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Fragments from the First Order of Fustat: Finds from the Cairo Geniza at Cambridge University Library

Abstract: This paper is concerned with a liturgical document from the Cairo Geniza known as the First Order of Fustat. After a short introduction by way of historical/cultural background, an edition, translation, and brief commentary are provided of the portion of the document that treats the ceremony of the sanctification over wine (*qiddush*) of the New Moon of Nisan.

1 Introduction

The First Order of Fustat is the name given by modern scholarship to a document whose leaves are scattered in the Cairo Geniza, a Hebrew manuscript trove containing tens of thousands of fragments that was ‘discovered’ in the latter portion of the nineteenth century by Western scholars in the attic room of a synagogue in Old Cairo (Fustat). The fragments are now kept in various collections, primarily in Europe and the United States. The largest single concentration is held in Cambridge University Library. Taken together, they constitute an immense wealth of information about numerous aspects of Jewish communal and intellectual life, with a concentration roughly on the period from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries (i.e. the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods in Egypt),¹ a period in Jewish history that is characterized by an intensive and complex intra-communal rivalry expressed in the social, religious (especially legal and liturgical), economic and political spheres in the form of a polarity between the two established centres of rabbinic learning – Palestine and Babylon (Iraq) – that was complemented by a third group, the Karaites.²

However, the exploitation of the Geniza materials for historical as well as textual study is seriously hampered by their fragmentary nature. The attic-Geniza accumulated gradually over the course of many centuries, written documents of

1 For an excellent introduction to the Cairo Geniza, see Hoffman and Cole 2011.

2 For Jewish communal history seen in this light and written on the basis of Geniza documents, see Rustow 2008.

all sorts being unceremoniously discarded into it as they became worn out and no longer suitable for their original purpose (e.g. prayer book[let]s), or, in the case of ephemera (e.g. correspondence), after having served their intended function. Thus, by the time the Geniza became known in the West, it essentially constituted a centuries-old manuscript junk heap. Moreover, the process whereby the hoard was extracted from its resting place by antiquities dealers and scholars was likewise entirely accidental and uncontrolled. As a result of these factors, the several Geniza collections now in existence consist not of reasonably whole codices and documents, but rather of the *dissecta membra* thereof, to borrow a phrase from the famous description by Solomon Schechter, their principal Western discoverer, who acquired the vast majority of the materials now held at Cambridge University Library. Now, about a century and a half after the initial discovery of the Geniza, research in this field is crucially dependent on the basic and gargantuan task of attempting to re-assemble the scattered fragments to as great a degree as possible in order to maximize their usefulness for scholarly enquiry.

The First Order of Fustat is a liturgical compilation, composed in the first quarter of the thirteenth century by Yedutun ha-Levi, the cantor (*hazzan*) of the Palestinian synagogue in Fustat, who seems to have been active during the last phases of a long-standing effort to preserve the remaining vestiges of the Palestinian liturgical rite from being replaced in favour of the Babylonian liturgy, the pro-Babylonian campaign being championed by Avraham, the son of Maimonides. Yedutun's activities have left a significant trace in the Geniza in the form of several liturgical compilations.³

The purpose of the First Order of Fustat is to document the liturgical customs and practices of the local Palestinian Jewish community.⁴ The section that I have chosen to discuss documents in great detail the sanctification over wine (*qiddush*) in honour of the New Moon of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish liturgical calendar, during which Passover is celebrated. Sanctifying special occasions, mostly Sabbaths and festivals, by means of pronouncing a benediction over wine is a widespread and ancient Jewish custom. However, the

³ For Yedutun and his activities, see Elizur 2009, especially 305–308 on the controversy over the Palestinian liturgical rite. Yedutun's role on this controversy is overstated in Elizur's discussion, as he *cannot* be identified as the author of the various epistles that are ascribed to him there. However, his liturgical compilations – including the 'Compact' (*ketav amana*) mentioned on p. 306 – all of which are autographs, are more than sufficient to indicate that he played a prominent role in the controversy.

⁴ For an inventory of all the known fragments of this document and their reconstruction, see Rand 2015, 152–153.

sanctification in this manner of the New Moon, and the New Moon of Nisan in particular, is peculiar to the Palestinian rite.

The section in question, which has not been preserved in its entirety, is known today on the basis of six separate Geniza fragments, three of which join together into an almost-complete manuscript leaf (see below). The ceremony, which took place in the synagogue, was accompanied by the recitation of numerous liturgical poems (*piyyutim*, singular *piyyut*, from Greek ποιητής ‘poet’), as well as short lections from the Aramaic translation of the Bible (Targum). The manuscript is trilingual: 1) prose liturgical texts as well as *piyyutim* in Hebrew, 2) lections, bits of liturgy and several *piyyutim* in Aramaic, and 3) liturgical instructions in (Judeo-)Arabic, the local vernacular.

