

## History and apologetics in XVth century Hispano-Jewish thought

It would be pleasing to think that the origins of the modern historian's craft developed in an atmosphere of serenity which gave it its characteristic objectivity and distinguished it from its medieval counterpart characterized by zeal for preconceived ideas. It would be pleasing but probably not entirely correct. It might, in fact, be argued that modern historical instruments developed out of apologetics and controversy. The medieval clerical historians studied by Lasch tend to use scepticism and critical concepts especially when dealing with pagan stories and folktales, i.e. non-Christian sources. Nicholas of Cusa when demonstrating that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery, and thus paving the way for the critical treatment of historical documents was not indulging in an academic exercise but trying to further the cause of the lay party in the conflict between conciliarist and papal parties. Much of Valla's work grew out of controversy and occasional anticlericalism. Machiavelli, similarly, used history as a means of argument against the rulers of contemporary Florence<sup>1</sup>.

One cannot therefore, discount a priori the apologetics genre as a proper subject of enquiry on the beginning of Jewish use of historical method. In the present state of

<sup>1</sup> On medieval historical technique before the Renaissance vid. Berthold Lasch, *Das Erwachen und die Entwicklung der historischen Kritik im Mittelalter (vom vi-xii jahrhundert)* (Breslau 1887), especially pp. 20, 21, 23. Cf. also Ed. Fueter (transl. Emile Jeanmaire), *Histoire de l'historiographie moderne* (Paris 1914) p. 3, on Petrarch's reasons for studying and writing history; also p. 97, where the histories of Machiavelli and Guicciardini are characterized thus: «sont issues exclusivement des luttes constitutionnelles et des discussions politiques dans la Florence de leur temps».

opinion on Jewish historiography in xvth century Spain this period might seem an odd choice. One need only recall that the historian of this period's historiography has maintained<sup>2</sup> that the Jews of Spain were not interested in the past and its history until the xvth century.

In fact historical activity increased dramatically in xvth century Spain as can be shown by both, the writing of chronicles by men of the second half of the century<sup>3</sup> as well as by the realization that there were various historical works, probably lost, being used as *niederläge* by writers of other types of literature such as Alami<sup>4</sup>, or yet others of which we know only by mention such as the lost chronicle of persecutions by Profayt Duran<sup>5</sup>.

The main concern of the following lines is not, however, with these but with the shift towards use of techniques of analyzing historical and literary documents which, blunt and primitive as they were, are recognizable to modern historians as antecedents of their own.

One may begin with the work of Profayt Duran. By *milieu* he is associated with that atmosphere of secular studies common to Southern France and the North of the Crown of Aragon as well as with the court of Martin the Humane which was absorbing currents of humanism

2 Abraham Aaron Neuman, *Landmarks and goals* (Philadelphia 1953) pp. 84-86; cf. also Lionel Kochan, *The Jew and his history* (London 1977) p. 49.

3 Such as Abraham ben Solomon Ardutieli on whom cf. Fritz Baer's article in the German *EJ*, I, 535-6: «Eine nähere analyse der drei werke (Zacuto and Joseph ibn Zadiq) ergibt aber das sie alle drei ein und dasselbe hebräische Geschichtsbuch verarbeitet haben, das aus einer Chronologie der jüdischen Gelehrten und einem sehr dürftiger Auszug aus einer bekannten Spanischen Weltchronik bestand»; Joseph ibn Zadiq of Arevalo (the last entry in his chronicle is dated 1487). Abraham Zacuto, and the small historical excursus of Abraham b. Eleazar Halevi, as well as the chronological work of ibn Danan are all examples of products of historians who were formed in the xvth century.

4 Cf. F. Baer, *Untersuchungen über Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Judah* (2) (Berlin 1936) p. 26, but cf. also Martin A. Cohen, *Samuel Usque's Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel*, 2 ed. (Philadelphia 1977) pp. 277-87.

