

*Pas Yeda'* and *Massa' ha-'Am*:  
The lost works of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu  
(Abraham Ezyiaszewicz)<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract**

*Pas Yeda'* and *Massa' ha-'Am* are two famous works by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu, mentioned in numerous publications, which were lost. The present article is devoted to these two works. It makes an attempt to explain the mystery of the “lost” *Pas Yeda'* and it introduces an edition of the preserved passages of *Massa' ha-'Am* which have until recently been unrecognized. It also briefly depicts the preserved manuscripts and works of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu.

**Keywords**

Karaite literature in Eastern Europe, Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, Karaite manuscripts, Abraham Firkowicz collection, Avraham ben Yoshiyahu, Abraham Ezyiaszewicz

Avraham ben Yoshiyahu is one of the most noted Karaite scholars from Troki, who were active in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of the cultural flowering in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He lived from 1636 to 1687. He gained

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham Ezyiaszewicz is widely known under his Hebrew name Avraham ben Yoshiyahu. Under the surname (patronymic) Ezyiaszewicz (or Ezyiaszowicz and Ezeiaszewicz) he appears in the deeds in the Polish language (cf. National Library of Russia F 946 op. 9 (Polish deeds) no. 114 and Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences F 301-62, fol. 1 recto, dated to 1667).

fame as a doctor<sup>2</sup> and kabbalist<sup>3</sup>. He was a son of Yoshiyahu ben Yehuda (1588-1663), a physician from Troki who was one of the Karaite disciples of Joseph Delmedigo. Biographical notes on him have been so far published by, among others, SYROKOMLA (1857: 83-84), GOTTLÖBER (1865: 151), NEUBAUER (1866: 72, 128, 130)<sup>4</sup>, FÜRST (1869: 30, 94)<sup>5</sup>, FÜNN (1886: 29), MANN (1935: 567, 680, 683, 818-819), ELYASHEVICH (1993: 7-8), TUORI (2007-2008: 197-210), AKHIEZER (2008: 68-72), GAŚIOROWSKI (2008: 363, 372-373), KIZILOV (2008: 51).

Four manuscripts held in the collections of the National Library of Russia and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg constitute the main evidence of the writing activity of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu, which was conducted in Hebrew, Latin and Polish. These manuscripts include a number of works and personal notes of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu, albeit the majority of their contents are excerpts from works by other authors. There are two manuscripts with medical recipes (mostly in Latin): *ha-Reḫu'ot* (the National Library of Russia Evr. I 732) and *Bet ha-'Oṣar* (the National Library of Russia Evr. I 733), and also two manuscripts with excerpts of mainly religious subject-matter (mostly in Hebrew): *He'teḡe Seḡarim*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> He used to be depicted as the physician of the Polish King Jan Sobieski. However, this information, disseminated by Abraham Firkowicz, is not verifiable in any textual source from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Cf. note 31 below.

<sup>3</sup> In the text of one of the prayers copied in the manuscript Abkowicz 3 (the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) Avraham ben Yoshiyahu is presented as מַתְלִמֵּי דִרְ מֹשֶׁה קוֹרְדוּוֹר (cf. ABKOWICZ 3, fol. 89 verso). Lucki in *Seḡer Liḡnat ha-Sappir* says that: "[...] rav ribbi Avraham, that doctor, was eminent in the kabbalist studies, speculative and practical, and was able to perform unusual things, as is evident from his estimable writings, which I have seen with my own eyes, and as was testified about him by many trustworthy persons, who heard of his fame, saw his splendour and propagated his splendour among nations." See the manuscript of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences B 307, fol. 8 verso.

<sup>4</sup> The note is based on *Seḡer 'Oraḡ Ṣaddiqim* by Lucki.

<sup>5</sup> The note is based on *Seḡer 'Oraḡ Ṣaddiqim* and Gottlob 1865.

<sup>6</sup> This manuscript is marked with this title in the catalogue of the National Library of Israel. In the catalogue of the National Library of Russia (actually prepared on the basis of the catalogue of Firkowicz) the manuscript is described as follows:

(the National Library of Russia Evr. II A 161-2) and *Bet 'Abraham*<sup>7</sup> (the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences B 263). The nature of the text of these last two manuscripts is well expressed by the motto at the beginning of one of them, in which the author writes: "...I have discovered a desire in me, I have decided to acquire secrets of eminent scholars, of rav Avraham ben Ezra, rav Moshe ben Maimon, rav Aharon the author of *ha-Mivḥar*, rav Aharon, the author of *'Eṣ Ḥayim*, and Tibboni, and along with them of those who came after them, to collect them together for the prudence of their words, so that they are written in the book..."<sup>8</sup> The palaeographic data indicate that all these manuscripts are autographs<sup>9</sup>, however they were written in different periods with a variety of writing styles and they include entries by other people<sup>10</sup>. A special case is the manuscript *Bet ha-Oṣar* (the blank notebook for it was purchased in 1680<sup>11</sup>), where on fol. 2 verso, a short poem beginning with

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"Из сборника выписок из раввинских и караимских сочинений. Составлен трокским караимом Авраам Иошия в 1664 г."

<sup>7</sup> In the catalogue of the National Library of Israel marked as *Liqqutim mi-Seḥarim Šonim*. This manuscript was marked as *Bet 'Avraham* in the catalogue of Gincburg (GINCBURG 2002: 105-6). It was identified with the work under such title which was listed by Lucki in *Seḥer 'Orah Ṣaddiqim* (in the 1830 Vienna edition fol. 23 recto). The term *Bet 'Avraham*, written with capital letters, appears on fol. 1 (primary pagination) of this manuscript. It precedes a quotation from *'Aqedat Iṣḥaq*.

<sup>8</sup> See B 263, fol. 3 recto (1 recto according to the primary pagination):

[...] מצאתי את לבי ראיתי להשיג סודות החכמי השלימים הראב"ע הרמב"ם

הראב"ה הראב"ח והטבונ"ו ועמהם הבאים אחריהם לאסוף ולאחדים לשכל מליהם שיכתבון בספר [...]

<sup>9</sup> According to Golda Akhiezer the manuscript *Seḥer ha-Reḥu'ot* is a copy made by Yehuda, the son of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu. Cf. AKHIEZER 2008: 148 (לספרו של אביו). It is noteworthy in this context that the recent research on the watermarks in these manuscripts conducted by Olga Vasileva from the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg confirms their dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>10</sup> The manuscript *Bet ha-Oṣar* is exceptional in this respect, as Shelomo ben Aharon added the text of *Seḥer 'Apiryon 'Asa* in it between 1706 and 1710, see the note on fol. 89 recto in this manuscript (repeated on 88 verso).

<sup>11</sup> On the fol. 1 recto the following note can be found:

1 היום שלישי לשבת שביעי לראש חדש תשרי שנת אמ"ת לפ"ק פה בק"ק עיר חדשה זה הספר  
2 הקשור בקשר חדש בעיר כרולוועץ הקנוי על ידי כמ"ר שמואל בכ"מ יוסף יעמ"ש הגיע  
3 לידי נאם אברהם הרופא בן אא"ו מוהר"ר יאשיהו זצוק"ל החתום שמי פה לזכרון.

the words מאוצר צור ישעי “From the Treasury of the Rock of my Salvation” was noted. In the poem there is information that the author wrote “a book” entitled *Bet ha-Oṣar* in the year 1671<sup>12</sup>. For chronological reasons this information is problematic as regards the identification of the text of the present manuscript Evr. I 733 with this work from 1671<sup>13</sup>.

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4 ואל אלהים ה' יזכני בחיים לכתוב את כל מה שהבינותי בלבי ובנפשי בכל תושיה ומלאכת יקרה  
5 ואמלא אותו רוח חכמה ובינה וגו'

“1) Today is Tuesday, the seventh of tišri in the year of “truth” (441) according to the short count (i.e. 1680 in the Gregorian calendar). Here, in the holy community of Nowe Miasto. This book, 2) bound in a new cover in the city of Królewiec, which was purchased by the honourable ribbi Shemuel son of the honourable Yosef, may he rest in peace, reached 3) me. Avraham ha-Rofe, son of my father and teacher, our great teacher ribbi Yoshiyahu, the memory of the righteous and holy is a blessing, declared it. My name was signed here for the memory. 4) And God, the Lord, may he enable me to write everything I have been thinking about in my heart and soul, with all prudence and (the rules) of the respected trade, 5) and fill it with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, etc.”