The distribution of languages within the manuscript accurately reflects the historical/cultural situation of the community for whose use it was produced. The fundamental liturgical language of the Jews is Hebrew. This is the language in which their basic synagogue prayers are composed, and in which their cycle of Scriptural readings is conducted. Hebrew is by far the best-documented and most intensively studied member of a group known as the Canaanite languages, which along with Aramaic belongs to a larger grouping defined as Northwest Semitic. It was the language of the United Kingdom of Israel, as well as its successor states Israel and Judea, and therefore the language in which the bulk of the Jewish Bible is written.⁵ The end of the independence of Israel and Judah, which came in the period from the eighth to the sixth centuries BCE, coincides with the spread of Aramaic in Syro-Mesopotamia together with the dynamic expansion of the geographical area in which Aramaic was employed, as a result of the spread of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires, the former of which did away with Israel as an independent political entity and the latter with Judea. It thus comes to be that starting from the end of the eighth century BCE we have evidence of the use of Aramaic by (Judean) Jews.⁶ The process of the penetration of Aramaic into the Jewish community was given great impetus by the Exile to Babylon, which had by this point become the epicentre from which the use of Aramaic radiated as a function of territorial expansion and political control. With the rise of Persian hegemony in the Near East, the use of Aramaic

5 For the history of Hebrew, see Sáenz-Badillos 1993.

6 This evidence comes from the Bible’s description of the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians in 701, during which Judean officials parleyed with the Assyrians from the city walls: ‘Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah replied to the Rabshakeh, “Please, speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it; do not speak to us in Judean in the hearing of the people on the wall”’ (Isaiah 36:11; Jewish Publication Society translation). The import here is that Aramaic is a language of international diplomacy, not understood by the common folk of Judea.

as a lingua franca and a language of administration became quite general, and significant textual corpora are attested in various parts of the far-flung Persian realm, from Egypt to Bactria. It is within this context that the Aramaic parts of the Jewish Bible, Daniel and Ezra, were composed, in what ultimately evolved into a local, Palestinian variety of the imperial linguistic medium. This evolution may be traced historically in the Aramaic writings found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as in documents dating to the period of the Bar Kokhba revolt against Hadrian, and in the Late Antique Period (i.e. the period of Byzantine control of Palestine) it issued in the emergence of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. At the same time, the use of Aramaic persisted among the Jews of Mesopotamia. From the Hellenistic period down to the conquest of the Near East by the Muslims, Aramaic was therefore the vernacular language of Palestinian and Babylonian Jewry and served as a major vehicle for religious activity. The most evident fruits of this activity are the Aramaic translations of Scripture (Targumim), exegetical works belonging to the genre of midrash, and the two Talmuds – that of Palestine and Babylonia.⁷ With the gradual penetration of Islam into the life-fabric of the peoples of the Near East, Arabic replaced Aramaic as the vernacular of Jews from Iraq to North Africa and Spain. However, because it had by this time been enshrined in documents that are of fundamental importance to Jewish religious and cultural life, the use of Aramaic persisted among them.

In the meantime, during the Second Temple period, Hebrew continued in active use, though as a spoken language its scope seems to have become increasingly restricted to Judea, until it finally died out – i.e. ceased to be the spoken mother tongue of anyone – around 200 CE. During this long period of ‘decline’, over the course of which Hebrew yielded to Aramaic as a spoken vernacular, the former remained robust as a language of literary activity, as amply documented in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the post-biblical Book of Ben Sira (the discovery of whose Hebrew original in the Geniza served as the principal impetus for the removal of the cache by Schechter), and ‘nationalist’ administration, as indicated by documents produced at the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt.⁸ Furthermore, it continued as the fundamental language of Scripture and liturgy (which overlap considerably in the synagogue), the latter coming in Late Antiquity to comprehend a rich tradition of *piyyut* (see below), and, alongside Aramaic, as a language of religious scholarship. Moreover, after the Muslim

7 For a history of Aramaic that covers the period sketched here, see the penetrating study of Gzella 2015.

8 See Gross 2012.

conquests, through either outright translation or adaptation/imitation of Arabic works, Hebrew experienced a prodigious efflorescence in numerous fields, among them philosophy and secular poetry.

As mentioned above, the *qiddush* ceremony for the New Moon of Nisan is a peculiarity of the Palestinian liturgical custom, and its recording in the First Order of Fustat is animated by an effort to save this custom from extinction. Our document is therefore a small part of the ample evidence supplied by the Geniza for the study of the relations, intellectual as well as political, between the two great loci of rabbinic Jewish learning and communal organization that vied for supremacy in the Medieval Jewish world: Babylon and Palestine. More narrowly, it (inadvertently) helps to document how the rite of Babylon came to predominate.

