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Rabbi Zerahyah HaLevi:

A Biography

by

Michael A. Signer

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

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Referee, Professor Ben Zion Wacholder

In Memory of my Father

David Primack

A Man of Passion and Paradox

Digest

The 12th century marks the rise of Provence as an important center of Talmudic scholarship. Its academies were the meeting place for the older Talmudic traditions of Islamic Spain and northern France. The meeting of these two established traditions produced a new intellectual ferment, and encouraged a surge of creative scholarship. This thesis focuses upon one of the participants in that ferment, R. Zerahyah HaLevi, who is known in the tradition by the acronym "Razah." It is an attempt to write a biography of Razah which reconstructs his life and examines his place in the Talmudic tradition.

Chapter one of the thesis deals with the traditions about Razah in the medieval chronicles. These chronicles provide a study of the historiography of Razah from the 13th until the 18th century. The sources of the traditions in each of the chronicles are traced. When conflicting traditions occur, I have attempted to trace the source of the contradictions. There were three major periods of chronicles which increase our knowledge about Razah. The first period was the 13th and 14th century of Provençal chronicles. They reveal Razah as one of the "sages of Lunel" and the author of the Sefer HaMa'or on

the Halakot of Isaac Alfasi. Since Alfasi's work had a venerable place in the Talmudic tradition, Razah's Ma'or cast him in the image of a "challenger." Chronicles of the generation of the Spanish Expulsion of 1492 establish the tradition of Razah's birthplace in Gerona, and reveal that the Sefer HaMa'or was written in 1154. Subsequent chroniclers obscured their traditions and set Razah's birthplace at Lunel. The 17th century chronicles reveal Razah's abilities as a poet. They extend his reputation as a critic to include his critical writings on his great contemporary R. Abraham b. David. Razah emerges from the medieval chronicles as a man of controversy. He attacked the venerated Alfasi in the Sefer HaMa'or and criticized his most powerful contemporary, R. Abraham b. David.

Chapter two is an attempt to reconstruct Razah's life on the basis of his own writings and the writings of his contemporaries. It examines the veracity of the statements in the medieval tradition. The tradition of Razah's birthplace is confirmed. Razah's father and brother are discussed. His student years in Narbonne are then described. Particular emphasis is placed upon his attitude toward his teachers and contemporaries to examine the medieval tradition about his "critical" attitude. Internal political strife in Narbonne brought Razah's residence there to an end. From Narbonne he went to Lunel. In Lunel Razah met his lifelong friend Judah Ibn Tibbon. At this time, Zerahyah married into one of the prominent families in the city. The remainder of the chapter reconstructs a part of Razah's life which has not previously been described. Razah returned to his native city of Gerona

where he served as a rabbi. His controversial decisions and writings brought this phase of his life to an unfortunate end. The final part of chapter two deals with the introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or and the testament of Judah Ibn Tibbon as sources describing his mood in the later years of his life.

The third chapter of this thesis focuses on Razah as a critic. His writings which criticize the works of R. Abraham b. David are the source for this analysis. Razah emerges from these writings not as a derisive antagonist, but as a critical scholar in the modern sense of the term. No scholar's opinion was accepted without question. Every halakik authority must be judged on the internal logic of his decision. The chapter closes with some speculations on the origin of the rivalry between the two scholars.

An appendix deals with the problem of Razah's birth date. On the basis of all available evidence, he was born in 1115. If this date is correct it sheds light on the age of Razah's contemporaries.

Preface

My course in the writing of this thesis has been well charted. Generations of chroniclers have passed judgment upon Razah and his works. The traditional view of Razah is that of the challenger. He wrote the Sefer HaMa'or which threatened the authority of Alfasi's code. The code of Alfasi sought to unify practice; the Ma'or posed a threat to that unity. Razah's work was answered by two great scholars, Nahmanides and Rabad of Posquieres. The Alfasi code was superseded by the code of Maimonides, but the tradition still looked to Alfasi and the commentaries on his code to aid them in their legal decisions.

Razah received more sympathetic treatment from the scholars of the 19th century. Graetz considered him one of the greatest scholars of his generation. For Graetz Razah was an incisive thinker who demanded freedom of thought rather than obeisance to custom. It was Jacob Reifmann's monograph Toledot Rabenu Zerahyah Halevi that analyzed Razah's life and writings. His use of Razah's poetry as a source for biographical information was an important advance in understanding this complex scholar. Toledot

Rabenu Zerahyah HaLevi captures the major trends themes in Razah's life. He was sophisticated and worldly. His sophistication, however, did not restrain his passions. Razah was a man of volatile temperment, but he was able to sublimate his passions into sarcastic poems and jingles which he used throughout his legal works. For Reifmann Razah was a tragic figure. It is the tragic tone which Reifmann makes explicit from Razah's poetry and introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or which forms the basis for this study.

In my biography of Razah I attempt to reconstruct the events in his life which underlie his tone of pathos and self-abasement. Razah is silent about the details of his life. Therefore, the reconstruction of the events in his life must be based upon inference from his own legal writings, and citations in the writings of his contemporaries. The richest mine of such testimony are the hasagot of Rabad and Nahmanides on the Ma'or. As Razah's contemporary, and life-long adversary, Rabad's notes are filled with personal references. Nahmanides was the communal leader in Gerona less than a generation after Razah had died. From his writings one detects the attitude toward Razah in the next generation. This thesis deals with some of the more overt references to Razah in their hasagot. To understand the more subtle innuendoes more study is required.

It is my hope that this thesis represents only the beginning of my study of Razah. Lacking experience with rabbinic texts I have been forced to limit the scope of this thesis to a basic examination of the traditions about Razah and a reconstruction of the chronology

and events in his life. I do not thoroughly examine his position in the history of Talmudic interpretation. The major themes in his liturgical poetry are also beyond the scope of this thesis. All these studies must be done before a monograph can be written which does justice to the complex personality and penetrating intellect of Zerahyah HaLevi.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge those who have assisted me in the preparation of this study. Professor Ben Zion Wacholder has inspired and guided me through the writing of this thesis. It was at his suggestion that I began my investigation of Razah's writings. His insights and Socratic questions opened up an entire world that I thought was closed to anyone lacking a yeshivah background. My gratitude for his interest in me and my thesis can never be fully expressed. My classmate, Mr. Stuart Geller, read the manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions. To Miss Shirley George who worked assiduously proofreading and typing this difficult manuscript go my deepest thanks.

My wife Betty has shared the first year of our marriage with R. Zerahyah HaLevi. The present writing of his biography is testimony of her patience and devotion.

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Chapter I

Razah in the Tradition of the Medieval Chronicles

From the composition of the Sefer HaKabbalah by Abraham Ibn Daud in the 12th century to the compilation of the Seder HaDorot by Yehiel Heilprin in the 18th century a chain of tradition was being forged. The links of the chain were the names, dates and writings of scholars who furthered the study of Torah. Each generation gathered its list from the preceding generation, adding to the list the scholars of its own generation.

These "chains of tradition" form a body of literature which is called "Medieval Chronicles." Not all of them were written in what most scholars would call the Middle Ages. However, the consistency of style and spirit in the composition of chronicles written in the 14th century and chronicles written in the 18th century allows us to use the term "medieval" with a less restricted definition. The style of presentation differs in some of the chronicles. Some of the works are simply lists of names arranged chronologically or geographically. Other chroniclers present a connected narrative which describe the lives and writings of the scholars of their generation.

The chronicles do not present history in terms of analysis and interpretation of events. That was not their concern. Earthly events could be explained in terms of the Divine will. Man's task was the performance of the Commandments, and the study of Torah. If the vast collections of responsa, Talmudic commentaries, and codes represent the effort to draw nearer to God through study of his law, then the Medieval Chronicles may represent the effort to inspire scholars of each generation to join the chain which would bind them to the first giver of the law at Sinai. This suggestion, however, is only an interpretation. The chronicles are, for the most part, silent with respect to their purpose. Some of them modestly suggest that they were composed to facilitate the study of Talmud, and act as a "handbook" to lead the student through the labyrinth of the Talmudic tradition.

Even if the chronicles stray at times from the exact details of events, they do provide the historian with valuable information and insight into the lives and writings of the Medieval rabbis. First, they supply basic biographical data: When did the scholar live? Who were his contemporaries? Second, the chronicles often describe the writings of these scholars. Third, the chronicles allow the modern historian an insight into the esteem in which a scholar was held in succeeding generations. Finally, the medieval tradition provides an overall image of the scholar. This image can be then examined in view of a particular scholar's own writings.

My method in this chapter is to use these four tools as a point

of departure for a biography of Razah. I will examine the chronicles of each generation in terms of the factual matter they present about Razah and their image of him. In some cases the factual matter and image becomes clearer through a discovery and examination of the chronicle's sources. Wherever it has been possible to detect the source and analyze it, I have done so. Once the image of Razah in the medieval chronicles is critically understood, I shall turn, in succeeding chapters, to a reconstruction of his life and image on the basis of his own writings.

A. Provençal Chronicles of the 13th and 14th Century

The first reference to Razah in the medieval chronicles occurs in the writings of Menahem b. Solomon HaMe'iri (died 1306) of Perpignan. HaMe'iri's city of Perpignan lies just north of the Pyrenees mountains, and is the first major city between Gerona and Narbonne. This excellent geographical location gave him access to the Talmudic scholarship of both Spain and France. It also places him directly between two major locations in Razah's life.

HaMe'iri was a prolific author. He wrote commentaries on most of the tractates of the Babylonian Talmud. It is in his introduction to tractate Abot that his chronicle of scholars appears. Abot is a natural place for a history of the tradition since the tractate opens with a "chain of tradition" linking Moses' reception of the Torah at Sinai with the rabbis who appear in the Mishnah. As an introduction

to the tractate HaMe'iri gives a chronological listing of the Tannaim and the Amoraim, and then turns to a list of the Gaonim who served as the heads of the Babylonian academies. The final part of the introduction discusses the scholars who followed the Gaonim. HaMe'iri calls them "Rabbanan."

In his description of the scholars and scholarship after the Gaonic period HaMe'iri describes not only the men who continued the scholarly tradition, but the type of Torah scholarship which interested them. HaMe'iri concludes, at one point, that there were two major trends in post-Gaonic scholarship. There was a tradition of commentary and a tradition of practical jurisprudence. It is in his description of the works on practical jurisprudence that Razah is mentioned.

There were famous books of legal decisions.
The most famous was the Halakot of Isaac Alfasi which was combined with the Sefer HaHashlamah of R. Meshullam b. Moshe.
However a challenge appeared in the work of the great R. Zerahyah HaLevi which was called the Sefer HaMa'or.¹

The translation of this passage is far more clear than what the passage actually means. I am uncertain what HaMe'iri means by the Halakot of Alfasi being "combined" with the Sefer HaHashlamah of Meshullam b. Moshe. My suggestion is that HaMe'iri is summarizing the practical use of Alfasi's Halakot. In HaMe'iri's generation scholars used the Halakot of Alfasi along with Meshullam b. Moshe's Hashlamah. The two works, by HaMe'iri's generation, had become one. Razah's image in this passage is that of the challenger. His book,

Sefer HaMa'or, called the Halakot of Alfasi into question. It is difficult to conclude that this passage casts a negative image of Razah. HaMe'iri calls him "great" as well as a "challenger."

HaMe'iri also attempts to build up the image of Provence in the Talmudic tradition. He adds to his analysis of the types of works which appeared in the post-Gaonic tradition a list of scholars who brought honor to Provence. Razah's name is included in this list.

Also in our land there were great men during the time of our blessed ancestor R. Abraham b. Isaac Ab Bet Din who died on the 20th of Marheshban 4,919 A.M. (1159 C.E.); and his son-in-law, who was greater in learning than his father-in-law, our ancestor Rabad. And others among them, R. Zerahyah Halevi, R. Meir of Trinquetaille, R. Jonathan HaCohen, and R. Moshe b. Yehudah. After them came his son, R. Meshullam of Bezeirs and R. Shlomo b. Abraham of Montpellier...and others in Narbonne....and among them the great teacher R. Isaac b. Merwan Levi and his descendant R. Moshe b. Yose b. Merwan Levi.²

HaMe'iri allows ancestral pride to overcome his chronological accuracy. His description of great men in "our land" begins with R. Abraham b. Isaac and his son-in-law Rabad whom HaMe'iri claims as "ancestors." The date 4,919 A.M. (1159 C.E.) does place these two scholars into a chronological framework. The words "and others among them" suggest that 1159 may have been the date for some of the other scholars listed.

If the order in which the scholars are listed in the second passage is significant, then HaMe'iri provides a solid date for Razah. He is first in the list of the "other" scholars, and the first name listed after Rabad. It might be implied from this that he and Rabad

were contemporaries and lived before 1159 C.E.

Razah thus appears to play two roles in the chronicle of HaMe'iri. He presents a challenge to the Halakot of Alfasi. This challenge appears to be his role in the Torah tradition. Razah also appears as one of the scholars who brought glory to Provence. Although HaMe'iri does not allude to Razah's origins, he provides a date of 1159 C.E. for him.

Menahem HaMe'iri was the earliest of three chroniclers of the Provence. The 14th century records two more chronicles. One of these was David of Estella. His chronicle was titled Kiryat Sefer.

The Kiryat Sefer of David of Estella (1305-1320) is a listing of scholars by geographical areas. His work lacks the overall insight of HaMe'iri, but provides a full picture of Provençal intellectual life. Razah is listed among the sages of Narbonne and Lunel:

And in the city of Narbonne and its district and Lunel and its district there arose new sages....who served in France and in Spain and who made innovations which clarified Talmudic passages and laws, and reconciled passages which appeared to contradict each other. There were among them some who made lengthy explanations of some of the Talmudic tractates such as R. Abraham Ab Bet Din who wrote the Sefer HaEshkol. And in those days there appeared at the border of Lunel a great light who was the great teacher R. Abraham b. David of Posquieres...He was a great sage, knowledgeable in both Talmuds, the Tosefta, Sifra, and Sifre. He also wrote a commentary on the Torat Kohanim and wrote on many subjects about the commentators and Gaonim in order to clarify and refine their words. And at that time a great light shone in Lunel who was R. Zerachyah HaLevi. He wrote the Sefer HaMa'or.³

This passage draws out the implication of HaMe'iri's second passage..

R. Abraham Ab Bet Din, Rabad of Posquieres and Razah appear together

in the same passage. The chronicle seems to dwell more upon Rabad than the other two scholars. Rabad stands out just as he did in HaMe'iri's comment that he was "greater in knowledge than his father-in-law." However, it should be noted that Razah is worthy of being called "a great light." This epithet is tied in with a play upon words for "light" involving Razah's name which means "God is shining." David of Estella also drew a distinction between Rabad who appeared "at the border of Lunel" and Razah who appeared "in Lunel." This implies a difference in location. Since Rabad's academy at Posquieres was not far from Lunel, the chronicler referred to him as being "at the border of Lunel."

The third Provençal chronicle was written by Isaac de Lattes of Montpellier. It was composed toward the end of the 14th century. The chronicle was part of a theological work which was called Ḳiryat Sefer. Isaac de Lattes' chronicle presents a full list of Spanish, Provençal and Franco-German scholars. His scope, therefore, is much wider than his two predecessors'.

The passage in which Razah's name appears is written with somewhat more literary style than the other chronicles. de Lattes is heavily in debt, however, to HaMe'iri and Estella.⁴

And in this land, in the mountain and in the valley. The great teacher, R. Abraham b. Isaac, Ab Bet Din, who wrote many wonderful works, both commentaries and legal decisions, one of them being Sefer HaEshkol. And his highly exalted son-in-law, R. Abraham b. David, the earth is filled with his wisdom, and praise, for his works of commentaries and decisions is unexcelled upon the earth, one of them being

Ba'al HaNefesh....And Judah b. Barzilay Albarceloni wrote a great work on all the Talmud containing both commentary and decisions....which I have seen. It is the Sefer HaIttim. And the great teacher R. Zerahya HaLevi who lit up the entire diaspora with the light of his knowledge, is it not written in the Sefer HaMa'or?⁵

In this passage de Lattes broadens the geographic horizon in describing Montpellier "the mountain," in addition to Lunel, "the valley," as a focus of scholarly activity. To the three scholars who have been previously grouped together, he adds the name of Judah b. Barzilay of Barcelona in Spain. It is possible to suggest that the inclusion of Judah b. Barzilay between the name of Rabad and Razah implies that Razah may be of Spanish origins.

de Lattes also extends the hyperbole about Razah. The hyperbole is based on the title of Razah's book Sefer HaMa'or, which means "The Book of Light." Thus Razah is described as "lighting up the entire diaspora." Razah's image in this chronicle is entirely positive. No trace of his "challenge" to Alfasi remains. He stands as one of the great teachers in Montpellier and Lunel along with Abraham b. Isaac Ab Bet Din and Rabad.

In examining the chronicles subsequent to HaMe'iri's introduction to Abot, it is clear that they depend more upon his second reference than his first. The first reference in HaMe'iri appeared in his analysis of the types of literature which developed after the Gaonic period. This synthesis of the history of halakik genres was not of interest to the later Provençal writers. Their aim was the glorification of Provence and Provençal scholars in the chain of tradition.

Thus, the 13th and 14th century became an age of epithet and evaluation for the writers of chronicles. The history of a community's leaders was not as important as the presentation of a list of famous scholars. Razah emerges from these chronicles as one of the great teachers in Provence. He wrote the Sefer HaMa'or. From HaMe'iri's chronicle one learns that this work was a challenge to Alfasi's Halakot. The description of Razah's history as an individual would await a generation of chroniclers who were conscious of history and how history affects individuals.

B. Chronicles After the Spanish Expulsion

An historically conscious generation was not too far in the future. A little over a hundred years after Isaac de Lattes finished his chronicle in Provence, the King and Queen of Spain expelled the Jews from their country. This expulsion marked the end of a flourishing intellectual civilization. It marked the beginning of a period for recording the history of that civilization and contemplating the causes for its decline.

The writers of the chronicles after 1492 were conscious of history's heavy burden. They were also trained in how history should be written. The influence of Arabic culture and learning left its mark on their minds. Their chronicles systematically link names with dates and locations. The history of individuals who made up part of the chain of tradition becomes significant.

One of the best known chronicles written after the Spanish Expulsion was the Sefer Yuhasin, by Abraham Zacuto. Zacuto was a well known astronomer and geographer. His maps may have guided Columbus to the New World. He was also a historian and a compiler of historical documents.

Zacuto wrote the Sefer Yuhasin in 1505. His avowed purpose in the chronicle was to aid students of Talmud by furnishing them with a chronological list of all the teachers found in both the Mishnah and the Gemarah. Zacuto's work also included material which shed light on the history of the Talmudic tradition after the Talmud.

The presentation of the material in the Yuhasin, however, is not systematic. Many digressions enter the narrative. These digressions include sources which shed light on material that occurs later in the book.

