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Shalom ben Solomon Yerushalmi: Mapping a Sicilian Exile and His Intellectual Baggage*

1. *Shalom ben Solomon Yerushalmi*

The hero of this article is a little-known polymath, the Sicilian exile Shalom the son of Rabbi Saʿadia the son of Rabbi Ḥiyya the son of Jacob, alias Yerushalmi, "from my place".[1] Through his alias, Yerushalmi expresses his yearnings for Jerusalem, bemoaning his fate as an exile, who lives far away from the holy city, as we read in the colophon of his copy of the *Epistle on the Astrolabe* in Ms. ebr. 379 from the Vatican Apostolic Library, folio 41v. As for "from my place", ממקומ״י, it is the abbreviation made of the first letter of each word in the second part of Deuteronomy 33:11: «smite through the loins of them that rise up against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again» (מחץ מתנים קמיו ומשנאיו, מן יקומון).

From the extant evidence, we learn that Shalom Yerushalmi was immersed in scientific learning in Syracuse, where he copied astronomical treatises between 1482 and 1487. During this period, an astronomical treatise and a biblical commentary were copied for him. After the expulsion of the Jews of Sicily in 1492, Yerushalmi reached Modon (the Venetian name of Methoni), which would have been a natural first stop for Syracusan exiles, being on a similar latitude as Syracuse and one of the nearest places outside the Kingdom of Sicily. There is further evidence of Yerushalmi's intellectual activity in Patras in 1512, where he copied astronomical tables. In 1515, he was in Lepanto (the Venetian name of Nafpaktos), where he copied exegetical work.

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[1] Some information on Yerushalmi, in part inaccurate, is found in M. Steinschneider, *Mathematik bei den Juden*, Georg Olms, Hildesheim 1964 [1901], 203-204. Steinschneider wrongly points to a Jerusalemite ancestor of Yerushalmi.

Apart from his original scientific and exegetical treatises, poems and works copied by him or for him, which will be mapped throughout this article, one finds further details regarding his communal role. His name appears in a responsum from 1504 while in Mazarakata (?) and in another responsum from 1509, written in Modon.[2] The last known trace of Yerushalmi is from 1521, when his name appears among the leaders of the community of Arta in the Epirus.[3]

Yerushalmi's stay in Modon and his further relocations, as noted by Nadia Zeldes, probably reflects the uncertain conditions of the years of war between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire. After the Expulsion, many exiles settled in the Venetian colonies, where Jews and even conversos *en route* back to Judaism were welcome by the authorities (but at times they were unwelcome by the local Jewish communities). Unfortunately for the Jews who attempted to settle in these territories in the years that followed, many of these places fell to the hands of the Ottomans and Jews found themselves caught amidst the battles between the Venetians and the Ottomans, having to endure further vicissitudes: expulsions and even death.[4]

2. *The Sicilian Jewish intellectual sphere in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries*

The unfortunate paucity of surviving documents and books from late medieval Sicily makes it difficult to reconstruct a true image of the intellectual milieu of Sicilian Jews before 1492. In his monumental oeuvre, *The Jews in Sicily*,[5] Simonsohn sums up the extant textual evidence for the Jewish education system and scholarly achievements. Literacy (at least among men) seems

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[2] H. Gross, "Jesaja b. Mali da Trani", *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie* 13 (1909) 49. Gross mentions מאסראקא in a Cambridge manuscript but it is not entirely clear what it refers to. It is probably Mazarakata in Cephalonia, which is relatively close to Yerushalmi's known locations, such as Arta and Patras. A priori, it could also refer to the Island of Mathraki, part of the Diapontia Islands, but it is quite far from Yerushalmi's whereabouts, so perhaps this option is less probable.

[3] L. Borstein-Makovetsky, "Life and Society in the Community of Arta in the Sixteenth Century", *Peʿamim* 45 (1991) 133.

[4] J. Palermo, *The Transition of the Jews of Sicily to the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean after the 1492 Expulsion,* M.A. Thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem 1993 (in Hebrew); and N. Zeldes, "Diffusion of Sicilian Exiles and their Culture as Reflected in Hebrew Colophons", *Hispania Judaica Bulletin* 5 (2007) 323-327. On page 326, the title of Yerushalmi's exegetical work should be *Shabbat Shalom* and not *Shevaḥ Shalom*.

[5] Sh. Simonsohn *The Jews in Sicily, Volume 18: Under the Rule of Aragon and Spain*, Brill, Leiden 2010, 12108-12131.

to have been common and there were various forms of teaching: private instruction, communal and private schools, which also included Talmudic academies (*yeshivot*), as well as apprenticeships. In regard to scientific endeavour, Sicily appears to have become a centre of activities for Jewish astronomers, be they Sicilians *de souche*, such as Isaac ben Elijah ha-Kohen, or immigrants, such as the Sephardic Isaac Ibn al-Aḥdab.[6]

Simonsohn's list of around thirty dated manuscripts of certain or almost Sicilian provenance from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries evinces a conspicuous interest in science, mainly in astronomy and medicine. One also finds significant interest in Kabbalah. Manuscripts on Halakha, Bible, Talmud and grammar, however, are scarce.[7] On the other hand, within the over 800 volumes ascertained to have been owned by Sicilian Jews, mainly in the fifteenth century, constituting of manuscripts and several incunabula, the great majority of books are of religious nature: Bibles, prayer books, Talmudic and post-Talmudic rabbinic literature, with a few grammatical works but only one book on Kabbalah.[8] Additional surviving evidence, such as extant manuscripts of works composed in Sicily but copied outside of it, such as Ibn al-Aḥdab's mathematical treatise *Epistle of the Number* or Yerushalmi's *Shabbat Shalom*, combined with the vivid impressions of foreign visitors to Sicily, seem to corroborate the supposition that science played a very significant role in the intellectual lives of Sicilian Jews at the time.

We know of several visitors to Sicily from the Italian and Iberian Peninsulae who expressed their low esteem for the Jews of the Island due to their reputation of being immersed in science and less interested in Halakha. Perhaps the most famous critic was Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro, who wrote letters criticizing the Jews of Palermo for their moral laxity. A guide to the traveller to Sicily found within a collection of letters completed in 1501 by Meshulam Cusi ben Moses Jacob of Mestre, hitherto unpublished, suggests that a halakhic scholar who reaches Palermo, will become very successful:

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[6] Also known as Ibn al-Ḥadib. Further details on these polymaths are provided in the section on Ms. ebr. 379 from the Vatican Library.

