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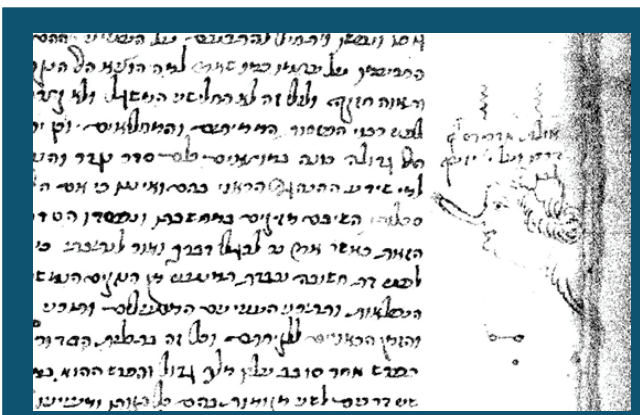
Sefer ha-Pardes by Jedaiah ha-Penini

A Critical Edition with English Translation

David Torollo



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INTRODUCTION

Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi 'ha-Penini' (ca. 1270–ca. 1340), a Provençal Jewish author born in the second half of the thirteenth century, wrote a short treatise containing concise epigrams and short stories on various *musar* topics. That work, whose title is *Sefer ha-Pardes* 'The Book of the Orchard', is the focus of this monograph.[1]

I first became acquainted with this work while working on my doctoral dissertation on *Mishle he-ʿArav* 'The Sayings of the Arabs', another Provençal work on wisdom, through which I explored the Hebrew didactic tradition in Iberia and Provence in the thirteenth century.[2] Although the author Jedaiah ha-Penini is known by scholars of medieval Hebrew literature in Christian lands, his work *Sefer ha-Pardes* has received very little scholarly attention, in part because this has been the fate of many wisdom works—a genre midway between the religious and the secular and between oral and written cultures—and in part because it has been overshadowed by the author's other major works, such as *ʾOhev Nashim* 'The Lover of Women' and *Beḥinat ʿOlam* 'The Examination of the World'. This disregard prompted my unearth-

[1] For more information on this author and his works, see Renan (1893, 359–402), Schirmann and Fleischer (1997, 499–513), and Halkin and Glasner (2007, 100–1).

[2] For a comprehensive study, a critical edition of the Hebrew manuscripts, and a translation of *Mishle he-ʿArav* into Spanish, see Torollo (2021a).

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ing of *Sefer ha-Pardes*, which turns out to be an excellent representative of the medieval genre of didactic and wisdom literature.

The goal of this monograph is to provide the first translation into English and a Hebrew critical edition based on four sixteenth-century witnesses of *Sefer ha-Pardes*: three manuscripts and a printed edition from Constantinople. Before that, I review the work's transmission and reception in different places over time. Then, I explore its structure and content, both religious and secular. Third, I situate the work within the intellectual environment and literary tradition of Provence. And lastly, I open the discussion with possible lines of enquiry for future research and complementary studies.

1.0. Transmission and Reception of *Sefer ha-Pardes*

The work *Sefer ha-Pardes*, probably written at the end of the thirteenth century, enjoyed newfound popularity in the sixteenth century, when three manuscripts of the work were copied. The first witness we have is MS Michael 536 in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.[3] It contains the complete work—fols 100א–108א—in Italian script and is dated 1518–1520. Other major works that accompany this one in the codex are *Maʾamar Ruaḥ Ḥen* 'Treatise on the Spirit of Grace', an introduction to Maimonides's *Moreh Nevukhim* 'Guide for the Perplexed', attributed to Jacob Anaṭoli;

[3] It belongs to the collection of 860 manuscripts amassed by the German bibliophile Heimann Joseph Michael (1792–1846) and acquired by the library in 1848 (see Richler 2014, 140).

Ṣeror ha-Kesef ‘The Bundle of Silver’, a comprehensive treatise on logic, by Joseph ibn Kaspi; and some fragments of Abraham bar Ḥiyya’s *Yesod ha-Tevunah u-Migdal ha-ʾEmunah* ‘The Foundation of Understanding and the Tower of Faith’, an early attempt to synthesise Greek and Arabic mathematics.

