

INTRODUCTION

This study is devoted to a description of the Hebrew style in the liturgical poems composed by an important paytan who lived in Palestine at the end of the tenth century, Shmuel ben Hosha'na. It is based on the reconstruction of numerous poetic texts by Prof. Joseph Yahalom, culled from some 650 Genizah fragments. The stylistic analysis of this paytan's literary works hopes to reveal two opposing trends concealed in his personal Hebrew style itself, *uniqueness* and *universality*. On the one hand, these are stylistic characteristics unique to this paytan, or to his time and place, and on the other a number of characteristics common to other paytanim of different times and places, or to the Hebrew language in general throughout its long history from the biblical and rabbinic periods down to the present day. A discussion of the following three topics will serve as an introduction to this study:

- I. Shmuel ben Hosha'na as portrayed in the Genizah documents
- II. Periodization of the history of piyyut against the background of time and place
- III. Considerations on the question of poetic style

I Shmuel ben Hosha'na as Portrayed in the Genizah Documents

Shmuel ben Hosha'na, the most important paytan in the final stage of the period when Palestinian liturgical poetry or *piyyut* flourished, was born in the latter third of the tenth century. He was active in the Palestinian religious academy, and in the early eleventh century reached the status of the *shlishi ba-havura* ("third in the assembly"), that is, the person seated third at the Palestinian academy, after the *gaon* and the *av bet din*. The period in which he lived was characterized by wars and hardship, and the creative liturgical activity of the Jews of Palestine came to an end with the Crusader conquest of the Holy Land in 1099.

Before entering into a detailed investigation of Shmuel HaShlishi's poetic style, it will be helpful to draw a portrait of the poet against the background of his time. In this we are, of course, greatly aided by documentation uncovered by historians of the period (J. Mann, S.D. Goitein, M. Gil and others). Despite the importance of the historical texts, historians of the period in question are not always familiar with contemporary literary materials. In this respect the acrostic signatures of the liturgical poet, which indicate his rank at the time of composition, are of considerable significance. Relying on the various extant name acrostics in the piyyutim by Shmuel ben Hosha'na, we can divide his life and his work into five periods:

- a) the period before he was given any official title
- b) the period in which he held the title of *haver*
- c) the period in which he held the position of *revi'i*
- d) the period in which he held the position of *shlishi*

e) the final years of his life, which he spent in Egypt.

The earliest information about R. Shmuel can be found in a letter dated *c.* 980, which deals with the estate of a freed slave by the name of Bundar of Palermo who bequeathed a quarter of his property to “the poor of Jerusalem”. Part of the money was passed on to Yosef HaKohen, the Gaon of the Palestinian academy, who is also known to us as the father of Shmuel HaKohen Gaon. Shmuel ben Hosha‘na, who was on the island of Sicily at the time, arranged for the transfer of the funds from the island to Jerusalem. In this document Shmuel is referred to without a title: “R. Shmuel [ben kevod] morenu verabbenu Hosha‘na”. Ten years later he is still referred to without a title. In a letter from *c.* 990, the anonymous writer, who is sending a substantial contribution to the poor of Ramle and the sages of the academy, requests that the addressee distribute the funds together with Shmuel HaKohen ben Yosef, who was at that time *av bet din*. The writer explicitly states that Shmuel ben Hosha‘na, who was then in Ramle, should receive a portion of the contribution. It is likely that in this period Shmuel ben Hosha‘na wrote some of his *yotsrot* for the weekly Shabbats, which he signed “Shmuel Yizke”, without any specific professional title.

The second period of his life, the last decade of the tenth century, when he received the title *haver* (“associate scholar”), was probably his most active as a paytan. During this period he devoted a lot of time to his literary activities and was apparently much less active in academic matters. It is interesting to note that not a single historical document bearing his name with the title *haver* has come down to us. However, this is the most frequent professional title found in the name acrostic signatures among his piyyutim (*c.* 80 percent). It is likely that he composed the majority of his liturgical work during this period, including a complete *mahzor* of *yotzrot* for the weekly *parashot*, as well as a number of compositions for festivals. At the same time he composed poems of different genres, including *rehitim* (“short poems”), *hespedim* (“mourning poems”), and *reshuyyot* (“preludes”) in Aramaic.

The third period, at the turn of the tenth century, was decisive for confirming Shmuel ben Hosha‘na’s position at the academy. From this moment on he developed ties with the Egyptian community of Fostat, and particularly with Shmarya ben Elhanan, the leader of the Babylonian community in that city. Besides this Babylonian community in Fostat there was also a Jerusalemite community, and the numerous ties maintained with the Babylonian community by Shmuel ben Hosha‘na – a man who was active in the Palestinian academy – are, on the surface, astonishing. Nevertheless, the situation was complex. First of all, the authority wielded by Shmarya ben Elhanan, together with his father Elhanan and his son, also named Elhanan, was considerable because there was no leader of the Jerusalemite community who was capable of competing with him. R. Shmarya was, to all intents and purposes, the leader of both the Fostat communities at this time. At the same time, R. Shmarya, who had studied at Pumbedita and received his ordination there, gradually cut himself off from the Eastern academy and developed ties with the academy in Palestine. Below we shall examine the very close ties between Shmarya ben Elhanan and Shmuel ben Hosha‘na.