5 On Profayt Duran vid. F. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia 1966) vol. 2, p. 474 ff. and the bibliography cited there, especially p. 475, n. 41. Cf. also R. W. Emery, 'New light on Profayt Duran the Efodi', *JQR*, 58, 1 (1968) pp. 328-337; I. Twersky, 'Religion and Law', in ed. S. D. Goitein, *Religion in a religious Age* (Cambridge, Mass. 1974) 69-82 especially pp. 74-77; E. I. Rosenthal, *Studia Semitica I* (Cambridge 1971) 227-234.

through its contacts with Italy and its colonies in Greece<sup>6</sup>. His historical context was the conflict within the Church, whether expressed in the movement of Wycliff or the conciliarist party. For these the center of information must have been Avignon, seat of the papal court. Any biographer of his would, no doubt welcome information on the actual details of transmission of ideas between Avignon and Spain or Perpignan. For the purposes of this enquiry, it may however suffice to point to the contacts between the Aragonese and Avignon Jewish communities implied by Hasdai Crescas' letter to the Avignon community<sup>7</sup>, a letter which is also an eloquent but not unique<sup>8</sup> example of such contacts. To this one should add the general interest in other religions shown by his contemporaries. Joshua Ha-Lorki mentions the means of obtaining such information when using the phrase «from hearing the merchants of distant lands»<sup>9</sup>. This interest in the affairs of the Church, particularly those concerning the schism at Avignon were remarked upon by Pedro López de Ayala who notes bitterly how the Jews and Moors rejoice at the spectacle offered by a divided Church<sup>10</sup>.

One should remember that Profayt Duran showed himself very much aware of the schism when sardonically mentioning, at the end of his *Al Tehi KeAvoteka* that if Pablo of Burgos is indeed as important as a Pope, as had been implied in Bonet Bongorn's letter, he is puzzled indeed about whether he will go to Rome or dwell in Avignon<sup>11</sup>. To this should be added the familiarity with Christian arguments

6 Cf. Antonio Rubio y Lluich, *Documents per l'història de la Cultura Catalana Migeval* (Barcelona 1921) vol. 2, xxxix-xlii.

7 Published in ed. Meir Wiener, *Shevet Judah* (Hanover 1855/6) p. 28 f.

8 F. Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*, vol. 1 (Berlin 1929) index, s.v. Avignon. B. Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain*, 2 ed. (New York 1973) appendix «C» and the 1394 safeconduct to «Paulus de Burgos presencium exhibitor ad curiam romanam» published by C. Carrete Parrondo in *Sefarad*, 35 (1975) 214. Menahem b. Zerah shows awareness of the situation in Avignon in his *Sedah la-Derekh*. Cf. Shelomo Eidelberg Proc. vith WCJSt., 3, 24.

9 In his letter to Paul of Burgos, Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Antología Hebraica Postbíblica* (Madrid 1953) 96-98, 97.

10 *Rimado*, ed. Michel García (Madrid 1978) p. 142, 209: «Los moros e judios/rien desta contienda/e dizen entre si/veredes que leyenda/tienen estos cristianos /e como su fazienda/traen bien ordenada/asi Dios los defienda».

11 I have used Adolf Poznansky's edition of the *Iggeret Al Tehi K'Avotekha* in MS, the facs. of which was published by Akademon (Jerusalem 1970) p. 144.

of older contemporaries such as Moses Ha-Cohen of Torde-sillas<sup>12</sup> who conducted a disputation with Benedict of Luna, the interest in Christianity which led to discussions on Jesus at Talmudic academies mentioned by Profayt himself<sup>13</sup> and the writing of a translation of the Gospel into Hebrew by another Aragonese contemporary<sup>14</sup>: Shem Tob ibn Shaprut. Profayt Duran, as well as other xvth century apologetes, probably had access to a medieval tradition of apologetics which was cognizant of Christian Biblical interpretations, Jerome's translation and perhaps, had texts of the New Testament such as those at the end of the Joseph Ha-Meqane MS, as well as the Toledot Jeshu and the Sepher Nestor Hakomer<sup>15</sup>. Established Jewish disciplines such as astronomy, astrology and exegesis combined to provide a background for Profayt Duran's interest and mastery of chronology<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless apologetics had been conducted, in the main, within a philosophical framework. This philosophical cast of thought, with its characteristic use of dialectics and logic, was not totally abandoned, not even by Profayt, but he was conscious of a new departure in the emphasis of his *Kelimat Hagoyim*<sup>17</sup>.

12 On whom cf. now Yehuda Shamir, *Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen of Torde-sillas and his book Ezer ha-Emunah* (Leiden 1975).

13 Z. A. Poznansky, ed., 'Profayt Duran's Kelimat Ha-Goyim', *Ha-Şofeh Me-Ereş Hagar* (Budapest 1914) iii, 4, p. 143.

14 On the translation cf. Adolf Herbst, *Des Schemtob ben Schaprut he-bräische Übersetzung des Evangeliums Matthaei...* (Göttingen 1879); also Pinchas E. Lapide, 'Der Prufstein Spanien', *Sefarad*, xxxiv (1974) 227-72. Marx, in *Studies...Freidus* (New York 1929) 270 ff., refutes Herbst's contentions.

