

# Manuscripts from the Eastern Mediterranean Sea Islands: Information from Colophons of Hebrew Manuscripts from the Thirteenth-Sixteenth Centuries

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**Abstract:** The article examines the production of books in the islands in the eastern Mediterranean basin in the thirteenth-sixteenth centuries, based on the information contained in the colophons written by the manuscript copyists at the conclusion of their work. The copyists' mention - at times - of the place of the copying teaches of the deployment of the Jewish communities in this region. Books were produced even in the small Jewish communities on these islands, and not only in the relatively large community on Crete. Twenty-nine manuscripts have survived from these locations. This material teaches of the presence of the demand by an educated Jewish population for books in diverse fields, including philosophy, Bible commentary, homiletical literature, medicine, and Kabbalah. Thanks to the efforts of these copyists, classical Jewish writings were preserved for future generations. These works will continue to provide a fertile field of research for scholars, due to their contents and to their being the subject of scholarly research as manuscripts. The colophons that were written by copyists reveal the locations where they received the original texts to be. Someone who copied a book for his personal use, in contrast, did not feel the need to supply such information. Professional copyists were paid for their services; although this is not stated explicitly in the colophons presented in the article, but in many instances we hear of this. Some copyists had to make major efforts in order to obtain the source for their copying, and at times they traveled far and wide for this purpose. The article illustrates the existence of Jewish communities in the small islands around Greece, especially in the thirteenth-sixteenth centuries. Most of the books were copied for the scribe's own use, thereby teaching of the intellectual level of the book readership. The colophons are the "identity card" of the copyist, and also contain the name of the book and details about the author. Colophons virtually disappeared after the invention of the printing press, to be replaced by title pages in printed works.

**Keywords:** Colophons, Copyists, Eastern Mediterranean

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## 1. Introduction

Book production in the medieval period was not limited to the large Jewish communities. Extremely small Jewish communities, including those on the islands in the eastern Mediterranean, each of which could not have numbered more than a few families, also engaged in such activity [1]. This demographic distribution, which resulted from historical and social factors, did not prevent the development of Jewish culture. This was expressed, inter alia, in the copying of books for everyday use by these communities, and that of philosophical and exegetical works for the educated.

The scholar who seeks to uncover the spiritual world of earlier generations faces a daunting task. One method is to examine the literary sources that they created and left for following generations. We know of the activity of the copyists until the invention of the printing press from book lists and inventories that at times were recorded by the book owners themselves, which have been found dating from different periods and belonging to diverse cultural expanses [2, 55-58]. This material enables us to explore the demands of 'culture consumers', in terms both of the quantity of books that were copied in a certain place (taking into account that our discussion will relate to the extant works) and of their content.

The current article will present an additional research source that has not been sufficiently utilized: the colophons of Hebrew books, that allow us to study the production of books in a defined location. The most complete collection of medieval colophons appears in the computerized database of the Hebrew Paleography Project in the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem [3]. The content of the colophons, that were written by the copyist and contain additional information, provide details about the manuscript, including the venue of the copying of the book, the date of its completion, and the like. Many copyists also recorded in their colophons personal details about themselves and the individual who commissioned the copying, along with historical details. The greater the number of bibliographical details added by the scribe, the more likely they are to enrich our historical, social, and cultural knowledge of his contemporaries, and especially of the scribe and the book. The collection of extant manuscripts from this region undoubtedly reflects the intellectual level of those commissioning the books, or of the copyists who wrote out these books for their own use. Most of the copyists almost certainly did so in order to peruse these works, although some of the books might have been intended to augment the collections of wealthy individuals [4]. These few remnants, that have survived the vicissitudes of time, teach of greater cultural treasures, and are not reflective of the reality in its entirety. A total of 29 manuscripts (for their titles, see the Appendix, below) that were copied in the following islands during the years 1324-1538 have survived.

Despite their extremely small number among the sea of Hebrew manuscripts, they are of importance, since they were copied in tiny communities that were distant from the Jewish centers in the eastern Mediterranean basin. Revealing the copying locations, based on the testimony of the colophons, illustrates the deployment of the Jewish communities in this region. More than 40 islands and coastal cities [5] are located between the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea and the coasts of Asia Minor, which in the past had been home to a diverse Jewish population [6, 59, 60].<sup>1</sup> both those whose families had been living there for generations, along with a population of Jewish immigrants from throughout the lands of the Mediterranean basin [7].

Books from this region are extant beginning from the period when it was under Byzantine rule in the eleventh century. We, however, will focus on the literary finds from the islands within the bounds of the Ottoman empire [8], while, chronologically, our discussion will begin before the time of the latter hegemony. The quantity of books that were copied in a specific place plainly attests to the existence of a local Jewish community, since we could hardly imagine the activity of a Jewish book copyist in the absence of a Jewish

community, whether large or small, one of whose members had commissioned his work. The scribe might have come to this location because of the presence there of the source manuscript, or alternatively, he could have brought his copy with him for dissemination within the community [9].

Manuscripts from all fields of Jewish culture were copied in this geographic area: prayer books, the Bible and commentaries, midrashic and halakhic works, philosophy, and more. My examination of the 29 manuscripts that were copied in these islands reveals an intriguing picture: the list is headed by 13 books on philosophy and Jewish thought, such as the writings of Aristotle, Avicenna, Euclides, the *Guide of the Perplexed*, and *Sefer ha-Ikkarim*. In second place are 5 Kabbalistic treatises, such as *Ginat Egoz* (two copies) and *Sefer ha-Peliah*; and various philosophical collections. Biblical commentary is the subject of 5 books; 6 manuscripts are halakhic in nature, such as *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*, *Sefer Mitzvot Katan*, *She'eilot u-Teshuvot ha-Rashba* (R. Solomon ben Abraham Aderet), *Hilhot ha-Rif* (R. Isaac Alfasi), *Hilkhot Teshuvah* (Laws of Repentance) of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and more.<sup>2</sup> One manuscript is from the medical realm, and another is a linguistic treatise: *Sefer ha-Mikhlol* by R. David Kimhi. As regards the script type of the manuscripts, 18 were copied in Byzantine script, that is, by copyists native to the islands, in contrast with 10 manuscripts that were copied in Spanish script, namely, by copyists who had immigrated from the Spanish cultural sphere; and 2 were copied in Italian script, thereby attesting to the origin of the copyists [10], who had come from Italy.

Table 1. Extant manuscripts by chronological division.

Land	thirteenth-fourteenth centuries	fifteenth-sixteenth centuries	total
Chios	-	1	1
Chalcis	-	1	1
Negroponte	-	1	1
Naxos	-	1	1
Crete	7	13	20
Cyprus	-	1	1
Rhodes	1	2	3

## 2. The Manuscripts by Location

### 2.1. Crete

During the time of Venetian rule (1104-1669), Cretan Jewry consisted of an amalgam of different communities and was a meeting place of cultures [11, 59-66]. Jews came there from the Franco-German center, Italy, and the Eastern lands. Most settled in the island's two port cities: Candia and Chania. A Jewish community existed in Candia (the present-day Iraklion) beginning in the second century BCE, and we can speak of Jewish settlement continuity on the island [12, 67]. The community's standing rose upon the arrival of the exiles from Spain, and throughout the entire period under discussion it was deemed an important community, with a considerable Jewish population, that produced Torah scholars and rabbis, including the noted historian R. Elijah Capsali [13]. The Jewish

<sup>1</sup> In one of the letters that R. Obadiah of Bertinoro wrote to his father (1488), he mentions the names of the islands he visited on his travels: 'The archipelago [i.e. the Aegean Sea] is full of many islands: Corfu, Candia, Negroponte, Rhodes, and Tzifriyah [Cyprus]. For it is said that there are three hundred islands in the archipelago, whether inhabited or not.' *She'eilot u-Teshuvot Maharam* by R. Moses Alashkar (see below) mentions several Jewish communities in the region under discussion. He writes in section 70: 'I was requested to give you my opinion concerning the charitable donations the holy [i.e. Jewish] communities of Romania, Candia, and ריטוני' vowed for that woman who was captive in Rhodes.'