[7] Three manuscripts related to Yerushalmi appear on the list (pp. 12122-12125): *Yesod ʿOlam* by Isaac ben Joseph Israeli in Ms. Hunt. 299 from the Bodleian Library; Gersonides's biblical commentary in Ms. ebr. 91 from the Vatican Library, both copied for Yerushalmi; as well as the astronomical miscellany copied by Yerushalmi in Ms. ebr. 379, from the Vatican Library, all of which I discuss in this article.

[8] Simonsohn claims that the content of these private libraries does not reflect the intellectual interests of Sicilian Jews, due, for example, to the discrepancy in the distribution of Kabbalistic works in the locally copied manuscripts and in the private libraries. This theme deserves further discussion, elsewhere.

«How good and pleasant it is [Psalms 133:1] to put your mind to go to the city of Sicily [i.e. Palermo] since there you will gain a name and prestige because in that city there is no one who preaches and no one who seeks Torah and wisdom...». A harsh critic of the learning methods in Sicily was the Sephardic sage Isaac Montizon, who, in his copy of the ethical work *Beḥinat ha-ʿOlam* (The Investigation of the World) by Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi ha-Pnini, criticizes Sicilians Jews for learning by rote and misunderstanding the text.[9] In fact, Yerushalmi, in his supercommentary on *Shabbat Shalom*, which will be presently discussed, mentions his teacher Isaac Montizon, who probably is the same person as the aforementioned critic. Regarding Yerushalmi's attitude towards religious matters, as we shall see throughout the article, there was neither ignorance (both in the French and English meanings of the word) nor disinterest in biblical or halakhic matters, only harsh criticism toward Talmudic hair-splitting (*pilpul*).

In the following sections, I will present the manuscripts related to Yerushalmi. They are divided into three categories: 1) his original works, with special focus on his main oeuvre *Shabbat Shalom*; 2) treatises copied for him; 3) pieces copied by him.

2.1. Original compositions by Yerushalmi

2.1.a. *Shabbat Shalom*

Jerusalem, Benayahu, Meir, Ms. NV 1 (IMHM F 74913); Oxford, The Bodleian Library, Ms. Poc. 183 (IMHM F 16372).

Shabbat Shalom[10] is a supercommentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra's commentary on three Torah portions: *Bereshit* (Genesis 1:1-6:8), *Shmot* (Exodus 1:1-6:1), and *Ki Tisa* (Exodus 30:11-34:35). *Shabbat Shalom* has survived in two copies. One witness, Ms. NV 1 from the Meir Benayahu Collection in Jerusalem, was copied in Lepanto in semi-cursive Sephardic script in 1513, i.e. during the lifetime of Yerushalmi. Unfortunately, we know nothing about the copyist. The second copy, Ms. Poc. 183 from the Bodleian Library, was copied in Byzantine script, also during the sixteenth century. The copyist's name (or the owner's) was probably Solomon, a name decipherable in a signature following the colophon at the end of the treatise. It is not clear whether the *Urtext* was written before or after the expulsion.

Shabbat Shalom focusses on linguistic, mathematical and astronomical themes related to Ibn Ezra's commentary. A study of *Shabbat Shalom* has

[9] Zeldes, "Diffusion of Sicilian Exiles", 331.

[10] Several of the titles of Yerushalmi's original works contain his first name *Shalom* (peace), creating a pun.

proven to be most valuable in unearthing data regarding Shalom Yerushalmi's intellectual world and scholarly achievements. Besides being one of few surviving witnesses of Yerushalmi's original writings, it also contains hitherto unpublished precious information about his scientific education and original works no longer extant. Furthermore, a plethora of treatises and authors are mentioned throughout *Shabbat Shalom*, revealing Yerushalmi's eclectic cultural background. We also learn new facts about the scientific oeuvre of Isaac ben Joseph Israeli from fourteenth-century Toledo. I shall focus mainly on data regarding Yerushalmi's lost works and his scientific background. It will be of great interest to publish *Shabbat Shalom* in its entirety in the future.

In the beautiful introduction to *Shabbat Shalom*, Yerushalmi explains the themes Ibn Ezra commentated upon, the reason for naming his work *Shabbat Shalom* and for whom it was composed. The introduction also reflects Yerushalmi's perception that science is superior to Talmudic studies:[11]

> [1א] נאום שלום בר שלמה ירושלמי להיות דברי החכם הר׳ אברהם בן עזרא עמקו מהשיג בבאורו הנכבד שעשה על תורתנו הקדושה עד שהוצרכו רבים מהמפרשים לבאר דבריו לרב עמקם וצחותם כי הוא ז״ל אסף וקבץ בבאורו הנכבד כל ענין נחמד מחכמת הדקדוק גם מחכמ׳ הטבע והאלהות ומחכמת המספר והתשבורת וחשבון מהלך הגלגלי׳ [וממשפטי הכוכבים והוראתם][12] על זה העולם השפל להראות העמים והשרים יופי תורתנו הקדושה איך היא כוללת כלל החכמות ולא תחסר כל בה ולזה היה קושי העמידה על דבריו לאיש אשר לא נסה ללכת בהמה ולא הרגיש כל שכלו בחכמות חיצונות אלא כל עסקו תמיד כל היום לא יחשה בהויי דאביי ורבינא ורב אשי. וכאשר יבא לעיין בענין דק ועמוק מדברי הרב ורמיזותיו וסודותיו בענייני החכמות ימצא השער נעול לפניו בדלתים ובריח יבוש ויסוג אחור ובפרט בשלש פרשיות שבהם העמיק הרב עד מאד. צלל במים אדירים והעלה לנו פנינים הראנו ידו הנוראה בפרשת בראשית ושמות וכי תשא סימנם בש״ת גם שב״ת כי בהם תשבות חכמת כל חכם ובינת נבוניו תתבלע להשיג תעלומות חכמה אשר כלל בהם הרב. ויהי היום בקשו ממני מקצת מיודעי [1ב] מהעומדים לפני לאמר לבאר להם אלה השלש פרשיות הנזכרות ויאמרו לי לאמר הלא ידעת כי שב״ת משוש לבנו הם נגילה ונשמחה בם נזכירה דודיך אם תבארם לנו ותגלה לנו בהם ענייני החשבון והתשבורת ומהלכי המאורות שכלל החכם בתוך אלו השלש פרשיות הנזכרות ובזה נדע כי קראת לשב״ת עונג והנה להפיק רצונם אמרתי הנני ומאותו מעט קט אשר השגתי בביאור דברי הרב אחקוק אותו על ספר להדריככם במעגלי יושר למען שמו ית׳ עד

[11] My edition and English translation of the introduction are based on Ms. NV 1, the more complete and accurate copy. On one occasion, however, the reading in Ms. Poc. 183 seems more correct, as I point to in my edition.

