

PIRQE DE-RABBI ELIEZER §30 (END)

The medieval Jewish text generally known as *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is an intriguing aggadic compilation which probably stems from Islamicate Palestine during the eighth or ninth centuries CE.¹ Its extant forms exhibit a division into fifty-four ‘chapters’ (*peraqim*), but it is almost certainly incomplete in its surviving manuscript and printed versions.² Following an introductory framing story which attributes the collection and formulation of the traditions transmitted therein to R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, a well-known early second-century sage,³ the work presents a coherent and almost seamlessly interwoven tapestry of biblical pericopae and interpretative expansions which extend with only minimal digression from the creation of the universe to the story of Esther. Its narrative style is akin to that found in roughly contemporary works like the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* or Muslim anthologies of ‘tales of the prophets’

¹ The most important general discussions of this work are Leopold Zunz and Hanokh Albeck, *Haderashot be-Yisrael* (2d ed.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 134-40, 417-23; Bern(h)ard Heller, “Agadische Literatur,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (10 vols.; Berlin: Verlag Eschkol A.-G., 1928-34), 1:1030-31; Moshe David Herr, “Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer,” *EncJud* 13:558-60; H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 356-58.

² Three separate structural considerations are suggestive: (1) all extant ‘complete’ versions end abruptly with the divine punishment of Miriam, hardly a propitious topic with which to conclude a book devoted ‘to expounding what He has accomplished and what He intends to do so that the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, might be exalted’ (*Pirqe R. El.* §3); (2) *Pirqe R. El.* §14 promises to explicate the ‘ten descents’ of the divine presence to earth, but only the first eight are treated in extant versions of the text (§§14, 24, 25, 39, 40, 41, 46, 54); and (3) there is a sustained attempt to ‘close’ chapters in the second half of the work (beginning with §27) with liturgical language connected with the benedictions of the *‘Amidah*, but only the first eight (out of an expected total of eighteen) survive.

In addition to these formal considerations, medieval commentators occasionally cite passages from *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* which no longer survive in our extant versions. See, e.g., Ramban *ad* Lev 16:8; Radaq *ad* Isa 27:1. For longer lists of such citations, see Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot*, 417 n.12, and R. David Luria’s ‘Mavo’ to his frequently reprinted edition *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer ha-Gadol* (Warsaw: T. Y. Bamberg, 1852), 13a §7.

³ It should be noted that the opening *petihah* of *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* found in §3 after the framing proem of §§1-2 cites Ps 106:2a (מי ימלל גבורות ייי), a passage which announces the overarching purpose of the larger work and whose value in gematria is also equivalent to that of the name ‘Eliezer ben Hyrcanus’ (אליעזר בן הורקנוס). This of course attests the artistry of the compiler as well as providing a rationale for the pseudonym. See Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot*, 420 n.28; *Pirqe R. El.* §3 (ed. Luria), 5a n.2.

(*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*). *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* enjoyed widespread popularity in Jewish circles and achieved a remarkable geographical and cultural dispersal.⁴ This work has also aroused perennial interest on the part of historians and students of medieval Jewish literature because it ‘utilize[s] narrative techniques similar (if not identical) to the expanded biblical tales of the earlier periods [of Jewish literary activity]’,⁵ even attesting at times certain distinctive exegetical and legendary details otherwise found only in Second Temple and Roman era pseudepigrapha like *I Enoch* and *Jubilees*.⁶

Scholars have long noticed that the traditions recounted in *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* appear to be closely related to those found in the Palestinian targum tradition, particularly those contained in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to the Pentateuch.⁷ Both *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* incorporate references, most of which are polemical, to Islamic religious claims and political hegemony.⁸ These cluster primarily around biblical passages which are concerned with the biblical character Ishmael, a

⁴ One of the earliest references to the work appears in the *'Iggeret* of Pirkoi ben Baboi, an early ninth-century advocate for Babylonian religious hegemony over North African Jewish communities. It subsequently became well known among both Islamicate (Judah ha-Levi; Maimonides) and Ashkenazi (Rashi; Tosafot) learned circles. For other early citations, see especially Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot*, 420-21 n.30. The first printed edition appeared in Constantinople in 1514. For the most recent discussion of the manuscripts and printed editions of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*, see Lewis Barth, “Is Every Medieval Hebrew Manuscript a New Composition? The Case of *Pirque Rabbi Eliezer*,” in *Agendas for the Study of Midrash in the Twenty-first Century* (ed. Marc Lee Raphael; Williamsburg, Va.: College of William and Mary, 1999), 43-62.

