Polemical Aspects in an Early Judeo-Persian Bible Exegesis

The Commentary on the Story of Ḥannah (RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 4608)

OFIR HAIM

Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities,
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

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OFIR HAIM
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ABSTRACT The article discusses the attitude towards Christians, Muslims, and the “foreign sciences” based on one of the only extant polemical texts written in Early Judeo-Persian—a passage from an unpublished commentary on story of Ḥannah preserved in the National Library of Russia (RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 4608). In addition, the article attempts to define the relation of this commentary to the broader intellectual environment of the medieval Jewish world. A close examination of this passage reveals a possible connection to Karaite exegetical works written in Judeo-Arabic during the tenth century, particularly those of Yefet ben ‘Eli. Therefore, the article may serve as a case study of intellectual contact and transmission of knowledge between different Jewish groups in the Islamicate world.

KEY WORDS Polemics; Bible exegesis; Karaite; Yefet ben ‘Eli; Early Judeo-Persian; Judeo-Arabic

The Jewish presence in the Iranian world in the first centuries of Islam (up to the Mongol invasion in the early thirteenth century) is well-attested. Various texts by Jews and Muslims alike point to the existence of Jewish communities from Khuzestan in the southwestern corner of present-day Iran to the city of Samarqand in present-day Uzbekistan (see, for example, Gil 2004, 520–532). Yet, most of the textual production of these Jewish communities did not survive. The extant non-documentary texts written in Early Judeo-Persian (henceforth EJP) amount to about a thousand pages of various genres, including liturgy, poetry, medicine, and, most extensively, Bible exegesis. The bulk of Judeo-Persian exegetical texts are preserved
in the Russian National Library (henceforth RNL) and in the British Library (henceforth BL).

Among the manuscripts in the RNL collection, the commentary on Ezekiel (RNL Yevr.-Arab I 1682), the longest EJP text known to us, has been studied the most (Salemann 1900; Shaked 1986; MacKenzie 2003; Gindin 2003; Gindin 2004; Gindin 2008). It has also been recently edited and translated into English (Gindin 2007).\footnote{In this context, see also Paul (2013), a comprehensive study of the grammar of Early Judeo-Persian.} The linguistic features of two other manuscripts from the RNL—the commentary on the first weekly portion of the Book of Genesis (RNL Yevr.-Arab I 4605) and a fragment of a commentary on Jeremiah (RNL Yevr.-Arab I 4611)—have also been discussed (Shaked 2003; Shaked 2009). The abovementioned studies have clarified the unique linguistic features of EJP and facilitated a further investigation into various aspects of EJP Bible exegesis.

In this paper, I discuss one aspect of EJP Biblical exegesis, namely the attitude towards Christians, Muslims, and the “foreign sciences” as reflected in a polemical passage from a commentary on the prayer of Ḥannah (RNL Yevr.-Arab I 4608). To the best of my knowledge, this is the only source in the EJP exegetical corpus from both libraries where a direct polemic against these groups is found. By discussing this passage, I will also attempt to situate it in the broader intellectual environment of the medieval Jewish world and to define its connection with the medieval exegetical literature written in Hebrew and in Judeo-Arabic.
The Early Judeo-Persian Bible Exegesis: Dating and Provenance

The exegetical corpus from both libraries consists of nine manuscripts (RNL Yevr-Arab. I 1682, 4605–4611, BL Or. 2549–2460) containing commentaries on selected portions of the Pentateuch and of the Prophets. The dating of these manuscripts relies heavily on paleography. According to George Margoliouth, the two manuscripts from the BL (Or. 2549–2460) were copied by Rabbanites during the sixteenth century or even later (Margoliouth 1899, 184–185). However, my research into the manuscripts in both libraries, as well as their paleographical examination (Edna Engel, pers. comm.), suggests that they were copied during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with the exception of RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 4606, which was authored/copied during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The orthographical, morphological, and syntactical features of the BL manuscripts are shared by other pre-Mongol Judeo-Persian texts, as identified by a number of scholars (Gindin 2004; Shaked 2009; Paul 2013). Moreover, my research shows that the linguistic features and the handwritings of the BL manuscripts are similar, if not identical, to those of manuscripts in the RNL. Based on their content, it is evident that some of the manuscripts in both libraries belong to the same codex. For example, RNL Yevr.-Arab I 4609, which contains a commentary on 2 Sam. 6, is the direct continuation of BL Or. 2460. In addition, the missing text in the

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2 This section is a general survey of my initial findings regarding the EJP manuscripts from the BL and the RNL. I am currently studying these manuscripts as part of my Ph.D. dissertation on Early Judeo-Persian Bible exegesis and its connections with Karaite and Rabbanite exegetical literature in Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic from the ninth to eleventh centuries.

3 A thorough paleographical study of the manuscripts written in Early Judeo-Persian is currently being conducted by Dr. Edna Engel (The National Library of Israel).
middle of BL Or. 2460 (between folios 18 and 19) can be found within the commentary on the first weekly portion of Genesis in RNL (RNL Yevr.-Arab. 4605, fol. 4). Other manuscripts, however, were apparently grouped together at a certain point in time due to similar physical features and should be treated separately (e.g., the various quires of BL Or. 2459).

The manuscripts must have been copied by the same group of scribes, as the same handwritings reappear in different parts of the corpus. While it is possible that this group of scribes copied works from various sources of no common origin, there is a strong possibility that most of these manuscripts originate from a certain exegetical school that existed among Persian-speaking Jews during the eleventh century.

At this point, we have yet to identify the place of composition or copying of these manuscripts. Although the commentary on 1 Sam. 1:11–2:10 (RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 4608, 1r–6r) contains a colophon, the place of composition or copying mentioned in the colophon is illegible. We do, however, learn that the work is titled Oṣar neḥmad and that the name of the scribe (who may also be the author) is Geršon ben Yefet the teacher (melammed). To the best of my knowledge, the name Geršon ben Yefet is not attested in other sources. The colophon also mentions the name of Geršon's teacher, Yaʿaqov ben ʿEli. A certain Yaʿaqov ben ʿEli (died before 1211) is mentioned in texts from the Cairo Genizah from the second half of the twelfth century. This Yaʿaqov, who is also called reš be rabanan, was the pupil of Šēmuʿel ben ʿEli, the head of the Jewish academy in Baghdad. He was sent by Šēmuʿel to various Jewish communities to take care of material as well as spiritual matters. At a certain point, Yaʿaqov may have emigrated from Baghdad to Fustat (Gil 2004, 480). Whether Geršon's teacher is the same Yaʿaqov ben
‘Eli is difficult to ascertain. If the commentary is Karaite, this suggestion appears to be even less likely.⁴

