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THE TRANSMISSION OF *PESIQTA RABBATI*
IN 11th CENTURY FRANCE IN NARBONNE
AND IN CHAMPAGNE: BORDERLANDS THEORIES

ABSTRACT

Pesiqta Rabbati is a rabbinic homiletic work that experienced a complex transmission and redaction. Originally from the Land of Israel, the text was transferred to Italy, the Rhineland and the South of France in the Byzantine era at the cusp of the Islamic conquest of the Middle East. In 11th century Narbonne (Provence) excerpts from *Pesiqta Rabbati* are quoted by Moses *Ha-Daršan* in *Berešit Rabbati* and in Champagne (Northeast France) by Rashi (R. Solomon b. Isaac, 1040-1105) in his Bible commentaries. Further references are found in *Maḥzor Vitry* by Simhah b. Samuel of Vitry (died before 1105). Additionally, *Pesiqta Rabbati* shows textual overlap with manuscripts of mainly French provenance of *Midraš 'Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*, which was partially edited in Narbonne in the 10th-11th centuries. Jewish scholars in Narbonne and the Champagne were familiar with *Pesiqta Rabbati* in the 11th century, which indicates a major stage in the development of the work. This article argues that geographical locations influenced the transmission of a rabbinic text and applies some features of “borderlands theories” to the reception of *Pesiqta Rabbati*.

RÉSUMÉ

La *Pesiqta Rabbati* est une œuvre homilétique rabbinique qui a connu une transmission et une rédaction complexes. Originaire de Palestine, le texte s’est diffusé en Italie, en Rhénanie et dans le sud de la France à l’époque byzantine, à l’aube de la conquête musulmane du Moyen-Orient. Au XI^e siècle en Provence, la *Pesiqta Rabbati* fut citée par Moïse *Ha-Daršan* dans *Berešit Rabbati* et en Champagne par Rashi (R. Salomon b. Isaac, 1040-1105) dans ses commentaires bibliques. D’autres références se trouvent dans le *Maḥzor Vitry* de Simhah b. Samuel de Vitry (mort en 1105). La *Pesiqta Rabbati* présente des recoupements textuels avec des manuscrits d’origine essentiellement française du *Midraš 'Ašeret ha-Dibberot*, qui a été partiellement édité à Narbonne. Les savants juifs de Narbonne et de Champagne connaissaient bien la *Pesiqta Rabbati* au XI^e siècle, ce qui indique une étape majeure dans le développement de l’œuvre. Cet article soutient que les localisations géographiques ont influencé la transmission d’un texte rabbinique et applique certaines caractéristiques des « théories des frontières (*borderlands*) » à la réception de la *Pesiqta Rabbati*.

In order to assess the intellectual situation in Narbonne and Champagne, “borderlands theories” are employed in this article. Boundary markers between Judaism and Christianity were not necessarily polemical in the early Middle Ages, but in respect to Judaism these boundary markers facilitated turning inward to the core values of Judaism and reaffirmed religious identities in new frameworks.¹ These theories claim that borderlands surround diverse groups of people. Among the numerous “borderlands” one may find spiritual, physical, and national applications. Thus, borderlands offer an opportunity to analyze differences and prospects of creating something new. Scholars influenced by Gloria Anzaldúa’s work view borderlands as sites that can enable the people dwelling there to negotiate the contradictions and tensions found in diverse cultural and other settings.² Critical perspectives of this view include concerns that there is “the tendency to construct the border crosser or the hybrid ... into a new *privileged subject of history*”.³ This would apply to rabbinic scholars in 11th century Narbonne and the Rhineland who focused on continuing the work of the Babylonian academies in the potent intellectual climate of France. Clooney states: “Diversity becomes a primary context of a tradition’s inquiry and self-understanding; particular traditions in their concreteness become the place where the religious meaning of diversity is disclosed”.⁴ In the academy at Narbonne the surrounding European Christian world would have been such a place where difference was experienced and where the possible obliteration of Jewish texts from the Middle East had to be prevented. Lasker wrote: “When Jews migrated to the medieval Christian world, they brought with them the shared heritage of all Jewish communities. The most basic texts of that heritage, irrespective of origin or place of residence of any particular Jewish group, were the Bible (and its Aramaic translations), and post-biblical rabbinic literature in its many forms – namely, the Talmud, the midrashic

1. D. J. LASKER, “Polemics,” in R. CHAZAN (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 6 – *The Middle Ages: The Christian World*, Cambridge, 2018, p. 813-835, 901-902; *id.*, “Controversy and Collegiality: A Look at Provence,” *Medieval Encounters* 22 (2016), p. 13-24; *id.*, “Christianity, Philosophy and Polemic in Jewish Provence,” *Zion* 68.3 (2003), p. 313-333, contends that polemics were more prevalent in the 12th century.

2. G. ANZALDÚA, *Borderland/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco, 1987, p. 3, was one of the original scholars promoting this theory. Borderland studies were perceived as a mode of praxis, linking activism and scholarship; however, beyond geography, there are theoretical and religious “borderlands”.

3. P. VILA, *Ethnography at the Border*, Minneapolis, 2003, p. 307.

4. F. X. CLOONEY, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders*, Oxford, 2010, p. 19.

literature, and the liturgy”.⁵ Similarly, beyond Narbonne, the Rhineland may be defined as a borderland, intellectually situated between German lands (Ashkenaz) and Northeast France. Furthermore, Fishman considers the cultural landmarks of medieval northern Europe and mentions the borderlands of the former Roman Empire and their impact on the creation of authoritative practices in the 11th century.⁶ Thus, we may claim that Rashi (R. Solomon b. Isaac, 1040-1105) also lived in a type of borderland which is known for its own intellectual geography.

Moyaert claimed with regard to current borderlands that changing religious patterns “influence both the identity formation of the self and the religious community with which one identifies”.⁷ These factors could have contributed to the enormous effort of collecting, editing, and revising Jewish texts from Babylonia and the Land of Israel, including parts of *Pesiqta Rabbati*, in France.

Narbonne as a center of scholarly activity in the 11th century

Narbonne (Provence) qualifies as an intellectual “borderland”, since it was a port city with access to the Mediterranean, and it was situated close to the Spanish border. In the 11th century and earlier the area attracted people from different nations, among them Jews. The presence of Jews in Narbonne⁸ (beginning in the 5th century) and the interactions between Christians

5. D. J. LASKER, “The Sources,” in CHAZAN (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, p. 465-484, 893-894 (465).

6. T. FISHMAN, *Becoming the People of the Talmud: Oral Torah as Written Tradition in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, Philadelphia, 2011, p. 94-100.

7. “The religious other is no longer an abstract figure but is seen in all her concreteness as neighbor, colleague, friend, spouse, etc. These changing religious patterns influence both the identity formation of the self and the religious community with which one identifies.” (<https://hds.harvard.edu/> [viewed March 14, 2018]). See also M. MOYAERT, *Fragile Identities: Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*, Amsterdam, 2011, p. 196. See also *ead.* and J. GELDHOFF (eds), “Introduction,” in *ead.*, *Exploring the Phenomenon of Interreligious Ritual Participation and Interreligious Dialogue: Boundaries, Transgressions and Innovations*, Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 1-16.

8. W. C. JORDAN, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians*, Philadelphia, 1989, in discussing the Narbonnais mentions that Jews had resided in Narbonne from at least the 5th century on, p. 162. See J. COHEN, “The Nasi of Narbonne: A Problem in Medieval Historiography,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 2 (1977), p. 45-76, regarding the presence of Jews in Carolingian France and their supposed privilege under the authority of patriarchs. See also M. CHALON, “L’inscription juive de Narbonne et la condition des juifs en Narbonnaise à la fin du VII^e siècle,” in *Hommage à André Dupont (1897-1972): études médiévales languedociennes*, Montpellier, 1974, p. 39-53. Also, a Muslim army was present in the 8th century in the area of Narbonne (P. SÉNAC, S. GASC,

and Jews in Narbonne in later centuries have been documented.⁹ The engagement of Jews with Islamic philosophy in later medieval France (12th-13th century) has also been analyzed.¹⁰ However, there is a dearth of information regarding the 11th century, and the relationship with Christians is minimal and mainly indeterminable.¹¹ Narbonne was a center of intellectual encounters between different cultures, as Pollack writes: “In short, from 1100-1300 a fluid society existed in Europe, spurred on by the cultural interaction with the Byzantine and Islamic civilizations in the East.”¹² By the 11th century Narbonne had become an intellectual center of Jewish learning, writing and copying, which continued until the 13th century. Moses *Ha-Daršan* (11th century) was a prominent rabbinical authority, who also authored Biblical interpretations that, from a literary perspective, resemble midrash.¹³ Furthermore, as Twersky remarked: “The derashah was a common form of writing and technique of exposition in Provence”.¹⁴ This may explain the interest in *Pesiqta Rabbati* – a homiletic midrashic work – and its *derašot* in Narbonne and other communities in France.

The learned authorities, “*Hakhme Narbonne*”, included, but were not limited to,¹⁵ Moses *Ha-Daršan*; Makhir of Narbonne and his family; Moses b. Joseph b. Merwan ha-Levi; Joseph Kimhi and his sons David and Moses; Abraham b. Isaac of Narbonne, the author of *Sefer ha-Eškol* (died 1179).¹⁶ The Jewish scholars of Narbonne created an academy, מרכז התורה, that continued the work of the Babylonian academies with regard to editing

P.-Y. MELMOUX, and L. SAVARESE, “Nouveaux vestiges de la présence musulmane en Narbonnaise au VIII^e siècle,” *Al-Qantara* 35 (2014), p. 61-94).

9. N. CAPUTO, “Regional History, Jewish Memory: The Purim of Narbonne,” *Jewish History* 22 (2008), p. 97-114. R. CHAZAN, “Anti-usury Efforts in Thirteenth-Century Narbonne and the Jewish Response,” *American Academy for Jewish Research* 41 (1973), p. 45-67.

10. C. SIRAT, “Moïse de Narbonne et l’astrologie,” in *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, 1972, p. 61-72.

11. A. GRABOIS, “Jewish Society in the XIth-XIIth Centuries C.E. according to an Anonymous Hebrew Chronicle of Narbonne” (Hebrew), in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, 1975, p. 75-86. Generally, S. W. BARON, *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 4, New York, 1957, p. 38, p. 45-47.

12. H. POLLACK, “An Historical Explanation of the Origin and Development of Jewish Books of Customs (‘Sifre Minhagim’): 1100-1300,” *Jewish Social Studies* 49 (1987), p. 195-216 (201).