⁵ Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 250.

⁶ See Hanokh Albeck, “Agadot im Lichte der Pseudepigraphen,” *MGWJ* 83 (1939): 162-69, esp. 167-69; Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot*, 139-40; John C. Reeves, “Exploring the Afterlife of Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Medieval Near Eastern Religious Traditions: Some Initial Soundings,” *JJS* 30 (1999): 148-77. Note also Joseph Dan, *Ha-Sippur ha-ivri be-yemey ha-beyanim: 'Iyyunim be-toldotav* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 22.

⁷ A roster of correspondences is supplied in Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot*, 419 n.20. A convenient example appears in Philip S. Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin Jan Mulder; CRINT 2.1; Assen & Philadelphia: Van Gorcum & Fortress, 1988), 219. The close relationship of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has however been questioned by Robert Hayward, “The Date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Some Comments,” *JJS* 40 (1989): 7-30; idem, “Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” *JJS* 42 (1991): 215-46.

⁸ See, e.g., *Tg. Ps-J. Gen 25:14*, where the names of three of Ishmael’s descendants are parsed as consolatory exhortations for Israel (‘Come together, remain silent, and endure!’). Note especially Moritz Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden, nebst Anhängen verwandten Inhalts* (Leipzig, 1877; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), 338-40; Bern(h)ard Heller, “Muhammedanisches und Antimuhammedanisches in den Pirke R. Eliezer,” *MGWJ* 69 (1925): 47-54; M. Ohana, “La polémique judéo-islamique d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” *Aug* 15 (1975): 367-87; but contrast Robert Hayward, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic,” *JJS* 34 (1989): 77-93. For resistance to the notion that the name ‘Ishmael’ functions exclusively as an apologetical or polemical trope, see Carol Bakhos, *Ishmael on the Border: Rabbinic Portrayals of the First Arab* (Albany: State University of New York

name commonly read in late antique Jewish literature as a cipher for ‘the Arabs’ or the religion of Islam, just as the character Esau or the locale of Edom functioned as an emblem for the ‘evil empire’ of Rome and triumphalist Christianity.⁹ The compilers of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* anticipate a future moment when both the Christian and Muslim empires will be annihilated by the power of God: ‘... the Holy One, blessed be He, is going to destroy the descendants of Esau, for they are the adversaries of the children of Israel, and likewise (He will destroy) the Ishmaelites, for they are enemies. Scripture affirms: “You will raise Your hand against Your adversaries, and all Your enemies will be cut off”’ (Mic 5:8).¹⁰

Among the more interesting of such passages is a lengthy apocalyptic logion attributed to the *tanna* R. Ishmael about the ‘fifteen things’ which the Ishmaelites (i.e., the Muslims) will do in Eretz Israel at the end-time (באחרית הימים). Due to censorship concerns, this passage is often entirely lacking or severely curtailed in most standard printed editions of the work.¹¹ A truncated periphrastic rendition of the initial lines of this logion is found in the *Secrets of R. Šim‘ōn b. Yoḥai*, there introduced by the incipit ‘moreover R. Šim‘ōn reported that he learned from R. Ishmael’ (ועוד היה רבי שמעון אומר ששמע מרבי ישמעאל).¹² Based on the roster of items mentioned therein (such as reallocation of lands, changes in legal tender, widespread apostasy, building activities on the Temple Mount, and campaigns against Constantinople), and provided moreover that such details were meant to correlate with actual historical events,¹³ the Ishmael logion would appear to date from the final decades of the seventh or the initial decades of the eighth century CE.¹⁴

Press, 2006); Steven Daniel Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 157-67.

⁹ For this latter equation, see the classic essay by Gerson D. Cohen, “Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought,” in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (ed. Alexander Altmann; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 19-48; also N. R. M. de Lange, “Jewish Attitudes to the Roman Empire,” in *Imperialism in the Ancient World: The Cambridge University Research Seminar in Ancient History* (ed. P. D. A. Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 269-71.

¹⁰ *Pirque R. El.* §48 (HUC Ms. 75 fol. 71a) עתיד הקב"ה להשמיד לבני עשו שהם צריו לבני ישראל וכן לבני ... ישמעאל שהן אויבין שנאמר תרום ידך על צריך וכל אויבך יכרתו.