<sup>2</sup> Some copies contain a number of books.

community during that period 'did not number more than 1,160 [14]. The size of the Jewish community is also attested by Jewish travelers: R. Meshullam of Volterra visited the island in 1481, and found 'some 600 Jewish *ba'alei batim* [i.e. the total Jewish population], and they have four synagogues [15]. The community functioned as a center for other communities, both those nearby and those more distant. *Maharam* (R. Moses) Alashkar (1465-1542) wrote in his collection of responsa *She'eilot u-Teshuvot Maharam* (para. 70-71): 'For this Candia is a large city [...]' R. Abraham Zacuto [16] mentions the island in his *Sefer Yuhasin* (233b):[17] 'Crete, which is Candia'.<sup>3</sup> Umberto Cassuto writes in his introduction to the book *Taqqanot Qandiya ve-Zikhronoteha* (Statuta Judaeorum Candiae = The Regulations and Records of Candia)[18, 68] the following, which teaches of the life of the community throughout the medieval period: 'I learned that the major portion of the Vatican collection of Hebrew manuscripts<sup>4</sup> originates in Candia, especially from the library of the historian R. Elijah Capsali, who was one of the leaders and rabbis of the Candia community in the sixteenth century.' [19, 69]. Our finds confirm this; Crete took the leading role in book production in the eastern Mediterranean islands. The 20 extant manuscripts from this island bear the date and place, and in most, the scribe also records his name in the colophon. The division of the books by intended usage presents the following: 9 manuscripts were copied for the scribe's own use, 4 were commissioned, and in 7 the copyist did not specify for whom they were meant. At times manuscripts lacking the owner's name were meant for the scribe's personal use, in which case the number of such manuscripts rises to 16. We also discovered that two scribes who copied at least two manuscripts apiece were active in Candia: Absalom ben Judah ben Shaltiel [20], and Shabetai ben Jeshaiiah ben Judah 'Balbo' ben Moses ha-Kohen of Acco, who can be identified as the father of the noted philosopher Michael Balbo [21, 70-72, 63-65]. *Parnasim* (communal leaders) in Candia came from this family beginning in the sixteenth century. Shabetai was a prolific and sought-after scribe, as is attested by the 8 extant manuscripts [22] which he copied. The two copyists were active on the island before its conquest by the Ottomans. The former employed the Spanish script, implying that he had migrated to the island from one of the countries in which that script had been prevalent, while the latter wrote in Byzantine script, meaning that he had been born on the island, while his forefathers had come to Crete from the Land of Israel, from the city of Acco. Absalom had been commissioned by Samuel ben Elijah, unlike Shabetai, who copied them for his own use.

Fascinating testimony is provided by an additional copyist, Michael Romano,<sup>5</sup> who was active in Candia ca. 1462/3. His colophon provides details of the manner in which the source for copying was obtained, which was in no way simple. He wrote:

זה הספר הוא מועתק מספר הפליאה...ואלו הט' הקונדרסים הועתקו מפרשת בראשית לבדה כי פרשת בראשית הוא ק"ך ניירים לבדה אך כל התורה הוא ת"ק ניירים ואיננו נמצא זה הספר בשום מקום ידוע רק בקונשטנטינא אשר ברומניא ביד ר' יוסף בונפאצו כהיום שנת ה' אלפים רכ"ג (1463) ליצירה. בעת ההיא בא פה קנדיאה יהודי אחד ושמו ר' יעקב והביא העתק מפרשת בראשית לבדה ובררתי משם אלה דברים והעתיקם לי באלה הקונדרסים ר' מיכאל רומנו העתק על פרשת בראשית.

This book is copied from *Sefer ha-Peli'ah* [...] the nine quires were copied from the [Torah] portion of *Bereshit* alone, since the portion of *Bereshit* comprises 120 *niyarim* <sup>6</sup>by itself, while the entire Torah is 500 *niyarim*, and is not in this book *which is known to be possessed only in Constantinople in Roumania* [23] by R. Joseph Bonifacio [24, 73] at present, in the year 5223 [1463] after the Creation.<sup>7</sup> Then [i.e. some time ago] a Jew named R. Jacob came to Candia and he brought with him a copy only of the portion of *Bereshit*, from which I chose things and copied them in these quires for myself, R. Michael Romano - a copy of the portion of *Bereshit*.<sup>8</sup>

The individual who commissioned the book thus engaged in a bibliographical examination of the location of the complete copy of the work that he wanted copied, and as luck would have it, someone came to the island with the book, and another scribe copied it for him.

Colophons gave copyists the opportunity to commemorate events from their personal lives, for the generations to come [25]. R. Michael ben Shabbeti Balbo (the son of Shabetai mentioned above) composed various sermons, and also wrote a commentary to *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol* and *Sefer Mitzvot Katan*. He wrote in the (second) colophon to a manuscript that he copied in 1479:

נשלם פה סה"ק [ספר המצוות קטן] תל"ח[תהילה לאל חי] ע"י לי מכאל כהן קטן ליל ג' לחנוכה שנת ושלד-י המ"ר[שנת ה' ר"מ 1479] ל י מאד על הלקח ממנו כתר ראשי בני הגדול ר' ישעיה כהן ארון הברית והודי נהפך עלי למשחית יחד עם בנו הגדול מכאל זלה"ה הש' למען שמו יאמר לצרותי די, אוי"ר [אמן וכן יהי רצון].

Thus is completed [*Sefer ha-Mitsvot Katan*], praise be to the living God, by me, Michael Kohen the insignificant, Monday night, the sixth day of Hannukah of the year **ו'שלד-י המ"ר** [= 1479] <sup>9</sup>for taking from me the crown of my head: my eldest son, R. Jeshaiiah Kohen, the Ark of the Covenant and my splendor, was destroyed, together with his [sic] eldest son, Michael, may his memory be for the life of the World to Come. May the Lord, for His sake, say enough! to my troubles, Amen, may it be [His] will.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Folio pages? quires?

<sup>7</sup> We know of only one copy, located in Constantinople until 1463, when a 'R. Jacob' arrived with an additional copy, which he loaned to the copyist Michael Romano to copy.

<sup>8</sup> MS. Vat. ebr. 187.

<sup>9</sup> The copyist follows Job 27: 2; Ruth 1: 20: 'who has embittered my life'; he also uses the date as part of his Biblical quotation.

<sup>10</sup> Ms. Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Heb. 8 3046. For a description of the manuscript and bibliographical references, see Beit-Arie and Sarat, *Manuscripts Medievales*, vol. 3, p. 19. Incidentally, the information in this colophon and in additional manuscripts enables us to chart the genealogy of the Balbo family: Immanuel > Jeshaiiah > Shabetai > Moshe Kohen of Acre > Judah > Jeshaiiah > Michael. MS. Cambridge UL Add. 373.3, that was copied by Shabetai, states that 'my son Michael' was born on the 2nd of Nisan, [5]171 (= 5 April 1411)

<sup>3</sup> The relevant parts of the passage: 'Crete, which is Candia [...] in the Peloponnesian Sea, which is around עֵתוֹן [?]; and it is said that Candia is in the center of the world.'

<sup>4</sup> That is, the collection of manuscripts in the Vatican library.

<sup>5</sup> Not mentioned in the list of Zunz, 'Abschreiber, Punktatoren, Korrektoren, Autographen'.