13. A subsequent scholar, Moses of Narbonne (1300-1362), was active in Perpignan.

14. I. TWERSKY, *Rabad of Posquières: A Twelfth-Century Talmudist*, Cambridge, MA, 1962, p. 111.

15. Y. MASER, *Les rabbins du Sud de la France au Moyen Age et leurs écrits. Les Sages de Provincia*, Montpellier, 2016.

16. TWERSKY, *Rabad of Posquières*, p. 19.

texts.¹⁷ Golb views this Talmud academy as one of the three most important ones of Languedoc.¹⁸ Furthermore, Jewish scholars in Narbonne were in contact with scholars in the Rhineland and Catalonia,¹⁹ and even before 1200, Jews in the Provence translated Arabic texts, including Muslim sacred texts.²⁰ The translator of Arabic works into Hebrew, Judah ibn Tibbon (died c. 1190), fled from Granada to Lunel (Provence) to escape persecution by the Almohads in Spain, who by 1150 had conquered Sevilla, Córdoba, Badajoz, and Almería. Moreover, the Jews of Provence translated Latin medical texts into Hebrew²¹ and were in contact with Jews in Northern Italian communities and beyond – e.g., Nathan b. Yehiel of Rome (c. 1035-1110) was a student of Moses *Ha-Daršan*. These connections and relationships had a positive impact upon the intellectual “borderlands” climate of Narbonne.²²

The text of *Pesiqta Rabbati*

The dating of *Pesiqta Rabbati* in its entirety may be a misdirected question, since the homiletic text grew by accretion. During this process textual units were interwoven into an existing text.²³ The work mainly originates from the Land of Israel. The rabbis cited in the text, the halakhic as well as the non-halakhic textual material in *Pesiqta Rabbati* and some peculiarities of the reading cycle make the Land of Israel the most plausible place of origin for the core of *Pesiqta Rabbati*; material from the Babylonian Talmud

17. B. Z. BENEDICT, “On the History of the Torah-Center in Provence” (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 22.2 (1951), p. 85-109; GRABOIS, “Jewish Society”.

18. N. GOLB, “The De Rossi Collection of Hebrew Manuscripts at the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma and its Importance for Jewish History” (Seventh Congress of the European Association of Jewish Studies, Amsterdam, 2002).

19. Among the Spanish visitors to Narbonne was Benjamin of Tudela in c. 1166; he traveled between 1159-1173.

20. J. P. DECTER, “The Rendering of Qur’anic Quotations in Hebrew Translations of Islamic Texts,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006), p. 336-358.

21. G. FREUDENTHAL, “Arabic and Latin Cultures as Resources for the Hebrew Translation Movement: Comparative Considerations, Both Quantitative and Qualitative,” in *id.* (ed.), *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, Cambridge, 2011, p. 74-105, mentions a few translations that were done before 1200.

22. Centuries later, in the 14th century, Narbonne declined for a variety of reasons. One was due to a change in the course of the Aude River, which interrupted navigational access to the Mediterranean and its rich culture. Other causes of decline were the plague and the raid of Edward of Woodstock in 1355, which devastated the city.

23. For a summary concerning the dating of *Pesiqta Rabbati* see R. ULMER, *A Bilingual Edition of Pesiqta Rabbati, Volume 1, Chapters 1–22*, Berlin-New York, 2017, p. 28-34.

is not cited by *Pesiqta Rabbati*.²⁴ It is reasonable to assume that the core of *Pesiqta Rabbati* material was in existence in the Land of Israel in the 5th/6th century²⁵ and was later redacted in the Diaspora.

The cultural environment of the city of Narbonne in the 11th/12th century, which was a center of Jewish learning, writing and copying, may have contributed to the accretion of homiletic material in *Pesiqta Rabbati*. *Pesiqta Rabbati* was cited in 11th century Narbonne and in other parts of France before a complete dated manuscript was edited in 1270 (MS Parma 3122); Narbonne is mentioned in a colophon of another manuscript (MS Casanatense 1249). It is possible that 11th and early 12th century France offered an intellectual context, in which *Pesiqta Rabbati* was further transmitted and edited and may have found its final form. In order to describe the development of the text of *Pesiqta Rabbati*, it is necessary to trace the early medieval textual transmission. One of the most fundamental issues in respect to the structure of a homiletic text is to estimate what particular text existed at a particular point in time. In the case of *Pesiqta Rabbati* the work is identified in the early medieval era by commentators and collectors.²⁶

A density of citations of *Pesiqta Rabbati* is found in works of the 10th/early 11th centuries, when *Pesiqta Rabbati* was known in France and “German lands” (Rhineland). Moses *Ha-Daršan* from Narbonne (11th century) utilized *Pesiqta Rabbati* in *Berešit Rabbati*. In Rashi’s Bible Commentary²⁷ and in the *Sefer Ha-Roqeah Ha-Gadol* (Eleazar of Worms, 1176-1238)²⁸ *Pesiqta Rabbati* is cited as a source. There were relations between Narbonne with rabbinic scholars of the Rhineland,²⁹ if this applied to *Pesiqta Rabbati* cannot be ascertained. Several excerpts from *Pesiqta Rabbati* were used in *Maḥzor Vitry*,³⁰ which was composed by Simhah b. Samuel of Vitry (died before 1105), based upon *minhagim* and Rashi’s halakhic rulings. The quotations in *Maḥzor Vitry* reveal that *Pesiqta Rabbati* had a textual identity. Additionally, *Pesiqta Rabbati* material was quoted without attribution

24. B. ELITZUR, *Pesiqta Rabbati - Pirque Mavo* (Hebrew) (PhD diss., The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1999), p. X.

25. *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1 may be dated to the 4th century.

26. A few ideas in this paper were expressed at a “Conference of Shared Ritual Practices and Divided Historiography,” Erfurt, Germany, 2017.

27. Rashi on Exodus 6:14 cites *Pesiqta Rabbati* 7:11: ובפסיקתא הגדולה ראיתי לפי שקנטרם יעקב אבינו לשלשה שבטים הללו בשעת מותר חזר הכתוב ויחסם כאן לבדם לומר שהשובים הם כך נדרש בפסיקתא. Rashi on 2 Sam 24:9 states: וכך נדרש בפסיקתא.

28. *Sefer Ha-Roqeah Ha-Gadol* (Jerusalem, 1968), sections 215-217.

29. N. A. VAN UCHELEN, “From Narbonne to Regensburg: Studies in Medieval Hebrew Texts” (The Juda Palache Institute, University of Amsterdam, 17 March 1992).

30. For example, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1:1 in *Maḥzor Vitry* (ed. S. HURWITZ, Nuremberg, 1923; repr. Jerusalem, 1988), p. 286.

in the *Tosafot*.³¹ Among the Tosafists were the *Ḥakhme Provans* – “Provençe” in Jewish medieval texts refers to the whole of Occitania, which includes Narbonne. *Pesiqta Rabbati* was also cited by subsequent medieval scholars in different locations: Rambam (R. Moses b. Maimon, 1135-1204),³² Maharam Rothenburg (R. Meir b. Barukh of Rothenburg, 1215-1293),³³ Ha-Rid (R. Isaiah b. Mali di Trani, c. 1200-1260),³⁴ and *ʿArugat Ha-Bošem* (1234) by Abraham b. Azriel, who cited *Pesiqta Rabbati* as “midrash”.³⁵ A medieval collector of texts, the compiler of *Yalquṭ Šimʿoni*, a collection of rabbinic exegetical material from approximately the 13th century, utilizes numerous passages from *Pesiqta Rabbati*. These excerpts were adapted by the editor of the *Yalquṭ*, who arranged midrashic material in the sequential order of scriptural verses. The excerpts from *Pesiqta Rabbati* in the *Yalquṭ* were taken from a *Vorlage* that was similar to the presently unknown *Vorlage* used several centuries later in the preparation of the first printed edition of *Pesiqta Rabbati* from Prague (1653/7). Thus, *Pesiqta Rabbati* material was cited by several medieval Hebrew texts that were composed before the earliest identifiable edited text of the entire *Pesiqta Rabbati* in manuscript form (MS Parma 3122), which was copied in the Rhineland and completed in 1270.³⁶ One homily, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 52, was added to the work in c. 1000 to reflect the institution of the festival of *Šemini ʿAšeret*.³⁷ In the early Middle Ages, *Šemini ʿAšeret* began to be associated with the ritual of completing the annual cycle of readings from the Tora, leading to the development of the festival of *Šimḥat Tora* from what was likely the second day of *Šemini ʿAšeret*. *Šimḥat Tora* was moved to the conclusion of *Sukkot*, and Genesis 1 was added as a new pericope.³⁸ *Šimḥat Tora* became the day on which the ending of one cycle of Tora reading and the beginning of the next cycle was celebrated. In the 9th century the attachment of a new

31. Tos. b. Šabb. 49a, s.v. כאלישע; Tos. b. Šabb. 87b, s.v. ואורו; Tos. b. Yebam. 81b, s.v. פרך; Tos. b. Zebah. 72b, s.v. ה.

32. For example, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20 in *The Responsa of Rambam* (ed. Y. BLAU, Jerusalem, 1960), sect. 313, s.v. ואמנם היוצר (Hebrew).

33. For example, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 25 in *Shu”t Maharam me-Rotenburg* (Prague, 1608), pt. 4, sect. 1, 23, s.v. תיר לא.

34. For example, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 16 in *Shu”t HaRid* (ed. A. J. WERTHEIMER, Jerusalem, 1967), sect. 50, s.v. בן עזאי.

35. *ʿArugat Ha-Bošem* (ed. E. E. URBACH, 4 vols., Jerusalem, 1939-1963), vol. 3, sect. 74.

36. *Pesiqta Rabbati* material was also utilized cross-culturally in *Pugio Fidei* by Raimundus Martinus (1220-1285), a polemical Christian work.

37. *Seder Rav ʿAmram Gaʿon* (ed. A. L. FRUMKIN, Jerusalem, 1912), 1, p. 52a.

38. I. ELBOGEN, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Hildesheim, 1967; *id.*, *Jewish Liturgy, A Comprehensive History*, trans. R. SCHEINDLIN, Philadelphia, 1993, p. 137.

haftara, Joshua 1:1-18, to this new festival is mentioned in *Seder Rav 'Amram Ga'on*. Early, very fragmentary manuscript material (10th-11th century) of *Pesiqta Rabbati*, does not contain any of this.