The second manuscript that contains the work is MS Guenzburg 315 in the Russian State Library in Moscow.[4] It also contains the complete work—fols 166א–174א—in Italian script and is dated 1524. The codex includes around 22 works, not all of which are complete, that belong to different periods, are written in different scripts, and were bound together at a later date, such as *Mozne Ṣedeq* ‘Scales of Justice’, a Hebrew translation by Abraham ibn Ḥasdai of a work on Sufism attributed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī; and an autograph copy of the eighteenth-century work by Khalifa ben Malka, *Kaf Naqi* ‘Clean Hand’, on liturgy, prayers, and *ḥidushim*.

The third manuscript of *Sefer ha-Pardes* is MS 2131 in the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York.[5] The work is

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[4] It belonged to the private library of the Guenzburg family in the nineteenth century. The Guenzburg library had more than 1900 manuscripts that were to be bought by the Jewish Theological Seminary, when the outbreak of the First World War cancelled the arrangement. In 1917, David Guenzburg’s widow sold the collection to a Russian Zionist group, with the intention of sending it to Jerusalem, but the new revolutionary government seized the material and kept it in Moscow (see Richler 2014, 87).

[5] The American banker Mortimer Schiff donated the manuscript to JTS in the 1920s. I thank Jerry Schwarzbard, Librarian for Special Collections at JTS, for this information.

complete—fols 3א–10א—in Italian script, and a colophon on fol. 25ב says that the copyist is a certain Ḥiyya Finzi, whose date of birth seems to be 1575.[6] The codex clusters together fragments from a total of 14 works, including treatises on Kabbalah, such as *Maʾamar ʿal Derekh ha-Qabalah* 'Treatise on the Ways of Qabalah' and *Sefer ha-Yiḥud* 'The Book of Unity' by Asher ben David; and, curiously enough, a chapter from Judah al-Ḥarizi's *Sefer Taḥkemoni* 'The Book of Taḥkemoni'.[7]

What emerges from this survey is that the work consistently circulated with a group of philosophical, Kabbalistic, and scientific works, all of them written in Provence, or in areas with close cultural ties to Provence, like Catalonia. Italian scribes copied these manuscripts in the sixteenth century, and the codices were still in Italy by the beginning of the seventeenth century. We know this because of the signatures of three censors that are found in the codices: Luigi da Bologna, 1599, in the New York manuscript; Camillo Jagel, 1611, in the Moscow manuscript; and Domenico Carreto, 1616, in the Oxford manuscript.[8]

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[6] See the JTS library catalogue at https://primo-tc-na01.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1jhdiph/JTS_ALEPH000071102 [accessed 21 March 2022].

[7] It is the chapter titled *Maḥberet ha-Meshalim*, in which the protagonist—Ḥever ha-Qeni—tests his 50 students by asking each of them to recite an epigram; see ch. 44 in Yahalom and Katsumata's edition (2010, 301–9).

[8] Beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Counter-Reformation promoted the censorship and expurgation of Hebrew manuscripts and books to control the dissemination of Jewish knowledge

Apart from the manuscript tradition, the work *Sefer ha-Pardes* survives in an edition printed in Constantinople. This edition lacks a colophon, so the name of the printer and the exact date of publication are unknown. According to scholars of sixteenth-century Hebrew printed works, it must have been produced between 1514 and 1520, precisely when the work was enjoying popularity in Italy (Yaari 1967, 82). Several printers have been identified working in Constantinople around the suggested time of publication, such as the famous printing house of the Naḥmias family with Samuel Naḥmias, or Astruc ben Jacob De-Tolon, Samuel Riqamin, and Mosheh ben Samuel Fisilini, but since there is no colophon, it is difficult to determine who printed it.

