Having worked together with Professor Joseph Yahalom on the edition of Judah al-Ḥarizî’s Arabic book of travels called the Kitâb ad-durar, the Book of Pearls, it gives me great pleasure to honour him on his scientific jubilee with a study of yet another Arabic composition bearing a similar title: the Kitâb ad-durr al-manzûm bit-tamâm wal-kamâl, The Book of the Pearl strung with Completion and Perfection. This anonymous work is an anthology of moral maxims in the adab style divided into ten chapters, the first of which contains a string of sayings comprising one aphorism, the second, sayings comprising two aphorisms, and so forth until the tenth chapter which contains sayings involving ten aphorisms. The latter are mainly culled from classical traditional and Sufi sources predating the eleventh century, though the surviving manuscripts, which seem to have an Egyptian origin, are not earlier than the sixteenth. Since, as far as we know, the book is not mentioned in the early literature there is a strong likelihood that the work was compiled in Ottoman Egypt and thus provides an interesting example of Sufi influence on the ethical literature of this period. At the same time, because of its Jewish connection, it also illustrates the strong attraction that this literature held for non-Muslim readers, in this case Karaite Jews.

The existence of this work was already pointed out as long ago as 1837 by Abraham Geiger on the basis of a copy transcribed into Hebrew characters, which was then to be found in an important private Karaite library in the Crimea. In his description of this collection, A. Geiger lists a manuscipt which could well have been that of Abraham Firkovic, comprising the manuscripts he had acquired during his first journey to the East in 1830, and Constantinople in 1830–32, before his return to the Crimea. Firkovic himself testifies to the existence of Judaeo-Arabic manu-
script comprising 12 leaves in Arabic in Hebrew characters entitled *Kitâb ad-durr al-manzûm bit-tamâm wal-kamâl*, which he rather arbitrarily classifies as a Karaite work, attributing it to Yefet ha-Lewî, apparently referring to Yefet b. ’Ali ha-Lewî, a tenth century Karaite exegete.

In the entry Simhah Pinsker devotes to Yefet b. ’Ali in his history of Karaite literature, he states that he examined at first hand the manuscript in question, which he aptly describes:

‘I do not know who was the source of information for this contrived attribution, for I examined this manuscript at first hand and copied therefrom the *Laws of Zizit* composed by an unknown Karaite author. The author of *Kitâb ad-durr* is never named there, but he was obviously an Arab, judging from the subject of the book, a collection of wise maxims similar to the *Choice of Pearls*, divided into ten chapters. The first presents sayings comprising a single aphorism, the second chapter contains sayings comprising two aphorisms, and so forth until the tenth chapter, which contains sayings comprising ten aphorisms. I asked the scholar [Salomon] Munk if he knew of a book of similar title and content and he replied that the Arabs had several books with this name.’

Indeed, a certain number of books bearing the title *Kitâb ad-durr al-manzûm* are listed by Haggî Khalîfà, but none seem to be identical with our work.