The text of *Pesiqta Rabbati* continued to grow by accretion, e.g., *Pesiqta Rabbati* 46 is a late addition, and several homilies may have integrated a secondary reaction to Christianity, as well as to Islamic intellectual thought.³⁹ In all likelihood, the text had been structured into a comprehensive homiletic rabbinic work by the 12th/13th century in Europe.⁴⁰ MS Casanatense 3324 is an extensive manuscript of *Pesiqta Rabbati* material, but in its present state it does not contain all the homilies listed in its table of contents.⁴¹ Moreover, the manuscript contains homilies from *Pesiqta Rabbati* and *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*.⁴² The manuscript has two colophons from different hands and a censor's signature from 1620, the *terminus ad quem*. MS Casanatense was copied on paper in a Sephardic rabbinic script; Moses Lutzki, who is mentioned in Mandelbaum's edition of *Pesiqta de-rav Kahana*, suggested a date of the 16th century. The date of the first colophon is indeterminable, because it contains a combination of letters כ"ק [?]ק [?"ה"ה] א"ת [?] that are not completely legible. Furthermore, the inscription mentions Isaac Abraham Avigdor, although the scribe was a certain Moses.⁴³ Grözinger and Hahn read the date of the colophon as כ"ק א"ה, which would assign a date of 1341-1342; this probably applied to the non-extant *Vorlage* of the Casanatense manuscript. In Mandelbaum's introduction to his edition of *Pesiqta de-rav Kahana* the date in MS Casanatense 3324 is read as 1387,⁴⁴ which obviously refers to the second colophon. The additional date of 1387 and the mention of Narbonne as the provenance in the second colophon were in all likelihood copied by a scribe in the 16th century, when he copied an earlier manuscript. The second colophon states: "Written in 1387 here, Narbonne, by Abraham ...".

39. A deeper engagement with Islam took place only in thirteenth century Spain and France, e.g., Meir b. Simeon of Narbonne, *Milḥemet Mišwa*, in 1270.

40. All quotations of *Pesiq. Rab.* are from R. ULMER, *A Synoptic Edition of Pesiqta Rabbati Based upon All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and the Editio Princeps*, vols. I-II, Atlanta, 1997-1999; vol. III, Lanham, MD, 2002; vols. I-III reprint 2008, I, p. XV-XVII, and *ead.*, *A Bilingual Edition of Pesiqta Rabbati*.

41. K.-E. GRÖZINGER and H. HAHN, "Die Textzeugen der Pesiqta Rabbati," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 1 (1973), p. 68-104 (88-89). The table of contents was also mentioned in *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* (ed. B. MANDELBAUM, New York, 1962), Hebrew pagination, p. 10.

42. *Pesiq. Rab.* 25, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 23/24, 24, 39, 40, 41, 42, *Pesiq. Rav Kah.* 43, 50, 44, 45 47, 51, 52.

43. N. J. COHEN, *The Manuscripts and Editions of the Midrash Pesikta Rabbati: A Prolegomenon to a Scientific Edition* (PhD diss. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, 1977), p. 20.

44. *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, Hebrew pagination, p. 10.

נכתב שנת קמ"ז לפרט האלף הששי פה נרבונו ע"י אברהם חזק י"צ

According to the secondary inscription, the Casanatense manuscript was copied in 1387 in Narbonne by a certain Abraham. Although the Casanatense manuscript is only extant in a copy from the 16th century, the colophon points to Narbonne as the source of the original which is no longer extant. Another text-witness, MS Dropsie 26 of *Pesiqta Rabbati*, is probably a copy of MS Casanatense or of a common *Vorlage*. The provenance of MS Dropsie is indeterminable; the Hebrew קשטילו could indicate Castello in Italy, a place name that refers to numerous locations. It could also indicate Castillo in Spain, again evoking multiple possibilities.

Quotations from *Pesiqta Rabbati* in *Berešit Rabbati*

Moses *Ha-Daršan* (the “preacher”) from Narbonne (11th century) cited *Pesiqta Rabbati* in his work *Berešit Rabbati*.⁴⁵ He lived in a center of Jewish learning that could sustain the study of rabbinic texts and that offered access to the traditions on which he relied. His work is an example of Biblical commentary.⁴⁶ Like other medieval writers or collectors, he revised the texts that he cited.⁴⁷ He cited *Pesiqta Rabbati* passages in his own work, possibly in order to respond to the needs of his time, in particular to the interreligious situation in Narbonne.⁴⁸ His work is older than the earliest extant complete manuscript of *Pesiqta Rabbati*. Moses *Ha-Daršan* made deliberate choices in his citations, which may indicate that there was physical contact with

45. The authorship is somewhat ambiguous; the work may have been edited by subsequent scholars. J. ELBAUM, “Genesis Rabbati,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica, Second Edition*, vol. 7, Detroit, 2007, p. 449-450, mentions that Solomon Buber reinforced this view by a comparison between *Midraš Aggada* (ed. S. BUBER, Vienna, 1894), which is based on the midrash of Moses *Ha-Daršan*, and *Numbers Rabba* on the scriptural portions *Ba-Midbar* and *Naso* (Num. 1-15), which are also based on the midrash of Moses *Ha-Daršan*. S. YAHALOM, “Rabbi Moše Ha-Daršan we-aggadat Provans be-mišnat Ha-Ramban [R. Moses *Ha-Daršan* and the Provençal Aggadic Tradition in the Teaching of Naḥmanides]” (Hebrew), *Peanim* 94-95 (2003), p. 135-158.

46. M. HIMMELFARB, “R. Moses the Preacher and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 9 (1984), p. 55-78, p. 55.

47. Such revisions are mentioned by H. Albeck in his edition of *Berešit Rabbati* (Jerusalem, 1940, reprint 1967), p. 23-24.

48. Citations include, but are not limited to: *Pesiq. Rab.* 1:2 in *BerRbti.* 110; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:17 in *BerRbti.* 225; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:19 in *BerRbti.* 257; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:27, 3:31 in *BerRbti.* 227; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:33 in *BerRbti.* 265; *Pesiq. Rab.* 7:2 in *BerRbti.* 80; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:12, 12:13 in *BerRbti.* 127; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:14 in *BerRbti.* 128; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:26 in *BerRbti.* 111; *Pesiq. Rab.* 13:5 in *BerRbti.* 149; *Pesiq. Rab.* 13:6 in *BerRbti.* 150; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:15 in *BerRbti.* 4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:38 in *BerRbti.* 156.

other religious groups in the “borderland” of Narbonne that influenced his text.

Moses *Ha-Daršan* chose to use the description of the Zodiac as found in *Pesiqta Rabbati*. At least by the Byzantine era in the 5th/6th centuries rabbinic literature mentioned the Zodiac; synagogue floors in the Land of Israel depicted the Zodiac, which derived from Greek culture.⁴⁹ However, in early medieval Provence and elsewhere, Jewish contributions to astronomical observances were minimal,⁵⁰ whereas Islamic medieval thinkers contemplated the planets and the stars in great detail.⁵¹ Although the work of medieval Arab scientists in the field of astronomy was based on ancient sources from Greece, India, and Iran,⁵² they updated methods for measuring and calculating the movement of heavenly bodies, and continued to develop new models of the universe.⁵³ The representations of each Zodiac constellation in Islam were derived from the images ancient Greek astronomers had used to describe them. These were a ram (Aries), a bull (Taurus), twins (Gemini), a crab (Cancer), a lion (Leo), a female figure (Virgo), scales (Libra), a scorpion (Scorpio), an archer (Sagittarius), a young goat (Capricorn),

49. There are multiple discussions of the Zodiac in synagogues, for example, H. MACK, “The Unique Character of the Zippori Synagogue Mosaic and Eretz Israel Midrashim” (Hebrew), *Cathedra: the History of Eretz Israel and its Yishuv* 88 (1998), p. 39-56, relates these depictions to midrashic literature, such as *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*.

50. G. FREUDENTHAL, “Les sciences dans les communautés juives médiévales de Provence: leur appropriation, leur rôle,” *Revue des études juives* 154.1-2 (1993), p. 77-90.

51. B. R. GOLDSTEIN, “Astronomy among Jews in the Middle Ages,” in G. FREUDENTHAL (ed.), *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, Cambridge, 2011, p. 136-146 (136), remarks that “from 750 to 1100, contributions by Jews, whether in Hebrew or Arabic, were relatively minor compared with those of their Muslim contemporaries.” Furthermore, astronomical speculations were taken over more or less intact from other sources (K. KEIM, “Cosmology as Science or Cosmology as Theology? Reflections on the Astronomical Chapters of Pirke DeRabbi Eliezer,” in S. STERN and C. BURNETT (eds), *Time, Astronomy, and Calendars in the Jewish Tradition*, Leiden, 2014, p. 41-64).

52. M. SARDAR, “Astronomy and Astrology in the Medieval Islamic World,” in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, New York, 2000. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ast/hd_astr.htm (Viewed April 2018).

53. D. A. KING, “Astronomy,” in M. J. L. YOUNG et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Religion, Learning, and Science in the ‘Abbasid Period*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 274-289. From the eighth to the tenth century, Baghdad had been a center of study and was engaged in the translation of previous works in Greek, Sanskrit, and Pahlavi into Arabic (G. SALIBA, *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories during the Golden Age of Islam*, New York, 1994). These traditions contained material on the fixed stars, the passage of the sun and moon through the zodiacal signs and the seasons (R. MORELON, “General Survey of Arabic Astronomy,” in R. RASHED (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science*, vol. 1, London, 1996, p. 1-19).

a water-carrier (Aquarius), and two fish (Pisces).⁵⁴ This body of knowledge was refined in part because of the specific requirements of Islam including the ability to calculate the appearance of the new moon that marked the start of a new month.⁵⁵ The calculation of the appearance of the new moon is also an established practice in Judaism.

Moses *Ha-Daršan* refers to the Zodiac before the Hebrew astronomical tradition in Spain in the 12th century came into existence.⁵⁶ *Berešit Rabbati* 10-11 quotes a dialogue between an angel referred to as the Prince of Darkness and God, which parallels the homily in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20. This homily is assigned to the festival of *Šavu‘ot*, which celebrates the revelation of the Tora. This angel questions the divine intention to create light first. Next the Prince of Darkness inquires: “And after that what will You create?” The divine responses to the repetitive questions serialize the constellations of the Zodiac, which are identical to the Greek and Muslim descriptions.

<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 20:5-7	<i>Berešit Rabbati</i> , 10-11	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 20:5-7 MS Casanatense 67a	<i>Berešit Rabbati</i> , 10-11 ⁵⁷
... Since at the time when the Holy One created His world, He said to the Prince of Darkness: Turn away from Me, since I wish to create the world with light. ...	At the time when the Holy One created the world, He said to the Prince of Darkness: Turn away from Me, since I wish to create light and its planets.	לפי שבשעה שברא הב"ה את עולמו אמר לשר החשך סור מפני שאני מבקש לבראת את העולם באורה ...	בשעה שברא הק' את העולם אמר לשרו של חשך סור מלפני שאני מבקש לבראות אור ומזלותיו ...
At that time the Prince of Darkness said to the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the world, what do You wish to create before me? The Holy One said to him: Turn away	When the Prince of Darkness saw that the Holy One screamed at him he began to say: Master of the world, why do You wish to create light before me? The Holy One said to	באותה שעה אמר שר של חשך לפני הקב"ה רבון העולמים מה את מבקש מלפני אמ' לו הב"ה סור מלפני אם אין את סר מלפני אני גוער בכ שאני מבקש לבראת עולמי באורה ...	כיון שראה שרו של חשך שגער בו הב"ה התחיל אומר לפניו רבוננו של עולם מפני מה אתה רוצה לבראת אור מלפני, אל' הב"ה אם לא תסור מלפני אני גוער בכ ומאבדך מן העולם

54. S. CARBONI, *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art*, New York, 1997.

55. R. MORELON, “Eastern Arabic Astronomy between the Eighth and the Eleventh Centuries,” in RASHED (ed.) *Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science*, vol. 1, p. 20-57.