Returning to the matter of language and liturgy, the First Order of Fustat serves as a convenient illustration of the *modus vivendi* between Hebrew and Aramaic that emerged in Jewish liturgical practice. As indicated above, Hebrew is the fundamental language of the synagogue – the language of the basic prayers and of Scriptural lection. Overwhelmingly, Hebrew is also the language of *piyyut*, a type of liturgical poetry that grew up in Late Antique Palestine within the context of the Palestinian rite.⁹ This genre developed as a replacement or embellishment for the prose statutory liturgy. The extensive corpus of *piyyut* that was produced in Late Antiquity, continuing almost seamlessly into the Islamic period, is couched in a special form of highly artistic, recondite Hebrew that is characterized by numerous morphological and syntactic peculiarities.¹⁰ On the other hand, Aramaic, being the language of the Talmud and related rabbinic works, was primarily situated within the house of study, the place of the gathering of scholars. However, Aramaic also made some inroads into the world of the synagogue, particularly in the form of the Targumic translation of the Scriptural lections, the (vernacular) sermon, as well as certain marginal *piyyut* genres that are primarily – though not exclusively – associated with the Targum.¹¹ This functional specialization of Aramaic within the world of the synagogue is accurately reflected in our text, in which the use of Aramaic is tied to the appearance of Targumic translations of several scriptural verses that are relevant to the liturgical occasion. Within this framework, Aramaic is employed

⁹ The fundamental treatment of the subject is Fleischer 2007. For a convenient English-language introduction, see Rand 2014.

¹⁰ For an introduction to the *piyyut* idiom, see Rand 2013.

¹¹ The role of Aramaic in Jewish liturgy is taken up in Heinemann 1977, 251–276. This work is also a superb introduction to the subject of Jewish liturgy in general.

in our text in the guise of short quotations of Targum, a prose liturgical pericope, a short litany, and three full-blown *piyyutim*. One of the latter is particularly interesting in the present context, as it is a late representative of a genre that has deep roots not only in the Palestinian tradition of *piyyut*, but in the poetic tradition of the Ancient Near East in general. The poem, *Itḥabberu yarḥei shatta* ‘The months of the year joined together’, is a versified precedence debate in which each of the months in turns offers arguments in favour of its own pre-eminence. In the end, Nisan emerges victorious.¹² This particular version was composed by Sahlan ben Avraham, a major figure in the Babylonian (!) community of Fustat in the eleventh century.¹³ Sahlan’s poem, however, clearly goes back to models from Late Antique Palestine.¹⁴

As we have seen, the liturgical material itself is either in Hebrew or Aramaic, each of which has a fairly well defined scope within the general matrix. On the other hand, the meta-text, which in the present case consists of short liturgical instructions, is in Arabic. This situation is entirely typical of the rite books of the time, and is well accounted for by the opposition between sacred-ancient (Hebrew/Aramaic) and profane/functional-modern (Arabic). In fact, this opposition persists in the rite books of traditional Jewish communities to this very day: the majority-Hebrew and minority-Aramaic liturgy has remained roughly stable, though the choice of *piyyutim* varies quite radically from rite to rite,¹⁵ while the liturgical instructions may be given in whatever vernacular happens to be relevant for a given time and place.

The cultural and linguistic context in which the First Order of Fustat was created is fairly well documented and well understood. The work itself, which – owing to the limitations imposed on Geniza research by the scattered and fragmentary material (see above) – has yet to be reconstructed and studied in full, serves to underscore the multi-lingual and multi-local nature of Jewry within the Medieval Islamic Near East: the Jews of this time, at least the learned among them, could be expected to have command of at least three languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and the vernacular – and to have fairly broad geographic horizons. This situation corresponds fairly well to the situation obtaining in the Medieval Islamic world at large.

¹² For the Ancient Near Eastern background of *piyyut* in general, and for the debate genre in particular, see Münz-Manor 2010.

¹³ Sahlan is treated, along with other prominent community leaders documented in the Geniza, in Bareket 1999.

¹⁴ For a detailed treatment, see Rand 2012, 101–104.

¹⁵ Jewish liturgical rites, which are geographically defined (e.g. the German rite, the Italian rite), are primarily distinguished from one another in the choice of *piyyutim* that they employ.

