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The manuscript of *Moreh Nevuchim* from the collection of the National Museum in Krakow

Among the Hebrew manuscripts in the collection of the National Museum in Krakow the most interesting one seems to be that of *Moreh Nevuchim* (MNK rkps 307) by Moshe ben Maimon (or Maimonides, 1135–1204). According to the colophon, the manuscript was written in 1406 in Perugia. The manuscript we are dealing with here includes the Shmuel ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of the famous Maimonides' work written originally in Arabic. The translation was completed – according to the colophon of the translator – in 1213, i.e. almost ten years after the author's death. Ibn Tibbon enlarged original work with the vocabulary of difficult terms and also – within the framework of the colophon – detailed description of the circumstances and place of the translation completion. Our manuscript includes also these additions of the translator.

Description of the manuscript

The manuscript has been preserved in a very good state. Only in certain places some tiny damages are present, for instance little wholes (some of them are paper-backed), stains (probably the remnants of spilling over) and scrapes. The bottom margins of some leaves have been cut off. The manuscript contains 522 pages (the pagination is modern, originally neither pages nor leaves were numerated or the numeration had been lost due to the trimming of sheets), in the present state of the manuscript an average leaf is of size 170 × 235 mm. Parchment quires have been bound with wooden binding covered brown leather with embossed pattern. Two brass clasps at the covers have been preserved. The leaves represent different types of bleached parchment with variety of shades, tones and thickness. The parchment may be described as Italian (so called *charta italica*) due to a characteristic way of bleaching leather that enables discerning which side of each sheet comes from outer hair-covered side of skin and which from the inner one.

On the parchment ruling (made with hard point) is visible. The letters are „hanged” on the lines according to the Italian mode. The space between the lines is always the same, i.e. 5–6 mm. On each page there are 28 vertical lines and 4 horizontal ones. Vertical lines run through the whole width of the sheet while those vertical spread through the whole length of the page. In the present state of the manuscript on the majority of pages no pricking is visible, probably due to the trimming of sheets. The most wide, bottom, margin is of ca 65 mm, while the top one as well as outer and inner are of ca 34, 41 and 20 mm respectively. Generally, the margins on the left side of each page are equal, although the

letters frequently cross the line (to avoid it, the copyist stretched or narrowed some letters; sometimes he wrote the words above the lines). On a standard page are usually two equal parallel columns of text of size ca 45 × 138 mm, while the space between them is of 13 mm. There are 28 lines of text in an average column. No vowel signs are present in the Hebrew text.

Although the text is mostly very well planned on the page, some irregularities occur notwithstanding. For instance on the page 324, where a certain part of the text ends, only one column is left while the following page is remained blank. Sometimes margins notes, written in brown ink, are made in square or cursive script working mostly as reminders of which term is discussed in the relevant fragment. The text itself is written with black ink of two shades: deep black and brighter black with the domination of the former. The script used may be described as Italian semi-cursive script which could be dated on 14th/15th century (what is confirmed by the date in the colophon). In our codex the letters are usually of 2–2.5 mm high. Sometimes the copyist uses higher characters – of 4 mm – signing on that way the numbers of chapters and also the items of the Ibn Tibbon's dictionary. For higher letters he used different pen. Out of the first parchment sheet of the codex only ca one third has been preserved, while the rest is apparently cut off. This leaf may be referred to as a Latin title page of the work as it bears an inscription that reads: „More Nevuchim Ebraice in pergameno”. On the top of the page the traces of other texts may be detected. One word in Hebrew seems to be certain – של [she] – which is the particle of genitive and may express an ownership among other meanings. One could guess, therefore, that a name one of the (Hebrew) owners of the manuscript was written there, but has been removed afterwards.

On the third page of the manuscript there is the only ornament present in the whole codex. The word opening the Maimonides' *opus magnum* – דברי [divre] is gilded (red basecoat comes through the thin layer of gold) and the letters are significantly bigger than the others (with the high of 20 mm). In fact they represent totally different type of writing than used in the main body of the text, as the letters were drawn not written. Additionally, the letters include ornaments. They are flanked by rich purple dominated filigree decoration with red and golden floral motifs. It spreads downwards along the inner margin. The figures of birds are conspicuous, rooster among them, and also a naked human figure holding one bird's tail. Additionally, at the bottom of the page there is a monkey drawn with ink. On the same page two stamps are visible. In one of them a phrase: „Cenzura Książ Żydowskich” (Censorship of Jewish Books) can be easily read, while the rest of the text inscribed is rather vague¹. In the central part of the stamp two-headed eagle with crown and cross is depicted (fig. 1). Presented codex includes the complete text of the Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of *Moreh Nevuchim*. In Arabic original as well as in Hebrew translation the whole work is divided into three major parts-volumes. In our manuscript the each of the three is marked by enlarged letters. First part with 76 chapters covers in our codex pages 24–184. The second part consisting of 48 chapters starts at the page 185 and ends at the page 324; on the last page the text is written in one column only, triangle shaped to the bottom of the sheet. Two words in Hebrew are added here בעזרת שדי [be-

¹ Except of „wezv”.

