at a place which he calls by the Biblical name of 'Patros', which may be identified with al-Mansura, as with him 'Misraim' is Cairo, 'No-Amon' Alexandria, and 'Kaftor' the Mediterranean port, and there was no other important town on the right arm of the Nile between Damiette and Cairo besides al-Mansura. But it is more plausible to assume that the author refers to Cairo itself, calling it inconsistently once 'Misraim', and another time 'Patros' [1]. The town is described as being full of military of all kind and description, people coming there almost got lost and forgotten, wherefore the town had become an ideal refuge for insolvent debtors. Jews were to be found in every corner riding on donkeys [2], among them were many men of learning and connoisseurs of poetry. Zakharia was particularly pleased to find there commentaries on the Mishna [3], especially on Pirke Avoth, some by Egyptian and some by other scholars [4], and there he got acquainted with Isaac Abarbanel's commentary Nahlat Avoth, which inspired him to a long encomium on the author, maq. 37, p. 399, 400. In general, Cairo alongside with Constantinople and Saloniki, was to the author the most important centre of Jewish learning in the East, outside Palestine, maq. 40, p. 426. There he attended a religious disputation. The Moslems inferred from the fact that Islam had existed already for 977 years [5] and like Christianity embraced mighty kingdoms while the Jews had no state for themselves, that the Jewish religion could not be true. In his reply, the author tries to prove that Christianity, which had preserved iconolatry, and Islam, which was purer, but still retained much dross, were but educational

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[1] The double name of Damascus (Damaesaeq and Ḥadrakh), mentioned above note 19, would be a parallel to that.

[2] In the Yemen, even that was forbidden to non-Muslims.

[3] Not the Talmud, but the Mishna is the main occupation of the students of Jewish tradition in the Yemen. Cf. also maq. 25, p. 285.

[4] 'Some by the rabbis of So'an, and some speaking the language of Ken'aan', a phrase occurring also in maq. 41, p. 431 and found in al-Ḥarizi's Taḥkemoni. (The rhyme already in Yehuda Hallevi's famous ode, Brody, *Anthologia Hebraica* p. 187.)

[5] = 1569/1570. This is, of course, not the date of the author's sojourn in Egypt, but gives the time of the composition of that maqama.