[12] *I.e.* astrology. In Ms. NV 1 we find ומשפטי הוראותם *i.e.* the ruling of their directions, but the judgements are attributed to the planets, not to the orbs.

שתשבתו בשב״תכם בשלו״ם ולזה קראתי לבאורי זה שבת שלום יען וביען בשלש פרשיות הנזכרות שסימנם שב״ת כל איש ואיש במקום מקום שרמז הרב לעניין דק על מקומו יבא בשלום ואם השער יהיה סגור בששת ימי המעשה ביום השבת יפתח והנה לא ראיתי להאריך לבאר אלה השלש פרשיות מראש ועד סוף לפי שכבר קדמוני הרבה מהחכמים שלא הגעתי לפסת כף רגלם וביארו בהם כל הצורך רק במקצת הקדמות שאראה שהם ז״ל לא האריכו בהם כל הצורך או לא רצו לדבר בהם לסמכם על המבין אעורר עליהם לקרב הענין אל המתחילים בעיון. גם במקצת מקומות שיראה לי בביאורם דעה אחרת אזכור דעתי אולי תישר בעיני המעיין ומאל היכול על כל אשאל עזר להתחיל ולהשלים.

[1r] The words of Shalom the son of Solomon Yerushalmi on the sayings of the sage Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, in his respectable commentary which he made on our Holy Torah, being too deep to grasp until it became necessary for many of the commentators to explain his sayings in their profound depth and precision, since he, in blessed memory, collected and gathered in his esteemed commentary every lovely matter from the science of grammar, also from the natural sciences, divinity and the science of the number [*i.e.* arithmetic], geometry and astronomy [lit. the calculation of the motion of the orbs/spheres] and the judgements of the planets and their rulings on this sublunary world [*i.e.* astrology], to show the people and rulers the beauty of our Holy Torah, how it includes the entirety of sciences and does not lack anything in it. And for this [reason], it was difficult to understand his [*i.e.* Ibn Ezra's] sayings for the person who did not try to follow [lit. walk in] them and did not immerse [lit. feel] the entirety of his mind in the external sciences, but whose business is always – all day long – not to be silent[13] on the discussions of Abaye, Ravina and Rav Ashi. But when he comes to scrutinize a subtle and deep theme from the sayings of the Rabbi, his insinuations and his secrets regarding the matters of the sciences, he will find the gate locked in front of him by doors and a bar. He will feel ashamed and will withdraw backwards,[14] in particular, in three Torah portions in which the Rabbi has gone into great depth. He plunged into mighty waters[15] and has raised pearls for us, showing us his awesome hand in the Torah portion *Bereshit*, *Shmot* and *Ki Tisa*, their sign being B-SH-T, also SH-B-T, because in

[13] *Cf.* Isaiah 62:1.

[14] This description may have been inspired by a parable found in Isaac Israeli's *Yesod ʿOlam*, a copy of which was made for Yerushalmi in Ms. Hunt. 299 from the Bodleian Library; see I. Wartenberg, "A Non-linear Transmission of Euclid's Elements in a Medieval Hebrew Calendrical Treatise", *Centaurus* 62 (2020) 163-164.

[15] *Cf.* Exodus 15:10.

them the wisdom of every wise man will stop[16] and the wisdom of his men will be swallowed up[17] [and impede] grasping the mysteries of wisdom included by the Rabbi. One day, several of my acquaintances [1v] standing in front of me asked me to explain to them these three mentioned Torah portions. They said to me: «you know that SH-B-T is the joy of our heart,[18] we will rejoice and be glad in it[19] we will find thy love[20] if you explain them to us and reveal to us the matters of arithmetic, geometry and the motions of the luminaries that the sage included within these three mentioned Torah portions. This way, we will know that you named the Sabbath SH-B-T a delight».[21] Thus, in order to respond to their wish, I said: «Here I am».[22] And from the little bit[23] which I grasped in the commentary on the Rabbi's sayings, I will engrave it in a book in order to guide you in paths [lit. circles] of uprightness[24] for His name, may He be blessed, until you settle in your dwelling in peace.[25] And for this [reason], I have called this commentary of mine *Shabbat Shalom* because[26] in the three mentioned Torah portions, whose sign is SH-B-T, each and every man is in his place, a place that the rabbi alluded to a subtle theme, it will reach his place in peace.[27] If the gate is closed during the six days of Creation, it will open on the day of the Sabbath.[28] Behold, Here I did not see [it fitting] to extend my commentary on these three Torah portions from the beginning to the end since many sages have already preceded me – I have not reached their sole – they have explained them as necessary. Only in [the case of] few preliminaries, where I saw that they, in blessed memory, did not write enough at length about them, or did not want to discuss them, relying upon [the readers] to under-

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[16] Yerushalmi is creating puns by using the multitude of meanings created by the letters SH-B-T, which means 'stopped', 'Sabbath' and the abbreviation of the three mentioned Torah portions.

[17] *Cf.* Isaiah 29:14 and Psalms 107:27.

[18] *Cf.* Lamentations 5:15.

[19] *Cf.* Psalms 118:24.

[20] *Cf.* Song of Songs 1:4.

[21] *Cf.* Isaiah 58:13.

[22] *Cf.* Genesis 22:1, et passim.

[23] *Cf.* Ezekiel 16:47.

[24] *Cf.* Proverbs 4:11.

[25] Further play on words: the root letters SH-B-T also relate to the verb 'to dwell' and Yerushalmi's first name, Shalom, means 'peace'.

[26] *Cf.* Leviticus 26:43.

[27] *Cf.* Exodus 18:23.

[28] *Cf.* Ezekiel 46:1.