In any case, when *Sefer ha-Pardes* reached the capital of the Ottoman Empire, it was at a time when several prominent figures of the Sephardic tradition were also being published there: Maimonides, Naḥmanides, and Jacob ben Asher. We can hypothesise that one of the many Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula brought the work to Constantinople, after Sultan Bayazid II offered refuge to the Jews. It might also be argued that one of the printers on their way to Constantinople, maybe even one of the members of the Naḥmias family, became acquainted with the newfound popularity of the work during their alleged stop in Italy—or possibly on another trip there—and decided to print it. It is also possible that someone else in the city commissioned the

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at odds with Catholic principles. The scholarly research on this phenomenon is vast; for an overview, see Hacker and Shear (2011).

work's printing: if that is the case, the questions of who might have done it and why remain unanswered.

What is certain is that some centuries later, Leopold Dukes gave the work more attention. In 1853, he reproduced and annotated the last section of ch. 4—on eloquent language and poetry—in an anthology of medieval poems and writings about poetry (Dukes 1853, 21–23). A bit later, he himself copied the rest of the sections of this chapter in the Hebrew journal *Ha-Levanon*. This journal was published in Jerusalem, Paris, Mainz, and London between 1863 and 1886, and the sections of *Sefer ha-Pardes* appeared in non-consecutive issues from the year 1868, in the literary supplement of the journal called *Kevod ha-Levanon* 'The Honour of *Ha-Levanon*'.[9] The journal's motto was "to publish, inform and set out everything a Jew should know to be a Jew and a member of human society," and it is not surprising that in a nineteenth-century Ashkenazi context, in the midst of a movement to promote Jewish national sentiment and encourage the progressive use of the Hebrew language, the editors of a journal whose goal was to disseminate news about Jewish international affairs decided to include fragments of literary works written in Sepharad.[10]

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[9] See issues 24, 30, 32, 39, and 42 of the year 1868. The journal is available via the website of the National Library of Israel in collaboration with the Tel-Aviv University at https://www.nli.org.il/he/newspapers/hlb [accessed 21 March 2022]. For more information on this journal, see Gilboa (1986, 186–95).

[10] On the relationship between the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement and the medieval Jewish culture of Sepharad, see the classical

Furthermore, at the end of the nineteenth century, around the time of the *Ha-Levanon* publication, we find the work *Sefer ha-Pardes* in the third volume of the collection *ʾOṣar ha-Sifrut*, reproduced by Joseph Luzzatto and published in Krakow in 1889–1890.[11] This publication includes two appendices that provide discussions on different aspects of the work. The first appendix deals with the year of printing of the Constantinople edition—1515, 1516, 1517?—and refers to studies on the work by nineteenth-century scholars, such as Amadeus Peyron, Leopold Dukes, Moritz Steinschneider, and Isaac Ben Jacob, highlighting again the Ashkenazi interest in medieval Sephardic works. The second appendix focuses on the journal *Ha-Levanon* and on the differences in the order of chapters and some of the content in comparison with the version in *ʾOṣar ha-Sifrut*.

These differences bring me to the analysis of the two families of witnesses that transmit the work *Sefer ha-Pardes*. Even though they might have been produced just a few years apart, the three manuscripts copied in Italy in the sixteenth century contain a different distribution of chapters than that found in the Constantinople printed edition. The manuscript tradition offers a prologue and four chapters, with the fourth divided into seven sections. The *Ha-Levanon* publication, though partial, follows the division of ch. 4 into sections. On the other hand, the version in *ʾOṣar ha-Sifrut* follows the Constantinople printed edition, which has a prologue and eight chapters: an entire chapter—the second

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study by Schorsch (1989), and more recent publications by Skolnik (2014) and Efron (2016).

[11] Graber (1889–1990, III:1–18 of section *ʾorot me-ʾofel*).

one—and some sections of ch. 4 from the manuscript tradition are absent, whereas other sections of ch. 4 are treated as independent chapters.[12]

Despite these differences, the question remains: what is this Provençal *Sefer ha-Pardes* that aroused so much interest among sixteenth-century Italian Jews, Sephardic Jews in Constantinople, as well as among the nineteenth-century Ashkenazi intelligentsia?

2.0. Didacticism: What to Know and How to Feel about It

Sefer ha-Pardes is a surprisingly short and apparently simple treatise consisting of a compilation of epigrams, analogies, and wisdom sayings, each preceded by the phrase ואמר *we-ʾamar* 'and he said', which serves both to introduce and to separate the items. From the information in the prologue, we may infer that the work was written when Jedaiah ha-Penini was quite young, and the concluding paragraph of the work suggests that the author was 17 years old, making the probable date of composition around 1290.

