

Synopses and Lists

Textual Practices in the Pre-Modern World

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Cover image: A fragment of a numbered and tabulated list of 22 biblical and rabbinic passages relating to the Sabbath, each referenced by means of a short lemma (T-S D1.76 from the Cambridge Genizah Collection). Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

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LISTS OF THE SONGS OF ASCENTS (PSS 120–134) IN THE CAIRO GENIZAH: THEIR FORM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Rebecca Ullrich

The Cairo Genizah¹ contains hundreds of thousands of fragments. Many of these fragments contain lists that have received considerable research attention. However, others still require in-depth study. These include eight fragments with lists containing the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120–34), which were often recited during the morning prayer of the rite of Eretz Israel; this section of the morning prayer is known as תפילת השיר (*tefillat ha-shir* ‘the prayer of the song’). The fragments will be examined here in relation to the morning liturgy of the rite of the land of Israel.

¹ A genizah is a place where, strictly speaking, texts containing the Hebrew name of God are deposited. Ritual items such as tefillin and mezuzot, as well as profane text and material, were also deposited in genizahs, and texts in other languages can also be found there. Probably the most famous genizah is the Cairo Genizah, which has been researched from the late nineteenth century on. The Cairo Genizah was located in the Ben Ezra Synagogue, Fustat, and followed the rite of the land of Israel in the Middle Ages. Most of the surviving fragments from that genizah date from the eleventh century CE and later.

Thematically, Pss 120–34 include the “return from exile, the re-establishment of the community in Judah, the centrality of Jerusalem, Zion, and the Temple and the future of the Davidic dynasty.”² All 15 psalms have the heading *shir ha-ma'alot* (שיר (ה)מעלות) or *shir le-ma'alot* (שיר למעלות). From this heading comes the name Songs of Ascents or Songs of Degrees. The Mishnah explains the meaning of the headings in Sukkah 5.4 and Middot 2.5 and their relation to the 15 steps that led to the temple. The Songs of Ascents have received considerable attention during the development of the Jewish liturgy and have always been (again) part of the liturgy, although regionally and temporally at different places in the liturgy. The complete set of the abovementioned 15 psalms, or each psalm from the set, is still recited today during various rites at different times.³ In medieval Egypt, the Songs of Ascents were recited during the morning prayers of the congregation of the land of Israel, in the *tefillat ha-shir*, until the gradual displacement of the rite of the land of Israel by the Babylonian rite at the end of the thirteenth century.⁴

The lists of the Songs of Ascents from the Cairo Genizah are particularly relevant in this liturgical context, as they provide

² Berlin, *Jewish Study Bible*, 1411.

³ See Nulman, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer*, 303–4.

⁴ See the findings of Vered Raziel-Kretzmer, ‘How Late’, who, on the basis of prayer book fragments attributed to a scribe from the last decade of the thirteenth century, showed that although he followed the Babylonian rite, he still adhered to elements of the rite of Eretz Israel, such as the recitation of the *tefillat ha-shir* (Pss 120–34) and the Ten Commandments for Shabbat morning service.

partial information about the position of the Songs of Ascents in the prayer. At the same time, the fragments of prayer books can be used to assign the lists to specific occasions during the prayer. That such lists were written to aid prayer and memory during recitation is evident from the nature of the prayer books. In the Genizah manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. g. 2, which presents the rite of the land of Israel, the following text is found, along with the timing of recitation of the Songs of Ascents during prayer. The text starts on fol. 5b and continues to fol. 6a.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם [האל] המהולל בפי עמו ומשובח ומפואר בלשון כל חסידיו ובשירי דויד בן ישי עבדך נ[הללך] ונשבחך ונרוממך ונגדלך ונזכיר את שמך מלכינו אלהינו יחיד חי העולמים משובח ומפואר עדי עד שמך ברוך אתה יי מהולל הת[שבחות] יהי כבוד כולה תם שירו לאלהים זמרו שמו תם שיר המעלות אלשיר כול אלי כל הנשמה תהלל יה הללויה יהללך יי אלהינו.⁵

“...Blessed are You, God our God, King of the world, the Almighty, whose praise is spoken through the mouth of His people, who is praised and glorified through the tongues of those who are devoted to Him in love. With the songs of David, son of Yishai, Your servant, let us praise You, let us glorify You, let us magnify You, let us remember Your name, our King, our God, the only one who lived eternally, let Your name be praised and glorified forever: Blessed are You Adonai, praised by praises.” [Then follows] the whole of *yehi khevod*, then (Ps. 68.5): “Sing to God, chant hymns to his name.” This is followed by the Songs of Ascents, the song in its entirety, until (Ps. 50.6) “Let all that breathes praise the Lord. Hallelujah...”

⁵ Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 233; my translation.

This shows that, in this case, the Songs of Ascents are only mentioned, but their text was assumed to be known. Only the text of the blessings is written down in full in this example. That there was a need for the text of the Songs of Ascents is shown by a list on fol. 80b of the manuscript:

שיר המעלות אל יי בצרתה לי
 שיר למעלות אשא עיני אל ההרים
 שיר המעלות שמחתי באומרים לי
 שיר המעלות לדוד אליך
 שיר
 שיר
 שיר⁶

A song of ascents. To the Lord in my distress⁷

A song for ascents. I turn my eyes to the mountains

A song of ascents. I rejoiced when they said to me

A song of ascents. Of David.⁸ To you

A song

A song

A song

The scribe enters the text of the opening verse for each of the Songs of Ascents here as a memory aid for the order of the texts.

⁶ Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 240.

⁷ The translation of the Hebrew Bible throughout the article is based on Berlin, *Jewish Study Bible*.

⁸ “Of David” belongs to the previous psalm. The scribe of the lines probably wrote down the biblical text from memory and switched the verses.