It is in one of these digressions that Razah's name first appears in the Yuhasin. The first chapter describes the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods of history. Into this narrative Zacuto inserts a quotation from a work titled, "Sefer Kabbalat HeHasid SheBeNarbonn'a." This work appears to be an account of Jewish settlement in Narbonne from the time of Charlemagne in the 9th century, along with a list of prominent scholars. Each generation of scholars is presented in chronological sequence beginning from earliest times. The list mentions Razah, his teachers and his contemporaries. The order of the list in the first chapter is significant because it sheds light on the list which covers the generation of Razah in the fifth chapter. I will

present the two citations and it will immediately become clear how many generations of chroniclers stumbled.

Chapter One

The author of the Aruk said, "And R. Moshe HaDarshan from the city of Narbonne taught us..." Among the greatest students of R. Moshe HaDarshan were Moshe HaAnaw and Moshe b. Yosef b. Merwan Levi, son of his brother R. Isaac. Of his students was Abraham b. Isaac who is called Ab Bet Din. All these dilligently taught Torah in Israel, and the sages of Narbonne and of Lunel drank from their waters. The greatest of their students were Rabad, R. Zerahyah, Ba'al HaMa'or and R. Meshullam b. Jacob and Samuel b. Moshe and Samuel b. David and R. Moshe b. Yehudah and R. Jonathan HaCohen and R. Shlomoh. But R. Abraham Ab Bet Din was greater than all of them....⁶

Chapter Five

And in their time (1070 A.D.) was R. Moshe HaDarshan of Narbonne, the teacher of R. Nathan, author of the Aruk as it is written in entry kzr. And the greatest students of R. Moshe HaDarshan were Moshe HaAnaw and R. Moshe b. R. Yosef b. Merwan and R. Levi the son of his brother Isaac. And the greatest of them all was R. Abraham Ab Bet Din, and Rabad, and R. Zerahyah, Ba'al HaMa'or and R. Meshullam b. Jacob and Samuel b. David and R. Moshe b. Judah and Jonathan HaCohen, and R. Shlomoh. But the greatest of them all was R. Abraham Ab Bet Din.

The passage in chapter five is a careless copy of chapter one. There are many lacunae in the copy which are obvious from even a casual reading. The most significant lacuna is the phrase "the greatest of their students" referring to both Moshe b. Yosef and R. Abraham Ab Bet Din. In the absence of this phrase, the reader must assume that the entire list of scholars were students of Moshe HaDarshan in the year 1070. Many chroniclers relied upon rearranging Zacuto's material. In their rearrangement they failed to note the discrepancy between the two citations. Razah and his contemporaries thus appear under the date 4,830 A.M. (1070 C.E.) in some of the chronicles which will be

presented later in this chapter.

Zacuto's source for the history of the Narbonne community has been published in two separate versions by Adolph Neubauer. One version was published with many other documents which Neubauer discovered.⁷ The other version was published in his Medieval Jewish Chronicles as an addition to the Sefer HaKabbalah of Abraham ibn Daud.⁸ This context explains the title which Zacuto used to introduce the material in the first chapter of the Yuhasin. A reading of Neubauer's two documents reveals that even Zacuto's fuller citation in the first chapter is a highly inadequate summary of the history of the Narbonne community. It is possible to argue that he was quoting the document from memory in the first chapter, and that his memory of the document faded even more by the fifth chapter. Another plausible argument is that the lacunae in the fifth chapter are due to scribal errors.

Twenty lines after the misleading reference to Razah and his contemporaries, chapter five of the Yuhasin supplies one of the most important citations about Razah contained in the medieval chronicles. Unlike the preceding references which place Razah in the context of his contemporaries, this reference describes him as an individual. It reveals much of the information about Razah that a 20th century "Who's Who" would reveal.

R. Zerahya HaLevi from Gerona wrote the Sefer HaMa'or in Lunel in 4,910 A.M. (1150 C.E.); and he greatly criticizes the Rif; and in the beginning it is written that R. Ephraim was a student of the Rif.⁹

This passage establishes Razah's origin. He was a Spaniard, born in

Gerona which is the northernmost city of the Catalanian region of Spain. Razah then moved to Lunel which is in the Provence. In that city he wrote the Sefer HaMa'or in which he criticized the writings of Isaac Alfasi. The phrase "in the beginning it is written that R. Ephraim was a student of the Rif" is somewhat obscure. This statement may be based on Razah's introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or in which he promises to use R. Ephraim to explain Alfasi's Halakot. Several lines after this citation Zacuto adds that Alfasi was saved by Moses Nahmanides (died 1270) from Razah's criticisms. If Alfasi had to be "saved" from Razah, then one might assume that the Sefer HaMa'or was a serious challenge to the authority of the Halakot.

Most of the information in Zacuto's biography may have been derived from Razah's own writings. His source for the date of the Sefer HaMa'or, however is somewhat elusive. It is a departure from the date offered in the chronicles of two contemporaries of Zacuto, Joseph of Arevalo and Abraham b. Shlomoh of Torrutiel. The date of the Sefer HaMa'or which appears in these three chronicles is worth investigating, since it is one of the few dates the tradition reveals about Razah. The other two chronicles have virtually the same wording as Zacuto's Yuhasin but the dates are divergent.

Although the sources offer no exact date for Joseph of Arevalo's birth or death, today we know that he was a contemporary of Zacuto. Neubauer has suggested that they both used the same source for their chronicles.¹⁰ The structure of Joseph's chronicle differs from the Yuhasin's structure. His chronicle is a list of names of authors

with their major works and the dates of their works or deaths. Razah appears in one of the lists in the following citation.

R. Zerahyah HaLevi from Gerona wrote the
Sefer HaMa'or in Lunel in 4,900 A.M. (1140 C.E.)¹¹

There is a ten year discrepancy with respect to Zacuto's date, despite the word for word correspondence between the passages. One possibility for resolving the difference might be that the scribe of Neubauer's manuscript of Joseph of Arevalo failed to add the letter yod (י) to the letters which form the present date (ק"ת). The yod would make up the ten year difference. The following evidence may be adduced for the emendation of the date: (1) The chronicle of Joseph of Arevalo is structured according to ascending dates. In the passage which mentions Razah the dates are: (a) Alfasi died 1103; (b) Rashi died 1105; (c) Simcha of Vitry died 1105; (d) Nathan HaBabli author of the Aruk died 1106; (e) Joseph Ibn Migash died 1141; (f) Zaddik Ibn Zaddik died 1149; (g) Razah died 1140. If this date is correct in its present form, it would be incongruent with what seems to be an otherwise highly patterned chronicle. (2) The present form of the date (ק"ת) stands before a full stop (:) and the copyist might easily have missed a letter the size of a yod. On the basis of this evidence, it can be suggested that the date be emended to (י"תק) 1150, and Joseph of Arevalo then supplies the same date as Zacuto.

One might, however, suggest that Zacuto's copyist added a yod and that the proper date is 1140 as it appears in Joseph of Arevalo. The citation in the chronicle of Abraham ben Shlomoh, Sefer HaKabbalah,¹² makes this suggestion untenable. This chronicle attempts to "complete"

the Sefer HaKabbalah of Abraham Ibn Daud from the year of his death until the death of Isaac Campanton in 1463.¹³ His citation of Razah and the date for the Sefer HaMa'or is as follows:

R. Zerahyah HaLevi from Gerona wrote the Sefer HaMa'or in Lunel in the year 4,914 A.M. (1154 C.E.); according to the creation of the world.¹⁴

This reference to Razah contains the same formulation as the other two chronicles. Only the word for "compose" differs with Abraham b. Shlomoh's using "hiber" rather than "yasad" which is used in the other chronicles. The fact that the third citation has a date in the 1150's makes it almost certain that the 1140 date of Joseph of Arevalo is unlikely.

On the basis of the manuscripts in Neubauer's Medieval Jewish Chronicles and Filipowski's edition of the Sefer Yuhasin it is impossible to achieve a certain solution to the three conflicting dates. We might assume that two traditions existed for the date of the Sefer HaMa'or: a tradition of 1150 and a tradition of 1154. This possibility is weakened, however, by the identical phrasing and contents of all three chronicles. Another factor which weakens the assumption of two traditions is the proximity of the years 1150 and 1154. It seems more probable to suggest that all three chronicles copied from the same source which read 1154. This suggestion is based on the resolution between the chronicles of Zacuto and Joseph of Arevalo which has been demonstrated. Aptowitzer has also shown that Zacuto has a tendency to round off dates to the nearest decade.¹⁵ Abraham

b. Shlomoh's chronicle is phrased in concise statements indicating the scholar's name, a statement of his achievement, and a date. Great care seems to be given to the listing of dates. Each one is signified by dots and concludes with the phrase "according to the creation." Such precision in the expression of the date, as well as the indication of the fourth year of the fifth decade of the twelfth century argue for Abraham ben Shlomoh's date as being the most precise, and probably the date indicated in the source common to all three chronicles. Without seeing all the manuscripts involved, it is difficult to offer more than these suggestions.

Another significant date in Razah's life emerges from the chronicles written in the generation after the Spanish Expulsion. Solomon Ibn Verga attempted to analyze the causes for that expulsion in his Shebet Yehudah. His analysis was published by his son Joseph Ibn Verga. Joseph added some chronological material to his father's expositions. One of these chronologies dealt with the "deeds of Christian kings combined with some events in Jewish history." This chronicle contains the following necrology:

In the year 146 A.M. (1186 C.E.) the cloud
of glory of R. Zerahyah was lifted up.¹⁶

One might question whether this R. Zerahya refers to R. Zerahyah HaLevi. The context of the passage seems to suggest that it does. The other rabbis mentioned are Provençal: R. Meshullam and Rabad of Posquieres. Only illustrious rabbis are mentioned in the passage, and this would preclude the R. Zerahyah of the passage referring to an otherwise unknown personality.¹⁷ The accuracy of the date

might also be assumed since the dates of the Christian events are correct.¹⁸

Chronicles of the generation of the Spanish Expulsion of 1492 supply vital information for the biography of Razah. We learn that he was born in Gerona and travelled north to the academies at Narbonne where he studied with R. Moshe b. Yosef b. Merwan Levi and R. Abraham b. Isaac. He was a contemporary of Rabad of Posquieres. He wrote the Sefer HaMa'or which criticized the Halakot of Isaac Alfasi in the year 1154. In writing the Ma'or he made use of the works of R. Ephraim, one of Alfasi's disciples. The critique was serious and severe for Alfasi's Halakot required Moses Nahmanides to defend them. Razah died in 1186. The skeleton outline of Razah's life has been sketched in these chronicles. They provide the basis for future chronicles which, unfortunately, do not always use them most felicitously.

C. The Tradition Obscured:

Gedalyah Ibn Yahya and David Gans

Striving for accuracy in reporting the tradition was not as important as glorifying it in the mind of Gedalyah Ibn Yahya (b. 1529) in the Shalsholet HaKabbalah.¹⁹ He uses the earlier chronicles like Sefer Yuhasin, and weaves their "facts" into his own narrative. In the following citation one may observe how his words obscure the established tradition:

R. Zerahyah HaLevi from the city of Lunel, the Sefardi, wrote the two Ma'orot against Alfasi in the year 1150....And I have seen that he was very young when he wrote the criticisms, and R. Ephraim the student of the Rif saved him (the Rif).²⁰

Razah's birthplace in Gerona is blurred into the word "Sefardi" which means "Spaniard." Ibn Yahya also changes the title of Razah's work to "the two Ma'orot." Razah describes his Sefer HaMa'or as being divided into the Ma'or HaKatan on order Moed and into the Ma'or HaGadol on Nashim and Nezikin. Ibn Yahya might have "seen" that Razah was very young from a poem which appeared together with Razah's introduction. Printed editions of the Talmud bear a superscription to Razah's introduction which reads, "When this work was begun its composer was nineteen years old." Ibn Yahya may have seen these lines as well. The mention of R. Ephraim was probably derived from a reading of the introduction to the Ma'or and the Yuhasin.

In the narration of scholarly relationships Ibn Yahya loses all sense of chronology. In the Shalshet HaKabbalah Maimonides (died 1235) and Rashi (died 1105) are of the same generation. Ibn Yahya makes the same chronological error in "proving" that Razah and Rabad were members of the same generation. After describing the critical notes which Rabad wrote on Maimonides, Alfasi, and Razah, he claims that Razah and Rabad went to the same academy. His proof for this claim and my demonstration of the untenability of that proof will enable the reader to understand Ibn Yahya's historical but "pietistic methodology."

And I have seen in the hand of one of the sages of the generation an old pamphlet which contained a question of Bonastruc DeSemestre, who was in AlMagarah, in the year 4,971 A.M. (1211 C.E.) of Rabad and R. Zerahyah HaLevi. This proves that they were in one academy.²¹

It is chronologically impossible for Razah and Rabad to have received any responsa in 1211. Ibn Verga gave a date of 1186 for Razah's death. Rabad, according to the Sefer Yuhasin, died in 1199.²² It may be argued, however, that since Ibn Yahya miscopied Zacuto's date for Rabad's death, recording it as 1239,²³ and he has no date for Razah's death, he assumed that both men were alive in 1211. Granting Ibn Yahya's consistency, it is still difficult to allow his information to prove that our Rabad and Razah received this responsum.

The names Bonastruc DeSemestre and Zerahyah HaLevi appear together at another point in Jewish history. In the year 1413 at the disputation in Tortosa one of the students of Hasdai Crescas was present. His name was Zerahyah HaLevi.²⁴ One of the Hebrew records of that same disputation was written by Bonastruc DeSemestre of Gerona.²⁵ It is entirely possible that Ibn Yahya saw the names in the responsum and assumed that this matter referred to Zerahyah HaLevi author of the Sefer HaMa'or.

Three problems prevent a positive identification of this responsum with the participants in the disputation. First is whether the Bonastruc DeSemestre of Gerona can be identified with the city of AlMagarah.²⁶ Second, who is the Rabad to whom our responsum is addressed? Third, is the problem of the 1211 date of the responsum.

Given the inaccuracy of Ibn Yahya in copying dates one is tempted to remove the דנתק and leave the remaining קע"א which would yield a date of 1411. This date would be plausible for the Bonastruc DeSemestre who was at Tortosa to ask a question of one of the participants.

At the present time it is impossible to state any final solution to the historical significance of the responsum. The responsum does reveal Ibn Yahya's careless use of evidence to prove his case. It is no wonder that historians have given the Shalshélet HaKabbalah which means "Chain of Tradition"; the title Shalshélet HaShekarim which means "Chain of Lies."

The other major chronicle of the 16th century, Zemah David, also obscured the traditions about Razah. Its author, David Gans (1541-1613), was a student of the great Talmudist R. Moses Isserles (1520-1572), Gans was also an astronomer who participated in observations at the Prague observatory. His chronicle reflected his universal interests. It was divided into two parts: one part dealing with Jewish history, and a second part covering major events in world history.²⁷

Despite Gans' scientific training, he was not a critical historian. He merely collected data from his predecessors and arranged it in tabular form. Gans never indicates any contradiction in his dates. With this lack of critical acumen he lists Razah under the year 4,830 A.M. (1070 C.E.)²⁸ as one of the students of R. Moshe HaDarshan, and as the author of the Sefer HaMa'or in the year 4,910 A.M. (1150 C.E.).²⁹ His source was the Sefer Yuhasin which he used without reflection or

examination.

If the chronicles of the 16th century do not substantially add to the facts about Razah's life, they do elevate his position in the tradition. Ibn Yahya informs his reader that Razah was a youngster when he wrote his critique of Alfasi. The placing of Razah and Rabad in the same academy also may be understodd as an elevation of Razah. Dismissing the poor evidence that Ibn Yahya offers, one must still conclude that Razah had a prominent position in his mind.

D. Chronicles of the 17th Century:

Joseph Sambary and David Conforte

Chronicles of the 17th century add more to our knowledge of Razah than the chronicles of the previous century. The center for writing these chronicles moved further east, from Italy and the Holy Roman Empire to Egypt. The two major chronicles of this century were the Kore HaDorot of David Conforte³⁰ (1618-1690) and the Liklutim MiDibre Yosef of Joseph Sambary (1640-1703).³¹

Sambary lived in Alexandria where he wrote his chronicle in 1674.³² Through his primary focus of interest is the Oriental Jewish communities, he demonstrates considerable knowledge of the literature of Spanish and Franco-German Jewish authors. His first reference to Razah appears in a discussion of the critique of Maimonides by Rabad of Posquieres.

The Rabad also wrote critical notes on the critique which R. Zerahyah HaLevi, Ba'al HaMa'orot, wrote of Rif. However, R. Zerahyah HaLevi criticized Rabad's work,

Ba'ale HaNefesh...and R. Zerahyah called this book Sel'a HaMahloket...And this R. Zerahyah HaLevi was from the city of Lunel and wrote a book against the Rif and called it Sefer HaMa'orot, and he was eighteen years old. This took place in the year 4,910 A.M. (1150 C.E.). He was also a great poet³³ as he wrote at the beginning of his book.

Sambary's chronicle is of considerable value for understanding Razah. He is the first chronicler to note the mutual rivalry between Rabad and Razah. Rabad wrote a critique of the Ma'or; and Razah wrote a critique of the Ba'ale HaNefesh of the Rabad. Unlike the chronicles of 13th and 14th century Provence which picture Rabad as the outstanding scholar of the generation, Sambary gives Razah almost an equal status.

Sambary's biographical information appears to be based on the Sefer Yuhasin and the Shalsholet HaKabbalah. The date of the Ma'or at 1150 seems to be based on the Yuhasin. Sambary goes further than the tradition of the Shalsholet HaKabbalah with respect to Razah's youth at the writing of the Ma'or. Ibn Yahya stated that Razah was "very young", and Sambary assigns him the age of eighteen years. I have been unable to determine his source for this statement.

Another dimension of Razah's scholarship is introduced to the chronicle tradition by Sambary. He is the first to mention Razah's ability as a poet. The citation which is quoted above continues with several lines from Razah's introduction to the critique of the Ba'ale HaNefesh.³⁴ The title of this work, Sel'a HaMahloket, appears for the first time in the chronicles. From the sections of poetry which

Sambari quotes one can discern both an apologetic and a satyric tone. Razah claims that he does not want a "contest" but to voice his disagreement with his colleague. The element of satire is introduced in Razah's introduction to the Sha'ar HaMayim of the Ba'ale HaNefesh.

David Conforte of Salonica wrote his literary history, Kore HaDorot, in Cairo around 1677.³⁵ Conforte follows the Sefer Yuhasin in making Razah one of the disciples of R. Moshe HaDarshan. He adds,

Razah, i.e. R. Zerahyah HaLevi b. R. Isaac from Lunel, Ba'al HaMa'orot, who criticized the Rif in all his books; He was nineteen years old as his father attests at the beginning of Rif's work in the poem which he wrote. He also wrote the Sefer HaZava.³⁶

It should be noted that Zacuto's statement about Razah's origin in Gerona is missing. Conforte also obscures Zacuto's reference to R. Ephraim by presumably identifying him with R. Ephraim b. Isaac of Regensbourg (died 1175).³⁷ Kore HaDorot is the first literary chronicle to mention Razah's father together with Razah. The mention of his father's poem at the beginning of the Ma'or may indicate that Conforte may have had a printed text of Alfasi's Halakot.³⁸

Conforte also mentions the critique on the Sefer HaMa'or written by Rabad.³⁹ This citation quotes a portion of the critique which was included in the Temim De'im a collection of the writings of Provençal rabbis printed in 1620.⁴⁰

The Kore HaDorot also mentions some of Razah's descendants. This statement is derived from the introduction to R. Aaron HaLevi's (died 1300) Bedeḳ HaBayit.

