

TWO

A HEBREW PROPHETIC TEXT ON STONE FROM THE EARLY HERODIAN PERIOD: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

Ada Yardeni and Binyamin Elizur

About eight years ago, we were informed of the existence of a stone bearing a Hebrew text that was previously unknown.¹ This is a very large piece of limestone (ca. 96 x 37 cm), of light gray color, polished on one side, the other being undressed and formless. The stone is broken into three pieces, considerably differing in size but joining together with hardly any pieces missing. To date the

1. Photos of the stone were sent to Ada Yardeni in 2003. Yardeni tried to copy the written text from the photos and was surprised to discover a unique composition, but she could not identify its nature. The photos and the text were given to Binyamin Elizur, who corrected some readings but had no time to deal with the text. It took another three years before Yardeni could see the stone itself and make a hand copy of the original. This helped in confirming most of the readings, but since the writing is worn out in many places, only part of the text could be deciphered and its *Sitz im Leben* remained a mystery. Binyamin Elizur then located most of the extrabiblical sources, mainly with the assistance of the program *Maagarim* of the Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language, the texts included in it having been established on the basis of manuscripts, as well as with the help of the concordance of Hekhalot literature edited by Peter Schäfer (*Konkordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur* [2 vols.; TSAJ 12–13; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986, 1988], and with the help of the concordance of personal names appearing in the scrolls from the Judean Desert (*The Texts from the Judaean Desert: Indices and an Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series*, ed. Emanuel Tov; DJD 39; Oxford: Clarendon, 2002], 237–84). This article was written by Ada Yardeni in consultation with Binyamin Elizur. The Hebrew version was translated into English by Ada Yardeni. We would like to thank Mr. Eugen Y. Han for his helpful comments, as well as Prof. W. van Bekkum for the translation into English of the verses from the *piyyut*, and Dr. Michael Rand for editing the article. Since the publication of our Hebrew version in *Cathedra* (“A Prophetic Text on Stone from the First Century BCE: First Publication” [in Hebrew], *Cathedra* 123 [2007]: 155–66), an article has been published in *Cathedra* in 2009 by Alexey Yuditsky and Elisha Qimron (“Notes on the Inscription ‘The Vision of Gabriel’” [in Hebrew], *Cathedra* 133 [2009]: 133–44) in which important corrections have been made to our reading. Only two of these corrections have been inserted here (lines 24 and 31 [see below]).

pieces have not been joined permanently. The main break starts ca. 40 cm from the bottom on the right, slants down to the left, and ends ca. 25 cm from the bottom on the left. A secondary break is found at the right top of the lower piece, creating a sharp-angled triangle (measuring 7 x 25 x 23 cm), its tip pointing to the left.²

The provenance of the stone seems to be Jordan, and it is now part of the collection of Dr. David Jeselsohn in Zurich. We hereby thank him for allowing us to examine the stone, to photograph it, to make a hand copy of it, and to publish it in the present preliminary report.

Two columns appear on the polished side of the stone, 3.5 cm apart. Each column is 16 cm wide and ca. 75 cm or more long. The text is written in ink, in a manner resembling the writing of a Torah scroll, in a "Jewish" book hand of the late first century B.C.E. (see below in the paleographic description). Forty-seven thin, straight, horizontal guidelines, running through both columns parallel to the short side of the stone, and four straight, vertical lines bordering the columns on both sides, are incised with a thin, sharp implement in a manner very similar to the guidelines in the scrolls from the Judean Desert. A margin of ca. 1 cm has survived on both the right and left sides of the stone. A margin of about 5 cm has survived at its top, and a larger margin of about 13 cm has survived at its bottom.

The existing text comprises eighty-seven lines of writing, the right column comprising forty-four lines and the left column only forty-three lines, the two last being shorter and delimited by three large, slanting strokes, one below the other, marking the end of the entire text. About three horizontal guidelines at the bottom seem to have been left empty (unless additional lines of text once existed in column A, which are now undetectable).

The text is poorly preserved, with lacunas throughout. The top and the bottom of the text, together with the beginnings of the lines in column A and the ends of the lines in column B, are very worn-out, with only single letters being legible. The readings in many places are conjectural and difficult to restore owing to a lack of parallels.

The undressed surface of the back of the stone indicates that it was installed in a wall in an upright position. The layout of the text, resembling the columns of a scroll (possibly having been copied from a scroll), indicates that it may originally have been much longer—that is, comprising more columns and thus having been written on a series of stones and perhaps installed in the walls of a large chamber. However, no similar finds seem to exist, and since the beginning of column A could not be deciphered, this assumption can be neither confirmed nor refuted.

The text is a literary composition not known from other Jewish sources. Its formulation indicates that it belongs to the prophetic genre. It contains at least

2. See the photos in this volume (pp. 189–94). For a drawing of the entire inscription, see *Cathedra* 123 (2007); also online at <http://sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/Gabriel/Yardeni.pdf>.

one biblical citation, from the book of Haggai, and expressions from the books of Zechariah and Daniel (see below). Some expressions, however, seem to be early attestations of expressions known from later sources (e.g., Hekhalot literature, *piyyut*, Talmud, and Midrash; see below). The text also contains expressions that do not seem to have parallels elsewhere. The language shows some Aramaic influence. The text seems to have been composed in the late first century B.C.E. and copied onto the stone (perhaps from a scroll) soon after, as indicated by its script.

