

The work of Samuel Archivolti (1515-1611) in the Light of the Classical Traditions and Cinquecento Italian literature

In the diaspora, Hebrew literature was permeated by the influence of neighbouring cultures. For centuries, Hebrew metrics and poetics reflected the impact of Arabic thought. In Arabic and medieval Hebrew culture some Aristotelian ideas were present, although Greek poetics and rhetoric were difficult to adapt to Arabic poetry. In Renaissance Hebrew poetic works, Greek knowledge was derived also from other sources in addition to translations through Arabic. Still the poetic metrics of the Hebrew poets of the Renaissance seem to remain within the framework of the secular Hebrew poetic tradition which originated in eleventh-century Muslim Spain and was based upon the Arabic models. In this light we shall investigate the poetic metres and themes dealt with by Samuel Archivolti in the light of his prescriptive chapters on metre and poetry in his *Arugat ha-Bosem* («The Bed of Spices»). We will try to determine to what extent they borrowed from Arabic tradition, and eventually from Greek and Latin antiquity and the church fathers. Conclusions will also be drawn about the influence of Italian literature on Archivolti compared with that of Classical Greek and Arabic literature. The intertextuality of Archivolti with regard to his Hebrew predecessors Ibn Yehudah ha-Levi (1075-1141), Immanuel da Roma (1261-1328), Ibn Habib (1450-1520), Ibn Yahya (1440-1524), Abarbanel (1437-1508), and Azaria de' Rossi (1511-1578) will be mentioned briefly.