In what is a common *topos* in the introductions to wisdom works in Iberia and Provence, a friend asks the author to undertake the project. Jedaiah acknowledges that it is a difficult commission, since this friend wants a brief work on ethics, and says that he will try to offer new content, without copying what he

[12] On the distribution and content of chapters in the two families of textual witnesses, see the next section.

has read in ancient books. He then explains the method for writing the work: that the language be beautiful, so the epigrams will be enjoyable; that the sayings be short and concise, so they will be easy to memorise; and that the content be clear, so it will be comprehensible for those who listen to it. He goes on to explain why he has given the compilation the title *Sefer ha-Pardes*: a פרדס *pardes* is an orchard in which one simply takes a walk and does not benefit from planting anything there, since it is considered smaller than a proper garden, a גן *gan*. So, through his composition, he wants to demonstrate that even a small orchard—i.e., his short book—can enclose wonderful trees, i.e., great knowledge.

The book is divided into four chapters. In ch. 1, 'On the worship of God and piety', Jedaiah focuses on the importance of faith and ethical principles, the necessity of seeking the company of wise men, and the virtues of pious people in contrast with the vices of fools. Ch. 2, 'On friends and enemies', offers advice on friendship, keeping secrets, trust, treason, and betrayal; and on the despicable acts of false friends and how to identify and avoid them. Ch. 3, 'On isolation from this world and the mention of the *meshalim* about its hostility', is longer than the others because it includes *meshalim* or *exempla* that present ethical lessons in a simple narrative, usually through analogies. These short stories deal with the vanity of this world, the benefits of avoiding any contact with worldly vices, and fate and destiny. Ch. 4, whose content is more secular in contrast to the previous chapters' intimate and religious tone, is called 'On the study and the division of the sciences that a man will need after piety and the

worship of God'. Its content is divided into seven sections: on the value of wisdom and the order of study; on the science of medicine; on judging; on the technique of logic; on sophism; on the remaining sciences; and on eloquent language and poetry.[13]

Contrasting with this structure of the work, the second family of witnesses of *Sefer ha-Pardes*—the printed edition in Constantinople and the *ʾOṣar ha-Sifrut* publication—presents a slightly different distribution: they do not include either ch. 2, on friends and enemies, or the section on medicine from ch. 4. Instead, they offer the prologue and eight chapters: on distancing oneself from this world; on worshiping God; on the study and the division of sciences; on judging and the behaviour of judges; on logic; on sophism; on astronomy; and on poetry. Therefore, and since we do not find that distribution of the content in any of the surviving manuscripts, we can infer that there was a conscious editorial intent on the part of the printers of the Constantinople edition to select and restructure the transmitted text.

However, and despite the arrangement and content of the two families of witnesses, it is worth mentioning that one cannot really learn anything practical from the work. The friend Jedaiah mentions in the prologue wants a short work on ethics, and that is what he writes. As can be noted in the edition and translation

[13] This last section, since it deals with the status of poets in society and the role of poetry in spreading ideas and strengthening faith, has received recent scholarly attention. See, for example, Schirmann and Fleischer (1997, 502–4), or Tobi (2012, 224–25). Furthermore, a reproduction of the section can be found in Vizan (2016, 123–25).

included in this publication, the epigrams are sentences on different topics, but they do not have any practical content: one does not learn how to worship God by reading the chapter on the service of God; one does not learn how to practice medicine by reading the section on medicine; and one cannot become a good poet by reading the section on poetry. And that is what makes *Sefer ha-Pardes* unique: a compendium of common sayings that sometimes express contradictory viewpoints and feelings on a variety of religious topics, secular sciences, and their practitioners. In this sense, Jedaiah offers a pragmatic compilation of epigrams and stories that stresses the contingency of wisdom as well as its absolute value.