15 Cf. Kurt Schubert, 'Das Christlich-Jüdische religionsgespräch im 12 u. 13 Jahrhundert', *Kairos*, xix, 3 (1977) 161-86; Frank E. Talmage, *The book of the covenant of Joseph Kimhi* (Toronto 1972); Daniel Lasker, *Jewish Philosophic Polemic against Christianity in the Middle Ages* (New York 1977); J. Rosenthal, 'Attack and defense in medieval apologetic literature', *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, vol. 2, 345-58 for the history of Jewish knowledge of the New Testament beginning with Epiphanius mention of Philostriatus book against the New Testament. Cf. also J. E. Rembaum, 'The influence of Sefer Nestor Hakomer on medieval Jewish apologetics', *PAAJR*, xlv (1978) 155-86.

16 For Profayt Duran's work on astronomy cf. for example Paris Hebrew MS 1048f. 119v. which is a letter Profayt sends to Shealtiel Gracian who had asked for information on the interval between the two moons and for a commentary to the Quadrant. Besides showing his competence it provides evidence to his reputation as a scholar of astronomy to the extent of being asked questions by Gracian whom he had not met. Cf. also I. Twersky, 'Joseph ibn Kaspi', in *idem*, ed., *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass. 1979) 231-60, 257 for his alleged motivation.

17 Cf. Daniel Lasker, *op. cit.*, in n. 15.

As he writes in the dedication of the work to its inspirer, Hasdai Crescas: «Your intention is to open the discussion (lit. Gate) on whether it is possible to answer the adversary according to his own terms, for in these subjects this is the true way to win. True, none of the ancients payed attention to this way... in order to make truth known to everybody because they did not want to waste their time in such things. But you have seen the evil days of fury poured out on the... captivity of Jerusalem which is in Spain, now that there are many who break away, who seek deep to hide their counsel and trespass on the mures of the Torah, make her a besieged city, and you want to establish it, the plague of heresy flourishes in the hearts of men...»<sup>18</sup>.

One of the underlying themes in the work and one which runs through it and gives it much of its coherence is that Christianity as known in his time was not the same Christianity which existed at its origins but was composed of different historical strata. Profayt Duran makes a great point of distinguishing between sayings, religious concepts or customs attributed to Jesus himself, those which should be traced to his apostles, those of theologians and those of the «piqhim» «clever ones» by which he means probably late scholastics such as Nicholas de Lyre<sup>19</sup>.

He tries to establish a «Jesus strand» through philological method when for example, he argues that the divinity of Jesus is a later addition to Christianity. He looks at New Testament usage of addressing Jesus and finds that he is not addressed as God<sup>20</sup>. The same method is used when trying to prove the lateness of the concept of redemption through his death. Profayt looks for this concept and finds that it is not explicitly stated except for Paul's Epistle to the Romans and concludes that he introduced it<sup>21</sup>.

He looks at the Hebrew terminology implied behind the NT text when for example, he says «In all his sayings

18 KH (= *Kelimat Ha-Goyim* ed. cit. in n. 13) iii, 3 (1913) 102-3. Joseph ibn Shem Tov also emphasized the novelty of this approach, cf. Lasker, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

19 KH, iii, 4 (1914) 151 for example.

20 KH, iii, 3, 104-6.

21 KH, iii, 4, 151-52.

he would call himself 'son of man' as does Ezequiel»<sup>22</sup>. He compares the versions of the OT texts in the MT with its quotations in the NT and lists discrepancies which he describes as mistakes<sup>23</sup>. He does this with Jerome's Bible quotations as well. Duran tries to establish the meaning of a phrase by studying its use elsewhere: «Pablo, in the epistle which he sent to the Hebrew, ch. X, 37-38 'For yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry my just one will live by his faith' and he who is called 'he that shall come' is Jesus and he is mentioned by this name at times in the narratives about him. When John the Baptist sent him his messengers they asked him in his name 'are you the one who will come'. And in ch. XI, 4 of Acts he called him also 'the one who will come'. And at the beginning of ch. I, 4 Apocalipsis he also called him 'the one that will come'»<sup>24</sup>.