The list then ends for unknown reasons. If such a list is already integrated into a prayer book manuscript,⁹ it is not surprising that such lists are also found as independent fragments in the Cairo Genizah. This also provides an insight into the possible practice of relying on ‘memory cards’ during prayer, probably as a support for memory.

In the following section, an overview of the types of lists in the Cairo Genizah is given, in order to analyse the lists within the broader context of the Cairo Genizah. Then an analysis of the fragments containing lists with the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120–34) and their liturgical classification follows.

1.0. Lists in the Cairo Genizah

The lists in the Cairo Genizah are a treasure trove of data, which provides numerous research insights. This is demonstrated by the extensive research focusing on the lists in the Cairo Genizah. For further classification of the lists, the categorisation of the entire source material of the Cairo Genizah must be considered first.

Often mentioned here is the categorisation elaborated by Goitein,¹⁰ in which he follows a Western approach to categorisation.¹¹ The first category of sources is called the documentary corpus. It includes fragments with administrative and economic content. The purpose and nature of lists in the documentary corpus are varied. Often, for example, only personal names are

⁹ Albeit by a secondary scribe and not the scribe of the main text of the prayer book.

¹⁰ See Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 1:9–14.

¹¹ See Frenkel, ‘Genizah Documents’, 139.

listed. This may be a memorial list to show an ancestral line,¹² or a listing of persons who have received benefits or still owe money,¹³ for example. In other lists, possessions or books are listed. For example, Nehemiah Allony collected book lists, offering a glimpse not only into book production and the book trade but also teaching rooms, for some of these lists were intended to be followed as a curriculum and used as templates for the books to be studied.¹⁴

Another list class was examined by Mark R. Cohen, comprising charity lists, donor lists, and alms lists. He writes:

Inert though they appear, the lists divulge much about the dynamics of the Jewish public welfare system.... Among other things, the beneficiary and donor lists permit us to make a rough socioeconomic taxonomy of the poor and nonpoor, relying on the fact that people are often recorded with their occupation (X the grave digger, Y the physician, for instance).¹⁵

Yet other lists contain ingredients for medical recipes.¹⁶ Also, numerous trousseau lists, in which the dowry of brides was listed with the respective values of the items, are found among the documents of the Cairo Genizah.¹⁷ Several researchers have tried to

¹² E.g., Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS T-S 8J11.2.

¹³ E.g., CUL T-S NS J76; CUL T-S Misc. 8.2.

¹⁴ Allony, *Jewish Library*. See also Frenkel, 'Book Lists', and literature cited there.

¹⁵ Cohen, *Voice of the Poor*, 107–8. See also Cohen, *Poverty and Charity*.

¹⁶ See Lev, 'Drugs'.

¹⁷ Goitein, 'Three Trousseaux'.

estimate the percentage of the lists in the texts of the Cairo Genizah; most recently, Jessica Goldberg estimated that “at least 10 percent of paper fragments from the documentary corpus contain lists.”¹⁸

The second source category is known as the literary corpus. Books or book fragments are assigned to this category. Mostly, literary and religious content is found here. This corpus in theory includes lists that do not fall under the documentary corpus; however, a clear classification is not always possible, so certain fragments can be classified as belonging to both corpora. Clearly belonging to the literary genre are the word lists of biblical books,¹⁹ as well as, for example, verse lists or lists of piyyutim and sequences of halakhic passages. Among them are also lists of mishnaic and talmudic texts in which the tractates in the orders and the chapters deviate from the present arrangement.²⁰

There are also lists that include Hebrew–Arabic glossaries of biblical texts. Meira Polliack has highlighted the value of these lists for linguistics, Bible translations, and commentaries,²¹ while Judith Olszowy-Schlanger has examined a glossary of difficult words from the Babylonian Talmud.²²

¹⁸ Goldberg, ‘Lists’.

¹⁹ See Russell, ‘Armenian Word List’; and also Shvitiel, ‘Judaeo-Romance’.

²⁰ See, e.g., CUL T-S K3.5; CUL T-S K3.7; CUL T-S K3.8; CUL T-S NS 329.448.

²¹ Polliack, ‘Bible Translations’.

²² Olszowy-Schlanger, ‘Glossary’. For glossaries in medieval Arabic, see Vollandt, ‘Glosses of Hebrew’.

The purpose of this paper is to examine lists that can be categorised as liturgical. For this purpose, the lists containing the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120–34) were identified among the fragments of the Cairo Genizah. In some cases, these lists include other contents as well, and, based on the psalms and any additional material, the purpose of these lists will be examined. The lists are viewed here as literary products of their environment.²³ Since they are understood as literary products, they can also be examined and interpreted through a literary analysis. The criteria would include, for instance, the arrangement of the list entries as well as a comparison of the list content. First, however, we turn to a classification of the object of study, that is, the Songs of Ascents and the purpose they served during the tenth through thirteenth centuries in Fustat.

2.0. Liturgical Framework in Fustat between the Tenth and Thirteenth Centuries

The Cairo Genizah contains writings from all the regional congregations of the period between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. This period witnessed three major congregations in Fustat, all of which have their liturgical costumes: the congregation of the land of Israel, which had its centre in the synagogue where the Cairo Genizah was discovered; the Babylonian congregation; and the Karaite congregation. This paper focuses on the Babylonian congregation and on the congregation of the land of Israel,

²³ This approach was also followed by Miriam Frenkel in the analysis of three different types of fragment: a letter, a court record, and a report of events. See Frenkel, 'Genizah Documents', 139.

which share some liturgical traditions but also differ in many ways. Divergences can be identified, for example, in the morning liturgy, in terms of length, texts included and to be recited, and the arrangement of these texts. For the study of Jewish liturgy, the Cairo Genizah is very important. Only because of the Cairo Genizah are we aware of details of the rite(s) of the land of Israel, which would otherwise have been lost.

