



## Several comments on a Genizah fragment of Bavli Eruvin 56a-b, 57a<sup>1</sup>

Comentários sobre um fragmento de Genizah de Bavli Eruvin 56a-b, 57a

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**Abstract:** The article refers to a Cairo Genizah fragment related to Bavli, Eruvin tractate 54a, identified as Cambridge, UL T-S F1 (1) 85. FGP No. C 96542. The article begins with a description of the Genizah fragment, and presents the text of the printed version and finally, reference is made to the content of the fragment and several comments are brought in an effort to characterize the fragment. A reproduction of the fragment presented at the end of the article.

**Keywords:** Genizah. Eruvin. Sugya.

**Resumo:** Este artigo faz referência a um fragmento da Genizah do Cairo, relacionado a Bavli, Eruvin, Tratado 54a, identificado como Cambridge UL TS F1 (1) 85. FGP N° C 96542. O artigo empreende com uma descrição do fragmento e apresenta o texto da versão impressa para, finalmente, comentar o conteúdo do fragmento com várias outras interpretações que são trazidos para em um esforço para caracterizar esse texto.

**Palavras-chave:** Genizah. Eruvin. Sugya.

### 1 Description of the Genizah Fragment

The Genizah fragment is identified as Cambridge, UL T-S F1 (1) 85, and here I shall discuss one folio (No. C 96542 at the Friedberg Jewish Manuscript Society) selected at random.

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The fragment includes approximately 36 lines. The measurements of the folio are 26.5×32.3 cm. The measurements of the written area are 20.5×24.5 cm. The page is torn at the edges and a considerable part of it is faded and illegible. The legible part of the fragment, which parallels that of the printed version (Vilna) begins with the word "*mesabaotan*" (56a) and ends with the words "*me`ah arba`im ve-achat*"(57a).

The scribe added occasional dots above some words in the fragment when necessary in his opinion. Between the lines there are emendations in a different hand. The writing style is square Eastern. <sup>2</sup>

Paleographically, the formative features of the letters have a greater similarity to letter specimens written in 995 AD (unknown place) and to letter specimens written in Cairo, Egypt, in 1003/4.<sup>3</sup>

## **2 The Text of the Printed version (bEruvin 56a-b, 57a)<sup>4</sup>**

*It goeth along the south<sup>5</sup> during the day `and turneth about the north` during the night. The wind turneth, turneth about and moveth<sup>6</sup> refers to the eastern horizon and the western horizon along which the sun sometimes moves and sometimes turns about.*

R. Mesharsheya stated: These rules<sup>7</sup> should be disregarded for it was taught: The sun has never exactly risen in the North East and set in the North West, nor has it ever risen precisely in the South East and set in the South West.

Samuel stated: The vernal equinox occurs only at the beginning of one of four quarters of the day<sup>8</sup> viz., either at the beginning of the day or at the beginning of the night or at midday or at midnight. The summer solstice only occurs either at the end of one and a half, or at the end of seven and a half hours of the day or night. The autumnal equinox only occurs at the end of three or nine hours of the day or the night, and the winter solstice only occurs at the end of four and a half, or ten and a half hours of the day or the night. The duration of a season of the year is no longer than ninety-one days and seven and a half hours; and the beginning of one season is removed from that of the other by no more than one half of planetary hour.

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<sup>2</sup> GOLDBERG, 1986, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> BEIT-ARIÉ, 1987, p. 15, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Vilna Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Ec 1:6.

<sup>6</sup> Ec 1:6.

<sup>7</sup> On the points of sunrise and sunset.

<sup>8</sup> The solar day of twenty-four hours, which includes both day and night.