56. GOLDSTEIN, “Astronomy among Jews,” p. 139. Jewish astronomy in Provence flourished from the 13th to 15th century, obviously influenced by the Jews in Spain, p. 140.

57. The text from *Berešit Rabbati* is included within the Friedmann edition of *Pesiqta Rabbati: Pesiqta Rabbati* (ed. M. FRIEDMANN, Vienna, 1880), supplement 2, p. 203a. This supplement is also referred to as *Pesiqta Rabbati* 53.

from Me. If you will not turn away from Me, I will rebuke you, since I wish to create the world with light.	him: Turn away from Me or I will ban you from the world.		
[The Prince of Darkness said:] ⁵⁸ And after the light, what will You create? [God] said to him: Darkness.	[The Prince of Darkness] said: And after the light, what will You create? [God] said to him: You!	ואחר האור מה אתה בורא אמ' לו חשך ...	אמר לפניו אחר האור מה אתה בורא א"ל אותך
... [The Prince of Darkness asked:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] Scorpio. [The Prince of Darkness asked:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] Libra. When a person is weighed and has [committed] sins, he is sent down to Gehinnom.	[The Prince of Darkness asked:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] Libra. When a person is fat like a virgin, he is weighed on the scales. [The Prince of Darkness asked:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] Scorpio, since when he is weighed on the scales and is found to have [committed] sins, he is sent down to Gehinnom, to a place full of snakes and scorpions.	... ואחריו מה את בורא סרטן ואחריו מה את בורא מאזנים כיון ששמין ודשין שוקלין במאזנים ... ומורידין אותו לגיהנם	ואחריו מה את בורא מאזנים מפני שכיון שאדם שמן כבתולה שוקלים אותו במאזנים ואחריו מה אתה בורא א"ל עקרב מפני שכיון ששוקלים אותו במאזנים ומצא בו עונות מורידין אותו לגיהנם ודנים אותו במקום שיש נחשים ועקרבים
And after that what will You create? The Archer's Bow [Sagittarius]. Perhaps you will say that once [a person] went down to Gehinnom, there is no coming up for him.	And after that what will You create? The Archer's Bow [Sagittarius], because when he comes up from Gehinnom he dances like a young goat [Capricorn].	ואחריו מה את בורא קשת שמא תאמר שכיון שירד לגיהנם אין לו תעלה כיון שמבקשין עליו רחמים זורקין אותו מן גיהנם ...	ואחריו מה את בורא קשת מפני שכיון שעלה מגיהנם מרקד כנדי ...

58. The text in square brackets was added by the author of this essay.

<p>When mercy is entreated in his behalf, however, he is shot up from Gehinnom like an arrow from the bow.</p>			
<p>And why did the Holy One create the sun in the beginning? Because the entire world was created by the light of one luminary.</p> <p>[The Prince of Darkness asked:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] The bright star [Venus]. Because the Holy One foresaw that the generation of the flood would commit sexual transgressions. When He foresaw this regarding them, He divided them [Mercury and Venus]; this one [dwells] alone and that one [dwells] alone. He [later again] mingled one with the other ...</p> <p>[The Prince of Darkness said:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] The moon, since the tribes of Jacob's children, every one of them, will reflect the light like the moon.</p> <p>[The Prince of Darkness said:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] Saturn, since the nations of the world will rule over Israel.</p>	<p>And why was the sun created in the beginning? Because the entire world was created by light.</p> <p>[The Prince of Darkness asked:] And after that [what will You create?] [God said to him:] The bright star [Venus]. Because [the Holy One] foresaw that the generation of the flood would provoke Him, He divided them [Mercury and Venus]; this one [dwells] alone and that one [dwells] alone. He [later again] mingled one with the other ...</p> <p>[The Prince of Darkness said:] And after that [what will You create?] [God said to him:] The moon, since Israel will be like the light of the moon.</p> <p>[The Prince of Darkness said:] And after that [what will You create?] [God said to him:] Saturn, since the nations of the world will rule over Israel.</p>	<p>ומפני מה ברא הב"ה חמה תחלה שכל העולם כלו בויו אחד נבראו</p> <p>ואחריו מה את בורא כוכב הנוגה לפי שצפה הב"ה שעתיד דור המבול לזנות כיון שצפה בהם הבדילם זה בפני עצמו וזה בפני עצמו עמד וערבבן זה בזה ...</p> <p>ואחריו מה את בורא לבנה שעתידין שבטי בני יעקב כל אחד ואחד להבהיק זיוו כלבנה</p> <p>ואחריו מה את בורא שבתיי שעתידין אומות העולם למשול בהם בישראל</p>	<p>ומפני מה נבראת חמה תחלה שכל העולם כולו בויו נבראו</p> <p>ואחריו כוכב נוגה לפני שצפה וראה שדור המבול עתיד להכעיס לפניו והבדילן זה לעצמו וזה לעצמו עמד וערבבן זה בזה ...</p> <p>ואחריו לבנה שעתידין ישראל להיות כזיו הלבנה</p> <p>ואחריו שבתי שעתידין אר"ה למשול בהם</p>

<p>[The Prince of Darkness said:] And after that what will You create? [God said to him:] The Justice star [Jupiter], since the Holy One, blessed be He, will judge them with strict justice.</p> <p>Perhaps you will say that they will be saved from judgment. That is why the Holy One, blessed be He, created the Red Star [Mars], because they fall into Gehinnom which is hot.</p>	<p>[The Prince of Darkness said:] And after that [what will You create?] [God said to him:] The Justice star [Jupiter], since He will judge them with strict justice.</p> <p>And after that [what will You create?] [God said to him:] The Red Star [Mars], because they fall into Gehinnom, which is red fire.</p>	<p>ואחריו מה את בורא צדק - שעתיד הקב"ה להצדיק עליהם את הדין -</p> <p>ושמא תאמ' נצולים הם מן הדין לכך ברא הקב"ה מאדים שנופלים בגיהנם שחמה היא -</p>	<p>אחריו צדק שעתידין להצדיק עליהם את הדין</p> <p>ואחריו מאדים במה דנן ברא מאדים ונופלים בגיהנם שאש אדום בו</p>
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Moses *Ha-Daršan's* passage appears as a midrash on Genesis 1:3, in which he focuses upon the lemma "light". The Friedmann edition of *Pesiqta Rabbati* includes the above text from *Berešit Rabbati*, which is presented as a homily on Genesis for *Šimḥat Tora*.⁵⁹ Although the textual material derives from *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20, homily 53 for *Šimḥat Tora* in the Friedmann edition in my opinion is not a *Pesiqta Rabbati* homily. The midrash on Genesis 1:3 in Moses *Ha-Daršan's* text may have served as an inquiry into the Jewish knowledge of astronomy, and a new "borderland" induced self-understanding that may be explained by borderland theories, namely, that the redactors had their own way of interpreting the constellations of the Zodiac through the technique of midrash. For example: "[The Prince of Darkness asks:] And after that what will You create? [God said:] The Bucket [of the Water carrier, Aquarius] [refers to] the bucket from which I splash pure water on a person to purify him of his sins" (*Pesiqta Rabbati* 20:5). The previous phrase is an example of a defensive statement of an emerging activism regarding positive aspects of Jews as a righteous group of people among other religious groups. It may be recognized by applying Moyaert's notion of forming an identity of the religious community, in this instance, the Jewish community with which Moses *Ha-Daršan* identifies.

59. Friedmann states that he copied the text from a manuscript of *Berešit Rabbati* in the possession of A. Jellinek (*Pesiqta Rabbati*, p. 203a). The Hebrew text of *Berešit Rabbati* in Friedmann is very similar to the Albeck edition of *Berešit Rabbati*, 10-11.

In the next example of Moses *Ha-Daršan*'s use of *Pesiqta Rabbati*, his midrash in *Berešit Rabbati* is arranged as a commentary on the lemma “in this generation” (Gen 7:1: *The Lord said to Noah: Come, you and your entire household into the ark, since I have seen you are righteous before Me in this generation*). Moses *Ha-Daršan* utilizes *Pesiqta Rabbati* in this midrash. Moreover, the passage shows Moses *Ha-Daršan*'s method of adaptation. Mainly, he shifts the lemma from 1 Kings in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20 to Genesis in *Berešit Rabbati*, and from Ecclesiastes in *Pesiqta Rabbati* to 1 Kings in *Berešit Rabbati*.

Other homiletic materials cited by Moses *Ha-Daršan* demonstrate that *Pesiqta Rabbati* is connected to local *halakhot* in France and to topics relating to the moon and the sun. In reaction to the geography in the “borderland” of Narbonne, Moses *Ha-Daršan* may have elected to address the Biblical figure of Ishmael, who is representative of Arabs and Muslims. Relations with “Ishmael” are often presented as part of a family conflict.