'*ezrat shadday*) „with the help of Almighty [God]”. The third and the last part of the work, including 54 chapters, covers the pages 326–509. The dictionary follows immediately the last part of the work (ends at the page 550). At the end of all parts as well as at the end of the dictionary the following formula is written: תם ונשלם תהילה לאל עולם [*tam venishlam thila le-el olam*] „completed and finished, praise [be] the God of Eternity”. Interestingly enough, in the quoted phrase three letters are marked – מ ש ה i.e. *mem*, *shin* and *he*. Reading from right to left they result in the name *Moshe* that may refer to the name of the author – Moshe ben Maimon. On the other hand, reading from left to right emerges the word *Ha-Shem*, „The Name [of God]”.

As has been mentioned, our codex includes Ibn Tibbon's colophon, the translator of *Moreh Nevuchim*. This is well known text that reads as follows:

[1] עשיתי זה השער בתוך [2] הספינה על חוף ארד [3] לאקיליביא בארבעת מילין [4] ולתוניס
יום וחצי יום בבאי [5] מאסכנרה בחדש תמוז שנת [6] תתקעג ליצירה ישיבנו השם [7] עם
חבורתנו אל עירינו ואל [8] בתינו לשלום [9] אמן

[1] I have finished this chapter on [2] the ship. I am going ashore [3] [in the place] of four miles to Aqilibia² [4] and one and a half day journey to Tunis on my way [5] from Alexandria in the month *Tammuz* in the year [6] [4]973 from the creation [of the world]. Let Lord bring us back [7] together with our community to our City and [8] to our home [9] Amen.

The above quoted text is immediately followed by the colophon written in the name of the scribe and some additional sheets that testifies to the origins and history of the described codex. They will be discussed in the next section of the present text.

The origins and history of the manuscript

The detailed history of the manuscript is not known. Some information about its origins and history is provided by the colophon written in the name of the scribe and paper sheets added to the codex itself. As has been already mentioned, the colophon written in the name of the scribe follows immediately, i.e. in the same column the standard Ibn Tibbon's colophon. The text reads as follows:

[1] זה הספר הנכבד מורה הנבוכים נכתב [2] על ידי מ"ר יצחק בכמר אזרחא איש [3]
קטלאנו פה בעיר פירושא היושבת [4] על נהר טיבריס וכתב אותו אלי [5] הצעיר נתנאל י"צ
בכמר אברהם [6] תנצב"ה בכ"ר נתנאל ע"ה בכ"ר משה ז"ל [7] בכר יצחק נבתי"א הנה בביתנו
[8] שחנן ה' אותנו וקבל שכירותו משלם [9] בפני עדים נאמנים בכל בית ישראל [10] והם מ"ר
אזרח ישרו בכמר יצחק [11] מטודי נ"ע ומר' אברהם י"צ בכ"ר [12] בנימן ע"ה ועם היות שנסע
מהנה [13] ר' יצחק הסופר בנחיצות בהיותי בעיר [14] קשטילו לא כתב בסוף זה הספר [15]
חתימת ידו ה' למען רחמי וחסדיו [16] יזכינו להגות בזה הספר המפואר [17] ובשאר ספרי

² The identification of the city-port Aqilibia is problematic. While S.I. Aranov (*A Descriptive Catalogue of the Bension Collection of Sephardic Manuscripts and Texts*, 1979, XV, p. 158) states that it is simply Al-Akliba, C. Sirat (*A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1985, p. 218) identifies the place with Cartagena which seems to be doubtful. On the other hand, there is the town of Kelibia (Qilibiyah) in Tunisia placed ca 150 km from Tunis, where was located port active no doubt in the 13th century, when the translation was prepared.