The rite of the land of Israel and the Babylonian rite coexisted until the twelfth or thirteenth century. Gradually, however, the former rite was replaced by the latter.²⁴ There are many reasons for this, the most notable of which are the diminishing influence of the Palestinian academies and the gradual predominance of the Babylonian Talmud and its rites.

3.0. The Songs of Ascents in the Medieval

Palestinian Liturgy in the Rite of Eretz Israel

The Songs of Ascents were recited during the morning prayers of the congregation of the land of Israel, in the section known as *tefillat ha-shir*.²⁵ This section is not found in the morning prayers in the Babylonian rite. In that rite, Pss 145–50 are recited, in the section called *pesuqe de-zimra* ('chapters of praise').²⁶ Thus, while the Babylonian rite inserts only the last six chapters of the book of Psalms into the morning prayer, the fragments from the Cairo

²⁴ See Raziel-Kretzmer, 'How Late', 309–36.

²⁵ Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 215–57, dedicated a separate chapter to the rite of the land of Israel and in particular to the *tefillat ha-shir*.

²⁶ For a discussion of the origin of the *pesuqe de-zimra* in the Babylonian rite, see Langer, 'Early Emergence'.

Genizah pertaining to the rite of the land of Israel show other sections of the Psalms, in particular the liturgical use of the Songs of Ascents, Pss 120–34, in the *tefillat ha-shir*.

It should be noted that the *tefillat ha-shir* was not a stable prayer entity and tended to change its position in the morning prayers.²⁷ In addition, its scope also varied. It could be either one single stretch of 31 connected psalms, Pss 120–50; or else divided into Pss 120–36 and Pss 144–50. A third version places the Songs of Ascents at the beginning of the morning prayer, as an introduction, so to speak.²⁸

These differences between the psalms included in the *tefillat ha-shir* and its position in the morning prayer result mainly from the days on which it is recited. There are differences between the recitation on weekdays and on Shabbats and holidays. Vered Raziell-Kretzmer describes the differences as follows:

On Shabbats and holidays, the *shir ha-ma'alot* are further expanded to include Pss 135–36 and are recited before the *pesuqe de-zimra* of the rite of the land of Israel. The land of Israel tradition of the *pesuqe de-zimra* differs in that it includes the seven last psalms (Pss 144–50), rather than six that are customary, and consists of the psalms and the concluding blessing alone. The opening berakhah, the יהי כבוד (yehi khevod, 'May the glory'),²⁹ the ויברך דוד (wa-yevarekh

²⁷ Raziell-Kretzmer and Ben-Dov, 'Qumran Psalter', 306–8.

²⁸ See Raziell-Kretzmer and Ben-Dov, 'Qumran Psalter', 309.

²⁹ Catena of 18 verses, recited in the *pesuqe de-zimra* section of the morning service in the Babylonian rite.

David, ‘And David blessed’),³⁰ and the *אֵתָהּ הוּא יִי לְבָרֵךְ* (*ata hu adonai levadekha*, Neh. 9.6) are missing, compared with the Babylonian rite. The concluding *berakhah* is similar to *יְהַלְלִיךָ* (*yehallelukha*, ‘All Thy works praise Thee’)... and not *יִשְׁתַּבַּח* (*yishtabach*, ‘praised be Your name forever’).³¹

On weekdays, the *tefillat ha-shir* is even detached from the *pesuqe de-zimra* and placed before the *birkhot ha-shachar*, at the very beginning of the morning prayer.³²

4.0. The Analysis of These Liturgical Lists

Lists are primarily characterised by their writers. On the one hand, lists can represent pure transcripts, if it can be assumed that the writers agreed with the pre-existing content. On the other hand, a scribe can also take the liberty to design a list according to his or her own preferences. This may be the case, for example, when a list containing the Songs of Ascents is adapted to the regional needs of the congregation. Therefore, it is helpful to identify the creator of a list; there may be further information available about the writer, or more fragments from the same writer. In some cases, the writers of the lists taken from the Cairo Genizah are indeed known—for example, if they sign or mark a list or can be identified by their handwriting. Unfortunately, this

³⁰ This prayer consists of 1 Chron. 29.10–13 and Neh. 9.6–11, and is recited in the daily morning prayer.

³¹ Raziel-Kretzmer, ‘How Late’, 318; my translation. *Yishtabach* is the concluding blessing of the *pesuqe de-zimra* section in the morning service.

³² Raziel-Kretzmer, ‘How Late’, 319.

is not the case with the lists presented in this paper. Nevertheless, in the case of unknown writers, an attempt can be made to determine the characteristics of the writer with the help of the following analytical approaches, from which in turn conclusions can sometimes be drawn about further aspects of the list.

When it comes to list fragments from the Cairo Genizah, it must be considered that, as a rule, the context of the lists is completely missing. For example, they are not (any longer) bound into a manuscript and exist only as an independent fragment. Thus, the study of the liturgical lists containing Pss 120–34 must address how manuscript fragments can be interpreted when there is no immediate context. To this end, a fragment with a list can only be studied with an auxiliary context. Within this auxiliary context, all references that can be found and deciphered are to be understood. In this paper, further fragments from the Cairo Genizah are included as auxiliary contexts—for example, fragments from prayer books, depicting, for instance, the morning liturgy of the rite of the land of Israel.

A material examination of the fragment can also contribute to the interpretation of a list. For example, considerable insight may be gained if a list is part of a comprehensive manuscript, in the context of which it can be interpreted. Likewise, a list could have served as the table of contents of a prayer book. It is more difficult if there are only individual pages without any context, although even here the material aspects of the list can still be investigated. For example, it may have served as a personal note, or perhaps even as a mnemonic device for a liturgical context.

After considering the material aspects, the next step is to analyse the purpose of the list. What is the purpose of entries in the list? Is this list an official document or is it intended for a private purpose? Does it serve as a summary or as a memory aid? In the context of worship, lists were used for personal orientation for the sequence of prayers. They were also used for listing and collecting passages, which could then be edited and embedded in a new text. Aside from this, lists helped in systematising the existing knowledge in the existing texts. These purposes could be greatly expanded and used to reflect on the individual uses of lists.