> stand, then I shall awaken upon them in order to render the matter closer [*i.e.* comprehensible] to those who start scrutinizing. Also, in a few places where I will have another view on their explanation, I will mention my opinion, perhaps it will be correct in the eyes of the scrutinizer and from the almighty God I shall seek help to start and to complete.

On folio 3r,[29] we learn about the existence of *Netivot Shalom*, Yerushalmi's commentary on Isaac Ibn al-Aḥdab's *Oraḥ Selulah* (The Paved Way):[30]

> I have already made known all this [*i.e.* astronomical conjunctions] by descriptive teaching [*i.e.* by diagrams, with no theoretical proof], this concerns knowing the essence in my commentary on *Oraḥ Selulah*, which I have named *Netivot Shalom* [The Pathways of Peace/Shalom's Pathways], and from it, the scrutinizer will be able to know all this in a concise manner. However, I have not seen [it fitting] to repeat myself [lit. 'double'] and write those matters here lest the hearer's soul will become weary.

Half a millennium later, with no extant copy of *Netivot Shalom*, one could only wish that Yerushalmi had risked gruelling his hearers and readers by repeating his teachings.

On folio 16r, we read that Isaac Israeli, the author of *Yesod ʿOlam,* is the only author at the time who had ever written a commentary on arithmetical and geometrical matters found in Ibn Ezra's biblical commentary (no longer extant). According to Yerushalmi, Israeli's commentary was in Arabic, and there he relied on several preliminaries from Euclid's *Elements*. Yerushalmi observes that he found in Israeli's commentary a calculation error (regarding the area of the square in a triangle inscribed within a circle), and that he also felt that certain matters were not easy to grasp for the reader. Thus, he decided to write a commentary in order to correct and clarify these matters, and he wrote it in Arabic, to echo Israeli.[31] Furthermore, says Yerushalmi:

> I preceded this discourse with rhymes in Arabic, which say that whoever sails on the waters of philosophy and learns from it to the best of his ability and now he is asking and seeking [to learn] geometry, yearning to see and understand the matters hidden to him, perhaps he will reach the highest degree until understanding what is deep and dark...

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[29] All the folio numbers given in this section refer to Ms. NV 1.

[30] *Oraḥ Selulah* was copied by Yerushalmi, it is the first treatise in the codex Ms. ebr. 379 from the Vatican Library.

[31] His Hebrew translation from the Arabic is found on folios 21v-26v.

Further mathematical compositions by Yerushalmi are revealed in *Shabbat Shalom*. On folio 21r, Yerushalmi discusses the notion of the perfect number (lit. the whole number המספר השלם) *i.e.* a number which is the sum of all its proper divisors. He mentions that for each degree of numbers, there is only one perfect number: 6 in units, 28 in tens, 496 in hundreds and 8,128 in thousands. Yerushalmi says further that he has explained this matter thoroughly in the first chapter of his arithmetical work *Sefer Mtey Mispar*:[32] «...there I explained the matter of the perfect number, the deficient (החסר) and the superfluous (הנוסף) and how to find them».[33] On folio 25r, he refers to «a second method I adduced in the chapter on multiplication in my arithmetical composition, which I called *Sefer Mtey Mispar*, my sayings there should be scrutinized». He also mentions that in this book, he discusses the addition of the integers from 1 to 15, but the rest of the contents of this treatise remains unknown. On folio 25v, we read about two other mathematical themes Yerushalmi wrote about after the composition of *Sefer Mtey Mispar:* how to determine the diagonal of a square and the diameter of circle given its circumference («After refining the calculation I have found that the circumference is about three times more than the diagonal, plus one seventh, minus one part of 21 integers, which is one third of a seventh...»).

Among the many pearls hidden within *Shabbat Shalom*, we also learn about his personal scientific curriculum. On folio 28v, Yerushalmi discusses the fundamental role that Ptolemy's *Almagest* and Isaac Israeli's *Yesod ʿOlam* had played in his scientific education:

> All this [*i.e.* planetary theory] is explained by the astronomers. I will not be able to explain these matters unless I write [*i.e.* copy] the majority of the third discourse from *Yesod ʿOlam*.[34] In order to know the truths of these matters, one will have to study the first five discourses of the *Almagest* – we toiled [lit. stood] in their study for a whole year, with much diligence and expediency, in addition to the foundations we had [acquired] in astronomy and spherical trigonometry [lit. the wisdom of the sphere]. I will not be able to write to you their explanation because it will extend beyond our aims within this commentary. Notwithstanding, I will not refrain from explaining a certain matter from this material [here and there] so it becomes easy to understand, and I will make it known at least by descriptive teaching.

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[32] This is possibly a pun on *Mtey Meʿaṭ* [Genesis 34:10].

[33] *I.e.* numbers which are smaller or greater than the sum of their proper divisors; respectively *e.g.* 20 and 16.

[34] A treatise he had commissioned, Ms. Hunt. 299 from the Bodleian Library.

On folio 33r, Yerushalmi mentions Ibn Ezra's view on the presence of the verb 'to go downwards' in the biblical verse «and Abraham went down into Egypt» [Genesis 12:10], namely, given that the Land of Israel is found to the north of Egypt, going southwards is 'going downwards'. Yerushalmi then adduces the view of his teacher Isaac Montizon: «...unto what is found in the northern hemisphere rains fall and render the earth wet, and it becomes soaked. Also plants grow in it, become rotten and return to earth. For this reason, they rise towards the northern hemisphere...». Following Ibn Ezra's and Montizon's views, Yerushalmi says that it is thanks to astronomy, in particular through the use of the celestial globe, that he is able to understand why going north correlates to going upwards:

> [33v] ...but today, that I have tasted some honey which is on the tip of the wand of astronomy, my eyes were lit and I saw that the reason [...] is that the north pole in most inhabited places is rising and high above the horizon and the south pole is low and hidden under the horizon. [34r] Therefore, the one who goes to the northern hemisphere is mounting and the one who goes to the southern hemisphere is descending and when you hold the celestial globe in your hand and you raise the north pole according to the height of the latitude in your horizon, you will see it well and you will determine the veracity of this matter.

On folio 38r we learn about the existence of the treatise *Divrey Shalom* (Sayings of Peace/Shalom's Sayings), in which he comments on the Torah portion *Shmini* (Leviticus 9:1-11:47), and perhaps other Torah portions.