2 Text

List of fragments from the First Order of Fustat giving the liturgy for the New Moon of Nisan:¹⁶

- Cambridge, T-S H 12.11 fol. 6.¹⁷
- Cambridge, T-S NS 125.96 (edited below).¹⁸
- Cambridge, T-S 13 H 3.11 + T-S NS 325.69 + T-S NS 139.88 (edited below; see Figs 1 and 2).¹⁹
- Cambridge, Mosseri VIII 394.²⁰

Base manuscript: Cambridge, T-S NS 125.96 (א); Cambridge, T-S 13 H 3.11 + T-S NS 325.69 + T-S NS 139.88 (ב)

Editorial sigla: ⚭ = doubtful reading; [א] = lacuna; [...] = lacuna of less than one word; [...] = lacuna of one word or more (repeated as necessary to fill out a line); <א> = scribal abbreviation; <<א>> = scribal omission

Notes: Lines 1–18 of *Itḥabberu yarḥei shatta* are missing in the base manuscript, and lines 1–14 are therefore given on the basis of manuscript Cambridge, T-S NS 236.5 (lines 15–18 have not survived anywhere). For those *piyyutim* that are copied in the base manuscript and have already been edited by Fleischer, I have only given the beginning of the text and referred to his edition in the margin.

[א ע"א] [...] תוקפא ותושבחתא לאלה שמיא דעבד לאבהן ניס[י]ן ופורקנ[י]ן. כן יעבד לן ניסין ו[פ]ורקנן ויתא משיחא רוכב על עננין. פרוקא לגלותהון דכל בית ישראל ולשכלל מהרה בית מלכות[יה]. כדכתיב וארו עם ענני שמיא כבר אנש אתה הוא ועד ע[תיק] יומיא מטא וקדמוהי הקרבוהי (דנ' ז, יג)

ויקול בין כל קול וקול מן אל[יסון א]ל[י] אלאכר שלים קיצא דבני יתיב חברון על יד משה ואהרן. ג[...]

¹⁶ See also Rand 2015, 152–153.

¹⁷ Edited in Fleischer 2012a, 874–878.

¹⁸ See Fleischer 2012b, 914–915 note 15 (verso), 915 (recto).

¹⁹ See Fleischer 2012a, 878–881; Fleischer 2012b, 916–918.

²⁰ See Fleischer 2012c, 892–895.

[א ע"ב] [...]

אִתְחַבְרוּ יְרַחֵי שְׁתָּא
בְּאוּרְדֵי זִמְנָא כְּד הוּה עִיתָא
בְּאַתְבוּתְהוֹן מְלִתָּא מְלִתָּא
כָּל חַד אָמַר כִּי לִי יֵאֲתָה רְבוּתָא

<פז>מון

5

גְּלִי אֵייר טַעִים מְלוּלִיה
וְעִנָּה וְחִבְרוּהִי לְקַבְּלִיה
דְּבֵר בִּי רַחֲמָנָה עֲמָה מְנַטְלִיה
וְאַחִית לִיה מְנָא וְאוֹכְלִיה

<פז>מון

10

הֶלֶא סִיּוֹן לְהוֹן עֵנָה
כְּד חֲזָה עוֹבֵד יֵאֵיָא הוּא חֲשִׁיכָה קִמִּי רְמָא
וּבִי סֶלֶק [מ] שֶׁהָ לְמָרוּ [מָא]
וְאַחִית תְּרִין לוֹחִי קִיאָמָא

[פזמון]

15

[ז.]
[... ..]
[ח.]
[... ..] עֲלֵלְתָא לְכַנְשָׂא

<פז>מון <בְּאַתְבוּתְהוֹן

20

טוּבֵאִי אָמַר אָב מְכָל יֶרְחָא
וְאַתְיָקֵר עֲלִיהוֹן לְאִישְׁתַּבְּחָא
יְחִדּוֹן בִּי עָמָא מְשַׁבְּחָא
דְּבִי יִתְנַחֲמוֹן אַבְלֵיָא וּבִי יִתְיַלִּיד מְשִׁיחָא

<פז>מון

25

כְּד שְׁמַע אֱלוֹל דָּא מִילָה
וְהוּא עָדִי כְּלִילָא
לִיבָא דְאַבְנָא בִּי יַעְדִּי מְקַהֲלָה
וְתַתְּבִי קְרִיתָא יְקִירְתָּא לְאִישְׁתַּכְּלָלָא

<פז>מון

30

מִן דְּכוּתִי בְּכוֹלְכוֹן אֲמַר תִּשְׁרִי
 דְּבִי צְבִי רְבוּנִי וּמָרִי
 [ב ע"א] נְהִירִין בִּי עֲמִיָּה בְּמַפֶּק סְהָרִי
 וַיִּתְּגֹוִין חֲנָא בִּי וַיִּתְּסֶף שְׁפָרִי

פז > מוֹן < 35

סְגִיּוֹת מְלִין אֲסָגִיא מְרַחֲשֹׁן
 וְאַמֶּר לְהוֹן אֲנָא הוּא דְּעִבְדִּית אֲצַטְלֹן
 עִבְד מְרִיא לְעַמִּיָּה בִּי [פְּרִי] שְׁוֹן
 וְנִצְחוּ בְּנֵי חֲשָׁמוֹנִי עַל מַלְכֵי יוֹן

