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## ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

### LITURGICAL FORMULAE IN THE LIGHT OF FRAGMENTS FROM THE JUDAEAN DESERT

Menahem Kister

The emergence of 'rabbinic' prayers, such as the *amidah* and *birkat ha-mazon* is obscure, as are the origins of differences in the text found in medieval manuscripts, where these prayers are first attested. This article discusses two texts that might shed some light on the wording of benedictions in 'rabbinic' liturgy:

1. Three fragments of a small scroll, XHev/Şe 6, paleographically dated to about 100 CE, previously published by Yardeni, Morgenstern and Qimron. The fragments are republished and thoroughly scrutinized in the present article. Features similar to those known from 'rabbinic' prayers may be discerned: (1) the first benediction in this scroll begins and ends with formulae strikingly similar to *modim*, the thanksgiving benediction in the *amidah*; (2) the content, and to some extent the formulae, of this benediction resembles *modim* according to the Palestinian version of the *amidah*; (3) God's epithets at the beginning of the benediction are strikingly similar to those that occur in *modim* according to inferior liturgical copies of the Babylonian rite; (4) the concluding formula of the first benediction in the scroll, *כי יה צדויק... להדות*, is reminiscent of a Palestinian ending formula, which was regarded inferior and of *paytanic* origin; (5) the ending formula of the first benediction begins with the word *כי* (instead of *ברוך*, the standard 'rabbinic' formula). It might be argued that some of the *כי* formulae at the end of benedictions (before the ending formula *ברוך* in the 'rabbinic' prayers are in fact remnants of a similar liturgical convention; (6) God is addressed in this scroll both in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person (in benedictions 1 and 2) and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (in benediction 3), as is the case in several clusters of 'rabbinic' benedictions (e.g., *birkat ha-mazon*); (7) the third benediction in the scroll begins with the formula *מלך העלם*. The meaning of this formula, prevalent in 'rabbinic' liturgy, is discussed; (8) the thanksgiving benediction in the scroll is followed by a very fragmentary benediction, but it begins with mentioning God's choosing of Aaron and his posterity and ends by stating that God 'brings peace on the land'. This is perhaps reminiscent of the two last benedictions of the *amidah*. The third benediction seems to concentrate on the Temple; (9) it has been noted that the wording of the third benediction is similar to the benediction for the *musaf* prayer for festivals

2. 4Q448 (the Qumranic 'Prayer for Jonathan'). The formulation of the Babylonian version of *modim* is compared with formulae in *birkat ha-mazon* and in 4Q448, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. It is clear from the latter that the Babylonian version represents a very ancient formula. Moreover, it might be argued that in 4Q448, the formula, whose origin was in thanksgiving benedictions, was adapted for petitionary benedictions.

A NEWLY DISCOVERED LEAF OF *MEGILLAT TA'ANIT* AND ITS SCHOLION

Yoav Rosenthal

Lately, a rare and important discovery has come to light thanks to the work of the Project for Hebrew Manuscripts and Fragments in Austrian Libraries. In the Library of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Paul in the Lavant valley, a leaf of the Scroll of Fasting (*Megillat Ta'anit*) with its scholion, was unearthed. Vered Noam has demonstrated that MSS. of the scholion to this scroll present two different, yet original, works. The newly found leaf represents a scholion which has otherwise been preserved in only one faulty MS. and one small fragment containing merely a few words. The new leaf contains a substantial part of the text, about 40% of the entire work, thereby enabling proper research of its text.

The first part of this paper presents the text of the new leaf, together with a discussion of its place in the textual tradition of this scholion. The contribution of this new leaf to the research of *Megillat Ta'anit* and its scholia is consequently presented, and some new insights are gained concerning the special characteristics of this scholion. The second part of the paper deals with a number of dates that appear in the *Megilla* where the contribution of the newly discovered leaf is especially prominent, both by presenting previously unknown texts and through its alternative textual readings, which enable better understanding of the scholion and its history.

IN THE WAKE OF THE NEW LEAF OF *MEGILLAT TA'ANIT* AND ITS SCHOLION

Vered Noam

The newly discovered page of the commentary on *Megillat Ta'anit* (Scroll of Fasting) significantly corroborates the conclusions that emerged from the earlier study of *Megillat Ta'anit*, with respect to the nature of the exegetical traditions of the Scholion and their representation in the manuscripts hitherto in our possession. It fits very well into the general picture traced by that study in terms of the existence of three different commentaries on the *Megillah*. The new passage confirms the separate existence of tradition O of the Scholion and enriches our knowledge of its content, wording, and history of transmission. The manuscript demonstrates the multiplicity and variety of the versions of the Scholion and their inner division into further secondary branches.

Beyond these general emphases, the article comments on the consequences of the textual variations in the manuscript regarding the commentaries of three dates mentioned in the Scroll of Fasting, and presents a new hypothesis regarding the origin of *Megillat Ta'anit* itself. According to this hypothesis, the ancient prohibition against fasting and eulogies, which applied in the Second Temple Era to those who brought wood and first fruits to the Temple, served as the first model for the formation of the Scroll of Fasting as a whole. The ancient list of the dates of the wood sacrifice served as inspiration for formulating the list of consecrated historical occasions that is included in the *Megillah*. The displacement of the custom from a ban on fasting on certain dates due to an ongoing ritual (the sacrifice of wood on set dates) to a list of festivals commemorating the historical past (the unique events at the basis of *Megillat Ta'anit*) was actually a bold innovation. The utilization of

an existing halakhic principle, along with the formulae that accompanied it, in the creation of *Megillat Ta'anit*, helped blur the boldness of this composition, which generated an entire ritual calendar with no biblical basis and commemorated historical events lacking canonical status.