The copyist mourns the deaths of his son and grandson, apparently in the same year. A manuscript from the early fifteenth century remains from the copying work of Shabetai Balbo; five colophons, all undated, appear in this manuscript. This is a collection of halakhic books, on *Hilkhot Teshuvah* and *Hilkhot Tefilin* from *Mishneh Torah*, as well as novellae. He writes in the first colophon:

נשלמו השגות שהשיג הר' אברהם בר' דוד על רש"י יצו"ל [ישמרהו צורו וגואלו לעד] על ידי לי [שבתי] הצעיר בן החבר ר' [ישעיא] כהן המחוקק [היינו הסופר] בלבד...ברוך ה' שלי כתבתי.

The *hasagot* [critical glosses] composed by R. Abraham ben David [of Posquierres] on Rashi, may his Maker and Redeemer preserve him, are completed by me [Shabetai], the youngest son of the *hever* [an honorific] R. [Jeshaiah] Kohen, the *mehokek* [i.e. scribe] Balbo [...]. Blessed be the Lord, I have written.<sup>11</sup>

The other colophons are written in similar style. An examination of the copying dates of the representatives of the different generations of the Balbo family revealed that during the course of close to eighty years (1400-1479) [26] they were engaged in copying philosophical treatises and biblical commentary, either for their own use or for others. In this manner they preserved Torah scholarship among the island's Jewish inhabitants.

Another noteworthy fact about the Cretan manuscripts is that five were copied in Spanish script (meaning that they were copied by migrants from the cultural sphere in which the Spanish script was prevalent), and another was written in the Italian script.

The scribe Abraham ben Moses came to Canea for some undetermined reason, and in 1382 he copied a philosophical collection for Shabetai ha-Rofe (the physician) ben Menahem ha-Rofe [27]. It was written in the Italian script, and the scribe might have been among those travelers who visited the island and its environs [28], and the opportunity arose to copy the manuscript for pay. He wrote in this colophon:

נשלם ספר מעלות המדות על ידי אברהם בכאמ"ר משה ישר פה בכרך קנייא...וכתבתי למ"ר שבתי הרופא בכמ"ר מנחם הרופא זלה"ה...והחלקי המחוקק יהיה ספון עם מצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד. חזק.

The book *Ma'alot ha-Middot* was completed by Abraham the son of my honored father and teacher Moses ha-Yashar,

here in the city of Canea [...] and I wrote it for our master, R. Shabetai ha-Rofe the son of his honored father and teacher Menahem ha-Rofe, may his memory be for the life of the World to Come [...] May the *mehokek's* [i.e. my] portion be together with those who enable the many to be righteous as the stars, forever and ever.<sup>12</sup> *Hazak*.<sup>13</sup>

The following colophon yields interesting information about a copyist named Saul ben Moses Kats Ashkenazi, who copied the middle commentary of Aristotle's *Physics* in the year 1520:

ואני הבא על החתום באות אמת עברתי על טוב הספר היקר הזה בעיון מופלג כיד החקירה הטובה עלי...ואנכי תקנתי והגהתי זה הספר כפי יכולתי כעת והשלמתי למודי עם הגהתי ט"ו באב שנת "פרה" ורבה פה קנדיאה נאם הקטן שאול הכהן מגזע אשכנזי בן לא"א [רפ"ה=1525] החכם הכולל מזה"ר משה כ"ץ אשכנזי.

I, the undersigned, with a true copy [lit., letter], labored on [...] this precious book, with tremendous deliberation to the best of my ability [...] I composed and corrected this book to the best of my ability. I have completed my study now upon its correction, the fifteenth of Av, the year *pre u-rbe*<sup>14</sup> [= 5285 (1525 CE); the numerology employed has the meaning of 'be fruitful and multiply'], here in Candea, says the insignificant one, Saul ha-Kohen from the branch of Ashkenaz [= the Franco-German center], the son of my master, my father the outstanding sage, our master and teacher, R. Moses Kats Ashkenazi [29].<sup>15</sup>

This copyist affixed his name to several of the 'Candia Regulations',<sup>16</sup> thus teaching of his being a book copyist. He does not write for whom the book was intended, whether for himself or for someone else, but the colophon presents another aspect of his personality.

The colophons also enrich our knowledge of historical events. Thus, for instance, the scribe Zechariah ben Moses ha-Hazani concluded the labor of copying with the following:

נשלם מכתב יד ימים זכריה בן הקדוש הר' משה החזני. קילור בעין. בראשי תיבות סימנו ופירושו לכל יושבי תחמוני. כי בגזירת הרועים הלך באור ה' לקדושתו. קדוש יאמר לו ואל רחום בגן עדן ישים נפש מתו אמ[ן]. נכתב ונחתם בלקניאה באי קנדיאה. בשנים עשר יום לירח מרחשוון חמשת אלפים ופ"ה לבריאת עולם. המקום יזכני להגות בו וזרעי וזרע זרעי עד סכ"ה [=סוף כל הדורות]. ויקיים בנו מקרא דכת' והגית בו וכו'.

*Yad yamim*<sup>17</sup> is completed [by] Zechariah the son of the martyr R. Moses ha-Hazani. *Kilor be-'ayin*. All the

(fol. 122a). Thus, he copied this manuscript at the age of 69. See also: Beit-Arie and Sarat, *Manuscripts Medievales*, vol. 2, p. 43. Malachi, 'Commentaries to Sefer misvot gadol', p. 393, is of the opinion that the year should be read as *ושד-י המ' ר לי* (with *המ'ר* = 245) = 1485. Consequently, Michael would have been about 75 years old when he completed the copy, 'after the death of his son R. Jeshaiah (who died about the age of 50) and that of his grandson Michael, who was about 20 when he died'. An examination, however, of the day on which the date mentioned in the colophon fell ('Monday evening, the sixth day of Hanukkah') clearly shows that 'המ'ר' is to be calculated as *ה' מר* = 1480. In this case, then, he completed the copy at the age of 69, as we noted above. See Beit-Arie and Sarat, *Manuscripts Medievales*, vol. 2, p. 43. Malachi, 'Commentaries', p. 393, bases his dating on '*ושד-י המ' ר לי*' (with *המ'ר* = 245) = 1485. According to this, R. Michael would have been about 75 years old when he completed the copying, 'after the death of his son R. Jeshaiah (who died at the age of 50) and the death of his grandson Michael, who was about 20 at the time of his death'. An examination, however, of the date of the day mentioned in the colophon ('Monday night, the sixth day of Hanukkah') clearly shows that 'המ'ר' is to be calculated as *ה' מר* = 1480, and so he completed the copying when 69 years old, as was mentioned above. See Beit-Arie and Sarat, *Manuscripts Medievales*, vol. 3, p. 19, n. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Ms. Cambridge UL Add. 377.1-8, fol. 11a.

<sup>12</sup> Following Dan. 12: 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ms. Cambridge BL Or. 2396, fol. 108a.

<sup>14</sup> Following Gen. 35: 11.

<sup>15</sup> This copyist was one of the exiles from the Franco-German center who went to Venice, and his son Moses continued from there on his wanderings, before settling in Candia ca. 1465, where he engaged in book copying.

<sup>16</sup> Regulations 64, 71, 72, 75, 78.

<sup>17</sup> The intent might be to fourteen days, in which the copying of the 182 folio pages was completed; or that he had copied the book, with [his] right hand [ימין] (The version in Stephanus Evodius Assemanus and Joseph Simonius Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Apostolicae Vaticanae Codicum Manuscriptorum Catalogus* [Paris: Maisonneuve, 1926], vol. 1, 207, no. 247, reads: 'This is completed *ימין* [the writing was completed with my right hand] Zechariah son of the martyr son of R. Moses ha-Hazani in Lakania in the island Candi'). According to Moritz Steinschneider, 'Candia', *Mose* 2 [1879], pp. 456-7, the copyist was from the Casani family). Also published in Benjamin Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library: Catalogue...* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2008), no. 247.

