The conquerors singled out Exilarch Bustanay b. Ḥaninay for particular honor because he was considered to be a descendant of King David, whom they revered as a prophet. According to Jewish tradition, Bustanay was given the captive daughter of one of the last Sasanian shahs for a wife.[13] The gesture was clearly to emphasize his own noble lineage and the esteem that he held in the eyes of Muslims. After all, Caliph ʿAlī (ruled 656–61) gave another Persian princess to his own son Ḥusayn, who was the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad. Bustanay must have rendered the conquerors important services and apparently, along with the catholicos, acted as a trusted adviser on native affairs. After Bustanay's death sometime around 680, his sons by Jewish wives attempted to repudiate the offspring of the Persian princess, claiming she had never been properly manumitted and thus her issue were merely slaves of their father's household. Despite the fact that the three sons of the princess were declared legitimate, their status was questioned intermittently for years.[14] Not until several generations later did any of their descendants attain the exilarchate. It was perhaps because of the frequent politics and intrigue within the exilarch's house that the office never achieved the actual ecumenical authority over the Jews of the Islamic world that some historians, most notably Salo Baron, have posited for it.[15]

When the Abbasids rose to power in Iraq in 750, the exilarchate took on increased significance to be sure. The exilarch was now close to the seat of caliphal power. He was accorded considerable dignity at the court of a dynasty that prided itself on its own noble lineage, going back to al-ʿAbbās, the Prophet's uncle. There was no other Jewish figurehead comparable to the exilarch. The office of the Palestinian patriarch had been dissolved three centuries earlier by the Emperor Theodosius. Thus, at the Abbasid court, at least, the exilarch came to be recognized as the leading representative of the Jews residing within their vast empire, which stretched from the Indus River to the Atlantic Ocean. He certainly represented his people's interests in the halls of power and was the obvious authority to be consulted on Jewish affairs. His actual administrative authority over the Jews outside Iraq and Persia, however, was probably token at best. Still, the mere existence of a Jewish prince—even if he was only a figurehead who was shown respect by the Gentiles—was a source of self-esteem for all Jews and a proof of the biblical prophecy that "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah" (Gen. 49:10). The Spanish traveler Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Baghdad in the second half of the twelfth century, describes with obvious pride and some hyperbole the reception of Exilarch Daniel b. Ḥasday at the court of the caliph at a time when the authority of both was at a low ebb.[16] If the exilarchs ever enjoyed any real authority over distant Jewish communities, it was probably during the first fifty years of the Abbasid Caliphate, when the rule of that dynasty extended over much of the Dominion of Islam.

Sometime during the first half of the ninth century, ecumenical Jewish leadership became increasingly associated with the persons who headed the Babylonian academies (Hebrew, *yeshīvōt;* Aramaic, *methīvāthā*) of Sura and Pumbedītha. At the end of the sixth century, the respective heads of these institutions took on the title of Rēsh Methīvath Ge'ōn Yaʿaqōv (the Head of the Academy of the Pride of Jacob). This grandiloquent title was contracted by later generations to *gaon*. In their own days the *geonim* were usually referred to as "our Masters, the Heads of the Academies." Even before Islamic times, they had great followings within Babylonia. The head of the Pumbedītha Academy, R. Isaac, is reported to have welcomed the Caliph ʿAlī into Firuz-Shapur at the head of 90,000 Jews in 658.[17]

The *geonim* were the great propagators and expounders of the Babylonian Talmud, which they sought to make the constitutional framework for the entire Jewish community. The spread of Talmudic Judaism out of Iraq was not an instantaneous process but extended over a long period of time. As it spread, so did the prestige and influence of the *geonim* and their schools. Throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, the renown of the *geonim* grew to the point that they were recognized by their coreligionists the world over as the highest authorities on Jewish law, which encompassed all aspects of Jewish life. As the great rabbinic scholar Louis Ginzberg succinctly put it: "The Babylonian Amoraim [expounders of the Mishna during the third through sixth centuries] created a Talmud; the Geonim made it 'The Talmud.' "[18]

[13] She was the daughter either of Khosroes II or Yezdegird III (most likely the latter).

