

## THE PRAYER OF R. ŠIM‘ON BEN YOḤAI

The *Prayer of R. Šim‘on ben Yoḥai* (תפלת ר' שמעון בן יוחאי) poses as an expanded and updated version of the influential *Secrets of R. Šim‘on ben Yoḥai*.<sup>1</sup> Its distinctive title stems from a superscription accompanying the text which refers in turn to a plaintive plea directed by the tannaitic Sage to God requesting revelatory answers concerning the time and manner of Israel's redemption.<sup>2</sup> The work was first published in the nineteenth century by Adolph Jellinek from a privately owned manuscript in Mantua.<sup>3</sup> Jellinek's text was in turn reproduced, emended, and supplemented by Yehudah Even-Shmuel in his comprehensive anthology of Jewish messianic literature.<sup>4</sup> The present translation is based on the version of the text published by Jellinek.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Whereas *Secrets* appears to emerge from the turbulent period marking the transition from Umayyad to ‘Abbāsid suzerainty over Islamicate Jewry, *Prayer* contains clear references to events associated with the era of the Crusades. See 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), 4:viii-ix; Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* (3d ed.; 11 vols. in 13; Leipzig: Oskar Leiner, 1890-1908), 5:413.

<sup>2</sup> It seems doubtful that this is the genuine title. Note the opening words of the text below (‘secrets and revelations’); also Moritz Steinschneider, “Apokalypsen mit polemischer Tendenz,” *ZDMG* 28 (1874): 635.

<sup>3</sup> Jellinek, *BHM* 4:117-26.

<sup>4</sup> Yehudah Even-Shmuel, *Midreshey Ge‘ullah* (2d ed.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 268-86.

<sup>5</sup> For discussion of this work, see Moses Bottenwieser, *Outline of the Neo-Hebraic Apocalyptic Literature* (Cincinnati: Jennings & Pye, 1901), 41. An important translation and study was prepared by Bernard Lewis, “An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History,” *BSOAS* 13 (1949-51): 308-38; its main arguments are accepted by Salo M. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (18 vols.; 2d ed.; New York and Philadelphia: Columbia University Press and the Jewish Publication Society, 1952-83), 3:93, 274 n.27.

These are the secrets and revelations (הנסתרות והגלות) divulged to R. Šim'on. This is R. Šim'on ben Yoḥai whom they dispatched from Jerusalem to Rome to (entreat) Caesar. While he was (still voyaging) on the ship, Ašmedai, ruler of the demons, appeared to him (in) a dream. He (Ašmedai) addressed him, 'Ask what I might do for you!' R. Šim'on responded, 'Who are you?' He answered: 'I am Ašmedai, the one whom the Holy One, blessed be He, has sent to perform a miracle for you.' He exclaimed: 'Master of the Universe! For Hagar, the serving-maid of Sarai, You summoned an angel, but for me You have sent the ruler of the demons?!?' Ašmedai said to him, 'Does the source from which the miracle comes matter—whether from I or from an angel—as long as your wishes are accomplished?' Ašmedai continued: 'I am going now to enter into (and take possession of) the body of the daughter of Caesar. I will weaken her and have her cry out your name ("R. Šim'on! R. Šim'on!"). Then, when you arrive and they ask you to expel me so that I might leave from this household, I will say "I shall not leave it until they satisfy the wishes of R. Šim'on and what he desires!"'<sup>6</sup>

Ašmedai departed and went to the palace of Caesar and did everything that he told R. Šim'on (he would do). The daughter of Caesar arose (from her bed?) and he entered into her. As soon as he had entered into her, she shattered all the crockery in the palace of her father, and was crying out 'R. Šim'on! Šim'on ben Yoḥai!' After a few days a ship arrived, and R. Šim'on was on board. They went and announced (this news) to Caesar. Caesar sent for him and said to him, 'What is your wish?' He replied, 'The Jews of Jerusalem have sent a gift for you.' He (Caesar) said, 'I will accept nothing from you, nor do I wish anything (from you) except that you expel this demon from my daughter. I have no one to succeed me in rule save for her, for there is no other offspring.' R. Šim'on went and addressed him: 'Ašmedai! Come out from this maiden!' He (Ašmedai) replied, 'I will not leave until they do everything which you want (them to do)!' He repeated this a number of times—'I will not leave (the girl) until they satisfy your wishes!'

The ruler then went and sent for all his elders, princes, and servants. He asked them: 'What do you advise (me) to do about my daughter? This demon has lately taken possession of her, but we have already decreed against the Jews that they will not circumcise their sons, observe the Sabbath, or permit their wives

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<sup>6</sup> This story is based on an older tale found in *b. Me'il.* 17a-b. See also the discussion of Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 154-55.

to observe (the rules of) menstrual impurity. The custom of our kingdom is that those who issue a decree can never revoke (it); should a ruler revoke it, they must remove him from his royal station in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians!’ One of his counselors arose and said to him, ‘My lord king, allow me to say something to you by which your daughter will be healed and which will permit you to revoke all of your decrees, for this decree against the Jews is bad for both us and for you.’ He (Caesar) replied to him, ‘Speak on!’ He (the counselor) continued, ‘If one has an enemy, would one rather that he (the enemy) be poor or rich?’ The king answered him, ‘Poor.’ The counselor said to him, ‘It is the Jews’ universal custom to labor all week long during which they accumulate wealth. On the sixth day they spend it all for the sake of honoring the Sabbath. But now, if you discontinue their Sabbath observance, the resources spent on Sabbath will (instead) be left (unspent) by them, and they will continue collecting wealth and (eventually) rebel against you. However, if you restore the Sabbath to them, they will expend many resources on it and remain poor.’ The king replied, ‘Restore the Sabbath to them!’

The same counselor again said to him, ‘If a man has enemies, which would he prefer them to be? To be many or few?’ The ruler replied, ‘Few!’ He (the counselor) continued, ‘My lord king, the Jews perform circumcision upon their sons when they are (only) eight days old. Even should one of them survive (the operation), a hundred (others) will die!’ The ruler declared, ‘Also restore (the practice of) circumcision to them!’

Once more he (the counselor) said to him, ‘My lord king, (the rules of) menstrual impurity operate thusly: when Israelite women are assumed to be in a state of menstrual impurity, they engage in little sexual activity, for they must observe seven days (as) ‘days of bloodflow’ and seven (further) days as days of purification.’ The ruler declared, ‘Permit their law regarding menstrual impurity as before!’