<sup>12</sup> The relevant passage reads as follows: “And now I have composed a book. I called it “The Treasury” (*Bet ha-Oṣar*). It is all what is desired. It is like a fortress for the humble. It is the purest flower among remedies, those which are tested and which can be found without a lot of effort. I put it for the distressed and oppressed one who is of my age. I see a born one who will follow my path. At the time when a thousand of evil fall beside him, and like a storm fear of perversity will descend upon him, he will run to the fortified tower of the Lord’s Name, and in his bosom he carry this book of mine, which emerged from me in the year 432 according to the short count, at the end of the month of Kislev (1671). And he will enter the Lord’s treasury, into the temple. And no stranger will set up a camp around him. He will fear. Because of his presence. How can he reply?” See Evr. I 733, fol. 2 verso, 8-14. A copy of this poem can also be found in the manuscript F 946, op. 1 (Personal archive of A. Firko-wicz), no. 375, fol. 20 recto-19 recto, and the manuscript Evr. II A 146-1, fol. 4 recto.

<sup>13</sup> It seems possible that the text of *Seṗer Bet ha-Oṣar* from the year 1671 was copied by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu into a new, bigger notebook, i.e. the manuscript Evr. I 733, in 1680 or later, nevertheless the layout of the text in various parts of the manuscript raises doubt. It should also be noted that the title ספר בית האוצר, written on the outer side of its leather cover (the inscription partially worn-away, בית is invisible), was obviously inserted after the death of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu (הטרוקי) ז”ל can be seen in the last line.)

Moreover, Avraham ben Yoshiyahu is the author of a short text on the history of the Karaites in Troki *Chronicle notes from Troki* from the year 1685<sup>14</sup>, and also three *zemarim*<sup>15</sup>. In several manuscripts he is mentioned in the context of some magic texts characteristic for the practical Kabbala which used to be ascribed to him<sup>16</sup>. He also appears as a copyist<sup>17</sup> and translator from Latin<sup>18</sup>. His name is attested many a time in the documents edited by Mann<sup>19</sup>.

The earliest descriptions of the writing of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu, repeated in later publications, appear in two works by Simḥa Lucki (1716-1760), written about the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in *Seṭer 'Oraḥ Ṣaddiqim* and *Seṭer Ner Ṣaddiqim*. In *Seṭer 'Oraḥ Ṣaddiqim*, while listing the works of Karaite scholars, Lucki mentions only two works of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu: *Bet 'Abraham* (בית אברהם) and *Pas Yeda'* (פס ידא)<sup>20</sup>. The former is described as "collections of the most secret teachings of rav ribbi Avraham ha-Rofe from Troki, of blessed

<sup>14</sup> Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, Abraham Harkavy Collection, OR 1327. This manuscript is quoted by Golda Akhiezer in her doctoral thesis as "Zikhronot Kara'e Troki. The Chronicle from the 17<sup>th</sup> century - UNL, H.C. 1327, 440". See AKHIEZER 2008: 143-146. The manuscript OR 1327 is not an autograph. Paleographic data suggests that Noah ben Hayim from Troki was probably the one who copied it (see MANN 1935: 900; 1110; 1447 (listed among the learned men of Lithuania in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Seṭer 'Apiriyon*)).

<sup>15</sup> See SHISHMAN 1892: 102-103 (אשיר בשירה אל); National Library of Israel, Ms. Heb. 8°3795, fol. 23 recto - 24 recto (הללויה אשא עיני אל רועי) and Ms. Heb. 8°5204, fol. 2 recto - 2 verso (אודה לאל נורא).

<sup>16</sup> Inter alia in Abk 3 and National Library of Israel Heb. 8.3652.

<sup>17</sup> The paleography proves that he is the copist of the manuscript Evr I 693-694 (*'Eṣ Ḥayim and Derekh 'Eṣ Ḥayim*) and of three leaves with a passage from *Seṭer 'Eṣkol ha-Koṭer* in the manuscript Evr. II A 146-3. These leaves (belonging to a lost manuscript) are now marked with numbers 41 recto - 42 verso and 48 recto - 48 verso. On the last of them (on fol. 48 verso) there is a colophon of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu (published by MANN, see MANN 1935: 567), which implies that the work was copied in the year 1665 in Troki for Israel ha-Yashish ben Ezra.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Evr. II A 146-3, fol. 33 recto (leaf number 33 is placed between leaves marked as 32 and 34 respectively by mistake). The copy of the text also in Evr II A 146-1, fol. 32 verso.

<sup>19</sup> See MANN 1935: 818, 820, 836, 840, 849, 871, 873, 917, 1025, 1235.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the edition of *Seṭer 'Oraḥ Ṣaddiqim*, Vienna 1830: 23 and 25.

memory”<sup>21</sup>, whereas the latter as “various interesting collections, the work of rav ribbi Avraham ha-Rofe from Troki, son of rav ribbi Yoshiyahu, whose soul is resting in paradise”<sup>22</sup>. In the case of *Bet 'Abraham*, the description undoubtedly corresponds to the content of the manuscript B 263 and it can be accepted as certain that it is the manuscript in question<sup>23</sup>. However, it is not clear what work Lucki referred to in the second case. So far, it has been assumed that this work was lost. A proposal of its identification was put forward by Golda Akhiezer in the second edition of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*<sup>24</sup>. It suggests that we are dealing with “perhaps a 17<sup>th</sup>-century anti-Christian Rabbanite treatise *Pas Yed'a Katava*<sup>25</sup>, written by Yehudah Briel, which Abraham owned or copied”. This thesis however is based solely on the accidental resemblance of the titles and has no justification. It appears the key to solving the mystery is Lucki’s account in *Seṗer Ner Šaddiqim*, where he writes that “there is one book in my hands, his manuscript, which is entitled *Bet 'Abraham*. Inside he gathered and collected secret teachings of the commentators of the Torah, both Karaite and Rabbanite scholars. And he confirmed there that he had written a certain book which he entitled *Massa' ha-'Am* and divided into 7 treatises. These are their titles: *Šomer Tora*. The second: *Mefer 'Otot Badim*. The third: *Šay la-Mora'*. The fourth: *Saraf 'al Nes*. The fifth: *Nefeš 'Amel*. The sixth: *Mivtaḥ 'Oz*. The seventh: *Mišpat Bene Isra'el*. Forsooth, because of our great sins he did not have enough time to write it for he was taken to God. He laid down his life for all Israel.”<sup>26</sup> The mention of *Massa' ha-Am* quoted by Lucki does not come from *Bet 'Abraham* but *He'teḡe Seṗarim* (Evr. II A 161-2, fol. 48v-49r). Assuming that we are dealing with Lucki’s mistake, and that he had access only to the two works by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu quoted by

<sup>21</sup> לקוטים שונים מסתרי הסודות של הר"ר אברהם הרופא הטרוקי ז"ל

<sup>22</sup> לקוטים מעניינים שונים חבורו של הר"ר אברהם הרופא הטרוקי בהר"ר יאשיהו ג"ע

<sup>23</sup> The term בית אברהם appears in the manuscript on fol. marked as 1 recto (3 recto in the secondary pagination).

<sup>24</sup> In the entry “Avraham ben Josiah Troki”, in the second edition of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. See Simchoni, Akhiezer 2007. In the first edition of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, in the entry edited by J. N. H. Simchoni, such a statement cannot be found.

<sup>25</sup> See Jewish Theological Seminary Ms. 2232.

