R. Solomon b. Isaac ha-Levi (1532-1600). Rabbi and scholar. He was born in Salonica to a family that had been exiled from Portugal. He and his family maintained strong ties with the Jewish community in Safed (Hacker 2008, pp. 255-256). Aside from his Jewish learning, 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 Salonica. He was considered one of the great preachers of his generation, and his sermons attracted many listeners. 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), whose center was in Salonica. It included such individuals as R. Solomon Alkabetz, R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, R. Moses Almosnino, R. Moses Alshich, among others. He wrote midrashic commentaries on the majority of the books of Scripture, but 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 period, he committed to writing the sermons that he presented to listening audiences. His work on the Bible is made up of five sermons on each Torah portion and on each holiday. R. Solomon did not explain each individual verse, rather he chose broad topics in each portion, aiming to solve larger problems in that portion. As was common to the school of preachers at that time, he preferred to emphasize the *midrashim* of the sages of the Talmud rather than focus on a textual approach to Scripture, and he endeavored to include a novel idea in each of his sermons. R. Solomon's sermons included his wide-ranging knowledge of philosophy and science, together with impressive proficiency in traditional Jewish sources and in the writings of the Sephardic scholars who preceded him. His writings serve as a source of much information about the status of the Jewish people at that time, concepts of Exile, Redemption and the future Messiah. He also presents in some detail his attitude towards Christianity specifically and to the nations of the world more generally (Hacker 1969; Hacker 1969).

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