The ruler (then) said to R. Šim‘on, ‘I grant your condition. Go, inform the demon that he should leave my daughter!’ R. Šim‘on ordered Ašmedai (to come forth), and he (the demon) departed from the ruler’s daughter. The ruler returned to R. Šim‘on the gift which he had brought to him (from Jerusalem), and gave him numerous additional presents, and wrote for him letters of endorsement for his official who

was in Jerusalem. And R. Šim'on returned to Jerusalem rejoicing and in good spirits, and the decrees were annulled.<sup>7</sup>

This was the R. Šim'on who was incarcerated<sup>8</sup> in a cave before this (adventure) on account of (the persecutions of) Caesar. He fasted for forty days and nights<sup>9</sup> and prayed before the Lord, and this is what he said in his prayer: 'Blessed are You, O Lord our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the great, mighty, and awesome God Who out of His mercies created heaven and earth, alive and enduring forever and forever! May You be glorified, praised, coroneted, adorned, and professed as One, for You are King of kings and Lord of lords! (A perfect) Unity, for You are equivalent to Your name: You are hidden from the sight of all living things, and (so too) Your name is hidden; You are marvelous and Your name is marvelous; You are unique and Your name is unique! You are the One who chose Abram and brought him forth from Ur of the Chaldeans and revealed to him the suffering caused by the oppression of the empires who would place his descendants in subjection.<sup>10</sup> I ask You now, O Lord God, to open the gates of prayer for me and to send to me an angel to instruct me (regarding) when the Messiah of the lineage of David will come, how he will gather together the exiled of Israel from all the various places where they have been dispersed, and how many wars they must endure after their ingathering? May he explain to me the topic by the pleasure of the Lord God! How long (is it) until the time of marvels?'

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<sup>7</sup> For another version of this poem, see Jellinek, BHM 6:128-30. An extended discussion with further references can be found in Richard Kalmin, "Rabbinic Traditions about Roman Persecutions of the Jews: A Reconsideration," JJS 54 (2003): 33-38. One might compare the account in the eleventh-century Megillat *Aḥima'aš* of an analogous exorcism performed by R. Shephatiah upon the daughter of the Byzantine emperor Basil I within a similar context of anti-Jewish legislation: see Adolf Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1887-95; repr., Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1970), 2:116-17; Samuel Krauss, *Studien zur byzantinisch-jüdischen Geschichte* (Leipzig: Buchhandlung Gustav Fock, 1914), 44 n.3; Joshua Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, 641-1204* (Athens: Verlag der byzantinisch-neugriechischen Jahrbücher, 1939), 129; Andrew Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 88-89; J. H. Chajes, *Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 182 n.12.

<sup>8</sup> Even-Shmuel emends תרבוּי תרבוּשׁ on the basis of the text of *Secrets*; I have retained and translated Jellinek's text.

<sup>9</sup> *Secrets* states only that 'he stood in prayer forty days and forty nights,' with no explicit indication of fasting. See however Deut 9:18.

<sup>10</sup> This revelation took place during the 'covenant of the pieces' narrated in Gen 15:7-21. See 4 Ezra 3:14; Mek. Yitro, Baḥodesh §9 (Horovitz-Rabin, 236.5-11); Pirque R. El. §28 according to HUC Ms. 75 fols. 38b-39b (this passage is severely truncated in most printed editions due to censorship), a passage preserved in the so-called '*Aggadot R. Ishmael and Yal. Šim. Torah* §76; discussed in John C. Reeves, "Scriptural Authority in Early Judaism," in *Living Traditions of the Bible: Scripture in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Practice* (ed. James E. Bowley; St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999), 79-80.

R. Šim'on said: 'Immediately the gates of heaven were opened to me and I beheld visions of God.'<sup>11</sup> I fell upon my face and behold, a voice was addressing me, "Šim'on! Šim'on!" I answered and said to the one addressing me, "What are you saying?" My Lord said to me, "Rise up from your place (on the ground)." As he spoke to me, I stood up trembling and said to him, "What is your name?" He responded to me, "Why this (need) to ask for my name? It is incomprehensible!"<sup>12</sup>

'I said to him, "When will the deliverer of Israel come?" He answered me (quoting), "And He (God)<sup>13</sup> beheld the children of Israel, and God knew" (Exod 2:25). Immediately he caused the Kenites to pass before me. I asked him, "Who are these?" He said to me, "These are the Kenites."<sup>14</sup> He moreover showed me the kingdom of Ishmael which would come into existence after (that) of the Kenites. I immediately wept an intense shower of tears and said to him, "My lord! Will he (also) have horns and hooves with which he will crush Israel?" He answered me, "Yes."<sup>15</sup>

I was still speaking with him when, behold, an angel whose name was Metatron touched me 'and roused me like a man who is roused from his sleep.'<sup>16</sup> When I saw him, I stood trembling and 'my pains racked me, and I could retain no strength'<sup>17</sup> and 'was seized with pains like those of a woman giving birth.'<sup>18</sup> He said to me, 'Šim'on!' I responded, 'Here I am.' He said to me, 'Know that the Holy One, blessed be He, has sent me to you in order to inform you with regard to your question which you asked Him. Now, when you saw the Kenite and the kingdom of Ishmael, you wept, but you should confine your weeping to the matter of the kingdom of Ishmael alone. For during the final period of its rule, it will effect

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<sup>11</sup> A paraphrase of Ezek 1:1b: נפתחו השמים ואראה מראות אלהים.

<sup>12</sup> A quotation of the anonymous angel's response to Manoah in Judg 13:18.

<sup>13</sup> The subject is expressed (אלהים) in the biblical text.

<sup>14</sup> As the immediately following sentence makes clear, the Kenites are here interpreted (unlike in Secrets) as an imperial oppressor who precedes the advent of Islam. See Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 35. Should the later Kenite siege and sack of Jerusalem refer to the First Crusade, then the term 'Kenites' encrypts Byzantine hegemony, an identification facilitated by reading Num 24:21 through the lens of Obad 1:3-4. Even-Shmuel (*Midreshey Ge'ullah*, 270-71) suggests that the equation was cemented by gematria: קץ; i.e., 'cross' = קץ 'Kenite,' both words having a numerical value of 160.