Text (doubtful readings appear in gray type)

Column A

1.] ד[
2.] ...[?]...ה.]
3.] ע[ב[
4.] יכ[]...ה..ארס...ל....
5.] ...[..]
6.] ..ה. ה. ז.]...ח[]...מל...י[?]
7.] בני ישראל ב..[?].ב.]...ש..ל.
8.] בנ...ד[?].ל..[?].ל[]...דא[?].
9.] דבר יהוה]...[]...ק.]...ד[?].
10.] ..[?].ד...לב...תים שאלת...[?]
11.] [?].יהוה אתה שאלני כן אמר אלהים צבאות
12.] ..[?].ני מביתי ישראל ואגדה בגדלות ירושלם
13.] כן[?].אמר יהוה אלהי ישראל הנה כול הגאים
14.]על ירושלם ו.שמתו...מ.....ג....
15.] א[?].חת שתין שלוש ארבעין נביאין והשבין
16.] ו[?].החסידין עבדי דוד בקש מן לפני אמ/כפרים
17.] ..[?].שים האות אני מבקש מן לפני כי אמר
18.] י[?].הוה צבאות אלהי ישראל גני.וכרי.
19.] קדשה לישראל לשלשת ימין תדע כי אמר
20.] יהוה אלהים צבאות אלהי ישראל נשבר הרע
21.] מלפני הצדק שאלני ואגיד לכה מה הצמח
22.] הרע הזה לו/יבנסד/ר/ך אתה עומד המלאך הוא
23.] כסמכ אל תורה ברוך כבוד יהוה אלהים מן
24.] מקומו עוד מעט קיטוט היא ואני מרעיש את
25.] .. השמים ואת הארץ הנה כבוד יהוה אלהים
26.] צבאות אלהי ישראל אלה המרכבות שבע
27.] ע[?].ל שער ירושלם ושערי יהודה ונ... למען
28.] ל... מלאכה מיכאל ולכול האחרין בקשו
29.] ילכ.. כן אמר יהוה אלהים צבאות אלהי
30.] ישראל אחד שנין שלושה ארבעה חמשה ששה

31. [שב] עה אל מלאכה..... מה זן אמר העץ
 32.[]..ל.ד. פכ..... ואלוף השני
 33. [] שמר על.. ירשלם שלושה בגדלות
 34. [] א..ה.[?].לו...[] .והו[?] ד.ד.
 35. [] ...ן. שראה איש...עובד וי[] ...
 36. שהוא [] שסמן ממירושלם
 37. ..אני על.אי.[?] אב/מר.אותגלות ..
 38. אתגלות.צל.[?] אלהים ע...א.ן ואראה
 39. ג [] א.... [] ירושלם יאמר יהוה
 40. צבאות ..א.ל..ל....חנארו.ורח.[?]
 41. [] דם שירם
 42. [] .א.ן הנגי. בכול
 43. [] ... ב ש.ו...
 44. [] ש.[?]

Column B

45. []
 46. [] י.הוה
 47. [] ..[] י.
 48. [] ע..ל.
 49. [] ..[] ד.[?] ד.
 50. [] ..[] ..[]
 51. [] עמד ר/דעוד
 52. [] ה[מ]לאכים [] מן..על[] ד/ר.
 53. על עמו/י ומחר...ה[] ..[] ..[] שג
 54. [] שלשת ימין זה שאמ... [] הוא
 55. אלה [] ..[] של.. [] ..[]
 56. ראו נא [] ? ה.צ..... []
 57. סתום דם טבחי ירושלם כי אמר יהוה צבא[ות]
 58. אלהי ישראל כי אמר יהוה צבאות אלהי
 59. ישראל מא..ל...אל... [] ..[] ד.[?]
 60. [] ..[] לגי רוח הנרא..תן. שק.ל..[?]
 61. [] ל אשריא....תץ ש...[?]
 62. [] בה א.. [] ..[?] ד.
 63. [] א. [] אב.[?] א.. [] ..[]
 64. [] ..[] ה/חביב ..ל... []
 65. שלושה קדושי העולם מן מק. []
 66. [] ו. שלום אמר עליך אנחנו בטוחין ..[?]
 67. בשר לו על דם זו המרכבה שלהן ..ל. []

68. אוהבין רבים ליהוה צבאת אל<ה>י ישראל ..
 69. כה אמר יהוה צבאת אלהי ישראל מ....[?]
 70. נביאים שלחתי אל עמי שלושה ואני אומר
 71. שראיתי ברכ. ל..לך דבר. בר[]...ב..[?]
 72. המקום למען דוד עבד יהוה[]...א..[]..[]
 73. את השמים ואת הארץ ברוך ש.....[]
 74. אנשים עושה חסד לאלפים מ.... חסד[]
 75. שלושה רועין יצאו לישראל ל..[]..[]
 76. אם יש כהן אם יש בני קדושים ..ה..[]
 77. מי אנכי אני גבריאל המל.כי.לי..מל[]
 78. תצילם נבי...ם גר..ם לשותן[]...ב.ב.[]
 79. מלפניך שלושה הא[ת]ות שלושה ...אק[]
 80. לשלושת ימין הא..אני גבריאל ...ל..[?]
 81. שר השרין ד..ן ארובות צדים א[]...א..[?]
 82. לראו/ת ה...לשנם מ[]....ן ו.ה.ב.ג.מ[?]
 83. לי מן שלושה הקטן שלקחתי אני גבריאל
 84. יהוה צבאת אל<ה>י[]..[]
 85. אז תעמדו א..[]..ל..[]...א.....[?]
 86. \ ל...
 87. \ ב....עלם
 88. \

Translation (Semitic sounds in capitals and/or italics)

Column A

(Lines 1–6 are unintelligible)