And he was the son of Yosef HaLevi, son of

Benveniste, son of Joseph, son of Isaac,
son of Zerahyah, son of Shem Tob.⁴¹

Conforte correctly notes that Zerahyah the author of Sefer HaMa'or was Zerahyah b. Isaac and not Zerahyah b. Shem Tob. This forces him to conclude, "Perhaps they were all of one family." This conclusion reveals a critical attitude toward the sources by Conforte. In a later work on rabbinic biography, Shem HaGedolim, written by Azulai, the author emends Aaron HaLevi's statement to read in "proper" order for Zerahyah to be Aaron's ancestor. Conforte, however, left the text as he saw it, attempting to draw conclusions from the text as it stood.

The availability of both printed books and manuscripts in the 17th century Egyptian centers of Cairo and Alexandria make Sambar and Conforte another high point in the historiography of Razah. From their works one becomes more fully aware of the literary rivalry between Rabad and Razah as it took form in the Sel'a HaMaḥloket and the critical notes on the Ma'or. The Sefer HaZava, though undescribed, is added to Razah's bibliography. A fuller picture of Razah emerges through the knowledge cited about his father and his illustrious descendant, R. Aaron HaLevi. Razah becomes known as a poet and satyrst as well as an halakhik scholar. The 17th century chronicles provide for Razah's literary accomplishment the same depth of knowledge that the chronicles of the generation of the Expulsion provided for his life.

E. The Tradition Crystallized:

Yehiel Heilprin's Seder HaDorot

Setting the end of any tradition is arbitrary. I have chosen to close this study of Razah in the tradition of the medieval chronicles with the 18th century Seder HaDorot of Yehiel Heilprin (1660-1746).⁴² This chronicle, written by Heilprin in Minsk, repeats the errors of previous chronicles, and thereby crystallizes the form of chronicle that students interested in the "chain of tradition" would accept. The "chain of tradition" moved from history to Pietism. No new information was sought out. Just as the Halaka of Heilprin's day had crystallized so had the "chain of tradition."

Heilprin's chronicle is more a dictionary of scholars than a chronology. It consists of three independent parts. The first of these, entitled "Yemot 'Olam" is a history from creation down to his own time. The second part, "Seder HaTannaim WeHaAmoraim" contains lists of the Tannaim and Amoraim in alphabetical order with their dates. Part three is a catalogue containing first the names of all the authors, and then the names of their works arranged in alphabetical order. Razah's name appears in part one of the book.

The first part of the Seder HaDorot draws heavily upon the works of Zacuto, Ibn Yahya and David Gans. Heilprin's treatment of Razah reads like a summary of the errors of previous chronicles. Razah appears under the year 4,830 A.M. (1070 C.E.) as a student of Moshe HaDarshan;⁴³ the author of the Sefer HaMa'or in Lunel in 4,910 A.M.

(1150 C.E.)⁴⁴ and the addressee of a responsum by Bonastruc DeSemestre in 1211.⁴⁵ The strong influence of Gans and Ibn Yahya is easily seen in these references.

The Seder HaDorot gives Razah no personality or image. He is another link in the chain of tradition. Heilprin was more interested in demonstrating the entire chain, than he was in highlighting particular scholars. The chain had been forged by Heilprin's time, leaving the examination of various links to scholars of future generations.

F. Summary

This chapter has been as instructive about the nature of the medieval chronicles as it has been about the life of Razah. One observes that the authors of the chronicles were sensitive to the major figures who made up the chain of tradition. Each author was bound by the number of books which were available to him in a particular place at a particular time. Considering this limitation as well as the fact that they were more interested in the study of Torah than in the recording of the history of its students, the chronicles do a remarkable job.

They present Razah within the context of his scholarly colleagues, R. Abraham b. Isaac and Rabad of Posquieres. Some emphasize Rabad above Razah while others appear to give Razah almost an equal status. Razah's scholarship emerges slowly from the chronicle tradition. The chronicles of the earlier period of the tradition offer the Sefer HaMa'or

as Razah's contribution to the study of Torah. Later generations of chroniclers demonstrate that he was a poet and satirist as well. Other works are ascribed to him such as the Sel'a HaMa'loket on Rabad's Ba'ale HaNefesh, and the Sefer HaZava. I believe that the slow emergence of works ascribed to him is a result of the availability of manuscripts and printed editions.

Chronological traditions grow out of the medieval chronicles as well. The references to Razah's "youth" by Ibn Yahya are taken up by Sambari and Conforte who suggest an age of eighteen or nineteen years. Both of the 17th century chroniclers might have seen a printed edition of Alfasi which indicated Razah's age when he wrote the Ma'or. The date of the Ma'or itself is somewhat more enigmatic. One notes the divergence between the chronicles of the generation of the Spanish expulsion. Even though a solution for the different dates has been suggested, one still questions the source of the tradition.

What is the image of Razah in the medieval chronicles? It must be clear at this point in our study that not all chronicles project an "image" of Razah. Some chronicles merely record dates. Those chronicles which do project an image of Razah do so rather consistently. In their minds Razah was a challenger. As a precocious youth he wrote the Sefer HaMa'or against Isaac Alfasi. At some time in his life Razah took up the pen against his colleague Rabad. This critique reveals Razah as a poet as well as a jurist.

In the following chapters I shall examine the statements and implications of the medieval chronicle tradition. My first task will

be a reconstruction of Razah's life based upon his own writings and the writings of his contemporaries. This will enable us to examine Razah's life on the basis of sources contemporary to his life, and give us an independant source for evaluating his contribution to the chain of tradition.

Chapter II

The Life of Rabbi Zerahyah HaLevi

The pulse of Jewish intellectual life began to quicken during the second half of the 12th century in Catalonia and Provence. Spain was in flux. The Almoravid invasions of the mid 11th century shook the foundations of political unity.¹ Religious persecution following the Almohade invasion of 1147 damaged the security of religious and cultural pluralism, which had been the hallmark of Islamic Spain.² Though the southern centers showed signs of security,³ there was also a searching for new centers. The foci of intellectual activity were gradually shifting to the cities under the domination of Christian rulers in the North.⁴ One of the cities which blossomed along with the rise of these northern centers in the 12th century was the northernmost city of the Province of Catalonia, Gerona.

Lying just South of the Pyrenees and near the seacoast, Gerona had a history of settlement since Roman times.⁵ It was captured by Arabs during their first conquest in 715.⁶ It remained under Arab control until the Reconquista began under Charlemagne (785-850).⁷ In the later part of the 9th century the city was traded back and forth between Arabs

and Christians.⁸ By the 10th century Gerona formed part of the Christian Spanish March.⁹ In the 10th century records of Jewish settlement began to appear.¹⁰ However, this does not preclude the possibility of prior Jewish colonization. By the 11th century Gerona Jewry was a small but prosperous community living within the walls of the city.¹¹ Twelfth century documents indicate that Jews were renting fields near Gerona, and were engaging in the building of stores and factories.¹²

Gerona prospered under the shadow of its southern neighbor Barcelona. Political sovereignty and rabbinic authority rested in Barcelona. The Count of Barcelona had suzerainty over the Spanish March; and, by the middle of the 12th century, over some cities of Languedoc as well.¹³ Barcelona was also the center of rabbinic authority in Christian Spain prior to the upheavals in southern Spain in the last half of the 12th century.¹⁴ It was to Barcelona that Rav Amram Gaon (885-970) probably addressed his prayerbook.¹⁵ A Talmudic academy probably existed there during this time.¹⁶ The center of Barcelona rose to great heights in the later part of the 11th and 12th century under the guidance of Judah b. Barzilay, author of Sefer HaIttim (1103),¹⁷ and R. Sheshet Benveniste (1110-1193?).¹⁸

A. Family

At the same time as the center of rabbinic studies in Barcelona was under the leadership of Judah b. Barzilay and Sheshet Benveniste, a line of rabbinic scholars began appearing with the appellation "Gerundi."

This title was based on "Gerunda" the Latin name for the city of Gerona.¹⁹ One of the first scholars recorded in the tradition with this epithet was R. Isaac b. Zerahyah HaLevi, father of R. Zerahyah HaLevi, or in its abbreviated form Razah.²⁰

Our knowledge of R. Isaac depends largely upon the writings of his son. Razah calls his father "Yizhari" in one of his poems in the introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or. Scholars have used this term as a basis for determining where R. Isaac was born. Aptowitzer suggested that "Yizhari" may refer to Oliva in Spain.²¹ Neubauer²² and S. Cassel²³ associate the name with the French cities of Grasse or Mountolivet. Neither claim seems to be firmly rooted as far as Razah makes use of the term "Yizhari". Razah uses the term in poetic contexts. It would, therefore, seem more satisfactory to interpret it as a poetic expression for the word "HaLevi" than to seek within it a key to the birthplace of R. Isaac.²⁴

R. Isaac is cited as a legal authority in his son's best known work, Sefer HaMa'or.²⁵ Razah's father was in correspondence with some of the great scholars of his time.²⁶ On one occasion he questioned an explanation given by R. Moshe b. Yosef, one of the heads of the academy in Narbonne.²⁷ He composed one legal work which is no longer in existence. Its title Megillat Nehamah is found in the Sefer HaMa'or to Baba Mezia. From the context of Razah's citation it appears that the work dealt with aspects of property rights.²⁸

Razah's father was a leader in the religious community of Gerona. The source for this information is not his son, but R. Abraham b. David

(Rabad) of Posquieres. In one of his notes to Razah's Sefer HaMa'or Rabad mentions some of his observations about Razah's father.

This change came from his father who taught the custom in his city according to Ibn Giyyat, even though Ibn Giyyat himself did not acknowledge this opinion. But his father liked to vaunt himself with strange customs; and he found young men lacking in halakik knowledge and guided them by his whim.²⁹

This passage seems to be demeaning R. Isaac's ability as a communal leader. It should be remembered that Rabad's remarks are colored by his distate for Razah.³⁰ Putting Rabad's harsh words aside, the passage reveals R. Isaac as a scholar who had the courage of his convictions. If he approved of a certain authority's decision, it made no difference to him how that authority regarded his decision.³¹ This critical attitude is also reflected in his questioning of R. Moshe b. Yosef, who was a prominent authority. This critical attitude toward authority was to be a hallmark of his son Zerahyah, who was to succeed his father to communal office in Gerona.

Razah's father was a liturgical poet of some merit. He was praised by the 16th century poet Menachem Luzano.³² Zunz³³ and Landshuth³⁴ list his liturgical poems as appearing in the Avignon and Carpentras rites. He composed poems in Aramaic as well as in Hebrew.³⁵ Combining poetry as well as halakik skill, R. Isaac b. Zerahyah represented to the Geronese community the hallmarks of culture demonstrated by the great rabbinic figures of the time, such as Joseph Ibn Migash (d. 1141), Isaac b. Giyyat (d. 1089), and Judah b. Barzilay (d. 1140?).³⁶

From our fragmented information about R. Isaac b. Zerahyah it is

difficult to assign him a date. The Ma'or passage which cites both R. Isaac and R. Moshe indicates that both were dead by the time it was written.³⁷ The date for R. Moshe b. Yosef's death has not been conclusively established, and is of little help.³⁸

Another scholar to bear the epithet "Gerundi" was R. Berakyah b. Isaac HaLevi, Razah's brother. It may have been the poetic spirit which moved R. Isaac to give his sons rhyming names. Berakyah was probably Zerahyah's younger brother. This judgment is based on the custom of naming the oldest child after the grandparent.

Berakyah was a Talmudist who may have written some responsa.³⁹ Zerahyah records a question which his brother asked him about an interpretation of R. Moshe b. Yosef.⁴⁰ On the strength of this question B. Benedikt suggests that Berakyah studied with Moshe b. Yosef.⁴¹ Since there is no evidence of this either in the chronicle tradition or elsewhere in Razah's writings, one need not make this assumption.

Razah carried on a correspondence with his younger brother.⁴² The content of the correspondence is unknown. It must have contained material of more than mundane interest since Razah showed all his correspondence to his friend Judah Ibn Tibbon.⁴³ J. Reifmann suggests that the correspondence may have included part of the Sel'a HaMahloket, a work which criticized Rabad's Ba'ale HaNefesh.⁴⁴

Like his father and brother Berakyah was a liturgical poet. His poems are listed by Zunz⁴⁵ and Landshuth⁴⁶ in their compilations of liturgical poets.

The family HaLevi into which Razah was born was one of the leading

families of Gerona. It was led by a father who was somewhat daring in the halakik practices which he adopted. The skills of poetry and jurisprudence were passed on to his sons. Razah also adopted his father's spirit of independence. His citations of his father indicate a great reverence for him. One can assume that Razah's first teacher was his father.

Razah's date of birth, however, is somewhat enigmatic. It is not found in the sources, and must be determined by inference. I have written an appendix to the thesis rather than include all the details at this point. On the basis of Razah's own testimony as well as the information in the chronicle tradition, I have concluded that he was born approximately 1115.

B. Teachers and Colleagues in Narbonne

After spending his earliest years in his father's household Razah became a part of the great student migrations which were becoming popular in Europe during the 12th century.⁴⁷ Both Christian and Jew were seeking out master-teachers who would educate them in the developing fields of knowledge. For the Christian the journey might have been to Paris to study philosophy, or to Bologna to study law.⁴⁸ For the Jew it meant the seeking of further Talmudic instruction or perhaps the study of medicine.⁴⁹

Razah's journey took place some time before his twentieth birthday.⁵⁰ He set forth for Narbonne, the most prominent academy in Provence. It

is not clear why he left Gerona. One possibility is that he stirred up trouble at home. One of his poems is an emotional plea for self-restraint. The poem indicates that he has angered the people of his own city, and he desires fair judgment. Razah implies in the poem that fair judgment is to be found in Lunel.⁵¹ J. Reifmann and H. Graetz assign this poem to the early portion of Razah's career.⁵² If personal problems forced Razah's move from his native city, then this first move foreshadows a pattern in his life. He was unable to live in harmony with the scholarly community. The motivation for moving might have been more simple. Zerahyah's father had been in contact with the Narbonne academy.⁵³ He knew the reputation of the scholars in that community, and wanted his son to study with them.

Zerahyah's new home in Narbonne was only a three day journey from Gerona.⁵⁴ It was a community which dated back to the reign of Charlemagne in the 9th century. One Jewish family in the city had title to land which was granted them by Charlemagne himself.⁵⁵ The community was organized on the pattern of the Babylonian Jewish communities with a Nasi at the head of the community and an Ab Bet Din at the head of the academy.⁵⁶

Of the many scholars in the academies at Narbonne cited in his works, Razah bestows the title "reverend teacher" only upon R. Moshe b. Yosef.⁵⁷ Little is known about the details of R. Moshe b. Yosef's life.⁵⁸ He was a scion of the scholarly Merwan Levi family. Both his father, Joseph and his uncle, Isaac were known as Talmudic scholars.⁵⁹

*There are few chronological details known about R. Moshe b. Yosef.

One of them is that his name appears on a writ of divorce dated 1134.⁶⁰ This indicates that he was a leading figure in the Narbonne community at the time of Razah's arrival.

In addition to his position of high standing in the community R. Moshe was an outstanding scholar. He wrote commentaries on several tractates of the Babylonian Talmud. Some of the commentaries have been preserved in the writings of his students. These commentaries may have encompassed the entire Talmud.⁶¹ Within the commentaries he exhibits a desire to preserve traditions native to Provence. This desire made him an opponent of the Gaonic and Spanish traditions which were imported to Provence by Judah b. Barzilai of Barcelona.⁶² Razah preserves a number of his teacher's commentaries, and may have possessed a number of manuscripts of them written by his teacher's own hand.⁶³

Razah never reveals the personal details of his relationship with his teacher. However, in the Sefer HaMa'or, he mentions him with deep respect. In the Ma'or on tractate Hullin, Razah writes:

This is the opinion of R. Moshe b. Yosef.
He is our reverend teacher and we have
relied upon him because the arrangement
of the Mishnah and traditions are all
according to his words.⁶⁴

It should first be noted that in this passage the title "reverend teacher" indicates high regard and affection. The comment reveals Razah's admiration for his teacher's ability to organize and explain the rabbinic tradition on a difficult question.

Even when he disagrees with his teacher Razah observes deference. When Berakyah, his brother, asked him about R. Moshe's interpretation

of a passage in tractate Gitin Razah replied:

We also relied upon him for we drank from the waters of his spring, and sat in his shadows and dwelt in his tent, until I struggled and investigated the matter according to my own ability but I have seen another explanation.⁶⁵

Razah does not dismiss his teacher's opinion with an abrupt or abusive statement. He does not even openly state that his teacher is incorrect. Before delivering an alternate explanation he gives full credit and respect to his teacher's opinion.

The highest compliment a student gives his teacher is preserving his teacher's writings. Razah includes some of R. Moshe's commentaries in toto in his Sefer HaMa'or. He mentions seeing manuscript copies of Moshe's commentaries to tractates Gitin and Rosh HaShanah.⁶⁶

R. Abraham Ab Bet Din whose name appeared with such grand epithets in the medieval chronicle tradition also is cited in Razah's works. R. Abraham was a student of R. Isaac b. Merwan Levi. He was also a student and junior colleague of R. Moshe b. Yosef.⁶⁷ R. Abraham's education was broader than his senior colleague's education. He left Narbonne to study with Judah b. Barzilay, and brought his teacher from Spain to Narbonne.⁶⁸ As the Ab Bet Din of Narbonne he was a prolific writer of responsa.⁶⁹ These legal consultations include the writings of the greatest Talmudists of both France and Spain. From France he quotes the opinions of R. Samuel b. Meir of Ramerupt, Rashi's grandson;⁷⁰ and the writings of Joseph ibn Migash, the student of Alfasi and the head of the academy at Lucena.⁷¹ R. Abraham b. Isaac was also the

author of Sefer HaEshkol, the first Provençal attempt at a comprehensive codification of Jewish law.

In his youth Razah looked to R. Abraham for support. On one occasion Razah criticized Joseph ibn Migash's commentary to Baba Batra. His friends attacked his criticisms, and he turned to R. Abraham for support. R. Abraham not only supported Razah's opinion, but included it in his own commentary to Baba Batra.⁷²

Razah's later writings display a highly critical attitude toward R. Abraham. Unlike the long demurrers which he introduces when dissenting from R. Moshe b. Yosef, he sometimes brushes R. Abraham aside with the statement "this is incorrect."⁷³ In light of this brusque treatment it seems likely that R. Abraham was not Razah's teacher in the same sense as R. Moshe. Auerbach's claim that the words "yesh mehaburatenu" in Sefer HaEshkol refers to Rabad and Razah might explain the curt treatment which R. Abraham gets from Razah.⁷⁴ However, Razah stood in awe of very few authorities, and brusque dismissal does appear in the Sefer HaMa'or.