[14] All of the data on Bustanay are analyzed in Hayyim Tyckoczynski, "Bustānay Rōsh ha-Gōla," *Devir* 1 (1923): 145–79. See also Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* vol. 3, pp. 89 and 270, n. 20.

[15] Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews,* vol. 5, pp. 5–13, especially p. 7.

[16] The passage is translated in Part Two below, pp. 252–54.

[17] Sherira Gaon, *Iggeret [From the Gaonic Period. 2: The Epistle of R. Sherira Gaon, arranged in two versions, originating from Spain and France, with variae lectiones from all the Mss. and Geniza fragments in the world],* ed. Benjamin M. Lewin (Haifa, 1921), p. 101 [in Heb.].

[18] Louis Ginzberg, *Geonica,* vol. 1 (reprint ed., New York, 1968), p. 73.

The *geonim* based their claims to legitimate and preeminent leadership upon the contention that they were the sole possessors of the living, authoritative, rabbinic tradition that went back to the Saboraim, the Amoraim, the Tannaim, the men of the Great Assembly, and ultimately back to Moses himself. For most Jews the *geonim* "reigned" (*mālekhū*), and their authority was supreme because it interpreted Divine Law from which there is no appeal. Their decisions frequently bore the admonition: "This is the *halakha* (religious law) and there is no moving from it."[19]

The Jewish communities of the wider Islamic Diaspora sent donations as well as queries (*she'eltōt*) on law, ritual, and textual exegesis to the academies. The great influence of the *geonim* was exerted through their responsa (*teshūvōt*), or authoritative legal opinions. In order to facilitate the flow of correspondence back and forth, as well as the donations that were the lifeblood of the academies, a network of representatives of the academies developed throughout the Islamic world during the ninth and tenth centuries. By the eleventh century the system was well established. The men who represented the academies in the local Jewish communities were not infrequently alumni of the institutions. They were entrusted with the task of collecting communal contributions and queries and forwarding them to Iraq. As great distances had to be traversed, there were intermediaries living between the communities and the academies who facilitated the transfer of correspondence in either direction.[20]

Not all Jews accepted the geonic authority, especially the small but numerous sectarian groups of eastern Iran. The most serious challenge to the *geonim* came from the fundamentalist Karaite schism, which denied the authenticity of the rabbinic oral tradition and accepted only the Bible as the principal source of Jewish law. The movement began in the second half of the eighth century with ʿAnan b. David, a disappointed candidate for the exilarchate. It became a force to be reckoned with in the ninth and early tenth centuries, when

[19] *Kākh halākha ve-ēyn lāzūz minnah.*

[20] For a study of one such individual who functioned as an intermediary, see my articles "Quelques renseignements biographiques sur Yōsēf Ibn ʿAwkal, médiateur entre les communautés juives du Maghreb et les Académies d'Irak," *REJ* 132, fasc. 4 (October–December, 1973), pp. 529–42; and "Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal: A Jewish Communal Leader in Eleventh Century Egypt," *The Eleventh Century*, ed. Stanley Ferber and Sandro Sticca, Acta of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, vol. 1 (Binghamton, N.Y., 1974), pp. 39–50. For a broad discussion of the ties between the Geonim and the local communities, see Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 2 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), pp. 8–13.

it had some of its best intellectual leadership among men such as Benjamin al-Nehāwandī and Daniel al-Qūmisī. The Karaites attracted and absorbed some of the various smaller sectarian groups. These "protestants" of Judaism began as a movement with pronounced ascetic tendencies. Within a few centuries of the founding of their sect, they counted among their number some of the wealthiest Jewish merchants of the Middle East.