7. [...]the sons of Israel ...[...]
8. [...]... [...]
9. [...]the word of YHWH[H ...]...[...]
10. [...]... I/you asked ...
11. YHWH, you ask me. Thus said the Lord of Hosts:
12. [...]... from my(?) house, Israel, and I will tell the greatness(es?) of Jerusalem.
13. [Thus] said YHWH, the God of Israel: Behold, all the nations are
14. ... against(?)\to(?) Jerusalem and ...,
15. [o]ne, two, three, forty(?) prophets(?) and the returners(?),
16. [and] the Ḥasidin(?). My servant, David, asked from before Ephraim(?)
17. [to?] put the sign(?) I ask from you. Because He said, (namely,)
18. [Y]HWH of Hosts, the God of Israel: ...
19. sanctity(?)/sanctify(?) Israel! In three days you shall know, that(?)/for(?) He said,

20. (namely,) YHWH the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Evil has been broken (down)
21. before justice. Ask me and I will tell you what ²²this bad ²¹plant is,
22. *lwbnsd/r/k* (=?) you are standing, the messenger/angel. He
23. ... (= will ordain you?) to Torah(?). Blessed be the Glory of YHWH the Lord, from
24. his place. "In a little while," *qytut*(= a brawl?/tiny?) it is, "and I will shake the
25. ... of? heaven and the earth". Here is the Glory of YHWH the Lord of
26. Hosts, the God of Israel. These are the chariots, seven,
27. [un]to(?) the gate(?) of Jerusalem, and the gates of Judah, and ... for the sake of
28. ... His(?) angel, Michael, and to all the others(?) ask/asked
29. Thus He said, YHWH the Lord of Hosts, the God of
30. Israel: One, two, three, four, five, six,
31. [se]ven, these(?) are(?) His(?) angel "What is it," said the tree(?)
32. ...[...]. and (the?) ... (= leader?/ruler?), the second,
33. ... Jerusalem.... three, in\of the greatness(es?) of
34. [...]. [...]. [...].
35. [...]. ..., who saw a man ... working(?) and [...].
36. that he ... [...]. from(?) Jerusalem(?)
37. ... on(?) ... the exile(?) of ...,
38. the exile(?) of ..., Lord ..., and I will see
39. ...[...]. Jerusalem, He will say, YHWH of
40. Hosts, ...
41. [...]. that will lift(?) ...
42. [...]. in all the
43. [...].
44. [...].

Column B

(Lines 45-50 are unintelligible)

51. Your people(?)/with you(?) ...[...]
52. ... the [me]ssengers(?)/[a]ngels(?)[...].
53. on\against His/My people. And ...[...].
54. [...]three days(?). This is (that) which(?) ...[...]He(?)
55. the Lord(?)/these(?)[...]. [...]
56. see(?) ...[...]
57. closed(?). The blood of the slaughters(?)/sacrifices(?) of Jerusalem. For He said, YHWH of Hos[ts],
58. the Lord of Israel: For He said, YHWH of Hosts, the God of
59. Israel: ...
60. [...]. me(?) the spirit?/wind of(?) ...

61. ...[...]
62. in it(?) ...[...]
63. ...[...]
64. ...[...] loved(?)/... [...]
65. The three saints of the world\eternity from/of ...[...]
66. [...]... peace he? said, to\in you we trust(?) ...
67. Inform him of the blood of this chariot of them(?) ...[...]
68. Many lovers He has, YHWH of Hosts, the God of Israel ...
69. Thus He said, (namely,) YHWH of Hosts, the God of Israel
70. Prophets have I sent to my people, three. And I say
71. that I have seen ...[...]
72. the place for the sake of(?) David the servant of YHWH[...]...[...]
73. the heaven and the earth. Blessed be ...[...]
74. men(?). "Showing mercy unto thousands," ... mercy [...].
75. Three shepherds went out to?/of? Israel ...[...].
76. If there is a priest, if there are sons of saints ...[...]
77. Who am I(?), I (am?) Gabriel the ... (=angel?)... [...]
78. You(?) will save them, ...[...]
79. from before You, the three si[gn]s(?), three ...[....]
80. In three days ..., I, Gabriel ...[?],
81. the Prince of Princes, ..., narrow holes(?) ...[...]
82. to/for ... [...]... and the ...
83. to me(?), out of three - the small one, whom(?) I took, I, Gabriel.
84. YHWH of Hosts, the God of(?) [Israel ...]...[....]
85. Then you will stand ...[...]
86. ... \
87. in(?) ... eternity(?)/... \

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEXT

The text is very fragmentary, but it seems to be a collection of short prophecies dictated to a scribe, in a manner similar to prophecies appearing in the Hebrew Bible. However, although the inscription contains many biblical expressions, the language sounds more like Mishnaic Hebrew than Biblical Hebrew (e.g., there is no use of *waw*-consecutive to express already finished and still unfinished actions), and it shows some Aramaic influence. The text is written in the first person, possibly by someone calling himself Gabriel (lines 77, 80, 83; cf. Dan 8:16; 9:21) and is addressed to someone in the second person singular. One of the short prophecies is almost an exact quotation from Hag 2:6 (lines 24–25). The author cites the "word of YHWH" (line 9), and many prophecies open with the words "thus/therefore said the Lord/YHWH of Hosts, the Lord of Israel" (lines 11, 13, 17–18, 19–20, 29–30, 57–59, 69). The name Jerusalem is mentioned several times (lines 12, 14, 27, 36, 39, 57) in different contexts.