Another senior colleague at Narbonne was R. Joseph ibn Pilat. Ibn Pilat is a somewhat enigmatic figure in Provence. Our knowledge of him is derived mainly from what his colleagues wrote about him. Ibn Pilat may have been born in Spain.⁷⁵ He seems to have first hand knowledge of the customs of the Spanish community of Lucena. His scholarship was well respected in Narbonne and his name appears often in R. Abraham b. Isaac's responsa. Ibn Pilat was another Spanish influence to whom Razah could turn.

Razah's written consultations with Ibn Pilat are limited to some questions regarding oths which appear in the Sefer HaTerumot of Shmuel HaSardi (c.1123).⁷⁶ The Sefer HaTerumot does not contain Razah's questions in their original form. It states that Razah asked "several things about a decision from R. Joseph ibn Pilat."⁷⁷ The parallel passage in the Sefer HaMa'or on tractate Shabuot fails to mention this consultation.⁷⁸ This might indicate Razah's disagreement with Ibn Pilat's views or his incorporating Ibn Pilat into the Ma'or without mentioning him. Since the date of the questions in the Sefer HaTerumot cannot be determined, it would be difficult to call Ibn Pilat a teacher of Razah. The questions might very well have been asked at a later time in Razah's career. It seems most logical to assume that Ibn Pilat was only one of a number of senior scholars in Narbonne to whom Razah could confer about halakik matters.

Another young scholar was living in Narbonne at about this time, Babbi Abraham b. David (Rabad). He was born in Narbonne.⁷⁹ As the outstanding native student in Narbonne his learning earned him the honor of marriage into the family of R. Abraham b. Isaac.⁸⁰ Razah and Rabad shared the same teacher, R. Moshe b. Yosef. Both young scholars looked to R. Abraham b. Isaac and R. Joseph Ibn Pilat as senior colleagues. The information about their education from the same teachers must be gathered from the writings of both Rabad and Razah independently. They never acknowledge each other as classmates or friends.

There is a strange silence between Razah and Rabad. Although they never directly mention each other's names in their writings, they both

went to great length to write refutations and criticisms of each other's works. Razah wrote a refutation of Rabad's commentary on tractate Kinnim. He also wrote the Sel'a HaMa'loket, critical notes on Rabad's Ba'ale HaNefesh, a code of the laws of ritual purity. Rabad responded with a blistering critique of the Sefer HaMa'or. I shall return to Rabad and Razah in chapter three of this thesis and examine the relationship between them.

Razah's years in Narbonne provide the major influences upon his life. His teachers made available to him the major trends in legal thought at that time. From R. Moshe b. Yosef he gained knowledge of the Provençal traditions of Talmudic interpretation. R. Abraham b. Isaac provided him with a broader education which encompassed the scholarship from the Spanish academies and the Franco-German academies. Narbonne was also a cosmopolitan center which hosted from all over the world. It was also the site of a Jewish medical school.⁸¹ These cultural aspects of Narbonne influenced Razah whose writings contained explanations using mathematics, medicine, and geography.

C. From Narbonne to Lunel

A shadow fell across Narbonne during Razah's student years. A power struggle over the leadership of the Christian community of Narbonne had disastrous effect upon the Jewish community. In 1132 the death of Count Aimeri II (1105-1134) left his young daughter Ermengarde to rule the city. The Counts of Toulouse and Barcelona sought marriage alliances

to bring this rich city under their suzerainty. Raymun Berengar, Count of Barcelona, influenced Ermengarde to marry his candidate for her hand. This victory of the Count of Barcelona infuriated Alphonse-Jourdain, Count of Toulouse, who marched his army into Narbonne. The war continued for a period of ten years, from 1134 until 1143. Ermengarde and Berengar eventually defeated the Count of Toulouse, but only at great cost to the city. The Jewish chronicler of these events recalls that heavy taxes were placed upon the Jewish community of the city. The Jewish population also declined during this period, particularly the population of Talmudic scholars. The chronicle relates that the generation of Rabad's colleagues "were born in Narbonne and studied there, but they left because of the political upheavals."⁸² Although Razah does not appear in the list of the chronicler, it is most probable that he was among those who left Narbonne during the crisis. It is not clear whether he left at the outset of the crisis or at its end. The study of Torah, as recent history has demonstrated, can take place under the most adverse conditions. However, a new center of Torah study was on the rise in Lunel and Razah and his contemporaries turned toward it.

If Razah left Narbonne during the period of upheaval, then he probably arrived in Lunel during the fourth decade of the 12th century. The community was dominated by Meshullam b. Jacob (d. 1170) and his five sons. Meshullam was a man of immense wealth who supported all fields of intellectual endeavor. His encouragement and funds produced the first translations of Jewish philosophic texts from Arabic into

Hebrew. Meshullam was an advocate of traditional learning as well. He attracted Rabad to his academy. The creativity which Meshullam demanded from his students is exemplified in Rabad's Issur Mashehu.⁸³

It is difficult to determine the extent of Meshullam's influence on Razah. His name appears only once in the Sefer HaMa'or,⁸⁴ but the quotations which appear in that work under the general phrase "Sages of Lunel" or Sages of Narbonne" preclude the use of the frequency of a name occurring as a criterion of influence upon Razah. There is reason to believe that Razah became a part of Meshullam's family by marriage during his residence in Lunel.

The evidence for Razah's marriage into Meshullam's family is derived from a statement by his descendant R. Aaron HaLevi. He indicates that Razah and R. Aaron b. Meshullam are his "grandfathers."⁸⁵ This statement proves that Razah married the daughter of Aaron b. Meshullam. Another proof for this marriage in Lunel is a reference to Razah's son in the testament of his friend, Judah Ibn Tibbon.⁸⁶

Razah could look to other former students of the Narbonne academy who had left in search of a calmer location. One of his companions in Lunel was another member of Meshullam's family, R. Moshe b. Yehudah.⁸⁷

Moshe b. Yehudah was probably born in Narbonne.⁸⁸ He studied under Razah's teachers, R. Moshe b. Yosef, and R. Abraham b. Isaac Ab Bet Din.⁸⁹ No major legal works are attributed to him. According to Benjamin of Tudela he was related to the family of Meshullam b. Jacob of Lunel.⁹⁰ The relationship is explained by Gross that Meshullam was his father-in-law.⁹¹ Some time after the death of

Meshullam in 1170 Moshe b. Yehudah bore a son whom he named after his father-in-law.⁹² His son Meshullam was associated with the city of Beziers and wrote Sefer HaHashlamah, a work on Alfasi.⁹³ In the introduction to that work he attests to the relationship between his father and Razah:

In their lifetimes they sometimes were
divided in opinion and sometimes agreed
in Migdal Lunel.⁹⁴

From this passage we might assume that Razah and Moshe b. Yehudah consulted as mutual friends on various legal questions in Lunel. Meshullam b. Moshe's open description of free-flowing argument between his father and Razah reveals a relationship between men of equal stature rather than, as H. Michael suggested, student and teacher.⁹⁵ Had Moshe b. Yehudah been the teacher of as illustrious a scholar as Razah, his son would not have hesitated to ascribe this merit to his father.

The mutual respect and equal status which Moshe b. Yehudah accorded Razah is further illustrated in a responsum which is recorded in the Ba'ale HaAsufot. Moshe b. Yehudah sets before Razah a case involving wine touched by a non-Jew.⁹⁶ He rendered no final verdict on the case,⁹⁷ but proposed a set of possible conclusions.⁹⁸ Razah then examines his opinions in the light of the decisions by Alfasi and Isaac ibn Giyyat.⁹⁹ The opinions of Moshe b. Yehudah are vindicated according to both the earlier authorities and Razah's personal opinion.¹⁰⁰ Although Razah addresses Moshe b. Yehudah as "our teacher", it may be a title of respect. The tone of the responsum indicates a correspondence between two scholars

of equal status.

Razah's influence upon Moshe b. Yehudah becomes clear in Meshullam b. Moshe's introduction to the Sefer HaHashlamah:

And I wish to make it known to all who read this work that in many matters I take the path of the author of the Ma'or, but not as one who steals his words, but as I received them from my father.¹⁰¹

Meshullam's father instructed him in Razah's method. So thoroughly had he internalized that method that when he finished the HaShlamah it was necessary for him to give credit to his father's friend.

Razah also had friends among the scholars in Lunel who were not engaged in halakik writing. His greatest admirer was Judah Ibn Tibbon, the founder of the family of translators. Born in Granada in 1120, Judah Ibn Tibbon was about the same age as Razah. He fled to Provence after the Almohade invasions in 1147-1148. His son Samuel, the translator of Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed, was born shortly after his arrival.¹⁰²

Judah Ibn Tibbon offers high praise for Razah. He eulogizes him as "one who stood out in his generation" and "one who was more wise than I."¹⁰³ From Ibn Tibbon's testament we learn that Razah acted as a tutor for young Samuel.¹⁰⁴

Razah sought out Judah Ibn Tibbon's linguistic skill. He asked for stylistic advice before sending off poems to his friends or sending letters to his brother. Razah knew some Arabic, and may have looked to Ibn Tibbon for more instruction. The immense library which Judah Ibn Tibbon collected must have been consulted by Razah for his references to the non-halakik fields of astronomy, medicine and grammar.¹⁰⁵

The bond of friendship seems to have held fast until Razah's death in 1186. Razah may have been one of Judah Ibn Tibbon's closest friends. In his testament Judah holds up Razah as the paradigm of a friend. Razah left "a blessing" to Samuel before he died.¹⁰⁶ We might therefore assume that the friendship between Judah and Zerahyah lasted from the time of Judah's arrival in Lunel in 1150 until Razah's death in 1186.

Ibn Tibbon's testament fixes two dates in Razah's chronology. It attests to Razah living in Lunel in 1150. The passage in the testament which holds Razah up as an example of Friendship also implies that Razah died in Lunel in 1186.¹⁰⁷ The chronology of Razah's life between these two dates is obscure. Razah is silent about where he was and what he did during these thirty-six years. In the absence of his own direct statements, I have relied upon the writings of his contemporaries to reconstruct these years.

D. In His Father's Footsteps:

Rabbi of Gerona

From Razah's most bitter adversary comes the first evidence that he returned to his native city of Gerona. In his critique of the Sefer HaMa'or Rabad presents the following observation on one of Razah's opinions:

And this proof which he brings from his youth about the blessings which the congregation recites, and that the custom changed in his old age...that change in

practice was instituted by his father who changed that custom in his own city according to Ibn Giyyat who did not subscribe to that practice himself. But his father liked to vaunt himself with unusual customs, and he found young men who were ignorant, and caused them to practice according to his whim. Afterwards men of learning came there (Gerona) and paid no attention to his strange customs, and restored the proper practice. Then he took his father's place, changing opinions and reversing customs. He could be destroyed and a thousand like him and a letter of the law would not be nullified nor a custom be changed.¹⁰⁸

This passage indicates three phases in the history of the Gerona community. First was the period of R. Isaac, Zerahyah's father. Then R. Isaac died, and other people took over his position. The take over of the rabbinate by others probably indicates that Razah was away from the city when his father died. In the third phase Zerahyah returned to the community and asserted his independent spirit. Like his father before him Razah decided the law according to his own logic. He was not concerned with "proper practice" as much as he was with the law as he interpreted it. This passage also attests to Razah as a dynamic personality. Without an aggressive approach he would have been unable to change the practices which had been instituted in the hiatus between his father's leadership and his.

Razah's innovation in ritual practice while in Gerona is recorded Manhig, a ritual compendium written by Rabad's student R. Abraham b. Nathan of Lunel.¹⁰⁹ Manhig was written after R. Abraham b. Nathan's travels in Spain and France during the closing years of the 12th century.¹¹⁰ In a discussion on the number required to constitute a quorum for prayer

he cites a practice of Razah:

I have heard that R. Zerahyah HaLevi in Gerona used to permit two minors to be included in the counting of a quorum... but this is incorrect practice.¹¹¹

Razah's proof for this decision is also included in the Manhig passage, but R. Abraham b. Nathan rejects both the decision and the proof.¹¹² His citation appears to be based on a practical decision which Razah delivered at Gerona. The usual counting of a quorum required ten males above the age of thirteen. Razah's decision is a departure from this custom based on his interpretation of a Talmudic passage. Razah preferred inference to standard custom.

Razah's leadership of the Gerona community which is implied in the works of these two contemporaries is explicitly mentioned in the Magen Abot of Menaḥem HaMe'iri. HaMe'iri, who lived a generation after Razah, wrote Magen Abot to defend the customs and halakik method of Provence against the rising school of Nahmanides which was trying to harmonize Gerona customs with those of the rest of Spain. While defending the recitation of the formula "God the Faithful King" before reading the Shema, HaMe'iri offers a biography of Razah:

In the days of Zerahyah HaLevi who left the city of Gerona in his youth, and merited to study in Lunel where he remained a long time, he returned to Gerona. There he instituted all the customs of our country (Provence), and it became set in their prayerbooks as it is set in our prayerbooks.¹¹³

HaMe'iri confirms Razah's birth in Gerona, his residence in Lunel, and his return to Gerona. From his biography it appears that Razah moved Gerona toward the customs of Provence. However, HaMe'iri's claim that

Razah introduced "all the customs of our country" may be an overstatement. Yet, Razah's Provençal education from R. Moshe b. Yosef would indicate that he had a strong tendency for the customs of that country.

On the basis of this evidence it may be assumed that Razah returned to Gerona after his father's death. The dates of his association with Judah Ibn Tibbon at Lunel would indicate that he returned in the later part of the 1150's. This would make him thirty-five years old. He assumed a position of prominence in Gerona in the prime of his life. As a rabbi he was an independent and creative thinker.

Razah is completely silent about his experience in Gerona. His writings give the impression that he never left Lunel. I think that the answer to Razah's silence about his rabbinic activity in Gerona can be found in the introduction to his Sefer HaMa'or.

E. The Return to Lunel

The bitter lines in the introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or indicate the results of an unsuccessful career in Gerona. Razah's innovations and unconventional practices as a rabbi may have aroused the wrath of his community. These enraged elements may have dismissed him from his position. However, two other forces may have contributed to his downfall.

Chronicles of the generation of the Spanish Expulsion of 1492 indicate that the Sefer HaMa'or was written in 1154. An investigation

of the work as we have it, however, reveals that it could not have been written before 1171. In the Ma'or Razah describes a responsum of R. Jacob b. Meir, Rashi's grandson, which was written "at the end of his days." R. Jacob b. Meir's death has been established by modern scholars at 1171.¹¹⁴ It is possible to suggest, however, that Razah may have published several editions of the Ma'or. One of these was published in 1154, when he was twenty-nine or thirty years old. The writing of a critique of Alfasi might have angered the community of Gerona.

Another source of ire was directed at Razah from his old adversary Rabad of Posquieres. Razah boldly criticized his former classmate's writings. Rabad's position of authority in Posquieres as well as his prominent reputation in all Provence would cause difficulties for anyone who might challenge him. Since the chronology of Rabad's hasagot on the Sefer HaMa'or is not known, we might assume that he wrote hasagot on each publication of the Ma'or. The caustic remarks in these hasagot might have lowered Razah's reputation in Gerona.

Rejected in his native city, Razah returned to Lunel and to his friend Judah Ibn Tibbon. The exact date of this return is unknown. Upon his arrival his friend may have encouraged him to write a comprehensive work. This new book would incorporate all aspects of Razah's writings: the Alfasi criticism, Talmudic commentary, legal decisions, and short essays on major legal and ritual problems. It would reveal Razah as a critical scholar, but not as an arbitrary critic. At the beginning of the book Razah could write an introduction which

would use the major intellectual currents of the time as an apologia for such a work. This type of introduction would be new for legal works, but Ibn Tibbon could cite precedents for apologetic introductions from the Arabic writings of Ibn Ganah.¹¹⁵

Razah followed his friend's advice and set forth an introduction which began with a philosophical justification for the search for truth. He then turns to the Talmudic sources and cites examples of students questioning of their teachers. Razah's next precedent for challenging authority is taken from Ibn Ganah who justifies his criticisms of teacher, R. Judah Hayyuj. The final paragraphs of the introduction deal with Razah's personal plea for kindly treatment from his contemporaries:

I have struggled to do all this commensurate with my strength, which has been sapped and weakened by circumstances which struck me. Because archers have wounded me with the arrows of misfortune which have thrust me down and turned me from my former situation; and the events which have torn me and carried me from my former status. One must not find fault with a soul so wearied and so shaken if it does not reach the target of perfection.¹¹⁶

The "arrows of misfortune" were enough to reduce Razah to pleading for an objective hearing for his halakik achievement. While admitting that some of the Ma'or was written in his youth, he acknowledges that its present form is due to the effort and encouragement of a "friend."¹¹⁷ The "friend" was Judah Ibn Tibbon.

It was his friend Judah Ibn Tibbon who probably was at Razah's death bed in 1186.¹¹⁸ Judah adjures his son Samuel to show special

favor to the son of Razah, because of the special love which Zerahyah had always shown them.¹¹⁹

Razah's work provoked criticism even after his death, since Rabad continued writing hasagot on the Ma'or after his colleague passed away.¹²⁰ One of Razah's successors to the leadership of the Gerona rabbinate, Nahmanides, wrote the Milhamot Adonai, a harsh critique of the Ma'or.

Despite his departure from Gerona and the criticism levelled against him, Razah's progeny reappeared in that city within a generation after his death and rose to high status in the rabbinic community.

R. Aaron Halevi, Razah's grandson, was born in Gerona in the early part of the 13th century. Aaron studied with his grandfather's critic, Nahmanides. In one of history's ironic parallels, the fate of the grandfather was visited on the grandson. Aaron's classmate at the academy of Nahmanides was Solomon b. Adret. Adret became one of the most powerful rabbis in Spain during the 13th century. He was a great scholar and a voluminous writer of responsa. He wrote a code on the laws of ritual purity which he titled Torat HaBayit. Aaron wrote hasagot, called Bedek HaBayit, on his classmate's book. Adret responded with a harsh defense of his own work. His response degraded and demeaned Aaron in a manner reminiscent of Razah's hasagot on the Ma'or. The end of Aaron Halevi's life is a tragic parallel to his grandfather's. After continued attacks from his former classmate, Aaron was forced to leave Spain. He fled to his grandfather's refuge, Provence, where he continued

writing his critical works until his death in ca. 1300.¹²¹

Chapter III

Razah as a Critic:

The Writings Criticizing Rabad of Posquieres

In the previous chapters, Rabad of Posquieres' name has appeared as one of the major figures in 12th century Provence, and as Razah's leading contemporary antagonist. Rabad was a powerful and intimidating figure. His disciples were numerous and his intellect prodigious. No genre of rabbinic literature escaped his pen. He wrote commentaries on both the Mishnah and on many tractates of the Babylonian Talmud. In addition to these commentaries, he composed numerous responsa, sermons, and codes.¹ He is probably best remembered for his "Hasagot," critical notes, which he wrote on the codes of Alfasi and primarily Maimonides.²

The writing of criticism, however, is a two-edged sword. When one writes criticism he opens the door to criticism of his own writings. Razah was a critic of Rabad. His hasagot on one of Rabad's Talmudic commentaries and on his code Ba'ale HaNefesh prodded and chided Rabad into anger,³ and in some cases into changing his mind, as I shall demonstrate at the conclusion of this chapter.