The Karaites were not the only Jews in the Islamic world who were not under the diocesan authority of the Babylonian *geonim*. There were Rabbanite Jews who followed the rites and customs of the ancient and venerable academy of Tiberias in Palestine. Little is known about the Palestinian Academy prior to the tenth century. Ever since the dissolution of the patriarchate, the heads of the Tiberian Academy had served as both spiritual and secular leaders of Palestinian Jewry. It is not known exactly when they assumed the title of *gaon* in imitation of their Babylonian counterparts. It would seem that this took place sometime after 969 when Palestine became part of the empire of the Fatimids, who were Shiʿite counter-Caliphs.[21]

The influence of the Palestinian gaonate outside of the Holy Land was limited. The congregations under its jurisdiction were all in the former Byzantine provinces of Egypt and North Africa. The Palestinian gaonate also maintained ties with the Jews of Byzantium and Italy. To these distant lands were sent special envoys who delivered sermons, answered some of the religious queries on the spot, and collected the contributions for the academy.[22]

From the second half of the eighth century on, the Palestinian Academy found itself increasingly overshadowed by its sister institutions in Iraq. The influence of the Babylonian academies was becoming strong even within Palestine itself. The advent of the Abbasid Caliphate, the centralization of power in Iraq, and the rise of a new cosmopolitan civilization throughout the Islamic imperium all contributed to the growing importance of the Babylonian *geonim* and to their academies as the institutions of central Jewish authority.

The new freedom of movement that began in the late eighth century and continued for more than three hundred years greatly facilitated the spread of Babylonian authority. The travel restrictions in force under the Umayyads disappeared under the Abbasids. With a

[21] Concerning the Palestinian Academy and the authority of its leadership, see Simha Assaf, *Teqūfat ha-Geʾōnīm ve-Sifrūtāh* (Jerusalem, 1955), pp. 91–101.

[22] Ibid., pp. 104–5.

bustling international commerce centered in Baghdad and Basra, people traveled to and fro, east and west. Some of the Iraqi Jewish merchants who came to the western provinces of the empire began to settle there temporarily or permanently. In so doing, they helped to disseminate further the Judaism of the Babylonian Talmud. At the same time they were extending the authority of the *geonim* of Sura and Pumbedītha. A genuine population movement westward occurred during the civil wars that plagued Iraq during the second half of the ninth century and the first half of the tenth century. By the end of the tenth century nearly every major city in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and, most probably, North Africa had a Babylonian as well as a Palestinian congregation.[23]

The rise of a vigorous Jewish mercantile class in the Muslim East was perhaps the single most important socioeconomic factor underlying the predominance of Babylonian Jewry as a whole. In early Abbasid times Jews began taking a significant role in a burgeoning international trade. Jewish merchants from the district of Rādhān (later called Jūkhā) around Baghdad extended their operations as far east as China and as far west as Spain.[24] The rapidly expanding commerce necessitated the development of banking, a profession in which Jews were prominently represented as well, although they certainly did not come to dominate it after a stage of initial Christian preeminence, as Louis Massignon has supposed.[25] A few Jews actually did attain the highest ranks in the world of commerce and finance from time to time, but these were the exceptions and not the rule. The discriminatory tariff of 5 percent levied on the goods of *dhimmī* merchants at this time when the Muslims were paying 2.5 percent was to ensure the

[23] Syria: Damascus, Aleppo, Palmyra; Palestine: Ramle and Baniyas; Egypt: Fustat, Alexandria, al-Mahalla. See Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, vol. 2, pp. 6 and 519ff., nn. 2–3, and the sources cited there. There is no concrete evidence for the existence of synagogues for both rites in the towns of the Maghreb. However, it seems most likely that the case was no different there than that of the Levant, for we know that many eastern Jews settled in North Africa and that there were congregations there that accepted the religious authority of Babylon.

[24] Convincing arguments for the identification of Rādhān with Jūkhā or Sawād Baghdād have been made by Moshe Gil, "The Rādhānite Merchants and the Land of Rādhān," *JESHO* 17, pt. 3 (1974): 299–328. The famous passage from Ibn Khurradādhbe describing the itinerary of the Rādhānites is translated in Part Two below, pp. 163–64.

[25] L. Massignon, "L'influence de l'Islam au moyen âge sur la fondation et l'essor des banques juives," *Bulletin des Etudes Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas* 1 (1931): 3–12. Most of the state bankers mentioned in the Arabic sources seem to have been Christians.

primacy of the Muslim merchant class through what would be called today a "most favored trading status."[26] Of course, the overwhelming majority of Jews pursued humble trades and occupations, eking out a bare livelihood like the rest of the Middle Eastern masses.