The text contains an expression that may perhaps refer to a historical event. This expression is *dm ṭbh̄y Yrwšlm* (= *dam ṭibēhē Yērūšālēm*? [Line 57]). The word *ṭbh̄y* seems to be the construct form of *ṭēbah* ("slaughter" or "sacrifice"). If this text was indeed composed in the first century B.C.E., as indicated by its script and language, there is more than one event to which this expression may refer. It seems more plausible, however, to understand the word *ṭbh̄y* as referring to the flesh of the sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple, that is, to the feasts held in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the text does not contain enough information to indicate the precise time of its composition.

The word *glwt* ("exile"), which seems to appear in lines 37, 38, 39, perhaps indicates that the author was forced to leave Jerusalem and reside in exile.

The text seems to contain a number of allusions to various groups of unnamed people, among them "the prophets, the returners(?) and the Ḥasidim(?)" (lines 15–16; cf. Ps 149:5–6),³ "the others" (line 28), "the three saints of the world/eternity(?)" (line 65), "many lovers," etc. (line 68; cf. "the lovers of the Lord"),⁴ "three prophets" (line 70; this expression appears in several sources referring to different prophets of unknown identity),⁵ "three shepherds" (line

3. יעלו חסידים בכבוד ירגנו על-משכבותם, רוממות אל בגרונם וחרב פיפיות בידם.
"Let the **saints** be joyful in glory. Let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a double-edged sword in their hand."

4. Emil Puech, "525. 4QBeatitudes," *Qumran Cave 4. XVIII: Textes hébreux* (4Q521–4Q528, 4Q576–4Q579) (ed. E. Puech; DJD 25; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 131.

5. Cf. שלשה נביאים הם. הרוא' מלכ' בחלום יצפה לחסידות; ישעיה יצפה להכמה; ירמיה ידאג מן הפורענות.

"**Three** are the **prophets**: the one who sees kings in a dream—he may look forward to piety; [the one who sees] Isaiah—he may look forward to wisdom; [the one who sees] Jeremiah—let him fear retribution" (*b. Ber.* 57b).

אמר רבא בר בר חנא אמ' ר' יוחנן. "שלשה נביאים עלו עמהם מן הגולה. אחד שהעיד להם על המזבח ואחד שהעיד להם על מקום המזבח, ואחד שהעיד להם שמקריבים אע"פ שאין בית."
"Rabbah bar bar Hannah said in R. Johanan's name, "**Three prophets** went up with them from the exile: one testified to them about [the dimensions of] the altar; another testified to them about the site of the altar; and the third testified to them that they could sacrifice even though there was no Temple" (*b. Zebah.* 62a).

דבר-אחר. "דברי קהלת בן דוד." שלשה נביאים על ידי שהית נבואתן דברי קנתורין נתלית נבואתן בעצמם. ואילו הן. "דברי קהלת." דברי עמוס. "דברי ירמיה."
"Another interpretation of 'the words of Koheleth son of David' (Qoh. 1:1): There are **three prophets** to whom, because their prophecy consisted of words of reproach, it is attributed personally, viz., 'The words of Koheleth,' 'The words of Amos,' [and] 'The words of Jeremiah'" (*Qoh. Rab.* 1,1,2).

שלשה נביאים הם. אחד תבע כבוד האב ולא תבע כבוד הבן. ואחד תבע כבוד הבן ולא תבע כבוד האב. ואחד תבע כבוד האב וכבוד הבן.

"**Three** are the **prophets**: one demanded the honor of the Father but did not demand the honor of the son, and one demanded the honor of the son but not the honor of the Father, and one demanded the honor of the Father and the honor of the son" (*Abot R. Nat.* ver. B, 47 [Ed. Schechter, p. 65a]).

זה אחד משלשה נביאים שאמ' כלשון הזה. אליהו ומיכה ומשה.

75; cf. Zech 11:8; it appears also in later sources,⁶ but it is difficult to know to whom the text referred).

The text also mentions “My servant, David” (line 16), and “David the servant of YHWH” (l. 72), indicating that the author supported the Davidic dynasty. The “bad plant” (lines 21–22; cf. Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:9–15) possibly refers to the Messiah of a different dynasty. In line 16, one can perhaps restore the name *’prym* (Ephraim[?]). If the name indeed appears, it may have referred to the Messiah son of Joseph, as opposed to the Messiah of the tribe of Judah.⁷

The reference to “His(?) messenger/angel Michael” (line 28) may be based on the book of Daniel (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; in extrabiblical sources, Michael is often mentioned together with Gabriel).⁸ In Dan 12:1 Michael is referred to as *השר הגדול* (“the great Prince” [= “the patron angel”?]).⁹ In Dan 8:25 *שר שרים* (“the Prince of Princes”) appears. This expression appears in line 81, the context being obscure. It is difficult to explain the letter *he* at the end of the word *מלאכה* before the name Michael in line 28. (Could it perhaps be the Aramaic article or the Aramaic possessive suffix that entered this Hebrew text?)

In addition to the citation from the book of Haggai mentioned above, the text contains biblical expressions and words alongside expressions and words unknown from the Bible.

Expressions appearing in the Bible or resembling biblical expressions are the following: *ואגדה בגדלות* (line 12; *wəʾaggîdâ biggēdûlôt*; cf. *ואגדה לך גדלות*, Jer. 33:3); *עבדי דוד* (line 16; *‘abdî Dāwid*; cf. 1 Kgs 11:32; 14:8; Ezek 34:24; 37:24; and sometimes with the word order *דו(י)ד עבדי*, e.g., 2 Sam 3:18; 1 Kgs 11:32, etc.); *לשלשת ימין* (lines 19, 80; *lišlōšet yāmîn*; cf. Exod 19:15; Ezra 10:8, 9; Amos 4:4); *ברוך כבוד יהוה* (line 23; *bārûk kēbôd YHWH min mēqômô*; Ezek 3:12; please note that the correct reading in line 24 *מקומו* has been offered lately by Alexey Yuditsky and Elisha Qimron instead of our reading *מושבו*); *המרכבות שבע* (line 26; *hammerkābôt šeba*; as against *מרכבות ארבע*, Zech 6:1;¹⁰ but see also *שבעה*

“This is one of **three prophets** who spoke thus: Elijah, and Micah and Moses” (*Midr. Tanh.*, ed. Buber, *Qorah* 3, p. 96).