<sup>15</sup> The 'kingdom of Ishmael' is here recognized as a full-fledged 'empire' (מלכות) in accordance with the prescriptive four-fold 'imperial eschatology' of the biblical visions of Daniel. See also Pirque R. El. §28 according to HUC Ms. 75 fols. 38b-39a; Abraham ibn Ezra ad Dan 2:39. The term 'imperial eschatology' (Reichseschatologie) is borrowed from Paul Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda," in *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol* (ed. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché; Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 3-34.

<sup>16</sup> A quotation from Zech 4:1.

<sup>17</sup> A quotation from Dan 10:16. Cf. also 1 Sam 4:19: כי נהפכו עליה צריה.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Isa 21:3: צירים אחזוני כצירי יולדה.

a great slaughter beyond measure among Israel and decree harsh edicts against Israel and announce (that) “anyone who reads Torah will be pierced by the sword.” A portion of Israel will turn to their (i.e., Ishmael’s) laws. At that time the kingdom of the Kenites will come to Jerusalem, subdue it, and kill more than thirty thousand within it.<sup>19</sup> Due to the pressure with which they constrain Israel, the Holy One, blessed be He, will send (more) Ishmaelites against them, and they will make war with them in order to deliver Israel from their grasp. A demented, demon-possessed man<sup>20</sup>—one who speaks lies about the Holy One, blessed be He—will arise and subdue the land, and there will be enmity between them (the Ishmaelites) and the children of Esau.’

I turned to Metatron and said to him, ‘Are the Ishmaelites a deliverance for Israel?’ He said to me, ‘Did not Isaiah the prophet speak thusly? “And should he see chariotry of a pair of riders, one riding an ass, (and) one riding a camel” (Isa 21:7).’ “Chariotry”—this (word) refers to the Achaemenid empire. “Pair”—this (word) refers to the Greek empire(s). “Riders”—this (word) refers to the Roman empire. “One riding an ass”—this (phrase) refers to the Messiah, as Scripture attests: “humble and mounted upon an ass” (Zech 9:9). “One riding a camel”—this (phrase) refers to the kingdom of Ishmael, during whose rule the Messianic kingdom will sprout.<sup>21</sup> This is why (the phrase) “one riding an ass” precedes (the phrase) “one riding a camel” (in the verse from Isaiah).<sup>22</sup> The “one riding a camel” will rejoice at the advent of the Messiah; nevertheless, the sages perish and the power of the riff-raff (בני בליעל) grows stronger.’<sup>23</sup>

Again ‘and he beheld the Kenite’ (Num 24:21). What was the symbolic message which Balaam the wicked saw? When Balaam foresaw that the tribe of Kenites would in the future arise and place Israel

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<sup>19</sup> A reference to the Crusader capture of Jerusalem in 1099. See Lewis, “Apocalyptic Vision,” 322-23. For a description of this event and the slaughter associated with it, see Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (3 vols.; Cambridge: The University Press, 1951-54), 1:279-88; Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099* (trans. Ethel Broido; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 826-29. Gil however denies that this Prayer passage reflects the First Crusade (ibid. 62 n.65).

<sup>20</sup> Probably derived from Hos 9:6-7; see the ‘unidentified polemical and apocalyptic piyyut’ T-S A45.3 verso 15-17 published by Simon Hopkins, *A Miscellany of Literary Pieces from the Cambridge Genizah Collections: A Catalogue and Selection of Texts in the Taylor-Schechter Collection*, Old Series, Box A45 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 1978), 7. Muḥammad’s contemporaries employ a similar rhetoric: see Q 15:6; 17:47; 38:4. Note that the originally positive evaluation of Muḥammad expressed in Secrets has undergone considerable polemical revision due to its possible ‘Īsāwīyya origin as well as the historical experience of Muslim rule.

<sup>21</sup> Note that this originally Muslim proof-text has now been adapted and fitted by Islamicate Jewish exegetes into the ‘four-kingdom’ eschatological schemes favored by earlier Jewish interpreters.

<sup>22</sup> Compare the lengthier explanation of Secrets.

under subjection, he began (and)<sup>24</sup> said: “‘Ethan is your dwelling” (ibid.)—I see that you will occupy yourselves only with the bell (?)<sup>25</sup> of Ethan the easterner.<sup>26</sup>

The second king who will arise from the Ishmaelites will love Israel. He will repair the breaches of the Temple, make war with the descendants of Esau, and slaughter their armies. There shall arise a king whose name is Marwān (מריון). He will be a herder of asses, and they will take him from following the asses and coronate him as ruler. The Edomites shall arise against him and kill him, and another will succeed him, and he (this latter one) shall have peace from all who transgress against him. He will be a friend of Zion<sup>27</sup> and die in peace.<sup>28</sup>

Another king will arise in his place and strengthen his hold upon the kingdom with his sword and his bow. Strife will occur during his reign: occasionally in the east, occasionally in the west, occasionally in the north, and occasionally in the south, and he will wage war with all (of them). At the time when the gyrdwn<sup>29</sup> in the west collapses upon the Ishmaelites in Damascus, the kingdom of Ishmael will fall, for regarding this time (Scripture) said: ‘the Lord has broken the rod of the wicked’ (Isa 14:5).<sup>30</sup> Warriors from the sons of Qedar will still remain with him. The northeastern quadrant will rebel against him and defeat many of his armies:<sup>31</sup> the first by the Tigris, the second by the Euphrates, and the third in Mesopotamia. He will flee from them, but they will capture his sons, kill (them), and hang (them) upon wooden scaffolding.

‘On that day the Lord will signal for the fly’ (Isa 7:18). The Holy One, blessed be He, will signal ‘for the bees who are in the region of Assyria’ (ibid.) and they shall wage war with the Ashkenazim. The

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<sup>23</sup> A pessimistic note on contemporary conditions?

<sup>24</sup> Secrets: התחיל שמח ואמר ‘he began rejoicing and said.’

<sup>25</sup> So the text. Secrets reads here ממצוות ‘with the commandments.’

<sup>26</sup> איתן המורחי. A scribal conflation of Ps 89:1, 1 Chr 2:6, and Isa 41:2?

<sup>27</sup> Read ציון in place of the text’s צאן ‘sheep.’ See Even-Shmuel, *Midreshey Ge’ullah*, 272; Lewis, “Apocalyptic Vision,” 313 n.4.

