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ABSTRACTS

Yosef Tobi (Haifa University)

The Religious Aspect in War Poems of Shemu'el Ha-Nagid and in Andalusian Arabic Panegyrics

This article deals with Samuel Ha-Nagid's (993–1056) war-poems, comprising the most important and impressive part in his *diwān*. The religious element, so essential to these poems, is studied here in comparison with Arabic war-poems. Of specific interest will be the work of Ha-Nagid's contemporary, the Andalusian poet Ahmad ibn Darrāj Al-Qastallī (958–1030), one of whose panegyric war-poems is presented here in full Hebrew translation. The inclusion of the religious element into the *qasīdah* was not invented by Ha-Nagid; it was already found in Ibn Darrāj's work, and to some extent also in the poems of the earlier Oriental Arab poets. Ibn Darrāj's war-poems take the form of panegyrics penned in praise of victorious Muslim rulers who fought against either the Christians in northern Spain, or against other Muslim rulers. Unlike the Arabic panegyrics (including those of Ibn Darrāj), Ha-Nagid's heroic war-poems are addressed to God. While the Arab poets wrote their panegyrics for clear political purposes, Ha-Nagid shaped his poems as thanksgiving to God. Interpreting the victories of the Granadan armies under his command as divine intervention, he relates the events as personal salvation from mortal danger, and, moreover, as redemption of the entire Jewish nation from destruction. Hence, the thanksgiving element in his poems is dominant.

Matti Huss (Hebrew University)

Misogyny in the Hebrew Andalusian School of Poetry

The article presents a series of close readings in medieval Hebrew poems of various poetic genres (didactic and moral poems, poems of self-praise, panegyrics, poems of friendship, love poems and dirges) in which women's figures are characterized as negative and as endangering patriarchy. The beloved in love poetry, the wife in moral poems, and the allegorical figure of *Tevel* (Fate) in dirges and ascetic poetry, are all depicted as subversive threats to male society. Beneath their seductive beauty they are said to hide deceit, pain and death — metaphorical in love poetry, actual in moral and ascetic ones. Whereas these powerful women figures are said to defy the rules of patriarchy, men are depicted as submitting to female temptations. Male lovers are sexually enticed by their beloveds, husbands are threatened by evil wives, and humans surrender to the covetousness and greed symbolized by *Tevel*. The moral poems offer the male readers a series of regulations whose enactment was supposed to secure women's inferior position in society and neutralize their negative qualities. Injurious feminine qualities, powerful as they are, are presented as being able to be disciplined by patriarchy. The allegorical figure of Fate, on the other hand, is characterized in a different manner. Her annihilative power is actual and not potential and usually she gets the upper hand in her struggle with men. Only a select few who are able to cope with her seductive ways can overcome her. The beloved in love poetry is the most powerful of the three and the lovers' subordination to her is complete. The representational similarity between these different women figures in poems of various genres originates from a common conceptual deep structure — they all threaten to reverse patriarchal hierarchy and thus to bring about chaos and catastrophe.

Haviva Yishai (Tel Aviv University)

Text as Intertext: Medieval Hebrew Love Poetry and Medieval Arabic Prose

Intertextual theories insist that texts do not exist as hermetic wholes. Firstly, because the writer is a reader of texts before he is a creator of texts. Secondly, because a text is available only through some process of reading, and what is produced at the moment of reading is due to all the texts which the reader brings to it. This article tries to examine the intertextuality of Hebrew love poems from Al-Andalus. Its innovative suggestion is that the medieval Hebrew reader, when approaching these love poems, was already familiar with other intertexts, which included not only Arabic love poems but also Arabic love stories. In certain cases — as the one illustrated in this article — it could be proven that the Hebrew reader — more so in the past than in the present — was able to decode the poem's meaning with clues drawn from Arabic narrative prose.

Tova Beeri (Tel Aviv University)

A New Love Poem by Yehuda Halevi(?)