He tries to see Christian customs within their Jewish historical context. For him Jesus' Jewish disciples wished to attract the Gentiles to belief in Jesus but they also believed in the eternity of the Torah. He seems to try to establish a historical Jewish context for baptism: «They (his Jewish disciples) wished to attract the Gentiles to belief in Jesus and they saw that if they were to burden them with the yoke of the Torah they would not achieve their purpose so they agreed that faith alone would suffice to save them and not to burden them with the yoke of works. And since the Jewish custom was to baptise the proselytes, as our Rabbis said 'if he circumcised (the proselyte) and did not baptise him it is as though he had not circumcised him' (Yeb. 46a) and they saw that the burden of circumcision was very heavy upon them so they agreed that baptism alone should suffice...»<sup>25</sup>.

He also sees Jesus' behaviour during Passover within

22 KH, iii, 106. On «ben adam» cf. Lapide, *art. cit.*, n. 14, p. 271.

23 E.g. KH, iii, 4, 152. Differences between the Vulgate and the MT had been previously noticed in the Book of the Covenant by Kimhi, by Joseph Ha-Meqane, by Nahmanides and others cf. Lasker, *op. cit.*, 4 and p. 173 n. 14.

24 KH, iii, 4, 156.

25 KH, ii, 4, 162. It is clear from a comparison with those who preceded him in this argument (e.g. Jacob b. Reuben and Moses Ha-Kohen, cf. Shamir, *op. cit.* p. 102) that his treatment is technically more ambitious and closer to a historian's way of handling texts rather than an apologete's.

its Jewish context. His description of Jesus «a pious fool» — «hasid shote»<sup>26</sup> rather than random invective may reflect an association with the historical sect of the «hasidim» in Talmudic times.

He tries to see phrases within their stylistic context rather than in isolated fashion, for example, when he tries to prove the late origin of the Eucharist «that man used to speak in parables always and perhaps he meant it metaphorically, meaning that his disciples should take away the bread and the wine with them instead of his flesh and blood and remember him always»<sup>27</sup>.

He notices discrepancies in the narratives of different Gospels and singles out for mention those that occur in the description of Jesus' lineage in Luke and Mathew<sup>28</sup>.

He makes an attempt at synchronizing Roman and Jewish history but uses Vincent of Beauvais rather than Josephus: «This Herod lived in the days of Caesar Augustus Roman Caesar who made him leader and ruler in the tenth year of his empire and he ruled for thirty three years. And he was an Edomite and converted to Judaism because of his loving desire of a Jewess. And she did not wish to marry an uncircumcised and to become his wife till he circumcised and converted to Judaism. And the above mentioned Caesar Augustus ruled fifty three years»<sup>29</sup>.

He seems to make an attempt at scribal amendment when finding the chronology implied in II Corinthians 12, 2 difficult: «Perhaps it said forty years. For the number ten in their scripts is similar to number forty in indian numbers and they became accustomed to write it in their numbers...»<sup>30</sup>.

He seems to scrutinize the textual sources of Christian information on the OT, i.e. Jerome's translation, not only in terms of its textual variants but by trying to discern a tendency in the variants as well as seeing their historical background i.e. Jerome's knowledge of Hebrew. «About him it was said by their theologians (lit. those who cause

26 E.g. KH, iv, 90 «hasidut shel shtut».

27 KH, iii, 3, 174 ff.

28 KH, iv, 88.

29 KH, iv, 115 n. 2.

30 KH, iv, 119.

to err) that when he was learning Hebrew he would grit his teeth in order to pronounce the words of Jonathan ben Uziel's translation well. And from this we can see that he was not used to our language and, needless to say, to its grammar, for he could not hold his bearings at all in Holly Writ. And when I went through Jerome's translation I saw his numerous errors... and it seems that some of these are intentional and most of them are to be attributed to his ignorance of Hebrew. And I think that an ignorant Jew helped him with the translations and both were confused...»<sup>31</sup>.

He follows this with examples of ignorance of grammar. He does not restrict use of these methods to Christian literature.

In the introduction to the *Maase Efod* (1408) he criticizes the Talmudists and at times seems to employ similar methods. He seems to imply earlier and later strata in the Talmud when saying «what is really meant by the science of the Talmud is not everything which is included in that work»<sup>32</sup>. If, as the Talmudists maintain, the Talmud is the path to supreme felicity, then how, asks Profayt «did David and Solomon and all the wise men of Israel obtain their merit». «Or do you think» continues Duran «that the wisdom of Solomon consisted of the knowledge of this work, composed thousand and three hundred years after him»<sup>33</sup>. A similar argument by the concept of anachronism is put forward by Duran to show that «the Talmud» cannot mean the whole Talmud as known in his time:

R. Jochanan b. Zakai is said to have studied the Talmud. He lived before the destruction of the temple, therefore he could not have studied a book written 400 years after the destruction of the Temple<sup>34</sup>.