¹¹ This is for example the case with the 1852 edition of R. David Luria. The 1514 Constantinople *editio princeps* is missing the folios which would contain this logion.

¹² Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der jüdischen Literatur* (6 vols.; Leipzig, 1853-77; repr., Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1938), 3:78.30-79.4. Heinrich Graetz viewed the Ishmael logion in *Pirque R. El.* §30 as ‘completely dependent’ upon the *Secrets* (see his *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* [3d ed.; 11 vols. in 13; Leipzig: Oskar Leiner, 1890-1908], 5:410-11 n.1), but this is problematic. Aside from the opening lines, there is very little overlap between the two texts.

¹³ The *textual* character of apocalyptic discourse does not demand any necessary congruity with the mundane details of contemporary history.

¹⁴ The most important discussions of this logion are Moritz Steinschneider, “Apocalypsen mit polemischer Tendenz,” *ZDMG* 28 (1874): 645-46; Graetz, *Geschichte*, 5:186-87; Samuel Krauss, *Studien*

The translation of this passage below is based on a synoptic comparison of the final lines of *Pirqe R. El.* §30 which was prepared from the following four sources: (1) Hebrew Union College Ms. 75 fol. 44a-b, a manuscript of oriental pedigree stemming from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries; (2) Hebrew Union College Ms. 2043, a nineteenth-century Yemenite manuscript; (3) the partial transcription of the passage from the 1544 Venice printed edition reproduced in Zunz-Albeck;¹⁵ and (4) the version of *Pirqe R. El.* published by Michael Higger, itself based upon an earlier unpublished edition prepared by H. M. Horowitz which relied upon three manuscripts (two Italian and one oriental) dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.¹⁶

A SYNOPTIC VERSION OF *PIRQE DE-RABBI ELIEZER* §30 (END)

R. Ishmael said: The Ishmaelites will do fifteen things in the Land (of Israel) at the End of Days, to wit: They will measure the Land with ropes,¹⁷ and make cemeteries (places for) the lodging¹⁸ of flocks¹⁹

zur byzantinisch-jüdischen Geschichte (Leipzig: Buchhandlung Gustav Fock, 1914), 145-46; Jacob Elbaum, “Meshiḥiyut be-Pirqey de-Rabbi Eli‘ezer: Apoqalipsah u-midrash,” *Te‘udah* 11 (1996): 252-60; Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 13; Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1997), 313-16; Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur‘ān: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 17; Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1999), 33-34.

¹⁵ Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot*, 420 n.25.

¹⁶ One should also note the translations in *Pirke De Rabbi Eliezer* (trans. Gerald Friedlander; London, 1916; repr., New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), 221-22; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 313-16; Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur‘ān*, 33-34. Another recent ‘diplomatic edition’ (using different manuscripts) of the same passage is available in Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 279; also her discussion at 38-42.

¹⁷ The *Secrets of R. Šim‘ōn b. Yoḥai* cites Dan 11:39 as its proof-text: ואדמה יחלק במחיר ‘and he (the king) will apportion the Land for spoil,’ a verse possessing no lexical overlap with the cited saying. One might compare however a Muslim apocalyptic tradition regarding the struggle of Rome and the Muslims for control of Palestine that is attributed to Ka‘b al-Aḥbār, an early Jewish convert to Islam, and which refers to Muslims who will ‘divide its (Caesarea’s) pasture-land with ropes (بالجبال = בחבלים) and cubit-measures.’ Ka‘b’s tradition is found in Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan* (ed. S. Zakkār; Beirut: Dār al-Fikr lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 1993), 286.1-4.

¹⁸ Instead of מרבץ (‘lodging, repose’), the *Secrets of R. Šim‘ōn b. Yoḥai* has מרעה ‘pasturage.’

¹⁹ Cf. Ezek 25:5, which promises that the Chaldeans will turn the territory of the Ammonites into a place where ‘flocks repose’ (למרבץ צאן). Note too the similar desecration portrayed in the roughly contemporary *Apoc. Ps-Meth.* 11.18 (Reinink, 1:32): כַּלְיוֹנוֹתֵינוּ נִשְׁמָרוּ בְּמִצְבֵּי מַבְרָיִם וּבְמִצְבֵּי קְדוֹשִׁים ‘they tether their livestock in the shrines of the martyrs and at the mausoleums of the saints.’

and²⁰ (for) trash-heaps,²¹ and they will measure from them and by them on the mountains.²² Deceit will increase, truth will be hidden,²³ law will be distant from Israel, and transgressions will proliferate in Israel.²⁴ The ruling kingdom will withdraw coinage.²⁵ They will confuse scarlet-dye and worm,²⁶ and paper and pen will decay.²⁷ They will refurbish the destroyed cities²⁸ and clear the roads.²⁹ They will plant ‘gardens and orchards’ (Qoh 2:5), and repair the holes in the walls of the Temple.³⁰ They will build a

²⁰ The conjunction is present only in HUC Ms. 75.