<sup>28</sup> This ruler has been identified as ‘Abd al-Malik; see Lewis, “Apocalyptic Vision,” 329; 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), 1:101.

<sup>29</sup> Read גירון (so Secrets) in place of the text’s גירדון. This term refers to an architectural feature of the Damascus mosque, the so-called *نورجرباب*. See the extended discussion in Secrets; also Steinschneider, “Apokalypsen,” 638-45.

<sup>30</sup> For the identification of ‘the wicked’ in Isa 14:5 with ‘Ishmael,’ see the parallel passage in Secrets.

<sup>31</sup> Read חילים (so Secrets) in place of the text’s חללים ‘corpses.’

first king who leads them and brings (them) forth is one who rebelled against their masters,<sup>32</sup> as Scripture attests: ‘Thus says the Lord ... to the despised one, to the one loathed by the nation, to the slave of kings’ (Isa 49:7). And (the phrase) ‘slave of kings’ (עבד מושלים)<sup>33</sup> indicates whom? He said, ‘This (phrase) refers to the Canaanites who are the most despised of all the nations.’<sup>34</sup>

Regarding (the phrase) ‘slave of kings’: there will be a slave of rulers who will rebel against his masters,<sup>35</sup> and (other) men who have rebelled against their masters will be gathered to him and assemble themselves with them. They will make war with the Ishmaelites, kill their warriors, and take possession of their wealth and property. They are very repulsive men, dressed in black, and coming forth from the east. They are cruel and impetuous, as Scripture attests: ‘Lo, I shall raise up against (על) the Chaldeans the nation cruel and impetuous’ (Hab 1:6).<sup>36</sup> All of them are horsemen, as Scripture attests: ‘horsemen charging up’ (Nah 3:3). They come from a distant land to take possession of dwellings that do not belong to them, and they will ascend onto the height of the mountains—this refers to ‘the mountain-height of Israel’<sup>37</sup>—and demolish the sanctuary, extinguish the lamps, and split the doors.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover four other kings will arise—two of them have been revealed—and two others will arise against them. During their reigns the son of David will appear, as Scripture says: ‘and in the days of those kings’ (Dan 2:44).<sup>39</sup> The form of the first king: an aged man, but not exceedingly old. The king is modest, his eyes attractive, and his hair lovely (and) black. But they will be led astray by him. After him another (ruler) will arise amidst dissensions, and he will station large armies by the Euphrates River. Yet his armies will fall in a single day, those in the north and those in the south, and he will flee, but will be

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<sup>32</sup> Sic. Corresponding text at end of Secrets reads: הוא עבד שמרד על אדונו.

<sup>33</sup> A Hebrew wordplay on the name of Abū Muslim, fomenter of the ‘Abbāsīd Revolution in Khurāsān. See Lewis, “Apocalyptic Vision,” 329.

<sup>34</sup> The explanation does not correlate with the expression ‘slave of kings,’ which is treated in the following sentence, but instead explicates the preceding phrase ‘the one loathed by the nation.’ According to Lewis (“Apocalyptic Vision,” 329), this is a reference to Khurāsān.

<sup>35</sup> Some traditions impute such a pedigree to Abū Muslim. See Sabatino Moscati, “Abū Muslim,” EI<sup>2</sup> 1:141.

<sup>36</sup> Masoretic text of Hab 1:6 reads: הנני מקים את הכשדים, where the Chaldeans are identified as ‘the cruel and impetuous nation.’ By subtly altering the text, Prayer constructs two ‘national’ entities in this verse and effects an exegetical equation between ‘Chaldeans’ and the Umayyad dynasty.

<sup>37</sup> Ezek 17:23; 20:40; cf. 34:14. Targum and traditional commentaries interpret this phrase as a reference to Jerusalem.

<sup>38</sup> Compare the text in Secrets: ועל הר מרום ישראל יעלו ויסבר לפרוץ בהיכל ודלתים יעקירו ומרות יבכו (Jellinek, BHM 3:81).

<sup>39</sup> Even-Shmuel (*Midreshey Ge’ullah*, 274) suggests this clause may stem from one who recognized the messianic candidacy of Abū ‘Īsā al-Iṣfahānī.

captured and imprisoned, and all the time he is held captive there will be peace in the land. The fourth king is a lover of silver and gold: he is elderly and tall and has a mole upon the big toe of his right foot. He will mint bronze coins and hide them and store them beneath the Euphrates with (his) silver and gold, but these (treasures) are (actually) held in storage for the King Messiah,<sup>40</sup> as Scripture attests: 'I will give you treasures (concealed in) darkness and secret hidden things' (Isa 45:3). During his reign the western quadrant will rebel, and he will dispatch two squadrons of troops, and they (those in the west) will kill some of the easterners, consequently (necessitating) the dispatch of still others (to the west).

And at the beginning of week one there is no rain, and in the second (week) 'arrows of hunger,'<sup>41</sup> and in the third will be a severe famine accompanied by drought, and in the fourth an average (climactic state), and in the fifth there will be great satiety.<sup>42</sup> And during the sixth a star shall appear from the east and on top of it a rod of fire like a spear. The Gentile nations will claim 'this star is ours,'<sup>43</sup> but it is not so; rather, it pertains to Israel, as Scripture forecasts: 'a star shall step forth from Jacob, etc.' (Num 24:17). The time of its shining will be during the first watch of the night for two hours. It will set (for) fifteen days in the east, and then revolve to the west and act (similarly?) for fifteen days. If it should be more (its period of shining), this is good for Israel.<sup>44</sup>

Again I returned to my prayer and also my fasting (for) forty days until this angel appeared to me. He said to me, 'Ask!' I answered him, 'Lord, what will be the end of these (things)?' The angel said to me, 'After all these (things) the westerners<sup>45</sup> will become overpowering, with mighty armies, and they will come mingled (sic) and make war with the easterners who are in their land. They (the westerners) will kill them, and those who survive will flee before them and enter Alexandria. Some of the westerners will pursue after them and arrive (at the city), and a great battle will take place there. The easterners shall flee

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<sup>40</sup> Compare the text in Secrets (Jellinek, BHM 3:81): ויעשה ספינות מנחשת וימלא אותם כסף וזהב וטומן אותם ... תחת מימי פרת להצניעם לבניו והם עתידים לישראל שני' ... Note that the identity of the 'servant' of Isaiah 45 is decoded differently by the two recensions of this apocalypse.

