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[Henry Wasserman / Larissa Daemmig (2nd ed.)]

TIBBON, IBN (Tibbonids), a family of translators, philosophers, and exegetes, based in southern France (“Provence,” the Midi, Occitania). JUDAH B. SAUL IBN TIBBON (c. 1120–1190), called the “father of translators,” was born in Granada, but fled (most likely due to the Almohad persecutions) and resettled in Lunel, where he worked as physician and merchant. Encouraged (and perhaps supported financially) by *Meshullam b. Jacob, *Abraham b. David of Posquières, and *Asher b. Meshullam, Judah produced Hebrew translations of Bahya Ibn Paquda’s *Duties of the Heart* and Solomon Ibn Gabirol’s *Improvement of Moral Qualities*. He also translated Saadia Gaon’s *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, Jonah Ibn Janah’s *Book of Roots* and *Sefer ha-Rikmah*, Ibn Gabirol’s *Choice of Pearls*, Judah Halevi’s *Kuzari*, and possibly a logical work by the Islamic philosopher al-Farabi (his summary of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*). Judah’s only surviving original composition is his ethical testament, a lively account of his efforts to educate his son according to his cultural and literary ideals. In this testament, he also refers to his book on grammar (no longer extant). A treatise on divine unity, entitled *Sefer Sha’ar ha-Yihud*, has been attributed to him.

SAMUEL B. JUDAH IBN TIBBON (c. 1165–1232) was born in Lunel, traveled to Arles, Toledo, Barcelona, and Alexandria, and lived in Marseilles (where he taught his son-in-law and most famous disciple Jacob Anatoli). Like his father, Samuel was a physician, merchant, and translator. His most important translation was the Hebrew rendering of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*. He issued a first edition in 1204 and revised version, with glossary (*Perush ha-Millot ha-Zarot*), in 1213. But he also translated other writings by Maimonides (Eight Chapters, Commentary on Avot, Letter on Resurrection, Letter to Yemen, Letter on Translation, and possibly the preface to the commentary on Mishnah Sanhedrin, Chapter Helek); and he produced the first Hebrew versions of Aristotle (*Meteorology*) and Averroes (“Three Treatises on Conjunction”). Other translations attributed to him, such as ‘Ali b. Ridwan’s commentary on Galen’s *Ars parva*, are evidently not his work.

Samuel produced original works as well. His *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (between 1213 and 1221) was the first extensive philosophical commentary written on the book in Hebrew. He explains that Solomon wrote it in order to defend the doctrine of immortality against ancient skeptics who argued that conjunction with the active intellect is impossible. His second major book, *Ma’amar Yikkavu ha-Mayim*, is a similar work of philosophy and exegesis. It begins with a question of

cosmology (why is the earth not completely covered by water), then proceeds to answer this question in light of verses from Genesis, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Job, and the Book of Psalms. In addition to these two works, Samuel also wrote a brief “Treatise on the Table and Shewbread,” a “Letter on Providence,” and “Annotations” to his translation of the *Guide*. He planned two additional projects that were never completed: A commentary on the internal meanings of Proverbs, and an esoteric commentary on Genesis, entitled *Ner ha-Hofesh* (see Prov. 20:27).

MOSES B. SAMUEL B. JUDAH IBN TIBBON (fl. 1244–1283) resided in Montpellier, but spent some years in Naples with his brother-in-law Jacob Anatoli. He was the most prolific translator in the family; he produced translations of philosophical as well as technical scientific treatises. The authors he rendered into Hebrew, from Graeco-Arabic, Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic, include the following: Euclid, Geminus, Theodosius, Themistius, Maimonides, Hunayn b. Ishaq, Abu Bakr al-Razi, Ibn al-Haytham, al-Hassar, Ibn al-Jazzar, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Ibn al-Sid al-Batalyawsi, Averroes, Jabir Ibn Aflah, and al-Bitruji. Like his father, Moses also wrote original works of philosophy and exegesis. Best known is his commentary on Song of Songs, in which he explains the biblical book allegorically as a story about the human intellect’s pursuit of conjunction with the active intellect. He wrote several additional works as well, including a commentary on select rabbinic *aggadot* (*Sefer ha-Pe’ah*), a “Letter on Providence” (responding to his father’s letter), a responsum on the elements (relating to *Ma’amar Yikkavu ha-Mayim*), various explanations of passages from *Mishneh Torah*, *Book of Knowledge*, *Guide* 2:17, and Psalm 69:32, a philosophical-exegetical work entitled *Sefer ha-Teninim*, a supercommentary on Ibn Ezra, and possibly a treatise about the microcosm (*Olam Katan*) and commentary on the “work of the beginning” (*Ma’aseh be-Reshit*).