At the end of *Shabbat Shalom* (folios 40r-40v), Yerushalmi declares that his commentary on these three Torah portions will suffice:[35]

> ...because whoever will improve the scrutiny and understanding in this commentary of ours and will understand the contents of these three Torah portions, will easily understand the other sayings of the Rabbi in his precious commentary on the entire Torah, with a bit of help from the sages who comment upon the Rabbi's saying, which I have not seen [fitting] to write, and [thus] repeat their discourse. And this suffices for the person who understands.

Throughout *Shabbat Shalom*, Yerushalmi mentions and quotes from a plethora of sources, both ancient and medieval. Although I have focussed on the parts within *Shabbat Shalom* that shed new light on Yerushalmi's lost

[35] As we have learned, Yerushalmi wrote a commentary on the Torah portion *Shmini*, but not in relation to Ibn Ezra's commentary.

works, I would like to offer a glimpse into his remarkable intellectual luggage, which includes the knowledge of the following authors and their works: Ptolemy's *Centiloquium* and Al-Baghdadi's commentary on it, Al-Kindi's compendium on the *Almagest*, the medical encyclopedia *Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* by Ibn Sina (Avicenna), the commentary on *Sefer Yeṣira* by Isaac Israeli ben Solomon (The First), Moses Kimḥi's grammatical work, Moses of Narbonne's supercommentary on Maimonides's *Guide for the Perplexed*, the biblical commentary by Samuel ben Saʿadia Ibn Moṭoṭ (or Maṭuṭ), which contains astronomical theories about the seven planets, as well as other works by Abraham Ibn Ezra. Unlike many a medieval author, who, more often than not, do not mention their sources, Yerushalmi not only indicates the names of the authors whose work he is quoting, but he also, at times, provides the exact reference within their work.

The long list of professions mentioned by Yerushalmi throughout *Shabbat Shalom* includes grammarians, philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers, astrologers, and alchemists. *Shabbat Shalom* is not devoid of humour and it even contains a number of mystical facets, which deserve a separate analysis and which can shed new light on the role of magic (and humour) among Sicilian scholars. In short, *Shabbat Shalom* is a well of information on the intellectual and other types of knowledge acquired by Yerushalmi.

2.1.b. Calendrical poems
The Ben Zvi Institute, Jerusalem, Israel Ms. 230 (IMHM F 35671).

In this codex, copied in 1769 in oriental script by Ḥayim Samuel ha-Levi, one finds Yerushalmi's poems on the Jewish calendar. Calendrical poems were also part of Abraham Ibn Ezra's work, and as we know, the latter greatly influenced Yerushalmi's writings.

2.1.c. *Battey Shalom*
Library of Jewish Studies in Warsaw, Codex 75.

A unicum of a calendrical work by Yerushalmi, *Battey Shalom* (The Houses of Peace/Shalom's Houses) was housed in the Library of Jewish Studies in Warsaw. It was part of a collection of about 150 manuscripts and 40,000 printed books, which was plundered by the Nazis in the autumn of 1939, some of which later succumbed to fire. Sadly, none of these precious objects have ever resurfaced.[36]

[36] B. Richler, "The Lost Manuscripts of the Library for Jewish Studies in Warsaw", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 38-39 (2005-6) [= I. Zwiep *et al.* (eds.), *Omnia in Eo: Studies on Jewish Books and*

2.1.d. *Ohaley Qedar*: a calendrical treatise

Yerushalmi allegedly also wrote a treatise on the calendar of the Jews in Arabia named *Ohaley Qedar* (The Tents of Qedar). Already at the time of Steinschneider, no copy of this work had survived.[37]

2.2. Manuscripts copied by Yerushalmi

2.2.a. A scientific miscellany
Vatican City, The Vatican Apostolic Library, Ms. ebr. 379 (IMHM F 458).

Ms. ebr. 379 from the Vatican Library is a scientific compendium, which includes a variety of astronomical texts. All the treatises were copied by Shalom Yerushalmi in neat semi-cursive Sephardic script. Latin summary notes in a different hand were added into the margins. A later owner was Shalom ben Elijah.[38] Fourteen of the sixteen works within the codex were copied in Syracuse between 1482 and 1487, probably for personal use. One text was copied in Modon in 1498 (n. 13) and another one in Patras in 1512 (n. 10). The codex focusses both on theoretical as well as practical astronomy, which includes astronomical data and the usage of astronomical instruments. The treatises derive from Jewish, Muslim and Christian sources which were part of the forefront of the scientific literature at the time.[39]

— *Oraḥ Selulah* (The Paved Way)[40] is the first treatise in the codex. It was composed by the Sephardic polymath Isaac Ibn al-Aḥdab, who had reached Syracuse at the end of the fourteenth century. He wrote extensively on astronomy, and even improved an existing instrument (n. 7).[41] *Oraḥ Selulah* was composed no later than 1396. It includes a set of tables for conjunctions of

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Libraries in Honour of Adri Offenberg Celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam] 360-365, 382.

[37] Steinschneider, *Mathematik*, 204.

[38] I have not been able to find any further information about this owner.

[39] B. Richler (ed.), M. Beit-Arié, in collaboration with N. Pasternak *et al.*, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library Catalogue*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2008, 321-324; SfarData E220.

[40] *Cf.* Proverbs 15:19.

[41] Furthermore, Ibn al-Aḥdab's *Epistle of the Number* is the first significant known mathematical Hebrew treatise on algebra, see I. Wartenberg, *The Epistle of the Number by Ibn al-Aḥdab: The Transmission of Arabic Mathematics to Hebrew Circles in Medieval Sicily*, Gorgias Press, Piscataway NJ 2015. Yerushalmi was well-acquainted with Ibn al-Aḥdab's astronomical work, so it is not impossible that he also read, or even possessed, a copy of *The Epistle of the Number*.

the sun and the moon as well as the times and circumstances of eclipses.[42] In Yerushalmi's original work *Shabbat Shalom*, we have learned that he wrote a commentary on *Oraḥ Selulah*.

