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of the too scanty productions in this branch of learning, I would consider it a dangerous practice to allow to pass without notice any work bearing on the subject, be the character of that work what it may.

And a somewhat lengthy consideration of the subject (the present has assumed such proportions without any intention on my part, and in spite of my attempt to limit it), will certainly do the reader less harm than none at all, and I trust that the readers of this esteemed periodical, taking into consideration the circumstances of the case, will acquit me of the guilt of being prolix, and pardon the length of this notice.

LUDWIG BLAU.

Budapest.

#### Grammatical and Lexicographical Literature.

A.—*The Book of the Comparison of the Hebrew Language with the Arabic*, by ABU-IBRAHIM (Isaac) IBN BARÛN, a Spanish Jew of the end of the eleventh century and beginning of the twelfth, by P. KOKOFTSOV, with the edition of the original text of the fragment of the work of ibn Barûn, which has been preserved (Russian title: *Kniga Sravnienia Yevresiskago Yazika s' Arabskim*); St. Petersburg, 1893. Being Part I. of "Contribution to the History of Mediæval Hebrew Philology and Hebrew Arabic Literature."

THE Imperial Library of St. Petersburg became the greatest rival of the Bodleian Library, as regards Hebrew MSS., by the acquisition of the two collections of the late Firkowitz. The first one, which was bought about 1860, consists mostly of Karaitic literature, a collection which will remain unsurpassed. Out of it the late Pinsker composed his important work, with the title of *Liquté Qadmonioth*, published in 1860, when the collection was still in Firkowitz's private possession. Another short account of it appeared in the monograph with the title of *Aus der Petersburgen Bibliothek*, by the present writer (Leipzig, 1860). Based upon Pinsker's book, Gottlober, Fürst, and Graetz wrote the history of the Karaites, in which many data have to be rectified. The second Firkowitz collection, acquired by the Imperial Library about 1876, consists mostly of a great number of fragments, more or less complete, of various departments of Hebrew

literature, Rabbanitic as well as Karaitic, in Hebrew as well as in Arabic, written with Hebrew characters. It is said that they were collected from *Genizoth* in Egypt and Mesopotamia. A short account of this collection was given by the present writer in a report addressed to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, published in the *University Gazette*, 1876, Vol. VII., page 237. An accurate idea of the richness of the documents in this collection can only be had when the catalogue, prepared by the Councillor of State, Dr. A. Harkavy, appears; meanwhile he has made a short list which is not yet published. On the other hand, this *savant* has brought to light many important pieces of this collection. We shall only mention a volume of *Responsa* of the Geonim, which appeared in three fasciculi amongst the publications of the *Megitse Nirdamim* (1885-87). This work is most important, amongst others, for the history of the Rabbinical schools in Barbary (Morocco, Tunis, and Algeria), which I hope to show in a special article on this subject. Also a first fasciculus on Saadiah Gaon (see JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, IV., p. 490), and some other extracts from old grammarians, as well as the Diwan of Samuel han-Nagid (the prince), 1879; moreover, many unknown poetical pieces (unfortunately scattered, in weekly periodicals mostly, which are inaccessible in this country; see below, p. 577). However, the collection of Hebrew and Arabic fragments, coming from a *Genizah* in Egypt, and lately acquired by the Bodleian Library, rivals that of St. Petersburg, if not in quantity, certainly in quality. In the Bodleian fragments we find a large fragment of the Babylonian Talmud tractate *Kerithoth*, written in 1123, which will soon appear, edited by Mr. Schechter and the Rev. S. Singer. This is the oldest dated of Talmud fragments known hitherto. The present number of the QUARTERLY will contain a unique fragment of the *Sifré Zutâ*, edited also by Mr. Schechter. From the Bodleian fragments Dr. Harkavy has published the important answer to Ben Meir (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, IV., p. 493). To return to the St. Petersburg fragments: Magister Israelson has edited with a preface the remainder of an Arabic commentary on Genesis by the Gaon Samuel ben Hofni (St. Petersburg, 1886); and M. J. Derenbourg has edited fragments of the commentary on Isaiah by the famous Judah Ben Balâm, as well as extracts of old grammarians (*Opusculus et traités*, Paris, 1880, p. xx., sqq.), and he is preparing the edition of a small remainder of Saadiah's commentary on Exodus.