In the following description of Razah's criticisms, my goal is not to explain the halahik basis for their disagreement. My desire is to shed light on Razah's relationship with his greatest contemporary, and to examine his use of material from other scholars of Talmudic interpretation.

Razah's two major critical works on Rabad are the Sel'a HaMahloket⁴ and the Dibre Ha Ribot.⁵ Both titles are suggestive of polemical or critical works. The Sel'a HaMahloket may have contained Razah's criticisms of Rabad's commentary to tractate Kinnim and his critical notes on Rabad's Ba'ale HaNefesh. Their combination into one work may be the result of a medieval scribe.⁶ The Dibre HaRibot is an argument sustained through several letters over some aspects of civil law. These works cover a wide range of Jewish law; some theoretical aspects and some practical aspects are contained in each. They enable the reader to view Razah as a jurist. They also reveal Razah as a human being.

Since no chronology of Rabad's works has been written, it is difficult to establish when Razah wrote his critical notes.⁷ Both the Sel'a HaMahloket and the Dibre HaRibot are mentioned in the Sefer HaMa'or, as it presently appears in the Talmud. One might therefore assume that they were written before the Ma'or took its final form. The order of presentation in this chapter is based on the extent of Razah's self involvement in his writing. This involvement moves from academic detachment in the Kinnim commentary to direct insult of his opponent in the Dibre HaRibot.

A. Sel'a HaMahloket:

The Commentary on Tractate Kinnim

Provençal academies were noted for their careful study of the tractates in order Kodashim. These tractates deal with the rituals which took place at the Temple in Jerusalem. The last tractate in this order is called Kinnim. It deals with bird offerings. These offerings were usually brought by women who had given birth or suffered a discharge from venereal disease.⁸ Both the Mishnah and Gemara to this tractate are difficult and obtuse. To explicate them must have been quite challenging.

Rabad took up the challenge and composed a commentary to this tractate. In the Vilna edition of the Talmud it runs considerably longer than the tractate itself. Rabad's father-in-law (and Razah's teacher) R. Abraham b. Isaac composed a poem of praise for this accomplishment.⁹

Razah, however, found difficulties with Rabad's explanations. To solve these problems he published his own commentary on tractate Kinnim. He introduced his commentary with a poem which asked for an objective hearing of his questions. Razah presents himself in the poem as a student before his teacher who is eager and willing to learn.

What is difficult for us in his reasoning,
we set before him. Let it not seem proper
in his eyes to hide his face and shut his
ears....¹⁰

This subdued tone is retained throughout Razah's commentary. Each questionable interpretation begins with a restatement of Rabad's

comment. This restatement is introduced by the formula "The sage explained."¹¹ Razah usually begins his own commentary with the phrase, "The sage did not have to give this reason."¹² He then advances his own solutions to the problem. Many of the statements contain no reference to Rabad or his commentary. Further study of such comments may reveal that they, too, are subtle criticisms of Rabad. At this stage in my research I would suggest that they might be Razah's original formulations.

Razah cites very few extra-Talmudic sources in his commentary on Kinnim. The Sifra is cited once.¹³ Rashi is the only Medieval source which appears in the commentary. He is cited twice. In one case he indicates disagreement with Rashi,¹⁴ and in one case he uses Rashi's explanation to support his own.¹⁵

Very little can be gleaned from the Kinnim commentary about Razah's personality. He maintains calm objectivity. His secular background emerges only at the end of the commentary where he describes tractate Kinnim as beginning with mathematical formulation and ending with praise for Talmudic sages.¹⁶ Aside from this one brief revelation, Razah conceals himself from the reader. He allows his scholastic arguments to carry the weight of the critique. The theoretical content in Kinnim would allow for personal detachment, and encourage learned commentary. Razah was not usually a detached critic as the Pitḥe Nidah and Dibre HaRibot will reveal.

B. Sel'a HaMaḥloket:

The Pithe Nidah on the Ba'ale HaNefesh

Exegesis of theoretical law where scholastic acumen was the of success, formed only part of the literary rivalry. The head of the Posquieres academy and the rabbi from Gerona locked horns on practical phases of Jewish law as well. Family purity and menstrual laws were as live an issue in the 12th century as they are among traditional scholars in our own times. The major difficulty in this area of law was the vast enumeration of rules which the Talmud presented in an unsystematic manner.

Rabad attempted to present an orderly synthesis of these laws in his treatise Ba'ale HaNefesh.¹⁷ His purpose in writing the code was to unify these confusing laws so that people could be "creatures of the spirit" (Ba'ale HaNefesh) instead of "creatures of the body" (Ba'ale HaGuf).¹⁸ The Ba'ale HaNefesh systematizes the laws under seven major headings. The book is written in an expositional style and is generally free from scholastic digressions. Rabad writes introductions for each of the major headings in which he describes the topics to be covered. Each topic is neatly summarized before the next topic is raised. Each section and chapter closes with a rhyming phrase.

Razah's critical notes on this code have assumed several titles. In the Ma'or to Shabuot where Alfasi's codification of menstrual laws appears Razah informs his reader:

We have explicit statements on the laws of menstruation in the book Sel'a HaMahloket.

The title given in the Ma'or has been ignored by some members of the rabbinic tradition in describing Razah's comments on the Ba'ale HaNefesh. His own grandson, R. Aaron HaLevi, cites a work by his grandfather entitled Pithe Nidah.²⁰ Most of the printed editions of Razah's notes on the Ba'ale HaNefesh give them the title "Hasagot." ²¹ The 17th century chronicler Joseph Sambary, however, describes Razah's "hasagot" on the Ba'ale HaNefesh with the title Sel'a HaMahloket.²²

Do these various titles refer to the same work? The recent publication of the Ba'ale HaNefesh by J. Kapach offers a solution. Kapach's research led him to a new manuscript Ms. Heb. 80.365 at the National Library of the Hebrew University of the Sel'a HaMahloket.²³ This manuscript indicated that the Sel'a HaMahloket was a work in two parts. The first part contained Razah's notes on the Ba'ale HaNefesh. It had the title "Pithe Nidah." The second part of the book was Razah's commentary on tractate Kinnim. The two works combined together thus presents a play on words of the Mishnah in tractate Abot:

Kinyan (read: Kinnin) and Pithe Nidah are great bodies of law.²⁴

There is something so clever about this pun that leads me to suspect that the combination of these two works was done by a scribe. Lacking hard evidence to refute Kapach, who has seen the manuscripts, and being aware of Razah's ability to play on words, I shall accept his explanation. It solves the problem of conflicting titles. Razah referred to the entire work as Sel'a HaMahloket. His discussion of menstrual laws was only

one part of the work. His grandson referred specifically to the part of the Sel'a HaMahloket which dealt with menstrual laws. Sambary's title of Sel'a HaMahloket for the critical notes on the Ba'ale HaNefesh still remains a problem which only closer study of all manuscripts can resolve.

The Pitḥe Nidah reveals a broader use of extra-Talmudic sources than the Kinnim commentary. The Tosefta and the Sifra are cited. Gaonic sources appear in the notes. He uses the Halakot Gedolot of Simon Keyyara,²⁵ and the responsa of Ahai Gaon.²⁶ From the Provençal school of Talmudists he quotes the uncle of his teacher, R. Isaac b. Merwan Levi.²⁷ Razah made use of two of the great Northern-French commentators. Rashi appears quite often. On one occasion Razah relies upon Rashi's interpretation to completely reverse a decision of Rabad.²⁸ R. Jacob b. Meir or Rabbenu Tam is also cited.²⁹ In one of these citations Razah refers to R. Tam's work Sefer HaYashar.³⁰

Since Razah's name is linked so often with Alfasi criticism it is interesting to note his use of Alfasi in the Pitḥe Nidah. Alfasi's name appears several times in this work. On one occasion Razah accuses him of obscuring an explanation of a Talmudic passage.³¹ In another case Rabad bases the decision for examination after intercourse on a decision of Alfasi, while deliberately ignoring authors who have criticized Alfasi.³² Razah claims that by dividing Alfasi from his critics Rabad can only use Alfasi as a supporting proof (Asmakta Be Alma) rather than final proof (ra'ayah). Razah also makes positive use of Alfasi. He refutes one of Rabad's proofs on the basis of Alfasi.³³ He claims that

one of the questions that Rabad raises against Alfasi is without foundation.³⁴ Razah's attitude toward Alfasi in the Pithe Nidah cannot be described as totally negative. He is "critical" of Alfasi in the modern connotation of the word. Alfasi is like any other authority. He may be used for proofs, but his name is not ineffable. His decisions are subject to question and criticism as are the decisions of any other Talmudist.

In the Pithe Nidah itself the reader becomes better acquainted with Razah's literary and legal skills. Razah couched his critique in a literary style. It begins with an introductory poem which describes some of the basic concepts of menstrual laws, and at the same time points out some fundamental differences between the way the scholars view these laws.³⁵ The introduction concludes with a plea for the reader to view this book as one which attempts to clarify issues rather than raise conflicts.³⁶

The pattern of style set by the Ba'ale HaNefesh carries over into the Pithe Nidah. Each section of the critical notes ends with a rhyming line. In these rhymes the reader often detects traces of humor. An example of these humorous conclusions occurs at the end of the critical notes to the first chapter of Ba'ale HaNefesh. This chapter, Sha'ar HaPrishut, deals with the occasions when a man is obliged to avoid contact with his wife. It begins with a discussion of separation because menstruation and concludes with separations which may occur between bride and groom on their wedding night. After countering Rabad's decision that a young bride should be declared impure on her wedding night, Razah

wryly concludes :

Fortunate are you Sha'ar HaPrishah that you
began in impurity (Tum'ah) and you have
ended in purity (Taharah).³⁷

These clever barbs in verse are found in the concluding note in most chapters. The beginnings of the notes to the sixth chapter, dealing with the ritual bath, and the seventh chapter, dealing with personal holiness, are introduced by several rhyming lines which reveal Razah's spirit of disapproval.

The literary framework provides a background of subtle criticism. The notes themselves express Razah's dissent far more openly than did the notes on Kinnim. Instead of the polite phrase, "The sage explains," Razah states, "I do not understand what he is saying here,"³⁸ or "We are astonished by this statement."³⁹ Razah criticizes Rabad's use of sources.⁴⁰ He accuses him of not understanding the way the Talmud reports legal decisions.⁴¹ On one occasion he chides Rabad for leaving out certain laws which might have been included.⁴²

However critical the notes may be, they do not openly assail Rabad's character. Razah does not deny the need for Rabad's code. He is not against codification and systematization of the law. His objections lie in two areas: (1) Where Rabad, according to his thinking, has misinterpreted the tradition; (2) Where Rabad has smoothed over complex issues. The Pithe Nidah seems to be calling for an honest exposition of the complexity of the issues, as well as for proper interpretation of the rabbinic tradition.

C. The Dibre HaRibot

The personal animosity between Rabad and Razah was most openly expressed in the Dibre HaRibot. The identification of the exact contents of this work has an interesting history. It was not firmly identified until the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Ma'or itself mentions the Dibre HaRibot in both tractates Baba Mezia and Baba Batra. Neither citation indicates that it is directed against Rabad. The citation in Baba Mezia concludes Razah's discussion of whether or not a claimant can make an oath by implication⁴³ (Shabu'ah 'al yede gilgul). He states:

In the book Dibre HaRibot we have lengthy discussion concerning this matter, along with other explanations....⁴⁴

The citation continues with some words which describe the work. However only the title of the work, Dibre HaRibot, which is based on Deuteronomy 17:8 would indicate that the work contains polemic.

The citation of the Dibre HaRibot in Baba Batra 56b defines the polemical nature of the work more clearly. The Ma'or passage explains the differing viewpoints of R. Yehudah and R. Nahman over the verification of witnesses in the case of a challenge to presumptive title to land. After accepting and then dismissing the explanations of several previous commentaries Razah redefines the argument, and states:

The answer to this question is deep and wonderous. It is hidden from the eyes of the majority of the sages of our generation. I, however, have already hinted at the answer in the book Dibre HaRibot.⁴⁵

This passage indicates some of the other material which Razah said was covered in the Dibre HaRibot. Inasmuch as Razah claims that the answer to the question is "hidden from the eyes of the majority of scholars of our generation" he identifies his own work as polemical. He does not, however, indicate against whom the polemic is written.

In the next generation of scholars Nahmanides claimed to have seen the Dibre HaRibot. His description of it is highly negative.⁴⁶ He gives no description of the contents of the book. Nahmanides' student Shmuel HaSardi identifies an argument between Razah and Rabad with the Dibre HaRibot.⁴⁷ Bezalel Ashkenazi, a 16th century scholar, published a series of letters between Rabad and Razah in his Shitah Mekubezet on Baba Mezia.⁴⁸ The 19th century scholars Reifmann and H. Michael base their identification of the Dibre HaRibot on Bezalel Ashkenazi's publication.

The identity of the exchange between Rabad and Razah in the Shita Mekubetzet with the Dibre HaRibot mentioned in the Ma'or was confirmed by Bernard Drachman's publication of a manuscript from the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The Dibre HaRibot thus consists of a series of letters which the two scholars exchanged over various concepts of law. Drachman admits that his manuscript may not contain all of the Dibre HaRibot.⁴⁹ It should be noted that Drachman's manuscript does contain the information to which Razah directs his reader in the Ma'or.⁵⁰

Razah displays a broad knowledge of post-Talmudic sources in his letters to Rabad. From the Gaonic period he quotes two works written

in Arabic; the Kitab 'alIman of R. Hai Gaon,⁵¹ and the 'Alzam alAhkam of R. Shmuel b. Hofni.⁵² From the Spanish school of Talmudists Razah quotes Shmuel HaNagid's Sefer HaTa'anah, a book of proverbs and maxims.⁵³ The Talmud commentaries of R. Hananel and Rashi are cited.⁵⁴ Razah uses the Halakot of Alfasi to support one of his own arguments.⁵⁵ This underscores the stance toward Alfasi which Razah had previously taken. Alfasi was to be used critically, and not just as an object of criticism.

Razah's education in the secular science is revealed in the text of his legal arguments. He quotes Aristotle's maxim about the love of truth.⁵⁶ He also quotes a number of philosophic maxims in the name of "the sage."⁵⁷ I have been unable to determine the author of these statements. All these sources, Jewish and secular, are skillfully combined by Razah in the presentation of his argument.

Aside from their insights into the logic and method of Talmudic argument, which I will not present in this thesis, the letters of the Dibre HaRibot give the reader a view of the personalities of two 12th century rabbis. The letters of both men reveal sarcasm, mockery and harshness. Two egos were involved in major conflict. Detachment gave way to deep personal animosity.

Many examples of their sarcasm could be cited. One of the better salvos of insults is fired in letters II and III. Rabad begins letter II with a salutation in rhyming prose.⁵⁸ He presents himself as one who is concerned only with righteousness and justice. He is one who identifies with "the seventh attribute of God" (truth);⁵⁹ if he did not, he would not bother answering Razah's attacks. After answering two of

Razah's attacks, he claims that he cannot weary himself with the remaining arguments because they are all "chaotic."⁶⁰ He viciously turns on Razah's suggestion that his interpretation differs from his father-in-law's (R. Abraham b. Isaac). Such an accusation is "rascalry."⁶¹ Immediately Rabad recants this attack, and denies any responsibility for his father-in-law's decisions and Talmudic interpretations.

Letter III presents Razah's rejoinder to the many insults in letter II. His salutation is composed of a series of barbs at Rabad in rhyming prose. Rabad's arguments are only a "wisp of smoke" before his eyes.⁶² He responds directly to the challenge that he is not a seeker of truth. Aristotle's maxim about loving truth more than Plato is brought in defense of Razah's continuing arguments. Friendship has its place, but it must fall away in the search for truth.⁶³ Razah accuses Rabad of constructing arguments which serve to flaunt his knowledge. Such arguments, however, require the tools of an artist; tools which Rabad did not possess.⁶⁴

These insults are traded until letter VI. By the end of letter V it was becoming clear that Rabad was losing the arguments over which type of oath had to be offered for presumptive title of land, and whether a person who admitted partial payment on a debt and payment of a pledge could combine the two payments. When he could no longer refute Razah with logic, he wrote the following:

I was happy to receive your reply. However, you appear to be a Levite who frequents the threshing floor and entices the master of the house to gather the gleanings, forgotten stalks, corners of the fields, and poor tithes...I will not answer your arguments...

because I wish to hold an argument with
one who is my equal, and not one who is
beneath me. Farewell! ⁶⁵

Although this letter consists of only four lines in Hebrew, it has considerable impact. Rabad hoped that such an insult would end the entire argument. By describing Razah as a Levite who lived off poor tithes, Rabad implied that Razah was incapable of doing his own work, and had to live off the labor of others. Razah was charged not only with lack of originality, he was charged with plagiarism.

Razah answered these charges in Letter VII. It is not clear whether or not this letter reached Rabad. If it did, he would have surely seethed with anger. Razah took the words of his insult, and made them points of departure for new arguments in support of his case.⁶⁶ He used the words for each of the poor tithes to suggest further justification for his own system of interpretation. In producing this brilliant exegesis of Rabad's insult, he turned words of shame into words of triumph.

D. Razah vs. Rabad:

Unanswered Questions

Razah may have triumphed over his adversary in the Dibre HaRibot, but he certainly does not gloat over his victory. The citation of the Dibre HaRibot in the Sefer HaMa'or seems to obscure any victorious spirit which Razah may have had. Rabad never acknowledges defeat by the pen of Razah in any of his writings. He tries to smooth Razah's

ruffled feathers in the Dibre HaRibot by explaining that his harshness was following the custom of Spanish Jews who use sarcasm as a technique of argument.⁶⁷ Razah does not accept this proposal, and claims that he never heard of such a custom. One can only conclude that Rabad was argued into a position from which he could not escape, and came back swinging with ad hominem epithets.

The Dibre HaRibot was not Razah's only victory over Rabad. Kapah's manuscripts of the Ba'ale HaNefesh and the Sel'a HaMaḥloket indicate that after Razah published his first set of critical notes, Rabad made significant revisions in some of his decisions. When Razah received a copy of Rabad's corrected manuscript, he made further critical notes. Unfortunately the manuscript for the second set of critical notes was worm-eaten and difficult to decipher.⁶⁸ Rabad never openly acknowledges Razah's corrections. He couches them under the anonymous heading "There are those scholars who state."