Interestingly, the margins of folio 1v are decorated with drawings of plants, flowers and animals, in various colours including gold.[43] The drawings look somewhat spontaneous and unprofessional, but not unattractive. They may have been made by Yerushalmi himself, who used elements from the local artistic repertoire. The colours, however, were not left to dry properly so they smeared over the next folio. Perhaps Yerushalmi decided to decorate the first page of *Oraḥ Selulah* to mark the importance of the treatise and his delight in making the copy. Regardless of its artistic level from a professional point of view, it is important to emphasize that decorative elements and, in particular, the usage of gold in a surviving medieval Hebrew scientific treatise, is rare. Furthermore, personal copies are usually not lavish or devoid of errors and erasures. In this case, the scribal level is very high. The text, as well as the tables and diagrams, were executed with great care, and there is ample use of red colour. Clearly, Yerushalmi cared for aesthetics and was apparently able to afford the materials, in particular, the gold. This copy may have also been used by Yerushalmi for teaching purposes, perhaps privately or in small groups, in which case a high esthetical level of such a textbook could have helped entice students to read its non-trivial contents.

Apart from the Jewish date, Yerushalmi often writes the equivalent Muslim or Julian dates in the colophons throughout the codex, and even astronomical data related to the date and time of completion of the copy and the coordinates of Syracuse, such as the position of the sun against the zodiac, the visible stars at that time, *etc*. The Jewish date is usually given by the day and the month in a particular year, or by festival-related designation, such as the eve of the Jewish New Year or the day in the counting of the 'Omer. For example, in *Oraḥ Selulah*, on folio 5r, we read in the signed colophon:

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[42] The Hebrew tables were later translated into Latin by the shadowy figure of the Sicilian scholar Flavius Mithridates, who became Pico della Mirandola's adviser, and who also was the converted son of Ibn al-Aḥdab's student and prominent copyist of his works, Nissim Abū ʾl-Faraj. See J. Chabás, B.R. Goldstein, "Isaac Ibn al-Ḥadib and Flavius Mithridates: The Diffusion of an Iberian Astronomical Tradition in the Late Middle Ages", *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 37 (2006) 147-148; Eid., "Ibn al-Ḥadib's Tables for Finding True Syzygy", *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 50 (2019) 428-446.

[43] This is the only decorated page in the manuscript. The entire codex can be currently viewed online through the KTIV database at the National Library of Israel or directly through the site of the Vatican Library: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ebr.379 (last accessed on 19 July 2022).

> This book was completed on Thursday, on the 18th [day] of the counting [of the ʻOmer] in the year [5]243,[44] by me, Shalom the son of Rabbi Solomon, the son of Rabbi Saʿadia, called Yerushalmi, from my place.

— On folio 13v, we find a table of colours of solar and lunar eclipses in Hebrew as well as Arabic in Hebrew characters. This is part of physical astronomy.[45]

— Astronomical tables by Isaac ben Elijah ha-Kohen.[46]

— An anonymous epistle on the astrolabe, probably written in or close to 1392.

— An epistle on the astrolabe by Elijah ha-Kohen of Montalto, possibly the father of Isaac mentioned in n. 2.[47] In the colophon on folio 50r, Yerushalmi recounts his usage of the astrolabe with a humorous tone: «I, the speaker, made measurements and raised to the sky and I have not moved from my place».[48]

— Diagrams of the astrolabe.

— Jacob ben Machir Ibn Tibbon's translation of Aḥmad Ibn Ṣaffār's commentary on the astrolabe, with additions by Ibn al-Aḥdab.

— Another astronomical treatise by Ibn al-Aḥdab, *Keli Ḥemda* (A Precious Instrument). Divided into two sections, consisting of four and thirteen chapters respectively, we find records of the construction and use of the equatorium, an astronomical instrument devised by Ibn al-Aḥdab in Syracuse in 1396 for the determination of the position of the planets with greater precision. It only requires the turning of dials, instead of making cumbersome calculations from astronomical tables.[49]

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[44] 10 April in the Julian calendar, 19 April in the retrojected Gregorian calendar, 1483.

[45] B.R. Goldstein, "Colors of Eclipses in Medieval Hebrew Astronomical Tables", *Aleph* 5 (2005) 11–34.

[46] Isaac ben Elijah ha-Kohen, the Syracusan polymath who wrote on astronomy, mathematics, linguistics and possibly philosophy, composed in the late 1420s or in the 1430s a Hebrew letter to the Venetian politician and humanist Marco Lippomano (ca. 1380/1390 - 1446 or 1447). In it, Ha-Kohen briefly introduces the Arabic verbal system. See D. Stein Kokin, "Isaac ha-Kohen's Letter to Marco Lippomano: Jewish-Christian Exchange and Arabic Learning in Renaissance Italy", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 104(2) (2014) 192-233.

[47] Id., p. 225.

[48] אני המדבר מדדתי ועלתי למרום ולא זזתי ממקומי שלום בר׳ שלמה ירושלמי

[49] B.R. Goldstein, "Astronomy in the medieval Jewish Spanish community", in L. Nauta, A. Vanderjagt (eds.), *Between Demonstration and Imagination: Essays in the History of Science and Philosophy presented to John D. North*, Brill, Leiden 1999, 233–234; and Id., "Descriptions of Astronomical Instruments in Hebrew", in D.A. King, G. Saliba (eds.), *From Deferent to*

— A commentary on the celestial globe attributed to Qusṭā Ben Lūqa.

— A compilation on astronomy and trigonometry, which includes tables on eclipses in Syracuse, longitudes and latitudes of various places, mainly around the Mediterranean, and explanation of the usage of a glass mirror to measure the height of a tower or a mountain.

— Tables and diagrams deriving from *Keli Ḥemdah*, copied in Patras in 1512.

— Jeremiah ha-Kohen of Palermo's treatise on the sundial.

— A table of tangents (לוח הצללים).

— Computed or predicted data on lunar and solar eclipses between 1483 and 1530, copied in Modon in 1498 on the Eve of the Jewish New Year 5249. On folio 75r, Yerushalmi wrote: «Eclipses I copied from Regiomontanus's register, according to the Christian calendar».[50]

— Isaac ben Joseph Israeli's *Shaʿar ha-Shamayim* (The Gate of the Heavens), an astronomical treatise, which was perceived by the author as a sequel to *Yesod ʿOlam*.[51] Indeed, we know that a copy of *Yesod ʿOlam* was made for Yerushalmi, Ms. Hunt. 299 from the Bodleian Library.