הקדוש ויזכרני ברחמי [18] לרב טוב הצפון ליריאיו וזה הספר³ [19] נשלם לכבוד השם [20]
 בחדש אדר [21] שני שלש [22] ימים [23] קודם פורים שנת חמשת [24] אלפים ומאה וששים
 [25] וששה לבריאת [26] עולם [27] כבורך השם

[1] This book of *Moreh Nevuchim* was written [rewritten] [2] by the teacher and rabbi Yicchaq son of the distinguished teacher and rabbi Ezracha [?]⁴, man [3] Catalonian, here in the town of Perugia, which [4] is located at the river Tiberis. And he wrote it for [me] [5] junior Nathanael, let the Rock protect me, son of the distinguished teacher and rabbi Avraham, [6] let his soul be woven into the wreath of life, son of the distinguished rabbi Nathanael, let peace be upon him, son of the distinguished Moshe, of blessed memory, [7] son of the distinguished Yicchaq, let he find rest in the Garden and God remember him, here in our house, [8] that Lord granted us with, and he had received his rent⁵, paid⁶ [9] in the presence of the most faithful witnesses in Israel [10] and these are: teacher and rabbi Ezrach/Zerach, let his years be multitude and good, son of the distinguished teacher and rabbi Yicchaq [11] from Todi, his rest is in [the Garden of] Eden, and teacher and rabbi Avraham, let the Rock protect him, son of the distinguished rabbi [12] Binyamin, peace be upon him. And as it happened that went out of there [13] rabbi Yicchaq *sofer*, in hurry, when I was in [14] Castello, he has not signed his name at the end of this book [15] his own signature. Let Lord through His mercy and grace [16] grant me that I could mediate [delight] in this splendid book⁷ [17] and in the rest of sacred books and remember me in your mercy [18] for the good hidden for those who fear of him⁸. And this book [the text finds its continuation on the next page] [19] has been completed for the glory of The Name [02] in the month *Adar* [12] the second, three [22] days [32] before Purim of the year five [24] thousand and one hundred and sixty [25] six of the creation [26] of the world [27] as The Name blesses (fig. 2).

It is certain that the colophon was written by different hand than the whole body of the codex. In the colophon the letters are smaller, so the „density” of writing is different. Moreover, there are conspicuous variations in the shape of particular letters: the beam of ץ is different; ל in the main text is written with two strokes of pen and a point, „a thorn” on the top of the stick, while in the colophon it is written with one stroke and without „a thorn”; ק written in the colophon with a space between a leg and a roof, in the main text – without, i.e. the beam sticks to the leg.

As to the persons that occur in the text there are some certainties as well as uncertainties. The name of the scribe is Yicchaq son of Ezracha (reading uncertain). The name Ezra-

³ The text finds its continuation on the next page.

⁴ The form *Ezrachi* is also testified but it seems rather modern variant of the name *Ezrach*.

⁵ Hebr. שכירותו [*skhiruto*], which refers rather to a payment for rental a flat or a house.

⁶ The lack of congruence: שכירותו [*skhiruto*] – fem., משלם [*meshullam*] – masc. The same phenomenon occurs also in the second colophon – see further. This creates an impression as if the adjective *meshullam* was used as uninflected part of speech. Another possibility is that the adjective refers to the scribe and should be, consequently, translated as „and he was paid”.

⁷ Biblical wording, cf. Jos 1:8; Ps 1:2; Ps 77:13; Ps 143:5.

⁸ Biblical phrase, cf. Ps 31.

cha⁹, however, is not testified elsewhere, to our best knowledge. One could guess that beyond the spelling אזרחה is concealed the name זרח[י]ה with prosthetic א, which would be pronounced as *eZRACHYA* or simply *ZERACHYA* analogically to two variants of זרח and אזרח. Another possibility is that the spelling אזרחה is an erroneous one or corrupted form of עזריה [‘*azraya*]. All in all, the extensive (although not completely reliable) lexicon of Naftali Yaaqov ha-Cohen does not know a rabbi bearing name אזרחה while it does know some rabbis with the name זרחיה [*Zerachya*] from Spain, according to the surname Catalano, of Catalonia, but no one fits an approximate time span of the events and places testified in the colophon¹⁰. The first one is rabbi Zerachya ha-Levi from Toledo which is in Castile and not Catalonia. Two names – Yicchaq and Zerachya appears regularly in Spain-Provençal family of halachic scholars with the most famous among them Zerachya ben Yicchaq ha-Levi, lived in the 12th century, an author of several influential works as *Sefer ha-Maor*. But some degree of coincidence with our scribe seems accidental. On the other hand, according to the same source there are still rabbis named Zerachya from Barcelona – Zerachya ben Sheshet, 13th/14th century and – more famous – Zerachya ben Shaltiel ben Yicchaq, among Biblical exegetes of the 14th century. What is conspicuous, almost all sages bearing the name Zerachya enumerated in the Ha-Cohen’s lexicon comes from Spain¹¹. We may conclude that there is no decisive indication that the scribe Yicchaq reveals some family links with above mentioned Catalonian/Castilian sages, however the repetitions of the names’ combinations Zerachya and Yicchaq are especially frequent in that time in Spain.