<sup>26</sup> The quoted fragment from *Seṗer Ner Šaddiqim*, chapter 10; see MANN 1935: 1432.

him in *Seḇer 'Orah Ṣaddiqim*, it seems justifiable to advance the thesis that Lucki used the term *Pas Yeda'* to refer to the manuscript Evr. II A 161-2. The Aramaic term *Pas Yeda'* comes from the Book of Daniel<sup>27</sup> and denotes a hand. It occurs in the phrase “the hand which wrote”. It is unclear why Lucki provided such a title; however, it definitely refers to the content of the manuscript, which consists of excerpts from different authors. As his fondness for Kabbalah is known, it seems that the numerical value of פס ידא (155), the same as in the case of the term ילקוט (which is how this manuscript was named by Firkowicz, see below) was the most significant premise. Perhaps also a possibility of reading this passage without the space as פסידא “loss”, “damage” was of some significance. It could refer to the entry about the death of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu in the manuscript (see fol. 22 recto/16 recto<sup>28</sup>). It is also possible that Lucki was inspired by the possibility of reading it as an abbreviation. With reference to Lucki’s account, it must be emphasised that he writes that the work *Massa' ha-'Am* was not finished, which of course casts a shadow on the credibility of the later account of this work being lost and the sale of the manuscript with its Latin translation.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. DAN 5:5: שליח פסא די ידא וכתבא דנה רשים and DAN 5:24: ומלכא חוזה פס ידה די כתבה.

<sup>28</sup> In its first line there is the word מספד “wailing”, “lamentation”:

- 1 קול שמים נשמע אבל גדול ומספד שק ואפר יצע
- 2 לרבים איכה נשבר(ה מדושתי וכן גורני) <מטה עוז מת> אדוני אבי
- 3 החכם האלהי המובהק והמופלא אברהם בא"א כמוהר"ר
- 4 יאשיהו החזן והזקן זצ"ל והשאיר אחריו קול ילה ובכיה
- 5 ונשארת שחרחום עצוב ועלוב מפני חמת ה'
- 6 זמן פטירתו ויומו היה בחצר סורדק ביום א' ל[שבת] ד' לר"ח כסליו
- 7 סמן וישכם אֲבִיָהֶם בבוקר אחר לעלות הש[חר]

1) The sound of heaven reverberated, great mourning and wailing, sackcloth and ashes as bedding (Est 4:3) 2) For many. {You that are left and you that are in pain (Isa 21:10)} How has <the strong scepter> been broken (Jer 48:17)? My lord and father <died> 3) God’s learned man, eminent and excellent Avraham, son of lord and father, the greatly honourable ribbi 4) Yoshiyahu, the hazzan and the elder, the memory of the righteous is a blessing, and he left the sound of wailing and crying behind him. 5) I was left blackened, sad and miserable, because of the wrath of the Lord. 6) The time of his death – its day, which happened in the country manor of Sordaki: on Sunday, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month *Kislev*, 7) section: “Abraham got up early in the morning” (i.e. the year 448), after da[wn].

Another important source of information on the manuscripts of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu is Abraham Firkowicz himself (1787-1874), who also had access to these manuscripts and concurrently collected authentic accounts relating to Avraham ben Yoshiyahu from the Karaites in Troki in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Syrokomla (1857: 56-90), Gottlober (1865: 150-151) and Fün̄n (1886: 29) refer to the information from Abraham Firkowicz in their publications. The manuscript Russian National Library F 946, op. 1 (Personal archive of A. Firkowicz), no. 375 serves as evidence of data gathered by Firkowicz<sup>29</sup>. Its contents are excerpts from several works and referential commentaries of Abraham Firkowicz, which were partly based on verbal messages of the Troki Karaites<sup>30</sup>. The choice of these excerpts, including biographical notes on eminent Karaites of the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Ezra ben Nisan, Zarah̄ ben Natan, Avraham ben Yoshiyahu) and notes regarding events connected with the history of the Karaites in Lithuania, was most probably made by Abraham Firkowicz himself.<sup>31</sup> Firkowicz prepared most excerpts on

<sup>29</sup> In the catalogue of Russian National Library, the text was described as *Заметки о караймских ученых Аврааме бен Иошшийаху Соломоне Йегидии Зерахе бен Натане. Троки. 1854*. This manuscript is quoted by Golda Akhiezer in her doctoral thesis (AKHIEZER 2008: 69, 147, 148).

<sup>30</sup> Abraham Firkowicz is the scribe of the manuscript. This is evidenced by both the style of handwriting and the note on fol. 8 recto (at the bottom of the left side), written in pencil: 1854 בשנת טרוקי בעיר בעיר טרוקי בשנת 1854.

<sup>31</sup> Golda Akhiezer (AKHIEZER 2008: 65, 69) states that the excerpts come from a chronicle whose author was Yehuda, one of the sons of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu. At the same time she refers to the manuscript F 946 op. 1, no. 375. The only mention regarding Yehuda ben Avraham, the alleged chronicler, can be found in this manuscript on fol. 2 recto (cf. FÜN̄N 1886: 29). It is a remark of Firkowicz's which reads "1) Honourable rav Yehuda, son of our respectable rav Avraham 2) ha-Rofe, wrote the time and place of the demise 3) of his father, whose soul is in paradise, but he did not provide the place of his burial." This remark is followed by the epitaph of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu written by his son: "5) My lord and father, my teacher and master, respectable rav ribbi 6) Avraham, the doctor of the king 7) Jan Sobieski, praise be to him!, son of my grandfather 8) respectable rav Yoshiyahu, shofet, 9) son of honourable rav ribbi Yehuda, the son of respectable rav ribbi 10) Aharon, the son of respectable rav Mordekhay, 11) shofet and doctor in the house 12) of the great prince Zygmund 13) the Second, whose soul is in paradise, the son of honourable ribbi Yosef, shofet, 14) the son of

the basis of the manuscripts of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu and two manuscripts

honourable ribbi Ezra, the son of honourable ribbi Moshe, 15) the governor, the son of honourable ribbi Işḥaq, the son of honourable ribbi 16) Simha Mirza, the leader, 17) the memory of the righteous is a blessing, died in the country manor Surdak 18) (Sudrak), on Sunday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev*, 19) in the year “Abraham got up early 20) in the morning” (i.e. the year 448). He was 52 years old 21) when he died. He is resting in glory.” The Hebrew text (in the fourth line, the mark “No. 5”):

1 כה"ר יהודה בכמה"ר אברהם הרופא 2 כתב את זמן ומקום פטירת 3 אביו נ"ע אך לא באר מקום קבורתו 5 אדוני אבי מו"ר כמה"ר 6 אברהם הרופא של המלך 7 יואן סוביצקיי יר"ה בן א"ז 8 כמה"ר יאשיהו השופט 9 בן כה"ר יהודה בכמה"ר 10 אהרן בכמה"ר מרדכי 11 השופט והרופא בבית 12 הדוכוס הגדול זיגמונד 13 השני נ"ע, בכ"ר יוסף השופט 14 בכ"ר עזרא בכ"ר משה 15 השר בכ"ר יצחק בכ"ר 16 שמחה מורזא המנהיג 17 זצ"ל נפטר בחצר סודרק 18 (סודרק) ביום א' ז' כסלו 19 שנת וישכם אב"הם 20 בבקר והוא ב"ן שנה במותו והיתה מ"ד.

I am skeptical if this text can be interpreted as a proof of the existence of a chronicle written by Yehuda ben Avraham. It is the only passage in F 946 op. 1, no. 375 which was ascribed by Firkowicz to Yehuda. It is very probable that Firkowicz made it up himself on the basis of the genealogy written by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu in the manuscript Evr. II A 161-2, fol. 14 recto, and the record of his death in Evr. II A 161-2, fol. 16 recto (in my opinion, the paleographical data proves that it was more probably put by Yosef not by Yehuda). It is noteworthy here that the date of death in the epitaph in F 946 op. 1, no. 375 is not correct (סמן וישכם אב"הם בבוקר ביום א') – Sunday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev*, year 448) as the 7<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev* 448 falls on Wednesday, not on Sunday. It is confirmed by the dates in the Karaite manuscripts of that period (cf. e.g. MANN 1935: 887-888). If we look into the epitaph in the manuscript Evr. II A 161-2, 16 recto, it appears that the sign marking the day of the month is a little blurred and actually illegible. Considering that this sign presents a one-digit number it should be assumed that, according to the calendar of the Karaites in Troki for the year 5448, the month of *Kislev*, it should be the number 4 (dalet). The 4<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev* is the only day of *Kislev* in the year 5448 marked with a one-digit number which falls on a Sunday. In Evr. II A 161-2 it would be the date: ביום א' ל[שבת] ד' לר"ה כסליו i.e. Sunday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev* (9<sup>th</sup> of November 1687). Assuming that the son of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu would not have made such a mistake, this should be interpreted as an argument that the epitaph in F 946 op. 1, no. 375, fol. 2 recto, was created by Firkowicz himself on the basis of these two records in Evr. II A 161-2. This thesis also is supported by the fact that the place of death was given by Firkowicz in two variants. It reflects his doubt as regards the identification of this toponym (also reflected in the record of Syrokomla: “Son of Jozyasz Abraham, the doctor of one of the Polish lords, who died somewhere in the manor house of Surdak [...]”), cf. p. 83. Nota Bene in the quoted note on the genealogy in Evr. II A 161-2, fol. 14 recto, there is no mention of the Polish king. Cf. KIZILOV 2008: 51.