Similarly, the design of a list can provide valuable insights. Here, for example, it is possible to look at the written form, especially the use of abbreviations or ornaments. Graphic elements can also be analysed to help with understanding a list. Likewise, the list structure can prove to be relevant. For example, lists may have an alphabetical arrangement (e.g., the alphabetical arrangement of piyyutim in CUL T-S K3.12 or of Bible verses in CUL T-S D1.35) or a thematic arrangement (e.g., CUL T-S D1.76, containing biblical and rabbinic passages on Shabbat). In addition, entries may be presented consecutively, or one below the next.

Particularly helpful is the analysis of the content of lists, remembering that the entries included in a list were determined by criteria set before the list was written. Among other things, it is important to note the entries that were made, and the relationship of the entries with each other.

This paper examines those lists in the Cairo Genizah that include a particular group of psalms, the Songs of Ascents. In addition to the psalms, these lists also contain short entries of other biblical passages or passages from the liturgy. This raises the question of the context of these lists and why they were created.

In the course of the analysis, it will be shown that these lists are to be seen in a liturgical context, and so allow at least a limited view into liturgical procedures. Thus, our understanding of the practices of the congregation members during the morning liturgy of the congregation of the land of Israel in Fustat in the tenth through thirteenth centuries can be expanded upon. More specifically, it is apparent that, even then, lists in the form of small slips of paper were used as mnemonic devices for the service. In order to arrive at this conclusion, existing research findings are first presented in the following section. Then selected lists will be examined and studied, fusing the analytical approaches described in this section.

5.0. Existing Research on Lists Containing the Songs of Ascents

The study of the rite of the land of Israel as reflected in the Cairo Genizah has a long tradition. For the Songs of Ascents, the *tefillat ha-shir*, and the lists to be discussed in this paper, studies by Jacob Mann, Ezra Fleischer, and Kim Phillips are particularly relevant.³³

³³ Further findings can be expected from the as yet unpublished dissertation by Vered Raziel-Kretzmer, 'Palestinian Morning Service'.

In 1925, Jacob Mann was one of the first to study the peculiarities of the morning liturgy of the rite of the land of Israel.³⁴ He analysed several fragments and pointed out that the rite of the land of Israel differed considerably from the Babylonian rite. In particular, the inclusion of the Songs of Ascents in the morning liturgy in the rite of the land of Israel is a distinctive feature.

Ezra Fleischer was the first to examine the Songs of Ascents in the liturgy of the congregations of the Cairo Genizah in his work 'Eretz-Israel Prayer and Prayer Rituals as Portrayed in the Geniza Documents'. He devoted an entire chapter to the Songs of Ascents in the liturgy. He analysed prayer book fragments that contain a much more elaborated text than the lists considered in this paper, and found a remarkable result when analysing certain fragments of the Cairo Genizah: depending whether the recitation was taking place on a weekday, on Shabbat, or on a holiday, the liturgy and the position taken by the Songs of Ascents differed. Therefore, on the basis of his analysis, it is possible in some cases to assign lists of the Songs of Ascents to certain days (weekdays or Shabbats). Moreover, by comparing a list with his analyses of the formulated prayer book fragments, it is also possible to determine where the Songs of Ascents were to be recited, that is, their position in the liturgy.

In a short article titled 'A Shorthand Psalter: T-S A43.8', produced as one of a series of Cambridge University Library fragments of the month, Kim Phillips examined the fragment CUL T-S

³⁴ Mann, 'Genizah Fragments'.

A43.8, basing his work on that of Mann and Fleischer. This small fragment is only 10 × 12 cm. Phillips assumes that

it was a personal production for individual use in personal and liturgical contexts. We can imagine a worshipper using this very codex in the Morning Service a thousand years ago, occasionally glancing at the abbreviated text as a sufficient aid to assist him in the recitation of Psalms he had been reciting from his youth.³⁵

6.0. Liturgical Lists in the Cairo Genizah

Containing the Songs of Ascents

A total of eight fragments that contain lists of the Songs of Ascents and are to be seen in a liturgical context were found for this paper. All are from the Cambridge University Library:³⁶

CUL T-S A40.34 (joins with CUL T-S AS 41.28)

CUL T-S AS 41.28

CUL T-S Ar.37.77

CUL T-S Misc. 10.184

CUL T-S NS 218.41

Mosseri VII 192.2 (joins with Mosseri VII 192.3)

Mosseri VII 192.3

CUL T-S NS 203.2

Ezra Fleischer and Kim Phillips have already shown, on the basis of some of these fragments, that these lists are to be seen in a liturgical context. Nevertheless, it is necessary to adopt a new

³⁵ Phillips, 'T-S A43.8'.

³⁶ It is of course possible that more fragments will be identified containing lists of the Songs of Ascents in the future.

perspective on these lists, since they have been considered neither as lists nor in the context of that particular technique of textual production with its own implications. In addition to building on this previous research, additional fragments from the Cairo Genizah are examined.

An essential feature of the lists in these fragments is their design, especially their graphic presentation. Signs are placed in these liturgical lists that are helpful for the reader. In addition, the scribes presuppose, to varying degrees, textual knowledge of the psalms, since they sometimes abbreviate the psalms or list only the first words of the psalms.