The *Kelimat Ha-Goyim*, despite its deficiencies, is the most extensive and consistent example of application of these methods by a Jew one will probably find in xvth century Spain. Its importance lies also in the extent of its

31 KH, iv, 120-21.

32 Ed. J. Friedlander and J. Kohn (Wien 1865) p. 6.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*



influence. Simeon b. Zemah Duran's *Keshet W-Magen* seems to be indebted to it for most of its arguments on Christianity. He also makes lists of variants between the MT and Jerome's translation, mentions contradictions in the NT and variants in the quotations of the OT in the NT<sup>35</sup>. An interesting example of an argument which seems to be his own and foreshadows, in structure, some modern attempts to see Christian beliefs in context might be his explanation of Jesus' birth of the Holy Ghost. He argues that the ancients believed that women could be made pregnant by the gods as we are told was the case of Alexander of Macedonia's mother who conceived him through the god Ammon<sup>36</sup>.

His main achievement seems to have been his anti-Islamic polemic in which, although he admits to not having read the whole text of the Qur'an, he makes use of certain methods which are similar to those of Profayt Duran. He is aware of anachronisms and points out that in the Qur'an Hanna is said to have lived at the time of Moses, Jesus is said to have been the son of Miriam, sister of Aron<sup>37</sup>. He is aware of the concept of cultural borrowings and influences when arguing for a Jewish origin of their dietary laws, especially their avoidance of pork, and for a Jewish origin of Islamic prayers, circumcision, notions of purity and impurity, pilgrimage<sup>38</sup>.

He also pays attention to Muslim chronology which he singles out for attack<sup>39</sup>. It is obvious that there are points of contact between Christian anti-Islamic apologetics and Duran's<sup>40</sup>. It is hard, however to determine whether they both owe their arguments to common sources or whether Duran had access to Latin Christian apologetics. The former would seem to be more likely as so much of Western European information about Islam was received through Jewish

35 I have used the recent critical edition on the basis of MSS and printed versions in Prospero Murciano's Ph. D. thesis, *Simon ben Zemah Duran, Keshet U-Magen: A critical edition* (New York University 1975) cf. p. xxii and text p. 40 and p. 56 on the contradictions in the NT and its «authors» ignorance of Hebrew Scriptures. He lists 21 passages where verses from the OT are «misquoted» (p. 57 ff.).

36 *Ibid.*, p. xx and text p. 26.

37 P. 69/70.

38 *Ibid.* p. xxxii and xxxiii and p. 82.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

40 Cf. N. Daniels, *Islam and the West* (Edinburgh 1960) 84-5, 343-4, n. 21.

sources and channels. Nevertheless, he himself denies that there were previous anti-Islamic apologetics for his use, with the exception of the Cuzari<sup>41</sup>. What matters in connection with our theme is the shift from philosophical arguments towards historico-critical arguments.

The last apologete who might be considered to this effect is Hayim ibn Musa, and, more precisely the fragment of his work *Magen Wa-Romah* (c. 1456) which has been preserved<sup>42</sup>. Most of it is concerned with arguments on the OT and its interpretation in Messianic terms. Like many of his contemporaries he paid attention to Nicholas de Lyre's apologetic work, perhaps more attention than that accorded to other Christian apologetes who, in the past had been largely ignored, or at least were not often mentioned by name. It may have been the alleged Jewish origin of Nicholas of Lyre which made writers such as Profayt Duran, Pablo of Burgos, Hayim ibn Musa and the Shevet Judah give him their explicit consideration<sup>43</sup>.

As had been the case with Profayt Duran and R. Simeon b. Zemah Duran he also pays attention to variants from the MT in his case in the works of Nicholas de Lyre. He also notices the discrepancies in the genealogy of Jesus in Mathew and Luke: «...the great discrepancies between Mathew and Luke in this matter, in names and numbers of men. But although all this is true it would be very dangerous for the Jew to answer thus...<sup>44</sup>.