which he calls ספר הלקוטים *Book of Collected Works*<sup>32</sup>, i.e. the manuscript Russian National Library Evr. I, part 2, no. 58<sup>33</sup> and הקטון הקטן *The small booklet*<sup>34</sup>, i.e. the manuscript Chronicle notes from Troki.<sup>35</sup> Firkowicz enumerates four works by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu: *Seḇer ha-Yalqut*, *Seḇer Massa' ha-'Am*, *Seḇer ha-Reḇu'ot*, and *Bet ha-'Oṣar*, while he does not mention the title *Bet 'Abraham*, which is quoted by Lucki in *Seḇer 'Orah Ṣaddiqim*. On fol. 1 recto Firkowicz writes about *Massa' ha-'Am* that Avraham ben Yoshiyahu in his work *Seḇer ha-Yalqut*<sup>36</sup> “gathered numerous valuable excerpts from the secret speeches of ancient scholars, both circumcised and uncircumcised, for example Plato, Aristotle, Alexander, and so forth, in the domain of different wisdoms, to include them in his book *Massa' ha-'Am*”. He also states that the book *Massa' ha-'Am* consisted of seven treatises: 1) *Šomer Tora*, 2) *Mefer 'Otot Badim*, 3) *Šay la-Mora*, 4) *Saraf 'al Nes*, 5) *Nefēš 'Amel*, 6) *Mivtaḥ 'Oz*, 7) *Mišpat Bene Isra'el*. “In fact, we failed to see it, we only found its beautiful title and the titles of its treatises which he wrote with his hand in his *Seḇer ha-Yalqut*, mentioned above. According to the preserved verbal transmission of the elders of the Troki *kahal*, he translated it from the holy language to Latin and sold it to a library which the Dominicans<sup>37</sup> had in the city of Wilno. May

<sup>32</sup> See F 946, op. 1 (Personal archive of A. Firkowicz), no. 375, fol. 5 recto: [...] וזאת הרשימה הנמצאת על ספר ישן נושן שהוא ספר הלקוטים “And here is the list which is in a very old book which is a collection [...]”.

<sup>33</sup> See MANN 1935: 1178 - 1181.

<sup>34</sup> See F 946, op. 1 (Personal archive of A. Firkowicz), no. 375, fol. 16 recto: „ [...] ובקונטרס הקטון הנמצא תחת ידי “In the small booklet, which I have at hand [...]”.

<sup>35</sup> See VERNADSKY National Library of Ukraine, Abraham Harkavy Collection, OR 1327. Texts in F 946, op. 1 (Personal archive of A. Firkowicz), no. 375, on fol. 16 recto (number 11) and fol. 15 recto - 13 recto (number 12) were copied by Firkowicz from this manuscript.

<sup>36</sup> Identical with *He'teqe Seḇarim* (Evr. II A 161-2).

<sup>37</sup> Syrokomla erroneously states that he sold it to Jesuits not the Dominicans (p. 83). If the book was indeed purchased by the Dominicans in Wilno, it is unclear what might have happened to it after the cassation of the monastery in 1844 and the confiscation of its property by the tsarist authorities. It is only known that a part of the collection was given to the library of the University in Wilno and the library of the Dominican monastery in Poporcie (abrogated by the tsarist authorities about 1864).

I find out where it is and find it, reached the place where it is. (Job 23:3) The titles of the treatises in it prove that it was an immensely excellent book.”<sup>38</sup> And further (fol. 20 verso) he writes: “His third book is from the field of medicine, in the Latin language, recipes for various diseases, and also in the holy language. In it he wrote down many valuable excerpts both from the field of medicine and other issues in the Hebrew language. The fourth is also from the field of medicine and it has the title *Bet ha-Ošar*. It is in the Latin language similarly to the first one which was before it. He composed it and wrote it with his left hand after he recovered when he was shot from a rifle by two Karaites at odds (with him), feeling invidiousness towards him, in the year 1670, whom he cursed greatly in his poem, which he wrote at the beginning of this book<sup>39</sup>. These last two books I found in the Troki *kahal*, when I arrived with my beloved son-in-law, honourable rav Gabriel, to investigate primeval times and other matters of the community. I have them here at hand.”<sup>40</sup> And further (fol. 1 verso), in the commentary to the genealogy of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu, Firkowicz wrote that “rav Avraham ha-Rofe in *Seṗer ha-Yalqut*, mentioned above, wrote with his hand, in the place mentioned above, also the genealogy of his ancestors, their memory is a blessing.”<sup>41</sup> The genealogy quoted on fol. 1 verso appears in the manuscript Evr. II A 161-2 on fol. 14 recto. Similarly on fol. 4 recto Firkowicz notes that the genealogy of Ezra

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I would like to extend thanks to Sławomir Brzozecki OP, Ph.D. for help in explaining the possible fate of the Latin manuscript. See also BRZOZECKI 2003.

<sup>38</sup> See F 946, op. 1 (Personal archive of A. Firkowicz), op. 1, no. 375, fol. 1 recto.

<sup>39</sup> i.e. the poem on fol. 2 verso in *Seṗer Bet ha-Ošar* (see note 10). The referential fragment of the text reads as follows “The traitors of the people which has not been left alone, Karaites, those who attempted on my life, may they die like Haman! Those who shed my blood in vain, (in the year) may they become eternal “debris” (1670)! May they not see the Lord in the land of the living, may they dead not come back to life! If it were not for the Glory of Israel and its Guardian, who girded me in my service, he surrounded me with favour like a shield, he procured miraculous advice and great prudence in my mind, I would not have recovered from the gunshot, blows, and wounds which have been inflicted on me.” See Evr. I 733, fol. 2 verso, 4-7.

<sup>40</sup> See F 946 op. 1, no. 375, fol. 20 verso.

<sup>41</sup> והרב אברהם הרופא בספר הילקוט הנ"ל כתב בידו במקום הנ"ל גם את יחש אבותיו וז"ל.

ha-Rofe placed there was written down by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu in his *Seḇer ha-Yalqut*<sup>42</sup>. Also in this case it appears in Evr. II A 161-2 on fol. 14 recto. On fol. 3 verso Firkowicz states that in *Seḇer ha-Reḇu'ot* Avraham ben Yoshiyahu noted the time, place of death, and burial of Ezra ha-Rofe. Such a note can be found in *Seḇer ha-Reḇu'ot* (Evr. I 732) on fol. 62 verso. On fol. 12 Firkowicz states that he did not manage to see three books of Zarah ben Natan whose titles only he found in *Seḇer ha-Yalqut* by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu<sup>43</sup>. The note with the titles of works of Zarah ben Natan quoted below, marked as number 13 is a copy of the record in Evr. II A 161-2 on fol. 41 verso (Nota Bene a similar note also appears in the manuscript B 263, fol. 86 verso).

These data make it possible to unequivocally determine that Firkowicz had three manuscripts by Avraham ben Yoshiyahu at his disposal: *Bet ha-Oṣar* (Evr. I 733), *ha-Reḇu'ot* (Evr. I 732) and *He'teqe Seḇarim* (Evr. II A 161-2). However, Firkowicz apparently had no access to the manuscript *Bet 'Abraham* (which came to Petersburg only as late as around the year 1930 and is at present in the collections of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy<sup>44</sup>). Ipso facto Firkowicz had no knowledge of the initial fragment of the lost work entitled *Massa' ha-'Am* being preserved in this manuscript, which as a result remained forgotten and was not quoted by the authors who wrote about *Massa' ha-'Am*. The details referred to by Firkowicz regarding the content of *Massa' ha-'Am* come from the manuscript Evr. II A 161-2, called *Seḇer ha-Yalqut* by him, apparently *Pas Yeda'* by Simḥa Lucki, and presently known under the title *He'teqe Seḇarim*.