<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 11:20	<i>Berešit Rabbati</i> , 134	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> MS Parma 136a	<i>Berešit Rabbati</i> , 134
... Abraham is compared to the sun, Isaac is compared to the moon, but Jacob is compared to stars, because in the time-to-come the sun and the moon will be put to shame, but the stars will not be put to shame. Similarly, Abraham and Isaac: their faces will turn pale on account of their children. Abraham [will be ashamed] on account of Ishmael and the children of Keturah, and Isaac [will be ashamed] on account of Esau and his princes. Like the stars, which will not know shame and disgrace, so Jacob [and	... Abraham is compared to the sun, Isaac is compared to the moon, but Israel to stars. The sun and the moon will be put to shame, as it is said: <i>the moon will be confounded and the sun will be ashamed</i> (Isa 24:23), but the rest of the stars will not be put to shame. Similarly, Abraham and Isaac: their faces will turn pale on account of their children. Abraham [will be ashamed] on account of Ishmael and the children of Keturah, and Isaac [will be ashamed] on account of Esau and his princes. Like the stars, which will not	... אברהם נמשל בחמה ויצחק נמשל בלבנה ויעקב נמשל בכוכבים לעתיד לבא החמה והלבנה בושים והכוכבים אין להם בושה כך אברהם ויצחק פניהם מתכרכמות בשביל בניהם אברהם בשביל ישמעאל ובני קטורה ויצחק בשביל עשו ואלופיו הכוכבים אין להם בושה לא עתה יבוש יעקב ולא עתה פניו יחזורו [ישעיה כט כב] למה כי בראותו ילדיו [ישעיה כט כג] שכולם צדיקים כולך יפה רעיתו [שיר השירים ד ז]	אברהם נמשל לחמה ויצחק ללבנה וישראל לשאר הכוכבים מה חמה ולבנה בושים שנאמר וחפרה הלבנה ובושה החמה [ישעיה כד כג] ושאר הכוכבים אין בושים, כך אברהם ויצחק פניהם מתכרכמות לעתיד לבא בשביל בניהם אברהם בשביל ישמעאל ובני קטורה ויצחק בשביל עשו ואלופיו ומה [כוכבים] אין להם בושה כך יעקב אין לו בושה שנאמר לא עתה יבוש יעקב [ישעיה כט כב] למה כי בראותו ילדיו [ישעיה כט כג] שכולם צדיקים וגו

his sons] will not know shame: <i>No longer will Jacob be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale</i> (Isa 29:22). Why [not]? <i>Because he sees his children</i> (Isa 29:23), because all of them are righteous: <i>You are fair, My love; and there is no blemish in you</i> (Cant 4:7).	know shame and disgrace, so Jacob will not know shame, as it is said: <i>No longer will Jacob be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale</i> (Isa 29:22). Why [not]? <i>Because he sees his children</i> (Isa 29:23), because all of them are righteous.		
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Another passage in *Berešit Rabbati* focuses on a passage in Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah mentioned all the nations of the earth including the “Ishmaelites”, as in the following passage: *The burden upon Arabia* (Isa 21:13); Isaiah considered the children of Israel to be righteous and spoke in their defense. This citation in *Berešit Rabbati* could be indicative of an interreligious environment.

<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 3:15	<i>Berešit Rabbati</i> , 66	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> MS Parma 121b-122a	<i>Berešit Rabbati</i> , 66
... R. Yohanan [said]: Two people made the same statement. The woman of Zarephath [said:] <i>Have you come to me to call attention to my sins?</i> (1 Kgs 17:18).	... After a while the woman's son became ill and died	ר' יוח' שני בני אדם אמרו הדבר // הצרפית באתה אלי להזכיר עוני [מלכים א' יז יח]	... ולאחר ימים חלה בן האשה ומת
She said to [Elijah]: Before you came to me, the Holy One looked at my deeds and the deeds of the people of my town and I was worthy compared to them. Now that you have come to me, and because you are a righteous man, [God] will weigh my deeds in comparison to your deeds! You have	The woman said to [Elijah]: Before you came to me, the Holy One looked at my deeds and the deeds of the people of my generation and I was worthy compared to them. Now that you have come to me, and because you are a righteous man, [God] will weigh my deeds in comparison to your deeds! You have	אמרה לו עד שלא באתה אצלי היה הק' שוקל מעשיו עם בני מקומי והייתי עומד שהייתי כשירה אצלם ועכשיו באתה אצלי ועל ידי שאתה צדיק שקל מעשיו מעשיך והזכרת עוונותי ומת בני לעיניך שאנו צריכים דברי חכמ' כדרבנות [קהלת יב יא]	אמרה לו האשה עד שלא באת כאן היה הקדוש ברוך הוא שוקל מעשי עם מעשי דורי והייתי צדקת בתוכם ועתה באת אלי שאתה צדיק גמור ושקל מעשי עם מעשיך והייתי רשעה בפניו והמית בעוני את בני שנאמר ותאמר וגו' באת אלי להזכיר עוני ולהמית את בני [מ"א יז יח]

<p>called attention to my sins and my son died. That is why we need this portion: <i>The words of sages are like goads</i> (Eccl 12:11).</p>	<p>called attention to my sins and my son died, as it is said: <i>Have you come to me to call attention to my sins and kill my son?</i> (1 Kgs 17:18).</p>		
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The emphasis on righteousness and the possibility of exposing previous sins is a homiletic statement invoking punishment for sins committed earlier. The above passage by Moses *Ha-Daršan* establishes the virtue of Jews, who were negotiating the contradictions and tensions in the “borderland” of Narbonne. It may not be coincidental that the Biblical figure is the woman from Zarephath (צִרְפַּת), since the Hebrew word for France (a Frankish area) is the same word. Therefore, the body of the poor woman in the Biblical Book of Kings may symbolize Jews in a French environment, thus documenting a revision of the text in *Pesiqta Rabbati*. This “borderland” activity provided a renewed contact between the three so-called “Abrahamic” religions and a new conceptual framework for astronomical considerations.⁶⁰

Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot

Another midrashic compilation, *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot* from c. the 11th century also contains citations from *Pesiqta Rabbati*, whereas in other instances *Pesiqta Rabbati* cites *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*.⁶¹ According to Twersky, the midrashic work *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot* was “written or redacted” in Provence.⁶² The interdependency of the two midrashic works, *Pesiqta Rabbati* and *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*, is evident in overlapping narratives. There are two stories concerning cows in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14; one story deals with an “enlightened” cow, who is able to discern between the Sabbath and the other days of the week on which work is permitted. The two stories are in the text as a result of the literary strategy of sequencing stories, events, people, etc. that pertain to a similar subject. The first narrative

60. S. STERN, “Fictitious Calendars: Early Rabbinic Notions of Time, Astronomy, and Reality,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 87 (1996), p. 103-129, mentions that the rabbinic astronomical doctrine was generally incorrect.

61. L. ZUNZ, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt*, Frankfurt am Main, 1892², reprint Piscataway, 2003, p. 151, sect. b, refers to excerpts from *Pesiq. Rab.* 21.

62. TWERSKY, *Rabad of Posquières*, p. 111.

relates to the purchase of a red heifer, recalling the ancient practice of burning a red heifer. The ashes of the red heifer were used to remove sin. The *Pesiqta Rabbati* homily that contains the cow narratives is for *Šabbat Para*, one of the four special Sabbaths before Passover. The homily referred to as “Red Heifer” focuses on the regulations concerning the red “cow”.⁶³ The first story concerns the question whether it is permitted to purchase a red heifer from a gentile; the story also explains the requirements pertaining to a red heifer.⁶⁴ According to the story, Jews tried to purchase a red heifer from a gentile. However, the gentile in the story attempts to deceive them by placing a yoke on the heifer (cow), which renders the cow worthless to serve as a red heifer. The Jews discover his fraudulent behavior. The gentile recognizes God and pronounces a blessing: “Blessed is He who chose this people”. After this acknowledgement of the God of Israel, which may be viewed as accepting Judaism, the story continues: “Then he went into his house, put up a rope, and hanged himself”. This is commented upon by quoting Scripture in the midrashic text: “*So let all Your enemies perish, Lord* (Judg 5:31)”. The story complements the halakhic question posed in the homily and provides details concerning the requirements applicable to a red heifer, possibly, as a reminder of the rites performed in the Temple. This story concerning a cow and the acknowledgement of the power of the God of Israel is closely related to the lectionary portion of the “red heifer”, and it serves as a typical instructional narrative (*exemplum*).

Story 1:

<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 14:1-4	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> MS Parma 140b-141a
<p>Lectionary Portion: The Red Heifer <i>This is the statute of the Tora which the Lord has commanded. {Speak to the Israelites to bring for you a red heifer without defect and free from every blemish and on which no yoke has ever been laid} (Num 19:2). Let our rabbi teach</i></p>	<p>פרשת" פרה אדומה" זאת חוקת התורה אשר צוה יי' {לאמר ויקחו אליך פרה אדומה תמימה אשר אין בה מום אש' לא עלה עליה עול} ⁶⁵ {במדבר יט ב} ילמדנו רבינו פרה אדומה כשהיתה נעשת למדונו אם היה מותר לישראל ליקח אותה מן הגוי כך שנו {רבתינו} לאין לוקחין פרה</p>

63. With regard to the rituals concerning the red heifer, see N. MACDONALD, “The Hermeneutics and Genesis of the Red Cow Ritual,” *Harvard Theological Review* 105 (2012), p. 351-371.

64. A. JASCHKE, “Die Asche der Roten Kuh. Eine rabbinische Homilie zu Paraschat Para (PesR 14),” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 31 (2014), p. 21-62.

65. The text in {} is based upon the *editio princeps* (Prague, 1653).

<p>us: [In case] a red heifer [needs] to be prepared [for the ritual], are we taught, if it is permitted for a Jew to purchase [the heifer] from a gentile? {Our Rabbis} taught: A red heifer may not be purchased from a gentile according to the opinion of R. Eliezer, [but] the Sages say that it may be purchased. What is the reason for R. Eliezer's saying that a red heifer is not to be purchased from a gentile? Because gentile {s} are suspected {of transgressions} [that would] cause Israel to sin.</p>	<p>אדומה מן הגוי כדברי רבי אליעזר וחכמים אומרים לוקחין מה טעמו של רבי אליעזר שאמר אין לוקחין פרה אדומה מן הגוי מפני שהגוי {ם} חשודים {על העבירות} להחטיא את ישראל”</p>
<p>R. Pinehas <i>Ha-Kohen</i> b. Hama said in the name of our Rabbis: An incident that Israel [Jews] needed a red heifer and could not find one. After a while they found one [in the possession of] a gentile. They went and said to him: Sell us the heifer which you have, since we need it. He said to them: Give me a [good] price for it and take it. And what is the price for a heifer? He said to them: Three or four gold coins.</p>	<p>אמר רבי פנחס הכהן בן חמא בשם רבותינו” מעשה שהיה שנצרכו ישראל לפרה אדומה ולא היו מוציאים ואחרכך מצאו אותה אצל גוי אחד הלכו ואמרו לו מכור לנו את הפרה שיש לך שאנו צריכים לה אמר להם תנו לי את דמיה וטלו אותה וכמה הם דמיה אמר להם בשלשה זהובים או בארבע</p>
<p>They said {to him}: We'll give it [to you]. As they went {to get the money, the gentile guessed for what purpose they needed the heifer. And when they came} and brought the money, he said to them: I will {not sell it to you.} They said {to him}: Perhaps [we should] increase the money you wish [to receive for the heifer]? {If you wish,} we will give you all you ask. The evil man saw that they were pushing [to buy] it, and he raised [the price]. They said {to him}: Take five gold coins! However, he did not want to [sell]. Take ten, take twenty, take thirty, take fifty! – until they reached [the sum of] one hundred gold coins, and he still did not want to [sell]. Some of our Rabbis say: [They increased their offer] until they reached [the sum of] one thousand gold coins. {Then he accepted [their offer] to sell them [the heifer] for one thousand gold coins.} [Thus,] they made an agreement with</p>	<p>אמרן {לו} ואנו נותנים עד שהם הולכים {להביא את דמים הרגיש אותו הגוי להיכן הם צריכים את הפרה וכיון שבאו} והביאו את דמיה אמר להם {אני מוכר לכם} אמרו {לו} שמא להוסיף על דמיה את מבקש אנו נותנים {לך} כל מה שתבקש ואותו רשע כל שהיה רואה אותם דחוקים עליה היה מלעז עליהם אמרו {לו} טול לך חמשה זהובים והוא לא היה מבקש טול עשרה טול עשרים טול שלשים טול חמשים עד שהגיעו למאה זהובים והוא לא {היה} מבקש ויש מן רבותינו אומר עד שהגיעו ליתן לו עד אלף זהובים {כשקיבל עליו ליתנה להם באלף זהובים} והתינו עמו והלכו להביא לו הזהובים מה עשה אותו רשע אמר לגוי אחד חבירו בוא ראה היאך אני משחק ביהודים הללו כלום הם מבקשים אותה ונותנים לי {כל} הדמים הללו אלא מפני שלא {עלה} עליה עול ואני נוטל את העול ונותנו עליה {ומשחק אני עליהם} ואטול את ממונם וכן עשה נטל את העול ונותנו על צוארה כל הלילה</p>