As stated above, a number of EJP manuscripts in the RNL is directly connected to one of the manuscripts found in the BL, namely BL Or. 2460. Therefore, the EJP manuscripts from both libraries were apparently in the same location before they were purchased in the nineteenth century. The most likely source of these manuscripts is the Karaite synagogue Dar Simha in Cairo. The EJP manuscripts in the RNL belong to the first Judeo-Arabic series (RNL Yevr.-Arab I). This series was formerly part of the second Firkovich collection, named after Avraham Firkovich, a Karaite communal leader and scholar who collected an impressive array of manuscripts from different locations during his lifetime. After Firkovich’s death, the second collection was sold to the Public Imperial Library (now the RNL) in 1876 (Sklare 2003, 895). A significant portion of the manuscripts in the second Firkovich collection originate from the Dar Simha synagogue (Elkin and Ben-Sasson 2002, 65–71; Sklare 2003, 895). It seems possible that the EJP manuscripts in this collection were also found there. As for the EJP manuscripts in the BL, they were purchased in 1882 from Wilhelm Moses Shapira together with a large group of manuscripts, most of which are Karaite (Hoerning 1889, v; Sklare 2003, 896, 899–900). It seems that

⁴ Karaism is a religious movement whose proponents reject the authority of Jewish oral law, which was accepted by the Rabbanites, and claim to adhere to a more scripture-based Judaism. Karaism (or proto-Karaism) emerged during the eighth century in present-day Iran and Iraq. The movement flourished between the late ninth and the eleventh centuries, especially in Jerusalem, where the Karaite community known as ‘the Mourners of Zion’ produced an impressive amount of compositions in an array of subjects, such as Bible exegesis, theology, and Hebrew grammar. For an overview of the history of the Karaite movement in the medieval Islamic world, particularly the Karaite community of Jerusalem, see Polliack (2003a, 73–252); for a survey of Karaite scholarship and literature, see Polliack (2003a, 255–413).
Shapira also acquired manuscripts from the Dar Simha synagogue (Elkin and Ben-Sasson 2002, 77; Sklare 2003, 896).

The possible origin of these EJP manuscripts in Cairo does not necessarily suggest that they were composed or copied there. These manuscripts may have been brought to Cairo by Jewish immigrants of Persian origin, whose presence in the city is well-attested from the tenth century onwards. Several dozen EJP texts discovered in the Genizah of the Ibn Ezra synagogue indicate this (Shaked 1985, 25–27). Evidence for the activity of (Karaite) Jews of Persian descent in the area between Cairo and Damascus also exists in the manuscripts from the Dar Simha synagogue, since many of them contain family names denoting a Persian origin (Ben-Shammai 2006, 99–101). Furthermore, their possible origin in a Karaite synagogue does not necessarily support the conjecture that the EJP manuscripts are Karaite, as many Rabbanite works or fragments thereof have been found in the Dar Simha synagogue (Ben-Shammai 2010, 46–47).

Several commentaries on selected portions of the Pentateuch are clearly Karaite, as becomes apparent in the commentary on the first weekly portion of the Book of Genesis (Shaked 2003, 202–204) and the commentary on the third weekly portion of the Book of Numbers (BL Or. 2459, 1r–32v). However, the religious affiliation of the commentaries on the sections from the Prophets remains unclear. There are several passages in the texts that may suggest that they are Karaite. For example, both the commentary on Ezekiel (Gindin 2007, vol. 1, 227; trans. vol. 2, 385) and BL Or. 2460 (13r:16)

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5 Another possible source of the EJP manuscripts is the Karaite community of the town of Hit in Iraq. Some of Shapira’s manuscripts may have come from there (Hoerning 1889, v; Sklare 2003, 896). It is also possible that the Karaite community of Hit sent manuscripts to Firkovich (Elkin and Ben-Sasson 2002, 62–63).
contain the phrase *the shepherds of the Exile* (רוּאֵי גָּלוּת, roʾe galut), a term which was used by the Karaites when referring to the Rabbanite leadership of the Jewish diaspora (Erder 1998, 65).

Another issue related to the question of the religious affiliation of this exegetical corpus is its polemics against the views of Jewish and non-Jewish groups. As far as I have been able to discern, most of the commentaries contain almost no direct polemical discussions. Although the author of the commentary on Ezekiel occasionally rejects exegetical explanations concerning a certain word or phrase (Gindin 2000, 43), he rarely refers to matters pertaining to religious thought, such as arguing against the doctrine of prophetic immunity from sin (Gindin 2007, vol. 1, 35; trans. vol. 2, 15-16). In addition, the explanations and views rejected by the author are anonymous (Gindin 2000, 43), making it difficult to trace their sources. One exception is the commentary on the first weekly portion of the Book of Genesis. This commentary includes attacks against the Rabbanites, especially against R. Saʿadya Gaʾon (d. 942) and his views on the Jewish calendar (Shaked 2003, 202-204). Except for the Rabbanites, almost no other group is criticized for its doctrines and beliefs. As for

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6 In view of the fact that this study is based on texts written in different languages and scripts, I employ different systems of transliteration. The transliteration of Arabic words follows the system of the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES). Transliteration of biblical Hebrew is according to the system of Brill’s *Handbook of Jewish Languages*, except that seghol and ḫaṭeph seghol are transliterated as -e- and -ē-, respectively. Non-biblical Hebrew is transliterated according to the system of Brill’s *Handbook of Jewish Languages* for post-biblical Hebrew. See Kahn and Rubin (2016, XVII–XVIII). EJP texts are accompanied by a letter-for-letter transliteration.

7 In general, the amount of extant polemical texts written in EJP is very small. One of the few texts that may be regarded as apologetic is a fragmentary manuscript (BL Or. 8659) discussing the prophethood of Moses and the precepts of the Torah. It was identified as an introduction to a Karaite sefer miṣvot (see Rosenvasser 1968, 41). For an edition of the text entitled “Early Jewish-Persian Argument”, see MacKenzie (1968, 249–269). See also Shaked (1971, 178–180).
Christians and Muslims (commonly referred to as ’Edom and Ishma‘el, respectively), they are mentioned throughout the corpus with reference to their fate in the time of salvation. References to their doctrines, beliefs, and attitude towards the Jews in exile are virtually non-existent. It seems that the commentary on the story of Hannah is the only text in the corpus openly criticizing the views of Christians and Muslims, as well as those of philosophers and astrologers.

The Commentary on the Story of Ḥannah (RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 4608, 1r-6r)

The manuscript of the commentary, dated to the second half of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century and authored or copied by Geršon ben Yefet, is not complete and starts in the middle of the discussion of 1 Sam. 1:11. In addition, the first few pages have been badly preserved, making them only partly legible.

Like other EJP commentaries on portions from the Prophets, it is difficult to determine whether this text is Karaite or Rabbanite. There are almost no terms or discussions that might lead to a definitive conclusion. However, the term maskilim, which was used extensively in Karaite literature (Wieder 2005, 104–110), does make one appearance. According to the commentator, the phrase He raises up the poor from the dust8 refers to the Remnant of Israel and to the maskilim.9 The fact that the term is integrated

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8 1 Sam. 2:8: מֵקִים מֵעָפָר דָּל (mēqīm mē-ʿāp̄ār dāl). English translations of the biblical text are according to the New Revised Standard Version (henceforth NRSV), if not noted otherwise.