<sup>41</sup> See Ezek 5:16.

<sup>42</sup> This periodization is modeled upon a baraita found in b. Sanh. 97a which recounts events associated with the שבוע שבן דוד בא בו. For a translation and discussion paired with 2 Baruch 26-29, see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 1:676-77.

<sup>43</sup> Not contained in the talmudic baraita, but seems to reflect the Christian prophecies associated with the 'star of the Magi' found in Syriac sources like the Cave of Treasures.

<sup>44</sup> Compare 'Aggadat ha-Mašiah (Jellinek, BHM 3:141): ויצמח כוכב ממזרח והוא כוכבו של משיח והוא עושה 'A star will emerge in the east. This is the star of the Messiah, and it will be visible in the east for fifteen days. Should it linger, it will be to Israel's benefit.'

from there and come into Egypt. They shall capture it, take spoil, and make it a desolate place in order to affirm what Scripture says: “Egypt will become a desolate place” (Joel 4:19). They will advance over into ‘the glorious land’ (Eretz Israel) and (the land will suffer) complete destruction at their hand.<sup>46</sup> Anyone whom they capture will not return (to Eretz Israel) until the Messiah comes.’

When I heard this discourse, I wept very much. The angel said to me, ‘Šim‘on, why do you weep?’ I answered him, ‘Will there be no escape for the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob during his (sic) days?’ He said to me, ‘The situation will be very difficult: if you leave meat over the fire, you cannot escape its savor; so too Israel cannot escape. But everyone who enters into a chamber and flees and hides will escape, as Scripture says: “Go, my people, enter your chambers!” (Isa 26:20). “All who are discovered will be stabbed, and all who are captured shall fall by the sword” (Isa 13:15). They will pass through ‘the glorious land’ and pillage, as Scripture notes: “and he shall enter the lands, sweeping and passing through” (Dan 11:40). They come into “the ravines of the precipices,”<sup>47</sup> and they will be in the middle,<sup>48</sup> and a great battle will take place there concerning which all the prophets have prophesied, and the streams and waters of the Euphrates will turn to blood. Those who remain will be unable to drink from it, and (it is) from there that the kingdom of the east will be destroyed.

And after all these things a king “strong of face” (עז פנים)<sup>49</sup> will arise and be active for three and one-half years.<sup>50</sup> At the beginning of his rule when he arises, he will receive those who are rich, remove their money, and kill them: hence wealth will not deliver its owner, as Scripture attests: “their silver and their gold will be unable to save them” (Ezek 7:19), nor will his counsel and planning stand up against him. He will kill whoever recites the *Šema* ‘, and he will kill whoever says “God of Abraham.” And they will say: “Let us all return (and become) one nation, and let us abolish the Sabbaths, festivals, and new moons from Israel,” as Scripture attests: “and he will plan to change times and law” (Dan 7:25). “Times” (זמנין)

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<sup>45</sup> I accept the argument of Lewis (“Apocalyptic Vision,” 331-32) that this sequence of events refers to the Fāṭimid invasion of Egypt in 969 CE and its immediate aftermath.

<sup>46</sup> An adapted paraphrase of Dan 11:16: ויעמד בארץ הצבי וכלה בידו.

<sup>47</sup> See Isa 7:19.

<sup>48</sup> This clause is Aramaic: והם באמצעיתא.

<sup>49</sup> Deut 28:50; Dan 8:23; Tg. Ket. Qoh 8:1.

<sup>50</sup> According to Lewis (“Apocalyptic Vision,” 332, and cf. 335 n.4), this figure symbolizes the Qarmaṭī campaigns in south Syria and Palestine in 971-974 CE. See Wilferd Madelung, “Qarmaṭī,” EI<sup>2</sup> 4:660-65; Gil, History, 335-44; idem, “The Political History of Jerusalem During the Early Muslim Period,” in The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, 638-1099 (ed. Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai; New York: New York University Press, 1996), 18-20.

refers to festivals and “law” (דת) refers to the Torah, as Scripture proves: “a fiery law (דת) to them” (Deut 33:2). During his reign there will be great distress for Israel. (Nevertheless), all whom he exiles will escape to Upper Galilee, as it is written: “for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be escape” (Joel 3:5) until he reaches Meron.<sup>51</sup> He will kill some from among Israel until he comes (to Damascus), and when he arrives at Damascus, the Holy One, blessed be He, will provide assistance and relief to Israel.<sup>52</sup> During his reign there will be strife and war in the world: a town will battle with its neighbor, and a city with (another) city, and a people with (another) people, and a nation with (another) nation. There will be no peace for those who go and come, as Scripture says: “I will press humanity hard, and they shall walk about like the blind” (Zeph 1:17). The people of the Lord shall suffer dislocation and experience distress for three years, and they will be subject to his power until the end of the three years, as Scripture says: “they will be delivered into his hand for a time, times, and half a time” (Dan 7:25). “A time” signifies one year, “times” signifies two years, (and) “half a time” signifies half of a year: consequently (after) three [and a half]<sup>53</sup> years the decree and foolishness will be annulled, as Scripture predicts: “and from the time of the suspension of the daily offering and installment of the abomination of desolation—one thousand two hundred and ninety days” (Dan 12:11). These are the three and a half years. There shall arise a king who will turn them to apostasy, as Scripture states: “and they will install the abomination of desolation” (Dan 11:31). He will rule for three months.<sup>54</sup>

After that, the Ishmaelites will do battle with the Edomites on the plain of Acco,<sup>55</sup> and immediately the Assyrians<sup>56</sup> will come upon them and capture them, as Scripture says: “until Assyria takes you prisoner” (Num 24:22). (And as for) “ships from the coast of Kittim” (ibid.), these are the Edomites who are destined to arise in the last days. When they (eventually) emerge, they will come forth like robbers, as

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<sup>51</sup> An Aramaic phrase (עד דמטי מרוך) which Even-Shmuel groundlessly emends to ‘until our Lord (i.e., Messiah) arrives.’ Meron is the site of the tomb of R. Šim‘on ben Yoḥai, a circumstance which seems hardly unimportant in the present context.

<sup>52</sup> Naphtali Wieder has argued that the toponym ‘Damascus’ functions in midrash and allied interpretive traditions as a cipher for the locale of national and religious redemption. See his *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism* (London: East and West Library, 1962), 1-30.

<sup>53</sup> The context requires this restoration.