<sup>42</sup> בספר הילקוט של כמה"ר אברהם הרופא הנ"ל בכמה"ר יאשיהו רשום בכתבת ידו וז"ל

אך לא זכינו לראותם רק מצאנו שמותם בכ"י הרב אברהם הרופא הנ"ל בס' הילקוט שלו הנ"ל. וזה לשונו.

<sup>44</sup> The remaining three manuscripts were bought for the Imperial Public Library in Petersburg in the first and second collection of Firkowicz, in the years 1862 and 1874 respectively. In this place I would like to extend my thanks to Olga Vasileva from the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg for assistance in explaining the circumstances connected with that fact.

*Textual evidence of Massa' ha-'Am*1. Manuscript B 263, 11 verso – 12 recto<sup>45</sup> (fig. 1)

Semi-cursive and cursive Karaite script (Ashkenazi script style) from the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Paper, 19 × 15.5 cm.

The only preserved and unequivocally identified passage of *Massa' ha-'Am* is in the manuscript *Bet 'Abraham* (B 263), on fol. 11 verso-12 recto. It is a kind of hymn which is an introduction to the work. The text consists of 39 lines, and three additional lines with information about its origin (11 verso, 1), an explanation regarding the rhyme used (11 verso, right margin) and the ending formula (12 recto, 18). The text was written as a hendecasyllable. The individual lines consist of two phrases which end with a syllable which sounds the same in both of them. The phraseology displays strong dependence on biblical text. The content of the text includes an autobiographical as well as accusatory thread towards the Karaite community in Lithuania in the economically difficult years after the wars against Moscow and Sweden. As the author suggests – the community was experiencing a period of moral decline at that time. In the text the prevalent motif is one of lament and praising God. The author writes about bad experiences and suffering, complains of lack of understanding and solitude. He mentions his charitable activity. The last passage asks for salvation and a change of fate. An especially interesting part of the poem is the passage beginning with line 18 on fol. 11 verso, in which he explains the goal of writing *Massa' ha-'Am*. As it can be read, his message was to give comfort and strength to the pious and also a call to repentance, with a clearly emphasised prophetic and eschatological message. Taking into account that the work was written on fol. 13 verso - 14 recto, whereas on fol. 3 recto (1 recto according to the primary pagination) there is the note of Avraham ben Yoshiyahu stating that the manuscript B 263 was first begun in the year 1662<sup>46</sup>, it appears that the discussed passage was

<sup>45</sup> According to the later pagination 13 verso-14 recto.

<sup>46</sup> “On Sunday, Lord God, you began to show to your servant your greatness, etc. (Deut. 3:24). It was caused by the hand (14) of the Comforter (Av), before the seder: And

introduced into the manuscript in the year 1662 or not much later<sup>47</sup>. It is unclear whether the quoted passage was copied from the finished work, or if it is rather a ready-made fragment from a time when the work was not complete yet.

### The text and translation

fol. 11 verso

1	זה החרוז שייך להתחלת תבורי המיועד להקרא במשא העם :	
2	במר רוחי אני תוהה ומשמים	' אבוי אצרח ראה צדיק ותמים :
3	בהתבונני אלי אנשי זמני	' עצרת בוגדים , שבת ששוני :
4	בני אמי בני מקרא קרואים	' אמללים , ירדתם פלאים :
5	דבר האל בפי כלם למשא	' ובכבדות , בכך הווים משסה :
6	באין סדר וגדר המתוכן	' לפרצתם תרומה המסוכן :
7	ואין קנין ואין מנין ובנין	' ולא כושר ולא פשר בענין :
8	ומאחזה ומאהבה רחוקים	' ובכזב ובחונף - - חשוקים :
9	ואין מקשיב לדת ודין ומוסר	' לבד כל איש לבצעו רץ ונמסר :
10	ובם כל מום ותועבה וסכלות	' וקנאות וליצנות וקלות :
11	וקודר הלכו בלתי צדקה	' וישיגם חמת מלך וצוקה :
12	ואין נחם לרוע תעתועיו	' ומתודה ועוזב את פשעיו :
13	בזה מרים מאד עצום ונפלא	' ומכתם אנושה היא ונחלה <sup>48</sup> :
14	וחדלו יועצי שלום <sup>49</sup> וצאפינו	' שרידים מלהייסירם כפופים :
15	והנגו תלואים גם פרועים	' באין חזון <sup>50</sup> קדורים אף גרועים :

Lord, your God, will keep the covenant with you, and mercy, etc. (Deut. 7:12). The year: write down (422) these words for yourself [...]"

הן באחד לשבת אדני השם אתה החלות להראות את עבדך את גדלך וגו' זאת עשתה  
י"ד למנחם לפני סדר ושמר ה' אלהיך לך את הברית ואת החסד וגו' שנת כת"ב לך את  
הדברים האלה. [...]

<sup>47</sup> The note on fol. 1 verso about the killing of Nisan Chorąży (חורוזיי) ben Yosef on the 26<sup>th</sup> of Adar 431 (i.e. 1671 in the Gregorian calendar) must have been added at a later time, most probably immediately after the event.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Jer 30:12: אנוש לשברך נחלה מכתך.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Pro 12:20: ליעצי שלום.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Pro 29:18: באין חזון יפרע.

16	לבנים הקטנים אין ברכה	להניח <sup>51</sup> לדור אחרון ערוכה :
17	להיישירם להוליקם בדרך	ישרה מבלי מכשול ופרך :
18	לבבי זה נשאני לקנא	לחלול שם כבוד בוראי אתנה :
19	בחבורי במשא עם קראתיו	זמיר עריץ לצופה חן נתתיו :
20	ושומר ראש <sup>52</sup> וחיי איש יהודה	וישראל אשר היו לנדה <sup>53</sup> :
21	שבעים איש בשמות הם פקודי	במשמרתם מצומדים ושוקדים :
22	להגיד תוצאות תולדות באחרית	אשר יקרא ככלות <sup>54</sup> שארית :
23	הסיבותי לאמץ נחשלים	לבל ינתנו הם בין חללים <sup>55</sup> :

on the right margin:

תנועת המלרעית שקולה כנגד חכמת המוזיקא ע"ש<sup>56</sup>

on the bottom margin:

והן<sup>57</sup>

fol. 12 recto

1	והן הוסף כבודות על לכובד	כדי יקל להגביה לאובד
2	כשה תועה בלי רועה עדתי	ועלימו אמון טוב עצתי
3	ולא אפחד לרגשת הרשעים	ולא אחוש למלינים ורעים
4	הנם אלפין ורבואות יריבים	מכחשי האמת יהיו שבבים <sup>58</sup>
5	ולא אשא עני אדם בתורה	כמצות אל טהורה ובהירה
6	וידי מאשר מצא להקריב	תמור עולה בעת משכים ומעריב
7	הרימותי מקום אשם וקרבן	לכפר על חטאי גוף וחרבן
8	יחידתי <sup>59</sup> עצובה גם שדודה	בעול גלות ובגלות נדודה

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Eze 44:30: תתנו לכהן להניח ברכה אל ביתך.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. 1 Sa 28:2: שמר לראשי אשימך.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Lam 1:8: על כן לנדה היתה כל מכבדיה.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Dan 12:7: וככלות נפץ יד עם קדש תכלינה כל אלה.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Jos 11:6: אנכי נתן את כלם חללים.

<sup>56</sup> Probably the abbreviation of עיין שם.

<sup>57</sup> The scribe's graphic mark over והן. On the right side faded barely visible characters of the unreadable text added on the margin.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Hos 8:6: כי שבבים יהיה עגל שמרון.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Psa 22:21: מיד כלב יחידתי.