9 RNL Yevr.-Arab I 4608, 5r:9–10: שארית ומשכילים הנד מוקים מעפר דל, ’He raises up the poor from the dust’, are the Remnant of Israel and the
into a non-Hebrew text and not as part of a biblical quote may suggest that
the text is Karaite. Furthermore, as will be shown below, the commentator
may have known and relied partially on the writings of authors from the
tenth century, mainly the Karaite exegete Yefet ben ‘Eli, who was a member
of the Karaite community of Jerusalem known as the “Mourners of Zion.”
Yet this does not necessarily mean that the commentator of the discussed
treatise was Karaite, as later Rabbanite scholars directly or indirectly also
relied on the works of Yefet (see, for example, Polliack and Schlossberg
2009, 97–100).

The extant commentary is divided into twenty-eight units (as the
number of the extant verses), each of which consists of several elements.
Each unit begins with the first few words of the Hebrew verse, followed by
the (partial or full) word-for-word translation of the verse into EJP. This is
followed by a separate treatment of each portion of the verse. The
commentator first gives the literal-contextual interpretation of the text,
followed by an actualizing reading of it, referring to the hardships of the
people of the exile (גלותיאן, glwtyʾn) or to the welfare of the kingdoms of
ʾEdom and Ishmaʾel. Some units end with a promise of the salvation of
Israel or the punishment of the gentiles, or both, supported by various
biblical verses.

Not every unit includes all the elements specified above. Some lack, for
example, a complete word-for-word translation or a prognostic exegetical
explanation referring to the people of the exile or to ʾEdom and Ishmaʾel.
However, this structure may be demonstrated in several units, such as that
discussing 1 Sam. 1:15 (But Ḥannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman

10 By “actualization”, I refer to the tendency to interpret scripture according to contemporary
events. For a discussion of the literal-contextual and actualizing approaches in Karaite
exegesis, see Polliack (2003b, 372–396).
deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord”\(^{11}\). In this verse, Ḥannah answers the high priest ʿEli, who rebuked her for being drunk after seeing her praying silently by moving her lips:

But Hannah answered. And Hannah answered and said: “No, (my) lord, I am a hard-souled woman and I did not drink wine and an intoxicating (drink), and I am pouring out the bitterness of my soul before the Lord.”

Hannah answered him when she heard this (ʿEli’s rebuke) and said to him: “No, (my) lord.” She said two things to him: The first—she said: “No, no, O lord, no, I am not drunk.” The second—“I want the happiness that the Israelites [have?], but I am a hard-souled woman. [There is] much bitterness and sorrow in my heart, and (as for) myself, I did not drink wine read: and an intoxicating (drink) \(^{12}\)

And just as Ḥannah said about herself: “I am a hard-souled (woman),” likewise he said about the people of the exile: For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like the wife of a man’s youth when she is cast off, says your God (Is. 54:6). And just as the Lord made Ḥannah happy, likewise the Lord will make the people of the exile happy, as he said: O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice etc. (Joel 2:23).

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וַתַּעַן חַנָּה וַתֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲדֹנִי אִשָּׁה קְשַׁת רוּחַ אָנֹכִי וְיַיִן וְשֵׁכָר לֹא שָׁתִיתִי וָאֶשְׁפֹּךְ אֶת נַפְשִׁי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

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Graphic signs used in this article: 1) Square brackets indicate lacunas in the manuscript, in which partly legible letters, words, or phrases are suggested. 2) Round brackets indicate complementary suggestions for translation of letters, words, or phrases not written in the original text. 3) Passages written above the line or glosses in the margins of the original manuscript are given in superscript.
And I am pouring out my soul before the Lord. She said: “I am pouring out the bitterness of my soul before the Lord, so he will grant me my will.” Likewise, these people of the exile say: I pour out my complaint before him etc. (Ps. 142:3, NRSV 142:2); These things I remember as I pour out my soul etc. (Ps. 42:5, NRSV 42:4).13

The discussion of this verse closely follows the structure outlined above. It begins with a short quote from the Hebrew verse and its almost word-for-word translation (‘the bitterness of,’ Ṯhln, thly, is an addition by the commentator). The commentator then explains the meaning of Ḥannah’s words: “I am a hard-souled woman and I did not drink wine and an intoxicating (drink).” The next element is the actualization of the biblical text by comparing the people of the exile to Hannah. The treatment of the first portion of the verse ends with a statement that God will make the people of the exile rejoice, just as he made Hannah. The commentator similarly deals with the second part of the verse: and I am pouring out my soul before the Lord. He first paraphrases Ḥannah’s words and then compares the people of the exile to Hannah. The two verses quoted here describe the people of the exile’s plea to God. As with the verse said by Hannah, they contain verbs from the Semitic root שפך (‘to pour’). However, unlike the discussion of the first portion of the verse, there is no reference here to the time of salvation.

The tendency to actualize the biblical text with or without a reference to time of salvation is quite apparent in this commentary. This could be explained by the fact that the commentator considered Ḥannah’s prayer a prophetic text. That Hannah was considered a prophetess is already attested in early Rabbinical works. Hannah is one of the seven prophetesses

13 For the EJP text, see Appendix, I.
enumerated in the Babylonian Talmud (Bavli, Megilla, 14a). According to the Aramaic translation of the prophets (Targum Yonatan), Ḥannah prayed in the spirit of prophecy.\textsuperscript{14} Jewish medieval commentators also adopted the view of Ḥannah’s prayer being prophecy. For example, Yefet ben ʿEli writes that Hannah said that her prayer was by the Holy Spirit, and that it was divided into two parts: the first part described the deeds constantly done by God and the second part described God’s deeds that he would do for Israel at the time of salvation (Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 271).\textsuperscript{15} Similarly, R. David Qimḥi (d. 1235) states that most of Ḥannah’s prayer is a prophecy concerning the hardships of Israel and their subsequent salvation (Cohen 1993, 11).

The fact that Ḥannah prophesied is clearly stated in a few places in the EJP text. After raising the possibility that ʿEli was still convinced that Ḥannah was intoxicated and that she had denied this only out of fear of him, the commentator explains: “Know that Hannah’s heart was just and [because of] this He gave her two things: the first—a son; the second—the prophecy of the future.”\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, in a partially legible passage discussing 1 Sam. 1:28–2:1, it is written that “The Lord endowed her (i.e., Ḥannah) with the Holy Spirit” (רוּחַ הַקּוֹדֵּשׁ, ruaḥ ha-qodeš).\textsuperscript{17} Further on, following the literal translation of 1 Sam. 2:1, the commentator states: “[…] this, from the beginning to the end, all (of it) is future events” (אין סֶר תָּא בּוֹן הָמָא עַתִּדָּות, ʾyn sr tʾ bwn hmʾ ʿtydwt hyst; Appendix, II).

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\textsuperscript{14} 1 Sam. 2:1: וּצוֹלִיאַת חָנָה בָּרֹוחַ נְבוֹעָה (wə-ṣaliʾaṯ ḥanā bə-rūaḥ nəḇūʿa).

\textsuperscript{15} In general, the Holy Spirit, which originates in inspiration (ilhām), was considered a form of prophecy by Yefet ben ʿEli. See Ben-Shammai (1977, 269–273; 2015a, 130–135, specifically p. 133, where Hannah is mentioned).