Samuel further stated: The vernal equinox never begins under Jupiter but it breaks the trees, nor does the winter solstice begin under Jupiter but it dries up the seed. This, however, is the case only when the new moon occurred in the moon-hour or in the Jupiter-hour.<sup>9</sup>

Our rabbis taught: If [a circular] town is to be [circumscribed by a] square<sup>10</sup> [the sides must be] drawn in the shape of a square tablet. The Sabbath limits also are then drawn in the shape of a square tablet. When the measurements are taken, one should not measure the two thousand cubits<sup>11</sup> from the middle point of the town corner, because, thereby, one loses the corners. One should rather imagine that a square tablet of the size of two thousand cubits by two thousand cubits is applied to each corner diagonally, so that the town gains thereby four hundred cubits in each corner, the Sabbath limits gain eight hundred cubits in each corner, while the town and the Sabbath limits together gain twelve hundred cubits in each corner. This is possible, Abaye explained, in a town of the size of two thousand cubits.

It was taught: R. Eliezer son of R. Jose stated: The limit of the allotted land beyond the confines of the Levitical cities was two thousand cubits. Deducting from these<sup>12</sup> an open space of one thousand cubits, such open space would represent a quarter of the entire area the remainder of which consisted of fields and vineyards. Whence is this deduced? – Raba replied: From Scriptures which says, [*And the open land...*] *from the wall of the city and outward a thousand round about*,<sup>13</sup> the Torah has thus enjoined, 'Surround the city by an open space of one thousand cubits'. 'Such an open space [it was said] would represent a quarter of the entire area'. 'A quarter! Is it not in fact one [in the neighbourhood] of a half? – Raba replied: The surveyor Bar Adda explain this to me. Such a proportion is possible in the case of a town whose area is two thousand cubits by two thousand cubits. For what is the area of its limits? Sixteen [million square cubits]. What is the area of the corners? Also sixteen [million square cubits]. Deducting [for the open spaces] eight [million square cubits] from the limits, and four [million square cubits] from the corners, to what area would this space amount? To one of twelve [million square cubits]. Would then 'such an open space represent a quarter'? Is it not in fact more than a third of the entire area? – Take the four [million square cubits] of the town area itself and add to them. Does not this, however still amount to a third? – Do you imagine that quadrilateral town was

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<sup>9</sup> Eruvin 56a.

<sup>10</sup> In connection with the calculations of the permitted Sabbath limits around it [a town].

<sup>11</sup> The permitted distance in all directions from the imaginary square round the town.

<sup>12</sup> The two thousand cubits mentioned.

<sup>13</sup> Nm 35:4.



spoken of[f]? No, a circular town was meant. For by how much does the area of a square exceed that of a circle? By one quarter [approximately]. Deduct a quarter from the measurements given and there would remain nine [million square cubits]; and nine [million square cubits] represents one quarter of thirty six [million square cubits].

Abaye said: This<sup>14</sup> is also possible in the case of a town that has an area of a thousand by thousand cubits. For what are its limits? Eight [million square cubits]. What is the area of the corners? Sixteen [million square cubits].<sup>15</sup> Deducting [for the open space] four [million square cubits] from the limits and four [million square cubits] from the corners, to what area would this space amount? To one of eight million square cubits. But is not such an open space a third of the area? – Do you think that the reference is to a square town? No, a circular town was spoken of. For by how much does the area of a square exceed that of the circle? By one quarter approximately. Deduct a quarter from the measurements given and there would remain six [million square cubits]; and six [million square cubits] represent a quarter of twenty-four [million square cubits].

Rabina explain: What is meant by `a quarter`? A quarter of the area of the limits.

R. Ashi explained: What is meant by `a quarter`? A quarter of the area of the corners. Said Rabina to R. Ashi: Is it not written in the scripture, `round about`?<sup>16</sup> - By `round about` the corners were meant. For, if you were not to admit this, would you also contend that the expression, `And dash the blood round about against altar,<sup>17</sup> written in connection with a burnt-offering, also meant round about the very altar? Consequently you must admit that by `round about` was meant round about the corners; well then, here also by `round about` was meant round about the corners. Said R. Ḥabibi of Ḥoza`ah<sup>18</sup> to R. Ashi: Are there not, however, the projections of the corners? – The reference is to a circular city. Was it not, however, made square? – You might contend that it was said that we imagine it to be a square but can you contend that it was actually made square?<sup>19</sup> Said R. Ḥanilai of Ḥoza`ah to R. Ashi: Consider! By how much does the area of a square exceed that of a circle? By a quarter

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<sup>14</sup> That the open space shall represent a quarter of the area of the land allowed around each city of the Levites.