Tahchemonites<sup>18</sup> were marked and interpreted by means of initials. For during the Shepherds' Crusade [30] he went by the light of the Lord to his martyrdom. He is to be called 'kadosh',<sup>19</sup> and the merciful God will place his departed soul in Eden, *Ame[n]*. Written and completed in Cania in the island of Candia, on the twelfth day of the month of Marheshvan, 5085 years to the Creation [= 8 November 1324]. May the Omnipresent merit me that my offspring and their offspring read it until the end of time. And may the scriptural passage be fulfilled for us, as it is written, 'but recite it, etc.' [Josh. 1: 8].

Blessed be Your servant, the son of your handmaiden, may he prosper. *Hazak*, praise be to Him (182a).<sup>20</sup>

The copyist attests to his father's martyrdom during the massacres perpetrated by those joining the Shepherds' Crusade in 1320. He includes enigmatic language: '*Kilor be-'ayin*', which he explains in the body of the colophon. He writes in Byzantine script, which was the prevalent script in the region. He copied for his own use *Sefer Mitsvot Katan* by R. Isaac ben Joseph of Corbeil. The copyist might have found refuge on the island from the massacres, that destroyed numerous Jewish communities in France and southern France. The port city of Canea was one of the cities in which Jews from the Franco-German center, Italy, and the East took shelter [31].

We hear of the island of Crete serving as a temporary refuge for Jews from various lands, since it served as a transit point for further destinations, from a colophon written by the copyist Ephraim ben Shabetai the teacher. He copied for himself(?) *Tsafneat Pa'neah*, an exegetical work on the Torah which was written by R. Eliezer [or Elazar] Ashkenazi ben Nathan the Babylonian. The copy, which was completed in 1399, is written in script of the Byzantine type. He writes:

נשלם זה הספר הנכבד ב"ג לחדש ניסן שנת הקנ"ט ליצירה וכתבתיהו לעצמי בעיר קריית מקום גלותי אני אפרים הצעיר בכ"ר שבת המלמד י"ל [שמרהו לעד] והשם למען רחמי ישיבני למקומי לשלום ויזכני לעבוד אלוהי אבי בלבב שלם ובנפש חפצה כי כל לבבות דורש'ה וכל יצר מחשבות מבין ויחנני לב לדעת להגות בתורתו יומם ולילה דכתי' לא ימוש... שבה לנותן ליעף כח ולאין אונים עצמה ירבה. (129b)

This worthy book is completed on 13 Nisan, in the year 5159 [1399] to the Creation, I wrote it for myself<sup>21</sup> in the city[sic] of Crete, the place of my exile, I, Ephraim, the young, son of the honored rabbi, Shabetai the teacher, may [the Lord] preserve him forever. May the Lord, in His mercy, restore me to my place in peace, and may I merit to wholeheartedly and willingly serve the God of my father. For 'the Lord searches all hearts and discerns the design of every thought' [1 Chron. 28: 9]. May I be granted the wisdom to know and study His Torah day and night, as it is written, 'Let not [this Book of the Torah] cease [from your lips]' [Josh. 1: 8]. Praise to the One who gives strength to the weary, and increases strength to the powerless.<sup>22</sup>

The colophon indicates that the island of Crete was a place

of exile for the copyist, who anticipated returning to the land of his birth. The fact that the copyist used the Byzantine script teaches that he had stayed in Crete for a number of years and had adopted the prevalent type of writing on the island.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.2. Rhodes

Three manuscripts from the pre-Ottoman period in Rhodes have survived, thereby providing additional evidence of the Jewish history on the island. When R. Benjamin of Tudela visited the island in 1170, he found 400 Jews there [32], but the Turkish war against the island in 1480 resulted in the community's destruction. Indeed, the latest manuscript that was copied in Rhodes dates from 1453. R. Obadiah of Bartenura visited the island in 1488, and described the condition of the Jews there as follows: 'Very few Jews remain in Rhodes. All there are now are about 22 households, all of them are poor and needy and live a life of affliction.' [33]. The Jews were expelled from the island towards the end of the century. The situation of the Jews in Rhodes in the middle of the fifteenth century is reflected in a colophon by the copyist Jacob ben Barzilai [...] the Spaniard, which concludes:

נשלם ביום ששי עשרים יום לחדש טבת קק"ד לפרט ברודוס להחכם השלם [...] ס"ט נאם הכותב ושבע רוגו והוא שלי יעקב בן ברזילי בן יצחק.

Completed on Friday, the twentieth day of the month of Tevet, 214<sup>24</sup> by the abbreviated era [= 30 December 30 1453], in Rhodes, for the perfect sage [...] of Spanish lineage, the words of the copyist *sated with trouble* [Job 14: 1]. This [manuscript] is mine [i.e. for his own use], Jacob ben Barzilai ben Isaac.<sup>25</sup>

The Spanish script of the colophon teaches that the copyist was an immigrant. Two additional manuscripts from the island were written in the Byzantine script.

The scribe Moses Kimhi copied for his son Eliezer a Kabbalistic collection that included the books *Ginat Egoz* and *Marot Elohim*. He writes in his colophon:

השלמתי ספר המורה בעזרת הבורא ביום חמישי בעיר רודוס... וכתבתי אני משה קמחי לר' אליעזר קמחי בני.

With the Creator's help, I completed the book *Ha-Moreh* [= *Guide of the Perplexed*] on Thursday in the city of Rhodes [...] I, Moses Kimhi, wrote [it] for R. Eliezer Kimhi, my son.<sup>26</sup>

The three books: *Seder Rav Amran Gaon*, *Ginat Egoz*, and a

<sup>18</sup> Following 2 Sam. 23: 8.

<sup>19</sup> "Kadosh" is used here with both its meanings: "holy" and "martyr."

<sup>20</sup> Ms. Vat. ebr. 247.

<sup>21</sup> He passed a line above these words (which in many manuscripts is used to denote deletions; the scribe apparently sold the book to someone else, and intended to write the name of the individual who had commissioned the work).

<sup>22</sup> Ms. Vienna - Jewish Community HS. II.8, 129b.

<sup>23</sup> For a description of the manuscript, see A. Z. Schwarz, *Die hebraischen Handschriften in Oesterreich* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1939), pp. 30-1, no. 44. A. Epstein, *Beiträge zur jüdischen Alterthumskunde (Mi-kadmoniyot ha-yehudim)* (in Hebrew) (Lippe, 1887), vol. 1, pp. 125-7, describes the manuscript, and states that it is 'a commentary on the Torah'. R. Eleazar wrote his book in 5124 [= 1393/94]. To my knowledge, the book *Tsafneat Pa'neah* is not to be found in any library. It transpires, however, that A. Schwarz described it in detail in the above catalogue. It was recently published: *Manuscripts and Archival Documents of the Vienna Jewish Community Held in Russian Collections* (Moscow, 2006), catalogue no. 73, which states that this manuscript is among the holdings of the Russian State Military Archives, Ms. 707/3/6. Thus, the manuscript exists, and is currently in a Russian collection.

<sup>24</sup> This unusual form of denoting the year (5214 = 1454 CE) repeats the letter ק (= 100 + 100), instead of the usual use of the letter ר, with the numerical value of 200.

<sup>25</sup> Ms. Torino Bib. Nazionale A. V. 17. He had initially intended this copy for some individual who had commissioned the work, and then apparently changed his mind, and wrote that he had copied it for his own use.

<sup>26</sup> Ms. Vat. ebr. 221.

collection of commentaries to the Bible, were copied by various copyists. All were commissioned, that is, this apparently was the three copyists' livelihood.

### 2.3. Chios

When R. Benjamin of Tudela visited Chios in the course of his travels, he reported that 400 Jews lived on the island [34, 74]. R. Samuel ben Moses de Medina (*Maharshadam*; Salonika, 1506/7-1589) wrote about the Chios community in a responsum addressed to them regarding the cancellation of a betrothal: 'I hear that there are not a hundred inhabitants of Chios. They are not Torah scholars, because of their sins they were cut off [i.e. died in a plague]. I was asked to give my opinion about the law.' [35]. The island's proximity to the Turkish coastal city of Izmir led to its importance in Levant trade, in which its Jews participated, already in the medieval period [36]. The traveler Nicolaus de Nicolai visited the island in 1551 and wrote about its Jewish community: 'Many Jews reside on the island [...] they have a special street for their residence [...] they were required to wear a distinctive large hat in the Cretan green color.' [37].

