר פקוד היה ראש ישיבה חמש שנים ויש אומרים ח' שנים.

Leaving aside for the moment the passage on the four captives, the first point to note is that Conforte has cited R. Samuel ha-Nagid in corroboration of *SHQ* whenever the latter two disagree with the Epistle of R. Sherira Gaon on an important datum. Three of these passages, indeed, are concerned with the crucial question of the division of eras, Amoraic, Saboraic and Gaonic. However, since, as has already been demonstrated, the division of eras in *SHQ* is predicated on a consistent use of symmetry,²²⁴ the most that may possibly be argued is that Ibn Daud appropriated the chronological scheme of R. Samuel ha-Nagid. If that is the case, the presumption must be made that schematology was integral to the Nagid's method of writing history and the embroideries in the story of the four captives, particularly the problematic date 4750, should be traced back to

²²² Conforte, *op cit.*, f. 3a = *MJC*, I, 62:16 f. MS Sassoon, p. 59 reads: ואחריו רב ששנא זרב בוסנאי רב ששנא נקרא רב משרשיא בר תתליפא בשנת דתמ"ט. סוף רבנן סבוראי דתמ"ט.

²²³ Conforte, *loc. cit.*, = *MJC*, I, 62:19 f. MS Sassoon, p. 59 reads:

סדר גאונים דתמ"ט רב חיינא מנהר פקוד תחלת הגאונים בפום בדיתא ח' שנים
Actually, Conforte is citing R. Samuel ha-Nagid and *SHQ* only for the point at which the Gaonic period begins. The remaining data in his statement are drawn from *Iggeret R. Sherira Gaon* (Edited by B. M. Lewin. Haifa, 1921), 106:4-6; this accounts for the מר before the Gaon's name and for the duration of his term. The alternate term is the one given by the Nagid and *SHQ*.

²²⁴ Cf. above, pp. 101 f. and esp. n. 143. The same observation holds true for the citation from the *Mabo* in Estori ha-Parhi's *Kaftor wa-Perah*; cf. A. Epstein, *loc cit.* On the other hand, the statement cited by R. Estori is not recorded in MS Sassoon, and Filipowsky's conjecture, cited by Epstein, is as good as any.

him. In other words, at worst we have analyzed R. Samuel ha-Nagid's story and not Ibn Daud's.

But in reality, the likelihood is that the Nagid should not be involved in this whole enigma at all.²²⁵ In a paper read before the American Academy for Jewish Research on December 30, 1956,²²⁶ Professor Mordecai Margulies described the method and the style of R. Samuel ibn Nagrela's *Hilkhatha Gabratha*, major fragments of which he had discovered among the remains of the Cairo Geniza.²²⁷ Everything in these fragments and medieval quotations from the work, he insisted, pointed to strictly halakhic discourses, with strong emphasis against interpretations of R. Hai Gaon, but with nothing of a methodological nature of the kind preserved in the editions of the *Mebo ha-Talmud* ascribed to R. Samuel ha-Nagid.²²⁸ Margulies also called attention to the only known MS of R. Samuel's *Mabo* containing the unpublished chronological portion of the work, preserved in the Sassoon Library in Letchworth, England.²²⁹ This portion, too, he contended, had all the earmarks of coming from a pen other than Ibn Nagrela's. What is more, it contained chronological data on Ibn Nagrela himself and went way beyond the latter's time. In fact, it seemed to stop at the very point that *SHQ* does.²³⁰ Accordingly, Margulies suggested that the enig-

²²⁵ Sc., beyond the partisan attitude for R. Ḥanokh and against Ibn Abitur discussed above, p. 120.

²²⁶ Cf. *PAAJR*, XXVI (1957), viii.

²²⁷ As of the present writing, Prof. Margulies kindly informs me, the introduction and texts are in galley proof and will be published shortly.

²²⁸ Cf. M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (3 vols. Berlin, 1852-1860), II, 2471-2472; *idem*, *Die Arabische Literatur der Juden* (Frankfurt a.M., 1902), pp. 109, 130; A. Epstein, "Meqorot le-Qorot ha-Geonim," pp. 167-169, (= *Kitbay R. Abraham Epstein*, II, 413-415).

²²⁹ Cf. S. D. Sassoon, *Ohel David* (2 vols. Oxford, 1932), II, 1066-1068. Incidentally, the MSS listed by A. Epstein, *loc. cit.*, n. 8 do not contain the chronological portion of the work.