It seems obvious why Rabad never openly acknowledges the rabbi from Gerona. He was a powerful figure with a large academy and many disciples. No one would have to know from whom his revisions derived. The spirit of the medieval chronicles seems to be that Rabad was the greatest scholar in all Provence. No one would question his authority over the realm of legal decisions. Perhaps Rabad sublimated his anger over the Dibre HaRibot and the Sel'a HaMaḥloket into his Hasagot on the Sefer HaMa'or. Many of these notes carry the same tone of anger that one detects in his final reply to Razah in the Dibre HaRibot. Further study of these Hasagot is necessary before any conclusions are possible.

What seems curious to me is Razah's self-effacing attitude toward Rabad. In the introductions to each of his critical works on the rabbi of Posquieres he seems to be apologizing. He asks that Rabad "hear his questions and not shut his eyes and ears."⁶⁹ Why would a scholar so ably equipped with a knowledge of the tradition approach a colleague with such timidity? From the last paragraphs of the introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or one senses this same spirit of apology:

I adjure by the Eternal One all copiers
of my book to copy this opening statement,
not to toss it aside which is the custom
of copiers of books in these lands. So
that it might be a testimony for me,
cleansing me from guilt before the readers
of my book. Perhaps it might restrain him
from lengthy speech and using his arrogance
and scholarship to speak at length to rebuke
me over my shame. Because my mind and
understanding are weak.⁷⁰

The tone of this passage seems to parallel all of Razah's other introductions. The spirit of pleading seems to pervade this paragraph. It is more emotionally charged than some of his other introductions, but perhaps the causes which led to Razah's writing were more severe. Careful reading of the passage reveals that Razah changes his wording from the general phrase "the readers of my work" to the specific phrase "restrain him" or "his arrogance." Perhaps these words indicate Razah's concern for his adversary's criticisms.

Why would Razah, after winning the debate in the Dibre HaRibot, and forcing his opponent to make serious corrections in the Ba'ale HaNefesh, approach him in a self-effacing manner? Why would he not approach him aggressively? Both scholars had the same educational

credentials. They were both taught at the same academies.

These are the questions, among others, which remain without firm answers. One might speculate that Razah was a self-effacing person, and that he lacked the confidence to launch an aggressive attack. Some of Razah's poems written at the age of nineteen deny that he lacked an aggressive temperament. Perhaps Razah faced some traumatic experience in the yeshivah of R. Moshe b. Yosef in Narbonne where his classmate, Rabad, humiliated him. Another suggestion might be that Razah was humiliated when R. Abraham b. Isaac chose Rabad over him to marry his daughter. A final suggestion might be couched in economic terms. Rabad was the rabbi of a wealthy Provençal community. His students came from all over Provence and even from the Franco-German centers. Razah was the rabbi of the small seacoast town of Gerona. He never mentions an academy in Gerona. His most famous role as a teacher was tutoring Samuel ibn Tibbon. It might have been this distance in status that forced Razah into his self-effacing posture.

All these are no more than suggestions. There is some evidence for each of them, but not enough evidence to favor one suggestion over another. Razah was a scholar of extreme sensitivity and keen mind. His critical use of sources should have earned him a reputation of honor among his colleagues. However, like those who would adopt a critical stance toward the sources of our tradition today, he had to plead to have his questions and dissenting opinions heard.

Appendix

The Date of Razah's Birth

Neither Razah nor any of the contemporary sources which mention him offer a date for his birth. Such a date would be desirable to put his life into context. It would enable us to better understand the events in his life, and shed light on the dates of some of his contemporaries.

The birthdate, however, may be estimated through inference. Combining two major types of evidence yields a good approximation of the date. The first type of evidence is internal or direct evidence. This evidence is derived from the writings of Razah himself and is, therefore, the most reliable. The other type of evidence is the external evidence which is derived from the writings of Razah's contemporaries or from the chronicle tradition. When both of these types of evidence are put in the context of the secular history of the period, some type of an accurate estimate is possible.

The medieval chronicles offer an 1154 date for the Sefer HaMa'or and a tradition that Razah was nineteen years old when he wrote it. It would therefore seem correct to subtract nineteen years from 1154. This would yield a birthdate of 1135. B. H. Auerbach has used this

method for determining the date of Razah's birth. However, he based his estimation on Zacuto's date of 1150.¹ A careful examination of this method indicates that it yields an unsatisfactory date, because it is based on unreliable traditions. The tradition that Razah was nineteen years old when he wrote the Ma'or is not mentioned in any of the chronicles of the Spanish Expulsion which give the date of the Ma'or. Ibn Yahya, in the 16th century, mentions only that Razah was "very young" when he wrote the Ma'or. David Conforte, in the 17th century, mentions the age of nineteen years. His contemporary, Joseph Sambary, claims that Razah was eighteen years old when he wrote the Ma'or. This confusion, as well as the late date of the tradition, should indicate that it is not solid enough to build upon. I have previously shown that the 1154 date for the composition of the Ma'or is problematic. Therefore, both traditions are weak and are not satisfactory for determining Razah's birthdate.

Is there some internal evidence in the Ma'or which might reveal Razah's birth? There is only one date which appears in the Ma'or. The date is 4,900 A.M. (1140 C.E.). J. Reifmann used this year for determining the date of the Sefer HaMa'or itself.² The context of this date, however, precludes its use for the determination of either the date of the Ma'or or the date of Razah's birth. It appears in the Ma'or at the beginning of tractate Abodah Zara where Razah discusses the methods for determining the Sabbatical year. He informs his readers that 1140 was a Sabbatical year and that 1240 will be the second year of a Sabbatical cycle. The two dates are used to strengthen Razah's

arguments, and not as evidence for an occurrence in Razah's life.³

The most reliable tradition for determining Razah's birthdate is found in the Dibre HaRibot. He claims that he presented an interpretation of a passage in Baba Batra to R. Abraham b. Isaac of Narbonne.⁴ This means that Razah was in Narbonne sometime before R. Abraham's death in 1159.⁵ The anonymous chronicler of the history of Narbonne and the research of J. Regne put the political situation in Narbonne into perspective.⁶ As I have discussed in chapter two Narbonne was in political upheaval between 1134-1143. It is unlikely that Razah would leave Gerona for Lunel during a period of political upheaval. The citizens of Narbonne could not have supported many students during this period of financial crisis. Therefore, it may be assumed that Razah went to Narbonne either before or after the crisis.

If Razah went to Narbonne after the upheavals ended in 1143, this would yield a birthdate of ca. 1123. This birthdate would be coherent with the events which occurred in his life with respect to the age of his contemporaries. However, two major facts weaken the acceptance of this date. First, if Razah came to Narbonne after 1143 his association with Rabad would have been limited to a few years. The anonymous historian of Narbonne indicates that Rabad left Narbonne during the upheavals.⁷ Even allowing a few years either way, Rabad would probably have left Narbonne in the middle 1140's either to study with Meshullam b. Jacob in Lunel, or to begin his academy at Posquieres.⁸ The adulation for Rabad's academy at Posquieres by Benjamin of Tudela indicates that Rabad was firmly settled and prosperous by 1160.⁹ The arguments between

Rabad and Razah, as I have indicated in chapter three, reveal deep seated emotions. They must have known each other more than casually. This would weaken the assumption that Razah went to Narbonne after the upheavals. The second major argument against Razah's journey to Narbonne after 1143 would be that Narbonne suffered a period of decline after the upheavals, while at the same time Lunel was on the rise.¹⁰ It is unlikely that Razah would have gone to Narbonne if its academies were in a period of decline.

It seems most logical to argue that Razah left for Narbonne sometime before the outbreak of the strife in 1134. This would set his birthdate ca. 1114-1115. This date would coincide with the medieval chronicles which place him next to Rabad in age. S. Atlas has determined Rabad's birthdate to be 1115.¹¹ Neither the chronicles nor Rabad and Razah themselves give us reason to believe that they were not the same age. The fact that they were the same age may put their rivalry into perspective.

The 1115 birthdate is consistent with all of Razah's associations. It makes him a little older than Judah Ibn Tibbon. Even this makes sense in view of Ibn Tibbon's compliments for Razah. The complaints of old age which appear in the introduction to the Ma'or are understandable in terms of Razah's birthdate in 1115. A seventy-one year old man pleading for the acceptance of his life's work places the harsh realities of Razah's life into an even more poignant perspective.

Chapter I

1. I have used two editions of HaMe'iri's introduction to tractate Abot: (1) Bet HaBehirah 'al Maseket Abot edited by R. Benjamin Z. Prag. Jerusalem, 1964. (2) A. Neubauer. Medieval Jewish Chronicles. 2 Volumes. Oxford, 1887. Volume II. Section VII, Extract A. pp. 224-230. (hereafter abbrev. M.J.C.) Citations are from the Jerusalem edition. HaMe'iri's statement about Razah's Ma'or is on p. 54.

והיו החבורים המפורסמים גמעלה דרך פסק. בראשם הלכות הרב אלפסי ז"ל עם צירוף ספר ההשלמה אשר הוסיף עליו הרב הגדול אבי כל יושב הרב משולם בן הרב משה ע"ה מבדריש. ואע"פ שיצא עליו ערער מצד החבור אשר חבר עליו הרב הגדול ר' זרחיה הלוי ז"ל הנקרא ספר המאור.

2. Ibid. p. 56.

וכן בארץ הזאת היו חכמים גדולים בימי הרב הגדול זקנינו הנבחר רבי אברהם בר' יצחק אב ב"ד, וגפטר בשנת תתקי"ט בעשרים במרחשון, וחתמו הנעלה בחכמתו מעלה מעלה זקנינו הגדול הראבד ז"ל. ומהם הרב ר' זרחיה הלוי והרב מאיר דמראנקטליש, והרב רבי יהונתן הכהן, והרב הגדול רבי משה בר' יהודה. ואחריהם בנו הרב משולם מבדריש והרב ר' שלמה בר' אברהם מן ההר... ועוד ברבנוב"א... ומהם הרב הגדול רבי יצחק בן מרן הלוי ובכדו הרב הגדול רבי משה ברבי יוסי בן מרן הלוי...

3. M.J.C. II, p. 231.

ובעיר ברבונגיה וגבוליה ולונזיל וגבולו קמו חכמים חרשים ונבונגי לחש שמשו בצרפת ובספרד וחדשו דברים רבים לברר בדרי התלמוד ודיניו לישוב המאמרים הנראים כסותרים זה את זה. ומהם אשר בארו באור רחב קצת מסכתות מן התלמוד. כגון, רבנו אברהם אב בית דין, הוא חבר ספר האשכול. ובימים ההם הופיע בגבול לונזיל אור בהיר הוא הרב הגדול רבנו אברהם בר דוד מפושיקירש היה חכם גדול בקי בשני התלמודים ותוספתא וספרא וספרי, ופרש רב התלמוד וחבר גם כן פירוש תורת כהנים, וכתב ענינים רבים על דברי המפרשים והגאונים לבאר ולצרף דבריהם.

ובעת ההיא זרח אור גדול בלוביל הוא הרב זרחיה הלוי וחבר ספר המאור.

4. H. Gross. Gallia Judaica. Paris, 1897. (hereafter abbrev. Gallia.) p. 266, no. 5. "est presque totalment empruntée a l'introduction du commentaire de Menahem Meiri de Perpignan sur Abot."

5. M.J.C. II, p. 236.

ובארץ הלזו בחר ובשפלה. הרב הגדול ר' אברהם ב"ר יצחק אב בית דין אשר חבר חבורים רבים בפלאים דרך חבור ופסק ומהם ספר האשכול. וחתנו הנעלה מעלה מעלה הרב הגדול ר' אברהם בר דוד אשר מלאה הארץ חכמתו בתהלת ספריו אשר חבר חבורים גדולים דרך חבור ופסק לא גשמע בכל הארץ כמוהו ומהם בעל הפפוש. והרב משה בר יוסף מברבונה... והרב הגדול הנשיא ר' יהודה ב"ר ברזילאי אלברצלוני... ואשר ראיתי מספריו הוא ספר העתים... והר' זרחיה הלוי אשר האיר במאור תורתו כל הגולה הלא היא כתובה על ספר המאור.

6. Zacuto. Sefer Yuhasin. edited by H. Fillipowski. Frankfurt a.M., 1924. The citation from chapter one is on p. 85 and the citation from chapter five is on p. 217.

פרק א'

ובעל הערוך קצד אמר ורבינו משה הדרשן מן קרית ברבונה שנה לנו... ומגדולי תלמידיו ר' משה בר יוסף בן מרן לוי בן הרב אחיו של הרב רב יצחק וכן מתלמידיו ר' אברהם בר יצחק הנקרא אב ב"ד וכל אלו הרבו תורה בישראל וכל חכמי ברבונה וחכמי לוביל שתו מימיהם ומגדולי התלמידים היו הראבד והרב זרחיה הלוי בעל המאור והרב משולם בר יעקב והרב שמואל בר משה והרב שמואל בר דוד והרב משה בר יהודה והרב יהונתן הכהן והרב שלמה אב"ר אברהם אב"ד הוא גדול על כולם...

פרק ה'

ובשמעם של אלו ר' משה הדרשן מברבונה רבו של רב בתן בעל הערוך כך כתוב בערך קצר. ומגדולי תלמידיו ר' משה הדרשן ר' משה העבו ור' משה בר יוסף בן מרן ור' לוי בן אחיה של ר' יצחק. והגדול שבכולם ר' אברהם בר יצחק הנקרא אב"ד. והראבד והרב זרחיה בעל המאור והרב משולם בר יעקב והרב שמואל בר משה והרב שמואל בן דוד והרב יהונתן הכהן והרב שלמה אב"ר הרב אברהם אב"ד גדול שבכולם.

7. In his introduction to the Yuhasin Fillipowski notes that Zacuto's source is to be found in Neubauer's "Documents Inedites" Revue des Etudes Juives. Volume X (1885). pp. 100-103. He fails to make clear that Zacuto has mingled that document with a passage from the Aruk which can be found in the Aruk Completum. edited by A. Kohut. Volume 7, p. 178. The entire Moshe HaDarshan citation is an interpolation by Zacuto from the Aruk.

8. M.J.C. I, pp. 82-84. This document is clearer than the R.E.J. document, and is important for an understanding of the history of Narbonne in the 12th century. I shall return to this document in chapter two since it gives substantial information relating to Razah's departure from Narbonne.

9. Yuhasin. p. 218.

ר' זרחיה הלוי מגירונא שיסד ספר המאור בלוביל שנת
תתק"י ושיג מאד על הרי"ף ונתחלת כתובות כי ר'
אפרים תלמיד הרי"ף...

10. M.J.C. I, p. XIV.

11. M.J.C. I, p. 93.

הר' זרחיה הלוי מגירונה יסד ספר המאור בלוביל שנת
ד' אלפים ת'ת'ק.

12. M.J.C. I, p. 102.

13. Ibid. For information on Abraham b. Shlomoh's biography see F. Baer. "Abraham b. Shlomo aus Torrutiel" in Encyclopedia Judaica. Volume I, p. 535-536. Isaac of Campanton was the "last Gaon of Castile." Cf. F. Baer. Toledot HaYehudim BiSefarad HaNozrit. Tel Aviv: 1965, p. 378.

14. M.J.C. I, p. 102.

הר' זרחיה הלוי מגירונא חיבר ספר המאור בלוביל
שנת ארבעת אלפים תתקי"ד ליצירה.

15. A. Aptowitzer, Mabo LeSefer Rabbiah. Jerusalem, 1938. on R. Jacob b. Meir, p. 366, and R. Solomon b. Isaac, p. 395.

16. Solomon ibn Verga. Shebet Yehudah. edited by A. Shohet and Y. Baer. Jerusalem, 1947. p. 146.

בשנת קמ"ו נעלה ענן כבוד של ר' זרחיה.

The date קמ"ו appears to have been cited without the preface תת"ק. However, the other dates in the chronicle demand its addition for the sake of consistency. See the notes of the editors on p. 221.

17. Two other noted rabbis of Provence appear in this chronicle: R. Meshullam who died in 1170 C.E.; and Rabad of Posquieres who was imprisoned in Carcassonne in 1172, and died in 1199. Maimonides also appears in this chronicle. Therefore R. Zerahyah would have to be a noted personality.
18. The chronicle lists 1187-1188 for the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin. This date is accurate according to C. Brockelmann. History of the Islamic Peoples. Translated by J. Carmichael and M. Pearlman. New York: Capricorn Books, 1960. p. 528. It also cites 1179 for a church council called by the pope. This year was the beginning of the Third Lateran Council convoked by Alexander III. Cf. Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Oxford, 1966. p. 787.
19. U. Cassuto. "Gedaliah Ibn Jachjah" in Encyclopedia Judaica. Volume 8. p. 732-733. I have used two editions of the Shalshet HaKabbalah: Lemberg, 1864 and Jerusalem, 1962.
20. Shalshet HaKabbalah (Lemberg edition). p. 39.

רבינו זרחיה הלוי מעיר להבין הספרדי חבר שני
המאורות בגד הרי"ף בשנת דתתק"י כנראה בס'
יוחסין. וראיתי שהיה בחור מאד כשחבר ההשגות ושרבי
אפרים תלמיד הרי"ף הצילו.

21. Ibid.

וראיתי ביד אחד מחכמי הדור קונטרס ישן שהיה בו
שאלת רב בונהס טרוק דסמסתר שבלמגרה בשנת דתתקע"א
מהראבד ומרבינו זרחיה הלוי. וזו ראיה שהיו יחד
בישיבה אחד.

22. Yuhasin. p. 220. תתב"ט.
23. Shalshet HaKabbalah (Lemberg edition). p. 39. תתקצ"ט.
24. F. Baer. Toledot HaYehudim BiSefarad HaNozrit. p. 326.
25. Ibid. p. 328.

26. I have checked with Dr. I. O. Lehmann who is compiling a geographical index of Jewish settlements. He has no record of AlMagarah in Spain. The following responsum which was published by I. Loeb in his article "Joseph Haccohen et les Chroniqueurs Juifs" Revue des Etudes Juives. Volume 16, p. 34, may shed some light on the real source of Ibn Yahya's responsum.

זה טופס הכתב ששלח החכם אנבונאסטרון דסמאשתרי
מעיר גיבונא (ק' גירונדא) אל הרב זרחיה ב"ר
יצחק הלוי העומד אז בגואד אלחג' ארה בארץ ספרד,
המכונה דון פרייר שאלשדין בחדש אדר שנת קעא
לפרט היצירה על מעשה שקרה שם כאמור חנה...

27. S. A. Horodetzky. "David Gans" in Encyclopedia Judaica. Volume VII, pp. 93-96.
28. Zemah David. Warsaw, 1859. p. 25b.
29. Ibid. p. 26b.
30. Kore HaDorot. edited by D. Cassel. Berlin, 1846.
31. M.J.C. I, pp. 115-160.
32. N. Franco. "Joseph ben Isaac Sambari" in Jewish Encyclopedia. p. 681.
33. M.J.C. I, pp. 124-125.
34. There are some differences between the text which Sambari cites and the introduction to the Berlin edition of 1762 of the Hasagot HaRazah al Sefer Ba'ale HaNefesh LeHaRabad. J. Kapah who compiled an edition of the Sel'a HaMahloket based on manuscripts apparently did not check Sambari's citations. The comparison of the two texts below indicate the value of Sambari's text of the introductory poem.