<sup>15</sup> Eruvin 56b.

<sup>16</sup> Nm 35:4.

<sup>17</sup> Lv 1:5.

<sup>18</sup> The modern Khuzistan.

<sup>19</sup> Obviously not. An imaginary square causes no actual reduction.



approximately. Are not then that so called `eight hundred`<sup>20</sup> only six hundred and sixty-seven minus a third? – The other replied: This applies only to a circle inscribed within a square,<sup>21</sup> but in the case of the diagonal of a square more must be added; for a Master stated: Every cubit in the side of a square corresponds to one and two fifths of a cubit in its diagonal.

[*Mishnah*] A *ḳarpaf*<sup>22</sup> is allowed for every town; so R. Meir, but the sages ruled: [The law of *ḳarpaf*] was instituted only between two towns so that by adding to each one a stretch of land of seventy and a fraction<sup>23</sup> the *ḳarpaf* combines the two towns into one. [Epstein ed.].<sup>24</sup>

### 3 Features of the Fragment

In the Genizah fragment several words were written above the line, for example the word "*kmin*" (Figure 1 below - line 11). Similarly, the word "*alfei*" (lines 18 [ $\times 2$ ], 19, 21) and the word "*riva`a*" (line 20), "*trei alfei*" (line 22), the word "*de`eir*" (line 25).

Some letters were also written above the line, for example in the word "*ve-hamarbi`a*"<sup>25</sup> (line 10) – the letters *hey*, *yod* are above the line. Also in the word "*lemigrash*" (line 15) the letter *lamed* is written above the line, and the letters *yod*, *mem sofit* at the end of the word "*ha-cohanim*" (line 24), and the letters "*kaf*, *yod*, *mem*, *ayin*, *tav*, *lamed*" (line 27), the letters *nun*, *alef* (line 28). Finally, there are indistinct words or letters that were clearly written above the line (line 25).

There are also deletions, for example in the word "*be`arba-a*" (line 4) the fragment shows remnants of the deleted letter *hey*. Also in the word "*'oseh*" (line 10) the fragment shows remnants of the deleted letter  $\aleph$ .

In the vicinity of the following words there are some unclear notations, for example above the word "*levanah*" (line 9) there is an unidentified mark, perhaps a straight line above the word or a tear. Similarly, in the word "*riva`a*" (line 20) as well there is a dot above each of the letters.

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<sup>20</sup> Eruvin 56b. `The Sabbath limit gain eight hundred cubits` by the application to the corners of the diagonal of the tablet of two thousand cubits in length.

<sup>21</sup> That the approximate difference between the area of a square and that of circle is a quarter of the former or third of the latter.

<sup>22</sup> A stretch of land extending to seventy and two thirds cubits away from the town.

<sup>23</sup> Two thirds of a cubit.

<sup>24</sup> Including a few of his notes.

<sup>25</sup> Tosefta 4(5):6: "*מרביע*".



In the word *himitza`ot*" (line 13) there is a correction to the end letters *vav, tav*. The word "*lekan*" (lines 12, 13 [ $\times 2$ ], 14) is written in a form with no vowel letters.