\textsuperscript{16} For the EJP text, see Appendix, III.

\textsuperscript{17} For the EJP text, see Appendix, II.
Polemics in the EJP Commentary on the Story of Ḥannah

In the commentary on the story of Ḥannah, we find quite a few discussions that are detached from the immediate context of the biblical text and concern the difficult present conditions of Israel in exile or the time of salvation. However, the discussion of the first part of 1 Sam. 2:3 (Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth) is unusual. It is aimed against several groups whose arrogance and pride are manifested in their practices, sayings, or beliefs. The commentator starts by giving a literal translation of the first part of the verse mentioned above and then turns to describe these groups in the following manner:

Talk no more. Do not talk anymore so very proudly, so very highly (lit. ‘proud, proud, high, high’), and may abomination not come out of your mouth.

Know that Ḥannah said these things concerning two matters. The first—concerning the astronomers and the philosophers of the world who do not believe in the prophets. And they say: “The creation of the world was thus,” which should be said or written, all of which David abhorred and said: O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me (Ps. 131:1). For they say about the sun: “Its size (lit. ‘length’) is this much,” and they say about the moon: “It is larger (lit. ‘longer’) than the earth.” They say about the stars this much and such. And they say many things about

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18 אַל תַּרְבּוּ תְדַבְּרוּ גְּבֹהָה גְּבֹהָה יֵצֵא עָתָק מִפִּיכֶם (ʾal tarbū ṯəḏabbərū gəḇōhā ḡəḇōhā yēṣē ʿāṯāq mip-pīḵem).
the Lord, who is God, and do not believe in the prophets. And they say other (things) about God that should not be said.

The second matter—she said (it) about the kingdom of ʾEdom and Ishmaʿel. For ʾEdom says that Jesus is in heaven, and he says: “As long as the world Exists, my kingdom shall exist.” As he said: “Your proud heart has deceived you, you that live in the clefts of the rock, (whose dwelling is in the heights.) You say” etc. (Obad. 1:3). Ishmaʿel says worse than this, as he said: “In the prophecy of Isaiah (it is written that) the pasul will appear.” And he (i.e., Isaiah) says this: “You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon; I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High” (Is. 14:13–14). And he (i.e., Ishmaʿel) said many things (of) heresy.

And Asaph said about this: “They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression” (Ps. 73:8). And Moses said about them: “They pour out their arrogant words; all the evildoers boast” (Ps. 94:4).

Let not arrogance come from [your mouth]. Its interpretation (is) may arrogance not come from your mouth.19

The passage above describes three different groups: “the astronomers and philosophers of the world,” ʾEdom, and Ishmaʿel. These groups are divided into two sections: those who believe in prophecy and those who deny it. The deniers of prophecy are the astronomers and philosophers of

19 For the EJP text, see Appendix, IV.
the world, whereas those who believe in it are 'Edom and Ishma'el, namely the Christians and the Muslims, respectively.

A similar division in accordance with the belief in prophecy is attested in earlier Jewish texts which were possibly known to our commentator and served as background for his own division. For example, in the thirteenth chapter of his work 'Ishrūn maqāla, the ninth-century Jewish theologian Dawud b. Marwan al-Muqammas writes that there are two groups of monotheists (man aqarra bi-l-tawḥīd)—those who deem prophecy necessary and those who deny it. The latter are the barāhima (Stroumsa 1989, 254–255). Another example is Yefet ben ‘Eli’s commentary on Psalms, where he distinguishes between Christians and Muslims, on the one hand, and various sects and religions, on the other. In his discussion of Psalms 139:19–22, Yefet writes that verses 19–20 refer to Christians and Muslims, whereas verses 21-22 are directed against those who believe in the eternity of the world (dahriyya), pagans, and the barāhima who deny (God’s) law (al-shar‘; Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 320–321).

On Astronomers and Philosophers

According to passage IV, “the astronomers and the philosophers of the world” deny the concept of prophecy. The commentator does not state that they deny the existence of God. It is more likely, therefore, that he considers them monotheists. The denial of prophecy is not the sole reason for his criticism of the astronomers and the philosophers. The commentator adds to this a number of forbidden practices, namely saying unworthy

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20 For further discussion of the identity of the barāhima in Islamic and Jewish traditions, see Stroumsa (1999, 145–162); Crone (2009).
things about the creation of the world and about God, as well as discussing the properties of the celestial bodies. It is possible, therefore, that he refers to scholars who adhere to the writings of the Greek philosophers and deal with the natural sciences.

The commentator does not specify the views of the astronomers and philosophers concerning God and the creation of the world. It is possible that the “unworthy things said of God” are anthropomorphic descriptions. The EJP Bible exegesis seems to reject such descriptions. Thus, for example, in the commentary on Jer. 1:9, the word יד (yād, ‘hand’) in the phrase Then the Lord put out his hand is rendered by the word ‘prophecy’ (תנובה, nbw’h; BL Or. 2460, 1v:17). A verse from Ezekiel (Ezek. 37:1) is given in the same context: The hand of the Lord came upon me (BL Or. 2460, 1v:17-18). Interestingly, the translation of this verse in the commentary on Ezekiel is the prophecy of the Lord was upon me (Gindin 2007, vol. 2, 418).

As for the creation of the world, the commentator may be disputing various views here, such as the belief in the eternity (dahr) of the world in contrast to the creation of the world ex nihilo. The rejection of the belief in the eternity of the world is attested in the writing of several Rabbanite and Karaite scholars who lived during the tenth century, such as R. Saʿadia Gaʾon (Davidson 1987, 95-106), and the Karaites Yaʿqūb al-Qirqisānī and Yefet ben ʿEli (Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 174-190). It is plausible to assume that, like these scholars and the author of the commentary on the first weekly portion of Genesis (see, for example, RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 4605, 16v:15–17r:3), our author was a supporter of the view of the creation of the world ex nihilo.

22 Ezek. 37:1: הָיְתָה עָלַי יַד יְהוָה (hāyəṯā ʿālay yaḏ YHWH).
At the same time, it is possible that the commentator did not intend to debate with the astronomers and philosophers directly about specific issues, but rather to highlight that it is forbidden to deal with what is beyond the limits of human knowledge. This can be deduced from the fact that in the middle of the discussion, the commentator quotes Ps. 131:1, which conveys the same idea, "O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me". It is worth noting that the same verse is also quoted by Yefet ben 'Eli while discussing the phrase for the Lord is a God of knowledge. Yefet cites it to clarify that God disapproves of the discussion of hidden things (khafiyyāt) known to Him (but not to human beings). As for the interpretation of Ps. 131:1 itself, Yefet identifies the subjects that are beyond human knowledge, the first of which are the wonders of creation. He stresses that this subject has preoccupied the sages of the gentiles (ḥakme ha-go'yim), who speak of the dimensions of the

24 Ps. 131:1: יְהוָה לֹא גָבַהּ לִבִּי וְלֹא רָמוּ עֵינַי וְלֹא הִלַּכְתִּי בִּגְדֹלוֹת וּבְנִפְלָאוֹת מִמֶּנִּי (YHWH lō ḡāḇah libbī wa-lō rāmū ʿēnay wa-lō hillaḵti bi-ḡḏōlōt u-ḇ-nip̄lāʾōt mimmennī).
25 1 Sam. 2:3: כִּי אֵל דֵּעוֹת יְהוָה (kī ʾēl dēʿōṯ YHWH).
26 BL Or. 2547, 47v:3–7: וְיִהְיֶה נְאֻם מֵאֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם וְיִהְיֶה הַלִּבְנָה (YHWH ḡāḇah libbī wa-lō hillaḵti bi-ḡḏōlōt u-ḇ-nip̄lāʾōt mimmennī).