I have great pleasure in noticing the critical edition of a great fragment in Arabic of the grammar and lexicon of Abu-Ibrahim Isaac ibn Barfîn, of Cordova, with an elaborate preface, translations, and copious philological notes in Russian, as well as a short preface in

Hebrew, by M. P. Kokoftsof. Ibn Barûn was a contemporary of the famous poet, Moses ibn Ezra, and he himself was a poet of talent (see No. 1972 of the catalogue of the Hebrew MSS. in the Bodleian Library), and a pupil of Levi ben al-Taban, who is mentioned by Abraham ben Ezra in his treatise called *Meoznaim*. Ibn Barûn was extremely well read in Arabic literature, and his comparisons of Hebrew with the Arabic are, therefore, of great value. Moses ben Ezra even says that ibn Barûn also compares Hebrew with Latin and Berber, and that his dictionary is superior to that of Dunash ben Tamim. In the existing fragments, however, there is no trace of such comparison, and we must consider Moses ben Ezra's remark concerning his friend as enthusiastic. Barûn's work, which is unfortunately incomplete, has been recognised in the 1876 collection : M. Kokoftsof mentions nine fragments (about half of the book); and that is all which is known at present of this treatise, for the fragment of the Bodleian Library, No. 2422 of my catalogue, is indeed not by ibn Barûn, as M. Kokoftsof rightly says. Much more comparative matter for Arabic with Hebrew is found in Ibn Barûn's work than in Abu-l-Walid's dictionary. Moreover, the numerous quotations from Arabic poets and other Arabic books will be a boon also to not a few Arabic scholars, who will find all the verses put together by the learned editor in Arabic characters. M. Kokoftsof did well to make his edition in Hebrew characters, in which the unique fragments are written in spite of Arabic scholars, who prefer naturally the Arabic characters. The introduction contains, I. The Biography of Ibn Barûn, as far as it is known, in which not an item is neglected ; II. Discussion on the title, אִלְמוּזַנַּיִם, "the balance," quoted by Hebrew writers כְּמִזְנִיִּם ; a similar title was given by Abraham ben Ezra for one of his grammatical treatises. M. Kokoftsof has, however, found at the beginning of ibn Barûn's second part (the work is divided into two parts, viz., grammar and lexicon) the full Arabic title, according to which we should translate "Book of Comparison between the Hebrew and the Arabic" ; Munk, without knowing the full title, translated " La mise en balance, ou la comparaison ;" and Professor W. Bacher renders it in German, " Die Gleichheit." III. The third part gives translations of I. and a part of II., with very extensive and useful notes. IV. treats of Hebrew and Arabic writers quoted by ibn Barûn. The writer shows here great knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic literature, and more especially of Arabic poetry, of which copious use is made by ibn Barûn. A very useful summary in correct Rabbinical Hebrew, concerning the biography of our grammarian and his quotations, precedes the text. Those who cannot read Russian without difficulty, and others who do not know

that language at all, will find here the essence of M. Kokoftsof's Russian monograph. It is scarcely necessary to mention that the text taken from unique fragments often requires emendations; these are, however, duly indicated in the notes: here we find also the references to Biblical passages explained by ibn Barûn. We hope that our young and able Semitist and excellent grammarian will give us soon, in the second part of this collection, other unique texts, grammatical as well as lexicographical, which are abundant in the second Fir-kowitz collection.

Another important essay on the well-known grammarian and commentator, Judah ben Balâm (a predecessor of ibn Barûn, who quotes him), by Dr. Solomon Fuchs, the able editor of the Hebrew monthly with the title of *החוקר*, has appeared (*Studien über Abu Zakaria Jahja (R. Jehuda) ibn Balâm*; Berlin, 1893; Part I.). We have already noticed Dr. Fuchs' just remark that many of Judah's treatises on the Particles were inscribed by a copyist into Abul Walid's lexicon (*ha-Hoqer* I., p. 121, *sqq.*). When the present essay is completed we shall gladly lay the result before our readers. At present we may only mention that Dr. Fuchs is one of the growing authorities in Hebrew-Arabic literature, and, above all, a great enthusiast for this branch of Jewish learning; he certainly deserves the attention of the Jewish public, who should try to help him to continue his monthly, to which eminent men like A. Epstein, Dr. Harkavy, Herr Halberstam, Professor Kaufmann, and others contribute.

A. NEUBAUER.

### Two Monographs by Dr. M. Gaster.

I. *מגלת בני חשמונאי* *The Scroll of the Hasmonæans.* (Extract from the Transactions of the Oriental Congress, London, 1891, vol. ii.)

Besides the first and second books of the Maccabees, which are now accessible only in Greek, there exists a small chronicle in later Hebrew, usually entitled the Scroll of Antiochos (*מגלת אנטיוכוס*).

That this Hebrew text is based upon an original written in Aramaic, was long suspected; and although existing in many MSS., this text was not published before 1851, from a MS. in the British Museum. It was followed by another edition from a MS. in the Town Library of Leipzig, in 1874; and a third appeared in 1877, by Dr. Jellinek, from a MS. in his possession. We have now before us a fourth