²¹ *Secrets of R. Šim ʿon b. Yoḥai* does not mention ‘trash-heaps’ (אשפתות) but uniquely adds at this point: ‘and when one of them dies, they will bury him any place they please. They will then turn around and plow the grave and sow seed on it, as scripture attests: “Thus the children of Israel will eat their food in a state of impurity” (Ezek 4:13). Why so? Because (the location of) impure field(s) will be unknown.’

²² Both Zunz-Albeck and Higger have ראשי ההרים ‘peaks of the mountains.’

²³ Zunz-Albeck has ותגש האמת ‘and the truth will be oppressed (?)’.

²⁴ These latter two clauses are completely missing from the version of the logion in HUC Ms. 75. The Higger edition reads עונות (sic!) ותרבה, whereas HUC Ms. 2043 has the same singular verb with another unfortunately illegible noun.

²⁵ The Hebrew text is ויפסל סלע מלכות. Compare the similar language found in *b. B. Qam.* 97a which speaks of the imperial government’s (= מלכות) withdrawal of damaged coins from general circulation. The translation follows the rendering suggested by Krauss, *Studien zur byzantinisch-jüdischen Geschichte*, 145. This clause occurs here in HUC Ms. 75, but appears after the reference to ‘paper and pen’ in the other versions.

²⁶ So HUC Ms. 75 (ויתערבו שני ותולעת). Higger and HUC Ms. 2043 have שני תולעת כצמר (‘scarlet-crimson like wool’); Zunz-Albeck has שני תולעת בצמר (‘scarlet-crimson with/in wool), both of which would appear to signal a deterioration in the quality of wool. *Contra* Hoyland (*Seeing Islam*, 315 n.176), Isa 1:18 does not seem relevant.

²⁷ HUC Ms. 75 reads here: ויקמל הנייר והקלמס, whereas HUC Ms. 2043 has: ויקמל הנייר והקולמוס. I have followed Zunz-Albeck and Higger’s editions in rendering ויקמל הנייר והקולמוס. See Isa 33:9 for the meaning of the verb.

²⁸ Cf. Ezek 36:33-38.

²⁹ HUC Ms. 75 has ויבנו את הדרכים ‘and they will rebuild the roads.’ Milestones bearing the name of ‘Abd al-Malik (685-705) attest this caliph’s interest in repairing the roads in Palestine; see Moshe Sharon, “An Arabic Inscription from the Time of the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik,” *BSOAS* 29 (1966): 367-72; Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099* (trans. Ethel Broido; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 109; Robert Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine From Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 2; Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), 87. Compare the Syriac *Apoc. Ps-Ephrem*, a text which dates from the latter half of the seventh century CE: הוּבְנָה אַרְזֻשְׁמָה כְּלֵזָה סַצְלָה כְּבָה פְּצֻנָה ‘they (the Arabs) will prepare roads in the mountains and highways in the plains.’ Text cited from Edmund Beck, ed., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III* (CSCO 320; Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1972), 63.153. For the dating of Pseudo-Ephrem, see the remarks of Gerrit J. Reinink, “Pseudo-Ephraems ‘Rede über das Ende’ und die syrische eschatologische Literatur des siebenten Jahrhunderts,” *Aram* 5 (1993): 437-63, esp. 455ff.; idem, “Heraclius, The New Alexander: Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius,” in *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation* (ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte; Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 90; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 260-63.