On the other hand, the name of Perugian citizen Nathanael ben Avraham is well testified. Nathanael ben Avraham ben Nathanael was a well-known bank owner or moneylender in Perugia of that time. In the Latin documents of the city of Perugia he appears as Deodato son of Abramo (di Abramo) son of Deodato¹². There are some references to him there starting from 1390. His name appears mostly in a role of moneylender in Perugia¹³. He also bought some property in Cortona (a vineyard) and owe it up to 1435 according to the local registers of *catastro*¹⁴.

On the other hand, in a document from Perugia occurs certain Gaio, i.e. Isacco (Yicchaq) in some context of written documents and writing. In the record from 1418 Gaio, son of Servado, son of Abramo was arrested on the accusation on stealing the writing pa-

⁹ The name *Ezracha* was accepted by the scholars who viewed this manuscript in the 1990s: „(...) the first inscription written by the owner, Nathaniel ben Abraham states that the scribe Isaac Ezraha of Catalano wrote the manuscript (...)”, *Jewish Art in Poland. Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, „Center for Jewish Art The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Newsletter”, 1995, 11, p. 6.

¹⁰ N.Y. ha-Cohen, *Otsar ha-gdolim alufe Yaaqov: kolel toldot gdole Israel mi-tqifat ha-ge’anim ha-rishonim mi-shnat 590’ ad 1590*, vol. 3, pp. 209–211.

¹¹ Although not exactly from Catalonia, as Zerachya ben Yicchaq (again!), sage and translator from the 13th century Saragossa, N.Y. ha-Cohen, *ibidem*, p. 214.

¹² A. Toaff, *Gli eberi di Perugia*, Perugia 1975, p. 36.

¹³ *Idem*, *Jews of Umbria*, vol. 1, Leiden 1993, p. 370.

¹⁴ The history and activity of moneylenders in Cortona and its vicinity is discussed by D. Bornstein, *Law, Religion, and Economic: Jewish Moneylenders in Christian Cortona* [in:] J.A. Marino, T. Kuehn (ed.), *A Renaissance of Conflicts: Visions and Revisions of Law and Society in Italy and Spain*, Toronto 2004, pp. 241–258, see esp. pp. 243–245.

per¹⁵. This, however, requires the identification of Servado with Ezracha/Zerachya, while Servado seems to have its equivalent rather in Abadya or maybe Azarya.

Still another person that appear in the colophon, Ezrach ben Yicchaq, may be identified with a person for whom the so called „Italian *machzor*” (cod. De Rossi 959 from the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma) was written¹⁶. In the middle of the last parchment leaf, i.e. no 552, there is a short note (5 lines and two words in the 6th one) written in black ink. This text contrasts with the previous ones, as it is written in rather cursive script, sometimes blurred and with lines a little crooked. The scribe uses also a ligature of א and ל. The text runs as follows:

[1] יקותיאל יזי"י הסופר בכמ"ר יחיאל אביר הרופאין]ם מביתאל זלה"ה מסר [2] מר' יצחק יזי"י¹⁷ הנ"ז¹⁸ לעיל זה המורה הנביכים למר' שלמה יזי"י הנ"ז [3] בכמ"ר אברהם זלה"ה¹⁹ כי נקרא נקריתי בקשטילו אז כשמכרו אליו וקיבל [4] המעות מידו משלם בפניי ונדר לו מה שכתב] לעיל מכתבת ידו [5] אני אברהם יזי"י בכמ"ר נתן ישראל]ל נמצאתי בקשטילו והייתי עד מכל מה [6] שכתוב]ל לעיל

[1] Yequtiel, let he see his offspring and his days be prolonged, *sofer*, son of the distinguished teacher and rabbi Yechiel, the best of the physicians of Bethel²⁰ [Da Synagoga], his memory for the life in the world to come. Sold our teacher and rabbi Yicchaq, let he see his offspring and his days be prolonged, mentioned above, this *Moreh Nevuchim* to our teacher and rabbi Shlomo, let he see his offspring and his days be prolonged, mentioned above, [3] son of the distinguished Avraham, let his memory be for the world to come. As [it happened that] I was called in Castello when they sold [it was sold to him] him [i.e. to Shlomo]. And he [i.e. Yicchaq] received [4] money from his hand paid²¹ in my presence and swore him [that] what is written above, is written by his hand. [5] [different handwriting] Me, Avraham, let I will see my offspring and my days be prolonged, son of distinguished teacher and rabbi Nathan Isra[el], I was in Castello and witnessed everything [6] what is written above.