— *Ḥeshbon Mahalakhot ha-Kokhavim* (The Calculation of the Motions of the Stars) on planetary theory, by Abraham Bar Ḥiyya (or Bar Ḥayya),[52] to whom Yerushalmi refers to as «the divine sage». This treatise was a sequel to *Ṣurat ha-Areṣ* (The Form of the Earth), a cornerstone in the medieval Hebrew astronomical library. It is reasonable to assume that that Yerushalmi also read *Ṣurat ha-Areṣ*, perhaps even possessed a copy thereof.

In the colophon on folio 163v we find Yerushalmi's reason for the compilation of this codex:

> This book has been completed, it is *Ḥeshbon Mahalakhot ha-Kokhavim* (The Calculation of the Stellar Motions) by our wise and great Nasi [*i.e.* head, an honorific title], our Rabbi Ḥiyya of blessed memory, and I have completed it,

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Equant: A Volume of Studies in the History of Science in the Ancient and Medieval Near East in Honor of E.S. Kennedy, New York Academy of Sciences, New York 1987, 124-128.

[50] J.M. Steele, F.R. Stephenson, "Eclipse Observations Made by Regiomontanus and Walther", *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 29 (1998) 331-334. For similar lists of eclipses, see J. Chabás, B.R. Goldstein, "Astronomy in the Iberian Peninsula: Abraham Zacut and the Transition from Manuscript to Print", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 90 (2000) 65-67, 153-154.

[51] B.R. Goldstein, J. Chabás, "The Astronomical Tables of Isaac ben Joseph Israeli of Toledo", *Aleph* 17 (2017) 357-370; and Wartenberg, "A Non-linear Transmission", 161-162.

[52] J.M. Millás Vallicrosa (ed.), A. Bar Ḥiyya, *La obra Séfer Ḥeshbon mehlejot ha-kokabim de R. Abraham Bar Ḥiyya ha-Bargeloni*, Instituto Arias Montano, Barcelona 1959.

> Shalom, the son of Rabbi Solomon named Yerushalmi, on Thursday, 28 Adar II, year [5]244 to Creation, here in the city of Syracuse, on the island of Sicily. May the Merciful award me [the possibility] to study it and other [works]. Amen, so be it.[53]

It is possible to interpret Yerushalmi's words literally, *i.e.* that the book served for self-study. This would fit very well into the general context of his scientific education. Throughout the codex, Yerushalmi uses various formulae in the colophons. The same formula is expressed in the copy of *Sefer Zikkaron* (Book of Remembrance), which Yerushalmi later completed for Rabbi Moses Figo, Ms. Heb. 8° 514 from the National Library of Israel, discussed in the next section.

— Astronomical tables attributed to King Peter IV of Aragon (Don Pedro el Ceremonioso), known as *The Tables of Barcelona*, were translated from Catalonian into Hebrew by Jacob Corsuno of Seville around 1381, at the behest of the king.[54]

2.2.b. *Sefer Zikkaron*

Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel, Ms. Heb. 8° 514 (IMHM B 734, 38°514).

Sefer Zikkaron (Book of Remembrance), is a supercommentary on Rashi's biblical commentary by the exegete and poet Abraham ha-Levi Bukkart,[55] who arrived from Malaga to Tunis after the Expulsion, and completed this work in 1507. Yerushalmi was the last of three scribes who copied the work.[56] The colophon on folio 315r indicates that Yerushalmi completed the copy in Lepanto in 1515 *i.e.* only eight years after original work had been composed. This is the only treatise we know of, which was copied by Yerushalmi for someone else. The addressee was Rabbi Moses Figo, possibly the same Rabbi

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[53] אוי״ר, which also means 'air'.

[54] J.M. Millás Vallicrosa, *Las tablas astronómicas del rey don Pedro el Ceremonioso; edición critica de los textos hebraico, catalán y latino, con estudio y notas*, Escuela de la Casa Provincial de Caridad, Madrid - Barcelona 1962; and J. Chabás, "*Astronomía andalusí* en Cataluña: Las Tablas de Barcelona", in J. Casulleras, J. Samsó (eds.), *From Baġhdad to Barcelona: Studies in the Islamic Exact Sciences in Honour of Prof. Juan Vernet*, Instituto "Millás Vallicrosa" de Historia de la Ciencia Arabe, Barcelona 1996, 477-525.

[55] Other extant spellings are Bokrat, Bukarat and Bakarat, but בקארט should be transcribed as Bukkart.

[56] The two changes of hands in the manuscript end at the bottom of a verso folio, each time in the middle of a sentence, indicate a linear copying process.

Moses Figo from Constantinople, active in the sixteenth century, who wrote *Sefer Zikhron Moshe* (Moses's Remembrance Book), an index of sayings by sages of the Talmud, Midrash and other Jewish sources.

It is indeed possible, as suggested by Nadia Zeldes, that the shift of Yerushalmi from a scholar to a simple scribe in this case may point to the deterioration of his financial situation, which forced him to make a living by copying a treatise for someone else.[57] However, this copy could have been the result of a group enterprise in honour of Rabbi Moses Figo. The division of work among three different scribes may have been aimed to optimise the copying time and the quality thereof, given the considerable length of the work. In fact, there is no mention of the other two scribes - perhaps Yerushalmi paid them for their work.[58]

2.3. Manuscripts copied for Yerushalmi

2.3.a. *Yesod ʿOlam, Oxford*

The Bodleian Library, Ms. Hunt. 299 (IMHM F 19328).

This rich codex includes Isaac Israeli's scientific treatise *Yesod ʿOlam* (The Foundation of the World). It was copied for Shalom Yerushalmi by Samuel ben Reuven alias Marṣawi in Syracuse in 1484 in Sephardic semi-cursive script.[59] *Yesod ʿOlam* was composed in Toledo in the Jewish year 5070 A.M. (1309/10) and was of a very high scientific level for its time. Israeli officially presented it as a treatise on the Jewish calendar, although it is in fact an astronomical treatise.[60] Over fifty copies of *Yesod ʿOlam* have survived. The copy made for Yerushalmi by Marṣawi is one of the best ones, both textually and diagrammatically. It is a complete copy, executed with much care, using red ink in the diagrams and writing some of the ends of sentences vertically into the margins, to ensure that the upcoming heading of the new chapter would always appear at the beginning of the next line. Some marginal notes include clarifications or corrections by the scribe as well as notes by other hands but

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[57] Zeldes, "Diffusion of Sicilian Exiles", 331.