This manuscript is most likely one of the oldest Karaite manuscripts written in Arabic characters. For its description, see Margoliouth (1899, 207–208); Hoerning (1889, 45–60). For studies concerning Karaite manuscripts of the Bible in Arabic characters, see Hoerning (1889); Khan (1990). For the importance of the manuscripts of Yefet ben 'Eli's commentaries written in Arabic characters, see Ben-Shammai (1976).

The rejection of the sciences appears to be typical of some Jewish groups in the Iranian world. The tenth-century Karaite scholar Yaʿqūb al-Qirqisânî attacks “those who are said to be Karaites”—some of whom are Persians, such as a group among the Tustarîs—who “find fault with those who engage in intellectual speculation (*naẓar*), i.e. by means of secular (*barrānî*; lit. ‘external, foreign’) sciences, either dialectics or philosophy” (Nemoy 1939, vol. 1, 3–4; transl. Chiesa and Lockwood 1984, 93–94; see also Gil 1981, 61–62; Rustow 2008, 141–142). The rejection of the foreign sciences is also apparent in the writings of the Karaite scholar Daniel al-Qūmiṣî, one of the founders of the Karaite community in Jerusalem, whose name indicates his Iranian origin (Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 105 with relevant references).

The condemnation of “foreign sciences” was not exclusive to certain Persian-speaking Jewish circles, whose affiliation with the Karaite movement is questioned by al-Qirqisânî, or to early Karaites who originated in Iran. It also occurs in the works of several tenth-century Jewish scholars—Karaite and Rabbanite alike, such as the Karaite commentators Salmon ben Yeruḥim (Robinson 2012, 127–135) and Yefet ben ʿEli (Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 101–108; Sasson 2016, 108–120), as well as R. Saʿadia Gaʿon (Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 104). The commentator of the EJP text might have drawn on the views reflected in the writings of these scholars for his argument.

Another aspect of our discussion is the association of the denial of prophecy with the advocating of “foreign sciences”. Islamic sources quite often describe the deniers of prophecy as followers of a rationalistic approach who argue for the supremacy and sufficiency of the human intellect. Arguments concerning the human intellect are connected, for
example, to figures such as Ibn al-Rāwandī (d. 860 or 912; Stroumsa 1999, 79–81) or Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 925 or 935; Stroumsa 1999, 111–112). They are attested in Jewish sources as well. For example, in his commentary on the Book of Proverbs, Yefet ben ‘Eli attributes the title lešim (לצים, ‘scoffers’) to those who follow the “foreign sciences”, on the one hand (Prov. 9:13), and to those who reject prophecy, on the other (Prov. 1:22; Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 105–106; Sasson 2016, 110–112).

On ’Edom

The commentator presents two arguments regarding ’Edom in order to demonstrate the latter’s pride and arrogance. The first argument, namely that Jesus is in heaven, is theological, and possibly alludes to the belief in the resurrection of Jesus or to his divine nature as the Son. The second argument is the perpetual existence of the kingdom of ’Edom, expressing ’Edom’s confidence in its political and military superiority. As evidence, the commentator quotes a verse from the prophecy of Obadiah: Your proud heart has deceived you, you that live in the clefts of the rock, whose dwelling is in the heights. You say in your heart, “Who will bring me down to the ground?”

It is no surprise that the commentator chooses to quote Obadiah’s prophecy on ’Edom, particularly the third verse, in which the latter talks proudly and doubts his future demise. The answer to ’Edom’s question does not appear in the EJP text. However, the commentator might have trusted the reader to know it and understand the final fate of ’Edom, as

27 I thank Dennis Halft for drawing my attention to this matter.
28 Obad. 1:3: זְדוֹן לִבְּךָ הִשִּׁיאֶךָ שֹׁכְנִי בְחַגְוֵי סֶלַע מְרוֹם שִׁבְתּוֹ אֹמֵר בְּלִבּוֹ מִי יוֹרִדֵנִי אָרֶץ (zəḏōn libbəḵā hiššīʾeḵā šōḵənī bə-ḥaḡwē selaʿ mərōm šiḇtō ʾōmēr bə-libbō mī yōriḏēnī ʾāreṣ).
it is prophesied by Obadiah: *Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, says the Lord.*

The commentator applies the prophecy of Obadiah to both Jesus and Edom, assuring the falseness of Christian beliefs and the demise of Christendom. As for Yefet ben ‘Eli’s commentary on Obadiah, in the discussion of Obad. 1:3, Yefet suggests that the phrase *Your proud heart has deceived you* (זְדוֹן לִבְּךָ הִשִּׁיאֶךָ; zəḏōn libbəḵā hiśšīʾeḵā) refers to the insolence of Edom, who invented the Trinity, attributed a son to God, anthropomorphized God, and claimed that the Torah was abrogated. In addition, Edom accused Israel of killing the son of God, and subsequently thought that all of Israel should suffer annihilation (Polliack and Schlossberg 2001, 73–74; Zuran 2012, 145–147). Another reason for Edom’s arrogance is the fortifications of his land, manifested in the phrase *you that live in the clefts of the rock* (שֹׁכְנִי בְחַגְוֵי סֶלַע; šōḵənī ḇə-ḥaḡwē selaʾ). According to Yefet, the phrase *the clefts of the rock* (חַגְוֵי סֶלַע; ḥaḡwē selaʾ) refers to the land of Byzantium, which is like an inaccessibly high mountain (Polliack and Schlossberg 2001, 74; Zuran 2012, 147–148).

Though not as elaborate as Yefet, the commentator of the EJP text adopts a similar approach. Edom’s sense of pride is manifest in two different ways: his (false) theological doctrines and his sense of confidence due to his geographical location. Unlike Yefet, the commentator does not attack Edom for his harsh treatment of Israel based on the accusation that Israel was responsible for the death of Jesus.

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29 Obad. 1:4: אִם תַּגְבִּיהַ כַּנֶּשֶׁר וְאִם בֵּין כּוֹכָבִים שִׂים קִנֶּךָ מִשָּׁם ְאֲרוֹרִיךָ נְאֻם YHWH.