³⁰ ויגדרו פרצות חומות בית המקדש. HUC Ms. 75 reads for the object בית המדרש ‘house of study.’ The *Secrets of R. Šim ʿon b. Yoḥai* (Jellinek, *BHM* 3:79.9-11) has this to say about ‘the second ruler to arise from Ishmael,’ arguably the second caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb (634-644 CE): ‘[he] will be a friend of Israel. He will repair their breaches (ויגדרו פרצותיהם) and (fix) the breaches of the Temple (ופרצוי ההיכל) and shape Mt. Moriah and make the whole of it a level plain. He will build for himself there a place for prayer (השתחוויה) upon the site of the foundation stone (אבן שתיה), as scripture says: “and set your nest *on the*

structure at (the site of the) sanctuary.³¹ Two brothers will arise over them as leaders.³² In their days the Branch (צמח), the son of David, will arise,³³ as scripture says: ‘and in the time of those kings the God of Heaven will establish a kingdom, etc.’ (Dan 2:44).

R. Ishmael also said: The Ishmaelites will fight three great battles³⁴ on the earth³⁵ at the End of Days, as scripture affirms: ‘for they fled from swords’ (Isa 21:15); the expression ‘swords’ refers to

rock” (Num 24:21).’ For Christian readings of Umar’s Temple Mount refurbishments as an attempt to rebuild the Jewish Temple, see Sebastian Brock, “Syriac Views of Emergent Islam,” in *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (ed. G. H. A. Juynboll; Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 12.

On the other hand, Mu‘āwīya b. Abī Sufyān (661-680), the founder of the Umayyad caliphate, enjoyed some renown as a builder and patron of construction projects during his reign. A Genizah fragment of a Judaeo-Arabic apocalypse originally published by Israel Lévi (“Une apocalypse judéo-arabe,” *REJ* 67 [1914]: 178-82) explicitly mentions Mu‘āwīya and states that ‘he will restore the walls of the Temple.’ According to Maqdisī, Mu‘āwīya was in fact the builder of the al-Aqṣā mosque. See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 316-17; Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimages* (2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 23-24; 33-35.

³¹ ויבנו בניך בהיכל. A reference to the construction of the Dome of the Rock by ‘Abd al-Malik in 691-92 CE? So Josef van Ess, “‘Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: An Analysis of Some Texts,” in *Bayt al-Maqdis: ‘Abd al-Malik’s Jerusalem* (ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns; 2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1:97; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 316; Gordon D. Newby, “Text and Territory: Jewish-Muslim Relations 632-750 CE,” in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication and Interaction: Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner* (ed. Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes, and Fred Astren; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 89.

³² ושנתים אחים יעמדו עליהם ולנשיאים. The Zunz-Albeck version appends the word בסוף ‘at the End’; Higger instead adds a final word בגופן ‘with/in their body’ (?). The latter probably is a corruption of the former.

Abba Hillel Silver (*A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* [New York, 1927; repr., Boston: Beacon, 1959], 40-41) argues that the two brothers are Mu‘āwīya (661-680 CE) and Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān (665-73). Hoyland (*Seeing Islam*, 316) nominates ‘Abd al-Malik (685-705 CE) and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the latter of whom was governor of Egypt during his brother’s reign as caliph. Newby offers ‘the Umayyad caliphs Yazīd III, who died in 744 CE and his brother Ibrāhīm, who succeeded him and ruled for only four months’ (“Jewish-Muslim Relations,” 89). Yet another attractive possibility is that the early ‘Abbāsīd caliphs Saffāh and Manṣūr are intended. It is well attested that the twenty-one year reign of Manṣūr (754-75 CE) was a time of great messianic upheaval among Jews, Muslims, and other Islamicate religious communities. See Bernard Lewis, “An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History,” *BSOAS* 13 (1949-51): 330-31, and especially Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis Under Early Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 27-33.

One might also compare a synonymous ‘sign’ found in the Latin Pseudo-Ephrem’s sermon *On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World*: ‘In those days [i.e., the End] two brothers (*duo fratres*) will come to the Roman empire who will rule with one mind; but because one will surpass the other, there will be a schism between them.’ This passage is not attested in the Syriac version of this pseudepigraphic *mēmrā*. Quotation cited from Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (rev. ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 61. For discussion of this passage and the difficulties it presents for dating purposes, see especially Wilhelm Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend: A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore* (trans. A. H. Keane; London: Hutchinson, 1896; repr., Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 33-41; Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (ed. Dorothy deF. Abrahamse; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 144-47.

³³ Both Zunz-Albeck and Higger attest the phraseology יעמוד צמח בן דוד. HUC Ms. 2043 reads בא בן דוד ‘the son of David comes.’ HUC Ms. 75 has בני דוד יצמח ‘My son David will sprout.’