<sup>54</sup> Lewis (“Apocalyptic Vision,” 336) opines that this refers to the Fāṭimid Mu‘izz. Note that in the *Secrets of R. Šim‘on ben Yoḥai*, it is ‘the king strong of face’ who rules for three months, as opposed to the three and one-half year period granted him here and in *’Aggadot ha-Mašiaḥ*.

<sup>55</sup> According to Lewis (“Apocalyptic Vision,” 333-37), this section refers to the Byzantine campaigns in Syria and Palestine under John Tzimisce in 974-976 CE.

<sup>56</sup> Alptakin and his Turkish forces? So Lewis, “Apocalyptic Vision,” 336-37.

Scripture predicts: “when robbers come against you” (Obad 1:5; cf. also Jer 49:9). They will do battle with the Ishmaelites and kill many of them and assemble themselves at the camp at Acco. Iron shall crumble clay, and its leg(s) will break down to the toes, and they will flee naked without horses.<sup>57</sup> (New) legions from Edom will unite with them, and they will come and do battle on the plain of Acco until a horse sinks to its flank in blood. The children of Israel will flee to the plain of Jericho, and there they will pause and ask one another, “To where can we flee? Let us leave (here) our wives (and) our children.” They will return and wage another battle on the plain of Megiddo, and the Edomites will flee and board ships, and a wind shall come forth and bring them to Assyria. They will oppress the Assyrians and (the region of) upper Mesopotamia, but at the end of nine months the Assyrians shall come forth and destroy the children of Israel (sic)<sup>58</sup> and the Romans, as Scripture states: “until Assyria takes you prisoner” (Num 24:22). When you see Syrians (?)<sup>59</sup> coming forth and traveling about the land of Israel, they will establish peace, and Elijah will come forth and proclaim news of peace to them, as Scripture says: “and this will be peace: when Assyria comes into our land” (Mic 5:4). The Italians will seek to wage war with them, and the kingdom will revert to the Ishmaelites for a short while, but they will not have sufficient time to evacuate their wives before Assyria captures them.

Suddenly a heavenly voice<sup>60</sup> will come forth and proclaim in all the places where the Israelites are:<sup>61</sup> “Issue forth and enact the vengeance of God against Edom!” For Scripture says: “I will enact my vengeance against Edom by the agency of my people Israel” (Ezek 25:14). Immediately the young men of the Israelites will band together and obey, and they will recognize as king over them a Davidide ruler. (However), dissension will break out among them, and the inhabitants of the land of Israel will rebel against the descendant of David, (a reaction) which will confirm what Scripture says: “and Israel has rebelled against the house of David until this day” (2 Chr 10:19): “until this day” signifies the day when the royal messiah comes. The contending parties will come and take hold of one another, and a heavenly voice will come forth and whistle: “‘what has been is what will be’ (Qoh 1:9)—the Holy One, blessed be He, existed before the creation of the universe, and He will continue to exist after the destruction of the

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<sup>57</sup> An Aramaic passage with allusions to Dan 2:31-45. I follow Jellinek’s suggested readings here; compare Lewis, “Apocalyptic Vision,” 316.

<sup>58</sup> Lewis (“Apocalyptic Vision,” 317 n.1) suggests emending ‘Israel’ to ‘Ishmael.’

<sup>59</sup> Jellinek’s text reads שוורים; he suggests emending to אשוורים.

<sup>60</sup> Literally a קול בת, the talmudic expression for a revelatory audition.

universe; ‘what He has already done is what He will do’ (ibid.).” It (the heavenly voice) will continue: “Just as Joshua did to Jericho and its ruler, so do to the nations of the world!” They shall respond: “The ark of the covenant is not with us as it was with Joshua!” It (the heavenly voice) will answer them, “There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets<sup>62</sup> (of the Law) and their seal ‘*Shema ‘Israel’!*” Immediately they will burst out with a great shout and say, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God; the Lord is One!” (Deut 6:4). They will encircle Jericho, and the wall will collapse at once. They will enter within her and find young men dead in her squares so as to affirm what Scripture states: “truly her young men will fall in her squares, and all her warriors will perish” (Jer 50:30). They will engage in slaughter for three days and three nights, and afterwards they will collect all her spoil in the midst of her square. But (then) news will come to them from the Land of Israel, and they will be very fearful.’

Again I returned to my prayer before the Lord while fasting and (garbed in) sackcloth and ashes until I had seen (a vision?). Behold, a hand touched me and stood me up on my feet, and he said to me, ‘Ask, O righteous one, what you would ask!’ So I asked him (and) said to him, ‘At the end of these things, how will all Israel be gathered together from the four corners of the earth? How will their escape from the control of the kingdoms take place? When they depart, to where will they go? How will their journey transpire? What will they be able to do? I want you to tell me about these things and others like them until the conclusion of the matter.’<sup>63</sup>

He responded to me from the doors of heaven, saying to me: ‘At the end of the kingdom of the Ishmaelites, the Romans will go forth against Jerusalem and make war with the Ishmaelites. The land will be subdued by them.<sup>64</sup> They will enter it (i.e., Jerusalem) and slaughter many Ishmaelites and cast down numerous corpses in it. They will capture a great many Ishmaelite women and dash out the brains of the children. Each day they will sacrifice children to Jesus.<sup>65</sup> At that time Israel (too) will suffer much distress, and at that moment the Lord will arouse the tribes of Israel and they will come to Jerusalem, the

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<sup>61</sup> See Lewis, “Apocalyptic Vision,” 317 n.3.

<sup>62</sup> A paraphrase of 1 Kgs 8:9.

<sup>63</sup> Hebrew עַד כֹּה סוּפָא דִּי מַלְתָּא (Dan 7:28).

<sup>64</sup> A description of the First Crusade and the capture of Jerusalem in 1099.

<sup>65</sup> This curious charge is probably a reflection of the blood libel which accused Jews of engaging in the ritual murder of Christian youth. See Israel J. Yuval, “Jewish Messianic Expectations Towards 1240 and Christian Reactions,” in *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco* (ed. Peter Schäfer and Martin Cohen; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 113; idem, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of*

holy city.<sup>66</sup> They will discover that it is written in the Torah: “the Lord was traveling before them daily in a column of cloud(s)” (Exod 13:21), and it is also written “for the Lord will travel before you, and the God of Israel will guard your rear” (Isa 52:12). They will journey in the company of thick clouds,<sup>67</sup> engage the Edomites in battle, and kill a large number of them. News about them—“the tribes have come!”—will spread throughout the world. At that time the verse pertaining to Israel will be fulfilled: “There will be a time of trouble the like of which has not occurred since you became a nation, and at that time all of your people who(se names) are found inscribed in the book will be delivered” (Dan 12:1). The nations will rise up against Israel and effect a great massacre among them, and many of the unlearned<sup>68</sup> will apostatize. They will torture with chains many of the pious so as to (make them) abandon the Torah of the Lord.