[58] In the colophon on folio 315r we find the wish: «May the Merciful One favour him, that he and his children and his descendants will study it until the end of the generations»; a similar wish which he expressed for himself in the colophon to his copy of Abraham bar Ḥiyya's *Ḥeshbon Mahalakhot ha-Kokhavim*, folio 163v in Ms. ebr. 379 from the Vatican Library.

[59] SfarData C258. So far, I have not been able to find any further information about this scribe.

[60] Wartenberg, "A Non-linear Transmission", 158-160.

none is Yerushalmi's, the first owner of this work. Not only is this copy aesthetically pleasing, but it is almost devoid of errors, reflecting Marṣawi's high scribal level. Without doubt, *Yesod ʻOlam* served as an important element of Yerushalmi's scientific education. As we have learned from *Shabbat Shalom*, Yerushalmi quotes from several parts of *Yesod ʻOlam* and refers to its Book III as fundamental for the study of astronomy.

2.3.b. Gersonides's biblical commentary
Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Library, Ms. ebr. 91 (IMHM F 207).

This manuscript contains Gersonides's commentary on Proverbs, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles. It is a copy made for Yerushalmi in Syracuse in 1489 in Sephardic semi-cursive script. There are some notes and corrections in various hands in the margins but none by Yerushalmi's quill. The scribe is Shabbetai ben Zeraḥ Sabatanello, also a Sicilian, one of four scribes of the Zohar within Ms. ebr. 207 at the Vatican Library, who copied the text of the Zohar on Genesis.[61] This copy attests to Yerushalmi's interest in biblical commentary, an interest corroborated by his own composition of a commentary on Ibn Ezra's biblical commentary, *Shabbat Shalom.*[62] Furthermore, the existence of this copy made for him as well as that of Ms. Hunt. 299 attests to Yerushalmi's good economic position, at least while still in Syracuse, before the Expulsion.[63]

2.4. *Conclusion*

In this article, I have aimed to do justice to the neglected Sicilian intellectual Shalom ben Solomon Yerushalmi. Most of the surviving works related to him are either works he copied or copies commissioned by him. A unicum of his original calendrical treatise *Battey Shalom* was destroyed during the Nazi period, and another calendrical treatise, *Ohaley Qedar*, had been lost. Yerushalmi's calendrical poems have survived but have been ignored. His exegetical treatise *Shabbat Shalom*, also overlooked, discloses key information about a number of his other original treatises, all sadly lost: (1) *Netivot Shalom*, a commentary on *Oraḥ Selulah* (2) *Mtey Mispar*, an arithmetical treatise (3) Some untitled mathematical writings related to geometry (4) Elaboration on and correction (in Arabic) of several mathematical issues treated in Isaac Israeli's Arabic commentary on Ibn Ezra's biblical commentary (Israeli's Arabic

[61] Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, 61-62, 146; SfarData E226.

[62] It is possible that Yerushalmi had access to, or even possessed, a copy of Gersonides's original mathematical original *Maʿase Ḥoshev* (The Art of Calculation).

[63] C. Roth, "Jewish Intellectual Life in Medieval Sicily", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 47 (1957) 331.

work is also lost and was hitherto unknown) (5) *Divrey Shalom*, which includes a commentary on the Torah portion *Shmini.*

My examination of the surviving works, in particular, of *Shabbat Shalom*, has shed light on Yerushalmi's love of science as well as his solid intellectual background and deep acquaintance with a multitude of texts, not only in the fields of astronomy and mathematics, but also in medicine, cosmology, the Jewish calendar, geography, astrology, alchemy, philosophy, as well as grammar and semantics of the Hebrew language. Although Yerushalmi's oeuvre may corroborate the reputation of Sicilian Jews as more focussed on science than on Halakha, the vociferous claim quoted earlier regarding the lack of proper study of the Torah among Sicilian Jews seems unjust,[64] surely in the case of Yerushalmi, given his evident interest in biblical commentary: he wrote a commentary on the Torah portion *Shmini* (and perhaps also to other Torah portions), he commissioned a copy of Gersonides's biblical commentary and his *Shabbat Shalom* constitutes his own commentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra's biblical exegesis.[65]

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that *Shabbat Shalom* aimed to explain scientific matters, mainly mathematical, astronomical and linguistic. Yerushalmi's impetus for delving into Ibn Ezra's biblical commentary may have derived from the latter's reputation as *homme de science*. Likewise, Yerushalmi's interest in Levi ben Gershom's biblical commentary may have been ignited due to the fact that Gersonides was the most original Jewish mathematician at the time. In any case, no palpable traces of halakhic discussions are found in Yerushalmi's surviving writings, except for his objection to Talmudic hair-splitting.[66]

From a linguistic perspective, it is important to emphasize that Yerushalmi writes in pure Hebrew (he does not mix it with the vernacular or Latin). He demonstrates perfect command of the medieval Hebrew scientific language. At the same time, we learned about his (now lost) writings in Arabic. This is another fascinating indication of how Arabic (perhaps written in Hebrew characters, and possibly in Sicilian Judeo-Arabic) continued to serve as a language of science for Sicilian Jews up to the Expulsion, and possibly

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[64] For Ibn al-Aḥdab's testimony of the Syracusan community's immersion in Torah studies, see Wartenberg, *The Epistle*, 258.

[65] Yerushalmi's involvement in the copying of Bukkart's exegesis on Rashi's biblical commentary for Rabbi Moses Figo may have resulted from financial need, as suggested by Nadia Zeldes.

[66] In his lost calendrical treatises, he may have included halakhic discussions on the calendar.

later.[67] Apart from his evident mastery of Hebrew and Arabic, Yerushalmi may have also accessed some of his astronomical sources in Latin.

The poignant loss of most of Yerushalmi's original works probably mirrors the fate of numerous other manuscripts written by Sicilian Jews in the Middle Ages. It remains to be wished that Shalom Yerushalmi will gain his appropriate place within the intellectual history of medieval Sicilian Jews, about whom the unknown clearly exceeds the known.

[67] For further evidence on the usage and knowledge of Arabic and Judeo-Arabic by late medieval Sicilian Jews, see Stein Kokin, "Isaac ha-Kohen's Letter", 192-233.