Kapah p. 134-135

ואני אחבי אהב, ואיבני
לריב נצב ולא חפץ קרב
ואת הרב איבני רב כי
חכמתו אתאב ולהבין אקרב

Sambari M.J.C. I, p.125

ואני אהבי אהב ואיבני
להב נצביו ולא חפץ קרב
ואת הרב איבני רב כי
חכמתו גלוייה ממזרח וממערב
ועקיצתו עקיצת עקרב ואם
יגער בים סוף יחרב, אכן
ללמוד אתאב ולהבין אקרב

35. M. Zobel. "David Conforte" in Encyclopedia Judaica. Volume X, pp. 645-646.

36. Kore HaDorot. p. 8b.
37. Ibid. p. 9b. There is no other R. Ephraim to whom Conforte might be referring, since the citation of these criticisms occurs within his discussion of the works of R. Ephraim of Regensbourg. For further information on R. Ephraim of Regensbourg see Aptowitz. Mabo LeSefer Rabiah. pp. 321-325.
38. The Halakot had several printings in the 16th century. Cf. Friedberg. Bet Eked Sefarim. no. 475.
39. Kore HaDorot. p. 11a.
40. It was printed in the Tamat Yesharim of Abraham Motal in Venice. For other editions Cf. Friedberg Bet Eked Sefarim. no. 801.
41. Kore HaDorot. p. 22b.
42. M. Seligsohn. "Jehiel b. Solomon Heilprin" in Jewish Encyclopedia. Volume VI, pp. 323-324.
43. Seder HaDorot. Warsaw, 1883. p. 97b.
44. Ibid. p. 102a.
45. Ibid. p. 108b.

Chapter II

1. The breakdown in Islamic Spanish unity under the Umayyad Caliphate began in the late 10th century, and continued until the invasion of the Almoravids. See W. M. Watt. A History of Islamic Spain. Edinburgh, 1965. pp. 100-102.
2. Ibid. pp. 105-111; also Sefer HaKabbalah of Abraham ibn Daud. edited by Gerson D. Cohen. Philadelphia, 1967. p. XXVI.
3. Cohen. Sefer HaKabbalah. pp. XVI-XVIII.
4. Ibid. p. XXVI. "As far as the Jewish communities of the West were concerned, Andalus was no more, and the only glimmer of hope lay far to the East or to the North of Catalonia in Christian Spain."
5. "Gerona" in Encyclopaedia Britannica. 1943 edition. Volume X, p. 312.

6. W. M. Watt. History of Islamic Spain. p. 16.
7. J. M. Casanovas. "Sobre Los Antiguos Judios de Gerona" Sefarad Volume XXIII (1963). p. 25.
8. Ibid. p. 25.
9. E. Rothert. Karten und Skizzen aus der Geschichte des Mittelalters. Dusseldorf: A. Bagel, n.d. Map 5.
10. Casanovas "Los Antiguos" publishes some of the documents on pp. 29-31; 34-35.
11. J. M. Casanovas. "Los Judios de Gerona en el Siglo XI" Sefarad Volume XXV (1965). p. 49 and pp. 57-58.
12. F. Baer. Toledot HaYehudim BiSefarad HaNozrit. Tel Aviv, 1965. p. 32.
13. Devic and Vaisette. Histoire de Languedoc. Toulouse, 1872.
14. S. Assaf. Tekufat HaGaonim WeSifrutah. Jerusalem: Mosad HaRab Kook, 1955. p. 180.
15. Ibid. p. 180.
16. Ibid. p. 180.
17. The date is based on J. Schor's introduction to his edition of the Sefer HaIttim. Krakow, 1875. p. XIII.
18. Cf. I. Davidson's introduction to his edition of the Sepher Shaashuim. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1914. p. CIX.
19. "Gerona" in Britannica. Volume 10, p. 312.
20. Cf. Gallia. p. 255. "Pourtant lui, comme son pere Isaac et son frere Berakhya qui etaient tous deux des poetes liturgiques sont appeles Gerundi."
21. Aptowitzer. Mabo LeSefer Rabiah. p. 325.
22. A. Neubauer. "R. Mattitya HaYichari" Revue des Etudes Juives IX (1884). p. 116.
23. Quoted in D. Cassel's review of Toledot R. Zerahyah HaLevi. in Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums Volume IV (1885). p. 38.

24. H. Gross offers cogent arguments for this position in Gallia. p. 255-256.

25. Ma'or to Baba Mezia. p. 108a.

פרוש זה קבלתי מאבא מארי.

26. Ma'or to Shabuot. p. 47a.

והפרוש שכתבתי קבלתי מאבא מורי ואבא מורי מרב גדול ומובהק בדורו זכר שניהם לברכה ולחיי העולם הבא

27. Ma'or to Baba Mezia. p. 6a.

וכן דן הרב משה ז"ל ומה שהקשה לו אבא מרי נר"ו...

28. Ma'or to Baba Mezia. p. 108a.

וכ"כ אבא מרי ז"ל במגילת הבחמה...

29. Katub Sham; Hasagot HaRabad 'al Ba'al HaMa'or. edited by B. Bergmann. Jerusalem, 1957. p. 72, par. 32.

בשתנה המנהג השנוי ההוא מאביו ששנה המנהג בעירו על דרך הרב אבן גיאת ז"ל אע"פ שלא היה הוא מורה באותו דבר, אבל רצה אביו להתגדר בדברים זרים ומצא בערים ושאינן בני תור והנהגם כרצון רוחו.

30. Rabad's criticisms on the Ma'or were directed toward discrediting Razah. Therefore his description is highly negative. See chapter three.

31. Katub Sham. p. 72 cites Ibn Giyyat's rejection of his decision.

32. Cf. J. Schirrmann. HaShirah HaIbrit BiSefarad HaNozrit. Jerusalem, 1956. Volume II, part I. p. 285.

ותאבתי ביום שבת ויום טוב שמע שיר כבעל המאור
כשיר אביו ושיר אחיו.

33. L. Zunz. Literaturgeschichte der Synagogalen Poesie. Berlin, 1865. p. 410, pp. 463-464.

34. L. Landshuth. Amude HaAbodah. Berlin, 1857. p. 117-118.

35. Cf. the introductory material to the Ma'or in tractate Berakot. Reifmann. p. 40 suggests that R. Isaac was the first scholar

to write Aramaic poems for rabbinic works.

36. Cf. Cohen's notes to Shalsholet HaKabbalah, "The Typology of the Rabbinate". p. 262-288.
37. Ma'or to Baba Mezia. 6a, where both men are cited as dead.
38. B. Benedikt. "R. Moshe b. Yosef of Narbonne" Tarbiz XIX (1948). p. 22.
39. H. D. Azulai. Shem HaGedolim. s.v. Berakyah HaLevi.
40. Ma'or to Gitin. 16b.
41. Benedikt. Tarbiz XIX. p. 22.
42. "A Father's Admonition by Judah Ibn Tibbon" in Hebrew Ethical Wills. edited by I. Abrahams. Volume I. p. 72.
43. Hebrew Wills. p. 72.
44. Reifmann. p. 3 and p. 49, note 26.
45. Zunz. Literaturgeschichte. p. 463.
46. Landshuth. Amude. p. 56.
47. C. H. Haskins. The Renaissance of the 12th Century. New York, 1964. p. 372.
48. Ibid. pp. 372-374 for an account of John of Salsbury's travels between 1136-1147.
49. Cf. Twersky. Rabad. p. 33. note 23.
50. This is based on his own statement in the Dibre HaRibot. p. 26.

ורבים מכתביו לאחיו היה מראה לי קודם שישלחם.
ואני זכור כשהייתי כבן עשרים שנה כתבתי לפני ר'
אברהם.

The R. Abraham in this passage was R. Abraham b. Isaac
Ab Bet Din of Narbonne.

51. The poem was printed by Reifmann in the biography, p. 29-30.

לבי המתק את מעבך כי קדוש יהיה מחבך
 ותבה תחת ללשונו צוף דבש עם (מתק) מנך
 השמר מהתרגזך גם מהעלות שעבך
 לפני שרים שרי קדש וערוך בגדם משמך
 שוכני מגדל ירחובך ארבע חיות אופניך
 ערכם רכב האל רבותים אלפי שבאניך
 בקש רצון כיום ופני האל חל בא ויחבך
 יאל עשוב שבתך עוד והשיבך על כנך
 שבת עמם כימי עורך ובעינם יתן חבך
 מתירושך ודגבך לא ירעיבך ויעבך
 לבני עירך ושכבך תשרק תחרק את שך
 בהם תמשול ובילדי יום גם תסתולל בשמך
 הם הם דלי תורה עבה ממתנים קטבך
 רועה תוך גן בשם הסר מבין החווים שושניך
 חוהי מדבר עם קוץ דודר אל לא גדר במ גבך
 תמר לבי אתה הרים מעץ יער סנסניך
 האומרים חדש ייבך בראות חדש קבוקך
 הן צעיר לימים אתה לחכמות זקן הבך
 עוד תגביה כנשר בין כוכבים תשים קנך

52. Graetz. Toledot Am Yisrael. translated by S. P. Rabinowitz.
 Volume IV. p. 253; Reifmann. p. 40.

53. See note 27 above.

54. Benjamin of Tudela. Itinerary. edited and translated by
 M. N. Adler. p. 2.

ומשם שלשה ימים לנרבונה...

55. Benjamin calls it an "ancient center of Torah" (Ibid.).
 See M.J.C. I, pp. 82-84 for the history of the community.
56. B. Benedikt. "Le Toledotaw shel Merkaz HaTorah BeProvence"
Tarbiz Volume XXII (1951). pp. 87-88.
57. Ma'or to Hullin. 61a.

זו דעת הרב משה בר יוסף ז"ל והוא הרב המובהק שלנו..

58. His biography has been written by Benedikt. Tarbiz XIX.
 pp. 19-34.
59. Ibid. p. 20.

60. Teshubot Hakme Provence. edited by A. Sofer. p. 233.

והבני מעיד לך שבמצא נוסח גט מגלת סתרים לחכמי
ברבונא חבה הוא אצלנו אות באות תיבה בתיבה וחתומים
עליו הרב הגדול ר' משה בר יוסף שהוא אחד משרשי
הקבלה בארצות האל... זמנו בשיש בשבת בחמישה ימים
כירח תמוז שנת ארבעת אלפים ושמונה מאות ותשעים
וארבע לבריאת העולם...

61. For an index of the citations from R. Moshe b. Yosef's commentaries, Cf. Benedikt. Tarbiz XIX. pp. 26-28.

62. Benedikt. Tarbiz XIX. p. 33.

63. Ibid. p. 23.

64. Ma'or to Hullin. p. 61a.

זו דעת הרב משה ב"ר יוסף ז"ל והוא הרב המובהק
שלנו ועליו היינו סומכין מפני שהצעת המשנה
והשמועות כולן נוכחות וברורות כדבריו אלא שקשה
לנו זו שבמצא ברוב הספרים וספרי הגאונים.

65. Ma'or to Giṭin. 16b.

גם אנחנו סומכין עליו מפני ששתינו מימי בחליו
וישבנו בצלליו והסתופפנו באהליו עד שטרחת
ועיינת בדבר כפי כחי ונראה לי בו טעם אחר
והבני שב לדרוש ולחקור אחר הקושיא שהקשו
היכא מתרץ...

66. Razah copied R. Moshe b. Yosef's commentary to Soṭah. This is printed after the Tosefta to Kiddushin in the Vilna edition of the Talmud. The commentary to Giṭin is cited in the Ma'or to Giṭin 16a; to Rosh HaShanah is found in the Ma'or to Rosh HaShanah 14a.

67. M.J.C. I. p. 83.

ור' יצחק בנו היה חכם גדול ורבץ תורה בברבונא
והעמיד תלמידים. ומגדולי תלמידיו היו ר' משה
בר יוסף ורבינו הענו משה, והרב אברהם הנקרא
אב בית דין וגם זה היה תלמיד חבר רב משה בר
יוסף.

68. S. Assaf. Sifran Shel Rishonim. Jerusalem, 1935. p. 2.

69. His responsa have been collected by S. Assaf. Ibid. pp. 1-50; and by J. Kapah. Teshubot HaRabi. Jerusalem, 1961.

70. Assaf Sifran. p. 22-23.
71. Ibid. p. 8.
72. Ma'or to Baba Batra. 56b.

ובילדותי הגהיתי בפרושו (של ר"י אבן מיגש) בלשון
זה....ומקצת חברי חלקו עלי בזה הטעם בימים ההם
שהוצרכתי לשאול עליו לפני ר' אברהם זצ"ל ושמת
והודה לדברי והשיב הטעם השה בפרושו...

73. Ma'or to Ketubot ch. II. ד"ה אמר רב הונא
אין פירוק זה נכון.

74. Sefer HaEshkol. edited by B. H. Auerbach. Halberstadt,
1868. p. XIX.

75. Gross in Gallia. p. 258 claims a Spanish origin for Ibn
Pilāt. Assaf. Sifran. p. 200 identifies his origin with
Kilat Hamad in North Africa. Mann in his Jews in Egypt
and Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs. Oxford, 1922.
Volume II. p. 297 identifies a Joseph Ibn Pilāt who was
living in Damascus at the time of Benjamin of Tudela. He
doubts that the two names represent the same man.

76. H. Michael. Or HaHayyim. # 1208.

77. Sefer HaTerumot. Salonica, 1628. chapter 29 par. 1.

ושמעתי כי הרב זרחיה שאלה על פסק זה כמה דברים
מאת הר' יוסף אבן פלאט ולא הגיעה לידינו טופס
שאלה אך בכתוב מקנתה התשובה אשר השיב לו ממנה...

78. Ma'or to Shabuot. 45a.

79. Twersky. Rabad. ch. 1 discusses Rabad's birthdate. He
offers no affirmative conclusion, and states: "Pending
the discovery of some new date, it will be impossible to
resolve this academic controversy." (p. 3).

80. Ibid. pp. 7-10.

81. The cities of Arles and Narbonne had Jewish medical schools.
Cf. H. Rashdall. The Universities of Europe in the Middle
Ages. Oxford, 1895. Volume II. p. 116.

82. M.J.C. I. pp. 83-84 for the Jewish history of the decline of Narbonne. J. Regne. "Etude Sur la Condition des Juifs de Narbonne" Revue des Etudes Juives Volume XLVIII (1909). pp. 80-81 supplies the dates and background for the Christian events.
83. For a description of Meshullam b. Jacob as a teacher Cf. Twersky. Rabad. pp. 13-14 and 68-72. The Issur Mashehu was published by Assaf. Sifran. pp. 188-198.
84. Ma'or to Baba Mezia 26a.

ושמעתי מפי הר' משולם ברבי (1) בפירוק קושיא אחד
85. Aaron HaLevi. "Perush 'al Maseket Abodah Zarah". edited by M. Y. Blau in Shit'at Kadmonim 'al Abodah Zarah. New York, 1969. p. 92.
86. M. Steinschneider. Ermahungsschreiben des Jehudah ibn Tibbon an seinen Sohn Samuel. Berlin, 1852. p. VI; and Hebrew Wills. Volume I. p. 83.
87. R. Moshe b. Yehudah appears in the lists of the scholars in Narbonne in M.J.C. I. p. 84, and in the Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, p. 3.
88. Gallia, p. 99 suggests no birthplace for Moshe b. Yehudah. On the basis of M.J.C. I. p. 84 one can assume that he was born in Narbonne.
89. M.J.C. I. p. 84 lists him among their students.
90. See note 87.
91. Gallia. p. 99. "etait gendre du celebre Meschoullam ben Jacob de Lunel."
92. Ibid. "Notre Meschoullam, qui portait le meme nom que son grand-pere de Lunel, naquit, sans doute, apres la mort de cet aieul 1170."
93. Ibid.
94. Sefer HaHaShlamah (on Nezikin). edited by J. Lubetzky. Introduction to the book.

כי גם בחייהם ז"ל פעמים נחלקו במגדל לונזיל מרוב
תורה ופעמים הושוו.

95. Michael. Or HaHayyim. # 826.

וקבל גם מן ר' משה ה"ר יהודה כנראה מתשובתו....
שקוראו רבינו

96. Shilte Gibborim to Abodah Zarah 60a.

שאלה להר"ר משה ב"ר יהודה מעשה ונא בכאן בדנא
דאשתקיך ברזא ואתא עובד כוכבים ואנח ידיה עלויה.

97. Ibid. Dividing the responsum into its parts facilitates understanding.

ולא אמרתי לא איסור ולא היתר.

98. Ibid.

אמנם נראה לי דיש חילוק בין שקל העובד כוכבים
הברזא ואהדריה בדנא משום דכי שקל העובד כוכבים
הברזא ומהדר לדוכתיה ה"ל כמדדו עובד כוכבים בקנה
דמותר בהנאה שלא בתכרין אלא למדידה בעלמא ובהכי אמרינן
דמברזא ואילך מותר בהנאה אע"פ שלא היה מתכרין אלא
להציל דמגע בכורבה היא אע"פ שלא בתכרון אלא למדידה
בעלמא דאם כן ליתבי מדדו מותר בהנאה וכל שכן בקנה
אלא שמע מינה דיש חילוק בין ביד בין בקנה והוא
הדין במי אי אנח פיסת יד בחור אזור בהנאה אע"ג
דלא נגיעה באצבע כדאמרינן במתב' אל שהיה בחבית
המרותחת ולשון טפיח תפיסת יד הוא כדאמרינן בכמה
מקומות בטעמא דנגע באופיא הוא דמותר בהנאה הא
נגע בתפיסת יד אסור בהנאה בנגיעה והוא הדין ונראה
לי כששוחה העובד כוכבים בבית ישראל ושייר היין בכוס
ואתא ישראל והוציא מן הדנא עליו דאסור משום נצוק
עד ברזא מותר בהנאה משום דהלכה כרשב"ג דאמר ימכור
כולו לעובד כוכבים חוץ מדמי יין צסך שבו כסתם יינם
ומברזא ואילך מותר בשתיה.

99. Ibid.

והשיב רבינו זרחיה מה ששאלת בדנא דאשתקל ברזא
בדקנו בהלכות אלפסי ומצאנו במקצתם אתא עובד
כוכבים נקטא וסכקא באצבעתיה. גם בספרי ר"י
אבן גיאת מצאנו אתא עובד כוכבים ואנח ידיה
עליה וכו'...

100. Ibid.

ומה שדקדק רבינו ממשנה טעמא דממדו בקנה הוא דמותר
בהנאה הא בידי אסור נראין דבר רבינו אף רב אלפסי ס"ל
הכי....ומה שכתב רבינו והוא הדין אם אנח עובד
כוכבים פיסת יד ברור הדנא נראין דבריו....ומה

שכתב רבינו בנצוק הוא הדת והוא החוק...