A letter written by Shmuel HaKohen ben Yosef, Gaon of the Palestinian academy, to Shmarya ben Elhanan, *c.* 1000, shows that a group opposed to the leadership of Shmuel HaKohen had tried to appoint a man named Yosef HaKohen ben Menahem, from a rival priestly family, instead of him. The *av bet din* at the time was Shmuel HaKohen’s

brother Hananya, and Shmuel ben Hosha‘na was the *revi ‘i*, the fourth in rank within the assembly of rabbis. The rival group then tried to elicit the help of these two prominent personalities, Shmarya ben Elhanan and Shmuel ben Hosha‘na, promising that if Yosef HaKohen ben Menahem was appointed *gaon*, he would appoint R. Shmarya as *av ben din* and Shmuel ben Hosha‘na would become the *shlishi*, or the third of the assembly of sages. The same source relates that Shmuel ben Hosha‘na, who acted out of loyalty to the leadership of Shmuel HaKohen Gaon, prevented the rivals from carrying out their plans. Perhaps as a reward for this loyalty, Shmuel ben Hosha‘na was granted the title of *shlishi* a short time afterwards. Shmarya ben Elhanan was also promoted, and he became *av bet din*, though he was required to sever his ties with the academy in Pumbedita. According to the testimony of the Gaon of Pumbedita, Rav Hai, he ceased to be in contact with the East: “R. Shmarya ... has joined the company of Eretz HaTzvi (the Land of Israel)”. Word of this reached Spain, as Dunash ben Labrat notes in a poem he composed in his honor.

Early in 1002, Shmuel ben Hosha‘na sent a letter to Avraham bar Sahlan, the future leader of Fostat’s Babylonian community, discussing the suffering of the Jews of the Land of Israel as a result of the war between the Turks and the Berbers led by the caliph Al-Hakim. At this time R. Shmuel was still signing his name “*harevi ‘i*”. The letter contained a piyyut that described the communities’ distress. It is easy to conclude that in relatively quiet times the paytan was able to devote himself to conventional compositions of yotsrot for a weekly portion of Tora, whereas the difficult situation facing R. Shmuel resulted in a kind of “history-based” piyyut, one that was detached from the standard liturgical conventions. During this same period he also composed a long composition based on the Song of Songs for the seventh day of Passover, and perhaps also *yotzrot* for festivals.

In the fourth period of his activity, the first decade of the eleventh century, during which he was granted the title *shlishi*, R. Shmuel was once again active in academic matters. In a promissory note drawn up in Jerusalem on November 10, 1004, Shmuel ben Hosha‘na, the final signatory, signs as “Shmuel HaShlishi bahavura birabbi” (Samuel the Third in the Assembly). He also does so on another promissory note drawn up in Damascus on June 24, 1007. Recently, a letter by R. Shmuel has been discovered, written in his own hand and addressed to a man named Maimon ben David. This letter is undated but it was clearly written at this stage as it was signed “HaShlishi”. R. Shmuel also wrote several *yotzrot* for festivals during this period.

The final years of R. Shmuel’s life in Fostat are well documented in the Cairo Genizah. From 1010 there is a letter by R. Shmuel which he sent from Jerusalem to his friend Shmarya ben Elhanan in Fostat. Here, R. Shmuel asks R. Shmarya to look after Natan ben Avraham – who was later appointed *av bet din* of the academy – who had decided to leave Jerusalem for Fostat in order to look after his father’s estate and inheritance after the latter’s death. Apparently Shmuel visited Fostat frequently during this period. A certificate drawn up in Fostat on July 24, 1011 is signed “Shmuel HaShlishi”, and it is virtually certain the poet was staying there at the time. We are informed in one of the letters that Shmarya ben Elhanan died at the end of 1011 from the plague that had spread through Fostat, and that R. Shmuel came to participate in the funeral. During his stay, the hazan Paltiel also died. This happened on December 31, 1011. The participants in the funeral procession were attacked by Muslims, who

threw stones at them and dragged them to the authorities. Twenty-three of them were arrested, including Shmuel HaShlishi. They were condemned to be executed the next day. However, Al-Hakim deferred to the entreaties of the Jews of Fostat and ordered the prisoners' release. The community then established the third of Shevat as a day of fasting to commemorate the incident. R. Shmuel wrote a literary treatise commemorating the events (called the Egyptian Scroll), and he devoted several piyyutim to the theme of the incident for this annual fast day. Two *qerovot* based on the *shemoneh 'esre*, two *selihot*, and two *rehitim* are still extant today. Poetry in this context takes on an added burden, serving the community's needs in difficult times. A short while later, apparently in 1012, R. Shmuel died, as the above-mentioned letter describing the events in question refers to him with the epithet "of blessed memory" (ז'ל).