‘battles.’³⁶ One (will be) in the forest³⁷—‘from the drawn sword’ (ibid.); one (will be) on the sea—‘from the drawn bow’ (ibid.); and one (will be) at the great city of Rome,³⁸ which (will be) more fierce than the (preceding) two, as scripture states: ‘from the ferocity of battle’ (ibid.).³⁹ From there (i.e., Rome) the son of David will sprout up,⁴⁰ and he will come to the Land of Israel and behold the destruction of both these and those,⁴¹ as scripture states: ‘Who is this *who comes from Edom*, red of garment from Bosra, this one majestic in his clothing etc.’ (Isa 63:1).⁴²

Compare the apocalyptic *ḥadīth* attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib which enumerates ‘fifteen’ things which will occur at the Endtime, followed by three environmental tribulations.⁴³

³⁴ So HUC Ms. 75 (מלחמות גדולות). Higger’s version reads מלחמות של מהומה ‘wars of confusion.’ For an identification of these battles in line with his suggested historical profile, see Silver, *History*, 41-42.

³⁵ This phrase (בארץ) is lacking in HUC Ms. 75.

³⁶ This particular oracle is introduced in Isa 21:13 as pertaining to Arabia (משא בערב), and the number ‘three’ is derived from the three separate scenarios envisioned in verse 15b.

³⁷ Higger’s version adds ‘of Arabia’ (בערב).

³⁸ Translating HUC Ms. 2043: בכרך גדול שלרומי. HUC Ms. 75 has: בכרך הגדול שברומי ‘at the great city which is in Rome (i.e., Byzantium).’

³⁹ HUC Ms. 75: מפני כבוד מלחמה, which would be ‘from the glory (!) of battle.’ The consonantal text of Isa 21:15 however reads כבוד מלחמה ‘ferocity of battle.’

⁴⁰ For the occultation of the Messiah in Rome, see *Sefer Zerubbabel* and the various sources collected by Abraham Berger, “Captive at the Gate of Rome: The Story of a Messianic Motif,” *PAAJR* 44 (1977): 1-17.

⁴¹ I.e., the destruction of both the Edomites (= Christians) and the Ishmaelites (= Muslims). The above translation follows the rendering in HUC Ms. 75, which views the final destruction of Rome and Arab rule as taking place in Palestine. HUC Ms. 2043 and Higger’s edition reverse the order of these two clauses: the Messiah of the lineage of David will witness the mutual destruction of the evil empires at Constantinople, and only then will make his triumphal journey to Eretz Israel.

⁴² See Ibn Ezra and Radaq *ad loc.*, as well as the remarks of Radaq about Edom and the necessity for its destruction *ad Isa* 34:1-17. Note too the abstract published by Jacob Mann, “Proceedings of the American Oriental Society at the Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1927,” *JAOS* 47 (1927): 364. Newby (“Jewish-Muslim Relations,” 90-91) argues that this messianic figure is Abū ‘Isā al-Isfahānī, but this historical identification does not correlate with the biblical text’s assumption that this ‘messiah’ hails from Edom; i.e., Rome, presumably Constantinople, and not the East. For an identification of Isaiah’s ‘Bosra’ with Constantinople, see the letter from the Genizah first published by Adolf Neubauer (“Egyptian Fragments, C,” *JQR* o.s. 9 [1897]: 29-36) and excerpted by Joshua Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, 641-1204* (Athens: Verlag der byzantinisch-neugriechischen Jahrbücher, 1939), 214.

⁴³ Translated by David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 2002), 340.