And after they have endured this distress for a short time, the Lord will bring a great and strong wind, a mighty earthquake, and a cloud so dark that its equal has never appeared before in the world, and from the midst of that wind the Holy One, blessed be He, will disperse the tribes in each and every city.<sup>69</sup> With regard to them it has been said, “Who are these who fly about like a cloud?” (Isa 60:8). A few persons from Israel will gather together in Jerusalem, but they will find no food, and the Holy One, blessed be He, will transform the sand into fine flour for Israel, and with regard to this time it has been said: “Let there be an abundance of grain in the land on the top(s) of mountains” (Ps 72:16).<sup>70</sup> Nehemiah ben Hushiel

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Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 279.

<sup>66</sup> See Isa 52:1; Neh 11:1.

<sup>67</sup> For a stimulating survey of the prominence of the ‘divine cloud’ motif in Jewish eschatology, see Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism*, 35-48.

<sup>68</sup> עַם הָאָרֶץ, literally ‘people of the land.’

<sup>69</sup> Even-Shmuel detects in this section a reference to the messianic activities of David Alroy. Lewis (“Apocalyptic Vision,” 338) suggests instead that it reflects general messianic excitement surrounding the period of the First Crusade. The most important Jewish testimonies to Alroy are collected and discussed in Aaron Ze’ev Aescoly, *Messianic Movements in Israel, Volume One: From the Bar-Kokhba Revolt until the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (ed. Yehudah Even-Shmuel; 2d ed.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1987), 186-200.

<sup>70</sup> Rashi ad Ps 72:16 notes that the entire psalm is traditionally interpreted as referring to the days of the messiah. The phrase בְּרֵאשׁ הַרִים is here being read as the ‘best ...’ or ‘choicest of mountains,’ namely Zion. Jellinek (BHM 4:124) directs attention to Qoh. Rab. 1.28, a passage which correlates the miraculous provision of manna during the Exodus with this future miracle. The paralleling of the ‘first’ and ‘final’ redemptions is exegetically generated from Mic 7:15: כִּימִי בָאתֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲרָאנוּ נִפְלְאוֹת: ‘I will display to him marvels corresponding to (those during) the time of your emergence from Egypt.’ For further discussion of this motif along with further references, see Louis Ginzberg, *An Unknown Jewish Sect* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1976), 234-38; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 158-59 nn.44-46; Oded Irshai, “Dating the Eschaton: Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Calculations in Late Antiquity,” in *Apocalyptic Time* (ed. Albert I. Baumgarten; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 124-29.

will arise and perform miracles in accordance with the word of the Lord.<sup>71</sup> A ruler will arise and become a religious heretic: he will make himself appear to be a servant of the Lord, but his heart will not be truly with Him. A mighty thundering<sup>72</sup> will go forth throughout the world, and the whole world will fear it. Israel will gather themselves to Nehemiah ben Hushiel. The ruler of Egypt will make a pact with him, and he (Nehemiah?) will effect a slaughter in all the cities surrounding Jerusalem, such as Tiberias, Damascus, and Ashkelon. The nations of the world will hear (about this), and terror and panic will fall upon them.<sup>73</sup>

The sign which will occur at that time (is) that the stars will appear in blood, and about that time it has been said, “The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon to blood” (Joel 3:4). The Holy One, blessed be He, will send ten plagues against the nations of the world just like the ones He sent against Egypt so as to affirm what Scripture has said: “On that day the Lord will again manifest His power—for a second time—in order to acquire the remnant of His people” (Isa 11:11).

They say that in Rome there is a marble statue in the shape of a beautiful maiden (which) was made during the six days of the creation-week. Worthless scoundrels from the nations of the world will come and have intercourse with it, it will become pregnant, and at the end of nine months it will split open and a male in the form of a human being will emerge. He will be twelve cubits long and two cubits wide, his eyes will be red (and) crooked, the hair of his head will be red like gold, and the soles of his feet will be green. He will have two heads, and they will call him Armilos. He will come to Edom and announce to them, “I am your messiah; I am your god!”<sup>74</sup> Although he is misleading them,<sup>75</sup> they will instantly believe him and they will install him as king, and all the descendants of Esau<sup>76</sup> will join together and come to him. He will travel about and announce in all the cities and say to the descendants of Esau, “Bring me my scripture<sup>77</sup> which I have given to you,” and again the nations of the world will come and bring a book ...<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> The Messiah of the lineage of Joseph; cf. Ibn Ezra ad Cant 7:11 and Midr. Teh. 60.3.

<sup>72</sup> Even-Shmuel has ‘great anger’ (זעם גדול) in place of Jellinek’s רעם גדול.

<sup>73</sup> Compare the Ten Signs of the Messiah (translated later in this volume) for a parallel with these final two sentences. Even-Shmuel (*Midreshey Ge’ullah*, 297) suggests that this betrays the dependence of Ten Signs upon this section of the Prayer.

<sup>74</sup> This scene and the ensuing dialogue with representatives of the Jewish community is closely related to Byzantine Christian apocalyptic legends surrounding the advent of the ‘Son of Destruction’ or ‘Lawless One’ (2 Thess 2:1-12), an eschatological figure frequently conflated with the Antichrist. See especially Apoc. Ps-Ephrem (ed. Beck), 68.359-404.

<sup>75</sup> This clause is missing in Even-Shmuel’s edition.

<sup>76</sup> I.e., the Christians.

<sup>77</sup> Literally ‘my Torah’ (תורתִי), but here presumably the Christian scriptures.

and he will say to them, “This is (indeed) what I have given to you,” and he will reiterate to them “I am your god” and “I am your messiah and your god!”