II Periodization of the History of Piyyut against the Background of its Time and Place

Joseph Yahalom, in two lectures delivered in August 2001 ("Poetic Language in the Middle Ages") and December 2002 ("Traces of Spoken Language in Poetic Language in the Middle Ages"), offered a new and interesting periodization of the history of the early piyyut against the background of its cultural setting:

- a) The Eastern period under Christian influence (Yannai and El'azar birabbi Qillir)
- b) The Eastern period under Muslim influence (Sa'adia Gaon and Shmuel HaShlishi)
- c) The Western period under Muslim influence (Shlomo ibn Gabirol and Moshe ibn Ezra)

Both the description of the stylistic characteristics of the piyyutim by Shmuel HaShlishi, and the search for stylistic parallels among other paytanim, make it clear that our paytan undoubtedly shares many of his stylistic characteristics with contemporary paytanim of the second period; many prominent stylistic parallels are strikingly evident in the literary compositions of Sa'adia Gaon. On the other hand, it should be noted that our paytan also maintains clear stylistic links to the paytanim of both the previous (Christian-Eastern) period and of the subsequent (Muslim-Western) period; especially impressive are the stylistic links between him and some of the most important paytanim of the second half of the first period, such as El'azar birabbi Qillir, and to paytanim of the first half of the third period, such as Shlomo ibn Gabirol. If we only examine the stylistic characteristics of these paytanim and ignore their different cultural settings for the time being, then we get the impression that El'azar birabbi Qillir is closer to Shmuel HaShlishi than to Yannai, and Shlomo ibn Gabirol is closer to Shmuel HaShlishi than to Moshe ibn Ezra.

B-1 Style of the Muslim-Eastern Period

The language and style of Shmuel HaShlishi and the parallels with other paytanim are analyzed in detail in the main body of this study. Here we will present some interesting examples to illustrate such inter-paytanic styles in the Muslim-Eastern period.

B-1-1 Strong Link with Sa'adia Gaon

As Menahem Zulai has already demonstrated in his book "The Paytanic School of R. Sa'adia Gaon", and as is well known to all those who are engaged in research into the

early piyyut, Shmuel HaShlishi possesses a strong and clear stylistic link with Sa'adia Gaon. In every chapter of the present study, clear traces of the Sa'adianic style are extremely evident. Thus, for example, the denominative derivation: Shmuel HaShlishi uses the root h-m-l (derived from a noun: *hamula*, cf. Jer. 11:16; Ezek. 1:24) as a real verb: *hahayot ratzo vashov kabazaq lehomla* ("to create the living creatures, which run and return like a flash of lightning"). This root is usually used as a passive participle of the *qal* pattern, in masculine plural: *hamulim*, as an epithet for angels. The use of this root as a real verb can be only found in Sa'adia Gaon, in his *barkhi nafshi*: *hahomel mal'akhav leharev* ("one who creates his angels to increase them"), and also in his *azharot*: *betzetkha hamalta siqe reshef lemana* ("when you went out, you created the sparking fire as a gift").

Both paytanim tend to use neologisms in line with the Aramaic equivalent. For example, Shmuel HaShlishi uses the Hebrew root b-n-s in the meaning 'to get angry' in line with the Aramaic equivalent root (cf. Dan. 2:12): *uvakhem ertze velo evnesa* ("In you shall I take pleasure, and shall not be angry"), and so does Sa'adia Gaon in his *essa meshali*: *elohim 'al tzorremo qatzaf uvanas* ("God is angry and wrathful about his enemies").

Some unique nominal forms are common to both of these paytanim. 1) Shmuel HaShlishi uses the unique form of a noun *mif'ol*, instead of the regular form *mif'al*, in the meaning "act": *mif'alah lemif'ol hamotah behidamo* ("when her act resembled her mother-in-law's one"). The same form can only be found in Sa'adia's answers to Hiwi HaBalkhi: *veze mimif'ol ha'adam* ("and this is from the act of the man"). 2) Shmuel HaShlishi uses the unique form of a noun *ametzet*, instead of the regular form *amitza*: *'uri ametzet hamahatzevet meduka kehalal* ("awake, a strong woman, who has cut the one which is trodden down like carrion"). Sa'adia also opens his *barkhi nafshi* with the following words: *barkhi aberet ve ametzet* ("bless, a mighty and strong soul"). In fact, Sa'adia not only uses this unique nominal form in his poems but also in his epistolary writings. In two letters to the community of Egypt he writes *rohav vehokhma ametzet* ("width and strong wisdom"), and *uteshu 'a ametzet* ("and strong salvation").

B-1-2 Links to Other Contemporary Paytanim from Different Centres

In addition to this clear stylistic link with Sa'adia Gaon, Shmuel HaShlishi also displays links with other contemporary paytanim from different centers: 1) Italy, 2) Ashkenaz, 3) Babylonia, 4) Spain, 5) Egypt, 6) and Eretz-Israel.