6.1. CUL T-S A40.34 and CUL T-S AS 41.28

The first fragment is CUL T-S 40.34 (fig. 1). It measures 22.5 × 8.4 cm and is written on paper. The lower end of the paper strip is detached. The text of the Songs of Ascents is shown on the front side:³⁷

א' ש' ה' אל יי בצרת לי 1. A s[ong] of a[scents]. To the
Lord in my distress

ב' ש' ה' למעלות אשא עיני 2. A s[ong] for a[scents]. I turn
my eyes

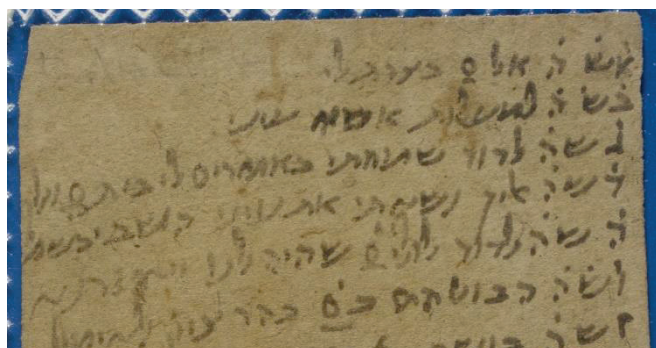
ג' ש' ה' לדוד שמחתי באומרים לי 3. A s[ong] of a[scents]. I re-
joiced when they said to me,
“We are going to the House of
the Lord.”

³⁷ Only the first lines of the fragment are shown here to illustrate the layout of the list.

4. ד' ש' ה' אליך נשאתי את עיני הישבי
enthroned in heaven, I turn my
eyes.

5. ה' ש' ה' לדוד לולי יי שהיה לנו יאמר
vid. Were it not for the Lord,
who was on our side, let de-
clare

Figure 1: Upper part of CUL T-S A40.34, showing Pss 120–24 of a numbered list of the Songs of Ascents (reproduced with the kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)



This manuscript presents a numbered list. The Songs of Ascents (Pss 120–34) are assigned the numbers 1–15, written using Hebrew letters and identified by overdots. The words שיר המעלות (*shir ha-ma'alot*) are abbreviated using the letters *shin* and *heh*. Then, throughout the set, the remaining text of the first verse of the respective psalm follows. Interestingly, Ps. 135 is omitted, and the list continues with Ps. 136. Commenting on this, Ezra Fleischer writes: “One does not know why Ps. 135 (שעומדים) was not included. Surely, he had no difficulty recalling this passage.

The liturgical, mnemonic purpose of the list cannot be doubted.”³⁸ Thus, the omission of this psalm from the list can only be an oversight and does not indicate an actual omission in the rite.

In the case of Ps. 136, not only the opening verse is quoted, but a total of 22 verses are quoted in full (up to v. 22). However, the refrain of the psalm is omitted. The fragment ends at this point.

In the course of searching for other lists in the Cairo Genizah that contain the Songs of Ascents, the lower part of this paper strip was found (CUL T-S AS 41.28). It seamlessly complements the upper part, and contains Ps. 136.23, but Ps. 136.24–26 are missing. Afterwards, the initial verses of Pss 137–40 follow. The author flipped the paper top-to-bottom and continued to write on the back of this fragment: the beginning verse of Ps. 140 is written again, followed by Pss 141–42. Then the fragment passes seamlessly into the verso of the fragment CUL T-S A40.34. There are still the beginnings of Ps. 142.1–3 and Pss 143–44. The rest of the verso of this fragment is blank.

The position of the text of this fragment in the liturgy is unclear. The continuous presentation of Pss 120–44 indicates that it could have been recited on a weekday or on Shabbat.³⁹ The absence of Pss 145–50 is notable, and so is the absence of these very verses in the next fragment.

³⁸ Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 240; my translation.

³⁹ See above and Raziell-Kretzmer, ‘How Late’, 319.

6.2. CUL T-S Ar.37.77

The next fragment is made of paper and measures 15 × 7 cm; it is also in a rather small format. The writing is almost completely faded in some places.

This list is written in the manner of continuous text and contains some graphic separations. Abbreviations and the end of a psalm are marked with overdots and colons, respectively.

אשא⁴⁰ ש' למ' בצרתה: ש' אלהי' שיר ה' A song of a[scents]. To the Lord in distress (Ps. 120.1): A s[ong] for a[scents]. I turn my eyes (Ps. 121.1):

אלך ש' ה' לדוד שמחת: ש' ה' אלהי' נשאתי⁴¹ את עיני' A s[ong] of a[scents]. Of David. I rejoiced (Ps. 122.1): A s[ong] of a[scents]. To You, I turn my eyes (Ps. 123.1):

ש' ה' לד' עש⁴² לולי יי' A s[ong] of a[scents]. Of David. Were it not for the Lord (Ps. 124.1):

ש' ה' הבוטחים: ש' ה' בשוב יי' A s[ong] of a[scents]. Those who trust (Ps. 125.1): A s[ong] of a[scents]. When the Lord restores (Ps. 126.1):

⁴⁰ ש' למ' added above the line.

⁴¹ נשאתי added below the line.

⁴² Here a probably accidental spelling of the letter ש, the first letter of שמחת, the first word of Ps. 122, which also begins with לדוד.

⁴³

מו' לד' יי קראתיד: מו' לד' A p[salm] of D[avid]. I call You,
Lord (Ps. 141.1): A p[salm⁴⁴]
of D[avid].

בהיותו במע': מו' לד' יי While he was in the cave.
(Ps. 142.1): A p[salm] of D[a-
vid]. O Lord,

שמע תפילתי: לדויד ברוך hear my prayer (Ps. 143.1): Of
David. Blessed is

יי צורי: the Lord, my rock (Ps. 144.1):

In this notation of the verses, no attention is paid to the meaning of the biblical verse. Moreover, only the first words that seem necessary to identify the psalm are quoted, a form of shorthand.

In this list, Ps. 136 is omitted. It can therefore be assumed that Pss 135 and 136 were possibly regarded as a unit and, thus, only the beginning of Ps. 135 was written.⁴⁵ Another possibility is that Ps. 136 was not quoted; however, this needs further clarification. The fragment ends with the first words of Ps. 144.