30 See also the discussion of Yefet ben ‘Eli’s commentary on Ps. 53 (Erder 1997, 43–44).
On Ishma’el

The last group mentioned by the commentator is Ishma’el, who argues that the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of the prophet Muhammad. Due to a lacuna in the text, it is impossible to determine whether the word is רָסֻל (rasūl, ‘messenger’) or פִּסּוֹל (pasul, ‘unfit, improper’). The word pasul is a widely-attested term for the Prophet Muhammad in medieval Jewish polemical writing (see, for example, Ben-Shammai 1984, 14, no. 47). Furthermore, as in the case of Jesus, who is designated ישו rather than ישוע in this passage, it seems plausible that the commentator (or the copyist) would refer to Muhammad with the derogatory term pasul.

Certain biblical verses were interpreted by Muslim authors as predicting the arrival of Muhammad and the rise of Islam. They extensively used the Book of Isaiah as proof (Lazarus-Yafeh 1992, 75-110; Adang 1996, 141-162). The commentator, however, does not discuss those verses from Isaiah that were widely used by Muslim authors; instead, he refutes the Muslim argument by quoting the verses from the same book (Is. 14:13-14) which depict the demise of Hêlêl ben Šāḥar, who was traditionally identified by medieval Jewish commentators as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and whom the commentator of the EJP text identifies as the kingdom of Ishma’el. This identification is borne out by the following passage:

_He brings low, he also exalts_ (1 Sam. 2:7). The fact that he expelled the Israelites, as he says: _He has thrown down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel_ etc. (Lam. 2:1); and that is what the master (sayyid, 31 This term also appears in another EJP exegetical text on the Book of Daniel (Shaked 1982, 319). 32 See, for example, R. Sa’adia Ga’on’s mention of the verse in Qaḥṭ (1976, 30). 33 1 Sam. 2:7: המאירי או מַשְׁפִּיל אַפּ מְרוֹמֵם (mašpīl ʾap mərōmēm).
Moses) said by the Holy Spirit: *The Lord uprooted them from their land in anger* etc. (Deut. 29:27, NRSV 29:28); and they said in (their) prayer: *Because of your indignation and anger* etc. (Ps. 102:11, NRSV 102:10). And in the end, he will expel the kingdom of Ishma'el, as he said to him: *How you are fallen from heaven, Hēlēl ben Šāḥar!*34 etc. (Is. 14:12).35

In general, throughout the commentary, Ishma'el seems to be identified with Babylon:

*But she who has many children is forlorn.*36 It is the kingdom of 'Edom and Ishma'el, for concerning 'Edom, he said: *And there shall be no survivor of the house of Esau* etc. (Obad. 1:18). And concerning Ishma'el, he said: *and I will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, offspring* etc. (Is. 14:22). Because of this he said *but she who has many children is forlorn.*37

And about the kingdom of Ishma'el, he said: *Come down and sit in the dust, virgin daughter Babylon! Sit on the ground without a throne, daughter Chaldea! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate* (Is. 47:1).38

What is the meaning of saying (lit. ‘that he said’) *nobles*39 (Ps. 113:8: נְדִיבִים, nəḏīḇīm) again? Why was there a need to say *with the nobles of his people*? Answer: There are (times) when he calls the kingdom of Ishma'el *nobles*, as in the *oracle concerning Babylon*, (where) he said: *wave the hand* for

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34 NRSV: ‘O Day Star, son of Dawn!’.
35 For the EJP text, see Appendix, V.
36 1 Sam. 2:5: הָאֵלֶּה הָעֵינַיִם אַבְנָלָה (wə-rabbaṯ bānīm ’umlālā).
37 For the EJP text, see Appendix, VI.
38 For the EJP text, see Appendix, VII.
39 NRSV: ‘princes’.
In order to support his arguments against Islam, the commentator quotes biblical verses from two prophecies on Babylon from the Book of Isaiah (chaps. 13-14, 47). The commentator’s choice of Isaiah’s prophecies appears deliberate, since it demonstrates that Isaiah did not foretell the coming of Muhammad, but rather the destruction of Ishma’el. Yefet ben ‘Eli links these two prophecies to Islam and the Muslims as well. According to Ben-Shammai, chapters 13 and 14 most likely target the house of Muhammad, possibly referring to the Abbasids, whereas chapter 47 contains general accusations against Islam (Ben-Shammai 1977, 319-322; idem 1984, 16-18). To the best of my knowledge, other commentators did not interpret the prophecies of Babylon as referring to Ishma’el. For example, there is no information concerning Ishma’el, Islam, or Islamic rule in the extant fragments of these chapters in R. Sa’adia Ga’on’s commentary on Isaiah (Ratzaby 1993, 170-171, 217).

We have seen several similarities between the arguments presented by the commentator of the EJP text and those of Yefet ben ‘Eli. A closer examination shows that Yefet’s discussion of the first portion of 1 Sam. 2:3 is not without resemblance to the EJP text. Yefet starts by saying that talk no more so very proudly refers to the enemies mentioned in the discussion of the phrase my mouth derides my enemies (רָחַב פִּי עַל-אוֹיְבַי, rāḥaḇ pīʿ al ʿōyḇîy).

40 For the EJP text, see Appendix, VIII.

41 However, in Ga’onic literature, the city of Baghdad, the seat of the Abbasid caliphate, is occasionally called Babylon. Furthermore, Baghdad was sometimes named ʿadina (‘delicate’), a title taken from Is. 47:8 (Gil 2004, 492). Perhaps the identification of Babylon with Baghdad led to the association of Babylon with the kingdom of Ishma’el.
ʾōyəḇay; 1 Sam. 2:1). The latter phrase refers to the people of Israel, who hear the attacks on the Torah by their enemies but cannot speak the truth because they are in exile. However, when God reveals the truth, the enemies of Israel will acknowledge the truth of their religion and propagate it.\textsuperscript{42} Yefet also writes that the meaning of the phrase \textit{Talk no more so very proudly} is to reject haughty (\textit{shāmikh}) words about the Creator and his law.\textsuperscript{43} Furthermore, after a discussion of the possible meaning of the word \textit{ʿāṯāq} (ʾāṯaq), Yefet states that the phrase \textit{Talk no more so very proudly} refers to the haughtiness and ridicule \textit{(al-shamkh wa-l-iskhāf)} of three opinions \textit{(aqāwīl)}: the opinions of the people of the Trinity \textit{(aṣḥāb al-thālūth, Christians)} concerning the creator itself, the opinions of the Hashwiyya of...
Ishma’el\textsuperscript{44} (Muslims), and the opinions of those who reject the opinion of the Hashwiyya, namely the people of unity and justice (\textit{aṣḥāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-ʿadl}, the Mu’tazila).\textsuperscript{45} All three groups believe that the Torah was abrogated (Ben-Shammai 1977, vol. 1, 30, no. 120).

