

## YEKET BEN 'ALI'S COMMENTARY ON THE HEBREW TEXT OF THE BOOK OF JOB I-X



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## Abstract

This thesis is a critical edition of the Judeo-Arabic commentary on the Hebrew text of the Book of Job by one of the greatest Karaites of his age (second half of the tenth century A. D.), Yefet Ben 'Ali the Karaite. An examination of the photocopies and microfilms of the original Manuscripts of Yefet Ben 'Ali written in the XIth, XIV-XVIIth, XVth and XVIth centuries resulted in a delimitation of the number of chapters in this edition i.e. chapters I-X. None of the four Manuscripts is complete and I have tried to complete the presentation of the first ten chapters of Yefet's commentary on the Book of Job by filling in the gaps of the master copy which I used (Ms. A., Or. 2509 B. M.) from the other Manuscripts. I used it as a main text because it is almost a complete copy compared with the others, as far as the first ten chapters are concerned. The four Manuscripts which I used are housed in the British Library in London. This edition is prefaced by an introduction, comprising a discussion of the information we possess about Yefet's life in Basrah and Jerusalem, with reference to his works in general and the authenticity of his work on the Book of Job in particular. This is followed by a description and analysis of the commentary, discussing the method used by the commentator, and how he made it possible for large numbers of Jews in non-Arabic speaking countries to make free use of his interpretations of biblical texts allied to the Karaite theological viewpoint and its relationship to Mu'tazilite views. There follows an analysis of the language used by Yefet in his text and exegesis, i.e. morphology, orthography and so on. A comparison is then made with Saadia Gaon, including a brief discussion of the language and exegesis of the two scholars which deals with the fundamental characteristics of Judeo and classical Arabic; in addition, notes on the text are appended in which attention will be drawn to Yefet's characteristic vagueness in interpreting the Hebrew text of the Book of Job. Special attention is paid to the vowels in each of the Manuscripts, and differences between the Manuscripts are footnoted throughout the text of this edition. The appendix takes cognisance of M. E., i.e. Opp. Add. 4.165 of the Bodleian Library, listing fully the differences between it and the printed text of this edition.

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Yefet ben Eli's view of the Book's collation and editing (Hebrew). The article discusses Yefet ben Eli's conception of the authorship and editing of Proverbs. Yefet ben Eli, a tenth-century Karaite exegete, discusses three major theological topics in his commentary on Proverbs 8: wisdom, creation, and angels. His treatment of these topics reflects a dialogue with contemporary Karaite more. Yefet's text represents the first completely extant, devoted commentary on Esther and, consequently, provides fascinating insight into the history and development of exegetical thought on this book, both among the Karaites as well as the Rabbanites. Researching the translation and commentary of the tenth century Karaite scholar and exegete Yefet ben 'Elī on the Book of Proverbs, numerous statements that seemed to ring with egalitarianism were found. Some of these statements found in Yefet's commentary on wisdom literature and biblical narrative will be examined in this article. One case in which he speculates on biblical Hebrew syntax will also be examined. Gender equality in Yefet's work is anchored in the principle of logical inference, also known as analogy, qiyās, which served as one of the three major sources for the determination of Yefet's text. Yefet's text represents the first completely extant, devoted commentary on Esther and, consequently, provides fascinating insight into the history and development of exegetical thought on this book, both among the Karaites as well as the Rabbanites. Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. chapter one YEFET'S LIFE AND WORKS Like many of the Jerusalem Karaites of his day, Yefet ben Eli ha-Levi, known by his full Arabic name as Abū Ḥasan ibn al-Lāwī .