The responsa of R. Solomon ben Adret (*Rashba*) were copied in this community. The copyist referred to *Rashba* as 'the light of Israel, the right hand, a strong hammer'. The book was copied in Provata in 1538. The copyist writes:

עד הנה עזרנו ה' והעתקנו שאלות ותשובות אלה לרב נר ישראל הימני פטיש החזק הרשב"א ז"ל וסיימתי ר"ה אדר הרצ"ה פה פרובטו. אני תולעת ולא איש, ישראל די באיסה.

The Lord has helped us to now, and we copied the responsa by the rabbi, the light of Israel, the right hand, a strong hammer, *Rashba*, of blessed memory. I finished it on the New Moon of Adar 5198 [= 11 February 1538], here in Provata [38]. 'I am a worm, less than a man' [Ps. 22: 7],<sup>27</sup> Israel de Biasa.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.4. Negroponte

Negroponte is the Italian name of the island and of the city of Chalkis on the island. R. Samuel Kalai<sup>29</sup> writes about the community in his book *Mishpatei Shmuel*: [39] 'They ask the rabbis in the adjoining cities of Larisa, Lepanto, and Patras [in Greece].'<sup>30</sup> R. Shemarya ben Elijah ha-Ikriti of Negroponte (1275-1355) lived and was active in the city for a number of years. This philosopher and Biblical commentator was born in Rome; while a child, his family moved to Crete ('ha-Ikriti' = of the island of Crete) [40, 75].

Two manuscripts were copied in this community: a Kabbalistic collection, copied in 1346 by Moses ben David Cazani, who noted the place where it was copied: '*Agrifon* [= Khalkis]' [41]. He writes in the colophon that it was written 'on the 28th of Shevat 5106 [= 30 January 30 1346], [by] Moses the son of R. David Cazani, of Coucy'.<sup>31</sup>

The second manuscript was copied by Shem Tob ben Jacob

ha-Sefardi of Tulaytulah (Toledo), an immigrant from Spain who arrived at the island in the beginning of the fifteenth century. He writes that he copied the manuscript for himself, in the city of 'Negro Ponte'. In the colophon<sup>32</sup> he speaks at length about a natural phenomenon that made a great impression on him, one that requires interpretation:

נשלם פירוש זה שחיבר...ר' יוסף אבן גקטלה...במדינת שגובייה... בהיותו על המעיין שקורין אבן מקל. וקורין לה השם הזה על ענין שהמים ההם חוזרין המקלות אבנים...מי שירצה לקחת מקל...ויצריהו כסוס או ככלב...ימצאהו מצוייר אבן לסוף שני ימים... "ואני המעתיק...שמי שם טוב אבן פולייא הספרדי ממדינת טליטלה בן... יעקב...מעיד שאני הייתי מצוי בעיר הנזכרת שגובייה בשנת קמ"ה...והודיעוני קרובי דון יוסף גונסון ור' יצחק אדבליש. ודון יוסף סלמה ודון יוסף עובדיה והראש הקהל דון משה אריו יצ"ו ענין ומעשה המים האלה ולא האמנתי לדבריהם. והולכתי למעיין ושם שמתי שלשה עצים מצויירים כלב ונחש ויור...ועמדתי בעיר ט' ימים ובאתי למעיין...ומצאתי אבנים יותר חזקים מאבן שיש. ושתיתי מהמים ההם...ואחר כן באתי בעיר ניגרה פונטי ומצאתי הפירוש הזה ביד החכם ר' יצחק אל אשבילי והעתיקתי שם בחדש כסליו שנת הקס"ב שם טוב [אבן פולייא] ס"ט בן יעקב ז"ל תנצבה.

This is the completion of this commentary that was composed by [...] R. Joseph ibn Gikatilla [...] in the state of Segovia [...] when he was at the spring called *even makel* [lit., stone stick] It is called this because the sticks return as stones [...] whoever wants takes a stick [...] and draw it as a horse or dog [...] will find it drawn as a stone after two days [...] 'I, the copyist' [...] My name is Shem Tob ibn Polia' ha-Sefardi from the state of Tulaytulah, the son of [...] Jacob [...] I attest that I was in the abovementioned city of Segovia in the year [5] 145 [= 1385] [...] and I was informed by my relatives Don Joseph Gonson and R. Isaac Adbalish[?]. And Don Joseph Salma and Don Joseph Obadiah, and the *rosh kahal* [head of the community] Don Moses Arroyo, may God preserve and protect him, about the matter of this water, but I did not believe what they said. They brought me to the spring, and I placed there three pieces of wood, bearing the depictions of a dog, a serpent, and a bull [...] I stayed in the city nine days and I came to the spring [...] I found stones that were stronger than marble stone. I drank from that water [...] Afterwards I came to the city of Negro Ponte, [where] I found this commentary by the sage R. Isaac el-Ishbili, and I copied it in the month of Kislev, in the year 5162 [= November/December 1401]. Shem Tob [Ibn Polia] Shem Tob ben Jacob, of blessed memory, may his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life (86a).<sup>33</sup>

The scribe copied for himself a commentary to the Song of Songs attributed to Joseph ibn Gikatilla and various collections, which he wrote in cursive Spanish script. An additional three manuscripts that he copied are extant. Since they were copied in different places throughout the Balkan expanse, he may be regarded to be a 'traveling scribe'. In 1403 he copied *Keter Shem Tov* by Shem Tob ibn Gaon in Salonika; in 1404 he completed a copy in Modon; and another copy in 1415 in the cities of Philippi and Thebes [42]. It is noteworthy that the *Entziklopedyah ha-Ivrit* entry on "Euboea" (the

<sup>27</sup> This concluding phrase is characteristic of copyists from the region of Byzantium.

<sup>28</sup> Ms. Oxford Bodleian Lib. 329.

<sup>29</sup> Rabbi in the cities of Arta and Wieden (= Vienna).

<sup>30</sup> Patras was conquered by the Ottomans in 1500.

<sup>31</sup> Ms. Mon. Olive. Magg. Bib. Capitole Cod 37 A Z.

<sup>32</sup> The colophon is damaged and is difficult to decipher, which explains the fragmentary nature of the quotation.

<sup>33</sup> Ms. Paris Heb. 790. For a description of the manuscript, see the following n.

official name of Chalcis) makes no mention of a Jewish community in the city. This colophon according adds to our knowledge of the history of the Jews on the island. Chalkis was conquered by the Turks in 1470; thus, the two manuscripts were copied before the Ottoman period.

### 2.5. *Aksia (Naxos)*

A very small number of Jews lived on the island during this period. As Rozanes writes: 'They apparently were few in number, and were unsuccessful in establishing a large community.' [43]. An extant manuscript was copied there in 1410: a medical treatise by one of the greatest physicians of the medieval period, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi. The work was commissioned by a physician, the teacher of the copyist, who praises his teacher-client as 'my teacher, the crown of my head, the honored rabbi, Judah Alcostantini, of the Hanokhi lineage [...] that he may see us as great in Torah as he desires a wedding (canopy) and good deeds' (the formulation of a classical blessing). The copyist writes:

אל הסופר תן מנוח רבו ציריו מיני ארבה א-ל נותן ליעף כח ולאין אונים  
עצמה ירבה, תמו פסקי מחמד בן זכריה אלרזי כלם ונשלמו על ידי תולעת  
ולא איש מלכאל כהן הקטן בן כ"ר שבתי כהן מאיקדאה ונכתב בכ"ח של  
ראש >חדש תמוז שנת הק"ע בעיר אקשיא... והוא לנכבד לאדוני ומורי  
ועטרת ראשי כ"ר יהודה החכם אלסנסני ממשפחת החנוכי והשם יזכהו  
שיראה בנו למעלת התורה כמו שהוא חפץ ולחופה ולמעשים טובים  
ונאמר אמן אמן סלה.

