Qiṣur shorashim: when, where, who and why?

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This presentation aims at presenting an nearly unknown Hebrew dictionary of roots. This text, which was probably called *Qitsur Shorashim*, is extant in five manuscripts copied between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 413; Cambridge, St-John's college 218 (I. 10); Rome, Biblioteca Angelica Or. 12 (4.18.A); Oxford, Bodleian Library Hunt. 292 (formerly Uri 474) and Hamburg, Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek Cod. hebr. 74. The Vatican manuscript was published by Angel Saenz-Badillos in 1987 who believe that it was a *unicum*, under the title *Un Diccionario Hebreo de Provenza* (Siglo xiii).

Clearly, this dictionary was still in use in the Late Middle Ages and was popular enough to be copied by a Hebrew teacher, in a probable context of Christian Humanism. Its durability is impressive since it had to face the important dissemination of the famous *Sefer ha-shorashim* of David Qimḥi which undoubtedly was its main competitor. It should be added that the *Qitsur Shorashim*, which is an abridged version of Ibn Janah's *Kitāb al-Uṣūl* translation by Judah Ibn Tibbon, reflects a previous state of the Hebrew grammar, compared to that of Qimḥi's dictionary.

This work is further proof of the importance of Hebrew lexicography in the Middle Ages. When and where was this *Qitsur Shorashim* produced? The presence of numerous Provençal glosses in the five manuscripts mentioned above, give us little doubt about the region in which it was composed, that is the same as David Qimḥi's dictionary. Since only fifty years separate the translation into Hebrew of *Kitāb al-Uṣūl* by Judah Ibn Tibbon (Lunel, Provence) and the writing of David Qimhi's *Sefer ha-shorashim* (Narbonne, Provence), one can wonder about the circumstances in which this abridged dictionary was written : before or after Qimhi's *Sefer ha-shorashim*.

The answer will lead us to discuss the possible author and the intention he had when he composed the *Qitsur Shorashim*.