<p>him, and they went to bring him the gold coins. What did the evil man do? He said to another gentile, who was his friend: Come and see how I will fool those Jews. The only reason they want [the heifer] and give me all that money is because no yoke has been upon it. I will take a yoke and put it upon it {and I will fool them} and take their money [anyway]. This is what he did: He took a yoke and put it on [the heifer's] neck for the entire night.</p>	
<p>These are the marks {of a heifer}, which never carried a yoke: there are two hairs on the spot of its neck where the yoke is placed, which stand upright as long as it has not carried a yoke. When a yoke is placed on it, the two hairs are immediately bent. And there is still another {sign} that [the heifer never carried a yoke]. As long as no yoke has been on it, [the heifer's] eyes look straight ahead. If a yoke has been on it, [the heifer's] eyes change, it squints and it turns its head and attempts to look at the yoke. When the [Jews] came to take [the heifer] from the [gentile], and they had all that gold and showed it to him, he went immediately inside and removed the yoke from the heifer, and he led it out to them. When he presented [the heifer], they looked at it and they noticed the two signs [of a heifer that had been under the yoke], the two hairs, which should have been straight, were bent down, and furthermore, its eyes were squinting because of the yoke. They said to him: Take your heifer. We do not need it. Fool around with your mother.</p>	<p>וזה היא סימניה {של פרה} שלא עלה עליה עול שתי שערות יש לה בצוארה במקום שהעול נתק וכל זמן שלא עלה עליה עול שתי השערות זוקפות הם ניתן עליה עול מיד שתי השערות ניכפפות ועוד {סימן} אחד יש בה עד שלא עלה עליה עול עיניה {שוות עלה עליה עול עיניה} שורות והיא מתחלפת פוזלת ומסתכלת בעול כיון שבאו ליקח אותה הימנו וכל אותו הזהב בידם והראהו לו הזהב מיד נכנס והעביר {את} העול מן הפרה והוציאה להם כיון שהראה להם התחילו מסתכלין בה ורואין {את} סימניה אותן שתי שערות היו זוקפות שנכפפו ועוד עיניה מן העול נפולו אמרו לו טול {את} פרתך אין אנו צריכין לה לך שחוק באמך</p>
<p>When this evil man realized that they were returning his heifer to him and that the outcome for him were empty [pockets] without all those gold coins, his mouth, which had said: I will fool them, said: Blessed is He who chose this people. Then he went into his house, put up</p>	<p>כיון שראה אותו רשע שהחזירו לו פרתו ויצא ריקם מכל אותם הזהובים אתו הפה שאמר אני משחק בהם התחיל ואומר ברוך שבחר באומה {ה} זו ונכנס לו לתוך ביתו ותלה את החבל וחנק {את} עצמו כך יאבדו כל אויבך ייי {שופטים ה לא} הא למדת שמכל מקום לוקחין פרה אדומה אל ישראל בין ישראל</p>

<p>a rope, and hanged himself, <i>So let all Your enemies perish, Lord</i> (Judg 5:31). Thus you learned that a red heifer may be purchased for Israel anywhere, either from a Jew or from a gentile that you should not say: It is written in the Tora that a red heifer may be purchased only from a Jew; [in fact] {it may be purchased from a gentile too}. {From where in Scripture do we know this?} From what is read in the Scriptural portion: <i>This is the statute of the Tora which the Lord has commanded ... Speak to the Israelites to bring for you a red heifer</i> (Num 19:2).</p>	<p>ובין מגוי שלא תאמר כת' בתורה {שאין} ליקח פרה אדומה אל' מישראל {אפי' מן הגוי} {מניי} ממה שקראו בענין זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה יי' לאמר וגומר דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו אליך פרה אדומ' [במדבר יט ב]</p>
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The literary components of the above story, as well as certain requirements pertaining to a red heifer, were known to Muslims in the seventh century. A cow that has particular signs comparable to those of a red heifer is mentioned in a *Qur'ān* commentary by Zayd Ibn 'Alī (d. 740) on *Sūra 2 The Cow*.⁶⁶ Zayd states that according to Jewish tradition, the story begins with a righteous man, whose only possession was a fine cow. The cow had no blemish and it was yellow. Before he died, the man entrusted the cow to his son. After his father had died, the mother told her son that the cow was not to be used for any form of labor and that the cow was only to be sold for a certain amount of money. After the mother's death, the son did not allow the cow to be used as a beast of burden. This commentary on the *Qur'ān* is continued by several commentators, who envision complicated sequels to the initial story.

Story 2:

The second story in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14 about a cow has elements of comparative theology and it includes the conversion of a gentile. This story is also found in *Midrash 'Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*, which may have borrowed it from *Pesiqta Rabbati*.

<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 14:6-7	<i>Midraš 'Ašeret</i> <i>Ha-Dibberot</i> 2	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> MS Parma 141a-b	<i>Midraš 'Ašeret</i> <i>Ha-Dibberot</i> 2 ⁶⁷
Our Rabbis said: An incident concerning a Jew who had a cow to plow [his field]. He became impoverished {and he sold} [the cow] to a gentile. As soon as that gentile owned it, he plowed with it during the six days of the week. On the Sabbath he took it out to plow, but it lay down under the yoke. He beat it, but [the cow] would not move from its place. When he saw this he went to the Jew who had sold it: Come, take your cow. It has some problem. No matter how much I beat it, it will not move from its place. The Jew understood that this was related to the Sabbath, because the cow had been accustomed to rest on the Sabbath. He said to [the gentile]: Come, I will make [the cow] get up. When he came [to the cow], he spoke into its ear: O cow, O cow, you know that when you were under my care,	An incident concerning a Jew who had a cow to plow [his field] during the six days of the week. He became impoverished and he sold [the cow] to a gentile [a Persian—a Muslim]. He plowed with it during the six days of the week. When the Sabbath came, he wanted to plow with it, but it lay down under the yoke and refused to plow. The gentile beat it, but [the cow] would not move from its place. When the gentile saw this he went to the Jew who had sold it: Take your cow. It has some problem, since it will not plow today. The Jew understood that this was related to the Sabbath, because the cow had been accustomed to rest on the Sabbath. He said to the gentile: Come, I will make [the cow] get up. They both went to the cow. The Jew spoke into its ear: O cow, O cow, you know that when you were under my	אמרו רבותינו מעשה היה בישראל {אחד} שהיה לו פרה אחת חורשת ונתמעט ידו {ומכרה} לו לגוי כיון שלקחה אותו הגוי וחרשה עמו ששת ימי החול בשבת הוציאה שתחרוש עמו ורבצה לה תחת העול היה הולך ומכה אותה והיא אינה זזה ממקומה כיון שראה כן הלך ואמר לאותו ישראל שמכרה לו בא טול פרתך שמא צער יש בה שהרי כמה אני מכה אותה והיא אינה זזה ממקומה אותו ישראל הבין לומר שבביל של שבת והיתה לימודה לנוח בשבת ואמר לו בוא ואני מעמידה כיון שבא ואמר לה באוונה פרה פרה את יודעת כשהיתה ברשותי היית חרשת ששת ימי החול ובשבת מנחת עכשיו שגרמו עונותי ואת ברשות גוי בבקשה ממך עמדי וחרשי	מעשה ביהודי אחד שהיתה לו פרה אחד וחרשת כל ימי המעשה ונתדלדלה ידו ומכרה לגוי {לפרסי—למוסלימי} וחרש בה כל ימי המעשה וכשבא יום השבת רצה לחרוש בה והיא רבצה תחת העול ותמאן לחרוש והכה אותה הגוי מאד ולא רצתה לנוח ממקומה כיון שראה הגוי הלך אצל היהודי ואמר טול פרתך שמכרת לי כי מום יש בה שאינה רוצה לחרוש היום כששמע היהודי כך הבין שבבביל שבת היא עושה כי כן היתה מנהגת לנוח בשבת אמר לגוי בא עמי ואני אעמידה הלכו שניהם אצל הפרה ולקחה היהודי ודבר באוונה ואמר פרתי פרתי אתה ידעת כשהיית ברשותי אתה נוחה בשבת ועכשו גרמו עונותי מכרתך לגן ואת ברשותו בבקשה ממך עמדי וחרשי

67. *Midraš 'Ašeret Ha-Dibberot* (ed. A. SHAPIRA, Jerusalem, 2005), p. 62f. See also *Ošar Midrašim* (ed. J. D. EISENSTEIN, New York, 1915), p. 450.