101. Sefer HaHaShlamah. Introduction.

והבני אודיע לכל קורא ספרי זה כי בדברים רבים
אני הולך בדרך בעל המאור אבל לא כגונב את
דבריו רק כן קבלתי מאבא מרי.

102. Hebrew Wills. p. 52. Also Gallia. p. 283.

103. Ibid.

והרב זרחיה הקוי ז"ל שהיה יחיד בדורו והיה חכם ממני.

104. Ibid. p. 83. Judah Ibn Tibbon calls Razah his son's teacher.

ולרב זרחיה רבן...

105. On Ibn Tibbon's library, see Ibid. pp. 57, 63, 68, 69-70, 81.

106. When Judah Ibn Tibbon exhorts his son to honor his friends he chooses Razah as his example. Ibid. p. 83.

אבל בני כבוד חבריך והרגיש עליהם להועיל להם
בחכמתך ובעצה ובמעשה... ולבן הרב זרחיה רבן
תזכור אהבת אביו בי ובך. תאהב אותו כאח ותכבדהו
כחבר גדול כי כן היה מכבודך ואהבך אותך אביו
זצ"ל גם הניח לך ברכה תחילה אחרי מותו.

107. Further proof may be adduced from the introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or.

קחה ספר כמו צהר תקימו	וכבר אל בתיבתך תשימו
ליצחרי זרחיה במגדל	ירחי חברו ולנס חרימו
לזאת מאור קרא לאות ב	עבור שמו ושם מקומו

108. Katub Sham. p. 72.

והראיה שמביא מילדותו ברכות לצבור וכו' ובזקנותו
בשתבה המבהג השבוי ההוא מאביו יצא ששנה המבהג
בעירו על דרך הרב אבן גיאת ז"ל אע"פ שלא היה
הוא מורה באותו דבר, אבל רצה אביו להתגדר
בדברים זרים, גערים ושאינן בני תורה והנהיגם
כרצון ואחרי כן באו שם אנשי תורה משאר מקומות
ולא שמעו למנהגיו, והוא קם תחת אביו לשנות דתות
ולהחליף מנהגות ויאבד הוא ואלף כיוצא בו ואות
מן ההלכות לא תבטל ומנהג אחד לא ישתנה.

109. Cf. Gallia. p. 293. and Twersky. Rabad. pp. 240-244. on R. Abraham b. Nathan.

110. Gross in Gallia. p. 283 dates the work ca. 1204-1205.

111. Manhig. Jerusalem, 1951. p. 166. par. 79.

הרב ר' זרחיה בגירונדא שמעתי שהיה מתיר שני
תיבוקות לעשרה לתפילה.... ולא בהירא.

112. Ibid.

והיה מדקדק מדקאמר בתלמוד עושין אותו שני
סניפין לעשרה ולא אמר סניף משמע שני סניפין
ולא אחד.

113. Magen Abot. edited by I. Last. London, 1909. p. 14.

ובימי ר' זרחיה הלוי שיצא בבחרותו מעיר גירונדא
וזכה ללמוד במגדל לונזיל ועמד שם זמן רב וחזר
לו לשם והנהיג בשם כל בני הקהל כמנהג הארץ הלזו
ונקבע במחזורותיהם כדרך שהוא קבוע במחזוריים שלנו.

114. Ma'or to Hullin ch. 3. Cf. Michael. Or HaHayyim. #826.
for a list of passages which suggest a later date for the
date of the Ma'or. Reifmann's date of 1140 for the Ma'or
(p. 44 note 3) is refuted in the appendix to this thesis.

115. Ibn Tibbon could have cited Ibn Ganah's introduction to the
Sefer HaRikmah which he translated into Hebrew. (See
Wilensky's edition, Berlin, 1928. pp. 8-29).

116. Ma'or. Introduction

והתאמצתי בכל זה לעשות כפי כחי הנענה והמודא
מתולדות הימים אשר פגעו בי, וימצאוני מהם המורים
בקשת בחצי הצרות אשר ממצי הדשוני וגלגלוני
והקורות אשר ממעמדי צנפוני וטלטלוני והלב אשר
כאלה קראוהו והלאוהו אין להחטיא כאשר קצר מהגיע
אל התמימות והנכונה.

117. It seems very possible that Ibn Tibbon is the referent of
Razah's statement in the introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or.

118. See above p. 16. The objections of Reifmann (p. 70 note 120)
and Auerbach (Eshkol. pp. XX-XXI) are answered (a) by the
context of the passage in the Shebet Yehudah which refers to
outstanding figures of Provence: (b) Razah's name appears in

the responsa literature without the name HaLevi or the epithet "Ba'al HaMa'or". Cf. the responsum of Solomon b. Adret in Teshubot Hakme Provence, Jerusalem, 1967. p. 258 where his name appears as ר' ז' ז' ז'.

The index of Baer's Toledot HaYehudim BiSefarad, which refers the reader to p. 482 note 36, for R. Zerahyah Ba'al HaMa'or's death in Toledo in 1215 is incorrect. Brody's article on "The Poetry of R. Meir HaLevi Abulafia" Yediot HaMakom LeHe'ker HaShirah HaBrit, Berlin, 1936. Volume II, p. 73. refers to Zerahyah HaLevi Abulafia, brother of R. Meir Abulafia who died in Toledo in 1215.

119. Hebrew Wills. p. 83. See above note 106 for the Hebrew text.
120. A. Marx. "R. Abraham b. David et R. Zerahyah HaLevi"
Revue des Etudes Juives. Volume LIX (1910). p. 220.
121. Cf. M. Y. Blau's introductory remarks on R. Aaron HaLevi
in Shit'at Kadmonim 'al Maseket Abodah Zarah.

Chapter III

1. See Twersky. Rabad. Ch. II, pp. 68-117.
2. For an examination of the types of Hasagot written on the Mishnah Torah, see Ibid., Ch. II, pp. 68-127.
3. Note the angry tone of the note in Rabad's Hasagot on the Ma'or which I have quoted in chapter two of this thesis. Rabad's tone of anger is reflected throughout his Hasagot on Razah. Twersky, who adopts the position that Rabad was an even-tempered model of scholarly behavior, readily admits that the Hasagot on Razah were more severe than the Hasagot on Maimonides or Alfasi. Ibid., p. 117. "The critique on Alfasi is mild and objective; that on Maimonides may be described as moderate; while that on Razah is most caustic and degradingly ad hominem."
4. I have used two editions of the Sel'a HaMaḥloket and Ba'ale HaNefesh: the Berlin edition of 1762; and J. Kapah's edition of Jerusalem, 1964. Quotations are cited according to Kapah's edition.
5. All citations are from the Drachman edition (New York, 1907). I have not compared Drachman's text with the earlier citations found in the Shitah Mekubezet.

6. See p. 58, of this thesis for my skepticism on both works appearing in one book.
7. Twersky's chronologies in ch. II of Rabad are unsatisfactory. They repeat the scholarship which has been written but offer no coherent solutions to the problems. See pp. 70-81 for the chronologies of the Talmudic Commentaries and pp. 87-88 for the dating of the Ba'ale HaNefesh.
8. H. Albeck's introduction to Mishnah Kinnim. Volume VI of Shishah Sidre Mishnah edited by Albeck and Yalon. p. 337.
9. At the end of Rabad's commentary in the Vilna edition of the Talmud. The poem appears as a part of Rabad's commentary. There are some parallels between the words in R. Abraham b. Isaac's poem and those in Rabad's introductory poem. I am unable to judge who borrowed from whom, or if the parallel was by chance.
10. The introductory poem is printed in the Vilna edition of the Talmud at the bottom of the first page of tractate Kinnim.

אכן מה שקשה עלינו בהגיונינו אנחנו משיבין לפניו,
ואל ישר בעיניו להסתיר פניו ולאטום אזניו.
11. Commentary to Kinnim. ch. 1:

פירש החכם.
12. Ibid.

לא היה צריך החכם לטעם זה.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid. ch. 3.
16. Ibid.

בחתם הסדר קבין התלויה בחכמת החשבון שהוא תחלת
החכמה ובהתמה המסכת בשבח זקני תורה וחכמתם.
17. Twersky gives a detailed description of the Ba'ale HaNefesh in Rabad. pp. 86-97.

18. Cf. Rabad's introduction to the Ba'ale HaNefesh. p. 13.

ועל זה הדרך בקראו הצדיקים בעלי הנפש כי המה
בעלים לנפשם והם אדונים לתאודתם. ועל כן קראתי
שם הספר הזה בעלי הנפש.

The comparison to Ba'ale HaGuf is mine and only implied
by Rabad.

19. Ma'or to Shabuot. 18b.

ובספר סלע המחלוקת יש לבן דברים דבורים על
אופניהם בהלכות נדה.

20. Aaron HaLevi. Bedek HaBayit. ch. VII, Section 3.

בענין הורסות לעולם הולכין אחר התחלת הורס
ואע"פ שהראיה במשכת בין בורס חיימים בין בורס
הדילוג בין ורס קפיצות ופיהוקין בכל ורס
כן כתב אדני זקני ר' זרחיה הלוי ז"ל בספר
פתחי נדה.

21. Cf. the Berlin edition of 1762, p. 37 where the title is
"Hasagot HaRazah 'al Sefer Ba'ale HaNefesh LeHaRabad" Kapah's
introduction to his edition claims on p. 6 that all printed
editions follow the first edition (Venice, 1602); the
Berlin edition was the first printing after the Venice.
Therefore I assume that the title is the same in all the
printed editions.

22. J. Sambary in M.J.C. I. pp. 124-125.

23. See the introduction to his edition of the Ba'ale HaNefesh.
pp. 7-8.

24. Abot. ch. 3, Mishnah 18.

קנין (ק' קנין) ופתחי נדה הן הן גופי הלכות.

25. Sel'a HaMahloket. Sha'ar Tikun HaWestot. par. 17. p. 145.

26. Ibid. Sha'ar HaTebilah. par. 41. p. 146.

27. Ibid. Sha'ar Tikun HaWestot. par. 8. p. 141.

28. Ibid. Sha'ar HaPerishah. par. 9. p. 141.

29. Ibid. Sha'ar HaTebilah. par. 41. p. 156.

30. Ibid. Sha'ar HaPerishah. par. 8. p. 141.

31. Ibid. Ibid. par 5, pp. 137-138.

הרב אלפסי מסתם ליה סתימי.

32. Ibid. Sha'ar Tikun HaWestot. par. 38. p. 155.

ומה שסמך על ר' חנינה בן אנטיגורוס ועל הלכות
הרב אלפסי אסמכתא בעלמא היא להטיל פשרה בין
הרב אלפסי ובין המקשים על דבריו.

33. Ibid. Sha'ar HaTebilah. par. 41. pp. 155-156.

34. Ibid. Sha'ar HaMayim. par. 47. pp. 155-156.

35. I am basing this analysis upon Kapah's reconstruction of the poem in his Ba'ale HaNefesh and Sel'a HaMahloket. pp. 131-134. I have attempted to translate the poem, but each word and phrase is so laden with connotations that I found translation impossible.

36. Ibid. pp. 134-135. See above chapter one, note 34.

ואני אהבי אהב, ואינני לריב גיצב ולא חפץ קרב
ואת הרב אינני רב כי חכמתו אתאב...

37. Ibid. Sha'ar HaPerishah. par. 7. p. 141.

אשריך שער הפרישה שבכנסת בטומאה ויצאת בטהרה.

This is also a paraphrase of the end of Mishnah Kelim. ch. 2.

38. Ibid. Sha'ar Tikun HaWestot. par. 13. p. 143.

לא הבינותי בזה מהו רוצה לומר.

39. Ibid. Sha'ar HaSefirah WeHabadikah. par. 36. p. 154.

ואנו תמהין בזה תימה גדולה.

40. Ibid. Sha'ar HaTebilah. par. 41. p. 156.

41. Ibid. Ibid. par. 43. p. 157.

אין דרך התלמוד בכך לומר הלכתא כר' שמעון בן לקיש
ואם היו דברי שניהן שוין היה לו לומר וכן אמר
שמעון בן לקיש, אבל לסיעוי מתלמיד לאו אורה ארעא.

42. Ibid. Sha'ar HaSefirah WeHaBedika. par. 32. p. 152.

ועוד אנו תמהין היאך השמיט מלכתוב דין תיבוקת
שלא הגיע שמנה לראות שאפילו סדיבין שלה מלוכלכין
בדם חוששין שכל זה היה לו לכתוב.

43. M. Jastrow. Sefer HaMilim: Dictionary of the Talmud and Midrashim. p. 244.

44. Ma'or to Baba Mezia. p. 100b.

ויש לנו בענין הזה בספר דברי הריבנות דברים ארוכים
ומבוארים עם שאר פירושים אחרים ודקדוקים שרירים
ותזקים ובהמדים.

45. Ma'or to Baba Batra. p. 56b.

ותשובה השאלה הזאת היא עמוקה ונפלאה ונעלמה
מעין רוב חכמי דורינו וכבר רמזנו עליה בספר
דברי הריבנות.

46. Milhamot Adonai to Baba Mezia. p. 100b.

וכבר ראיתי דבריו בזה בספר דברי הריבנות וקראתי
עליהם המקרא טוב איש שבת מריב (משלי כ, ג).

47. Sefer HaTerumot. ch. 7, part 2, par. 4.

דעת הרב זרחיה ז"ל....ודייק ליה מההיא דג' פרות
והשיבו הר"ר אברהם....והרבה האריכו בזה בספר
דברי הריבנות...

48. Shitah Mekubetzet to Baba Mezia. p. 98a.

49. Drachman, Dibre HaRibot. p. XIV.

50. Ibid. Letters III-V.

51. Ibid. p. 53.

52. Ibid. Cf. the introduction p. XIX-XX for the relevant secondary literature on these works.

53. Ibid. p. 27.

54. Ibid. p. 55 for R. Hananel; and Rashi, p. 27.

55. Ibid. p. 21.

56. Ibid. p. 25. This statement also occurs in the introduction to the Sefer HaMa'or.
57. Ibid. p. 42 and p. 48.
58. Ibid. p. 27.
59. Ibid. The text reads:

ואני ידעתי כי יד המדה השביעית נוגעת בו

Drachman's notes read: יד המדה השביעית נוגעת בו. In view of Razah's response in the following letter, the reading in Drachman's notes is preferred.

60. Ibid. p. 14.

הנה כבר כתבתי את הצורך על שני הדברים הצריכים להשיב עליהן ועל שאר דבריו לולי אחי החמודים לא הייתי מיגע עצמי להשיב עליהם כי כולם תוהו ואין בהם מועיל.

61. Ibid. p. 15.

עוד עשית עמדי עבין הרשקביולות כי הפכת את פניך כלפי הרב אדוני חמי ז"ל ובקשת ביני ובינו על אשר פירשתי העבין כמותו.... ואני אינני ערב בדבר זה להיות משה עמו בכל פירושי

62. Ibid. p. 20.

תשובת הרב זרחיה ז"ל שלום רב לך ולתורתך והנחה והשקט מחמתך ועבורתך החכם אשר חכמתו מתייחסת ותבונתו לא מביחתו הנה צדקת בהמשילך דבריו ליורה רותחת אך יעות אותנו להקטילנו ריח עיקרי סמין ולהקטילנו מערוגות בשמין ואני לא ראיתי אלא מעלה עשן כבגדי.

63. Ibid. p. 25.

וזו הטעם לכל מודה על האמת ואני לא נגעה בי יד המדה השביעית וראה גם ראה כי מרוב אהבתי האמת וחשקתי בה ואני פונה פנים אליה וערף עליך אע"פ שאני הידיד שלך כי אך האמת אהוב יותר כאשר אמר אריסטובוס (!) על אפלטון הפילוסוף (!) והידידות העמוד במקומה הראוי לה ומשפטי ה' צדקו יחדיו.

64. Ibid. p. 26.

ומה שכתבת בענין הודאה והלוואה.... כדי להראות
לבו חכמתך ולהשתרר עלינו באומרך שהם צריכין
אומן שלא מכלי אומנותך.

65. Ibid. p. 48.

תשובת הרב ז"ל שמחתי על תשובתיך אלא אשר בדמית
לבן לוי המחזיר בבית הגרנות והמשתדל בשדה בעל
הבית ללקט לקט שכחה ופאה ומעשר עבי אך לא
אשיבך דבר עליהם מטוב עד רע איני רוצה להחזיק
במחלוקת עם שכנגדי (ולא) עם פחות ממני שלום.

66. Ibid. pp. 48-49 and 54-55.

67. Ibid. p. 32.

והייתי תולה את הכל כחרוצי חרוצים אשר במ
כי נתנני עובר מתעבר ותחשבני לאויב לך
ואמרת כי תבלע ותשחית שם ידיד מספרי אשר
כתבתי.

68. Sel'a HaMaḥloket. edited by Kapah. pp. 162-164. Razah
indicates his disapproval with Rabad's "revised" text as
follows:

ואחרי שנכתב הספר הזה ויצאה העתקתו מלפנינו
לרוב ימים מצאנו חבור החכם בכתב ידו ומוגה
בהגהותיו וראוי לנו ללמד עליהם שלא יתפש אדם
בהם.

69. See note 10 of this chapter.

70. Introduction to Sefer HaMa'or. Found in tractate Berakot of
the Vilna edition of the Talmud.

ואני משנזע בחי העולם לכל מעתיק ספרי זה
שיעתיק הפתיחה זאת ולא ישליכנה אחרי גוו
כמנהג מעתיקי הספרים בארצות האלה בעבור
תהיה לי לעדה לבקוּתני מן האשמה לפני כל קורא
בספרי זה אולי יש אשר תמנעו מהרחיב פיו
וגרונו להאריך לשונו בגאותו וגאונו לחוכית
עלי חרפתי כאשר קצרו בי יד שכלי ותבונתי.

Appendix

1. Sefer HaEshkol. edited by B. H. Auerbach. Halberstadt, 1868.
p. XX. note 13.
2. Reifmann. p. 44. note 3.
3. Cf. Rabbenu Asher and Tosafot to Abodah Zara 9a. These commentaries also list dates; the dates appear to be within the life-span of these commentators.
4. Dibre HaRibot. p. 26.
5. HaMe'iri. Bet HaBehirah. p. 56.
6. M.J.C. I. pp. 83-84. and J. Regne. "Etude sur La Condition des Juifs de Narbonne" Revue des Etudes Juives Volume LVIII (1909). p. 80.
7. M.J.C. I. p. 84.
8. Twersky. Rabad. p. 32. Twersky offers no date for the commencement of Rabad's activities in Posquieres. He concludes that "by 1165, approximately, he was located in Posquieres at the head of an already famous school." This is not a helpful conclusion.
9. Benjamin of Tudela. Itinerary. p. 4. For the date of Benjamin's journey see I. Davidson's Appendix A. to his edition of Zabara's Sepher HaShaashuim. New York, 1914.
10. Cf. Benedikt. Tarbiz XXII. p. 240.
11. Novellae on Tractate Baba Kamma. edited by S. Atlas. London, 1940. p. 16.

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