He briefly pays attention to the context of the Septuagint, which he cites in Greek, at second hand, no doubt,

41 P. Murciano, *op. cit.*, p. 106/7.

42 I have used the edition by Z. Poznansky, published by Akademon with a preface by J. Haker (Jerusalem 1970).

43 For Profayt's quotations cf. the notes of Poznansky to the KH ed. cit.; for Pablo of Burgos' *Postillae ad Nicholas* cf. e.g. Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María* (Madrid 1952) 339-40. See also *Shevet Judah*, ed. Azriel Schochat (Jerusalem 1947) pp. 28, 40, 158 for some playful mentions. Shelomo Eidelberg, in 'Was Nicholas de Lyre of Jewish Origin?' (Hebrew), *Sinai*, 64 (1968/9) pp. 204-6, argues for a Jewish origin of the scholar. To us the important factor is whether he was believed to be Jewish and therefore accorded more attention or not. Abarbanel's commentary on Daniel pays attention to Nicholas. To the authors quoted in the various Encyclopedia articles who maintain his Jewish origin one may add the paragraphs in Werner Rolewinck's *Fasciculus Temporum*. He writes: «...fuit judei natione conversus...visitavit escolas informatus est in pueritia...» (ed. Paris 1512) f. 116.

44 Magen, p. 27.

and compares it to the MT: «...as the Jew believes only in his religion and not in other versions of the Bible... the Jew should not accept evidence brought by the Christians from their translation. For there are differences between theirs and ours. For there are many divergences in the translation of Jerome and even more in Gregory who says in the pericope «and the Lord appeared unto him» Abraham saw three and served one. And if you press them they will say that thus was the translation of the seventy elders. They are the ones who translated the Bible for Talmi. He is Tolomeo. And we are to say to them that when they show us that translation, signed by faithful Jews, we will believe them. Or perhaps we shall not believe, for it has already been indicated to us that that translation was changed in various places and it seems to me that that is the reason why that translation was not copied on (i.e. transmitted or translated) amongst the Jews... the tradition witnesses for the Jew (the truth of) the verses, the words, the diacritical points, the cantillation. Also, our predecessors have truthfully given evidence that the (seventy) elders ie. the LXX) changed (their translation) out of fear...<sup>45</sup>.

His use of Talmud for providing the historical background of the LXX, reminiscent of Profayt Duran's use of the Talmud for providing a historical background to early Christian customs, is in some ways an antecedent for Dei Rossi's comparison of the evidence of the letter of Aristeas with that of the tractate Megillah.

He seems to be aware of the anachronism incurred in using logic and dialectics for Biblical interpretation: «The science of logic and the ways of dialectics were only perfected in the days of Aristoteles and afterwards. Therefore we are not to make the understanding of the verses subservient to syllogisms and dialectics and logics. Only to the plain meaning...<sup>46</sup>.

What he means by the «plain meaning», as he makes clear elsewhere, is the understanding of the verse in context: «It is the way of the Muslims and the Christians that when they are short of an argument they say that the

<sup>45</sup> Magen, pp. 5-7, 33.

<sup>46</sup> Magen, p. 7.

verse is indicating an inner meaning, a great secret. And we are to say to you that we shall leave out all commentators and we will take what precedes and what comes after (lit. the above and the below) the verse about which we wish to speak and we shall comment on it as is fit, according to its subject matter in connection with the (rest of the) verses. For the first (or primary) commentary, even according to their commentators is the 'historico'...'»<sup>47</sup>.

None of the above mentioned apologues is entirely consistent, nor do they entirely abandon philosophy or the use of sources at second hand or without consistent scrutiny. But the same might probably be said about most historians of early modern Europe. Even Azaria dei Rossi accepted Anneas of Viterbo's forgeries uncritically when they suited his arguments<sup>48</sup>. What is important is not to neglect the stages of gradual development in the use of techniques of historical and literary enquiry which are recognizable to the modern practitioners of the craft as comparable to their own.

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47 Magen, p. 3.

48 I owe this information to a paper, read by Ms. J. Weinberg at the Institute of Jewish Studies, London, on «Azaria dei Rossi's use of Anneas's forgeries».

Since the above lines were written there appeared Frank Talmage, 'The polemical writings of Profiat Duran' (Hebrew), *Kuntresim*, No. 55 (Zalman Shazar Center and Dinur Center, Jerusalem 1981) I thank the author for kindly sending me the work and add the references to this new critical edition (= T): to n. 20-T4 ff.; to n. 21-T18/9; to n. 22-T5; to n. 23-T49 ff.; to n. 24-T22; to n. 25-T28; to n. 26-T 40, 49, passim; to n. 27-T37; to n. 28-T54; to n. 29-T60; to n. 30-T62; to n. 31-T64.