We still do not have, as of now, a complete and reliable edition of the poetic oeuvre of the great Andalusian poet Yehuda Halevi. The existing edition of his secular poems, edited some one hundred years ago by H. Brody, is based primarily on two manuscripts of Halevi's Diwan, now kept at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Since then many new poetic works by Yehuda Halevi were recovered from scattered manuscripts; most of these are of liturgical nature.

In the present article the author edits and analyses a new cheerful love poem written in the Andalusian form of *muwashshah* with an Arabic *kharja*. The text is found in three different manuscripts (Firkowich, ENA – New York and a Yemenite Tiklal), in one of them it is clearly attributed to Yehuda Halevi.

Masha Itzhaki (Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales)

Biblical Allusions as an Encoding Technique in Abraham Ibn Ezra's Riddles

The article examines Abraham Ibn Ezra's riddles, and in particular one of the encoding techniques he uses, based on the *Zimmud ha-Ne'elam* (the hidden homonym), where the text is referring to a biblical first name which has an additional meaning. This encoding system is rarely used by other Hebrew poets in Spain and therefore might be considered as typical to Abraham Ibn Ezra's style. Hence, it can be used as a style marker which enables to solve problems of attribution, so typical to a great number of Ibn Ezra's secular poems. Following this technique, the article studies in detail two riddles referring to a wine party, and proposes to consider both of them as Ibn Ezra's.

Reuven Tsur and Idith Eynath-Nov (Tel Aviv University)

Artistic Devices and Mystic Qualities in Hebrew Devotional Poems

There is in the Spanish Golden Age a small corpus of extremely rigid formulaic poems said to stem from *mercabah* mysticism. Such frozen formulae appear incompatible with the overpowering and fluid nature of mystic experience. We adopt Anton Ehrenzweig's psychoanalytic view that society defends itself against artistic devices that have "too dangerous" expressive power by turning them into rigid formulae and frozen ornaments. We explore some stages of this process by close analysis of a *mercabah* hymn and poems by Yitshak Ibn Ghayat and Shlomo Ibn Gabirol. Supplementing Ehrenzweig's conception with a notion derived from the Russian Formalists, we point out that not as in Ibn Ghayat, in Ibn Gabirol's poems some of the fossilized devices are "revived" and endowed with new expressive power. We examine such

different uses of one formula in view of Bergson's distinction between ordinary perception and metaphysical intuition in terms of "perceptions [that] are clear, distinct, juxtaposed or juxtaposable one with another", and "a succession of states each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it". We conceive of the rigid alphabetic formulae in these poems as fossils of the overwhelming mystic experience that may arise from practicing the "science of the combination of letters" reported by medieval mystics.

Binyamin Bar-Tikva (Bar Ilan University)

"Ava'er be-Milah Metukanah": Piyyut for Hannuka by Solomon Ibn Gabirol

The *piyyut* "Ava'er be-Milah Metukanah" ("I shall explain with a well-chosen word") by Solomon Ibn Gabirol, published here for the first time from ms. Ginsburg 197, is, to our best knowledge, the first *piyyut* of *Hannuka* laws written in Spain. Examined here are the special properties of this *piyyut* studied against the background of the *me'orah* type (a liturgical sub-genre accompanying the "yotzer ha-me'orot" prayer in the Sabbath and holiday morning service). Ibn Gabirol renovated the form of the traditional *me'orah* in introducing to his *piyyut* a special format and meter. From the aspect of content, the *payyetan* compressed into the relatively short space of this *piyyut* an outstanding amount of *Hannukah halachot*. Ibn Gabirol's poeticized halachic details — those included as well as those omitted — are considered here at length, primarily in comparison with the halachic decisions made by the author of *Halachot Gedolot*. Finally, we discuss in detail the three sections of the *piyyut*, the introduction, the main body and the conclusion, in comparison with the other Sephardic *me'orot* for *Hannuka*, including the well known halachic *me'orah* by R. Moshe Ibn Ezra, "*Shemor Dat Hannuka*" ("Observe the law of *Hannuka*"). Ibn Gabirol's amazing skill is manifested here in the realm of halachic *piyyutim*, blazing a new trail with a *piyyut* of impressive depth and beauty.