<p>you plowed on the six days of the week and on the Sabbath you rested. But now that my sins have brought about that you are in the hands of a gentile, please, get up and plow.</p>	<p>care, you plowed on the six days of the week and on the Sabbath you rested. But now that my sins have brought about that you are in the hands of a gentile, please, get up and plow.</p>		
<p>At once [the cow] stood up and plowed. The gentile then said to him: Until now I begged your cow, when it was resting, and then you came and made it stand up. Above and beyond this and that, I will not leave you alone until you tell me, what you did to its ear that made it stand up and plow? Because I hurt it and struck it and wore myself out, but still - it did not stand up. The Jew began to calm him down and said to him: I did not perform sorcery or witchcraft. But I spoke this and this into its ear, and it stood up and plowed.</p>	<p>At once [the cow] stood up and plowed. The gentile then said to him: Nevertheless, take your cow and give me my money back. Since each time that she rests I will go and run after you to get her up. Furthermore, don't leave me until you tell me the sorcery that you whispered into its ear. The Jew began to cry and said to him: Am I a sorcerer? The gentile said: Who will believe you? Because I struck it all day long with the goad and wore myself out, but still it did not stand up, but you with your whisper got her up. Didn't your whisper get her up? The Jew swore an oath: I spoke this and this into its ear, and it stood up.</p>	<p>מיד עמדה וחרשה אמר לו אותו אני מבקשה פרתך עד עכשיו ומסיב אחרך שתהא בא ומעמידה על כל אחת חוץ מזו ומזו אני מניחך שתאמר לי מה עשיתה לה באזנה ועמדה וחרשה אני מכה נתייגעתי והכתי אותה ולא עמדה התחיל אתו ישראל מפיסו ואומר לו לא כשף ולא כשפים עשיתי אלא כן וכן הסחתי לה באזנה ועמדה וחרשה</p>	<p>מיד עמדה על רגליה וחרשה אמר לו הגוי אף על פי כן טול פרתך ותן לי הדמים כי כל פעם שתרכיץ אלך ואסבב אחרך להעמידה ועוד לא תתפרד ממני עד שתאמר לי הכשפים שלחשת באזנה התחיל היהודי לבכות ואמר לו מכשף אני אמר לו הגוי מי יאמינך אני היכיתיה כל היום המלמד ויגעתי עליה ולא עמדה ואתה בלחישת שפתיך תעמידנה אלמלא כשפך לא תעמידנה אמר לו בשבועה כך וכך שחתי באזנה ועל כן עמדה</p>
<p>At once the gentile was overcome by awe. He said: If a cow, which has no speech and no understanding, could</p>	<p>When the gentile heard this at once the gentile was overcome by awe. He said: If a cow, which has no speech and no under-</p>	<p>מיד נתייראה אותו הגוי אמר ומה אם פרה שאין לה סיחה ולא דעת הכירה בוראה ואני שייצרתי בדמותו ונתן בי דעת איני הולך ומכיר</p>	<p>כיון ששמע הגוי כך הרהר תשובה בלבו ואמר אוי לי מה פרה זו שאין לה לא סיחה ולא דעת הכירה בוראה ואני שב[אני הב"ה בצלמו</p>

<p>acknowledge its Creator, I, whom He made in His image and gave me understanding, shall I not go and acknowledge my Creator? At once he went and converted and studied and acquired Tora. They called him Judah b. Torta. And to this day our Rabbis quote {<i>halakha</i>} in his name. And if you are astonished that by way of a cow a man was brought under the wings of the Divine Presence, [consider] that by means of a cow the purification of all Israel is achieved. From where [in Scripture do we know this]? From what they read in the Scriptural portion: <i>To bring for you a red heifer</i> (Num 19:2), <i>this is the statute of the Tora</i> (<i>ibid.</i>)</p>	<p>standing, could acknowledge its Creator, I, whom He made in His image and gave me understanding, shall I not go and acknowledge my Creator? At once he went and converted and studied and acquired a lot of Tora. He is called by the name of Hanina b. Torta in Judaism. And to this day our Rabbis quote <i>halakha</i> in his name. May his portion be with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Hence, may a person understand and give his heart to honor the Sabbath.</p>	<p>את בוראי ומיד בא ונתגייר ולמד וזכה לתורה והיו קוראין שמו רבי יהודה בן תורתא ועד עכשיו רבותינו אמרין {הלכה} משמו ואם תמה את שעל ידי פרה נתקרב אדם אחד לכנפי השכינה הרי על ידי פרה היא טהרתם של כל ישראל מנין ממה שקראו בענין ויקחו אליך פרה אדומה" זאת חקת התורה [במדבר יט ב]</p>	<p>ונתן בי בינה ודעת איני מכיר את בוראי מיד הלך ונתגייר וזכה ללמוד תורה הרבה ונקרא שמו בישראל ר' חנינא בן תורתא ועד עכשו אומרים הלכה על שמו יהיה חלקו עם הצדיקים בנגן עזרן לכן יבין אדם ויתן אל לבו לכבד את השבת</p>
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Occasionally, there was conversion to and from Judaism in the Middle Ages. Pollack⁶⁸ refers to the conversion of house slaves to Judaism which resulted in the hostile reaction of the church, mentioned by Abraham b. Jacob *Ha-Kohen* from Narbonne, the author of *Orhot Hayyim*.⁶⁹ The story has stock elements of medieval Jew hatred such as Jews being accused of practicing magic. The above story concerning an observant cow and a convert is not found in the presently extant body of classical rabbinic literature; the only source is *Pesiqta Rabbati*. This story is also mentioned in *Midraš*

68. POLLACK, "An Historical Explanation," p. 196.

69. Abraham *Ha-Kohen*, *Sefer Orhot Hayyim*, Jerusalem, 1856, based upon the Florence edition of 1759, Hebrew pagination, p. 7a.

‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot. *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot* based its text upon *Pesiqta Rabbati* in this case, because the version of the story in *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot* is embellished and has more details than *Pesiqta Rabbati*.

The story of the cow observing the Sabbath has a Persian or a Muslim instead of a gentile in some manuscripts of *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*. A manuscript mentioned in Shapira’s edition states “and he sold it to a Persian”, and she remarks that generally Non-Jews are referred to as “Muslims”, whereas Christians are referred to as “uncircumcised”.⁷⁰ The Jewish story of the observant cow is only found in a few manuscripts from medieval France and infrequently in manuscripts from Ashkenaz.⁷¹ It may be argued that the expanded story of the cow derived from a Muslim environment and that it was added in France to *Pesiqta Rabbati*. Subsequently the story was cited and further edited in *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*. An important religious element is that the cow practices Sabbath observance, which raises her above the new gentile owner. This element may be related to the historical context of comparing religions, which permeated Jewish existence in medieval Europe with its forced comparisons of Judaism to Christianity.

It seems that a tale of unknown origin was combined with an imagined etiology of R. Ben Torta’s name, “son of a cow”. R. Ben Torta is mentioned several times in rabbinic literature, among the texts is the *Tosefta*.⁷² The story is also referred to in medieval commentaries; e.g., *Tosefot Yešenim*, *Yoma* 9a, s.v. *רלא שמשו*, which refer to “the *Pesiqta*” [*Pesiqta Rabbati*] when the text states: “it is explained that he converted through a cow”. The same is found in *Tosefot ha-Roš*. *Ḥidduše Ritva* (*Yoma* 9a) states: “his name is based on the fact that he sold a cow to a Kuthean and whispered in its ear”. Eventually the story concerning the cow became part of Jewish folklore.⁷³

70. *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot* (ed. A. SHAPIRA), p. 62, n. 117, based on M. R. COHEN, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, Princeton, 1994, revised reprint 2008, p. 345.

71. R. KUSHELEVSKY, “Between the Heritage of the Middle Ages and the Winds of the Renaissance: The Midrash of the Ten Commandments in the Parma Manuscript 2269 (De Rossi 473)” (Hebrew), *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 29 (2015), p. 33-77; in regard to the observant cow she lists MS Paris 716 (f. 217b-218a), Provence 14th-15th century; MS Wolfenbüttel 36.17, Ashkenaz 14th century (13-14). *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot* (ed. SHAPIRA) also mentions MS Frankfurt am Main [MS Oct. 227].

72. t. *Menaḥ*. 13:22; b. *Yoma* 9a; y. *Ta’an*. 4:5; *ŠemR* 40:1; *BemR* 7:10; *EkhR* 2:4.

73. M. GASTER, *The Exempla of the Rabbis*, London, 1924, repr. New York, 1969, number 312: “A cow which belonged to a pious man when sold to a stranger refused to work on the Sabbath and thus the transgressor was taught a lesson.” ZUNZ, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, p. 152, assigns the story to the expositions of the Fourth Commandment in *Midraš ‘Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*.

Mahzor Vitry

In order to assess the transmission of *Pesiqta Rabbati*, additional 11th century sources from France have to be considered. *Mahzor Vitry* dates from the 11th /early 12th century Champagne and it was composed by Simhah b. Samuel of Vitry (died before 1105). This *mahzor* contains several citations from *Pesiqta Rabbati*.⁷⁴ *Mahzor Vitry* resembles a liturgical-legal compendium from Champagne; most manuscripts date from the 13th and 14th centuries.⁷⁵ It not only includes the annual cycle of Jewish prayers according to the northern French rite (*nusah šarfāt*), but it is also based upon Rashi's halakhic decisions and additional *minhagim* in its attempt to regulate the annual liturgical cycle, including the festivals and the special Sabbaths. Among the sources of *Mahzor Vitry* are the *Seder Rav 'Amram Ga'on* and the *Halakhot Gedolot* from 9th century Babylonia, as well as the teachings of Simhah's teacher, Rashi. *Mahzor Vitry* is the only work of its kind from the School of Rashi to combine liturgy and law, unlike other famous legal codes such as *Sefer Ha-Sedarim*, *Sefer Ha-Ora* or *Sefer Issur we-Heter*. The author of *Mahzor Vitry* refers to the first homily in *Pesiqta Rabbati*: "As is explained in the beginning of the great *Pesiqta*..." (דמפורש בתחילת פסיקתא) (הגדולה) and to a specific homily "The lectionary portion on the Seventh Month in *Pesiqta Rabbati*..."⁷⁶ Furthermore, *Mahzor Vitry* contains passages from *Pesiqta Rabbati* that also appear in *Berešit Rabbati*; for example, a passage concerning the judgment of the dead:

<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 20:6 MS Casanatense 67a-b	<i>Berešit Rabbati</i> , 11	<i>Mahzor Vitry</i> , p. 173, 392
קשת שמבקשין עליו רחמים זורקין אותו מנהיגים כחץ מן הקשת קשת מפני שכיון שעלה מנהיגים מרקד כגדי ...	ומצאתי בפסיקתא ... ומבקשין עליו רחמים זורקין אותו מנהיגים לגן עדן כחץ מן הקשת שכך שנינו בפסיקתא ... כיון שמבקשין עליו רחמים זורקין אותו מנהיגים לגן עדן כחץ מן הקשת ...

74. *Pesiq. Rab.* 7:12 was cited in *Mahzor Vitry*, p. 207; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:15 was cited in *Mahzor Vitry*, p. 497; *Pesiq. Rab.* 6:10 was cited in *Siddur Rashi* (ed. S. BUBER, Berlin, 1911), p. 320, and in *Mahzor Vitry*, p. 302.

75. For example, <https://www.bl.uk/hebrew-manuscripts/articles/the-mahzor-vitry-of-the-british-library> (Viewed October 2018).

76. *Mahzor Vitry* (p. 497): בפרשת החדש השביעי בפסיקתא רבתי וכדאמר ר' מעיקרא פתח להווא: [להו] בבדיחותא ולבסוף יתיב באימתא ולא כל המרבה בסחורה מחכם כלומר לא על ידי סחורה בלבד מחכם האדם שהרי מי שרוצה להתחכם צריך לעסוק בכל עיניו ישוב בין בסחורה ובין שאר חכמות שבדרך עולם להיות מבין בכל ובמקום שאין אנשים להשתדל ולעמוד בפרק תשתדל להיות איש לזאת ולבא ואין כאן משום שררה ולא מחזקין ליה ביהודא.