²³⁰ To be sure, the material on Ibn Nagrela and the century after his death could be dismissed as a later gloss. However, in view of Sambari's testimony on the identity of a man who had been the Nagid of his own community (cf. next note), Margulies felt that this would be a cavalier

matic *Mabo* be ascribed to R. Samuel ibn Ḥananiah ha-Nagid of Egypt, a (younger?) contemporary of Judah ha-Levi and Ibn Daud.²³¹

Thanks to the kindness of Mr. D. Sassoon, the owner of the only known complete MS of Samuel ha-Nagid's Introduction to the Talmud, I have been able to examine from photostats the chronological section of that work for myself. This examination bore out every one of Prof. Margulies' contentions on the chronological portion of the *Mabo*. The latter is nothing more than an abridgement of *SHQ* with occasional asides to confirm or reject Ibn Daud's data.²³² Secondly, the material on Ibn Nagrela and the century after him are definitely not a gloss, for the same anticipatory reference to the death of Joseph ibn Nagrela is included in the Gaonic section at the point parallel to the one in *SHQ*.²³³ Finally, the Nagid's chronicle is by

dismissal of written evidence. There can be no question that Margulies is correct; cf. below.

²³¹ Such a work, Margulies pointed out, is indeed ascribed to him by Joseph Sambari of Egypt, who completed his chronicle in 1672; *MJC*, I, 156 (end). On Samuel ibn Ḥananiah ha-Nagid, cf. also S. Abramson, "R. Judah ha-Levi's Letter on his Emigration to the Land of Israel (Hebrew)," *Kirjath Sepher*, XXIX (1953-54), 133-144.

²³² Cf. the citation in S. D. Sassoon, *op. cit.*, II, 1068 col. a in support of *MJC*, I, 54:1-2. Note, too, the citation of Maimonides in confirmation of the identification of R. Judah the Prince (cf. B. Hamburger, *Maimonides' Einleitung in die Misna*. Frankfurt a.M., 1902, pp. 19 f., 65, 67). The words במסכות אבות in the citation from MS Sassoon begin a new clause.—In this connection, MS Sassoon may be cited to illuminate the citation by A. Zacuto, *op. cit.*, p. 146 col. a (bot.). The MS reads, p. 59:

סדר גאונים דתמ"ט. עיקר ישיבה היתה בפרס בדיתא ולפיכך נמנה סדר הגאונים שבפרס בדיתא תחלה ואחר כך נמנה שבסוריא ושאר מקומות כמו שעשינו בשאר.

²³³ *MJC*, I, 67:13-17. MS Sassoon p. 64 reads:

וברחו ב' בניו אל רב שמואל הנגיד לגרנזה והיה שם עד השמד וברח האחד לטרקסטה ונשא אשה והוליד בנים ומהם ר' חייא בן אל דוארי (!) ונפטר בשנת דתתק"ד בארץ קשטיליאה ואחריו לא נשאר בארץ ספרד אדם מפרסם שהוא מבית דוד לבד יאשיהו בנו. (The last three words are found in no MS of *SHQ* except for MS Epstein-Halberstamm, which I have not seen, but the collations of which were made by N. Bruell and presented to me by my late teacher, Professor Alexander Marx. Bruell's note reads: נגיד בנו יאשיהו. The word נגיד is obviously a corruption of לבד.)

and large a verbatim replica of *SHQ*, with occasional efforts at paraphrase or even improving on Ibn Daud's style. This may be illustrated by the Nagid's report of the story of the four captives:²³⁴

ואחר חזקיהו ראש גלות וראש ישיבות הגאונים. יקודם (!) לכן היתה סיבה שנפסק חוק²³⁵ חוק הישיבות שהיה הולך אליהם מספרד וארץ המערב ואפריקה ומצרים וארץ הצבי וכן היתה הסבה שנשבו ד' חכמים גדולים בספינה הולכת ממדינת בארי לספסטין הא' ר' חושיאל אביו של ר' חננאל והא' ר' משה אביו של ר' חנוך ור' חנוך בנו והשלישי ר' שמריה בר' אלחנן הד' לא נודע שמו. והשבאי לא הרגיש בחכמתם כי נתעלמו ומכר את ר' שמריה באלכסנדריא של מצרים ומשם עלה למצרים²³⁶ למדינת אל קורן והיה לראש ושם הוליד את ר' חננאל ז"ל ומכר את ר' משה עם ר' חנוך בנו בקורדובה והיה לראש והיו לו תלמידים הרבה ומהם ר' יוסף בן אביתר. או נשמע כל חכמתו של ר' משה זה בכל ארץ ספרד ומערב ובאו תלמידים הרבה לקראת. ודבר זה היה בימי רב שרירא בקרוב לשנת דתש"נ ועמד בקורדובה ונפטר שם ר' משה וישב על כסאו ר' חנוך בנו ורבץ תורה גדולה ונפטר שנת דת"ש ע"ה קודם פטירת רב האי כ"ג שנה. ומפני סבה זו לא השיבו הקהלות חקם לישיבות בבל. ומגדולי תלמידיו של ר' חנוך היה רב שמואל הנגיד וכו'