פז > מוֹן < 40

פּוּמִיָּה פִּתַּח בְּסָלְיוֹ [וְאֵ] מֶר
 וּלְחַבְרוּהִי טַעְמִיָּה אֲגַמֶּר
 צְלוֹתְהוֹן דְּעַמָּא בִּי אֲשַׁתְּמַעַת [לִ] מִימֶר
 וּמַעַיִיקְהוֹן אִיתְּבֶר וְאִיטְמֶר

פז > מוֹן < 45

קָם טִבֵּת וְאַמֶּר מִי [לִ] תָּא
 וְאַנָּא בִּי שְׂזִיב רַחֲמֵךְ [אֵ] אֵ [מְ]תָא
 רָבַת בִּי אֲסַתֶּר מַלְכָּתָא
 וּבְטִילִית גְּזִירְתָּא דְּהֶמֶן בֶּן [הַמֶּדֶ] תָּא

פז > מוֹן < 50

שָׁבַט אֶף הוּא כְּדַחְזָא [ע] וּבְדָא
 וְעַל כּוֹלֶן אִיתִיקֶר [בְּחִ] דָּא
 שְׁבַחָא סָגִיא לִי הוּא וְעַיִ [י] דָּה
 דְּבִי פִירֶשׁ מֶשֶׁה [אֵ] וּלְפָן אוֹרִיתָא הָדָא

פז > מוֹן < 55

תִּנִּי אֲדָר מִמְּלַל פּוּמִיָּה
 וְעַנָּא וְחַבְרוּהִי קְדָמִיָּה
 הֶגְאָ לִי הוּא מְרִי חַתְמִיָּה
 דְּבִי אִיתִילִיד עֲנוּתֶן דְּדַבֵּר עִמִּיָּה

פז > מוֹן < 60

סִיחַ דְּנִיסָן אֲנָהּ הוּא מִלְכָּא בְּהַרְמוֹן עִילָאָה
הָלֹא אֲנָהּ רִישָׁא וְכָל יֶרֶח בְּתִרְאָה
לִי <<י>> אֵתָּא רְבוּתָא וּמִלְכוּתָא וְאֲנָהּ נְשִׂיָּאָה
נְהוּרִי נְהוּר סָגִיא וְאֲנָהּ יֶרֶחָא קְדָמָאָה

שלם קיצא דבני יתיב חברון / על יד משה ואהרן

תם ילחן מלילו עם כל כנישתא דישראל [למימ]ר בעשרה לירחא הדין ויסבון להן
גבר אמר לבית [אבא] אימרא לביתא (שמ' יב, ג). כָּל כְּנִישְׁתָּא דִּישְׂרָאֵל

מלילו עם אַבְהֶן [ובנין]	כָּל כְּנִישְׁתָּא <דִּישְׁ-רָאֵל>
מלי-לדו <גִּיבְרִיא וְדַחְלִיא>	כָּל כְּנִישְׁתָּא <דִּישְׁ-רָאֵל>
מלי-לדו עם [כְּ]הֲנִיא וְלֹוִיא	כָּל כְּנִישְׁתָּא <דִּישְׁ-רָאֵל>

דהכין כתיב ומפרש. ואמר יי למשה ולאהרן בארעה דמצרים <<למימר>> ירחא
הדין <<לכון>> ריש ירחיא קדמאי הוא לכון לירחי שתא מלילו עם כל כנישתא כול'
(שמ' יב, א-ג)

קול ל-חן <גדלו אהיה

ישורון בִּירְאָתִי (!) צור תְּהָא חָבִיב / שְׁמֹר אֶת חֲדָשׁ הָאָבִיב פז <מון>

לְחֻדְשֵׁי שָׁנִים עֶשֶׂר
נִיסָן נִגִּיד וְשׁוֹר ...

[פליישר, 'ראש ראשי חדשים', עמ' 879-880]

שלם <קיצא דבני יתיב חברון / על יד משה ואהרן>

ל-חן <מטב בשורות
למשה ז"ל [ב ע"ב]

בְּרֵאשׁ לְכָל חֲדָשֵׁיכֶם חֲדָשׁוֹ רְנָנָה
רֵאשׁוֹן הוּא לְכֶם לְחֻדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה פז <מון>

מִלְכֵּי שְׁמוֹ / רֵאשׁ לְכָל חֲדָשִׁים
וּבֹ גָאֵל עֲמוֹ / מִיד כּוּשִׁים
וְלַעֲתִיד הַקִּימוֹ / לְעֹלֹת חֲמוּשִׁים 5
לְצִיּוֹן [ק]רִית חָנָה פז <מון>