3.0. Wisdom Epigrams in Provence

The kinds of sayings we find in *Sefer ha-Pardes* are familiar to scholars of this genre. The work belongs to a Provençal tradition of compilations of short wisdom units—aphorisms, proverbs, epigrams—in Hebrew, in either prose or verse. For example, we have *Mivḥar ha-Peninim* 'A Selection of Pearls', translated by Judah ibn Tibbon from the original Arabic *Mukhtār al-Jawāhīr*, a non-extant work that is attributed to Shelomoh ibn Gabirol. It is a collection of 652 prose clauses on wisdom, friendship, and distancing oneself from this world and the love for the world to come. Joseph Qimḥi's work *Sheqel ha-Qodesh* 'The Holy Sheqel', in metre and rhyme, is drawn mostly—about 80 percent—from the content of *Mivḥar ha-Peninim*. A third work in this tradition is Yiṣḥaq ha-Qaṭan's *Mishle he-ʿArav* 'The Sayings of the Arabs', a work divided into 50 chapters with prose sections—both

rhymed and unrhymed—as well as poems in the Andalusi style and numerous clusters of biblical verses. In addition, we have the *Musare ha-Filosofim* 'The Ethics of the Philosophers', attributed to Judah al-Ḥarizi, probably written when he was visiting Provence. He translated it from the ninth-century Arabic version *Kitāb Adab al-Falāsifa*. composed in Baghdad by Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, and there is also a thirteenth-century Castilian translation, *El Libro de los Buenos Proverbios* [The Book of Good Proverbs]. This work is a compilation of aphorisms on different topics attributed to Greek sages, where wisdom and its transmission are the focus. This same Judah al-Ḥarizi wrote a collection of 50 Hebrew *maqāmāt*, called *Sefer Taḥkemoni*, and one of them—*Maḥberet ha-Meshalim*—consists of a compilation of 50 epigrams.[14]

It would not be bizarre if Jedaiah ha-Penini attempted to summarise in his *Sefer ha-Pardes* Andalusi popular knowledge on different topics, religious and secular alike, in order to preserve it and transmit it at a time and place—the end of the thirteenth century in Provence—when that knowledge was in danger of being lost.[15] And Provence is indeed a very interesting case study

[14] This chapter appears bound with *Sefer ha-Pardes* in the JTS manuscript; see above, n. 7.

[15] For an analysis of the early fourteenth-century construction of local Jewish identity in Provence marked primarily by the Andalusian Jewish tradition, see Ben-Shalom (2017b). In particular, this scholar focuses on Jedaiah ha-Penini's *ʾIgeret ha-Hitnaṣlut*, which he wrote in favour of rationalist philosophy. As part of his argument, Jedaiah offers an overview of the cultural history of Provençal Jewry, and highlights the importance of Iberian thought and scholars in that history.

of the impact of the Andalusi intellectual tradition on a non-Arabised Jewish community.[16] Until the mid-twelfth century, Jewish culture in Provence was characterised by the existence of communities devoted to the study of Torah, Talmud, and midrash that were known for their rabbinical exegesis. Provençal Jewry, unlike its Andalusi or northern Iberian counterparts, had not been exposed to the secular tradition and the rationalist philosophical approach that had developed in societies in contact with Arabic thought. However, some decades later, it had become a hub for the study of philosophy and other non-traditional disciplines, as a result of dynamic cultural interaction in the religious and secular spheres between this area and Iberia (Twersky 1968, 190–1).[17]

One factor that might explain this transformation is the arrival in Provence of a group of Jewish intellectuals from al-Andalus fleeing Almohad intolerance towards religious minorities. Among these newcomers, two families played a fundamental role in transforming Provençal Jewry.[18] The Tibbon family, with

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[16] See, for example, Pearce (2017), where she explores the prestige of the Arabic language and the Andalusi Judaeo-Arabic tradition in Provence through a comprehensive analysis of Judah ibn Tibbon's ethical will to his son.

[17] Freudenthal (2009) calls this phenomenon 'transfert culturel'; and Ben-Shalom (2017a) speaks of a 'cultural renaissance' based on the phenomenon of translations from Arabic into Hebrew that took place in Provence.

[18] More information in Zinberg (1959), Iancu-Agou (1994), and Ben-Shalom (2009).