Joseph Yahalom (The Hebrew University)

From Lyric to Liturgy in the Gabirolian Tradition

Only few scholars dispute the credit given to Shelomoh Ibn Gabirol for having introduced to liturgical Hebrew poetry the sub-genre of the personal prayer. However, his achievement in this respect has yet to be properly evaluated in the context of his historical models. David, the composer of the scriptural personal Psalms, may be regarded as the founder of liturgical Hebrew poetry. The same holds for Solomon the Wise. According to Shmuel Ha-Nagid's own testimony, his poems may be seen as an extension of the Psalmist tradition of sacred poetry addressed to God. In his war-poems Ha-Nagid refers to King David as his model and guide — both as military commander and as poet. However, unlike Ha-Nagid's poems, Gabirol personal poetic prayers soon developed into synagogal pieces. Remarkable as it might be, individual worshippers, as well as a broad section of the public, were apparently able to identify with Ibn Gabirol's personal religious longings. His short personal religious poems (*reshuyot*) were in due time adopted as paraliturgical texts. Set as short introductions to the public prayer service, the worshipper turns through them to God and to his own soul, seeking inspiration and permission (*reshut*) to utter a new song before Him.

Yehudah Ratzhaby (Bar Ilan University)

New Piyyutim from the Treasures of the *Geniza*

The Cairo *Geniza* has enriched Hebrew literature with numerous new *piyyutim*. Published here with commentaries are six hitherto unknown *piyyutim*, some of which have been lately unearthed in poetic collections from countries previously belonging to the Soviet Union. Some of these anonymous poems show traits of the Spanish school.

Ephraim Hazan (Bar Ilan University)

The Dove Symbol in an Unknown Poem of Mandil Avizimrah of Algiers

Relatively unknown to the wider public, Mandil Avizimrah is considered by scholars to be the greatest North African *paytan*. Belonging to the second generation of the expellees from Spain, his poetry is representative of the center of Hebrew poetry that arose in Algiers following the Expulsion, and that was active for an unbroken span of some two centuries. His literary work is a clear continuation of the poetry of Spain, albeit with innovations and original developments.

The properties of Mandil's poetry are expressed in a heretofore-unknown poem that is presented for the first time here, along with textual variants and an extensive commentary. The poem is constructed around the metaphor of the dove as *Knesset Israel* (the Israelite nation). The uniqueness and beauty of the poem lies primarily in its development of the metaphor of the dove in an extremely rich description capturing every detail and movement of the dove. This use of metaphor joins together with the use of other poetical techniques, such as the use of alliteration and of Biblical allusion.

Yehudit Dishon (Bar Ilan University)

Exile and Redemption in The Book of Tahkemoni by Judah Alharizi

This article deals with the views of Judah Alharizi on exile and redemption, two important issues at his times, as expressed in several maqamat in his Book of Tahkemoni. Although he abhors *galuth* and awaits redemption eagerly, he refuses to consider any unnatural way that may bring it into being. He even declines to speculate when, at the latest, it may come about.

Tova Rosen (Tel Aviv University)

Eros and Intellect in the First Maqama by Jacob Ibn Eleazar

The problematic relationship between the human Soul, the Body and the Cosmic Intellect was elaborated in many medieval works, speculative as well as literary. This subject found its keen dramatic expression in an allegorical *maqama* written by Jacob Ibn Eleazar in the first half of the thirteenth century. Considered by scholars as "complicated and ambiguous," the story is staged within the human psyche. The human Soul, personified as a haughty and pretty princess, is in love with the Intellect embodied as a military commander; the Body, a brutish scoundrel, tries to prevent their rendezvous; Philosophy, a tempting woman is the Intellect's beloved, and the medium through which the Soul will reach its intellectual goal. The author / narrator, whose different parts are in fierce conflict with each other, appears also as a dramatic person side-by-side with his fictional figures. The article proposes to examine this allegory against the background of contemporary European models, as well as against the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. Rosen insists that for Ben Eleazar, the pictorial-sensual level of this maqama is no less significant than its moral, abstract level.

