

patterns or by way of polemics) by Hellenistic texts. This possibility has, of course, also to be borne in mind when we – with Werner – see a connection between the *Dayyenu* of the Passover Haggadah and the parallel and contradictory text in Melito's homily referred to at the beginning of this article. It is possible that comparison with Hellenistic texts will give rise to similar assumptions regarding other early passages in the Passover Haggadah.

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HEBREW IMPROPERIA

Pines's important article sheds new light on the probable connection between the *Dayyenu* litany in the Passover Haggadah, the Paschal Homily of Melito of Sardis and the Improperia (Reproaches) in the Latin Good Friday liturgy. All three pieces contain a list of God's gracious deeds to Israel from the Exodus to their entry into the Land of Israel. The *Dayyenu* shows the following pattern:

How many are the claims of the Omnipresent upon our thankfulness!
Had He taken us out of Egypt,
but not executed judgments on them,
It would be enough (*dayyenu*).

Had He executed judgments on them,
but not upon their gods,
It would be enough.

And so on. As the *Dayyenu* concludes the list of God's favours with the building of the Temple, scholars rightly suppose that it was written before the destruction of the Temple in 70 C. E.

The list in Melito's homily is embedded in anti-Jewish polemics: Israel, who despised and killed Christ was ungrateful towards God who had granted her such great gifts. A similar pattern occurs in the Improperia: a sentence expressing God's goodness to Israel during the Exodus and the

entry into the Land is contrasted by one containing reproaches against the Jews who tortured and crucified Christ. In addition, there is another Christian source which in two places contains a similar list of God's favours to Israel, namely the Didascalia.¹ Although also in the Didascalia the list is adduced to prove Israel's wickedness, in contrast to Melito's homily and the *Improperia* their wickedness is not demonstrated by their rejection of Christ but by their ungratefulness to God and to Moses. This juxtaposition of God's grace and Israel's sins is not specifically Christian or anti-Jewish² but accords very well with the Jewish tradition of contrasting God's goodness with Israel's sinfulness as a pedagogical device to bring the community to repentance. Can we thus accept Pines's suggestion that there existed a Jewish parallel to the *Dayyenu* in which God's blessings during the Exodus and the entry into the Land were compared with Israel's sins at that period? Or, in other words, did Jewish *Improperia* exist which are reflected in the anti-Jewish *Improperia* of the Latin Good Friday liturgy?

Pines's ingenious intuition can be fully confirmed: such a text exists and is even written according to the same pattern as the Christian parallel. It is a poem recited according to the Ashkenazic rite on the 9th of Av, the day of destruction of the first and second Temples.³ Its author is Kalir, the last great scion of the old *piyyut*. He lived before the Islamic conquest in Syria or Palestine, probably in the sixth or seventh century. Both the Latin *Improperia* and Kalir's poem contain twelve strophes, in each of which the praise of God is followed by a verse speaking of Israel's sins. In Kalir's poem the verse of each strophe containing God's praise begins with "To thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness" and the second verse which mentions Israel's sins with "But to us shame of face" (quoted from Daniel 9:7). Thus the *first* strophe reads: "To thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness through the signs which thou hast wondrously shown from of old until now; but to us shame of face because of trials by which we were tried, and thou didst abhor us". In the *second* strophe, God's taking "a nation from the midst of another" is contrasted with Israel's imitating the ways of the heathen. In the *third* strophe, Israel's salvation from the yoke of Egypt is contrasted with its rebellion at the Red Sea. In the *fourth* strophe, God is praised because he said to Israel, "You are my witness and I am God", but Israel is cursed

¹ Didasc. VI, 3, 1 and VI, 16, 6 (= Const. Apost., ed. Funk, VI, 3 pp. 304-307 and VI, 20, 6 pp. 350-353). A similar list in Const. Apost. VIII, 12, 26 (p. 504) is unimportant because its source is probably the Didascalia.

² Although the second passage in the Didascalia is part of a passage originating from an Ebionite source.

