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A CURIOUS IBN EZRA MANUSCRIPT.

THE object of the following lines is to call the attention of lovers of the commentaries of Ibn Ezra to a MS. which probably is not known to them.

In the printed catalogue of the "Proprietary and Cottonian Library" at Plymouth, the second entry reads: "Abenezræ comment. super Gen. & Exodum."

The MS. itself is labelled thus:

"Ab. Abenezræ super Genesim & Exodum latine versus per Methrydatum, Gaonis Commentum super ultimam prophetiam Danielis;—in a good hand of the sixteenth century, folio," &c.

The size of the MS. is half-folio.

A more recent hand than that of the MS. has written on the first page:

Oeilampadii Commenta de Genesi.

180 fol. init. Sæc. XVI.

Since the MS. itself frequently gives the names of the authors as "Aben Azra" and Ben Caspi, the question is not only who is this Oeilampadius (rather Oleilamp.?), but also how did this writer come to ascribe it to a bearer of this name, a name very befitting an author or student ("man of the oil-lamp").

The Rev. J. Polack suggests to me that Ben Caspi's super-commentary, which is partly contained in this MS., may have borne in Hebrew a name such as שֵׁמֶן לְמִנְיָוֹר, which was mistaken for the name of the author. But Dr. Friedländer, in his "Ibn Ezra Literature" (Society of Heb. Lit. IV), remarks of Caspi that this author had the habit of naming his works with an allusion to כֶּסֶף in reference to his own name¹.

The MS. is in Latin throughout. It contains—firstly, a very brief abstract of Ibn Ezra's Introduction to his *Commentary on the Pentateuch*; then Ibn Ezra on Gen. i-iv. 8, with many omissions.

This part ends with the words: et mille ligna & mille lapides aderant ad interficiendum eum.

After which follows:

Finis Abenazræ. Seq. Additio Bencaspi sup ipsius [?] comment [?]
Abræ.

¹ On the other hand, a super-commentary by Caspi on Ibn Ezra is described simply as פ' הסודות של א"צ (Renan-Neubauer, *Les Ecrivains Juifs français du XIV^e Siècle*, p. 138).

This part of the super-commentary of Caspi (or is it more correct to call him with this writer Ibn Caspi?) deals with several points contained in the preceding part of Ibn Ezra's commentary.

After this, on a fresh page (p. 19), begins the Latin translation of the commentary of Ibn Ezra on the whole book of Exodus, with the omission (as also stated in the heading by the writer of it) of grammatical matters. Still, a cursory glance already reveals the fact that it sometimes differs from the text usually found in print, although that is the version it represents. Not alone are there omissions and abbreviations, but expansions are also to be found, as will be seen by comparing several quotations from the MS. given below, with the printed text.

Into this Commentary of Ibn Ezra, the notes on it by Caspi, are almost to the end interwoven, as will be seen by the specimens adduced immediately; towards the end of the book, however, they are not incorporated in the text, but as above, on Gen. i-iv, follow separately.

The superscription, evidently by the hand of the writer of the MS., runs thus:

cum additionibus ben Caspi

Abrami Avenzari [here follows an illegible word, perhaps versus] p. Methrydatem ex hebraico \overline{em} dimissione s. q. ad grammaticam p. tinerent.

Then follows:

“Et hæc sunt nomina filiorum isrl. Superaddit et [!] pro continuatione sermonis preteriti,” &c.

The following specimens, which are somewhat hastily extracted, may contain some unavoidable mistakes in spelling, but they will nevertheless give a sufficiently clear idea of the character of the MS.

[Ibn Ezra on Ex. i. 10 towards the end, א"ר מרינום] Dixit marenos egredietur pro egrediemur, i. e. expellemur de terra [words illegible] egredietur ad evitandum augurī quo summo \overline{pe} Aegyptii utebantur & cavebant int. loquendū. [The latter words are not in the usual text.]

[Ib. ver. 16, after the translation of משיני עבריהם] & hoc indicat cp. [sancta?] Scriptura qua utimur hebræ. [Then in red ink] Prima additio Ben caspi [again in black] p. p. duos transitus i. duabus viis [word illegible] hebreus uno modo ab heber, [עבר] q. Latina int. pr. atur transitus, qua transivit opinionē. omnium gentiū mundi de unitate dei, et vera fide, alio $\overline{m\ddot{o}}$ [do] p. p. transitum fluvii euphratis. Nam in Mesopotamia hā[bi]tabat heber, & insula \overline{e} [st] int'duos

fluvios Tygrin & euphratem nec poterant [ea]m̄ exire nisi fluvium transissent. Idō dur [=Ideo dicuntur] hebrei [עבריים] 1. transeuntes & t. [tum] hoc ē[st] quod dx deus p. Josuen in transitu fluvii hītarunt prēs uri ab initio. [Then in red ink :]