JACOB B. MAKHIR (Don Prophet Tibbon, Profatius/Prophacius Judaeus; c. 1236–1306), probably a nephew of Moses, likewise lived in Montpellier, where he had close contacts with Christian physicians in the medical school. In addition to translating Arabic and Graeco-Arabic philosophical and scientific writings (including works by Euclid, Menelaus, Autolycus, Theodosius, Qusta b. Luqa, Ibn al-Haytham, Ibn al-Saffar, Azarquel, Jabir ibn Aflah, and Averroes), he seems to have rendered into Hebrew a Latin medical treatise by his contemporary Arnold of Villanova. Jacob was also engaged in original scientific research. He wrote works of mathematics and astronomy and invented the Quadrant of Israel (*Roba Yisra’el; Quadrans novus*), an astronomical instrument that marked an improvement upon the astrolabe. During the communal controversy of 1303–6, he was an outspoken defender of philosophy and the philosophical culture represented by his family.

Three additional members of the Ibn Tibbon family are worthy of mention:

SAMUEL B. MOSES IBN TIBBON was involved in a lawsuit, mentioned in a responsum by Rashba, concerning the marriage of his cousin. JUDAH B. MOSES IBN TIBBON, together with Jacob b. Makhir, was a defender of philosophy

during the controversy of 1303–1306. A certain ABRAHAM IBN TIBBON, otherwise unknown, is identified as the translator of Aristotle's *Oekonomika*.

Influence

It is hard to overestimate the influence of the Ibn Tibbon family. With their translations, they created a philosophical library in Hebrew and coined a technical terminology that would be used by translators and original authors throughout the middle ages. Their original works were important as well. This is especially the case with Samuel, Moses, and Jacob Anatoli, who laid the foundations for a Maimonidean tradition of philosophy and exegesis in Europe. Their imprint is found especially in Provence, in the writings of figures such as Levi b. Abraham b. Ḥayyim, Gershom b. Solomon of Arles, Menahem ha-Meiri, and David ha-Kokhavi, but they were important in Italy as well. Moses of Salerno, Zerachiah Hen, Judah Romano, and especially Immanuel of Rome, owe much to the work of their philosophical predecessors. Although some scholars in Spain opposed their work – Jacob b. Sheshet wrote a full-length refutation of *Ma'amar Yikkavu ha-Mayim* – others, such as Isaac Ibn Latif, used them extensively, and in the 14th century they were cited frequently in commentaries on the Bible and supercommentaries on Ibn Ezra. Although their importance, as original philosophers and exegetes, waned in the 15th and 16th centuries, they were still consulted and discussed. Thus Judah Abarbanel (Leone Ebreo) owned a copy of Samuel's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, while Judah Moscato cited it several times in *Kol Yehudah*, his commentary on Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*.

See also *Translations and Translators.

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[James T. Robinson and Uri Melammed (2nd ed.)]

TIBERIAS (Heb. תִּבְרִיָּא), city on the western shore of Lake Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee), and the largest settlement in the Jordan Valley. The name usually appears in the Jerusalem Talmud as *Tivveryah*, and in the Babylonian Talmud as *Teverya*. The city is built upon a terrace of alluvial soil, lake sediment, and layers of basalt; the last is used as building material. It lies on a broad strip of land along the shore, where the ascent to the top of the mountains is relatively easy. Tiberias is situated approximately 8½ mi. (c. 13½ km.) from the northern tip of Lake Kinneret, and approximately 6 mi. (c. 10 km.) from the southern tip. It is geographically placed to serve as a trade, administrative and cultural center for the surrounding settlements. Because of the steep slopes of the mountains, the built-up part of the city is spread over a relatively large area. The old city lies only a few feet above the level of the lake and 690 ft. (c. 210 m.) below sea level, while the newest part of the city, on the Poriyyah Ridge to the west, reach to approximately 817 ft. (249 m.) above sea level, thus lying 1513 ft. (461 m.) above the level of the lake. This results in noticeable differences in temperature, rainfall, and vegetation within the city limits.

History

Tiberias was founded by Herod *Antipas, son of Herod, king of Judea and tetrarch of Galilee, on the remains of biblical Rakkath (Josh. 19:35, where Rakkath is described as a city of Naphtali between Hammath and Chinnereth; TJ, 1: 1, 70a). The site of Rakkath is probably to be identified with Khirbat