Change in quoting a biblical verse. The verse (line 24) appears with the addition of the words "*bnei aharon*" that are not part of the biblical source.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, there are several identical features in the Genizah fragment and the manuscripts mentioned above and the printed version (Vilna edition), as well as other features in which the fragment differs from the manuscripts and the printed version. We shall begin with the identical features, which include the opening (lines 1-2) *`It goeth along the south` during the day `and turneth about the north` during the night... sometimes moves and sometimes turns about.*<sup>27</sup> Goeth along the south during the day – as there is no day when the sun does not move along the south, and turneth about the north during the night – as there is no night when the sun does not turn along the north. Sometimes it moves – in the longer days, and sometimes it turns about – in the shorter days.<sup>28</sup> The Yerushalmi Talmud mentions the east and west and not the north and south, as in the fragment's version.<sup>29</sup>

The letters "*bet, alef, zayin*" (line 5) may have been written by mistake (as they are absent from some manuscripts),<sup>30</sup> or they may have meaning and the letters *alef, zayin* (equivalent to the numbers 1,7) serve as an introduction, an abbreviation that precedes the subsequent detailed information, that denotes the numbers one and seven ("either at the end of one and a half, or at the end of seven and a half hours of the day or night"), as other sources that do have these letters cannot be disregarded.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, MS Vatican 109 consistently brings in the text not only these letters as abbreviations of further information presented subsequently, rather also other letters of abbreviation, for instance the letters *gimel, tet* (from the letters *bet, gimel, tet*) (equivalents of the numbers 3,9) serve as an abbreviation for details presented further in the same sentence that relate to the numbers three and nine ("The autumnal equinox only occurs at the end of three or nine hours of the day or the night"). Further on as well, the letters *dalet, yod* (from the letters *bet, dalet, yod*) (the equivalents of the numbers 4,10) serve as abbreviations for details mentioned further on in the same sentence, which refer to the numbers four and ten ("And the winter

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<sup>26</sup> Lv 1:5.

<sup>27</sup> YERUSHALMI, Eruvin, 5:1, 22:3.

<sup>28</sup> LIEBERMAN, 1962, p. 370.

<sup>29</sup> GOLDBERG, 1986, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> MS Munich 95, MS Oxford 366.

<sup>31</sup> HANANEL, p. 109.



solstice only occurs at the end of four and a half, or ten and a half hours of the day or the night.").

With regard to the contents of the Genizah fragment, the words of R. Mesharshya (line 2) who said that "these rules should be disregarded" (referring to a tannaitic source – a baraita – that does not appear in the fragment but preceded his words), illustrate that sometimes the Amoraim rule against a baraita, or perhaps R. Mesharshya intended to say that these rules should be taken as an approximation (an approximate calculation)<sup>32</sup> rather than as an exact measurement.<sup>33</sup> R. Mesharshya's fundamental objection to following known rules on various issues without employing discretion regarding the specific issue is also evident elsewhere.<sup>34</sup>

Further on in the fragment it says "*riva`a...telatin ve-shitah*" (line 20), which means: one quarter... thirty six, but the letter or word preceding the word "thirty" ("*telatin*") is illegible. All the different versions have different wordings. MS Munich 95 has: "*lefi telatah*", MS Vatican 109 has: "*lefi telatin*". MS Oxford 366 and the printed version have: "*mi-telatin*". If it had been possible to read the word or letter before the word "thirty", the fragment could have been joined to one of these versions. But, as stated, since it is not possible to read that word or letter in the fragment, we shall have to follow the context of the sugya and say that the correct version is "one quarter of thirty six" (stressing the letter *mem* in the word "*mi-shloshim*"). Accordingly, the wording in MS Oxford 366 and in the printed version appears to be the most correct and accurate in this matter.

The fragment concludes with an incomplete paragraph from the Mishna<sup>35</sup> from which it appears that there is a dispute between R. Meir and the sages in the first part of the Mishna. But not all the commentaries think that there is a dispute between the those tannaim.<sup>36</sup>

However, with regard to the order in which the dispute is presented further on in the Mishna (in the current fragment the large majority of the Mishna is missing and only a small part of it has remained), R. Meir's words were brought first followed by those of the sages (probably one sage – R. Yehuda<sup>37</sup>). Notably, R. Meir's words were not brought in the Mishna in their entirety at once and the words of the sages were also

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<sup>32</sup> ALBECK, 1969, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> LIEBERMAN, 1962, p. 370.