9	למעמקים טרודה מארקים	בעב ענן וכבד עם ברקים <sup>60</sup>
10	ומסעה פליאה היא וארחה	למעלה <sup>61</sup> לעלות קשה ונוחה
11	אהה אל חי <sup>62</sup> תרחם נא לעבדך	אשר בודד במועדיו <sup>63</sup> וגם דך
12	שבע קלון \נדנדוד <sup>64</sup> \שבע רוגז <sup>65</sup> וצרות.	שתיתו בכוס לען מרירות
13	ותן ישע לאברהם והפלא.	שאלתי לטובה נא תמלא
14	במעש לז ואתנחם בעניי	ואשקוט סערת צירי ושביי
15	ואל תעלה בלא עתו לגדיש <sup>66</sup>	עדי יכין תנובת בר ויקדיש
16	ושכל טוב כצנה תעטרהו	ומספדו למחול תהפכהו <sup>67</sup>
17	ואז יעלוץ כמוצא רב <sup>68</sup> לשמים	ויתלונן בסוד צדיק ותמים
18	תם ונשלם	

fol. 11 verso

1. This poem belongs to the beginning of my work which is to be called “The Burden of the People”<sup>69</sup>.
2. In the bitterness of the spirit, I am astonished and terrified. Woe is me!, I am screaming. Look at the righteous and irreproachable!
3. As I look at the people of my time, the assembly of traitors, my joy ceases.
4. The sons of my mother, called *Bene Miqra*, miserable – their downfall astonishing<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Exo 19:9: בעב הענן; Exo 19:16: וענן כבד; ויהי קולות וברקים וענן כבד.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Pro 15:24: ארח חיים למעלה.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Jos 3:10: אל חי; Psa 42:3: לאל חי; Psa 84:3: אל חי; Hos 2:1: אל חי.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Isa 14:31: בודד במועדיו.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Job 10:15: שבע קלון.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Job 14:1: ושבע רגז.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Job 5:26: תבוא אל קבר כעלות גדיש בעתו.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Psa 30:12: הפכת מספדי למחול.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Psa 119:162: כמוצא שלל רב.

<sup>69</sup> A possible alternative translation: destined to be read during “carrying” (the service) of people. The term *massa* has the meaning of “weight”, “carrying”, “tribute”, “saying”. The title might refer to Num 11:11. Cf. also Num 4:14.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Lam 1: 9, where: ותרד פלאים.

5. The Word of God, according to them all, is a burden, and is burdensome<sup>71</sup>. That is how they become an object of plunder.
6. As if there is no order and well-established enclosure. To break them up – an offering for which one is too impoverished<sup>72</sup>.
7. There is no buyout, no *minyan*, no building. There is no kosherness and no meaning to an issue.
8. They are far from brotherliness and love, joined by lie and duplicity.
9. No one shows obedience to law, judgement, and morality. Everyone seeks his profit and devotes himself to it.
10. There is all flaw, abomination and stupidity in them, and envy, ridicule and contempt.
11. In darkness they followed in iniquity. And the wrath of the king and oppression overtook them.
12. None shows regret because of their wicked mockery. (None) confesses his wrongdoings and gives up his crimes.
13. In this their rebellion is very powerful and astounding. The wound (inflicted) upon them incurable and painful.
14. Those who recommended peace and watched over us have disappeared. Those who have stayed are bent from reproach.
15. And here we are, suspended and dispersed<sup>73</sup>, without a vision, sullen, and rejected<sup>74</sup>.
16. There is no blessing for the little children, to leave it prepared for the last generation,
17. To make them go straight, to guide them on the straight path, without obstacles and compulsion.
18. This heart of mine, which inspired me to be zealous, because of the profanation of the glorious name of my Creator, I gave<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Lit. “with difficulty”, “hard”. Cf. Exo 14, 25: בכבדות.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Isa 40:20: המסכן תרומה.

<sup>73</sup> Lit. with hair down, with bare heads. Cf. Pro 29:18: באין חזון יפרע עם.

<sup>74</sup> A possible alternative translation “with cut (beards)”. Cf. Jer 48, 37.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Ecc 1, 17: ואתנה לבי.

19. In my work. I called it “The Burden of the People”. I made it a powerful song for the one looking for grace
20. And the guardian of the head and life of the people of Juda and Israel, which have become like the impure.
21. Seventy people appointed by their names, in their guards, joined and keeping watch,
22. To tell about what will happen to the future generations<sup>76</sup> at the end, what is called “When the power of the rest terminates”,
23. I have turned to strengthen the weak, lest they be given (to be) among the fallen.

the right margin:

The vowel in the last stressed syllable rhymed according to the rules of music. See there.

the bottom margin:

And here

fol. 12 recto

1. And here the burden was loaded down so that it would be easy to collect, to the one who is perishing.
2. My congregation is like a sheep wandering away without a shepherd. My advice for them is trustworthy<sup>77</sup>.
3. I will not be afraid of the rage of the wicked ones. I will not fear the murmuring and evil ones.
4. Here there are thousands and tens of thousands of adversaries. Denying the truth, may they fall into pieces!

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<sup>76</sup> Various translations are possible. The term תּוֹצִיאוֹת probably in the same meaning as in Ps. 68:21 “escape”.

<sup>77</sup> Heb. אֱמוּנָה טוֹבָה, lit. “good confidence”.

5. I cannot bear<sup>78</sup> the poverty of a man (living) in the Torah, according to the commandment of God, which is pure and bright.
6. And my hand, of what it found, gave offerings, instead of a burnt offering in the time of the morning and evening service.
7. I rose a place for a guilt offering and for a gift to make atonement for carnal sins and destruction.
8. My soul is sad, yea, plundered, in the iniquity of exile and wanders in exile.
9. To the depths carried away from the earth, in a thick and heavy cloud, with lightnings.
10. Its journey is extraordinary. Its way upwards, hard to go up, but it is pleasant.
11. Ah, Living God, please have mercy upon your servant, who is lonely in the time appointed to him, and also downtrodden.
12. Full /of nagging/ {disgrace}<sup>79</sup>, full of turmoil and distresses. He is drinking from a cup of bitterness wormwood.
13. Give salvation to Abraham, act marvellously. Please make my request be fortunately granted.
14. I will find comfort in my misery through that deed. I will calm down from the windstorm of my distress and captivity.
15. Do not collect for a stack before the appointed time. Only when (he) prepares harvest of cereal and consecrates it.
16. Surround him with good prudence like with a shield<sup>80</sup>. Turn for him mourning into dancing.
17. Then he will rejoice like someone who finds something great, to heaven, and he will dwell in just and perfect assembly.
18. Ended and completed.

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<sup>78</sup> A possible translation also: "I am not capable to pronounce".

<sup>79</sup> Heb. קלון "disgrace, shame" crossed, נדנוד "nagging" added above the line.

<sup>80</sup> Lit. "crown him".

2. Manuscript Evr. II A 161-2, 48 verso – 49 recto<sup>81</sup> (fig. 2)

Semi-cursive and cursive Karaite script from the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Paper, 15 × 9.5 cm.

The text regarding *Massa' ha-'Am*, preserved on fol. 48 verso - 49 recto of the manuscript *Seḫer ha-Yalqut (Pas Yeda')*, consists of 16 lines, and 5 lines whose text was crossed out (the text can be read in four of them). Moreover, at the bottom of fol. 48 verso, under a separating horizontal line, there is another text written down (certainly added at a later time) which lists the works of Zarah ben Natan. The text on fol. 48 verso, referring to *Massa' ha-'Am*, lists seven treatises. It was quoted by Lucki in *Seḫer Ner Ṣaddiqim* and Firkowicz in the manuscript F 946, op. 1 (Personal archive of A. Firkowicz), no. 375. Regarding the text in the manuscript Evr. II A 161-2, it should be noted that on the right side, next to the names of the individual treatises, signs in the shape of dots were placed which supposedly provide numerical values and may be numbers providing the correct order of the treatises. At the beginning of the third line there is also a graphic character which serves as a reference to the text of two lines at the beginning of fol. 49 recto. The referred text on fol. 49 recto (with a similar graphic mark) may be a quotation from the treatise “He who keeps the law” and refers to the term הצדק “righteousness”, which was written on 48 verso, line 3, after שומר תורה “He who keeps the law”. The title of this treatise might also be read as “Righteousness is a guardian of the Law”. The following text is on fol. 49 recto, under the horizontal line, includes exegetical clues regarding the terms משא and נשא in the phrases quoted on the side (written in a different style of writing). It was probably to provide justification for the message of the title. It might be presumed that this fragment might have been a part of the initial part of the work. The subsequent fragment, from more or less half of fol. 49 recto, separated by a horizontal line which was crossed out for unknown reasons, might come from the end of the work. It expresses the moral mission of the work, which was supposed to serve the revival of the community, in a poetic form. The last line reads: “As teaching and testimony it should be written

<sup>81</sup> According to the later bottom pagination 41 verso - 42 recto.

down for future generations". As for the date of the record of this text, the only available piece of information regarding that can be found in the note on fol. 22 verso, in which Avraham ben Yoshiyahu recorded his dream in Poswól. The date the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Sivan* year 424 (i.e. 1864) is attested there, which should probably be interpreted as a clue to the approximate time of the creation of the manuscript, including the discussed text.