Give repose to the scribe, for his troubles were as numerous as locusts, God who gives strength to the weary, and increases strength to the powerless. Thus is concluded all the sentences of Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi. They were completed by 'a worm, less than a man', Malchiel Cohen the small, son of his honor, the rabbi, Shabetai Kohen of *Aksia* [= Naxos]. It was written on the twenty-eighth of the month<sup>34</sup> of Tammuz, the year of 5170 [= 9 July 1410] in the city of *Aksiya* [...] for the worthy, for my master and teacher, the crown of my head, his honor, the rabbi, Judah the sage Alcostantini, of the Hanokhi lineage. May the Lord merit him that his son will see the greatness of Torah, as he desires a wedding (canopy) and good deeds, and let us say, *Amen Amen Selah* (58b).<sup>35</sup>

His script is Byzantine, thereby teaching that the copyist was one of the island's veteran residents. Additionally, he uses the concluding formula 'a worm, less than a man' which is characteristic of the region's scribes.

Naxos would later gain fame when Don Joseph Nasi would be appointed duke of the island [44]. He persuaded the Ottoman authorities to conquer Cyprus, and he was even promised to be appointed king of the island.

### 2.6. *Famagusta - Cyprus*

Our information regarding Cretan Jewry in the medieval period is insufficient to sketch a complete history, although we know that Jewish communities existed for centuries in

Famagusta and Nicosia. These communities, however, have left no mark on Jewish history [45]. In the 'Letter from a Pupil of R. Obadiah of Bartenura – 1495' [46], the author provides the following details: 'We came to Fama Gusta [...] the city is a fine one, full of all bounty [...] in Fama Gusta there is only a single Ashkenazic Jew, named R. Shabetai, and he opens the door to borrowers [i.e. extends loans].'

Benjamin of Tudela found Jews when he visited the island, but he does not specify the number of Jews there. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Italian Jews settled in Cyprus, when it was under Genoese rule. R. Moses Basola visited the island in 1521, and in Famagusta he met twelve Jewish families of Sicilian origin. He wrote in his diary: 'The Jews there are few and bad [...] there is enmity and altercation between them, and most of them drink *yayn nesekeh* [wine handled by non-Jews, and consequently prohibited] [...] they have a fine and magnificent synagogue.' [47]. On the other hand the traveler Elijah of Pesaro, who visited the island in 1563, relates the following about the Jewish community in Famagusta: 'I found here a large and magnificent synagogue with a community numbering about twenty-five households, some Levantine, some Sicilian, and some Portuguese [...] there is enmity between them [...] In all the island there are no Jews besides those here.' [48]. The island was conquered by the Ottomans in 1570.

An implied description of the spiritual state of this community, that according to Rozanes once numbered in the thousands [49], appears in a responsum by R. Hayyim Vital in his *She'eilot u-Teshuvot Avkat Rohel*: 'Also on the island of *Jifro* [= Cyprus] there is not a single Jew to be found who can properly write any legal document.'<sup>36</sup> A fascinating report from the middle of the fourteenth century states: 'I, the writer, ate white beans on Passover [which are forbidden to Ashkenazic Jews during the holiday] at the table of the rabbi, R. Eliezer Firna, of blessed memory, in the city of Famagusta in the year 1359.' [50].<sup>37</sup> As was noted above, there is a single extant manuscript that was copied in Famagusta. It was written in Spanish script, thereby indicating that the copyist was an immigrant. He copied the Biblical exegeses of ibn Shuaib [51] for someone. His colophon teaches of the way he worked:

אני יום טוב ה' פ' אראג' כתבתי וסיימתי זה הספר מכן שועף' והשלמתי אותו  
ליל יום ה' באיילת השחר בה' ימים לחדש חשוון שנת חמשת אלפים ומאתים  
וששים וישיבה לבריאת עולם ביום מוצאי באי קוברו בעיר פ'אמאגושה.

I, Yom Tob ibn Faragi, wrote and completed this book by ibn Shuib. I completed it Thursday night at the morning dawn [52],<sup>38</sup> on the fifth day of the month of Heshvan, the five thousand, two hundred, and sixty-sixth year to the Creation of the world [= 13 October 1505] [...] on the island of Cobra [= Cyprus], in the city of Famagusta (92b).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Para. 75.

<sup>37</sup> I was unsuccessful in identifying this sage. He was one of the Ashkenazic Jews who ate legumes on Passover. I found this comment in Shlomo Spitzer, 'The Halakhic Rulings of Our Masters in Ashkenaz in the Generation Close to the Persecutions of 109 [= 1349]'

<sup>38</sup> We may conclude from this wording that he labored over the copying the entire night and completed it in the early dawn. Jewish writers were not deterred from writing by lamplight, unlike their Christian counterparts in the scriptorium, who were strictly forbidden from copying books by lamplight.

<sup>39</sup> Ms. Moscow Russian State Lib. Guenzburg 559.

<sup>34</sup> The 28th day of the month of Tammuz could not be 'Rosh Hodesh' of that (or any other) month.

<sup>35</sup> Ms. Parma Bib. Palatina 2279.

### 3. Conclusion

The 29 manuscripts that were prepared in those extremely small communities by industrious copyists, who worked day and night, and often for many months, are irrefutable evidence of the cultural life of the Jews on those islands. The professional copyists, and perhaps others as well, did not do their work without financial recompense, although we find no testimony to this in their colophons [53]. Thanks to their efforts, classical Jewish writings were preserved for future generations; they were the disseminators of this culture among

the readership of their time. If we have been so bold as to present the copyists as book purveyors', then, keeping things in perspective, they are indeed worthy of such a title [54]. These colophons teach of the work of local book copyists and of those who immigrated to the islands, whether willingly or compelled by circumstances. Some copied books for their personal use, while others copied manuscripts for their livelihood. These writings will continue to provide a fertile field of research for scholars, due to their contents and to their being the subject of scholarly research as manuscripts.