B-1-2-1 Italy

Among the contemporary paytanim in Italy, such as Amitai bar Shefatya (9th century) and Shlomo HaBavli (10th century), we find stylistic resemblance in the introduction of Talmudic words (Aramaic and Greek) into their piyyutim. 1) Shmuel HaShlishi uses the Aramaic word *izgad* (=messenger) in his piyyut: *me izgade tzirim* ("from the messengers of the leaders"). This Aramaic word can also be found in the piyyutim of Amitai bar Shfatya: *hat'u izgadim hutz mishnayim* ("the messengers committed a sin, except the two"), and of Shlomo HaBavli: *egod ahehem izgadim* ("join together their brothers, the messengers"). 2) Shmuel HaShlishi uses the Greek word *ikonin* (εἰκών, image) in his piyyut: *kavod halaq lamalkhut besha 'a she ikonin shelo ra'a* ("he expressed his honor for the kingdom, when he saw his image"). Amitai bar Shefatya

also uses this Greek word in his piyyut: *ikonin shel 'aviv letzayro* (“to paint the image of his father”). 3) One of the favorite stylistic characteristics of Shmuel HaShlishi is the use of a pair of synonyms. He often creates such a pair by combining a Hebrew word and an Aramaic equivalent: *betah lishqot uleshodkha* (“to be quiet and silent safely”). The Hebrew root sh-q-t is equivalent to the Aramaic root sh-d-kh. The same pair also appears in a piyyut by Shlomo HaBavli: *shemarav shoqet shodekh shahutz* (“one who has settled on his lees is now divided”). Here Shlomo HaBavli uses the biblical verse, “and he has settled on his lees” (Jer. 48:11), while changing the biblical word *veshoqet* into a pair of Hebrew/Aramaic synonyms: *shoqet shodekh*.

B-1-2-2 Ashkenaz

Shmuel HaShlishi also reveals stylistic resemblance to contemporary paytanim in Ashkenaz, such as Shim'on bar Itzhak (10th century), Meshulam bar Qalonimus (10th century), and Binyamin ben Shmuel (11th century). 1) Shmuel HaShlishi uses the root n-b-ʿ in the *hif'il* pattern by twice keeping the *nun* letter in his piyyutim. He actually makes a semantic distinction between this unique form *hinbia* ʿ in the meaning “to pour” and the regular form without the *nun*: *hibia* ʿ in the meaning “to express”: *uvimeluhav metuqim lehanbi'ehu* (“and to pour sweet water out of bitter”), and: *be'er pikh mayim hayim tanbia* ʿ le'edri (“the well of your mouth will pour living waters for my flock”). This form also appears in a piyyut by Shim'on bar Itzhak: *tzorer mayim umanbia* ʿ (“one who ties water and pours”). 2) Shmuel HaShlishi is fond of using the roots r-g-g / r-g-r-g in the meaning “to love”. He even creates a noun in the *qitlon* nominal pattern: *rigyon ahava le'orer heyot devarav li lesason* (“to awake love, because his word is to me the joy”). Meshulam bar Qalonimus also uses this word in this sense: *lehayav ka'arugot tzomhot bosem rigyonim* (“his cheeks are like garden beds which grow perfume of love”). 3) Shmuel HaShlishi uses a rare Hebrew root t-sh-q in the *nif'al* pattern derived from a noun *teshuqa*: *hel shishim ushemonim va'alamot ein mispar nitshaq* (“the force of sixty, eighty, and young women without number, is preferred”). Binyamin ben Shmuel also uses this root in the *qal* pattern: *tashaq 'edo shtayim ve'esrim* (“he has longed for his witness for twenty-two years”).

B-1-2-3 Babylonia

In addition to the strong stylistic links which Shmuel HaShlishi maintains with Sa'adia Gaon, some stylistic resemblance can be also found with other contemporary paytanim in Babylonia. 1) The most prominent of such paytanim is Yosef al-Baradani. Thus, for example, the opening of *guf hayotzer* for the portion of *ahare mot* composed by Shmuel HaShlishi contains some expressions common to a *masdar* by Yosef al-Baradani for the same weekly portion. Whereas Shmuel HaShlishi writes: *gor yagur pen yufga' beharon / devir lo yikanes bekhlo 'et limeqom aron* (“he should be afraid unless he will be injured with wrath / he should not enter sanctuary at all times, to the place of ark”), Yosef al-Baradani says: *ze nam le'anav al yavo ah bekhlo 'et pen yufga' beharon* (“God said to Moses, he come not at all times unless he will be injured with wrath”). The phrase *pen yufga' beharon* is only found in these two piyyutim. 2) Another Babylonian paytan is Avraham HaKohen of Baghdad, who was also related to the Baradani family. Although we do not have so many poems by him, we cannot ignore the stylistic resemblance between him and Shmuel HaShlishi. For example, while Shmuel HaShlishi uses the

segolic noun *zeleg* in the meaning “water”: *vayidlaf kema ‘yan zilgenu* (“and it dropped like our well of water”), so does Avraham HaKohen of Baghdad: *revot kol nefesh mizelagav nimtze ‘a* (“to drink every soul which exists on his water”).