Yequtiel ben Yechiel – together with Avraham ben Nathan – seems to be a witness of the contract between certain Yicchaq and Shlomo ben Avraham. The expressions concerning witnessing of the transaction – „it was paid in my presence” – testify to that fact. The whole colophon should have been, then, perceived as a list of witnesses of the transaction, i.e. a kind of invoice. Consequently, one could expect another document, i.e. the contract itself. Especially, when the persons not occurring in the first colophon appear in the second with the reference „mentioned [above]”.

Some difficulties are posed when the first name is concerned: Yequtiel ben Yechiel with an qualifier מביתאל אביר רופאים [*abir rofim mi-Bethel*]. The person is mentioned in the

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 306.

¹⁶ A. Toaff, *ibidem*, p. 36.

¹⁷ יזי"י: יראה זרע יאריך ימים

¹⁸ הנ"ז: הנזכר

¹⁹ זלה"ה: זכרונו לחיי העולם הבא

²⁰ Hebrew family name, in Italian Da Synagoga, see A. Toaff, *ibidem*.

²¹ Hebr. מעות [*me'ot*] – fem. plur., משלם [*meshullam*] – masc. sing., see above.

Ha-Cohen's lexicon as a son of Yechiel ben Yequiel ben Benjamin, an author of „Sefer Ma'lot ha-Middot”²². The problem arises here, however, as Yechiel died in 1284, while our codex is dated on 1406. On the other hand, Ariel Toaff identifies Yequiel ben Yechiel with the most prolific scribe active in Perugia in the 14th century. First of the representatives members of the family with surname Mi-Bethel, i.e. Da Synagoga, was Joab ben Binyamin ben Joab: „Lo scriba Joab b. Binyamin b. Joab della famiglia dei Bethel o De Synagoga, copiava a Perugia il 28 *Tammuz* 1366, all'età di quindici anni, il 'Sefer ma'lot ha-middot' ('Libro dei gradi') di Jechiel ha-Sofer b. Jequiel (Vitale di Consiglio) di Bethel (...) Ma la figura di maggiore spicco tra gli scribe perugini è quella di Jequiel b. Jechiel Rofè di Bethel b. Jequiel, attivo a Perugia ed in altri centri dell'Umbria nell'ultimo scorcio del XIV secolo ed agli inizi del XV secolo. Discendente del ramo dei Bethel, cui appartenava il suo antenato Jechiel ha-Sofer b. Jequiel b. Binyamin ha-Rofè, già più volte ricordato fu tra i più prolifici ed apprezzati scribi ebrei del Medioevo”²³.

It seems, therefore that Ha-Cohen is wrong stating that Yequiel was the son of Yechiel. He must be seen rather among some later descendants of the Yechiel ben Yequiel. As to our colophon, if Yekutiel mentioned there is the same person as the Yequiel, distinguished among the Perugian scribes, his activity in the region of Perugia (including Città di Castello) stretches from the end of the 14th up to the 1430s. He would be, then, contemporary of the scribe Yicchaq son of Ezracha of Catalonia.

Interestingly enough, certain Yicchaq occurs again. Could he be the same as Yicchaq the scribe? This would be, however, difficult to interpret in the light of the first colophon, as certain sum of money has been already paid to the scribe (Yicchaq). His work had been, therefore, paid and it would not be plausible to assume that he notwithstanding became an owner of the manuscript afterwards. One could rather expect that the manuscript could be sold by the owner, i.e. Deodato di Abramo, namely Nathanael ben Avraham. Would it be possible that Nathanael/Deodato had sold the manuscript or passed it to the hands of the other Yicchaq enabling him to sold it further, i.e. to Shlomo ben Avraham? Two possibilities that stem from that assumption pose, however, certain difficulties. The whole issue might have passed through relatively short time-span, somewhere between finishing the manuscript, i.e. 1406 and the last recorded transaction of the second witness of the contract, Avraham ben Nathan, 1416 (see further in the text) – or slightly later. In that period the manuscript should have changed the owner and been passed to the hands of another owner. This option, although possible, contradicts – to some extent – the spirit of the first colophon. Could Deodato, who expected so many spiritual profits out of the reading of *Moreh Nevuchim*, so quick spend the manuscript to someone else? Or, for some reasons, he decided to spend the manuscript and it passed to the hands of the second Yicchaq, the seller of the codex from the second colophon. Could he be, than, a family member who inherited the volume of *Moreh Nevuchim*?

The last hypothesis seems to stand for the reason especially when we try to shed some light on the person of the second witness, namely Avraham son of Nathan. Could he

²² N.Y. ha-Cohen, *ibidem*, vol. 5, pp. 30–31.