At that time he will send for Nehemiah and all Israel, and he will say to them: “Bring me your Torah and testify to me that I am God!” Immediately all Israel will be astonished and intimidated, and at that time Nehemiah will arise, along with three men from the tribe of Ephraim, and they will come bearing a *sefer* Torah with them. They will read aloud before him: “I am (the Lord your God ...)” and “You shall not have (any other gods before Me).”<sup>79</sup> He will retort, “None of this can be in your Torah! I will give you no rest until you believe that I am God in the same way that the nations of the world believe in me!” Immediately Nehemiah will arise to confront him, and he will say to him, “You are not God, but Satan!”<sup>80</sup> He (Armilos) will say to them, “Why do you lie about me? I could give the order to execute you,” and then will command his servants, “Seize Nehemiah!” Immediately he (Nehemiah) will arise along with 30,000 warriors from Israel and do battle with him, and he will slay 200,000 from the camp of Armilos. Enraged, Armilos will gather all the forces of the nations of the world and make war on the Israelite people and kill 1,000,000 Israelites, and he will even kill Nehemiah at midday. Concerning this time it has been said: “And it will come to pass on that day—so says the Lord God—that I shall make the sun set at midday, and I shall darken the earth on a bright day” (Amos 8:9). Those Israelites who remain alive will flee into the ‘desert of the peoples’<sup>81</sup> and remain there for forty-five days without food or water, with only wild grass to serve as their sustenance. After forty-five days have passed,<sup>82</sup> Armilos will invade and make war against Egypt and capture it, as Scripture attests: “even the land of Egypt will not be a refuge” (Dan 11:42). Then he will turn back and set his face toward Jerusalem in order to devastate it a second time, as Scripture

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<sup>78</sup> According to Jellinek, the word has been erased from the manuscript. Based on a parallel passage contained in the work entitled *Otot ha-Mašiah* (Jellinek, BHM 2:58-63), Steinschneider suggested restoring the word תפלותם ‘frivolity’; see his “Apokalypsen,” 635 n.17.

<sup>79</sup> A mnemonic reference to Exod 20:2-3.

<sup>80</sup> According to *Sefer Zerubbabel and Secrets*, Armilos is the son of Satan. In *Otot ha-Mashiah* (see also Even-Shmuel, *Midreshey Ge’ullah*, 318-23), the author states: ‘his name is Armilos Satan; this is the one whom the nations term Antichrist (אנטיקריסט)’ (ibid., 320).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Ezek 20:35; 1QM 1.3 for the peculiar syntgm. Note also Hos 2:16 and the medieval commentators on both biblical passages, as well as Pss. Sol. 17:17 where the devout inhabitants of Jerusalem are portrayed as fleeing to the wilderness in order to escape the reign of the ‘lawless one’ (17:11). It is clear from these passages that the locale invokes the ‘original wilderness’ trials of Israel as a means of purgation and presages a successful ‘reconquest’ of the Land.

<sup>82</sup> The cipher ‘forty-five’ is derived from the numerical difference between the 1290 and 1335 ‘days’ of Dan 12:11-12. See especially *Pesiq. Rab Kah. 5.8* (ed. Mandelbaum, 92-93) where the forty-five days is the period of time that the messiah is in ‘occultation’ (נכסיה מהם).

states: “he will pitch the canopies of his pavilion between the seas at the splendid mountain of holiness; however, he will have reached his limit, and no one will aid him” (Dan 11:45).

At that time Michael the great prince will stand and blow three blasts on the shofar, as Scripture attests: “and it will come to pass on that day that he will blow a great trumpet (shofar)” (Isa 27:13). That shofar is (actually made from) the right horn of the ram of Isaac,<sup>83</sup> which the Holy One, blessed be He, will lengthen until it is one thousand cubits long. He will blow a strong blast, and the Messiah of the lineage of David<sup>84</sup> and Elijah will be revealed. Both of them will journey to where Israel is in the ‘desert of the peoples.’ To them Elijah will announce, “Here is the Messiah,” and he will restore their hearts and strengthen their hands, as Scripture states: “Strengthen (your) wavering hands and fortify (your) faltering knees! Say to the anxious ones, ‘Be strong and unafraid!’” (Isa 35:3-4). All of the Israelite people will hear the sound of the shofar blowing, and they will know<sup>85</sup> that He has redeemed Israel, as Scripture says: “for the Lord has ransomed Jacob (and redeemed him from the power of one stronger than he)” (Jer 31:11). “Those who were lost in the land of Assyria will come, (as well as those who were wandering in the land of Egypt)” (Isa 27:13). Fear of the Lord will instantly fall upon the peoples and upon all the nations. Israel will come back with the Messiah until they reach the wilderness of Judaea, and they will rendezvous there with all of Israel and enter Jerusalem together. They will climb the steps of the House of David—those that remain from the destruction—and the Messiah will sit down there. Armilos will hear that a king has appeared in Israel, and he will collect the forces of all the nations of the earth, and they will advance against the King Messiah and Israel.

The Holy One, blessed be He, will fight on behalf of Israel. He will say to the Messiah, “Sit at My right hand” (Ps 110:1), and the Messiah will say to Israel, “Assemble yourselves and ‘stand aside and witness the Lord’s deliverance’!” (Exod 14:13). Immediately the Holy One, blessed be He, will go forth and do battle with them, as Scripture promises: “The Lord will go forth and do battle with those nations”

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<sup>83</sup> I.e., the ram substituted for Isaac as sacrificial victim in Gen 22:13. Even-Shmuel calls attention to Pirque R. El. §31 (Luria, 72a): שְׁנֵי קְרָנָיו שֶׁל יִצְחָק לְבָא בְּקִבּוּץ שֶׁל גְּלוּיּוֹת ‘and its right horn is larger than its left, and it will be blown in the future as part of what is destined to occur at the ingathering of the exiles, as Scripture says: “and it will come to pass on that day that he will blow a great trumpet” (Isa 27:13)’ (*Midreshet Ge’ullah*, 285). See also Isaak Heinemann, *Darkey ha-Aggadah* (2d ed.; Jerusalem/Ramat Gan: Magnes/Masadah, 1954), 31.

<sup>84</sup> מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

<sup>85</sup> Read with Even-Shmuel וַיִּדְעוּ instead of Jellinek’s וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ.

(Zech 14:3), and it is recorded in Scripture: “At that time I will bring you, and at that time I will gather you; for I will make you famous and an object of praise for all the peoples of the earth” (Zeph 3:20).’

Amen! May that time and that occasion be soon!