### Appendix

*Table 2. Copyists' Names, Location, and Year of Copying (chronological order).*

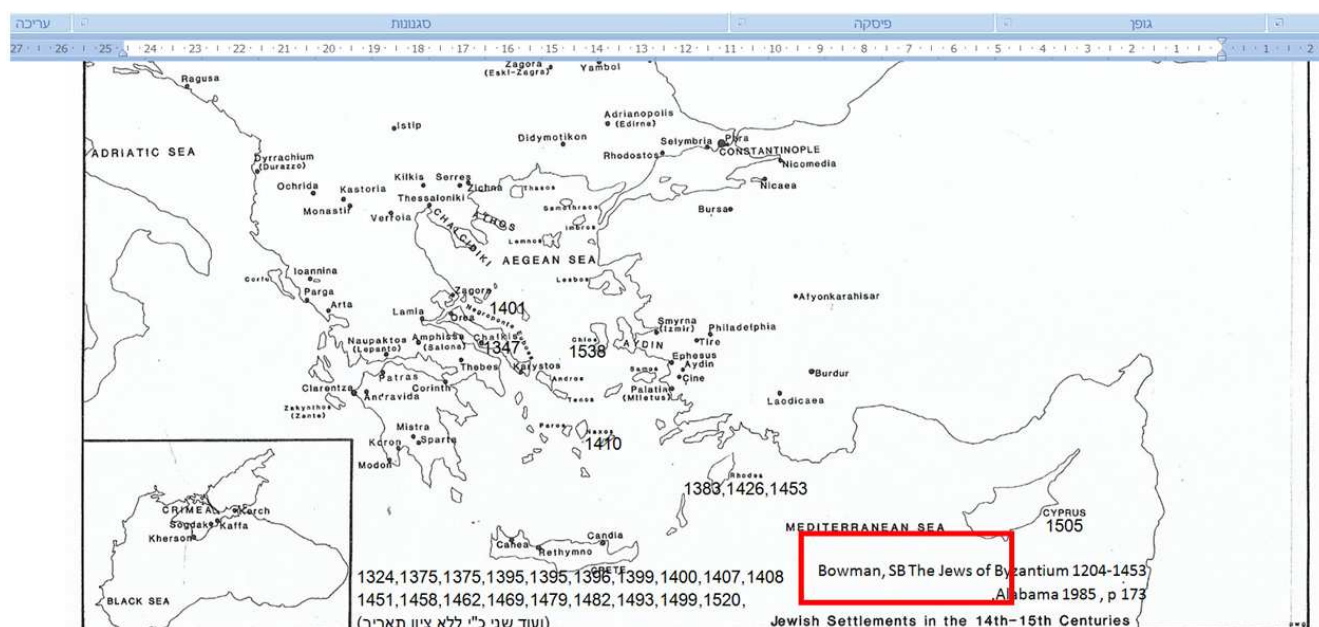
	<i>scribe</i>	<i>year</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>for</i>
1.	Zechariah ben Moses ha-Hazani	1324	Crete	own use
2.	Moses ben David Cazani	1346	Negroponte	unknown
3.	Abraham ben Leon	1374	Crete	own use
4.	Joseph ben Eliezer	1375	Crete	unknown
5.	Abraham ben Moses	1382	Crete	Shabetai ha-Rofe
6.	Moses Kimhi	1383	Rhodes	Eliezer Kimhi (his son)
7.	Shabetai ben Jeshaiiah Balbo	1391	Crete	own use
8.	Absalom ben Judah (two copies)	1395	Crete	Samuel ben Elijah
9.	Moses Carvira	1396	Crete	own use
10.	Ephraim ben Shabetai the teacher	1399	Crete	own use
11.	Shabetai ben Jeshaiiah Balbo	1400	Crete	own use
12.	Moses ben Isaac ibn Tibon	1407	Crete	Unknown
13.	Joseph ben Abraham Farir	1408	Crete	Unknown
14.	Michael ben Elijah ha-Kohen	1451	Crete	own use
15.	Unknown	1457	Crete	unknown
16.	Michael Romano	1462	Crete	Joseph Bonifacio
17.	Unknown	1469	Crete	unknown
18.	Michael Balbo	1474	Crete	unknown
19.	Michael ben Shabetai Balbo	1479	Crete	own use
20.	Isaac Papano	1493	Crete	own use
21.	Saul ben Moses Kats Ashkenazi	1520	Crete	unknown
22.	Moses ben David of Coucy	1346	<i>Agrifon</i> (= Khalkis)	unknown
23.	Shem Tob ben Jacob ben Puliya	1401	Negroponte	own use
24.	Malchiel ben Shabetai Kohen	1410	Naxos	Judah Alcostantini
25.	Moses ben Isaac Grazian	1426	Rhodes	own use
26.	Jacob ben Barzilai the Spaniard	1453	Rhodes	not for own use
27.	Yom Tob ibn Faragi	1505	Cyprus (Famagusta)	unknown
28.	Israel de Biasa	1538	Chios (Provata)	unknown

#### Index of Copied Works

1. Avicenna, with commentary by Joseph ha-Lorki
2. Euclides (translation by Ibn Tibbon)
3. Sod ha-Sodot (the Hebrew version of Secretum Secretorum) and Sefer ha-Tapuah (the Hebrew version of The Book of the Apple) by (or ascribed to) Aristotle
4. Middle commentary of Physics by Aristotle
5. Ginat Egoz by Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla (two copies)
6. Various expositions
7. Expositions on the Torah
8. Sefer ha-Mikhlol by R. David Kimhi
9. Hilkhos Teshuvah and Hilkhos Tefilin (from Mishneh Torah)
10. Hilhot ha-Rif (R. Isaac Alfasi) on Mo'ed
11. Novellae on the Torah
12. Guide of the Perplexed
13. Guide of the Perplexed with commentary by Moses of Narbonne (Narboni)



14. Marot Elohim
15. Meshovev Netivot by Samuel Motot
16. Sefer Mitzvot Katan
17. Siddur R. Amram Gaon
18. Ha-Ikarim by R. Joseph Albo
19. Sefer ha-Peli'ah
20. Commentary on Sefer Mitzvot Katan
21. Commentary of Rashi to Avot
22. Bible commentaries (collection)
23. Commentary of Ibn Ezra to the Torah
24. Parshat ha-Kesef by Joseph ibn Kaspi
25. Tsafneat Pa'neah
26. Kabbalistic collection (two copies)
27. Pirkei Avukrat (the Hebrew version of al-Murshid, or al-Fusul al-Tibb, a commentary to the Aphorisms of Hippocrates by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi)
28. She'eilot u-Teshuvot ha-Rashba (R. Solomon ben Abraham Aderet)
29. Tahkemoni by Judah al-Harizi
30. Tikkun Midot ha-Nefesh by Ibn Gabirol



(Steven B. Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium (1204-1453)*, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1985, 85)

Figure 1. Locations of Manuscript Copying.

## References

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- [2] Nehemya Allony, *Studies in Medieval Philology and Literature*, vol. 5: *Bibliography and Book Art* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 183-227.
- [3] On the Project and the database, see Malachi Beit-Arie, 'The Codicological Data-Base of the Hebrew Paleography Project; a Tool for Localising and Dating Hebrew Medieval Manuscripts', in D. Rowland Smith and P. S. Salinger (eds), *Hebrew Studies: Papers Presented at a Colloquium on Resources for Hebraica in Europe... 12-13 September 1989*, *Hebrew Studies Colloquium* (1991) (1993), 165-97.
- [4] Unlike the opinion of the French historian Jacques Le Goff: 'They [i.e. manuscripts] were meant to enhance the collections [...] of rich individuals' (Jacques Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, tr. T. L. Fagan [Cambridge, 1993], pp. 7-9, at 8).
- [5] See the map: Steven B. Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium 1204-1453* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1985), p. 173.
- [6] Joshua Starr, *Romania: The Jewries of the Levant after the Fourth Crusade* (Paris: Editions du Centre, 1949), p. 10.
- [7] David Jacoby, 'Migration familiales et strategies commerciales venitiennes aux XIIe et XIIIe siecles', *Migrations et diasporas mediterraneennes* (2002), pp. 335-73.
- [8] The Fourth International Conference of the Dahan Center, Bar-Ilan University, on societal and cultural aspects of the Jews in the Ottoman empire, 13-14 June 2001.