ירמיה היה אחד משלשה נביאים שנתנבאו באותו הדור. ירמיהו וצפניהו וחולדה הנביאה. ירמיהו היה מתנבא בשוקים וצפניה בתוך הבית בתי בניסיות וחולדה אצל הנשים.

“Jeremiah was one of **three prophets** who prophesied in his generation: Jeremiah, and Zephaniah, and Huldah the prophetess. Jeremiah prophesied in the city squares, Zephaniah in the Temple and in synagogues, and Huldah among the women” (*Pesiq. Rab.* 26 ed. Ish Shalom, p. 129b). “Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Huldah”—Parma ms. See Jer 1:2; Zeph 1:1; 2 Kgs 22:3, 4; and 2 Chr 34:8, 22.).

6. “שלשה רועים” אילו משה ואהרן ומרים.

“Three shepherds”: these are Moses and Aaron and Miriam” (*Tanh.*, Huqqat 8).

7. Cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 36–37 (ed. Ish Shalom, pp. 161b–163a).

8. Cf., e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 1 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 5).

9. Cf. *Tg. Job* 25:2; *Tg. Ps.* 137:7; *b. Hag.* 12b (ומיכאל השר הגדול, “and Michael, the great prince”).

10. Cf.

אמר ריש לקיש האבות הן הן המרכבה

in a later source);¹¹ יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל (line 69; *YHWH šēbā'ôt 'ēlōhē Yiśrā'ēl* [with variations in lines 11, 13, 17–18, 19–20, 29–30, 57–59] = 2 Sam 7:27; Isa 21:10; 37:16); למען דוד עבד יהוה (line 72?; *lēma'an Dāwid 'ebed YHWH*; cf. 1 Kgs 11:13: למען דוד עבדי ולמען ירושלם); עושה חסד לאלפים (line 74; *'ōseh ḥesed la'ālāpīm* = Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; Jer 32:18); שלושה רועין (line 75; *šlōšā rô'in*; cf. Zech 11:8: ואכחד את שלשת הרעים בירה אחד ותקצר נפשי בהם וגם נפשם בחלה בי [“And I cut off the three shepherds in one month, and my soul loathed them and their soul also abhorred me”]; אם יש¹² (line 76; *'im yēš* = Gen 44:26); שר השרין (line 81; *šar haššārīn*; cf. שר השרים Dan 8:25 = Michael; this expression appears in several extrabiblical sources).¹³

“Resh Lakish said: the forefathers, it is they who are the Chariot” (*Gen. Rab.* 47:6 [ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 475], et al.).

11. Cf. א' ר' לוי משום ר' יוסה מעוניה שא' ר' מאיר: “שבעה רקיעים ברא הק' ושבעה מרכבות ...

“R. Levi said in the name of R. Yosi the Ma'onian that R. Me'ir said: The Holy One Blessed Be He created seven firmaments and **seven chariots** . . .” (*Re'uyot Yehezke'el* 11 [ed. Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, II, Jerusalem, 1953, p. 130]).

12. Cf. n. 5 above.

13. Cf. in Hekhalot literature:

א' מטטרון מלאך שר הפנים ומלאך שר התורה ומלאך שר החכמה ומלאך שר התבונה ומלאך שר המלכים! ומלאך שר הרוזנים ומלאך שר הכבוד מלאך שר המלכים מלאך שר השרים רמים וגבוהים רבים ונכבדים שבשמים ובארץ.

“Thus said Metatron, the angelic prince of the countenance, the angelic prince of the Torah, the angelic prince of wisdom, the angelic prince of insight, the angelic prince of !kings!, the angelic prince of rulers, the angelic prince of the [Divine] majesty, the angelic prince of kings, the angelic **prince of princes**, high and exalted, distinguished and respected in heaven and on earth” (*Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* [ed. Peter Schäfer; TSAJ 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981], §78 [= Hugo Odeberg, 3 *Enoch*, Or *The Hebrew Book of Enoch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928; repr., Library of Biblical Studies; New York: Ktav, 1973), 73]).

וזה הנער מלאך שלו שר הפנים מלאך שר התורה שר החכמה שר התבונה שר המלוכה שר הכבוד שר ההיכל שר המלכים שר הרוזנים שר השרים רמים וגבוהים רבים ונכבדים שבשמים ובארץ.

“Now this youth is His angel, the prince of the countenance, the angelic prince of the Torah, the prince of wisdom, the prince of insight, the prince of kingship, the prince of [Divine] majesty, the prince of the Temple, the prince of kings, the prince of rulers, **the prince of princes**, high and exalted, distinguished and respected in heaven and on earth” (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §389).

See also:

בששי ברא בהמות וחיה ורמש. ושבע חיות ושקצים ורמשים שני' [אמר] תוצא הארץ נפש חיה למינה בהמ' [ה] ורמ' [ש] וגו'. אחר כולם ברא אדם למשול בכולן. דבר דיבר והכין צבאיו וכל אחד ואחד ציוה על עבודתו. גידל מלאך בראש כולם וגבריאל בראש השרים.