#### THE CHAINS OF VERSES IN THE *QEDUSHTA* AND THE ANCIENT BENEDICTION

Shulamit Elizur

Central to this article is the riddle of the chain of verses that follow the *magen*, *meḥaye*, and *meshaleš* in the *qedushta*, suggesting that they derive an ancient version of the *amidah* benedictions. We show that when chains of verses are included in hymns, they are derived from parallel chains of verses in prayers. Hence, the benedictions of the *amidah* probably also contained verses in an earlier period of its formation, and we find traces of these.

Several ancient rabbinical sources indicate that a longer and more complex version of the *amidah* was once recited, and it included biblical verses. We suggest that they were included in order to distinguish between blessings, which were newly composed, and Scripture. This practice contrasts with the prayers (mainly the sectarian ones) from the Second Temple Era and other writings of that time, whose authors sought to imitate the language of the Bible and resemble it, sometimes even striving to have their works included in the canon.

The *amidah* prayer evidently underwent processes of change and abbreviation, and it probably developed from an alternative version, 'an abstract of Eighteen Benedictions', shorter and less complex than the original prayer. The possibility that the cantor was called upon to recite the long prayer in its entirety, whereas the congregation tended to be satisfied with the short version, can explain the flourishing of hymns that embroider on the prayers. Chains of verses disappear from hymns when they are abbreviated.

Toward the end of the article, we focus on the *qedushta* again and discuss the appearance of concluding rhymes that divide it between the chain of verses and the conclusion of the benediction. After a short conclusion, an appendix is presented, presenting a very ancient *qerovah*, every part of which is no more than a passage of poetry and a chain of verses, without any concluding rhymes.

#### INCANTATIONS, LISTS, AND 'GATES OF SERMONS' IN THE CIRCLE OF RABBI NEHEMIAH BEN SHLOMO THE PROPHET, AND THEIR INFLUENCES

Moshe Idel

In two manuscripts, MS. London, British Library, 752 (Add. 15299), and MS Sason 290, there are several incantations that scholars have ascribed to a Provençal background. However, I maintain that their terminology is similar to that found in the writings of an early 13<sup>th</sup> century Ashkenazi figure named R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo the Prophet, especially in the proliferation of new names for angels; this proliferation may be explained as part of a resort to magic in order instantly to master the burgeoning Halakhic literature.

In those two manuscripts, as well as in some few others, additional magical charms are found, *Shem ha-Doresh*, which served for magical preaching, and *Shem ha-Kotev*, which served for magical writing. The assumption of this study is that these Ashkenazi texts and practices found their way to Spain, especially to Castile, and contributed to the cultural effervescence that culminated with the Zoharic literature.

This study provides evidence of a cultural dynamic in thirteenth century Jewish culture that relates Halakhic studies to use of magic; it demonstrates the impact of magical practices on the development of Kabbalistic literature, be it the Zoharic literature, or the ecstatic Kabbalah; and it points to fertile interaction between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish cultures at that time.

#### DEVIATIONS FROM THE EMPHATIC ROLE OF DOUBLING ('*HaKEFEL LECHAZEK*') IN RADAK'S BIBLE COMMENTARY

Ayelet Seidler

In his Bible commentary Radak (Rabi David Kimchi, 1160–1235) often refers to the phenomenon of doubling and repetition in the biblical text. He formulates a rule according to which repetitions have an emphatic meaning ('*HaKefel Lechazek*'). However, close scrutiny of his commentary reveals that Radak did not always observe his own rule. The present paper deals with three types of cases in which Radak abandons his declared approach to biblical repetitions and seeks a distinct meaning for each component of the doubling or repetition: 1. Cases in the biblical narrative in which a protagonist is named by different names; 2. Doubling in figurative style; 3. Doubling that can be attributed to metaphysical issues.

Radak's numerous exceptions from his self-proclaimed approach (according to which the aim of repetitions is emphatic) reveal his unique exegetical approach, which (a) synthesizes 'Peshat' (plain meaning) and 'Derash' (homiletic meaning); and (b) often reveals additional philosophical, apologetic, and polemical purposes.

#### FROM ARAGON TO CASTILE – THE ORIGINS OF SEPHARDI TALMUDIC SPECULATION IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN

Yoel Marciano

This article traces the sources of the study methods of fifteenth-century Sephardic sages, showing that the foundations of the approach that spread in Castile during the second half of the fifteenth century had already arisen in Aragon, in the Saragossa region at the end of the fourteenth century in the academies of the Ran, Rabbi Hasdai Crescas, Rabbi Yosef Albo, Rabbi Mattitya Ha-Hitzhari and others. This suggests that the Sephardic approach, which was prevalent in Castile, originated in Aragon, and it also supports the thesis raised in the article with regard to the force that motivated the Sephardic approach.

This article maintains that the Sephardic Approach not only adopted the logical method

and semantic concerns from the field of philosophy, but that it was influenced even more strongly by the adoption of philosophical doctrines regarding ultimate perfection. The Sages of the Sephardic Approach believed that the study of Talmud – close reading, the acquisition of knowledge, and the sharpening of the mind – brings the student to cleave to God – an effect similar to the study of philosophy, which combines devotion with the active intellect.

This article contributes to the better understanding of the Talmud study-techniques by the Sephardic Sages of the fifteenth century. It contributes to recognizing that the Sephardic study-technique was an independent and unique evolutionary process, which drew upon Iberian culture, rather than the product of Ashkenazi influences that penetrated Spain at the end of the Middle Ages.