Judah ibn Tibbon (ca. 1120–1190) and his son Samuel ibn Tibbon (ca. 1165–1232), settled in Lunel and were active in the translation of works from Arabic into Hebrew.[19] The Qimḥi family, with Joseph Qimḥi (ca. 1105–1170) and his two sons Moses and David (ca. 1160–ca. 1235), settled in Narbonne and became famous for their grammatical, linguistic, and exegetical works.[20]

The arrival of these Andalusi intellectuals provided a model to local authors and brought about the development of innovative approaches, making Provence a centre of thought, science, and philosophy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with such authors as Anaṭoli ben Joseph, Yiṣḥaq ha-Sheniri, Yehosef ha-ʾEzovi, Abraham ha-Bedersi, Qalonimus ben Qalonimus, and Jedaiah ha-Penini, Abraham ha-Bedersi's son. Among Jedaiah's other works are a prayer with one thousand words that begin with the letter *mem*, titled *Baqashat ha-Memim* 'Poem of the *Mems*'; *ʾOhev Nashim*, a response to the misogynistic work *Minḥat Yehudah Śoneʾ ha-Nashim* by Judah ibn Shabbetai,

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[19] Judah ibn Tibbon translated multiple philosophical works, such as Saʿadiah Gaʾon's *Sefer ha-ʾEmunot we-ha-Deʿot*, Ibn Gabirol's *Sefer Tiqun Midot ha-Nefesh*, and Baḥya ibn Paquda's *Sefer Ḥovot ha-Levavot*; wisdom literature, such as Ibn Gabirol's *Mivḥar ha-Peninim*; polemics, such as Judah ha-Levi's *Sefer ha-Kuzari*; and other grammatical works. Samuel ibn Tibbon was the Hebrew translator of Maimonides's *Moreh Nevukhim*.

[20] By Joseph Qimḥi, grammatical works such as *Sefer ha-Galui* and *Sefer ha-Zikaron*; biblical commentaries; a polemical work against Christians, *Sefer ha-Berit*; *piyyuṭim*; another translation of Ibn Paquda's *Sefer Ḥovot ha-Levavot* and a work in poetry, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*. David Qimḥi, RaDaK, is known for his *Mikhlol* in two parts: a grammar of biblical Hebrew and a dictionary, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*.

in which he celebrates women and their virtues; and his more influential *Beḥinat ʿOlam*, a philosophical and ethical work written after the expulsion of Jews from France in 1306.

If we are to believe Jedaiah's statements, *Sefer ha-Pardes* must have been one of his first compositions, if not the first one. The significance of this fact is twofold. First, Jedaiah shows awareness of the Provençal compilations of wisdom material and writes a work that has precedents in the same genre. The authors of these compilations have clear-cut connections with the Andalusi tradition: Judah ibn Tibbon, Joseph Qimḥi, Yiṣḥaq ha-Qaṭan (the unknown author of *Mishle he-ʿArav*, who says he is translating from Arabic), and Judah al-Ḥarizi. In fact, Jedaiah says in the prologue that he will not reproduce what he has read in ancient books, by which he might mean Arabic books on wisdom in Hebrew translations, books that would have easily been at his disposal.[21] Secondly, writing his first work on Andalusi wisdom material would have been a prestigious endeavour to prove and

[21] Even though Jedaiah claims to have written the book using new sayings, it seems improbable that he does not base himself on the collections of epigrams that circulated widely in Provence. In fact, the concepts of originality, imitation, and plagiarism were understood differently in medieval Arabic and Hebrew literatures: reusing content in a different way and translating or adapting works from other languages were considered new projects. On this, see, for example, Von Grunebaum (1944) and Schippers (1994). However, and despite its interest, the use Jedaiah makes of his sources goes beyond the scope of the present monograph, whose goal is to offer an English translation of the work, a Hebrew edition of four sixteenth-century witnesses, and a brief contextualising study.

legitimise his worth as a writer and to link himself to the seemingly distant, but still highly respected, Judaeo-Arabic intellectual tradition.