²³ A. Toaff, *ibidem*, p. 35.

be identified with Abramo di Dattero (in another place named di Deodato²⁴), father of Bonaventura, Manuelle and another Deodato? He – no doubt – was still alive when the manuscript was completed as we have at our disposal the records of his money transaction from 1416²⁵. Moreover, he was a resident of Città di Castello and frequently visited Perugia. His and his sons' partner was certain Gaio, i.e. Yicchaq. Would he be an owner of the manuscript to whom Deodato had passed it?

Now, a problem arises as to the expression „and he swore that what is written above, is written by his hand”. Could it be a reference to „an invoice”, a confirmation of transaction? Should we not rather assume that Yicchaq, the scribe, confirmed that the whole manuscript had been written by him? But if the latter is truth, the problem of the manuscript ownership arises anew. Notwithstanding one more hypothesis may be advanced. Yicchaq, the scribe, was not an owner of the manuscript but he acted as an agent who passed the work of his hands from its previous owner, Yequitiel ben Yechiel, to a new one, Shlomo ben Avraham, mentioned in the second colophon. What is more, the person named Shlomo ben Avraham is testified among the moneylenders in Florence and Cortona²⁶. Maybe this hypothesis does not solve a vast majority of problems posed by the colophons but it could open some new ways of their interpretation. Therefore, to reconstruct the lacking history of the manuscript one should assume that after some years of drawing spiritual profits from the reading of the text Nathanael ben Avraham, i.e. Deodato di Abramo, decided to sell it to another moneylender active in the region, i.e. to Shlomo ben Avraham. As an agent to do this he choose certain Yicchaq, the scribe. All in all, during the first two/three decades of the 15th century Deodato ceased to be the owner of our manuscript and a new one became Shlomo.

We hope that new facts and further investigation will be able to shed some light on those mysterious fragments. All in all, in the present stage of research we have to leave many questions opened for a further discussion.

In that point an Italian episode of the codex's fate ends and opens a Dutch one. The proper text of the Maimonides' treatise is preceded by a paper leaves (numbered as I and II) with a text in Dutch. Moreover, at the end of the codex have been added some more paper sheets with a text in Polish (numbered from I to VI). Both texts bear signatures and dates.

The first one, in Dutch, records that the manuscript was a property of certain Hermanus van de Walf (reading uncertain) in Amsterdam. The whole text reads as follows:

[1] Dit boek genaemt More Neboechiem [2] is Geschreven Int Jaar na De schepping [3] der werelt A[nn]o 5166 A[nn]o Christi 1406. In [4] het Ligt gegeven door rabbi Mosche [5] Ben Maimon Int Arabus en uijt [6] het Arabus Int Hebreüs overgebracht [7] Door [8] Rabbi Samuel ben Judas Abentibon [9] Gekocht in de Auti(?) bij Wijlen D[oct]o[r] [10] Hermanus van de Walf (?). [11] Amsterdam dezentis (?) 1734

[1] This book called More Neboechiem [2] was written in the year from the creation [3] of the world 5166, [i.e.] A.D. 1406. [4] [It] was edited by rabbi Mosche ben Maimon in Arabic language [6] and translated from Arabic into Hebrew [7] by [8] rabbi Samuel ben

²⁴ See D. Bornstein, *ibidem*, p. 245.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

Judas Abentibon [9] [and was] bought in Auti(?) by late [10] Hermanus van de Walf (?). [11] Amsterdam, December (?) 1734.

After the gap of more than 300 years our codex reappears in the Netherlands in the hands of certain Hermanus van de Walf or maybe Hermanus van de Wolf. On the present stage of research we cannot identify him among the Dutch collectors of Hebrew manuscripts. Certain is that the next trace in the history of the manuscript we find in the fly-leaves in Polish:

To arcywyborne dzieło noszące w języku hebrajskim tytuł *More Nebochim*²⁷ מורה נבוכים (Nauczyciel vel Przewodnik błędzących) jest płodem słynącego w świecie uczonym Mojżesza Majmonidesa, izraelity, rodem Hiszpana z Korduby, żył on w 12 w. Ery chrz., który był Teologiem, Filozofem, Astronomem i Lekarzem. Czcigodny Tadeusz Czacki mówiąc o tem dziele w Rozprawie o Żydach na str: 186/7 wspomina że przytoczone zostaje przez Alberta Wielkiego i Tomasza z Akwinu

Dążność tego dzieła jest wzniosłą a rozważny czytelnik znajdzie w niem trzy główne kategoryje czyli oddziały z których: I) objaśniwszy niektóre metaforyczne wyrażenia Pisma St^{go} traktuje: a) o użytku wypływającym z poświęcenia się naukom b) o pojęciu sposobu wyrażenia się Biblii zwłaszcza miejsc w których przypisują się Bogu affekta ludzkie c) o prawdziwym poznaniu Boga, o własności Aniołów i o wielkiej nazwie Jehowa d) o zasadach i powodach rozumu jakimi filozofowie dowodzą istności Boga, Jego jednotkwości i własności duchowej. II^{gi} Traktuje a) o Bogu jako Twórcy, b) o ciałach niebieskich i o aniołach w szczególności c) o stworzeniu świata d) o prorokach i prorocctwie, e) o wyborności, dokładności i wiecznotrwałości prawa Mojżeszowego. III^{ci} Traktuje a) o dziełach stworzenia, b) o opatrności c) o 10 przykazaniach Bożych.