Yefet’s explanation of the first portion of 1 Sam. 2:3 focuses on theological matters, mainly on the abrogation of the Torah. Although the commentator of the EJP text chooses not to do so, his treatment of this passage, i.e. referring to the ambitious pretensions of three different groups, is somewhat similar to that of Yefet. Other commentaries on the Book of Samuel, for instance those of Rashi (d. 1105) and R. David Qimḥi, do not refer to such issues at all. Rashi states that this verse refers to those who become haughty at the time of their good fortune: according to the \textit{pešaṭ} (plain meaning), Ḥannah refers to Peninnah, Elkanah’s other wife, and, according to the \textit{dəraš} (homiletical meaning), Rashi, following the Targum Yonatan, interprets the verse as addressed to Nebuchadnezzar (Cohen 1993, 10). At the same time, R. David Qimḥi interprets it in accordance with its literary and historical context, saying that it is aimed against Peninnah and those who made Ḥannah upset (Cohen 1993, 10).\textsuperscript{46}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{44} In Islamic polemical writing, Hashwiyya is a derogatory term used mainly by rationalists against traditionalist groups, such as \textit{ahl al-ḥadīth}. For more on this term, see Ben-Shammai (2015b, 235, no. 43 with references).

\textsuperscript{45} The Mu’tazila is a theological school that was founded at Basra in the first half of the eighth century and flourished during the early Abbasid period. The proponents of this school argued for the primacy of reason in religion and theology. For further reading, see el-Omari (2016), Bennett (2016), Schmidtke (2016).

\textsuperscript{46} As stated above, he claims further on in his commentary that most of Hannah’s prayer is a prophecy concerning the hardships of the people of Israel and their subsequent salvation.
\end{flushleft}
Conclusion

Among the hundreds of pages of the EJP exegetical corpus from the BL and the RNL, there is only one passage which contains a direct polemical discussion aimed against non-Jewish groups. The passage, found in the commentary on the story of Ḥannah, provides a glimpse into the commentator’s attitude towards three groups: the advocates of the “foreign sciences” (called here “the astronomers and philosophers of the world”), Christians, and Muslims, who are all criticized by him for their religious beliefs and the investigation of the wonders of creation.

As I have attempted to show, the arguments presented by the commentator of the EJP text are also attested in the writings of other medieval Jewish scholars who wrote in Hebrew and in Judeo-Arabic, in particular Yefet ben ‘Eli. It is not clear whether the commentator was Karaite or whether he was able to read Judeo-Arabic. In any case, the examination shows that he could have relied (directly or indirectly) on exegetical literature written in Judeo-Arabic, and especially on Yefet’s works. At the same time, the similarities might reflect certain widely known interpretations adhered to by exegetes from various intellectual circles in the medieval Jewish world.

This paper has dealt with only one aspect of the EJP exegetical corpus. Further study of the corpus would undoubtedly contribute to a much better understanding of the literary world and religious thought of Persian-speaking Jews during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, of which too little is known as yet. In this regard, a fruitful path would be a comprehensive and systematic comparison of our corpus with the Karaite and Rabbanite literature written in Hebrew and in Judeo-Arabic; such a comparison would facilitate its proper contextualization and shed light on the exchange of
ideas and the transmission of knowledge between various Jewish groups in the Islamicate world.

Appendix: Excerpts from RNL
Yevr.-Arab. I 4608

Images of the manuscript are now available online at “Ktiv: the International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts” (National Library of Israel in partnership with the Friedberg Jewish Manuscript Society): http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/en/Manuscript/Pages/Item.aspx?ItemID=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS000156302.

For this word, see Paul (2013, 50).

A gloss written in the right margin.
kwʾhwmn (16) šʾdy ky [hyst?] yʾšʾln rʾ wlykyn šʾqš ʾt rhʾw’ nkʾy. skt (17) thlyhʾ wgm[y [hyst]] pʾ dyly mn wkwd yyn wṣkr q ʾšʾtyty. wṣwn ʾḥnhn (18) gwpt kwʾyštn rʾ qšʾt rhʾwʾ nkʾy. hmʾswynn glnʾtyʾn rʾ gwpt ky (19) ʾkšʾ ʾzwbh wʾswbt rhʾwʾ qʾrʾ k yʾy wʾšt nʾwrym. ky tmʾsʾ mr (20) ʾlhyk. wṣwn ky ʾḥnhn rʾ šʾd krd yʾy hmʾswynn ʾšʾd kwʾd yʾy ’yn (21) glnʾtyʾn rʾ: ʾṣʾghʾ wʾbyn sywn glyʾw wʾsmḥw wgʾ wʾṣpk ’t npšʾ yʾyʾ. gwpt ky hmy ryzwm thlyʾn (22) gʾn mn rʾ pyʾšʾ yʾy tʾ mwrʾdy mn bydhd. hmʾswynn ʾyn glnʾtyʾn (23) hmy gwynʾd ʾšʾpwm ʾlpnyw šḥʾry ʾṣty ʾlpnywm wgʾ: ʾlh ʾzkwʾ hʾš[pk]h (24) ’ly npšʾ ky ’bwʾr wgʾ:}

... wrpt [p]ʾ swy nymʾz ky [...] (23) krd. wyʾy rhʾw hʾqwdšʾ brwʾ wʾ prwʾd ʾbrd wʾb[r d]ʾšʾt [...] tʾyd ...)] (24) ’br zwʾnʾ w rwʾnyʾṣ: wtʾll ʾḥnh [wtʾmr. wny]mʾz] (25) krd ʾḥnhʾ gwʾpwd ʾrʾmyšʾn bwd dyly mn pʾ yʾy bwlwnd bwd [...] ly mn pʾ [yʾy ...)] (26) bwd [[mn]] dhʾn mnʾ br dwʾsmʾn mn ky šʾd bwdwm pʾ prgʾy tw ...)] (27) kygʾ pswʾq rʾ yʾlyʾnʾ ʾbr ʾḥnhʾ hmy nyʾh[d]nd k[y ... swy ... gwpt ...)] (28) [...] ’yn sr tʾ bwn hʾmʾ ’tʾydʾt hyst.

... wrpt [p]ʾ swy nymʾz ky [...] (23) krd. wyʾy rhʾw hʾqwdšʾ brwʾ wʾ prwʾd ʾbrd wʾb[r d]ʾšʾt [...] tʾyd ...)] (24) ’br zwʾnʾ w rwʾnyʾṣ: wtʾll ʾḥnh [wtʾmr. wny]mʾz] (25) krd ʾḥnhʾ gwʾpwd ʾrʾmyšʾn bwd dyly mn pʾ yʾy bwlwnd bwd [...] ly mn pʾ [yʾy ...)] (26) bwd [[mn]] dhʾn mnʾ br dwʾsmʾn mn ky šʾd bwdwm pʾ prgʾy tw ...)] (27) kygʾ pswʾq rʾ yʾlyʾnʾ ʾbr ʾḥnhʾ hmy nyʾh[d]nd k[y ... swy ... gwpt ...)] (28) [...] ’yn sr tʾ bwn hʾmʾ ’tʾydʾt hyst.

... wrpt [p]ʾ swy nymʾz ky [...] (23) krd. wyʾy rhʾw hʾqwdšʾ brwʾ wʾ prwʾd ʾbrd wʾb[r d]ʾšʾt [...] tʾyd ...)] (24) ’br zwʾnʾ w rwʾnyʾṣ: wtʾll ʾḥnh [wtʾmr. wny]mʾz] (25) krd ʾḥnhʾ gwʾpwd ʾrʾmyšʾn bwd dyly mn pʾ yʾy bwlwnd bwd [...] ly mn pʾ [yʾy ...)] (26) bwd [[mn]] dhʾn mnʾ br dwʾsmʾn mn ky šʾd bwdwm pʾ prgʾy tw ...)] (27) kygʾ pswʾq rʾ yʾlyʾnʾ ʾbr ʾḥnhʾ hmy nyʾh[d]nd k[y ... swy ... gwpt ...)] (28) [...] ’yn sr tʾ bwn hʾmʾ ’tʾydʾt hyst.

