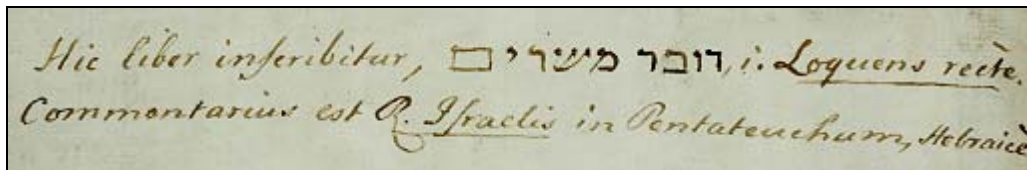


Christ Church Library MS 197

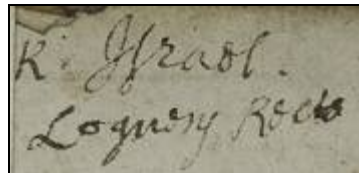
An introductory study by Jeremy I. Pfeffer

Paper (ff.244), in quarto: OX 2447; IMHM Film No. F 155850.

There are two inscriptions in this codex. The larger is on a note stuck on the inside of the front cover which reads: *Hic liber inscribitur, דובר משרים, Loquens recte. Commentarius est R. Israelis in Pentateuchum Hebraice.* (This Book is Entitled “Straight Talking:” A Commentary by R. Israel on the Pentateuch, Hebrew).



The smaller of the two is an older inscription in the top right hand corner of the inside cover that reads: *R. Israel. Loquory Recto.*



CXCVII.
Codex chartaceus, in quarto, ff. 253.
R. ISRAELIS Commentarius in Pentateuchum.
Inscribitur דובר משרים “loquens recte.”

There is no colophon in the codex and it is only from an index on fol. 127v, in a different Sefardi script from that of the texts, that we know by whom the discourses were given. Although the top of the page has been badly cropped, the words הנקרא דובר משרים לר' ישראל (Called *Straight Talking* by R. Israel) can just be made out (Fig.197.1).

The index lists sixty two discourses, almost all related to one of the Torah portions read in synagogue on the Sabbath; a few are also linked to a Jewish festival or occasioned by a life-cycle event such as a marriage or a death. Only fifty two of the listed discourses have a designated page number and of these, only forty are actually present in the codex; twenty two discourses are unidentifiable or missing.

The mentor, R. Israel, describes himself on fol. 137v as “Bereaved since the Castilian Exile and forlorn in the Portuguese Captivity” which suggests the discourses were given in the late 15th or early 16th century (Fig. 197.2). And as if to emphasise the Spanish connection, a paragraph at the beginning of the discourse on fol. 89r is in Spanish but written in a Sefardi Hebrew script (Fig.197.3).

