A THIRD DEW SHIV’ATA BY ELEAZAR BE-RABBI QILLIR

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Introduction

The text presented below is the third of a group of Dew shiv’ataot composed by the Classical paytan Eleazar be-rabbi Qillir (fl. early seventh century). The first of these is the first of these is רְפֵּאָה אֵבוּס הָיוֹת, employed until today in the Ashkenazic rite. The second is בְּרֵעַת אֱוֹרֶך 하 מַלְלוּיָּם, known exclusively from Geniza manuscripts, and edited in a forthcoming article. The Dew shiv’ata is a composition whose function is to mark the transition between the Rain season and the Dew season. During the Rain season, the phrase מְשַׁבְּךָ הָרוּחַ מְרוּדִי הָוֶׁשָׁנָם is inserted into the second benediction of the 'amidah, whereas during the Dew season the same position is occupied by the phrase מְשַׁבְּךָ הָרוּחַ מְרוּדִי חֶלֶשׁ. The switch from the former to the latter takes place in the 'amidah of the Additional service of Passover, and in liturgical practice it is marked by the recitation of a Dew shiv’ata.

Structurally, the Dew shiv’ata (as also the Rain shiv’ata) is divided into two main parts: 1) the festival shiv’ata itself, between whose second and third strophes is inserted 2) an internally articulated group of independent piyyutim: reshut + seder yetzirah + seder pesuqim + rahit(im).

The structure of the festival shiv’ata, which serves as a frame for the independent piyyutim, does not differ from the structure attested throughout the Qillirian corpus: each one of the benedictions of the 'amidah, with the exception of the fourth (i.e., ברכות קרושת חיימ) is accompanied

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2 M. Rand, ‘אֶלֶּאָזָּר בְּרַבִּי קִילִּיר: יָשָׁנְאָת שְׁלָשׁ, Qovetz al Yad (forthcoming).
3 In the Ashkenazic rite, the phrase מְשַׁבְּךָ הָרוּחַ מְרוּדִי חֶלֶשׁ is employed exclusively in the second benediction of the 'amidah of the Additional service of Passover, as is the case also in Seder Rav Amram and Siddur Rav Sa’adya. The source of the liturgical custom of inserting this phrase into the second benediction of the 'amidah throughout the Dew season is in Palestine, as is made plain by the appearance of lexical references to Dew (שה) in Palestinian qerovot immediately before the closing formula ב... מְשַׁבְּכָּךָ הָרוּחַ מְרוּדִי חֶלֶשׁ.
by one poetic strope. Theses strophes are unified into a compositional whole through the use of various structural devices that brace the entire shiv’ata, such as framing verses, fixed words/phrases and acrostic series. In Classical festival shiv’atot the fourth benediction stands apart from the rest, in that it is accompanied by an independent piyyut that employs its own alphabetic acrostic. Such independent piyyutim are labeled guf (גֻּף) in the manuscripts. On occasion the guf may be missing from copies of festival shiv’atot found in the Geniza, and in these cases it appears that in the liturgical practice reflected by such copies the precentor employed the statutory formulation of the fourth benediction rather than replacing it with a piyyut. In the case of Dew and Rain shiv’atot by Qillir, a guf never accompanies the fourth benediction.5

Attribution

Before we begin to analyze the shiv’ata published below, we must stress that both the strophes of the framing shiv’ata as well as its two sedarim are characterized by an outstanding poetic feature: the lines of all of these piyyutim make extensive use internal rhyme: i.e., // אֶנֶּכֶנֶּי הַרַּאֹבֶּן מַיָּסֶס (ל. 52–53). In this example, not only are the ends of the lines braced by the rhyme ב, but each of the lines also contains an internal rhyme: מ in the first line and ל in the second. This fact removes all doubt as to the organic unity of the framing shiv’ata and the group of independent piyyutim that are inserted into it (or, more precisely, the nucleus of this group, i.e., the two sedarim).

With regard to the question of the attribution of this composition to Qillir, it is significant that the seder yetzirah does not contain any acrostic signature, whereas the seder pesuqim contains the signatureألטרו, which is not considered to be an unambiguous marker of Qillirian authorship. Furthermore, the lack of an explicit signature such as אלטרו בורוכי קלייר מקריר סומר within the composition casts doubt on its Qillirian authorship.6 This doubt, arising from formal considerations, is furthermore exacerbated by considerations of language, which have been brought to my attention by Prof. Shulamit Elizur. In her view, the linguistic profile of the Dew shiv’ata under consideration is reminiscent of that of the school of Rav Sa’adya Gaon. She cites the use of Biblical hapax legomena (גַּלְפֵּלֶר [ל. 72]), the use of feminine by-forms of nouns (כָּפָדָה [ל. 40]), and in par-

5 See M. Rand, שָׁבַעַת לְשׁוֹנָה.
6 This signature is attested in the two Qillirian Dew shiv’atot mentioned above.