Niniejszy Rękopism który który (jak na końcu w języku hebrajskim wyrażono) ukończony został w roku 5166 od stw: św: (podług Ery chrz: w roku 1405.) w Katalonii pr: Hiszpańsk: sprzedałem Wielmożnemu Rusieckiemu z Trojanki

Nie podobna mi było rozłączyć się z tym szacownym zabytkiem starożytności gdybym nie miał przekonania że spoczywać będzie wśród godnych sobie towarzyszy i pod pieczęią męża znanego z cnót ob[y]watelskich i przywiązania do nauk i oświaty, którego zbiory starożytności słyń.

w Warszawie dnia 3/15 Lutego 1856

JTugendhold DSR (fig. 3)

This extraordinary piece of work bearing a Hebrew title *More Nebochim* (The Teacher vel. Guide for Perplexed) is a fruit of worldwide famous scholar Moses Maimonides, Israelite, of Spanish Cordoba origin, who lived in the 12th century A. D. and was a theologian, philosopher, astronomer and physician. Distinguished Tadeusz Czacki mentioning the work on the pages 186/7 of [his work entitled] *Rozprawa o Żydach* [„The Treatise on Jews”] made a remark that it [the book] is quoted by Albert the Great and Thomas of Aquino.

The aim of this work is noble and a prudent reader will find in it three main categories or chapters and the first [I] among them explains some metaphorical expressions from the Holy Writ and deals with: a) profits drawn from the devoting oneself to sciences; b) mode of expressing ideas in the Bible especially there, where human affects are ascribed to God; c) true cognition of God, attributes of angels and the great name of Jehovah; d) about the principles and arguments of the reason used by philosophers to prove the existence of God, His uniqueness and spiritual character. The second [II] part deals with: a) God as Creator; b) about heavenly bodies and angels in particular; c) creation of the world; d) prophets and prophecy; e) excellency, preciseness and eternal character of the Mosaic Law. The third [III] part deals with: a) deeds of creation; b) the providence; c) ten commandments.

The present manuscript, which (as it was expressed at the end in Hebrew language) was completed in the year 5166 from the creation (A.D. 1405) in Catalonia (sic!), province of Spain, I sold to distinguished Rusiecki from Trojanka.

²⁷ The original orthography has been preserved.

It would have been unimaginable to separate myself from that precious monument of antiquity, if I had not been convinced that it would be placed among equally precious items (lit. comrades), under the custody of someone widely known as a man of social virtues and of his attachment to the science and education, whose collection of antiquities is famous.

In Warsaw, 3/15 of February 1856

[Tugendhold DSR [Director of the Rabbinic Seminar]

As to some details occurring in the text. The work of Tadeusz Czacki is entitled *Rozprawa o Żydach i Karaitach* [„The Treatise on Jews and Karaites”] for the first time printed in Vilnius in 1807 by Józef Zawadzki’s publishing house. According to the second edition of „Biblioteka Polska” from the year 1860, the relevant quotation concerning references of the Maimonides’ work in the texts of Albert the Great and Thomas of Aquino occur on the pages 102–103. The purchaser of the volume seems to be Józef Rusiecki born in Pieniążkówka in 1817 and died in Trojanka in 1873, the father of the last owner of the manuscript.

To the conclusion

The fate of the manuscript MNK rkps 307 seem to be as fascinating as bizarre and obscure. Even the facts we have at our disposal rather contribute to our confusion than shed a light on the history of this particular codex. The three stages of its history are certain: 1) it originated in Italy, in Perugia; 2) in the first half of the 18th century we find the codex in the hands of a Dutch owner in Amsterdam; 3) finally the manuscript emerges in Krakow (or in Trojanka), in the hands of book collector, Józef Rusiecki. Many questions as to the history of the manuscript remain unanswered. The exact reconstruction of its Italian lots is very difficult despite relatively detailed information recorded within two colophons. Who exactly was the Dutch collector? And even more difficult question arise: is it possible to fill the gaps between the stages testified in the colophons? Maybe some scholars who deal with the Hebrew paleography issues may in the future join to the discussion and help in resolving some of those questions.