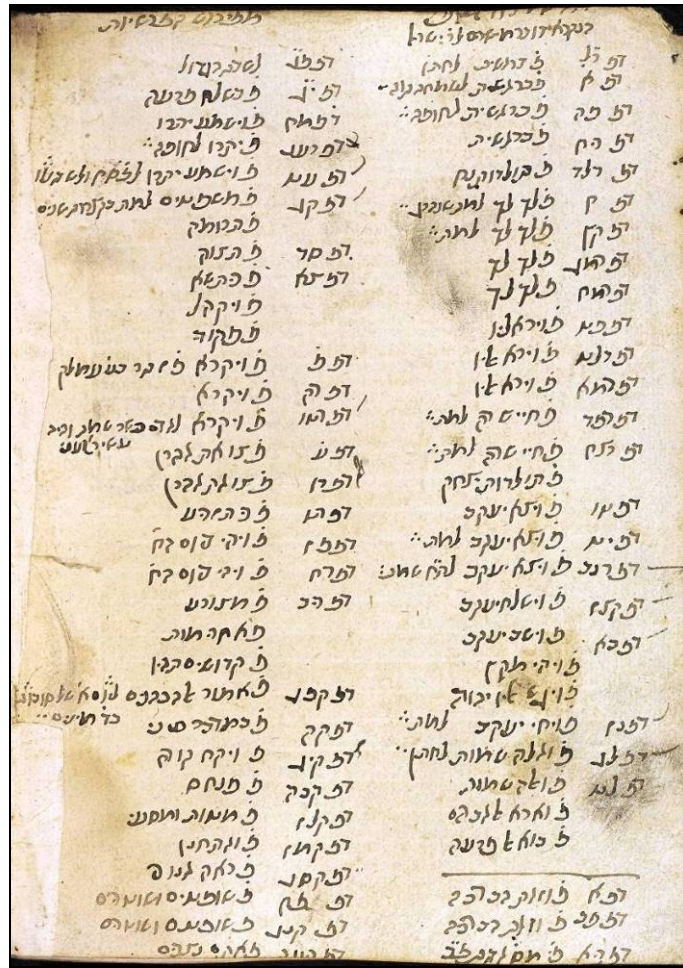


Fig.197.1: The index on fol. 127v. The discourses are listed in the order of the weekly Torah portions to which they relate. Ten of the sixty two discourses have no designated page number; others are completely missing. The truncated top and bottom are typical of the page cropping throughout the codex.

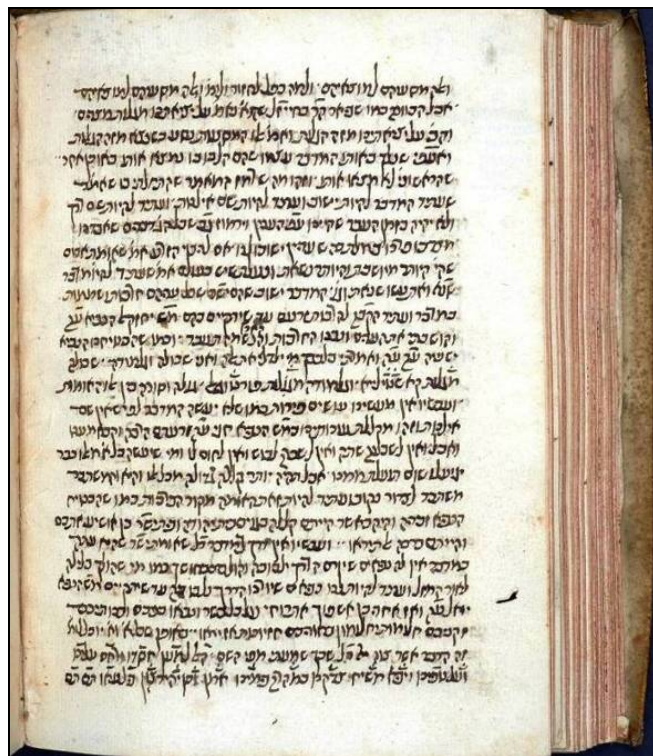


Fig.197.2: Fol. 137v. R. Israel's lament starts from the words *ואני שוכה ונאני* in the thirteenth line, "And I am bereaved and forlorn; bereaved since the Castilian Exile and forlorn in the Portuguese Captivity."

The several discernible foliations in the codex are just one of the indications of the manuscript's troubled history (Fig 197.3). Each gives a different figure for the total number of pages that there once were. According to the entry in Kitchin's 1863 catalogue, there should be 253 folios in the codex. The pencilled foliation, which reflects the present state of the codex, runs unbroken from 1 to just 244, which suggests that 9 folios (253 – 244) have gone missing since the catalogue was prepared.

But the situation is actually much worse. The older foliation in corresponding Hebrew and Arabic numerals, as exemplified by the נצ and 91 on fol. 89r (according to the pencilled foliation) runs from 1 to 283, albeit with gaps in the sequence. This suggests that 30 folios (283 – 253) had already gone missing by Kitchin's time. By reference to the index, however, the loss is even greater. The highest page number it records is 298, which implies that there were once a further 15 folios (298 – 283), making a grand total of 45 missing folios (298 – 253).

Fig. 197.3: Fol. 89r. From the fifth word in the fourth line to the end of the paragraph, the text is in Spanish written in a Sefardi Hebrew script. Note the foliations in the top left-hand corner, in particular the pencilled 89 and the Hebrew number נצ with its equivalent 91, in Arabic numerals, to its left. The import of the abbreviations above is not clear.