6.3. CUL T-S Misc. 10.184

The third fragment is also very small, measuring only about 16.4 × 25.5 cm. The characteristic of this fragment is its graphic design. It lists the opening verse and the closing verse of each

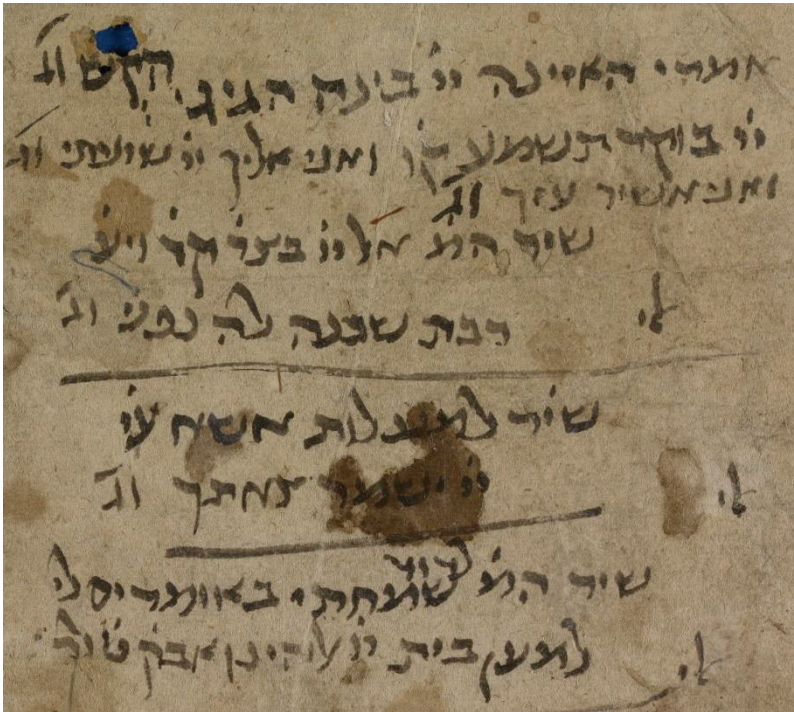
⁴³ Only the first and last lines of the fragment are shown here to illustrate the layout of the list.

⁴⁴ The text of the Hebrew Bible says *maskil* and not *mizmor*.

⁴⁵ See also the discussion in b. Pesahim 118a.

psalm and then graphically separates it from the next list entry by a horizontal line (see fig. 2).

Figure 2: Psalms separated by a horizontal line in CUL T-S Misc. 10.184; top of the list including Ps. 5.2 and Ps. 59.17, then the first and last verses of Pss 120–122 (reproduced with the kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)



The fragment begins with the verses “Give ear to my speech, O Lord; consider my utterance. Hear the sound of my cry, my King and God, for I pray to You. Hear my voice, O Lord, at daybreak” (Ps. 5.2–4) and “But I will sing of Your strength, extol each morning Your faithfulness; for You have been my haven, a refuge in time of trouble” (Ps. 59.17). These verses are followed by the listing of the Songs of Ascents. The fragment contains Pss 120–45 in their entirety.

Having Ps. 5.2–4 and Ps. 59.17 as opening verses is also found in the fragment London, British Library, Or. 5557E, fols 12–13.⁴⁶ There, as in the fragment here, these verses precede the Songs of Ascents. The British Library fragment also gives a clue as to when the reading of the *shir ha-ma'alot* should take place. The fragment reads:

And afterwards (after the *birkhot ha-shachar* ['the blessings of the morning']) one says the song here on Shabbat morning and on holidays, and on the fast day Kippur and on the feast of the Commandments and on the feast of Shavu'ot and on the feast of Sukkot and on New Year's Day one says the song before saying *barukh she-amar*.⁴⁷

From comparison of the Genizah fragment and the fragment from the British Library, it can be concluded that CUL T-S Misc. 10.184 has its context in the morning prayer on Shabbats and feast days.

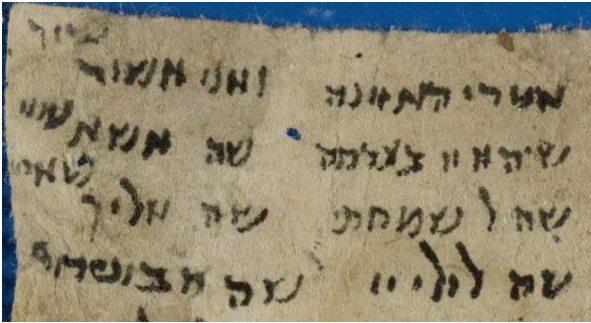
6.4. CUL T-S NS 218.41

The fourth fragment is written on a paper measuring only 13 × 16 cm. It is a bifolium, two pages of which are blank. The list is written without abbreviation signs above the letters. The entries are separated by blank spaces (fig. 3).

⁴⁶ For this fragment, see Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 236–37.

⁴⁷ My translation.

Figure 3: Psalms separated by blank spaces in CUL T-S NS 218.41a; top of the list including Ps. 5.2 and Ps. 59.17 followed by Pss 120–23 (re-produced with the kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)



(verso)

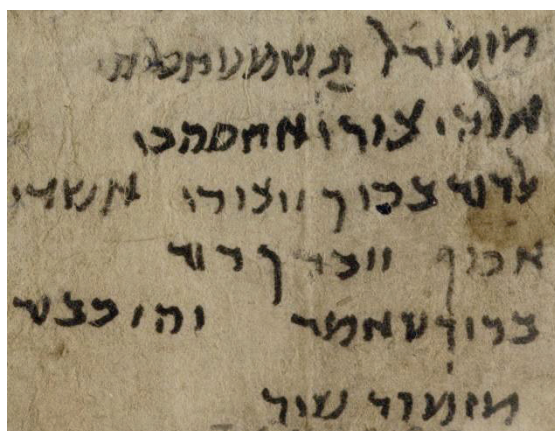
- אמרי האזינה ואני אשר עוזיך Give ear to my words [Adonai]
(Ps. 5.2), and I will sing of
Your strength (Ps. 59.17)
- א ש ה א י בצרתה ש ה אשא עיני A s[ong] of a[scents]. In dis-
tress (Ps. 120.1)
- א ש ה ל שמחתי ש ה אליך נשאתי A s[ong] of a[scents]. I turn my
eyes (Ps. 121.1)
- א ש ה ל שמחתי ש ה אליך נשאתי A s[ong] of a[scents]. I re-
joiced (Ps. 122.1)
- א ש ה ל שמחתי ש ה אליך נשאתי A s[ong] of a[scents]. To You,
I turn (Ps. 123.1)

...⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Only the first lines of the fragment are shown here to illustrate the layout of the list.