B-1-2-4 Spain

Shmuel HaShlishi also bears strong stylistic resemblance to a paytan who came from Spain and worked in the East, Yosef ibn Abitur. We will discuss the relations between these two paytanim in this paragraph and not in the paragraph dedicated to the discussion of the links to the Muslim-Western period. 1) Shmuel HaShlishi is very fond of using the root ‘-sh-l (derived from a noun *eshel*) as a real verb. He does so five times in his piyyutim: *veta ‘ashilo; ha ‘ashel; le ‘eshol; leha ‘ashilo; ashulah*. Interestingly, Yosef ibn Abitur is also fond of using this root as a real verb. He does so three times in his piyyutim: *ye ‘ashelu; hane ‘eshal; ne ‘ashel neshel*. 2) Another example of denominative derivation relates to the root h-l-m. Shmuel HaShlishi uses this root (derived from a noun *halom*) as a real verb in the *hif’il* pattern in the meaning “to let him dream” four times in his piyyutim, and not in the regular meaning “to recover from illness”: *vehehelimo; halomot hehelamta; hehelim; hehelamta*. So does Yosef ibn Abitur: *vehehelimo halomot*.

B-1-2-5 Egypt

Shmuel HaShlishi’s stylistic characteristics can be also found in an Egyptian paytan who lived in the 11th century, Sahlan bar Avrahan. It is known that this paytan elegized Shmuel HaShlishi. He also had a fair knowledge of Shmuel HaShlishi’s piyyutim, as we learn from a letter in which he discussed the meaning of the words *de ‘uqa; da ‘aqa*, which appeared in HaShlishi’s *yotzrot* for the New Year. In fact, we find some unique words which are used by both of the paytanim. So, for example, Shmuel HaShlishi uses the word: *rahayon* (=fear): *zohalim kol panim vegodrim mipahadat rahayon dinim* (“they fear in all faces and are gloomy from the fear of the judgments”). This word is only used by Sahlan bar Avrahan, interestingly in his elegy on the demise of Shmuel HaShlishi: *qirvehem homarmaru vehardu berahayon* (“their entrails were troubled and trembled in fear”).

B-1-2-6 Eretz Israel

It is interesting to note that we do not find so many clear stylistic links between Shmuel HaShlishi and Shlomo Suleiman al-Sinjari, one of the most prolific and popular paytan who probably lived in Eretz Israel in the second half of the ninth century. On the other hand, we do find interesting stylistic links with the prosaic writings of the members of the Eretz-Israeli academy of the first half of the eleventh century. One of these members was Shlomo ben Yehuda, Gaon of the Eretz-Israeli academy. Both a letter which Shmuel HaShlishi sent from Jerusalem to Shmarya ben Elhanan in Fostat in c. 1010, and a letter which Shlomo ben Yehuda sent to Avraham ben Sahlan in 1020, display a highly similar Hebrew style. Both letters open with the rhyming words -mon: Shmuel HaShlishi: *‘armon – hamon – vetahkemon – ‘armon – bismon – qinamon*, and Shlomo ben Yehuda: *veqinamon – ka ‘afarsemon – hamon – betahkemon – kerimon – uvismon*. Both writers create new nominal forms by using the paytanic ending -mon: *tahkemon; bismon*. The first word attested is derived from the biblical word *tahkemoni* (II Sam. 23:8), besides these two sources, this is only found in Yosef birabbi Nisan. The

second word *bismon* is attested only here.

We also find a similar style in the prosaic writings of Shmuel HaShlishi's son, Avraham. While Shmuel HaShlishi talks about the enemy of Israel in the combination of synonyms: *behiri al tira merogen venotze veroten* ("my chosen, do not be afraid of one who quarrels, fights, and murmurs"), Avraham also uses a similar combination in his letter: *lehashqito mikol soten verogen veroten betah vesha 'anan* ("to make him quiet safely from every one who is hostile, quarrels, and murmurs").

Although the prosaic nature of Shmuel HaShlishi's piyyutim (especially his *guf hayotzer*) is usually stressed, there is also an opposite direction: ornate letters written in this period in Eretz Israel often display a very similar style to that of the piyyut. It turns out that we are dealing with writers whose mother tongue was not Hebrew. When they attempted to write Hebrew in an ornate style, they used more or less the same style, both in poetry and in prose. Therefore, the Hebrew writings of Shmuel HaShlishi and Shlomo ben Yehuda, contemporary paytanim and writers, can serve as a good indication of the sophisticated Hebrew style in this period.

B-2 Link to the Christian-Eastern Period

We have seen that there are a lot of stylistic parallels between Shmuel HaShlishi and other contemporary paytanim from different centers. It is highly probable that some of the stylistic characteristics of Shmuel HaShlishi indeed reflect the general style of ornate Hebrew writing in the tenth century, both in poetry and in prose. On the other hand, we have to admit that some of the prominent stylistic characteristics of Shmuel HaShlishi can be observed in paytanim of different periods as well. Especially striking are the stylistic links between Shmuel HaShlishi and one of the greatest paytanim of the second half of the first period, El'azar birabbi Qillir, and to one of the greatest paytanim of the first half of the third period, Shlomo ibn Gabirol.

