Levi Ben Gershom Encyclopedia Article

Levi Ben Gershom

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Levi Ben Gershom

1288-1344

French Jewish astronomer and mathematician who in his *Sefer takunah* (1340) attempted to replace the cosmology of Ptolemy with a new, rationalized Jewish cosmology. One of the few Jewish scholars to enjoy a successful career in Christian Europe, Levi observed a lunar eclipse in 1335 and a solar eclipse in 1337. He also developed the Jacob's staff, a mechanism for measuring the angular distance between heavenly bodies, and used the camera obscura in making astronomical observations.