October 11, 2021

Niran Garshtein

Department of Jewish Thought

Bar-Ilan University

Ramat Gan

niran.gar@gmail.com

Dear members of the PESHAT (Premodern Philosophic and Scientific Hebrew Terminology in Context) Project,

I am writing to express my sincere interest in PESHAT in Context’s open research position at Hamburg University. Recently, I completed my doctoral studies in the Department of Jewish Thought at Bar-Ilan University, where I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation, “Astronomy and Astrology in the 13th-century Hebrew Encyclopedias,” (Heb.), under the supervision of Prof. Shlomo Sela. (The dissertation was submitted in June 2021, and has already been approved by the referees – Prof. Ruth Glasner from the HHhsa Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Prof. Dov Schwartz from Bar-Ilan University. I anticipate receiving an official Ph.D. approval at the beginning of November). As I will explain below, my research has a clear link with the PESHAT project, I am very motivated to collaborate with the project’s team-members, and I am completely certain that I have all the requisite tools for contributing significantly to the project.

My research focuses on medieval science and its reception in medieval Jewish cultures, especially from the 12th to the 14th century. My dissertation examines the contents, sources, use of sources, and Hebrew scientific terminology in the astronomical and astrological sections of six encyclopedic works composed during the thirteenth century; and, more generally, pursues\intends to enhance our understanding of the encyclopedic genre’s place in the process of transmission, reception, and integration of scientific knowledge in medieval European Jewish society. The dissertation includes, *inter alia*, a detailed analysis of the Hebrew scientific terminology adopted (and in some cases coined) by the encyclopedists, discusses the various strategies they adopted in formulating their Hebrew vocabulary, and incorporates glossaries of technical terms. In these investigations, I distinguish between authors who drew on Arabic sources, and those who exclusively relied on the material produced by the Hebrew translation movement. For the former, I uncover the Arabic terms that stand behind their Hebrew ones, and compare their Hebrew terminology with the one found in the latter Hebrew translations of their Arabic literary sources. For the latter, I examine how did they deal with the diverse Hebrew terminologies found in their distinct literary sources. In my M.A thesis, “The Relationship between Abraham Bar Ḥiyya’s Astronomical Tables and his Treatise *Calculations of the Stellar Motions*,” (2016), I paid special attention to the technical terminology used\found in the mathematical algorithms’ descriptions of Abraham Bar Ḥiyya, the pioneer in the creation of Hebrew scientific terminology.

During my studies, I have acquired a variety of tools that, I believe, meet perfectly with the position’s requirements. First, I am knowledgeable with medieval Hebrew and well-acquainted with diverse philosophical and scientific vocabularies found in treatises that belong to disparate scientific traditions, such as Aristotelian-Averroenian and Ptolemaic. Furthermore, I am knowledgeable in not a few distinct medieval scientific disciplines. As I am highly qualified in the fields of medieval astronomy, cosmology, astrology, and mathematics (including spherical trigonometry); I also have knowledge of meteorology and logic. In addition, I have knowledge of Arabic and Latin, and I already gained experience in comparing medieval original works with their medieval translations. Moreover, I have considerable prior experience working with manuscripts and editing medieval texts, and good knowledge of Hebrew codicology and paleography. Lastly, I am already familiar with the PESHAT database, and have long experience working on\with the technical sides of online applications. (Prior to my academic studies, I worked as a software implementer\(or:integrator?) in a high-tech company, instructing business customers how to work with the company’s online environment products).

My current work and future research plans also have the potential of contributing to the PESHAT project and [to] its database. Currently, I produce a critical edition accompanied by a commentary of an astrological text with a horoscope written in 12th century Provence, which one of its special features is its usage of unique astrological terms that are different from\dissimilar to those used by Abraham bar Ḥiyya and\or Abraham ibn Ezra. In the future, I hope to have the opportunity to produce the first complete critical edition of Gersonides’ *The Wars of the Lord*, book V part 1 (also known as *Astronomy*), accompanied by an introduction, commentary, and a glossary of technical terms. (The research program of this [ambitious] long-term project is enclosed).

In addition to my professional skills, I have the ability to work as a cooperative team member, who can also work independently. I am self-motivated, diligent, and always open to feedback. I know how to seek out advice from more experienced scholars, and, at the same time, I willingly share my own thoughts and insights. As I fully comprehend the significance of the project, I would\will be thrilled to join PESHAT’s team, participate in the project’s conferences and workshops, and contribute to its database.

Accordingly, I am completely confident that I am an ideal candidate to join the PESHAT’s team. I am certain that I will contribute significantly to the project; and I am similarly sure that my participation in the project will contribute greatly to my development as a young scholar. As I just completed my doctoral studies, I am available to start working immediately; and I would appreciate the opportunity to conduct my research as a member of the PESHAT project. I have enclosed my *curriculum vitae*, future research plan, and copies of degree certificates.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Niran Garshtein

Important note:

As I already wrote to Dr. Reimund Leicht and Dr. Michael Engel, I would like to inform you in advance that, unfortunately, I will not be able to move with my family to Hamburg. I will be glad, though, to come to Hamburg for visits as many times as needed. Since the Hebrew University is also involved in the project, I can, if it will be possible and agreed by everyone, work from there. I completely understand that the physical presence at Hamburg University is highly important, and fully respect your preference for someone who could relocate to Hamburg. Nevertheless, I would very much appreciate it if you will be kind to consider my application, and can ensure you that I will do all the efforts to compensate for this disadvantage\obstacle.