R. Solomon b. Isaac ha-Levi (1532-1600). Rabbi and scholar. He was born in Salonika to a family of Portuguese exiles. He and his family maintained strong ties with the Jewish community in Safed (Hacker 2008, pp. 255-256). Aside from his Jewish erudition, he also studied mathematics and language, and he was knowledgeable in the sciences and philosophy of his time. Beginning in 1574, he served as rabbi in Salonika. He was considered one of the great preachers of his generation, and his sermons attracted large audiences. He authored many works in all areas of Torah study: commentaries on Ethics of the Fathers, on Talmud, on *midrashim* and on the Zohar. He also composed poetry (Haberman).

R. Solomon was a member of the sixteenth century school of homiletic commentary (disciples of R. Joseph Taitazak), centered in Salonika. It included such individuals as R. Solomon Alkabetz, R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, R. Moses Almosnino, R. Moses Alshich, among others. He wrote midrashic commentaries on most books of Scripture; only his homilies on the Bible (*Divrei Shlomo*, Venice 1596) and his commentary on the Book of Isaiah (*Hashak Shlomo*, Salonica 1600) were published (towards the end of his life). As was the custom among the preachers of that time, he committed to writing the sermons that he delivered to his listening audiences. His work on the Bible is made up of five sermons on each Torah portion and on each holiday. R. Solomon does not comment on individual verses, but rather choses broad topics in each Torah portion, aiming to solve larger problems. As was common among preachers at the time, he preferred to emphasize the *midrashim* of the sages of the Talmud rather than taking a textual approach to Scripture, and he endeavored to include a novel idea in each of his sermons. R. Solomon incorporates his wide-ranging knowledge of philosophy and science into his sermons, along with his impressive proficiency in traditional Jewish sources and in the writings of the Sephardic scholars who preceded him. His writings serve as a valuable source of information about the status of the Jewish people at that time, as well as conceptions of Exile, Redemption and the future Messiah. He also presents in some detail his attitude towards non-Jews, specifically Christianity (Hacker 1969; Hacker 1969).

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