B-2-1 Strong Link to El'azar birabbi Qillir

Stylistic resemblance between Shmuel HaShlishi and El'azar birabbi Qillir can be observed almost to the same extent as found between him and Sa'adia Gaon. For example, Shmuel HaShlishi uses the root tz-r-b in the *nif'al* pattern: *beqirbi tafsari nitzrav* ("within me my commander was burnt"). The only other person to use this form is El'azar birabbi Qillir: *venitzreva bikhvedut* ("and she were burnt in heaviness"). We find such stylistic parallels particularly in Qillirian *qinot* for the seventh day of *av*.

1) The root m-z-y appears in the Bible only once as a participle form: *mezey ra'av* ("sucked empty by hunger") (Deut. 32:24). Shmuel HaShlishi uses this root as a real verb in the *hif'il* verbal pattern: *lev offeha lehamzot* ("to suck empty the heart of those who surround her"). The same verb appears together with the word *levavot* in a *qina* by Qillir: *levavot betokh me 'ayim lehamzot* ("to suck empty the hearts in the entrails").

2) The root r-d-m usually appears in a passive participle form of the *qal* pattern, *radum*. Shmuel HaShlishi uses this verb in the past tense: *va 'aniye hatzon bekhoh har vegiv 'a ravtzu veradmu* ("and the poor of the flock lay and slept on every mountain and hill"). The use of this verb in the past tense also appears in a *qina* by Qillir: *veradam ketava 'sha 'ar hamizrah* ("and slept when the Eastern gate sank").

3) Shmuel HaShlishi uses his favorite nominal ending -ut with the root n-h-m, *nahamut*, instead of the regular form, *nehama*: *mi zot hatzo 'eqet begerut vegalut venahamut* ("who is she, that is crying

in proselytism, in Diaspora, and in roaring”). This word can be only found in a *qina* by Qillir: ‘*al ken tagarti benahamut* (“therefore I complained in roaring”).

B-2-2 Yosef birabbi Nisan

We also find stylistic links between Shmuel HaShlishi and Yosef birabbi Nisan, especially in his *siluq* within a *qedushta* for Passover, *atah adir meharre taref*. 1) Shmuel HaShlishi twice uses the root ‘-b-kh in the *nif‘al* pattern in his piyyutim: *viqod ‘ashan ne ‘evakh* (“and the fire of smoke was mounted up”); *titzpenenu besukekha milehe ‘avekh* (“you shall steal us in your covert in order for us not to mount up”). This root in the *nif‘al* pattern is only otherwise found in Yosef birabbi Nisan’s *siluq*: *vega ‘ar bam lehe ‘avekh* (“and he rebuked them for them to mount up”). 2) Shmuel HaShlishi uses the root g-r-z (cf. Ps. 31:23) in the *huf‘al* pattern: *reheqayikh yugrazun* (“those who are far from you will be cut off”). This root in the *huf‘al* pattern is only otherwise found in the same *siluq* by Yosef birabbi Nisan: *veze hugraz bemaqel ya ‘aqov* (“and this was cut off with the rod of Jacob”).

Also, in *shiv ‘ata* for Dew by Yosef birabbi Nisan, *etyatzva letzimhe perah*, we find a lot of stylistic resemblance to Shmuel HaShlishi’s piyyutim. Shmuel HaShlishi uses the root tz-f-r (derived from a noun: *tzipor*, bird) as a real verb: *sheretz va ‘of nitzpar* (“swarming things and fowls were created”). This verb in the same meaning is only otherwise found in Yosef birabbi Nisan’s *shiv ‘ata* for Dew: *ye ‘evor veyitzpor liqhi ‘ad dir tal* (“my lesson will fly to the place of dew”).

B-3 Link to the Muslim-Western Period

David Yellin has already pointed out that in the poems of Shlomo ibn Gabirol, both liturgical and secular, we can detect a clear influence of the paytanic language and style. Joseph Yahalom even argues that the free derivation of a verb from a noun, characteristic of Shlomo ibn Gabirol, such as *meshohemet* from *shoham* (=onyx), *meyushafa* from *yoshfe* (=jasper), and *bruqa* from *baraq* (=lightning), was probably made possible by his knowledge of the piyyutim of Shmuel HaShlishi, who also liked to derive verbs from nouns, such as *me ‘uqnan*; *me ‘uqnav*, from a Greek noun εἰκών (=image), and *mit ‘abnetet* from a Greek word ἀπαντή (=encountering). A close stylistic analysis of Shmuel HaShlishi’s piyyutim has revealed that there is indeed a lot of such stylistic resemblance between the two poets.

Thus, for example, Yellin discusses a poetic device in Spanish Hebrew poetry: *tzimud shone ot*, that is a pair of two synonyms, both of which have two common radical letters while each word has one different radical letter. Yellin illustrates this poetic device with many examples from Ibn Gabirol’s piyyutim, which open with such pairs of words. They usually come in the form of a passive participle (feminine-singular or masculine-plural) as an epithet for the people of Israel: *shezufa nezufa*; *shekhula akhula*; *shekhura ‘akhura*; *shevu ‘a qevu ‘a*; *mehutzim lehutzim ... bezuzim gezuzim*; *shedudim nedudim*.