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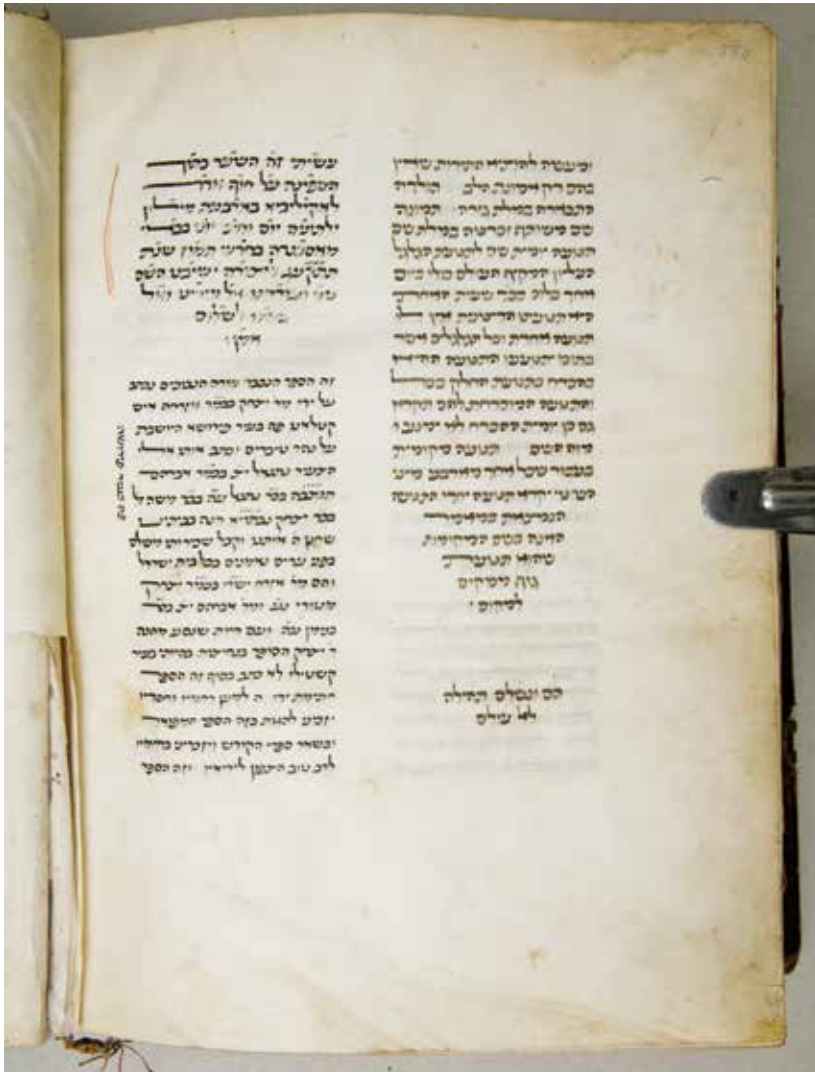
Rękopis *Moreh Nevuchim* z kolekcji Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie

Streszczenie

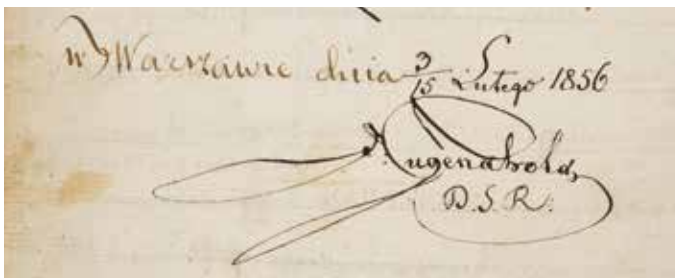
Artykuł opisuje pergaminowy rękopis hebrajski ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie (MNK rkps 307). Kodeks ten powstał w Perugii w 1406 r. i obejmuje hebrajski przekład jednego z najważniejszych dzieł dla judaizmu i filozofii żydowskiej – *Moreh newuchim* Majmonidesa. Ten atrakcyjny rękopis z ozdobnym inicjałem, zapisany po hebrajsku półkursywnym włoskim pismem kaligraficznym, w bardzo dobrym stanie dochował się do naszych czasów. W artykule znalazł się jego opis kodykologiczno-paleograficzny oraz zostało zamieszczone tłumaczenie kolofonów i dodatkowych not zapisanych na kartach papierowych, dzięki którym zyskujemy cenne informacje na temat powstania tego kodeksu i jego historii.



1. The word opening the text in the manuscript MNK rkps 307.



2. Colophons, p. 550.



3. The signature of Jacob Tugendhold.