On the sixth [day] he created Behemoth and beasts and crawlers and the seven beasts and the abominations and the crawlers, as it is said: Let the earth bring forth living creatures in accordance with their types, cattle and crawlers *and so forth* (Gen 1:24). And after all these he created man to rule over them all. He spoke the word and set up His hosts, and commanded each one to his particular task. He [also] elevated an angel to be at the head of them all, **Gabriel, as the head of princes**” (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §847).

Other biblical words: צמח (line 21; *ṣemah*; cf. Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12 [cf. *הוא צמח הוא מנחם*],¹⁴ possibly referring to the Messiah); העץ (line 31; *hā'ēṣ*? [= the tree]; the corrected reading—העץ instead of our reading הצץ—has been offered lately by Yuditsky and Qimron); עמי (line 70; *'ammî*); אות (line 17; *ōt*; letter[?]/sign[?]; cf., e.g., אשר שמת אותות ומפתים, "Who has set signs and wonders" [Jer 32:20]); צדק (line 21; *ṣedeq*; cf. אפרים משיח צדקנו¹⁵ and Isa 41:10); הקטן (line 83. *haqqāṭān*; cf. 1 Sam 16:11; 17:14).

Expressions not appearing as such in the Hebrew Bible: אתה שאלני (line 11; *'attā ša'alēnî*; perhaps a case of Aramaic influence); גדלות ירושלם (line 12; *gəḏūlôt Yērûšālēm* [see Jer 33:3]; the word גדלות appears in the Bible but not together with the name of the city); נביאין והשבין [נ]החסידין (lines 15–16; *nəbī'in wəḥasībīn* [wə]ḥaḥsīdīn [the latter probably referring to a certain social or political group]); בקש מן לפני (line 16; *biqqēš min ləpānay* [?]/*lipnē* [?]); אני מבקש מן לפני (line 17; *'ānî mēbaqqēš min ləpānēkā*; cf. Aramaic מן קדמך¹⁶ but cf. also מלפני in line 21 and מלפניך in line 79); נשבר הרע מלפני הצדק (lines 20–21; *nišbar hāra' millipnē haṣṣedeq*; see צדק above); מה הצמח הרע הזה לי/ובנסר/ך (lines 21–22; *mā haṣṣemah hāra' hazzeh lî/lô benesek* [?]; the reading is conjectural); כסמכך אל תורה (line 23; *kəsōmekākā 'el tôrâ*; the meaning here is unclear; the root סמך in the meaning "to ordain" appears in Talmudic Hebrew);¹⁷ כן אמר (line 29; *kēn 'āmar* [as in Aramaic],¹⁸ as against biblical מה זו (line 31; *mā zô*; cf. biblical מה זה [e.g., Exod 4:2] and מה זאת [e.g., Gen 3:13]); אחד שנין שלושה ארבעה חמשה (lines 30–32; *'eḥād, šēnayin, šlōšā, 'rbā'ā, ḥāmiššā, šiššā*, ששה [שב]עה אל מלאכה

In piyyut:

שלמה סולמן, סדר עבודה, [...] במרומים [...] מלא עולמים. ס' [גולה] תען שירים / בעטות בגדים מאושרים / סוקרת בו בפנים מזהירים / בדמות פני מיכאל סר סרים.

"The treasured [nation] resounds with song / as He dons sublime garments, / beholds Him with radiant faces, / the image of Michael, the **prince of princes**" (Naoya Katsumata, "An Additional Seder 'Avoda for Yom Kippur by Shelomo Suleiman Al-Sinjari," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 29 [2002]: 41, lines 231–32).

דוסא החזן, יוצר בלק: ויבא שר השרים בהקדימך / עוז מיכאל תמימך / "מי האנשים האלה עמך." "And the **prince of princes** came at Your bidding, / the mighty Michael, Your blameless [angel], / 'Who are these men with you?' (Num. 22:9)" (Ezra Fleischer, *The Yozer, Its Emergence and Development* [in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984], 732).

14. Y. Ber. II 5a (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2001), 18, line 42.

15. *Pesiq. Rab.* 37 (ed. Ish Shalom, p. 163a).

16. Cf., e.g., XHev/SE 7:6; see Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabatean Documentary Texts from the Judaean Desert and Related Material* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2000), vol. B, III Concordance, p. 127.

17. Cf., e.g., b. Sanh. 13b.

18. Cf., e.g., Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from ancient Egypt* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: Hebrew University/Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1986–99), 96, A6.2:22, et passim.

[šib]^cā, ^cel(eh?) mal^cāk(?) . . . ; seven angels are mentioned in Hekhalot literature);¹⁹ איש תהפכות (line 32; wē^callūf haššēnī (?); cf. the midrash to Prov 16:28 "A quarrelsome man sows strife, and a whisperer alienates friends";²⁰ this is an adoption of a biblical title referring to Edomite tribal leaders [cf. Genesis 36]; the word אלוף appears in Hekhalot literature in the context of angels);²¹ סתום דם טבחי ירושלם (line 57 = sātūm?^c/sātōm?^c dam ṭibḥēhē[?] Yērūšālēm; the precise meaning of סתום in this context is obscure, either ending the preceding verse or perhaps referring to the interruption of the sacrifice practice at the Jerusalem temple); שלושה קדושי העולם (line 65; šēlōšā qēdōšē hā^cōlām), עליך אנחנו, בשר לו על (?; line 66; ^cālēkā ^cānahnu^c bētūhīn^c?; the reading is conjectural);²² אוהבין רבים (line 67; baššēr lō ^cal dam zō hammerkābā šellāhēn); דם זו המרכבה שלהן (line 68; ^cōhābīn rabbīm laYHWH; cf. ואהבת את יהוה אלהיך, Deut 6:5); נבי- (line 68; ^cōhābīn rabbīm laYHWH; cf. ואהבת את יהוה אלהיך, Deut 6:5); ליהוה (line 68; ^cōhābīn rabbīm laYHWH; cf. ואהבת את יהוה אלהיך, Deut 6:5); אים שלחתי אל עמי שלושה (line 70; nēbī'im šālāhtī ^cel ^cammī šēlōšā; the word order seems to be influenced by Aramaic); שראיתי (line 71; šērā'itī; postbiblical language showing Aramaic influence; cf. biblical אשר, ^cāšer); שלושה רועין יצאו לישראל (line