According to the Hebrew/Arabic numerals, just ten of the missing folios were between folios 1 and 204. The Hebrew/Arabic and pencilled foliations concur from folio 1 up to folio 55, at which point the correspondence breaks down. Whereas the pencilled foliation continues with the next number, 56, the Hebrew/Arabic jumps to 58; folios 56 and 57 are missing. The disparity between the catch-word at the base of the verso page and the first word in the top line of the recto page in Fig.197.4 confirms that pages are missing here.



Fig 197.4. The recto page is numbered נח = 58 according to the Hebrew/Arabic page numbers but 56 according to the sequence of pencilled page numbers. Note also that the first word in the top line of the recto page does not match the catchword at the base of the verso page.

The difference of 2 units between the Hebrew/Arabic and pencilled foliations continues up to the folios numbered 102 and 100, respectively, from which point the pencilled foliation continues with the next number, 101 but the Hebrew/Arabic foliation jumps from 102 to 105; folios 103 & 104 are missing. Similar considerations point to the loss of a further six folios, 131 to 136 according the Hebrew/Arabic foliation, making a total of 10 missing folios: 56 & 57, 103 & 104 and 131 to 136.

Table 1 lists the sixty two discourses in the Index by the page/folio numbers in which they appear according to the three different systems of foliation: 33 in the section from fol.1 to fol.204, 19 from fol.205 to the end and 10 with no designated page/folio number.

Table 1: The sixty two Torah Discourses and the pages/folios on which they appear according to the three foliations: the pencilled, the older Hebrew/Arabic numerals and the Index.

Page/Folio Nos. up to Folio 204				Page/Folio Nos. from Folio 205			
Pencil	Old	Index	Torah portion	Pencil	Old	Index	Torah portion
1r	1	1	וּזְאת הַבְּרִכָּה			205	וּיקְרָא
8r	8	8	לֶךְ לְךָ לְמַת שְׁנֵהָרָג			206	צו
13v	13	13	בְּשֵׁלַח			208	שְׁמִינִי
15r	15	15	וַיֵּצֵא			209	תְּזַרִיעַ
19r	19	19	וַיֵּצֵא לְמַת			211	מִסָּ?
21r	21	21	וַיֵּשֶׁב			212	מִצֹּרַע
33r	33	33	שְׁמוֹת לַחֲתָן			215	וַיקְרָא לְאָדָם כֶּשֶׁר שְׁמֹת וְהָיָה עֹשִׂיר רַ' י' עֵנִי
39v	39	39	שְׁמוֹת			218	בְּרֵאשִׁית
48r	48	48	יִתְרוֹ			221	וּזְאת הַבְּרִכָּה
Missing		57	וַיַּחֲי			230	בְּרֵאשִׁית לַחֲתָן
62r	64	64	תְּצֹוה	196r	239?	234	תּוֹלְדוֹת נַח
70v	70	70	צו	208r		239	וַיִּרְא
77r	79	79	יִתְרוֹ לִפְסָח וּלְשִׁבְעֹת	210r		241	וַיִּרְא
78r	80	80	וַיִּקְרָא זֵכֶר עַמְלֵק	200r		243	לֶךְ לְךָ
82v	82	82	וּזְאת הַבְּרִכָּה	204v		248	לֶךְ לְךָ
81r	83	83	שֶׁבַת הַגְּדוֹל			252	וַיֵּצֵא לְתִיַח שְׁמוֹת
83r	85	85	בְּרֵאשִׁית לַחֲוֹפֵה			273	יִתְרוֹ לַחֲוֹפֵה
85r	87	87	שְׁמִינִי	231r	284	284	חַיֵּי שְׂרָה לְמַת
86v	88	88	שׁוֹפְטִים	239r	?	298	חַיֵּי שְׂרָה לְמַת
87r	89	89	וַיִּרְא				תּוֹלְדוֹת
89r	91	91	כִּי תִשָּׂא				מִקָּץ
Missing		103	מִשְׁפָּטִים לְמַת בְּקִצְרוֹת שָׁנִים				וַיִּגַּשׁ
101r	105	105	בְּמִדְבָּר				וַאֲרָא
109r	113	113	קוֹרַח				בֵּא
121r	125	125	פְּנַחֵס				תְּרוֹמָה
128r	137	137	מִטּוֹת וּמִסְעֵי				וַיִּקְרָא
138r	147	147	וַאֲתַחֲנֶן				פְּקוּדֵי
?	153	153	שׁוֹפְטִים				אַחֲרֵי מוֹת
154r	163	163	רָאָה				קְדוּשִׁים
166r	175	175	אַתֶּם נִיֻּצְבִים				
174r	183	183	אֲמֹר לַיּוֹם אֵי שֶׁל סוֹכוֹת בְּדִ' מִיָּנִים				
181v	190	190	לֶךְ לְךָ לְמַת שְׁנֵהָרָג				
188v	197	197	וַיִּשְׁלַח				