The text and translation  
fol. 48 verso

משא העם	1
נחלק לשבעה מאמרי'	2
"82:: שומר תורה <sup>83</sup> הצדק'	3
84... מפר אותות בדים <sup>85</sup> /	4
86.. שי למורא <sup>87</sup>	5
88:: שרף על נס <sup>89</sup>	6
90. נפש עמל <sup>91</sup>	7
92::: מבטח עז <sup>93</sup>	8
94::: משפט בני ישראל <sup>95</sup>	9

<sup>82</sup> On the margin there is a graphic mark in the form of two vertical lines, with a horizontal line bent at its ends, referring to the text at the beginning of fol. 49 recto where the same graphic mark was placed. Additionally, a four-dot mark on the right.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Pro 29:18: באין חזון יפרע עם ושומר תורה אשרהו.

<sup>84</sup> A three-dot mark on the right side. An irregular horizontal line above.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Isa 44:25: מפר אותות בדים.

<sup>86</sup> A two-dot mark on the right side.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Psa 76:12: נדרו ושלמו ליהוה אלהיכם כל סביביו יובילו שי למורא.

<sup>88</sup> A five-dot mark on the right side.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Num 21:8: ויאמר יהוה אל משה עשה לך שרף ושים אתו על נס והיה כל הנשוך וראה אתו וחי.

<sup>90</sup> A one-dot sign on the right side.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Pro 16:26: נפש עמל עמלה לו כי אכף עליו פיהו.

<sup>92</sup> A seven-dot mark on the right side.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Pro 14:26: ביראת יהוה מבטח עז ולבניו יהיה מחסה.

<sup>94</sup> A six-dot mark on the right side.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Exo 28:30: ונשא אהרן את משפט בני ישראל על לבו לפני יהוה תמיד.

A note regarding the excerpts starting with fol. 49 verso was written under the horizontal line:<sup>96</sup>

10 אלו השלשה הספרים אשר הם מיוסדים מחברים.  
 11 מהחכם המופלא מוהרר' זרח זצ"ל בכמ' נתן ז"ל  
 12 זה יצא ראשונה ' אשר על ידו חוט שני ' ויקרא  
 13 את שמו זרח ' במחלוקת הקראי' והרבני'  
 14 זמן החלקם וכתב זמן התיחשם וסבות מחלוקתיהם

fol. 49 recto

1 <sup>97</sup>צדק צדק תזרני<sup>98</sup> נפשי עז<sup>99</sup> לאלהי'  
 2 להורות על מציאות פועל תמיד ברצון ומשגיח  
 3 לבית ישראל השואלים מה משא ' נבואה<sup>100</sup>  
 4 ה' עליו נשא<sup>101</sup> ' רוממות<sup>102</sup> '  
 5 {לאיש דברו}<sup>103</sup>  
 6 לאיש יהוה דברו משא ' לשון כובד<sup>104</sup>  
 7 <sup>105</sup>{...}

<sup>96</sup> A copy of this text was included by Firkowicz in the manuscript F 946 op. 1, no. 375, fol. 12 recto. A corresponding fragment is present in the manuscript *Bet 'Abraham*, on fol. 86 verso:

אמר אברהם קבלתי מפי החכם החוקר התורני מוהרר' זרח בכ' נתן ז"ל שאלה ספרים היה בלבו חקוק לחברם.

זה יצא ראשונה אשר על ידו חוט שני ויקרא את שמו זרח

והם היו מיועדים לבאר את מחלקת קראים ורבנים זמן החלקם וסבותיהן ואופניהן עם שאר המסתעף. [...]

<sup>97</sup> On the right margin, below the line, a graphic mark in the shape of two lines with a wavy line at the top – a reference to the text of the third line on the previous page.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. 2Sa 22:40: ותזרני חיל למלחמה תכריע קמי תחתני.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Jdg 5:21: נפשי עז; Psa 138:3: בנפשי עז.

<sup>100</sup> Above a graphic mark in the shape of a horizontal line at the whole width of the page.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. 2Ki 9:25: ויהוה נשא עליו את המשא הזה.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Psa 149:6: אליו פי קראתי ורומם; see also Psa 66:17: רוממות אל בגרום וחרב פיפיות בידם; תחת לשוני.

<sup>103</sup> An erased passage.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Exo 4:10: וכבדי לשון; Eze 3:5,6: וכבדי לשון אנכי.

<sup>105</sup> Blurred letters.

- 8 שדי יסור {...} <sup>106</sup> במשא <sup>107</sup> : בעקירה ובשרישה מארץ  
 9 חי'.
- 10 {אשא דעי למרחוק<sup>109</sup> ולעמו<sup>110</sup> ואל עמו ארים נס<sup>111</sup> להתנוסס מפני  
 11 קשט סלה<sup>112</sup> אמרים אמת<sup>113</sup> לשמיע בקול תודה<sup>114</sup> שמת/מבשר/ צדק בתוך  
 12 קהל ועדה לתורה ולתעודה<sup>115</sup> תכתב זאת לדור אחרון<sup>116</sup>}

fol. 48 verso

- 1 "The Burden of the People"
- 2 Is divided into seven treatises:
- 3 "174. He who keeps the law. Righteousness.
4. 3. Invalidates the signs of diviners.<sup>118</sup>
5. 2. The gift for the one who is to be feared.
6. 5. The serpent on a standard.
7. 1. Breath of the labourer.
8. 7. Strong confidence.
9. 6. The judgement of the sons of Israel.
10. These are three books which were composed, written
11. By the amazing scholar our great teacher ribbi Zarah, the memory of the righteous is a blessing, son of our honourable Natan, of blessed memory:

<sup>106</sup> Blurred letters.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. 1Ch 15:22: הוא במשן כי מבין הוא.

<sup>108</sup> The passage written below was crossed. It is a text written with small cursive letters. It is graphically divided with horizontal lines as wide as the page at the top and the bottom.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Job 36:3 אשא דעי למרחוק ולפעלי אתן צדק.

<sup>110</sup> It might have been crossed earlier. An additional crossing line is visible.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Isa 49:22: כה אמר אדני יהוה הננה אשא אל גוים ידי ואל עמים ארים נסי. See also Isa 62:10: מאבן ארים נס על העמים.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Psa 60:6: קשט סלה להתנוסס מפני קשט סלה.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Pro 22:21: להודיעך קשט אמרי אמת להשיב אמרים אמת לשלחך.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Psa 26:7: לשמע בקול תודה.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Isa 8:20: לתודה ולתעודה.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Psa 102:19: תכתב זאת לדור אחרון.

<sup>117</sup> A reference to the initial text on fol. 49 recto.

<sup>118</sup> An alternative translation: "Exposes the signs of diviners".

12. The one who came out first, with a scarlet thread on his hand. He called
13. Him Zarah. About the separation of the Karaites from the Rabbanites
14. And the time of their division. He wrote their genealogy and reasons for their separation.

Fol. 49 recto

1. With righteousness, with righteousness gird me. My strong soul belongs to God<sup>119</sup>,
2. To teach about revealed things which he does continually<sup>120</sup> in his will and watches.
3. For the house of Israel, the ones asking what is the burden<sup>121</sup>. The prophecy.
4. (which) the Lo[rd] put upon him. Praising.
5. {His word for the man}
6. For the man of YHWH his word is burden. Stiff tongue.
7. {...}
8. The Almighty rebukes {...} with the burden<sup>122</sup>. With pulling out and removing with the roots from the land
9. of the living.
10. {I will carry my knowledge far away and {for his people} and for his people I will set up a standard, so that they can escape
11. the bow<sup>123</sup>. Sela. Let the words of truth be proclaimed with the voice of thanksgiving. I put (the one) who announces justice in
12. the community and in the congregation. As the law and as the testimony it should be written down for future generations.}

<sup>119</sup> An alternative translation: "My soul is a stronghold of God".