... wrpt [p]ʾ swy nymʾz ky [...] (23) krd. wyʾy rhʾw hʾqwdšʾ brwʾ wʾ prwʾd ʾbrd wʾb[r d]ʾšʾt [...] tʾyd ...)] (24) ’br zwʾnʾ w rwʾnyʾṣ: wtʾll ʾḥnh [wtʾmr. wny]mʾz] (25) krd ʾḥnhʾ gwʾpwd ʾrʾmyšʾn bwd dyly mn pʾ yʾy bwlwnd bwd [...] ly mn pʾ [yʾy ...)] (26) bwd [[mn]] dhʾn mnʾ br dwʾsmʾn mn ky šʾd bwdwm pʾ prgʾy tw ...)] (27) kygʾ pswʾq rʾ yʾlyʾnʾ ʾbr ʾḥnhʾ hmy nyʾh[d]nd k[y ... swy ... gwpt ...)] (28) [...] ’yn sr tʾ bwn hʾmʾ ’tʾydʾt hyst.

... wrpt [p]ʾ swy nymʾz ky [...] (23) krd. wyʾy rhʾw hʾqwdšʾ brwʾ wʾ prwʾd ʾbrd wʾb[r d]ʾšʾt [...] tʾyd ...)] (24) ’br zwʾnʾ w rwʾnyʾṣ: wtʾll ʾḥnh [wtʾmr. wny]mʾz] (25) krd ʾḥnhʾ gwʾpwd ʾrʾmyšʾn bwd dyly mn pʾ yʾy bwlwnd bwd [...] ly mn pʾ [yʾy ...)] (26) bwd [[mn]] dhʾn mnʾ br dwʾsmʾn mn ky šʾd bwdwm pʾ prgʾy tw ...)] (27) kygʾ pswʾq rʾ yʾlyʾnʾ ʾbr ʾḥnhʾ hmy nyʾh[d]nd k[y ... swy ... gwpt ...)] (28) [...] ’yn sr tʾ bwn hʾmʾ ’tʾydʾt hyst.

: The word ṭulʾl is the imāla form of Ar. ṭālīm. For the imāla in EJP, see Paul (2013, 48).
51: The phrase nbʾwʾh ʾtydʾ should apparently be read with an idāfa between the two words.
by’dn ky dy l ln h r’st bwd w[‘br] ’yn b” šyz d’d ‘wyr’. yky (14) prznd. dwywm nbw’h ‘tyd.

A gloss written in the right margin. The meaning of the letter qof is not clear. Perhaps it stands for ky.

For the use of the hortative particle hē-, see Shaked (2003, 207); Paul (2013, 122-123).

For additional occurrences of wʾrw- (“to believe”) in EJP texts, see Shaked (2003, 215); Paul (2013, 45).

See Paul (2013, 49).

MT – (bi-ġdlōṯ).

MT – (zadqōn lībbāḵā hiššīʾeḵā šōḵănī ḏa-haḡwē selaʾ marōm šiḥtō ’ōmēr bā-liḇbō mī yōridēnī ’āres).

Polemical Aspects in an Early Judeo-Persian Bible Exegesis

(16) 'l trbw tdbrw. m' bsy'r kwnyt kwnt q' (17) skwn gwytyt gšy gšy bwlwndy bwlwndy wm' byrwn hy 'yyd zyšty 'z (18) dhn šwm'. byd'n ky 'yn skwn r' gwpt hnh 'br b" rwy. yky. 'br (19) mwng'ym'n wpylswp"n g'yh'n ky n' hmy w'rwyyn p' nby'ym. whmy (20) gwyny ky 'prynyn g'yh'n šwnyn bwd ky n' š'hd gwptn wnybysyd. (21) 'n ky dwyd zyšt krd 'yn hm' r" gwpt y'y l' gbh lby wl' rmw 'yny (22) wl' hlkty bgdwit wbnpl'wt mn': ky hmy gwyny ky 'pt'b r' šndyn (23) hyst dr'zy 'w: wm'ng r' hmy gwyny ky dr'z try 'z zmy. w'str'g'n (24) r' šndyn wšwnyn hmy gwyny. w'br y'y ky kwd'h hyst bsy'ryanšyzh' (25) my gwyny wn' hmy w'rwyyn p' nby'ym. w'br y'y yt' šm' 'nyh' hmy gwyny (26) [ky n'] š'hd gwptn. dwywnm rwy gwpt 'br mlıkw t'dwm wyšm'li. ky (27) '[dw]m hmy gwyny ky yšw p' 'sm'n hyst. whmy gwyny ky t' gyh'n bwd (28) [mm]l[k]ty mn bwd. Šwn gwpt zdwn lbk hšy'wk šwknky bḥgwy [[h]sl' 'wn' wg' (29) [yšm']l 'z 'yn btr hmy gwyny. Šwn'n ky gwpt p' nbw'ly yš'yhw (30) [ps]wl pyd' 'yyd w'yn gwyny w'th mrt bllbk hšmym "IH mm'l (31) [lkwkby] 'l 'rym ks'y w'šb bhr mw'd byrkty śp"wn. "IH 'l bmtj (32) ['b 'dm]h l 'lywn. wbsy'ryanšyzh' gwpt kwpr. wgwt sp p' swy 'y[n] (33) [ymyqw wydbrw] br' 'šq mmqwmm ydbrw. wmšh gwpt p' swy (p. 4r, line 1) 'yšr 'yby w ydbrw 'tq yt'mrw kl p'ly 'wn. yš' 'tq m[pym]. tpsy' (2) [wy] 'l ys' 'tq mpykm.

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מלכות אדום וישראל: הממלכה בארץ מצדה, בארץ פא סוי איש אבר אשר אביו עשו (29) וברט בן עבש וך. והכרתי לבבל שם (30) ובא עבש הרת פא סוי אבר ויוסף רבו באב. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך.

והכרתי לבבל שם (12) וברט בן עבש וך. ופי עבש הרת פא סוי איש אבר אשר אביו עשו (13) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך לארץ פא סוי איש אבר אשר אביו עשו (14) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך. ופי עבש הרת פא סוי איש אבר אשר אביו עשו (15) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך. ומיפו יד ויבואו פתחי דיבר (16) ואביו עשו (17) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך. ופי עבש הרת פא סוי איש אבר אשר אביו עשו (18) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך. ומיפו יד ויבואו פתחי דיבר (19) ואביו עשו (20) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך. ופי עבש הרת פא סוי איש אבר אשר אביו עשו (21) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך. ומיפו יד ויבואו פתחי דיבר (22) ואביו עשו (23) וברט בן עבש וך. אבר אחד גופן עבש וך.
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