Aviva Doron (Haifa University)

Shelomo Dapiera's Concept of Poetry Against the Background of Poetical Changes in Christian Spain

Shelomo Ben Meshulam Dapiera (Aragon, second half of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth), saw Hebrew poetry as both vocation and mission. Well accepted by his contemporaries, and serving also as teacher to younger poets, his work provides an interesting case reflecting poetical trends of his period. His concepts concerning the nature and role of poetry can be readily discerned from his intensely ars-poetical

poetic oeuvre. Following his Jewish predecessors in Christian Spain (and especially Todros Abulafia) he personifies “the poem,” thus creating various metaphors of relationship and mutual dependence between poet and poem. Confident in his ability to master the craft of poetry, he seems to tread the path of the Andalusian poets. However, contrarily to their perception that “the best of poetry is its lies” (as is Moses Ibn Ezra dictum) Dapiera emphasized poetry as being the very vehicle of moral truth. This concept coincides with prevailing trends in Christian Spain, both in general and Hebrew literature. A Spanish trend known as “El mester de clerecia,” represented by Gonzalo de Berceo, set itself the objective of expressing religious truth. For Alfonso X, The Wise, the poem expresses the truth bestowed which is upon the poet from a supreme source. During the same period Hebrew poets (Meshulam Dapiera and Shem Tov Falaquera) discuss the truth-value of poetry. Shelomo Dapiera continues this poetical process and finely hones it by defining the truth expressed in his poem as a message received from a supreme source.

Israel Levin (Tel Aviv University)

The Influence of Medieval Ashkenazic Chronicles and *Piyyutim* on Poems by H.N. Bialik

The article examines the intertextual relations between the liturgical genre of the Ashkenazic *qinot* (Lamentations) and poems by the modern Hebrew poet H.N. Bialik relating to Jewish martyrology, past and present. Bialik's poems *Im yesh et nafshekha lada'at* and *Be'ir haharega* manifest his thorough acquaintance with the traditions of past Jewish literature. The article argues that he was deeply — and consciously — influenced by the chronicles and *piyyutim* reflecting the horrors that the Jewish communities in Germany went through during the Crusades, as well as with the accounts of the persecutions and pogroms during the Cossack's uprising in the Ukraine and Poland in the seventeenth century. Bialik's active dialogue with these traditions is evident in the contents, style and idiom of his poems.

Relying on these sources, he draws in *Im yesh et nafshekha lada'at* a heroic image of the Jewish martyrs, lamenting their affliction and humiliation and extolling their ethos of *kiddush hashem*. In *Be'ir haharega* ["The Town of Slaughter"] written shortly after the notorious pogrom in Kishinev, Bialik intentionally adopted the descriptive technique of the Ashkenazic *qinot*. The scenes of slaughter are naturalistically illustrated to the smallest horrifying detail. Exposing the bestial brutality of the murderers; protesting against the indifference of the world, and identifying with the victims, he now also sharply criticizes the behavior of the survivors. They are described, harshly and relentlessly, as mere phantoms, debased and defeated, hollow and devoid of values. As Bialik views them, they did not live up to the traditional spiritual values of the heroic martyrs of the past.

Menachem H. Schmeltzer (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York)

An Unknown *Ma'ariv Piyyut* for *Simhat Torah*

In the various prayer rites of medieval Jewry, liturgical poems added to the evening service of the holidays were very popular. This was particularly true in the prayer services of Franco-German Jews. Until now eight such compositions have been known of the Franco-German prayer book for the festival of Shemini Atzereth/ Simhat Torah. A previously unknown liturgical poem for this festival was found in a thirteenth century manuscript of Franco-German liturgical poems at the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, #8972, f. 163b. The poem has an acrostic: Moshe, and it is possible that the name of the father of the poet (Yosef) was also signed. The identity of the poet could not be established. The poem is unvocalized, probably indicating that already at the time of the writing of the manuscript, it was not the actual liturgical use any longer. The text of the composition is presented here, with vocalization and with commentary.