The Jewish mercantile elite formed the backbone of the religious leadership, a situation that had its parallel in the Muslim community at the time. Between the years 788 and 798, for example, the gaonate of Pumbedītha was held by Rādhānites.[27] The intimate bond between the scholars and the merchants was not an entirely new phenomenon. The leaders of the Babylonian academies had been recruited from the ranks of the merchants long before the Arab conquest.[28] However, as the merchant class expanded and increased in power economically and politically, there arose in ninth- and tenth-century Baghdad a lay plutocracy that played the dominant role in Jewish comunal life.

The Abbasid capital provided the ideal setting for the growth, development, and political activities of an influential Jewish merchant class. F. E. Peters has given a vivid description of the atmosphere of the Baghdadi melting pot:

> Intellectually, commercially, and circumstantially, Baghdad inherited within the *Dār al-Islām* the role played by Alexandria in the old Hellenic *oikoumene*. Turbulent, cosmopolitan, invincibly successful, given more to scholarship and trade than to piety, the unrivaled center of arts and letters and the seat of the secular and religious power in Islam, Baghdad had, like its Egyptian counterpart, no past. Its present was frequently unruly, since rich and poor, Arab, Iranian, and Turk, Shi'ite and traditionalist, Christian and Jew, scholar, merchant and soldier rubbed shoulders within the walls.[29]

It was in Baghdad that the new plutocracy made itself felt in Jewish affairs in ways that affected the larger Diaspora. When a new exilarch was to be chosen, the decision was taken at a meeting of elders in the home of a merchant prince such as Neṭīra (d. 916), the founder of a great banking establishment and himself a *novus homo* who was

[26] The passage from Abū Yūsuf's handbook on taxation is translated in Part Two below, pp. 159–61.

[27] Gil, "The Rādhānite Merchants," p. 322.

[28] There are numerous talmudic references to scholars, including the heads of academies, involved in trade, especially the lucrative silk trade. See Goitein, "Ba'ayōt Yesōd be-Histōriyya ha-Yehūdīt," *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 101–6, and in particular the references on pp. 102–3.

[29] F. E. Peters, *Allah's Commonweath* (New York, 1973), p. 143.

never referred to with the usual patronymic, as if he had no father worth mentioning.[30]

The positions taken by such men in Jewish communal matters were frequently decisive. Because of their influence in Muslim court circles as *jahbadhs,* or government bankers, they could make or break even a prince of the exile. Such was the case when a dispute broke out between Exilarch Mar ʿUqba and the *gaon* of Pumbedītha, R. Judah b. Samuel. It was the intervention of Neṭīra and his father-in-law Joseph b. Phinehas that resulted in ʿUqba's banishment in 909 to Kirmanshah in Iran.[31] It was due to the protection of the Sons of Neṭīra and the Sons of Aaron (Aaron b. Amram had been Joseph b. Phinehas's business partner) that the famous Saʿadya was able to maintain himself as *gaon* of Sura for two full years after having been deposed by Exilarch David b. Zakkay in 930. The ultimate reconciliation between Saʿadya and Ben Zakkay was brought about through the good offices of the wealthy Bishr b. Aaron in 937.[32] One cannot fail to note that in several of the examples cited here, we see the merchant-bankers joining in common cause with the rabbinical scholars against the House of David. The elite of wealth and intellect was asserting itself against the elite of aristocratic birth. A similar phenomenon was occurring in the contemporary Muslim community. Throughout the ninth and tenth centuries, the newly Arabized Persians and others of *mawālī* extraction were asserting themselves in society. The affluent bourgeoisie was eagerly engaged in the pursuit not only of wealth, but of the religious and Hellenic sciences—that is, of religious and social status.

The ties that bound the merchants and the scholars were numerous. Neṭīra had sent his son Sahl to the Pumbedītha Academy, where he became a devoted disciple of Saʿadya, who taught there before

[30] Concerning this man and the sources referring to him, see Walter J. Fischel, *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Mediaeval Islam* (reprint ed. with new Introduction, New York, 1969), pp. 34–44. See also Abraham David, "Netira," *EJ* 12: 999–1000. An extensive Arabic passage on Neṭīra and his sons has been edited with Hebrew translation by Alexander Harkavy, "Netira und seine Söhne," in *Abraham Berliner Festschrift,* vol. 1 (reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 34–43.