שְׁדִי בִּמְחֻזָּה / דְּבַר בְּכַשְׁרוֹן
לְצוּפָה וּמֻזָּה / מִשָּׁה וְאַהֲרֹן
הַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה / לְכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן
לְ[ג]אוֹל בּוֹ שְׁלִישִׁית אוֹס נְאֻמָּנָה 10 פז <מון>

הטור בשוליים

[פזמון]

הָאֵל יִקְבֵּץ / עִם הַסְּרִי
 וְעִדְתּוֹ לְמִרְבֵּץ / יַעֲלוּ בְּשִׁירִים
 וְאוֹיְבֵים יִנָּפֵץ / כְּעֶשֶׂה בְּמִצְרַיִם
 וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה

פז<מון> ראשון

15 חֲלָקֵי יִי / אֶמְרָה נִפְשִׁי
 זְכוֹת אֵיתָנִי / זְכוֹר לִי קְדוֹשִׁי
 קִלְפֵּץ הַמוֹנִי / אֶל מְקֻדְשִׁי
 אֶנָּה יִי הַצְלִיחָה נָא

שלם קיצא <דבני יתיב חברון / על יד משה ואהרן>

ויקול להקדים הודו ליי כי טוב (תה' קו, א). יגיבו כי לעולם חסדו (שם). מרשות רבותי^[1]. יגיבו מרשות השמים. ב<רוך> א<תה> יי אל<הינו> מ<לך> <העולם> בורא <<פרי>> הגפן. פאן כאן סבת יקול ב<רוך> א<תה> יי אל<הינו> מ<לך> <העולם> אשר קדשנו ורצה בנו אלי מקדש השבת. וישרב. ואן כאן לילה אל אחד יבדי הודו ומרשות ובורא פרי הגפן ועצי בשמים וב^[1]רא מאורי האש אלי בין קדוש (!) לחול. תם

[פליישר, 'ראש ראשי חדשים', עמ' 880–881]

בְּרוּךְ אֲשֶׁר קִדֵּשׁ עִם קִדְשׁ
 בְּבִיאור כְּתָבִי קִדְשׁ ...

3 Translation

Note: Hebrew (and indeterminate) text is given in regular font, Aramaic in *italic*, and Arabic is underlined. The incipit of a *piyyut* the text of which is given in our source is marked by an asterisk. The *piyyut* 'On the chief of all your new moons', which is published here for the first time, is translated below. For the translation of 'The months of the year joined together', see the notes below. I have not translated the other *piyyutim*.

[...] *Might and Glory to the God of Heaven, who performed miracles of salvation for their fathers. Thus may He perform miracles of salvation for us, and may the Messiah come riding on clouds – a saviour for the exile of the entire House of Israel, and to quickly rebuild his royal house. As is written: 'And behold, with the clouds of heaven was coming one like a human being, and he reached the Ancient of Days, and they presented him to Him' (Daniel 7:13)*

And between every pericope, from ‘Eleison’ until the end, one says: *The time of the sons of the Hebron-dweller has been accomplished / by the hand of Moses and Aaron [...]*

**The months of the year joined together...*

The time of the sons of the Hebron-dweller has been accomplished / by the hand of Moses and Aaron

Then one intones: *‘Speak with the entire congregation of Israel, saying, on the tenth of this month each man shall take for themselves a lamb for a clan, one lamb per house’ (Exodus 12:13; Targum Onqelos). The entire congregation of Israel*

<i>Speak with fathers and sons</i>	<i>The entire congregation of Israel</i>
<i>Speak with mighty men and timid</i>	<i>The entire congregation of Israel</i>
<i>Speak with Priests and Levites</i>	<i>The entire congregation of Israel</i>

For thus it is written and translated: ‘And God said to Moses and Aaron in the Land of Egypt, saying: This month is for you the chief of the months, it is first of the months of the year. Speak with the entire congregation’, etc. (Exodus 12:1-3; Targum Onqelos)

Poem, to the melody of: Gaddelu Ehye

**Yeshurun, be beloved by fearing the Rock / “Observe the month of spring” (Deuteronomy 16:1)*

*Of the twelve months
Nisan is chief and prince*

The time of the sons of the Hebron-dweller has been accomplished / by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

To the melody of: Meitav besorot
By Moshe, may his memory be a blessing

**On the chief of all your new moons renew your cries of joy
‘It is the first for you of all the months of the year’ (Exodus 12:2) Refrain*

My King made it / the chief of all months
 And in it He redeemed his people / from the hand of the Cushites
 5 And He established it for the future / [for them] to go up armed
 To Zion, the city where [David] encamped Refrain

Shadday in a vision / spoke at an opportune [time]
 To the Seer and the Sprinkler, / Moses and Aaron
 'This month / is a remembrance for you'
 10 To redeem the Third, the faithful people Refrain

God will gather / the nation of [...]
 And His congregation to a resting place / will go up with songs
 And He will smash [their] enemies / as He did with the Egyptians
 And they will come with shouting to Zion Refrain