19. Cf. שליט שבעה מלאכין על נורא. תרמוס אוריאל ואפיאל גבריאל נוריאל פנאל וסרפאל. "There are seven angels [appointed] over the fire: TRMWS, Uri'el, 'PY'el, Gabri'el, Nuri'el, PN'el, and SRPY'el" (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §493).

20. Cf. "יפריד אלוף" שהפריד אלופו של עולם. "Alienates friends: he alienated the Friend of the world" (*Gen. Rab.* 20:2 [ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 182]).

21. Cf. אמר רבי ישמעאל. אמר לי מטטרון מלאך שר הפנים. למעלה מהן משני השרים הגדולים. הללו יש שר אחד אלוף ונכבד [...] שאין כיוצא בו בכל השרים כלם. רכביאל יו"י שמו שהוא עומד אצל המרכבה.

"R. Ishmael said: Metatron, the angelic prince of the Countenance, said to me, 'Above them, i.e., these two great princes, there is one prince, venerable (?) and respected. . . the like of whom is not found amongst all the princes. His name is RKBY'el, YWY, for he stands near the Chariot'" (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §30);

אמר ר' ישמעאל. אמר לי מטטרון מלאך (ה) שר הפנים. למעלה מהן יש (ר) שר אחד גדול ותקיף חייליאל יו"י שמו. שר אדיר ונורא שר אלוף וגבור שר גדול ונורא.

"R. Ishmael said: Metatron, the angelic prince of the Countenance, said to me, 'Above them there is a prince, great and powerful, HYYLY'el YWY is his name—a strong and awesome prince, a venerable (?) and heroic prince, a great and awesome prince'" (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §31); אמר ר' ישמעאל. אמר לי מטטרון מלאך שר הפנים. למעלה מהן יש שר אחד גדול ונורא וגבור ונכבד אלוף ונערץ.

"R. Ishmael said: Metatron, the angelic prince of the Countenance, said to me, 'Above them there is a prince, great and awesome, heroic and respected, venerable (?) and mighty'" (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §39);

אמר ר' ישמעאל. אמר לי מטטרון מלאך שר הפנים. למעלה מהם יש שר אחד מופלא ואדיר רב יקר גבור ועריץ ואלוף ונגיד.

"R. Ishmael said: Metatron, the angelic prince of the Countenance, said to me, 'Above them there is a prince, wonderful and powerful, great, precious, heroic and mighty, and venerable (?) and princely'" (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§41–42).

22. Cf.

כי על רחמך הרבים אנו בטוחים.

"For we trust in Your great mercy." *A Prayer before the Thirteen Attributes, Selihot according to Polish Rite* (ed. Daniel Goldschmidt; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1965), 7.

75; *šlōšâ rôʿîn yāšēʿû lēyisrāʾēl*; the expression ל יצא, “to go out to” or “to arise from,” is unusual for Hebrew, which typically employs מן יצא בני; (יציאת מן) קדושים (line 76; *ʿim yēš kōhēn ʿim yēš bēnē qēdōšim*; יצא מן is attested in the Bible [e.g., Gen 44:26] but not in this particular syntagm); מי אנכי אני (line 77; the reading is conjectural; the expression מי אנכי is attested in the Bible [e.g., Exod 3:11]; cf. also מי אנכי in 2 Sam 7:18; cf. מי אנכי in the parallel verse in 1 Chr 17:16); שלשה הא[ת]ות (line 79; *šlōšâ hāʾōtōt* [perhaps האותיות]; this expression appears in several extra-biblical sources);²³ מן שלושה הקטן (line 83; *min šlōšâ haqqāṭān*; מן shows Aramaic influence); שלקחתי אני (line 83[?]; *šelāqahtî*; note ש as against biblical אשר).

23. In Hekhalot literature: שאלתי לר' נחוניא בן הקנה. היאך חכמתו של שר. התורה. אמ' לי [...] (ו[ש]) [כ]שאתה מתפלל בסוף הזכר שלשה (שמות) אותיות; נ"א: אותות < שמזכירין חיות בשע[ה] שצופות ורואות בארכס יהוה אלהי ישראל. גלי איי אדיר אדרר יהיאל זיך בניבא. "R. Ishmael said: I asked R. NeHunya b. Haqana, 'How does the wisdom of the prince of the Torah [come about]?' He said to me: [...]. And when you pray, at the end, mention (the) **three letters** that mention the Hayyot when they behold and see >RKS, the Lord, the God of Israel: GLY YY DYR DDR YHY'L ZYK BNYB" (*Ma'ase Merkava*, 56; Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism: Merkabah, Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965], 109 = Schäfer, *Synopse*, §564).