PIRQE DE-RABBI ELIEZER §30 (END)
SYNOPTIC EDITION

Zunz-Albeck, <i>Haderashot</i>	Higger (§29 end)	HUC Ms. 75	HUC Ms. 2043
<p>ר' ישמעאל אומר חמשה עשר דברים עתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים ואלו הן ימדדו את הארץ בחבלים ויעשו בית הקברות למרבץ צאן אשפתות וימדדו בהם ומהם על ראשי ההרים וירבה השקר ותגש האמת וירחק חק מישראל וירבו עונות בישראל שני תולעת בצמר ויקמל הנייר והקולמוס ויפסל סלע מלכות ויבנו את הערים החרבות ויפנו הדרכים ויטעו גנות ופרדסים ויגדרו פרצות חומות בית המקדש ויבנו בנין בהיכל ושני אחים יעמדו עליהם נשיאים בסוף ובימיהם יעמוד צמח בן דוד.</p>	<p>ר' ישמעאל אומ' חמשה עשר דברים עתידין בני ישראל (!) לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים ואלו הן ימדדו את הארץ בחבלים ויעשו בית הקברות למרבץ צאן אשפתות וימדדו בהן ומהן על ראשי ההרים וירבה השקר ויגנו האמת וירחק חק מישראל ותרבה עונות בישראל שני תולעת כצמר ויקמל הנייר והקולמוס ויפסל סלע מלכות ויבנו {ההרים} הערים החרבות ויפנו הדרכים ויטעו גנות ופרדסים ויגדרו פרצות חומות בית המקדש ויבנו בניין בהיכל ושני אחים יעמדו אליהם נשיאים בגוף ובימיהן יעמד צמח בן דוד שני ביומיהון דמלכא אינון ועוד היה ר' ישמעאל אומ' שלשה מלחמות של מהומה עתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים שני כי מפני חרבות נדדו ואין חרבות אלא מלחמות אחת ביער בערב מפני חרב נטושה ואחת בים מפני קשת דרוכה ואחת בכרך גדול ... שהוא כבד משניהם שני כי מפני כובד מלחמה ומשם בן דוד יצמח ויראה באבדן של אלו ואלו ומשם יבא לארץ ישראל שני מי זה בא מאדום.</p>	<p>ר' ישמעאל אומ' חמשה עשר דבר עתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים ואלו הן ומדדו את הארץ בחבלים ויעשו בית הקברות מרבץ צאן ואשפתות וימדדו מהם ובהם על ההרים וירבה השקר ויגנו האמת ויתערבו שני ותולעת ויקמול חנייר והקומים ויפסל סלע מלכות ויבנו את הערים החרבות ויבנו את הדרכים ויטעו גנות ופרדסים ויגדרו פרצות חומות בית המדרש ויבנו בנין בהיכל ושנים אחים יעמדו עליהם לנשיאים ובימיהם בני דוד יצמח שני וביומיהון דמלכיא יקום וג' ר' ישמעאל אומ' שלש מלחמות גדולות עתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות באחרית הימים שני מפני {חרבות} ואין חרבות אלא מלחמות אחת ביער מפני חרב נ[טושה] ואחת על הים מפני קשת דרוכה ואחת {ב} בכרך הגדול שברומי מפני שהוא כבוד משניהם שני מפני כבוד מלחמה ומשם בן דוד יצמח ויבוא אל ארץ ישראל ויראה באבדן של אלו ואלו שני מי זה בא מאדום חמוץ בגדים מבצרה זה הדור בלבשו וגו' סליק פירקא</p>	<p>אמר ר' ישמעאל חמש עשרה דברים עתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים ואלו הן ימדדו את הארץ בחבלים ויעשו בבית הקברות מרבץ צאן אשפתות וימדדו בהן ומהן על ההרים וירבה השקר ויגנו האמת וירחק חוק מישראל ותרבה ע.ל.ת בישראל [שני] תולעת כצמר ויקמל הנזר והקלמס ויפסל סלע [מלכות] [ויבנו א]ת הערים החרבות ויפנו הדרכים ויטעו גנות ופר[דסים] ויגדרו פרצות חומת בית המקדש ויבנו בנין בהיכל ושני א[חיים יעמדו] עליהם נשיאים ובימיהם בא בן דוד בא.. דכת' ובימיהון די [מלכיא אנון] יקים אלה שמיא מלכו ועוד היה ר' ישמעאל או' שלש מלחמ[ות] [??] [עתידין] ב[ני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים שני כי מפני חרבות] נדדו ואין חרבות אלא מלחמות אחת ביער שני כי מפני חרב נטו[שה] ואחת [בים שני מפני קשת דרוכה ואחת בכרך גדול שלרומי ומפני כבד מל[חמה] מלחמה ומשם בן דוד יצמח ויראה באבדן שאלו ואלו ומשם יבוא לארץ י[שראל] שני] מי זה בא מאדום חמוץ בגדים מבצרה זה הדור בלבשו צעה ברב כוח [אני מדבר] בצדקה רב להושיע סליק פרקא</p>

¹ Read ישמעאל in place of ישראל in accordance with the parallel versions and Moritz Steinschneider, "Apokalypsen mit polemischer Tendenz," *ZDMG* 28 (1874): 645 n.38.