It has turned out that this Gabirolian use of *tzimud shone ot* was also frequently employed by Shmuel HaShlishi. Although these pairs of synonyms are usually used as epithets for the people of Israel, they are also used for other things: *yeguna ‘aguna*; *retusha netusha*; *renuna genuna*; *tzefuna usefuna*; *qerutza qeruiala*; *kevulim kelu ‘im*; *qeturim ‘aturim*; *setumim gam hatumim*.

In fact, we can safely say that such use of *tzimud shone ot* was one of the most prominent general stylistic characteristics of this period in different centers, see for example Shlomo HaBavli: *'aguma va 'aguna*, and also Gershon Meor HaGola: *'aguma va 'aguna*; Yosef ibn Abitur: *teruda teruha*; *badud nadud shadud*; cf. also: *bedudim hanedudim*; Hai Gaon ben Sherira: *bezuza bezuya*, *sheduda neduda*. Here, too, we must admit that El'azar birabbi Qillir had already introduced the use of these pairs into his piyyutim: *retusha netusha* (cf. the same pair with Shmuel HaShlishi: *retusha netusha*); *vetzafun vesafun* (cf. the similar pair with Shmuel HaShlishi above: *tzefuna usefuna*). Once again we see here strong stylistic links between Shmuel HaShlishi and El'azar birabbi Qillir, who may be regarded as a harbinger of a new style in the Muslim-Eastern period.

There is much more stylistic resemblance between Shmuel HaShlishi and Shlomo ibn Gabirol. Shmuel HaShlishi tends to use nouns ending with the letter *he* (or *tav*) by dropping the final letter, for example the word *tenum* (instead of *tenuma*) appears in his piyyutim three times: *tenum ridmatam*; *utenumam*; *tenum ishonam*. The word *teshu'* (instead of *teshu'a*) also appears twice: *teshu'ekha*; *teshu'am*. Interestingly, Shlomo ibn Gabirol also uses such forms: *shekhino* (instead of *shekhinato*); *tenumo* (instead of *tenumato*).

Both Shmuel HaShlishi and Shlomo ibn Gabirol tend to use a verb in the *hif'il* pattern instead of the *qal* or *pi'el* patterns, without any difference in the meaning. For example, in his *seder 'avoda*, which is deeply based upon an Eastern paytanic tradition, Shlomo ibn Gabirol uses two verbs of the roots *p-ʿ-r* and *t-ʿ-r* in the *hif'il* pattern as rhyming words: *lehaf'ir ... hit'ir*. Shmuel HaShlishi, in his turn, uses the root *p-ʿ-r* in the *hif'il* pattern three times in his piyyutim: *lehaf'ir*; *hif'ir*; *taf'ir*. And he uses the root *t-ʿ-r* in the *hif'il* pattern four times: *lehat'ira*; *lehat'ir*; *behat'iri*; *hit'ir*. Shlomo ibn Gabirol even derives a verb *hitvikh* in the *hif'il* pattern from a noun: *tavekh*: *vatatvikh*; so does Shmuel HaShlishi: *hitvikh betavekh*.

Both Shmuel HaShlishi and Shlomo ibn Gabirol introduce Talmudic words (Aramaic and Greek) into their piyyutim. Thus, for example, the word *hanasnes*, a loan word from the Aramaic translation of the biblical word *hamanekhem* (Lev. 26:30), appears in their piyyutim. Shmuel HaShlishi is very fond of using this word: *hanasnese hanes aqatzetz* ("I will destroy the sun-pillars of Egypt"). He even creates a new abstract noun: *hanasnesut*: *ge'ut hanesi bahanasnesuto* ("the pride of Pharaoh in his idolatry"). Ibn Gabirol also introduces this Aramaic word into his Hebrew piyyut: *hadurim tekane / mikush vehane / veyevosh hanasnes / ba'asotekha nes* ("you will gather the glorious / from Kush and Hanes / and the sun-pillar will be ashamed / when you make a miracle").

Shmuel HaShlishi also uses Greek words favorably. He even creates new Hebraized words from Greek words. Thus, for example, from the Greek word *tekhes* (τέχης), he creates a verbal noun of the *qal* pattern three times in his piyyutim: *tekhisa*. Shlomo ibn Gabirol, on the other hand, from the same Greek word, creates not a verbal noun *tekhisa*, but a noun with a Sa'adianic ending: *tikhsa*. Shmuel HaShlishi, in his turn, uses this Sa'adianic ending with another Greek word *tofes* (τύπος): *tifsa*. This word also appears in a piyyut by Sa'adia himself.

The predilection for quadrate roots is also characteristic of both paytanim. For example, the root *s-n-s-n* derived from a noun: *sansan* (cf. Cant. 7:9) appears both in Shmuel HaShlishi (twice): *behistansenah* (infinitive of *hitpa'el*); *tesansenem* (future

tense of *pi'el*), and in Shlomo ibn Gabirol: *sinsen* (past tense of *pi'el*).