15 'The Lord is my portion', / says my soul
 The merit of my steadfast [Fathers] / remember for me, my Holy [God]
 Gather my multitudes / to my Sanctuary.
 O Lord, let [us] prosper! Refrain – It is first

The time of the sons of the Hebron-dweller has been accomplished / by the hand of Moses and Aaron

Then one says: First 'Thank the Lord, for He is Good' (Psalms 106:1). They respond: 'For His mercy endures forever' (Psalms 106:1). By the leave of our masters. They respond: By the leave of heaven. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the World, Creator of the fruit of the vine. And if it falls on a Sabbath, one says: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the World, who has sanctified us and desired us, until Sanctifier of the Sabbath. And one drinks. And if it falls on the eve of Sunday, one begins: Thank, and By the leave of, and Creator of the fruit of the vine, and Creator of Spice trees, and Creator of the fiery lights, up to between holy and profane. Then

*Blessed is He who sanctified the holy people
 Through the clarification of holy Writ ...

Notes on the text:

Eleison] This is the (Greek [!]) incipit of an Aramaic *piyyut* that appears earlier in the *qiddush* ceremony, in manuscript Cambridge, T-S H 12.11 fol. 6 (see above). The full text is given in Sokoloff and Yahalom 1999, 220–222.

The sons of the Hebron-dweller] A poetic epithet for Israel, the offspring of Abraham.

The months of the year joined together] For translation and commentary, see Rand 2015, 29–33.

Translated] For this meaning of Aramaic *mefarash*, compare ‘They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating (*meforash*) and giving it sense; so they understood the reading’ (Nehemiah 8:8), where the Hebrew equivalent is interpreted in the Jewish tradition to refer to an Aramaic translation. See Babylonian Talmud, *Megilla* 3a.

To the melody of: Gaddelu Ehye] This is the most common form of musical notation in the liturgical documents of the Geniza: the precentor is instructed to perform a *piyyut* according to the melody of another *piyyut*, which is assumed to be familiar. The *piyyut* serving here as the melody-label is by the Golden Age Hebrew poet Yehuda ha-Levi. See Brody 1930, 192.

Yeshurun, be beloved by fearing the Rock] For the text, see Fleischer 2012a, 879–880.

Meitav besorot] This *piyyut* is attested in other Geniza manuscripts, in its own right (manuscripts Cambridge, Mosseri V.30; T-S NS 274.87), and as a melody-label (manuscripts London, Or 5557V.38; Cambridge, T-S AS 133.102).

By Moshe, may his memory be a blessing] The *piyyut* that follows is attributed to an unknown poet named Moshe. The formula following his name indicates that he was deceased at the time the copy was produced. Such attributions are common in Geniza *piyyut* manuscripts.

On the chief of all your new moons] This *piyyut* is published here for the first time, and I therefore provide a commentary below. It is of a Spanish type that is characterized by a ‘girdle-like’ structure, the basic principle of which is that each main strophe (in this case, lines 3–6, 7–10, etc.) has its own rhyme scheme while at the same time concluding with a line whose rhyme remains fixed throughout the poem and therefore ‘undergirds’ it. The rhyme of each of these

last lines corresponds to the rhyme of the opening strophe (in this case, lines 1–2), which also serves as a refrain. In the present case, the lines of the main strophes exhibit internal rhyme, and only the second line of the opening strophe serves as a refrain, as indicated in line 18. The rhyme scheme of the opening strophe and the first two main strophes is as follows (/ indicates a hemistich boundary; – indicates a line boundary): a–a, b/c–b/c–b/c–a, d/e–d/e–d/e–a.

1–2 *On the chief...*: The opening strophe is also attested in manuscripts Cambridge, T-S NS 273.230, T-S AS 122.79 at the head of a *piyyut* by Yehuda ha-Levi, the incipit of whose first main strophe is יְעַף עַל סִבֵּל. See Jarden 1985, 1069–1071.

4 *Cushites*: An epithet for the Egyptians.

5 *to go up armed*: Based on ‘Now the Israelites went up armed out of the land of Egypt’ (Exodus 13:18).

6 *the city where [David] encamped*: Isaiah 29:1.

7 *Shadday in a vision*: ‘Shadday’ is an ancient, biblical epithet for God. The phrase is based on the oracles of Balaam: ‘... beholds visions of Shadday’ (Numbers 24:4, 16).

8 *the Sprinkler*: An epithet for Aaron the Priest, who sprinkled the sacrificial blood.

9 *This month is a remembrance for you*: Based on ‘This day shall be for you one of remembrance’ (Exodus 12:14).

10 *Third*: An epithet for Israel, based on ‘Israel shall be a third with Egypt and Assyria’ (Isaiah 19:24).