<sup>120</sup> An alternative translation: "about the existence of him who does continually".

<sup>121</sup> An ambiguous term. Possible translations "service", "lifting", "carrying", "utterance", "singing", also in the occurrences in the text below.

<sup>122</sup> This phrase is close to the one in 1Ch 15:22 יסר במשא. Presumably we are dealing with the error of transposition of ו and ס (יסור instead of יסר). Otherwise, it should be translated "The Almighty will depart".

<sup>123</sup> Alternative meaning: "thanks to the truth".

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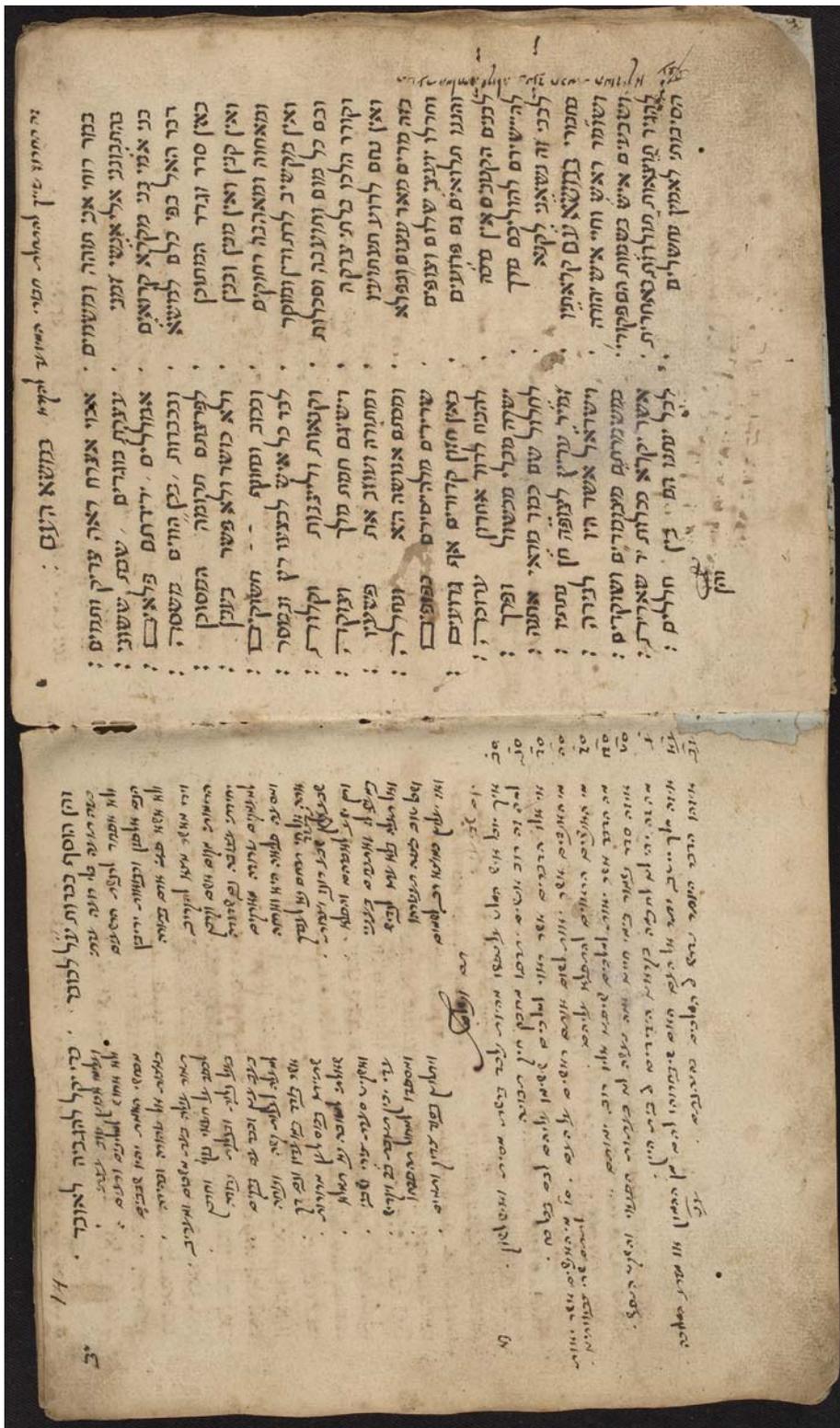


Fig. 1

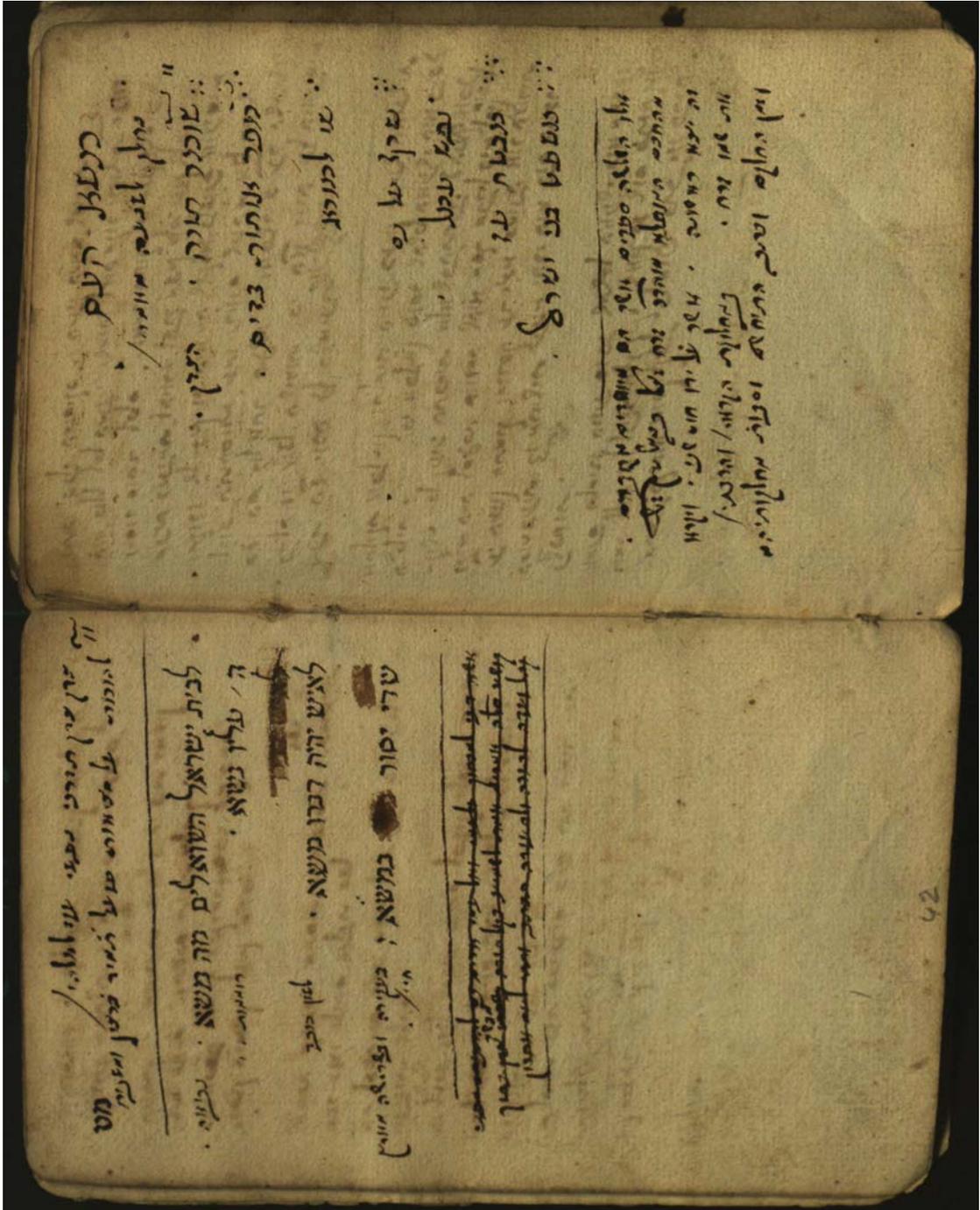


Fig. 2