<sup>34</sup> Eruvin 46b.

<sup>35</sup> Eruvin 5:1-3.

<sup>36</sup> Korban Ha`edah, Eruvin 5:2, s.v. "salakt".

<sup>37</sup> GOLDBERG, 1986, p. 139.



not brought in the Mishna in their entirety at once. This order created a strange sequence of presenting the dispute in the Mishna, where their words were in fact presented alternately (some researchers think that the sages' words in the Mishna are brought in parentheses and then the last part of the Mishna returns to the words of R. Meir)<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, the order of the statements may be interpreted by saying that at the beginning of the Mishna the redactors sought only to present the opinion of R. Meir and of the sages – concisely, in order to emphasize the contrast between them. Only later was the controversy supplemented in the Mishna,<sup>39</sup> presenting their opinions at length,<sup>40</sup> but there are also other possible interpretations of the order in the Mishna.<sup>41</sup>

The dispute between R. Meir and the sages deals with the possibility of adding a karpaf to a town or two towns. According to R. Meir, any town can add a karpaf<sup>42</sup> (an area of "seventy and a fraction"). According to the sages, the possibility of adding a karpaf is limited to a situation in which one town is close to another.<sup>43</sup>

A karpaf is an open lot around a yar<sup>44</sup> or around an area outside the town (in the territory surrounding the town) that does not serve for residential purposes (rather as a place for storing wood,<sup>45</sup> and accordingly karpaf is an urban term, but the sages use it as a halakhic term for adding territory to a town<sup>46</sup>) and is surrounded by partitions. If the area of the karpaf is no larger than seventy cubits and a fraction (= two *beth se'ah* equal to the courtyard of the Tabernacle<sup>47</sup> [Ex. 27:18] – whose length was one hundred cubits and breadth fifty cubits, and whose area was five thousand square cubits<sup>48</sup>) – then objects can be carried within it (if it has a larger area – carrying is forbidden). The area of the karpaf is appended and added to the external houses (or the external protrusions) at each of the town's four directions, and the Sabbath-permitted area of two thousand cubits is measured from the edge of each direction.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> LIEBERMAN, 1962, p. 374-376.

<sup>39</sup> LIEBERMANN, 1934, p. 297.

<sup>40</sup> HALIVNI, 1982, p. 155.

<sup>41</sup> GOLDBERG, 1986.

<sup>42</sup> Tosefta, Eruvin 4 (6):12.

<sup>43</sup> GOLDBERG, 1986.

<sup>44</sup> Eruvin, p. 155.

<sup>45</sup> RASHI, Eruvin 18a, s.v. "La`Ginah".

<sup>46</sup> Eruvin, p. 55.

<sup>47</sup> Eruvin 23b; Tosefta, Eruvin 4 (6): 9.

<sup>48</sup> STEINBERG, 2014, p. 117-118.

<sup>49</sup> ALBECK, 1958, p. 102.





Linguistically, there are different versions as to pronunciation of the word. In some versions, the word is "karpef".<sup>50</sup> In other versions "karfif"<sup>51</sup> or "karpif"<sup>52</sup> or "karfef".<sup>53</sup> The last version is based on the Yemenite Jewish tradition, considered accurate in its pronunciation. From a vocal respect, some words are vocalized differently, such as *ʔe-hamarbi`a* " (line 10) and "ve-tchumahah" (line 13).<sup>54</sup>



Figure 1 – Cambridge U-L T-S F1(1).

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<sup>50</sup> KAUFMAN; LEVY, 1924. p. 387.

<sup>51</sup> BEN YECHIEL, 1955, p. 211; SOKOLOFF, 2017, p. 580.

<sup>52</sup> YASRTOW, 1967, p. 1424.

<sup>53</sup> *Eruvin 56a*, 1980.

<sup>54</sup> MORAG, 1988, p. 6.



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