14 *And they will come with shouting to Zion*: Isaiah 35:10, 51:11.

15 *‘The Lord is my portion’, says my soul*: Lamentations 3:24.

16 *my steadfast [Fathers]*: An epithet for the Patriarchs, based on a rabbinic interpretation of the word *eitanim* ‘steadfast’ – see ‘In the month of the *Eitanim*’ (1 Kings 8:2) – [It is called thus] since the Patriarchs were born in it’ (Jerusalem Talmud, *Rosh Hashana* 1:2 [fol. 51b; ed. Academy of the Hebrew Language, 664]).

17 *my Sanctuary*: The Temple.

18 *O Lord, let [us] prosper*: Psalms 118:25.

Blessed are you ... Creator of the fruit of the vine] The benediction over wine, used in a *qiddush* ceremony.

Blessed are you ... Sanctifier of the Sabbath] The benediction that marks a Sabbath *qiddush*.

The eve of Sunday] Saturday night, the end of the Sabbath.

Creator of Spice trees ... Creator of the fiery lights] The first two benedictions marking the *Havdala* ceremony, performed the end of the Sabbath to usher in the beginning of the work week.

Between holy and profane] The concluding phrase of the third, and final, benediction of the *Havdala* ceremony.

Blessed is He who sanctified the holy people] For the text, see Fleischer 2012a, 880–881.

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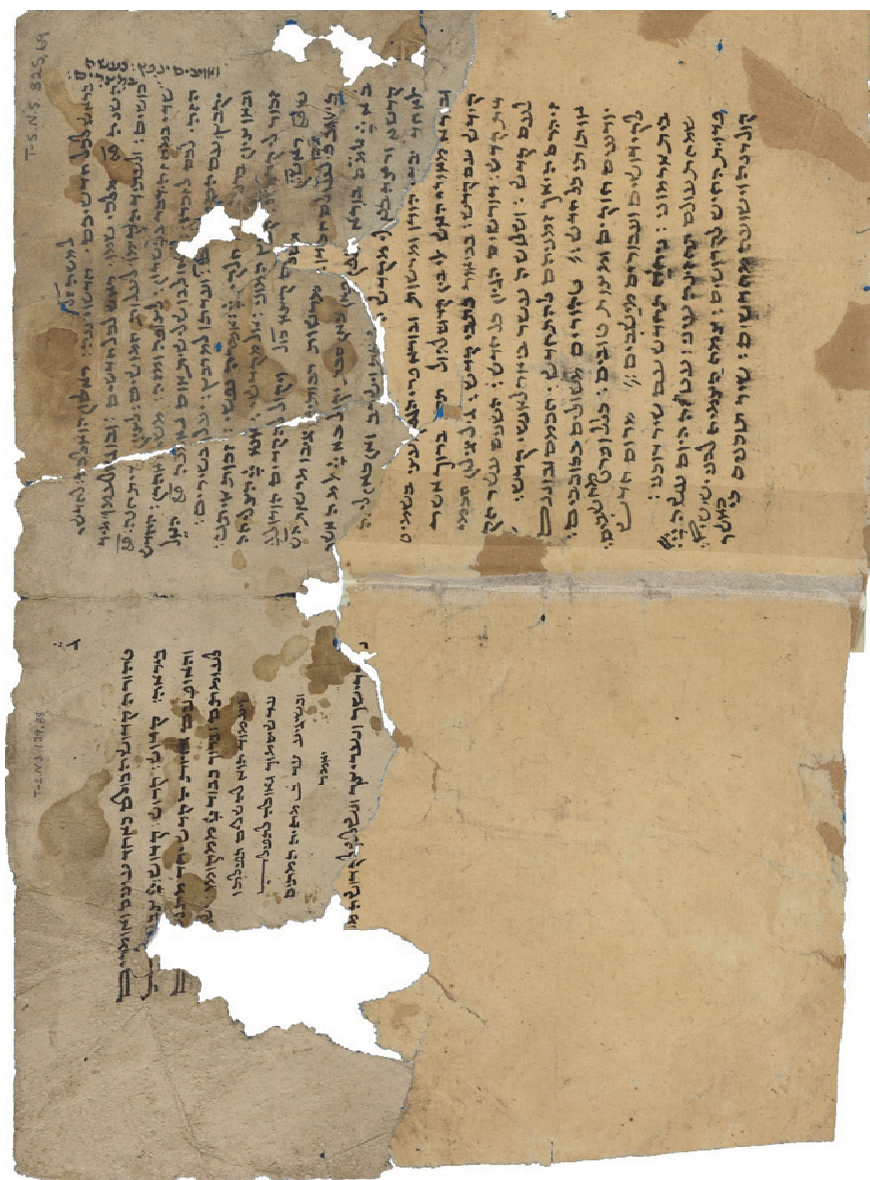


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