Secunda Additio eiusdem. [On Ibn Ezra, ib. וזה לאות. Then in black] et hoc indicat scriptura qua utimur hebraea ost.[endare ?] hoc ideo dicit, qua quidem invidentes nobis, opinati sunt linguam n̄rām [nostram ?] et hebraicam caracteres tū[m] caldaicos sive assyrios ut negent nos et priores ceteris, idō postillator [?] hoc excludens, dit [dicit] caracteres quos hēmus [habemus] e. [esse] hebraicos, cum punctata lrā [litera] Tau legitur Tau pro nomine illius lrē [literæ] quod deriva[ta] a xobo [verbo ?] ituita [והתוית Ez. ix. 4]. Quod ē signare . et m̄ dx [inde dixit ?] Tau 1. signum quare et nomen illius lrē et character ē idem tam legendo q̄. scribendo et icidem [?] ē de ceteris lrīs chaldaicis neq. aliarum linguaŕ. Ex quo lingua & caracteres hebraicos nos habere patet.

Abram. Et faciebant mares [matres ? ib. ver. 17, ויתחיי] Intelligitur ipsas conatas fuisse ultra vires suos pueros conservare.

In this way, this MS. intersperses the notes of Caspi among the explanations of Ibn Ezra. Generally the words: Abram, & Additio Ben Caspi, or Ben Chaspi, are in red ink.

Here is one more specimen: Ibn Ezra on Ex. xii. 7, towards the end (והתוית תו) : et notabulum bathim equoñ ē ad domus, et ad mēsuram cuius singulare ē bath.

Additio Bencaspi. Prout in fragmentis et fractionibus [is this the title of an arithmetical book ?] indicat, cp. [quod ?] Aegypti solent commede re quosdam cibos ex similagine semicocta, et fragmenta, supposito oleo instare minha quam d. jussit israelitis capii [cassi ?] et frangi. Dem[um] super ponē [superponitur ?] oleum & sacrificar ut levitico. Bathim quando org. domū. ponitur comes [קטין] subtra beth qu. org. mensuram illam ponitur patha subra beth, in pronunciatione tamen uno modo proferuntur.

[ver. 8] Abram. Et comedent eum sup. azimis, &c.

Towards the end of Exodus, the notes of Caspi do not intrude into the commentary of Ibn Ezra, but are collected and subjoined at the end : on p. 167, after "noctis," the last word of Ibn Ezra's commentary, we find these words :

Et sic finis Rabi Abram. in 60 tribus com̄tibus. [paragraphs or notes ?].

On p. 168. Additio Bencaspi sup. am̄ [com ?] pen. ultimo Abram. sup. exodum.

The occasional variations, noticeable in this translation, from the

version in the commonly printed text, which version it yet mainly follows¹, and still more the fact of its being interspersed with the notes of Caspi, make it probable if not certain, that it is translated from a Hebrew MS., which slightly differed from our text.

At the conclusion of the commentary and super-commentary on Exodus occur a few blank pages, then the MS. finishes with the commentaries, in a Latin version, and one after another, of R. Saadya Gaon and of Ibn Ezra on Daniel x-xii, thus forming with the previous matter a curious conglomeration.

The translator "Methrydates" is no doubt identical with the Flavius Mithridates who towards the close of the fifteenth century rendered many Hebrew works into Latin². It is, however, a new point, I fancy, to find him among the translators of Ibn Ezra.

M. BERLIN.

SYMPATHY WITH THE BRUTE CREATION.

As the Holy One, blessed be he, hath compassion upon man, so hath he compassion upon the beasts of the field. As it is said in the text:

"When a bullock or a sheep or a goat is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam; and from the eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for the oblation of an offering made by fire unto the Lord³."

Furthermore it is said:

"And whether it be cow or ewe, ye shall not kill it and her young both in one day⁴."

And as the Holy One, blessed be he, hath compassion upon the beasts of the field, so is he filled with mercy for the birds of the air. For it is written: "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way⁵."

Midrash Rabbi Deut., VI, 1.

¹ For information on the two Recensions of Ibn Ezra's Commentary, see Dr. M. Friedländer, *Essays on the Writings of Ibn Ezra*, IV, p. 148 ff. (cp. p. 151, כריית 'ר, and beginning of our first quotation above); and on the super-commentary of Caspi, *ibid.*, p. 231 ff.

² On this Mithridates see Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, pp. 492, 922, 930, and esp. 985 and the references there given. Cf. *Hamazkir*, XXI, 111, where a list of Mithridates' translations is given.

³ Lev. xxii. 27.

⁴ *Idem*, 28.

⁵ Deut. xxii. 6.