³ Published with English translation in: *The Authorized Kinot for the Ninth of Av*, translated and annotated by Rev. Abraham Rosenfeld, London 5725 - 1965, pp. 123f. A critical and annotated edition was published by David Goldschmidt, *Seder ha-Qinot le-tish'ah be-Av*, Jerusalem, 1972, pp. 79f.

because it said to Aaron, "Arise, make us gods". According to the *fifth* strophe, God gave Israel manna, but Israel offered it on the same day to the Golden Calf. In the *sixth* strophe, God's sustenance of Israel with manna, a spring from the rock and a pillar of cloud is contrasted with Israel's murmuring. According to the *seventh* strophe, "We have not lacked anything in the Wilderness", but Israel angered God at Libnah, Hazerot and Di-Zahab. In the *eighth* strophe, God is praised for his smiting of "Sihon and Og and the kings of Canaan", while Israel is blamed because of Achan. In the *ninth* strophe, God's sending the Judges is contrasted with Micah's making an idol. In the *tenth* strophe it is said, "To thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness for erecting sanctuaries at Shilo, Nob, Gibeon and an Eternal House (of Jerusalem), but to us shame of face, for they were all destroyed through the guilt that was found in us". In the *eleventh* strophe, the author thanks God for the continuing existence of the Jewish people despite the destruction of the Temple, and hopes for the people's repentance. In the *twelfth* strophe the poet praises God that he had postponed the destruction of the second Temple, and closes with David's prayer for the restoration of the Temple.

Although the last two strophes are not written according to the basic structure, it is clear that this list of God's gracious deeds fits the same pattern as the other pieces mentioned previously, starting with the Exodus and ending with the possession of the Land. It is characteristic that the building of the Temple is mentioned at the end of both the Jewish sources: the Dayyenu and Kalir's poem, but is missing from all Christian parallels.⁴

There can be no question about it: the Jewish and Christian texts all depend on the Dayyenu in the Passover Haggadah or a very similar text. It is very likely that the connection of Kalir's Improperia with the 9th of Av is secondary, but this poem belongs to a tradition of Jewish Improperia, the texts of which have not been preserved, which originally had their place in the Passover liturgy, but were subsequently transferred to the 9th of Av. This could happen because they ended with the reference to the building of the Temple (as can be seen in the Dayyenu and in Kalir's poem), and by this transfer it was underlined that it was Israel's sins which caused the destruction of the Temple. A further indication of these Jewish Improperia belonging to the Passover liturgy is the fact that both Melito's homily and the Improperia have a clear link to the Paschal liturgy.

⁴ The Kingdom of Israel is mentioned both in Melito's first list (line 641 – but is missing from the second) and in the Improperia, but not in the other sources; the spring from the rock and the pillar of cloud occur in the Christian lists as well as in Kalir's poem, but not in the Dayyenu; it is likely that they were once also present there. The smiting of "the kings of Canaan" occurs, interestingly enough, only in the two latest texts, namely in Kalir's poem and the Improperia.

From the foregoing it becomes evident that the Christian Improperia — and possibly the passages in Melito's homily — were not only an anti-Jewish distortion of the Dayyenu, but depend on a Jewish *Vorlage*, of which Kalir's poem is a late derivative. The literary development can be viewed as follows: the Dayyenu was the first form, the next stage was the formation of the Jewish Improperia (preserved in late form in Kalir's poem) in which God's gracious deeds during the Exodus and the entry into the Land are contrasted with Israel's sins. These Jewish Improperia which had already twelve strophes (as have the Christian Improperia and Kalir's poem) were imitated by the author of Christian Improperia, but with the difference that God's gracious deeds during the Exodus and the entry into the Land were no longer contrasted with sins committed in that period but with alleged sins of the Jews during the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. The Christian Improperia are by no means the only examples of Jewish self-criticism being transformed in the mouth of Christians into violent anti-Jewish invective — in this case, the accusation of deicide.