

## A NOTE ON THE AUTOGRAPH OF SA'ID BEN FARJOI

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In his interesting article "An Autograph of Sa'id ben Farjoi, *etc.*", which appeared in *Textus*, VI, 106 ff., N. Allony published a fragment of a colophon, written by ben Farjoi, apparently at the end of a copy of one of the books of the Bible. In page 2 of the folio containing the colophon are some scribblings and experimental strokes of the pen, one of which<sup>1</sup> appears to be in the hand of the writer of the colophon himself. This text runs as follows, "ל' אמרתי בסיני אנכי הוא". Allony is inclined to see in the words "ל' אמרתי" a Massoretic note concerning the vocalisation of the word "אמרתי" in the Bible,<sup>3</sup> he finds it difficult to interpret the word "בסיני",<sup>4</sup> and he considers the words "אנכי הוא" as a Biblical quotation.<sup>5</sup> From this, and the other scribblings on this page, most of which are of Biblical verses,<sup>6</sup> N. Allony deduces that Sa'id ben Farjoi copied not only books of the Bible, but also certain notes

- 1 There is no proof whatsoever to support Allony's suggestion that all of the scribblings on p. 2, including those in Arabic, are the work of Sa'id ben Farjoi. The Hebrew scribblings, apart from the one mentioned below, are clearly written in another hand, and with another pen. It is logical to maintain that the first copyist of the MS would never have used an empty page of his monumental (and complete!) MS for practise strokes of the pen. Such an use of the page must have come about a long time after the MS itself had been written, possibly even after the page became detached from the main body of the MS, as a result of its protracted use.
- 2 This letter "ל'", which Allony includes in his analysis, is clearly written with a different pen and in a different hand. It is apparently completely unconnected with the sentence under discussion.
- 3 Even discounting what will be said below, this proposition seems most unlikely: "ל' אמרתי (= לית)" can mean at the best that the word "אמרתי" is found nowhere in the Bible, but in fact this word occurs 75 times. If the copyist had wished here to indicate, as Allony opines, that this word always appears with one particular vocalisation only, with one exception, under no circumstances would he have used this particular language.
- 4 Cp. Allony, "An Autograph of Sa'id ben Farjoi, *etc.*", *Textus*, VI, 111, note 34.
- 5 Allony, *ib.*, note 36.
- 6 Incidentally, most of the practise pen strokes in the Geniza MSS use Biblical passages, and it is doubtful whether we should attach to this any particular significance.

concerning the Massorah, which in his opinion strengthens the hypothesis that ben Farjoi was a Karaite.

In truth, the words "אמרתי בסיני אנכי הוא" constitute the initial line of a Rabbinical lamentation for the Ninth of Ab, found in several MSS from the Geniza,<sup>7</sup> which runs as follows:

אמרתי בסיני אנכי הוא  
 והמה בציון כיחשו ויאמרו לא הוא  
 פזמון: תנו לי דברי / עשרת מאמרי  
 בני, זרע בחירי / עמוסי, נצורי  
 5 אמרתי בסיני לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני  
 והמה בציון עץ ואבן המליכו לפני  
 אמרתי בסיני לא תשא לשוא את שם  
 והמה בציון ניאצו וחללו את השם  
 אמרתי בסיני זכור את יום השבת  
 10 והמה בציון דורכים גתות בשבת  
 אמרתי בסיני כבוד אב ואם  
 והמה בציון הקלו אב ואם  
 אמרתי בסיני לא תרצח ותשפוך דמים  
 והמה בציון ידיהם מלאו דמים  
 15 אמרתי בסיני לא תנאף בניאופים  
 והמה בציון כי כולם מנאפים  
 אמרתי בסיני לא תגנב ותחלוק עם גנבים  
 והמה בציון חברי גנבים  
 אמרתי בסיני לא תענה עדות שקר  
 20 והמה בציון קמו בי עדי שקר  
 אמרתי בסיני לא תחמוד [ג]מול כל  
 והמה בציון חמדו שדות וגנלו כל

We may conclude from this that the above passage provides no evidence for linking Sa'id ben Farjoi with any issues of the Massorah, and further constitutes a counter argument to his assumed affiliation with Karaism: the lamentation is clearly of Rabbanite origin, and it would be hard to imagine its ever being used by the Karaites.

The other notes, above and at the side of the note under discussion,

<sup>7</sup> *E.g.*, MS. T.-S.H 14/7 (printed above); and likewise MS. Adler 2159, p. 9; MS. T.-S. H 14/32 and 6H6/2. Another version of the Piyyut (and its beginning "אמרתי בסיני אנכי ה' אלהיך") is found also in MSS. Adler 2425, p. 54 Oxford 2723 B and British museum 701.

"אבותינו הטאו" and "אבותינו הטאו",<sup>8</sup> also appear to be no more than openings of Rabbanite lamentations for the Ninth of Ab, from which we may deduce that the tome, whose colophon occupies the first page of the folio under discussion, contained a copy of the Book of Lamentations.

8 A Piyyut, with such an opening, is recorded in Israel Davidson's *Thesaurus*, vol. 1, letter א, No. 152.