We usually tend to distinguish between the puristic style of Hebrew poetry in Spain and the creative style of the ancient piyyut. We have seen, however, that the Spanish paytan Shlomo ibn Gabirol was highly creative in the field of neologisms, just like the Eastern paytan Shmuel HaShlishi. On the other hand, we have attempted in this study to demonstrate that Shmuel HaShlishi was also a purist, if not in his linguistic innovations, then at least in the structure of his poetic lines. A poetic line in the minor parts of his *yotzrot* (i.e., *me 'ora*, *ahava*, *mi kamokha*, and *adonai malkenu*), which is usually divided into two hemistiches by means of natural caesura and biblical parallelism, is surprisingly beautiful. Here we can see that the very lack of the “strangling” exact meter of Spanish Hebrew poetry bestowed on an Eastern genuine poet of considerable stature like Shmuel HaShlishi an excellent opportunity to “reach heights that were rarely matched in the whole of our medieval poetry” (Fleischer).

III Considerations on the Question of Poetic Style

Shmuel HaShlishi was the only major Eastern poet whose life and work are both reflected in the documents of the Cairo Genizah. Some 650 Genizah fragments contain elements of his wide-ranging oeuvre. Close examination of his literary style is of considerable interest, as it helps us understand the move away from the Sa'adianic poetic style and toward the style of the Spanish poets. In 1964, Menahem Zulay's volume, “The Paytanic School of R. Sa'adia Gaon”, was published posthumously. To this day, Zulay's volume remains the single most important work on the subject. In his book, Zulay showed that the radical linguistic innovations of Sa'adia Gaon in his piyyutim were based on his notion of the purity of language (*tzahut halashon*, or *fasaha*). According to this approach, it is permissible, and even desirable, to decline all Hebrew roots according to the forms found in Scripture. Zulay offers definitive and unmistakable indications of the Sa'adianic style, such as the preference for feminine constructions, hapax legomena, etc. This identification of the Sa'adianic style is perhaps the book's most important contribution. Zulay concludes by stating that Sa'adia Gaon established a paytanic school that included Shmuel HaShlishi and even the Spanish paytanim. The common denominator among these poets was their notion of *tzahut halashon*.

A year later, Ezra Fleischer wrote a review of this book in which he proposed that precisely where Zulay identified a common element, he (Fleischer) identified a difference of approach. According to Fleischer, there is a substantial difference between the Sa'adianic style – which was based on the principle of the linguistic expansion of biblical roots (in which respect Sa'adia's approach was not essentially different from that of earlier paytanim) – and the Spanish style, which was based on the principle of the restriction of language to precise scriptural usage. According to Fleischer, only Shmuel HaShlishi may properly be termed a student of Sa'adia in terms of style and diction; later on, in his book *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages*, he mentions Nehemia ben Shlomo as well. Fleischer even criticized Zulay for focusing in his studies on the linguistic dimensions of the poetry, when in fact he is trying to determine literary influence. Fleischer proposed that the poetries involved be analyzed in terms of form,

ornament, and the various other characteristic elements of the liturgical verse of the period. He suggested that, in terms of structure, the Spanish school appears to have been influenced by Sa'adia.

Another element that should be taken into consideration is the relation between paytanim and the dominant culture. It is well known that the Arabic culture influenced Sa'adia in every one of his various literary activities. One of the most conspicuous influences of Arabic literature upon the Hebrew liturgical verse of the period involved the introduction of philosophical elements into the poetry. This influence was especially pronounced in the work of Sa'adia's Babylonian contemporary, Nehemia ben Shlomo, and in the Spanish poets Yosef ibn Abitur and Shlomo ibn Gabirol. In this respect, the Palestinian Shmuel HaShlishi was conservative.

All of this has caused considerable confusion in the scholarly literature pertaining to this period. Who are the genuine students of the paytan Sa'adia Gaon? Does Shmuel HaShlishi belong to this group? Close examination of Shmuel HaShlishi's known works actually demonstrates that, along with a lot of stylistic characteristics of Sa'adianic style, his work also shows characteristics that clearly depart from the Sa'adianic style. Shulamit Elizur has recently demonstrated that at least one of Shmuel's characteristic elements – verbatim quotation from midrashic literature in the *guf hayotzer* – is also employed by Yosef HaLevi HeHaver, who lived in the last quarter of the eleventh century. Is it possible, then, to speak of the paytanic school of Shmuel HaShlishi? Elizur even recommends that, with regard to dictional style, we distinguish between the large group of major paytanim who are also members of the academy (Sa'adia, Shmuel HaShlishi, Sahlan ben Avraham, and Yosef HaLevi HeHaver), all of whom lean toward the Sa'adianic style, and the more mediocre group of paytanim who are not members of the academy (*talmide hahakhamim*), who incline to a “lower”, Eastern style.

This study attempts to demonstrate that the style of Shmuel HaShlishi serves as a link between the Palestinian style of the early paytanim and the new style that would emerge in Spain. One of the clearest indications of such a link can be found in the minor parts of his *yotzrot* – namely, the *me 'orah*, *ahavah*, *mi kamokha*, and *'adonai malkenu*. In these parts Shmuel HaShlishi is revealed as a genuine poet of considerable stature, who can compete with the Spanish poets with the full power of their pure, religious lyricism. Thus, for example, some of his *ahavah* poems may be regarded not only as piyyutim whose liturgical designation is *ahavah* blessing but also as pure love poems in their own right.