Eli Yassif (Tel Aviv University)

‘Virgil in the Basket’: Memory and Authority in the Hebrew Narratives of the Middle Ages

The question of narrative authority is the center of interest of medieval studies for more than half a century. While this issue has been studied in depth in the scholarship of medieval Christian culture, it went almost unnoticed in the study of Jewish medieval narratives. An attempt is being made here to face the question by analyzing one outstanding novella from an early fourteenth century manuscript. The tale is known in European medieval literature as “Virgil in the Basket”. However, the Hebrew version, which is among the oldest existing ones, has been hitherto unknown to European medievalists. This erotic-magic novella is included in a historical, authoritative work on Jewish history. At first glance, it is apparently alien to the texts which surround it. Moreover, its almost pornographic qualities oppose not only Jewish moral norms, but also the very essence of historical writing. The article attempts to answer these questions from three different angles: The medium, the context and the unconscious. Analysis of the story on these levels shows that in these case questions of authority cannot be discussed in conventional terms (such as: Who was the authority who presented the text? What is the nature of the document in which it was preserved?). More complex and refined tools are needed to solve these questions.

Alessandro Guetta (Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales)

Moshe da Rieti Elegy at the Death of his Wife

Moshe da Rieti (1388–1467) is primarily known for *Miqdash Me'at* (A Small-scale Sanctuary), a poem in tercets, with narrative passages. Intended as a Jewish response to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and relating a journey in the “Jewish” Paradise, it is, in fact, an encyclopaedia of Jewish

and universal knowledge. Presented here is an elegy written on the death of the poet's wife. The text is remarkable both in its form — a highly erudite rhymed prose, apparently typical of Rieti — and for the depth of emotion it expresses. As we try to demonstrate, it belongs stylistically to the second phase of his poetical production. This is the first annotated critical edition of the elegy, prefaced by a short introduction to the life and work of a man who was one of the protagonists of Jewish intellectual life in Italy at the dawn of the Renaissance.

Dan Almagor (Tel Aviv)

Fourteen Love Poems by Joseph Zarfati

A critical annotated edition of fourteen hitherto unpublished love-poems by Joseph Zarfati (Rome-Florence; died 1527), based on Ms. Bodl. 554.

Dvorah Bregmann (Ben Gurion University)

Five Wedding Poems by Moshe Zacuto

R. Moshe Zacuto (c. 1610–1697), poet, playwright, and great authority on Halacha and Kabala, left nearly 250 poems. Part of them was printed in various prayer-books intended for mystical *shomerim laboker* (“Morning Guards”) groups. The rest remains mostly in his autograph, in the Kaufmann collection housed in Budapest. As customary in Italy, Zacuto composed poems for weddings, as well as for other social occasions. His unique style is evident in the five wedding poems published here for the first time. The poems’ intricate syntax, their rare vocabulary, abundance of allusions to old Hebrew sources, as well as the great variety of their verse forms and meters, constitute fine models of the Hebrew-Italian Baroque. I am presently preparing a comprehensive edition of Zacuto’s poetry, due to be published by Machon Ben Tzvi, Jerusalem.

Zvi Malachi (Tel Aviv University)

Solving Riddles: Five Poetical Hebrew-Italian Riddles for Weddings

The genre of poetical riddles was most popular in Hebrew literature in Italy and the Netherlands during the eighteenth century. Jews composed complicated literary riddles according to a special detailed code. The riddles, used in special social events such as weddings, were often beautifully printed and artistically decorated. Most of the riddles are quite difficult to decipher, unless by sheer luck one happens to find in manuscripts the original solutions. Printed here from old manuscripts (retained in the Israel Museum and in private collections) are five such riddling-poems with their original poetic solutions, accompanied by a commentary.