The Index is not part of the original text and was evidently inserted in the codex at a later date in the gap created by the loss of folios 131 to 136. It thus made up for one of the ten missing folios leaving a net difference of 9 between the two foliations from this point on.

Unless the pencilled numbers was entered before 1863, this raises the worrying possibility that the nine missing folios have gone astray since Kitchin prepared his catalogue.

The folio immediately following the Index is numbered 137 (128 according to the pencilled foliation) and from this point and until we reach folio 204 (195 according to the pencilled foliation), there are no more missing folios. Thus, apart from the said ten missing folios and the two discourses that they would have contained, this section of the manuscript appears to be intact. The almost unbroken sequence of catchwords in this section also attests to its integrity.

By contrast, the text from this point on is in a distressing state. According to the index, a group of ten more discourses should follow, starting on folio 205, and continue unbroken up to folio 230. There is, however, no trace of them. The discourse that actually follows (תולדות נח) is the one that the Index places on folio 234, but there is no sign of that number on the page (Fig.197.5). All there is, apart from the pencilled 196 in its top left-hand corner, is a figure 8 and the number 239 in a awkward angular script. The next three folios, on which the discourse continues, have the numbers 9, 10 and 11 in their top left-hand corner. The origin of all these numbers is a mystery. The four folios are possibly from a different manuscript and were inserted here, and the incorrect folio number 239 was added later.

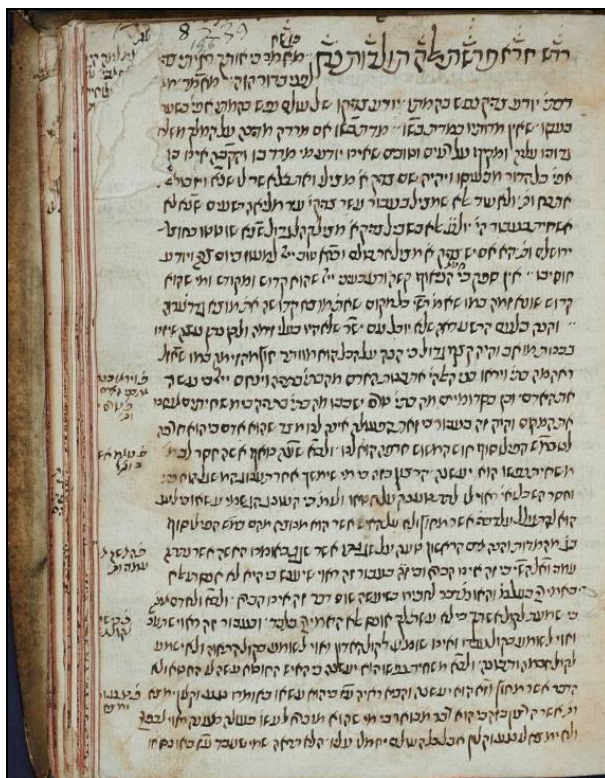


Fig.197.5: There are two extraneous page numbers, 8 and 269, in addition to the pencilled page number 196, in the top left-hand corner. The figure 8 is in a script similar to that of the Hebrew/Arabic foliation whereas the 239 is in a very different angular script.

The discourses that should have appeared on folios 239, 241, 243 and 248 according to the Index are, however, not missing. They now appear on fols. 208r, 210r, 200r and 204v, respectively, (according to the pencilled foliation). However, there is no trace of the two discourses that should have been on folios 252 and 273, which gives a running total of fourteen missing discourses. Adding to this the ten discourses listed in the index but without a designated page number, gives a final total of twenty four missing discourses.

The last thirty four folios of the codex are a confused jumble, as the image in Fig. 197.6 exemplifies and it is quite possible that fragments of the missing discourses could be pieced together from their contents. Such a task is, however, beyond the remit of this project.