Like fragment CUL T-S Misc. 10.184, this fragment begins with the first words of Ps. 5.2, “Give ear to my words [Adonai],” followed by the first words of the verse Ps. 59.17, “But I will sing of Your strength.” On the back, after the citation of Ps. 144, follow the *wa-yevarekh David*, *barukh she-amar*, and *yehi khevod*. The last entry in the list is the *mizmor shir* (fig. 4).

Figure 4: End of the list of the Songs of Ascents in CUL T-S NS 218.41b, where other sections of the morning prayer are mentioned (reproduced with the kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)



(recto)

... ..

מזמור ל' יי שמע תפלתי A psalm of [David]. O Lord
hear my prayer: (Ps. 143.1)

אלהי צורי אחסה בו

לדוד ברוך צורי Of David. Blessed is my rock.
(Ps. 144.1) Happy (Ps. 144.15)

אמן ויברך דוד Amen.

Wa-yevarekh David.

יהי כבוד ברוך שאמר *Barukh she-amar*.

Yehi khevod.

מזמור שיר *Mizmor shir* (Pss 145–50)

From this fragment, information can be drawn about the position of the Songs of Ascents in the morning prayer. They precede the *wa-yevarekh David* (“And David blessed,” 1 Chron. 29.10–13), followed by *barukh she-amar* (“Blessed be he who spake”), and *yehi khevod*⁴⁹ (“May the glory of the Lord endure forever; let the Lord rejoice in His work,” Ps. 104.31); that is, the Songs of Ascent occur before the opening elements of the morning prayer. Finally, following these opening elements is another section of Psalms, the *mizmor shir* (מזמור שיר) or Pss 145–50, known from the Babylonian version of the morning prayer.⁵⁰ Thus, the psalms enclose the first official section of the morning liturgy.

Like the fragment CUL T-S Misc. 10.184, this fragment places the reading of the Songs of Ascents before the *barukh she-amar*. Thus the list also seems to reflect the recitation on Shabbats and holidays.

6.5. Mosseri VII 192.2 and 192.3

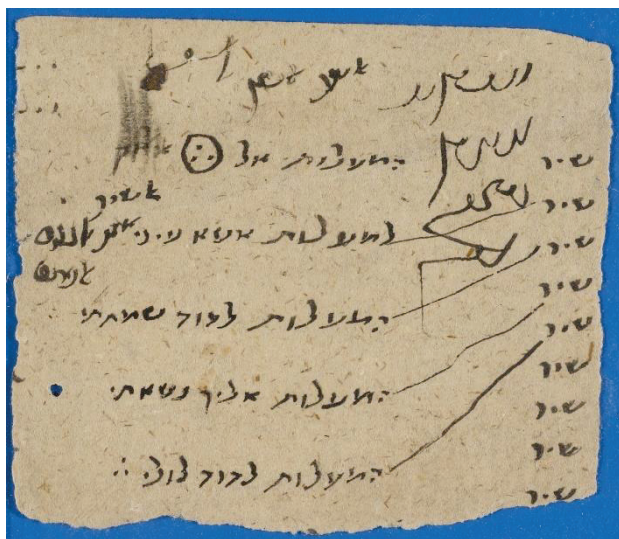
The two fragments Mosseri VII 192.2 and 192.3 are the fragments from which the least information can be extracted. Mosseri VII 192.3 shows the beginning of a list of the Songs of Ascents from Pss 120–25. The word ‘song’ (שיר *shir*) is repeatedly seen on the

⁴⁹ A passage comprising 18 verses mostly from the book of Psalms, today recited daily in the *pesuqe de-zimra* section of the morning prayer.

⁵⁰ Raziell-Kretzmer and Ben-Dov, ‘Qumran Psalter’, 307.

right, which is then connected by a line to the initial words of each psalm (fig. 5). These initial words are offset from the repetition of the word ‘song’, so the stroke is necessary to visually draw an auxiliary line of association. After Ps. 125, no further psalm beginning seems to have been added, since there is also no longer a stroke for assignment. This is also shown by the fragment Mosseri VII 192.2, which contains only a repeated sequence of the word ‘song’.

Figure 5: Lines connecting the word *shir* ‘song’ with the opening verse of each psalm in Mosseri VII 192.3 (reproduced with the kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)



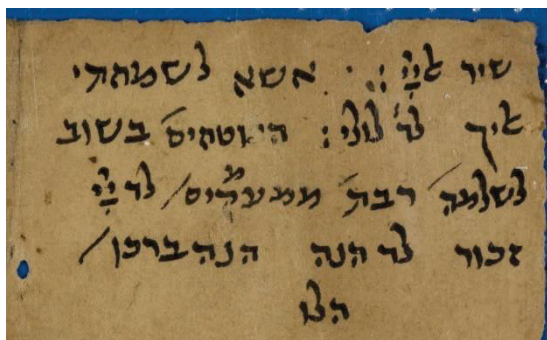
The fragments are incomplete and cut or detached. It can be assumed that originally the list was written on paper, and a text in Judaeo-Arabic was written on the reverse side afterwards when the paper was reused. This later text is a note on both fragment parts to inform the judge Moses that the Parnass Abū l-Nās is responsible for the provision of bread. Such a secondary use of

paper and splitting of fragments is not uncommon in the Cairo Genizah, and it reflects the frequent reuse of previously written material at the time.