In addition, despite Jedaiah's superficial explanation of the meanings of the terms *pardes* and *gan* to justify the title, he might be connecting his work with that Judaeo-Arabic tradition by the mere emphasis on the term *pardes* in the title and the symbolic imagery of a garden. In fact, as scholars of the Jewish Andalusi tradition have noted, the enclosed garden, or *hortus conclusus*, became a symbol of Andalusi culture.[22] This symbol was used contemporaneously with that culture, but also in later nostalgic recollections.[23] Furthermore, the term *pardes* might relate to Arabic secular learning and science in al-Andalus, in contrast to the term *gan*, which may have more religious and otherworldly connotations. This dichotomy was used for the first time by Dunash ben Lavraṭ, who introduced Arabic prosody—quantitative metre—into Hebrew in tenth-century al-Andalus. He wrote: "Let your paradise [*gan ʿeden*] be the Holy books, your orchard [*pardes*] the books of the Arabs."[24] This might explain why Jedaiah ha-Penini accommodated secular content in his work

[22] See, for example, Scheindlin (1986, 4), Brann (1991, 8), or Decter (2007, 24–25).

[23] Decter (2007, 24) says that "the garden remained a persistent symbol of the cosmopolitan culture that poets recognized as their own".

[24] The Hebrew verse reads: *ve-gan ʿednakh yehu sifre qedoshim / u-fardeskha yehu sifre ʿaravim*; see Allony (1945–1946, 93). See also Brann (2000, 446), Cole (2007, 9), and Pearce (2017, 107–8). Pearce (2017, 109) also analyses the trope of the garden as a library connected to the cultural production of al-Andalus.

and used the term *pardes* in the title of the whole compilation. Since Jedaiah's explanation on the difference between *gan* and *pardes* is quite strange, could he be using a rhetorical device for evoking and revisiting al-Andalus?

Even if this is the case, however, this association of the word *pardes* with Andalusi secular knowledge would have been lost in Italy in the sixteenth century, when the three manuscripts that preserve the work were produced. Many of the works that are copied or bound with this one in the codices are halakhic and Kabbalistic in nature. This can be explained by the fact that *pardes* is also one of the terms used in the Jewish tradition to refer to mystical material.[25] Furthermore, Rashi (1040–1105) wrote a halakhic work with the title *Sefer ha-Pardes* that enjoyed great popularity. These two facts would have prompted a learned reader in the sixteenth century to associate a work with such a title with either *halakhah* or Kabbalah, but not with *musar*, and less even with the Andalusi tradition.

4.0. Conclusion

Jedaiah might have been aware of the precarious situation of Andalusi knowledge in Provence and may have created his compilation *Sefer ha-Pardes* in order to preserve it. He took on the role of the preserver and transmitter of the Andalusi tradition,

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[25] The origin of the use of the term *pardes* in relation to mysticism is to be found in the Babylonian Talmud, *Hagigah* 14b, in the story *ʾarbaʿah nikhnesu be-fardes* [Four entered the orchard] that tells that four sages entered the esoteric knowledge of the Torah and only one of them—Rabbi Akiva—emerged unharmed.

just as Judah ibn Tibbon had done 150 years before him, in an attempt to save it from oblivion.

And this role may not have been foreign to him: in fact, he was writing at a time when other Occitan authors, conscious of the passing of the golden age of troubadour lyrics in Provence, began to produce compilations of poetic treatises to preserve the legacy of the troubadours from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and disseminate it throughout the Mediterranean, particularly in Catalonia and Sicily (Marshall 1972, xcvi–xcviii). It would not be surprising if Jedaiah ha-Penini knew of these Occitan treatises, since one of those thirteenth-century poets, Raimon Vidal de Besalú, wrote in his work *Razós de Trobar* 'Guidelines for Troubadour Composition' that the Occitan lyric verse was popular among all peoples, including Jews and Muslims (Marshall 1972, 2–3).

In any case, and even though there is an established tradition of Hebrew compilations of wisdom epigrams in Provence with links to the Andalusi lore, *Sefer ha-Pardes* illustrates the need to situate Hebrew writing in a non-Hebrew cultural context rather than considering it in isolation.