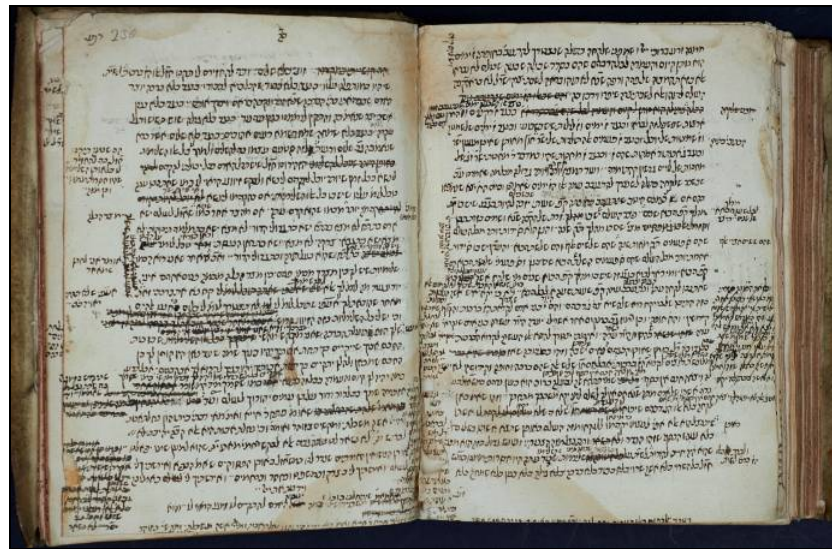


Fig.197.6: Folios 229v-230r. An illustration of the chaotic condition of the last thirty four folios of codex 197.

The partial watermark and close chain-lines in the endpaper are reminiscent of the Dutch papers used in the endpapers of codices 198 and 200, suggesting that this codex was also rebound in Holland during the 17th century (Fig. 197.7).

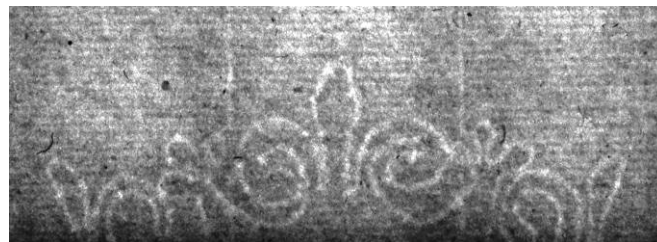


Fig.197.7: The partial watermark in the front endpaper of codex 187.

Most of the watermarks in the folios of text are variants of the familiar hand/glove design (Fig. 197.8). The mark in folio 204 is an exception (Fig 197.9).

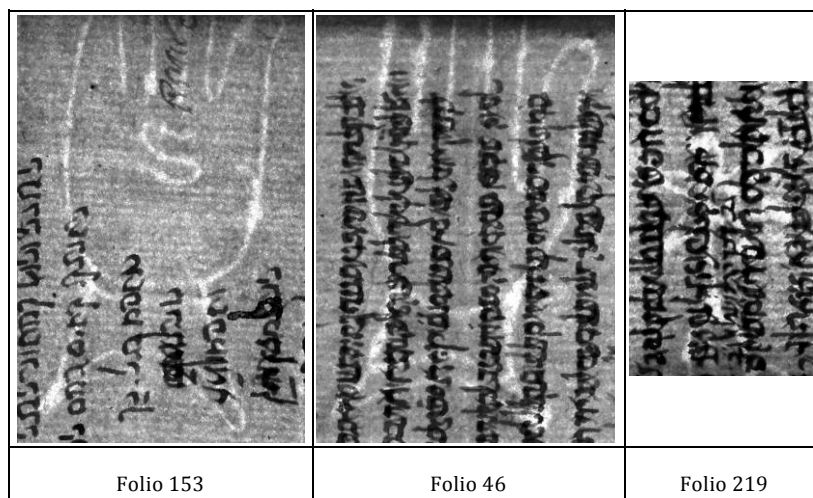


Fig. 197.8: Hand/glove watermarks in codex 197.

	<p style="text-align: center;">- 4365</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Watermark in f.204</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Briquet 4365 (1479-1500)</p>

Fig. 197.9: The partial watermark in fol.204.