- [9] On the phenomenon of a scribe who traveled to different communities with books for the purpose of their copying and distribution (albeit in the Franco-German center), see Ephraim Kupper, 'Concerning the Cultural Image of German Jewry and Its Rabbis in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries' (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 42 (1973), pp. 130-32.
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- [11] Simon Marcus, 'Historia de los Judios de Creta', *Otsar Yehudi Sefarad* (Tesoro de los Judios Sefardies) 6 (1963), pp. 135-9, at 135.
- [12] Zvi Ankori, 'Jews and the Jewish Community in the History of Mediaeval Crete', *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Cretological Studies* 3 (1968), pp. 312-67.
- [13] Meir Benayahu, Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali of Crete (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1983); Giacomo Corazzol, 'On the Sources of Elijah Capsali's "Chronicle of the Kings" of Venice', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 27, 2 (2012), pp. 151-60.
- [14] Abraham David, 'From Candia to Egypt during the Venetian Period in Light of Documents from the Cairo Genizah' (in Hebrew), *Italia*, vol. 21 (2012), pp. 7-32.
- [15] Avraham Yaari, *The Journey of R. Meshullam of Volterra in the Land of Israel in 241 [= 1481]* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1949), pp. 81-2.
- [16] The astronomer and historian R. Abraham ben Samuel Zacuto (1452?-1515).
- [17] Abraham Zacuti (Zacuto), *Liber Juchassin (Sefer yuhasin ha-shalem)* (in Hebrew), ed. H. Filipowski (London: Hevrat Meorerei Yeshanim, 1857).
- [18] Elias S. Artom and Humbertus M. D. Cassuto (eds.), *Statuta Judaeorum Candiae (Taqqanot Qandiya)* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1943).
- [19] Benayahu, *Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali*, pp. 148-53 and n. 20. On the sale of books that originated in the islands.
- [20] This book copyist is not mentioned in the list of Leopold Zunz, 'Abschreiber, Punktatoren, Korrektoren, Autographen', *Zeitschrift für hebraeische Bibliographie* 18 (1915), pp. 58-64, 101-19.
- [21] For the Balbo family, see A. Ch. Freiman, 'Palestine Emissaries and Pilgrims: 15th Century Documents from Candia' (in Hebrew), *Zion* 1 (1936), pp. 185-7.
- [22] Malachi Beit-Arie and Colette Sarat, *Manuscripts Medievales en Caracteres Hebraïques* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; Jerusalem: Academie Nationale des Sciences et des Lettres, 1979), vol. 2, p. 43, with bibliography and a list of the manuscripts that he copied.
- [23] The name of the Byzantine empire in the medieval period, and especially, of the Balkan states and Thrace. Thus, e.g. Benjamin Klar, *Megillat Ahimaaz: The Chronicle of Ahimaaz* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Tarshish, 1974), p. 51 and p. 151 n.
- [24] This scribe is known to us from two additional book copies that he made for himself in 1431 (Vat. ebr. 220): *Sod Shem ha-Yihud* and *Ha-Behir* (Cambridge UL Dd. 10.11). It might be possible to classify him as a professional copyist, who kept books in his possession in order to make additional copies.
- [25] Michael Riegler, 'Inscriptions of Scribes in Colophons of Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts' (in Hebrew), *Jewish Studies* 36 (1996), pp. 135-45.
- [26] Shabetai ben Jeshaiah Balbo copied MS. Paris BN. hebr. 698 (*Guide of the Perplexed*) in 1400, and the second Michael Balbo copied Ms. Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Heb. 80 3046 in 1479.
- [27] This physician is not mentioned in the list of Moritz Steinschneider, 'Juedische Aerzte', *Zeitschrift für hebraeische Bibliographie* 17 (1914), pp. 63-96, 121-67; 18 (1915), pp. 25-37. Accordingly, this colophon contributes to the identification of a Jewish physician in Candia. The book comprises 170 folio pages, including the book *Tikkun Midot ha-Nefesh* by Ibn Gabirol and *Sod ha-Sodot* (the Hebrew version of *Secretum Secretorum*) and *Sefer ha-Tapuah* (the Hebrew version of *The Book of the Apple*) by (or ascribed to) Aristotle (MS. London BL. Or. 2396).
- [28] Marcus, 'Historia de los Judios', p. 136.
- [29] Ms. Vat. ebr. 343. On R. Saul Kohen Ashkenazi, see Kupper, 'Concerning the Cultural Image', p. 125.
- [30] On the Shepherds' Crusade, see Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, L. Schoffman, trans. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 15-17; Bernhard Blumenkranz, 'Pastoureaux ("Shepherds")', *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 13: 175-76; Solomon ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, ed. Y. Baer (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1947), p. 149.
- [31] David Jacoby, 'On the Status of Jews in the Venetian Colonies in the Middle Ages' (in Hebrew), *Zion* 28 (1963), pp. 57-69.
- [32] 'Rhodes [...] the principal of the four hundred Jews who reside here are R. Aba, R. Chananel and R. Eliyah' (*The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela*, trans. A. Asher [London and Berlin: A. Asher, 1841 (New York: Hakesheth, n.d.)], p. 57 [Hebrew: p. 25]).
- [33] Yaari, *Igerot Eretz Yisrael*, p. 111, Letter 21 (letter from R. Obadiah to his father).
- [34] *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela: Critical Text, Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. M. N. Adler (London: Frowde, p. 1907), 14, reads: 'Thence it is three days' journey to the island of Chios, where there are about 400 Jews, including R. Elijah Heman and R. Shabta' (Hebrew: p. 17, para. 25); and in the edition of Adolph Asher (*Itinerary*, p. 57): 'Three days from thence is situated the Island of Chio [= Chios].'
- [35] *She'eilot u-teshuvot Maharshadam* (Mahraschdam) (Lemberg: P. M. Balaban, 1862), *Yoreh Deah*, para. 133.
- [36] Jacob Barnai, 'The Origins of the Jewish Community in Izmir in the Ottoman Period' (in Hebrew), *Pe'amim* 12 (1982), pp. 47-58, at p. 57.
- [37] Salomon A. Rosanes, *Histoire des Israelites de Torquie... et de l'Orient* (in Hebrew) (Sofia: Amichpat, 1937-1938), vol. 2, p. 136.
- [38] The copyist mentions the name of a mountain chain on the island of Chios. Jews resided in Chios since the eleventh century (Simon Marcus, 'Chios', *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 5: 475; David Jacoby, 'The Jews in Chios under Genoese Rule' [Hebrew], *Zion* 26 [1961], pp. 180-97).

- [39] Para. 54; Vienna 1599 (Jerusalem: Yad Harav Nissim, 1989).
- [40] Hermann Vogelstein and Paul Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom* (Berlin: Mayer & Muller, 1896), vol. 1, pp. 446-50, with bibliography and the history of the family.
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- [42] Malachi Beit-Arie and Colette Sarat, *Manuscripts Medievales en Caracteres Hebraïques* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; Jerusalem: Académie Nationale des Sciences et des Lettres, 1972), vol. 1, nos. 75, 78.
- [43] Rosanes, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 136.
- [44] Cecil Roth, *The House of Nasi: The Duke of Naxos* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948 [1992]). Benjamin Arbel, 'The Jews in Cyprus; New Evidence from the Venetian Period,' *Revue des Etudes Juives* 137, 1-2 (1978), pp. 27-46; idem, 'What Happened to Famagusta's Jews Following the Ottoman Conquest of 1571?', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 27, 2 (2012), pp. 241-9.
- [45] Cecil Roth, 'The Jews in Cyprus' (in Hebrew), *Sefunot: Studies and Sources on the History of the Jewish Communities in the East* 8 (1964; *Itzhak Ben-Zvi Memorial Volume*), pp. 285-95.
- [46] Avraham Yaari, *Masa'ot Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel Journeys) (Ramat Gan: Masada, 1976), p. 147.
- [47] Izhak Ben-Zevi, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine: By Rabbi Moshe Bassola of Ancona* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 1939), 2nd ed, pp. 33-4.
- [48] Letter from Iliyah from Pisaro, Italy, when he traveled from Venice to Famagusta, on the island of Cyprus, in 1562/3-1563/4, in: J. D. Eisenstein, *A Compendium of Jewish Travels (Otzar Masa'ot)* (in Hebrew) (New York: J. D. Eisenstein, 1926), pp. 169-70.
- [49] Rosanes, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 138.
- [50] *Moriah* 8 (86-87) (1978), pp. 2-6, at p. 3, para. 3.
- [51] R. Joshua ibn Shuaib (1280-1340), a Spanish rabbi known for his book of Biblical exegeses. See Israel Moses Ta-Shma, 'Ibn Shuaib, Joshua', *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 8: 1201-1202.
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- [53] On copyist's wages in various Jewish expanses, see Riegler, 'Colophons', pp. 249-57.
- [54] Gries, *Book in the Jewish World*.
- [55] Zipora Baruchson, 'Research of Hebrew Books and of the Discipline of Bibliometrics' (in Hebrew), *Yad la-Kore* 24 (1989), pp. 41-52, with bibliographical references.
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