[31] Nathan ha-Bavlī in A. Neubauer, ed., *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes,* vol. 2 (Oxford, 1895), pp. 78–79. See Salo Baron's reconstruction of these events in his *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* vol. 5, pp. 10–11, and his assessment of Nathan ha-Bavlī's account in *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History,* pp. 104–8.

[32] Nathan ha-Bavlī in Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles,* vol. 2, p. 82.

assuming the gaonate of Sura.[33] In a letter to his coreligionists in Egypt written shortly after his accession to the gaonate in 928, Saʿadya offers to bring to the attention of the Jewish court bankers any matters requiring their intercession with the authorities:

> Whenever you have any request or petition for the government, please bring it to our attention so that we may then inform the heads of prominent houses in Baghdad among whom we live, such as the Sons of Neṭīra and the Sons of Aaron (may the memory of their departed fathers be blessed, etc.). They will procure a response from the Ruler for you with the help of the Lord our Fortress. Follow this procedure, and do not deviate from it.[34]

The merchants not only sent their sons to study at the academies, but often went there themselves. Jacob b. ʿAwkal, the founder of a great merchant house in tenth-century Fustat, had studied at Pumbedītha with Sherira Gaon (d. 1006). The enthusiastic alumnus became the representative of the academy in Egypt.[35] The entire world-wide network of intermediaries and representatives of the academies consisted of merchants and men of substance who had the means to facilitate the flow of correspondence and monies. Funds destined for the academies often came in the form of *suftajas,* bills of exchange resembling the modern cashier's check, which were drawn on Baghdadi banking houses.[36] Substantial sums were involved. For example, the annual revenue for the Sura *gaon* in the tenth century was 1,500 dinars. For the sake of comparison, the cost of living for a middle-class family in Iraq at that time has been estimated at about 240 dinars a year.[37]

The reader should not lose sight of the fact that the highly developed Jewish communal organization, which has only been briefly described here, operated within the context of the Islamic state. There

[33] Harkavy, "Netira und seine Söhne," *Berliner Festschrift,* vol. 1, p. 38 (Ar. text), p. 40 (Heb. trans.).

[34] The Hebrew text of this passage is given in Fischel, *Jews,* p. 34, where Louis Ginzberg's translation is quoted. My own rendering differs somewhat.

[35] See Stillman, "Quelques renseignements biographiques sur Yōsēf b. ʿAwkal," *REJ* 132: 538.

[36] Fischel, *Jews,* pp. 17–21, especially pp. 18ff. Concerning the *suftaja* and other instruments of payment, see Goitein, *Mediterranean Society,* vol. 1, pp. 242–46.

[37] Eliyahu Ashtor, *Histoire des prix et des salaires dans l'Orient médiéval* (Paris, 1969), p. 62. Baron, *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History,* p. 412, n. 48, is not altogether correct in referring to the revenues of Sura as "relatively insignificant." His comparisons are with the fabulous wealth of some of the greatest men of the age.

was a considerable degree of internal autonomy to be sure, for this was the nature of Muslim society and, indeed, of all medieval societies where corporate, national identities were essentially religious. In medieval Christian Europe too "extensive Jewish self-government was universally accepted as the necessary and welcome complement to recognized religious disparity."[38]

Muslim authorities were concerned above all that taxes be paid and that *dhimmī* subjects acknowledge in a variety of ways, some more and some less humiliating, the dominion of Islam. As long as the non-Muslims complied, they were accorded a good measure of internal self-rule. However, even in the conduct of their own communal affairs, they were not entirely free of government supervision and, at times, downright interference.

Both the *geonim* and the exilarchs who were chosen within the community had to be approved by the government. Their formal assumption of office came only upon receipt of a caliphal proclamation and a letter of appointment. A writ of approval continued to be absolutely necessary for all principal leaders of Jewish communities (*nāgīd, shaykh al-Yahūd, ḥākhām bāshī*, and others) in Muslim lands down to modern times.[39] The document not only confirmed the rights and privileges of the official but also the restrictions of his own and his communities' *dhimmī* status.