This passage, even allowing for copyist's errors, is patently an abridgement of the one in *SHQ* rather than the nucleus for Ibn Daud's amplification. Moreover, as already indicated, the chronicle continues with no alteration of style or sign of hiatus to the next generation.

To conclude, if MS Sassoon is a copy of the chronological section of R. Samuel ha-Nagid's *Mabo*—and there is no reason to question that it is—the work drew on *SHQ* rather than vice versa. Accordingly, barring any new evidence to the contrary, Conforte's statements on Ibn Nagrela as Ibn Daud's source must be rejected.

²³⁴ MS Sassoon, pp. 64 f. The statement follows immediately upon the one cited in n. 229.

²³⁵ Perhaps חלוק or חוק with deletion over it.

²³⁶ A sentence has been omitted by homoioteleuton.

B

The second bit of independent testimony on the story of the four captives comes from R. Menahem b. Solomon ha-Meiri's introduction to his commentary on *Pirqay Abot*:²³⁷

ואחריי [= אחרי ר"ש הנגיד] היה ר' חננאל ואביו היה מארץ ספרד ושמו רבי חושיאל ונסבה ונתגלגל הדבר שעבר לארץ אפריקא במדינת לקירואן והוליד שם לר' חננאל הנזכר . . . ובאותו פרק נשבה ג"כ רב משה ׳ן חנוך ופדאוהו קהל קרטבא ורב שלום הכיר חכמתו וסלק עצמו מן השררה ומנהו לראש. והיה מתלמידיו ר' יוסף ׳ן אביותום והיה באותו הזמן ר' נסים שקבל מר' האי ז"ל.

Since the Meiri (1) does not know the correct place of R. Ḥushiel's birth, (2) does not know of the capture of four captives but only of R. Moses, and (3) does not know the name of R. Nathan the Pious²³⁸ but calls the teacher of Cordova R. Shalom, it follows that his statement on the capture and redemption of R. Moses must have derived from a source independent of *SHQ*. A careful examination of this passage will indicate that this reasoning is untenable.

In the first place, the reading ספרד as the birthplace of R. Ḥushiel is easily accounted for as a corruption of בארי.²³⁹ Secondly, Prof. Alexander Marx long ago suggested that רב שלום is obviously a corruption of ורב שלהם²⁴⁰. Thirdly, even if נסבה and not נשבה is the correct reading in this passage,²⁴¹ it still does not follow that the Meiri drew on an independent source that told only of the capture of R. Moses and R. Ḥanokh, and not of the others. It is quite out of order to draw a conclusion from an isolated passage in the Meiri's introduction without regard

²³⁷ Menahem B. Solomon ha-Meiri, *Bet ha-Behirah, Perush 'al Pirqay Abot* (Edited by S. Stern, Vienna, 1854) p. 16b; *MJC*, II, 225; copied by Isaac Lattes, *ibid.*, p. 234.—For the evaluation of the evidence presented in the text, cf. M. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 35.

²³⁸ Cf. above, n. 19.

²³⁹ For an alternate conjecture, cf. V. Aptowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 24 f. n. 11.

²⁴⁰ A. Marx, Review of Poznanski's *Anshay Kairawan* in *Zeitschrift fuer Hebraeische Bibliographie*, XIII (1909), 74.

²⁴¹ Cf. *MJC*, II, 234.

to the whole of his historical essay.²⁴² Anyone who reads the whole of the Meiri's introduction cannot fail to notice that his most important single source was *SHQ*. As for the section on the later Rabbis, the Meiri may have been writing from memory, or his copy of *SHQ* may have been defective. Finally, the Meiri may not have had any interest in transmitting a full account of a local affair, which after all was not germane to his major purpose. The evidence from the Meiri, even if his own statement has been authentically transmitted, is of the flimsiest nature and cannot be invoked to confirm the historicity of the story in *SHQ*.

²⁴² The same point is made in a different way by V. Aptowitzer, *loc. cit.* in n. 239.—The section of the Meiri reprinted in *MJC* is only a fragment of the Meiri's historical introduction.