<p>[Sagittarius] ... When mercy is entreated in his behalf, however, he is shot up from Gehinnom like an arrow from the bow.</p>	<p>Sagittarius, because when he comes up from Gehinnom he dances like a young goat [Capricorn].</p>	<p>I found in the <i>Pesiqta</i> ... when mercy is entreated in his behalf, he is catapulted from Gehinnom to the Garden of Eden like an arrow from the bow. Since we taught so in the <i>Pesiqta</i> ... When mercy is entreated in his behalf, however, he is shot up from Gehinnom like an arrow from the bow.</p>
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Pesiqta Rabbati is the only rabbinic source concerning an insertion into the prayer known as “Grace after Meals”. This insertion is *we-hasi’enu* (“may God bestow upon us”) on the Sabbath of the New Moon (*Rosh Hodesh*).⁷⁷ *Maḥzor Vitry* dates from the 11th /early 12th century France and contains citations from *Pesiqta Rabbati*. Furthermore, the author of *Maḥzor Vitry* refers to the first homily in *Pesiqta Rabbati*:

<i>Maḥzor Vitry</i>	<i>Maḥzor Vitry</i> , p. 361
<p>As has been explained in the beginning of the great <i>Pesiqta</i>, R. Simeon bar Abba said in the name of R. Yohanan that one has to recite <i>hasi’enu</i> [bestow upon us,] on New Moons ...</p>	<p>כדמפורש בתחילת פסיקתא הגדולה ר' שמעון בר אבא אמ' בשם ר' יוחנן צריך לומר והשיאנו בראשי חדשים</p>

The source of this citation is a halakhic passage – a *yelammedenu* unit “May our rabbi teach us” – in *Pesiqta Rabbati*. *Maḥzor Vitry* utilizes *Pesiqta Rabbati* to support a liturgical *minhag* and to provide a script for the recitation of the *hasi’enu* blessing. This may have occurred when other halakhic and liturgical practices were decided. Pollack mentions that the early *Sifre Minhagim* were first found in Provence.⁷⁸ One of these early books, *Sefer ha-Minhagot* by Asher b. Saul (early 13th century) investigates and organizes the maze of customs, references, and details relating to observances of festivals and Sabbaths as well as regulations concerning family, diet, and social life. Among numerous local preferences the *minhagim* of the Provence were included in *Maḥzor Vitry*.

The major collections of rabbinic homilies such as *Midraṣ Tanḥuma*, *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* and *Pesiqta Rabbati* often preserve sections that

77. R. ULMER, “The Halakhic Part of the *Yelammedenu* in *Pesiqta Rabbati*,” *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* 14 (1998), p. 59-80.

78. POLLACK, “An Historical Explanation,” p. 195.

contain halakhic statements in textual units entitled *yelammedenu*.⁷⁹ The halakhic portions usually consist of quotations from the *Mišna*, *Tosefta* or *Barayta*. The topics discussed in these halakhic units relate to the liturgical occasion of the respective homily.⁸⁰ This is the case in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1, which is a homily for the New Moon that falls on a Sabbath. The *yelammedenu* units function as a connector between the Biblical lectionary portion, the liturgical occasion, and the exegetical part of the homily. In *Pesiqta Rabbati* the pattern of halakhic question and response involves an anonymous questioner and an anonymous respondent, which differs from the Babylonian Talmud.

Liturgical themes included in these halakhic statements reveal the particular understanding of the “preacher” (*daršan*) concerning the issue in question. The *yelammedenu* in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1 ultimately examines the status of the New Moon, the Sabbath, and festival customs. This *yelammedenu* unit consists of the following subparts: 1) a question posed to a rabbi; 2) an initial, anonymous response; 3) a dictum in the name of R. Simeon b. Abba in the name of R. Yohanan, which could be viewed as a second response to the question in the context of *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1; 4) a proposition based upon this dictum; this proposition is supported by a Scriptural proof from Numbers 10:10 and a midrash on Isaiah 66:23, which connects the *yelammedenu* to the lectionary portion.

<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> 1:1	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> MS Parma 119a
And it will happen that from one moon (Isa 66:23) Let us begin in the name of the Lord, our God. <i>Yelammedenu</i> .	ויהי מדי חדש בשם יי אלהינו נתחיל ילמדינו
Let our Rabbis [sic] teach us: What should a Jewish person do, if he forgot to mention [the words referring to] the New Moon when he recites Grace after Meals? [Subpart 1]	ילמדינו רבותינו אדם מישראל שבירך על המזון בראש חדש ושכח ולא הזכיר של ראש כיצד הוא צריך לעשות

79. A. MARMORSTEIN, “Zur Erforschung des Jelammedenu-Problems,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 74 (1930), p. 266-284 (270), regarded *yelammedenu* as a collection of sermons from the seventh or eighth century.

80. V. APTOWITZER, “Scheeltoth und Jelammedenu,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 76 (1932), p. 558-575 (562-563).

<p>Our Rabbis taught us: If he forgets to mention the New Moon, but realizes it immediately [that he omitted it, when he recites] Grace after Meals, and before his attention is diverted from the blessings, then he is not required to return to the beginning [of the Grace after Meals]. Instead [he amends his omission] by reciting a short blessing: Blessed are [You, Lord our God, King of the world], who has given New Moons to His people Israel. Blessed are {You, Lord}, who sanctifies Israel and the New Moons. [Subpart 2]</p>	<p>כך לימדנו רבותינו שכח ולא הזכיר של ראש חדש ומשגמר ברכת המזון נזכר מיד עד שלא הסיח דעתו מן הברכות אינו צריך לחזור {לתחילה} לראש אלא אומר ברכה קטנה בסוף ברוך אשר נתן ראשי חדשים לעמו ישראל בר מקדש ישראל וראשי חדשים</p>
<p>Simeon b. Abba said in the name of R. Yohanan: During the festival season one is required to recite [the blessing]: Lord, our God, bestow upon us ... [Subpart 3]</p>	<p>שמעון בן אבא בשם רבי יוחנן אמר צריך לומר בחולו של מועד והשיאנו יי אלהינו</p>
<p>Now, we learned that New Moons are equivalent to festival seasons, as it says: <i>In the days of your rejoicing, both in your festival seasons [and in your New Moons]</i> (Num 10:10). New Moons are even equivalent to the Sabbath! [Subpart 4]</p>	<p>הרי למדנו שראשי חדשים שקולין במועדות שנאמר וביום שמחתכם ומועדיכם ובראשי חדשיכם {במדבר י ין} אפילו בשבת שוקלין הם ראשי חדשים</p>
<p>Therefore, your position is that New Moons are equivalent to festival seasons and to Sabbaths. [Conclusion]</p>	<p>נמצא אומר שראש חדשים שקולין כנגד המועדות ובשבתות</p>
<p>From where in Scripture [do we know] New Moons are equivalent to Sabbaths? From the concluding [passage] from the prophet [read for the New Moon]: <i>And it will happen, that from one New Moon to another, and from one Shabbat to another, shall all flesh come to worship, etc.</i> (Isa 66:23).</p>	<p>ומניין שהן שקולין אף כנגד השבתות ממה שהשלים בנביא והיה מדי חדש בחדשו ומדי שבת בשבתו יבא כל בשר" להשתחות {חות} וגומר {ישעיה סו כג}</p>

Pesiqta Rabbati 1 (subpart 1) presumes that there is an insertion concerning the New Moon in the Grace after Meals, ברכת המזון. If the reference to the New Moon is forgotten, the suggested remedy in *Pesiqta Rabbati* is to recite a short blessing. *Pesiqta Rabbati* refers to an unknown tradition by stating “Now, we learned that New Moons are equivalent to festival seasons ...”, but the *yelammedenu* has no exact parallel in the *Mišna*, *Tosefta*, or Talmud; there are merely a few fragmented points of view

concerning the halakhic problem. The anonymous halakhic answer is included in *Sefer Ha-Roqeah Ha-Gadol*. The second halakhic answer, which is crucial to the *minhag* of reciting *hasi'enu*, is cited in *Maḥzor Vitry*. The *yelammedenu* enables the *daršan* to develop the subject that the New Moon has a special significance for the Jewish people and that it is equally important as the festivals and the Sabbath.

Conclusion

Pesiqta Rabbati is a rabbinic homiletic work that experienced a complex transmission and redaction. Originally from the Land of Israel, the text was transferred to Europe – to Italy, the Rhineland, and the South of France – in the Byzantine era at the cusp of the Islamic conquest of the Middle East.⁸¹ In 11th century Provence excerpts from *Pesiqta Rabbati* are quoted by Moses *Ha-Daršan* in *Berešit Rabbati* and in Champagne by Rashi in his Bible commentaries. Further references are found in *Maḥzor Vitry* by Simhah b. Samuel of Vitry. Additionally, *Pesiqta Rabbati* shows textual overlap with manuscripts of mainly French provenance of *Midraš 'Ašeret Ha-Dibberot*, which was partially edited in Narbonne in c. 11th century. Jewish scholars in Narbonne and in Champagne were familiar with *Pesiqta Rabbati* in the 11th century. This article argues that geographical locations influenced the transmission of a rabbinic text and applies some features of “borderlands theories” to the reception of *Pesiqta Rabbati*.

The geographical location and the ensuing intellectual context of Narbonne and Champagne influenced the engagement with earlier rabbinic texts. *Pesiqta Rabbati* was cited in 11th century France before the first extensive manuscript of the work was completed in the Rhineland in 1270 (MS Parma 3122). Moses *Ha-Daršan* made deliberate choices in his citations to accommodate rabbinic reactions to the borderland mentality in Narbonne. Excerpts of *Pesiqta Rabbati* appear in a story about a woman from Zarephath to highlight the righteousness of Jews. Additionally, Moses *Ha-Daršan* cited the creation of the Zodiac to display astronomical knowledge. Furthermore, he chose a passage mentioning Ishmael, as well as the importance of the moon in Judaism. In *Pesiqta Rabbati* the “Grace after Meals” contains

81. The Persians conquered Palestine in 614, which is reflected in *Pesiq. Rab.* 36:8: “The king of Persia will make war against the king of Arabia, and the king of Arabia will go to Edom [East Rome] to take counsel from Edom. The king of Persia will again devastate the whole world and all the nations of the world will be agitated and frightened, they will fall.”

an insertion for a special Sabbath; this was cited as a source in a prayer book, *Mahzor Vitry*. The borderland situation of Narbonne and Champagne may have contributed to negotiating in a diverse religious setting. Moyaert's question,⁸² whether one can maintain one's religious identity without closing oneself off from the other, deserves a positive response: Judaism was able to maintain and reaffirm its identity in Narbonne and Champagne.

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82. MOYAERT, *Fragile Identities*, p. 11 ff.