The Muslim authorities could and did block the appointment of religious leaders within the *dhimmī* communities. The Chalcedonian Orthodox patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem frequently went unoccupied because of caliphal opposition.[40] That this

[38] Baron, *The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution*, vol. 1 (reprint ed., Westport, Conn., 1972), p. 208. On a broader plane, Gustave E. von Grunebaum has discussed the "essential kinship of thought and sentiment" shared by the Latin, Byzantine, and Muslim worlds. See his *Medieval Islam*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1962), pp. 1–63.

[39] Examples of such documents are translated in Part Two below, pp. 178–79 and pp. 269–70. No examples of a letter of appointment for an Exilarch have survived. It was probably similar to the ones issued to the Nestorian Catholicos. For the latter, see A. von Kremer, "Zwei arabische Urkunden," *ZDMG* 7 (1853): 219–33. The same text with some revisions and an English translation is given in H. F. Amedroz, "Tales of Official Life from the 'Tadhkira' of Ibn Hamdun, etc.," *JRAS* n.v. (1908): 447ff. and 467ff. Another writ is given by A. Mingana, "A Charter of Protection Granted the Nestorian Church in A.D. 1138, by Muktafi II, Caliph of Baghdad," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* 10 (1926): 127–33.

[40] Demetrios J. Constantelos, "The Moslem Conquests of the Near East as Revealed in the Greek Sources of the Seventh and the Eighth Centuries," *Byzantion* 42, pt. 2 (1972): 336, 345–47.

church was singled out for particularly harsh treatment at times is understandable, as it was the official church of the Byzantine enemy. But other churches, including the anti-Byzantine Nestorian and Coptic, suffered interference. The Umayyad Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik is alleged to have imprisoned the Nestorian patriarch Khanishu and to have appointed a rival in his stead.[41] Two exilarchs and at least one candidate for the office are reported to have been put to death by the Muslim authorities. These extreme cases were exceptional and the circumstances surrounding them not entirely clear.[42]

Disputes within the community and rivalries for office were open invitations to government involvement. The outcomes in such controversies in the end were often decided by the Muslim authorities in favor of the faction paying the highest bribes. Aaron b. Sarjado is reported to have paid 60,000 dirhams in order to facilitate Saʿadya's forced retirement during the conflict with Ben Zakkay, and even this sum was apparently not enough at first.[43]

Quite understandably, it was a generally accepted principle within the Jewish community to avoid involving the Muslim authorities in internal Jewish affairs. This principle was violated in many instances, but on the whole it was adhered to. After all, it was clear to everyone that the gentile state did not have the best interests of its Jewish subjects at heart, nor could it be expected to. The Jews like all other *dhimmīs* enjoyed extensive communal autonomy precisely because the state did not care what they did so long as they paid their taxes, kept the peace, and remained in their place.

[41] Ibid., p. 346, citing Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, Sect. II, 27, ed. J. B. Abbeloos and Th. J. Lamy, vol. 3 (Paris and Rome, 1877), pp. 130–32.

[42] Two of the deaths are reported in Jewish sources. Nathan ha-Bavlī reports the execution of the candidate for the Exilarchate in ca. 941, who was accused of having blasphemed Muḥammad (in Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, vol. 2, pp. 82–83). Ibn Daud mentions the tragic end of the Exilarch Hezekiah b. David (d. ca. 1058), who was imprisoned and tortured after having been denounced by informers to the authorities. See Abraham Ibn Daud, *The Book of Tradition (Sefer Ha-Qabbalah)*, ed. and trans. Gerson D. Cohen (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 44 (Heb. text); p. 61 (Eng. trans.). The great Muslim historian al-Ṭabarī relates the tale of an Exilarch who was put to death by the last Umayyad Caliph Marwān II (ruled 744–50) for having given him a magic mirror which showed him displeasing things. See Ṭabarī, *Annales*, Tertia Series, vol. 1, pp. 165–66. The passage is translated in Ignaz Goldziher, "Notes et mélanges: Renseignement de source musulmane sur la dignité de Resch-Galuta," *REJ* 8 (1884): 123–24. There may be a historical kernel of truth to this obviously legendary account.

[43] Nathan ha-Bavlī, in Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, vol. 2, p. 80.