6.6. CUL T-S NS 203.2

A particularly pronounced form of shortening of the text is evident in the fragment CUL T-S NS 203.2 (fig. 6). This fragment is also very small, measuring only 8 × 8 cm. It has already been identified and edited by Ezra Fleischer.⁵¹ The listing extends over five lines.

Figure 6: Mnemonic from Pss 120–35 on CUL T-S NS 203.2 (reproduced with the kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)



שיר אל יי: אשא ל' שמחתי
אליך לד' לולי: הבוטחים בשוב
לשלמה רבת ממעמ⁵² קים לד' יי
זכור לד' הנה הנה ברכו
הלו

⁵¹ Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 240–41.

⁵² מ added above the line.

Here, there is neither an explanation of what the list is supposed to be nor any classifying words, as in the other lists presented so far.

Rather, as Fleischer noted, the order of the Songs of Ascents is listed here in a mnemonic fashion.⁵³ Mostly, only a single word from the opening verse of the Songs of Ascents appears. Strung together, these words make no sense, unless one understands them as a mnemonic. Fleischer also noted the absence of Ps. 128 from this listing. If one reconstructs this mnemonic enumeration and inserts the further text of the psalms, the following picture arises:

שיר [המעלות] אל יי בצרתה לי: [שיר למעלות] אשא [עיני]: [שיר
המעלות] לד[וד] שמחתי: [שיר המעלות] אליך [נשאתי את עיני]: [שיר
המעלות] לד[וד] לולי יי שהיה לנו: [שיר המעלות] הבוטחים [ביי]: [שיר
המעלות] בשוב יי את שיבת ציון: [שיר המעלות] לשלמה [אם יי לא יבנה
בית]: [שיר המעלות] רבת [צרונו]: [שיר המעלות] ממעמקים [קראתיך
יי]: [שיר המעלות] לד[וד] יי [לא גבה לבי]: [שיר המעלות] זכור [יי לדוד]:
[שיר המעלות] לד[וד] הנה [מה טוב ומה נעים]: [שיר המעלות] הנה ברכו
את יי: [הלו].⁵⁴

A song [of ascents.] In my distress: [A song for ascents.] I
turn [my eyes]: [A song of ascents.] Of [David.] I rejoiced:
[A song of ascents.] To You [I turn my eyes]: [A song of
ascents.] Of D[avid.] Were it not [for the Lord, who was
on our side]: [A song of ascents.] Those who trust [in the
Lord]: [A song of ascents. When the Lord] restores [the
fortunes of Zion]: [A song of ascents.] Of Salomon. [Unless
the Lord builds the house]: [A song of ascents.] They have
often [assailed me]: [A song of ascents.] Out of the depths

⁵³ Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 241n99.

⁵⁴ Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer*, 241.

[I call You]: [A song of ascents.] Of D[avid.] O Lord [my heart is not proud]: [A song of ascents. O Lord,] remember [in David's favour]: [A song of ascents.] Of D[avid.] Look [how good and how pleasant]: [A song of ascents.] Now bless [the Lord]: Hallelujah.

As can be seen from this reconstruction, only the first and sometimes the second word after the incipit שיר המעלות (*shir ha-ma'alot*) is ever listed. Thus, only a little content is transported. Therefore, the fragment can only have served as a mnemonic anchor.

7.0. Conclusion

Several findings were deduced in this paper. First, it was determined that none of the writers of the lists could be identified. The handwriting of each list differs, so it can be concluded that the lists were made by various persons. One can at least say that the writers must have belonged to the circle of the Palestinian congregation, since they follow the rite of the land of Israel.

The context of the lists is also missing; the fragments are each present individually, although one of the lists could be re-assembled from two fragments. All of the lists may have been independent of other writings before they were deposited in the Cairo Genizah; the lists were not, for example, part of a larger manuscript or booklet. In some cases they are found on recycled paper as a secondary use, or on paper that was subsequently used for a secondary use. This suggests that these lists were personal texts intended for personal use.

The examination of the material showed, in particular, that all the lists were in a very small format. Based on this, it can be

assumed that they served as a kind of small memo to capture the order of the psalms. The purpose of the lists was, therefore, probably to serve as a kind of memory card for prayer.

Even though all the lists on the Songs of Ascents in the morning liturgy are united by their theme, they diverge in design and content. These differences are probably due to the individual preferences of the various scribes of the lists. Although their working procedures and approaches to the content differed, they all produced an abbreviated schema of the Songs of Ascents. These shortened representations helped the individuals in their particular situations to provide the best possible assistance in memorising the texts.

Next, the differences in the way the verses are cited and the extent of the citation should be noted. The citations sometimes follow the verse exactly; sometimes a shortening of the words is used; sometimes it is even indicated up to which place the psalm is quoted. Mostly, the last verse of the respective psalm is quoted for this purpose.

The form of list varies from scribe to scribe and reflects personal design preferences. One list has numbering before the psalm beginnings, while the others appear without numbering. Another list is characterised by a subdivision of the entries by long dashes (CUL T-S Misc. 10.184). Supporting the main text, some lists use various graphical aids in the creation of the lists. They use separators such as colons and dashes, whereas other lists use spacing between the entries (CUL T-S NS 218.41).

In terms of content, the arrangement of the elements of the Songs of Ascents lists is, on the one hand, predetermined by the

order that these psalms already have in the Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, the list also reflects the order of liturgical practice. Each list may represent the knowledge of the person writing it. Nevertheless, there is the limitation that the scribe may reflect only the information that is necessary and important to him, for example, to support his memory. Other information that is self-evident to the person writing might be omitted.