ובשאת' מתפלל תפילה אחרת {ו} הזכר אותיו שמזכירין גלגלי המרכבה שאומרים שירה לפני כסא הכבוד. הן פז יפא פף יאו גהוא שביבא. זהו קנין שכל אדם שמזכירין קונה חכמה לעולם. וכי יכול אדם לעמוד בו. אלא שלש אותיות <נ"א: אותות> כתב משה ליהושע ברום ושתה. אם אינך יכול לעמוד חקוק אותם בחוק ואל תצטער בדברי גיבורים.

"And when you pray another prayer, {and} mention the letters that mention the wheels of the Chariot, which sing before the Throne of Majesty: HS PZ YP' PP Y'W GHW' SBYB'. Any man mentioning this thing (lit. acquisition) acquires wisdom forever. And does a man have power to withstand it (i.e., this incantation)? Now Moses wrote **three letters** in the cup (?) for Joshua and he drank. If you cannot withstand [it], make an engraving of them (lit. engrave them an engraving) and do not be troubled by the words of the heroes." *Ma'ase Merkava*, 57; Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 109.

In *piyyut*:

י טוב טעם לעמו דיבר / טיכוס שלושה אותות העיבורים עיבר / ירח ועונג ושמעו חיבר / יען אם יאבו לשמוע עמים תחתיהם ידבר.

"God spoke good sense to His people, / prescribing the order of the **three signs** of calendar reckoning. / He joined moon, pleasure [= Sabbath] and [the lection] *Shim'u*, / such that if they are pleased to obey, He would subdue nations under them" (*Ma'ariv* for '*Shim'u*' and New Moon [ed. Menachem Zulay, *Erez Israel and Its Poetry* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995), 336]).

טעם פחו שלשה אותות זללתה / יחד פזרת ונזרתה.

"You have belittled the meaning of the **three letters** of [the word] *pakhaz* ('disturbance'), / both [*khet*] scattering [*peh*] and being dispersed [*zayin*]" (Sim'on bar Megas [ed. Joseph Yahalom, *Liturgical Poems of Sim'on bar Megas* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1984), 146]).

אותות שלשה היום נישתלשו / באום שלישיה בשלוש קודשו.

"**Three signs** today are gathered threefold. Among the triune nation they are thrice sanctified" (E. B. Qilir [ed. S. Elizur, "'אותות שלשה' – A Qiliran Qedushta for Shabbat-Hanuka and Rosh-Hodesh," *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 8 (1985): 178]).

החדש הזה לשמור / כסכם אסופי הר המור / וא[ן]תם אל יגמור / שלשת אותות[י]ן בו [ל]שמור.
 "This month is to be observed / by the consensus of those gathered at Mt. Moriah [=the San-

The following words are not attested in the Bible in the orthography encountered in our text: הגאים (line 13; *haggō'im*; cf. biblical הגוים [e.g., Hag 2:7]; cf. also הגואין in a Bar Kokhba letter);²⁴ לכה (line 21; *lēkā*; cf. biblical לך; the long forms of the personal pronouns are common in the scrolls from the Judean Desert); קיטוט (line 24; *qītūt*[?]; the form belongs to the root קטט, "to fight, etc.," or is a variant of כמעט קט, Ezek 16:47).

It is difficult to determine the *Sitz im Leben* of this text and its precise nature. Richard C. Steiner, to whom I showed a draft of this article, suggested that it might perhaps be "an apocalyptic text, based on the apocalyptic texts in Zechariah and Daniel. . . . Could he [i.e., the Gabriel of our text] be the angel Gabriel who explains to Daniel the meaning of his visions in Daniel 8-9?" [e-mail, May 7, 2006]. In a late text called *Ma'ase Dani'el alaw ha-Shalom* a few expressions appear that echo certain expressions in our text.²⁵ However, no text known to date shows an unambiguous relationship with the text on the stone. One may conjecture that the text includes hints of a rivalry between two messianic groups.²⁶

hedrin]. / And may God give them full leave / to observe the **three signs** on it" (E. B. Qilir, Qedushta for Shabbat HaHodesh, 'Atiyat Et Dodim' [Israel Davidson, *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry* (New York: Ktav, 1924), A 8904]).

24. P. Yadin 51:6; see Yardeni (n. 16 above), vol. A, p. 167.

25. Cf. אז יתיצבו מיכאל וגבריאל לפני האלהים ... אז יאמר אלהים למיכאל וגבריאל לכו והגידו לישראל.

"Then Michael and Gabriel will stand up before God" . . . "then God will say to Michael and Gabriel: 'Go and speak to Israel'" (Adolph Yelinek, *Beit Hamidrash* 5 [in Hebrew; Vienna: Brider Winter, 1873], 127; and cf. Jehuda Even Shmuel Kaufman, *Midreshei Ge'ulah* [in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Mossad Bialik, 1943], 224).

וה' יופיע משמים ורעש גדול יצא מציון וממקום הקודש.

"And God will appear from heaven, and a loud **noise** will come out from Zion and from the Place of Holiness" (Yelinek, *Beit Hamidrash* 5, 128; Even Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 225; cf. line 24).

עשה איפה את השלשה האותות האלה.

"Do, then, these **three signs**" (Yelinek, *Beit Hamidrash* 5, 127; Even Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 224; cf. line 79).

אז ישלח להם אלהים חסדו ויפתח את ארבות השמים.

"Then God will send His grace upon them and open the *Arubbot* of heaven" (Yelinek, *Beit Hamidrash* 5, 127; Even Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 224; cf. line 81). However, one has to keep in mind that this is a late Persian composition, from the mid-tenth century (940; see Even Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 202), that is, about one thousand years later than our inscription, and it was translated into Hebrew in the mid-nineteenth century (by Abraham Kohen Kaplan, probably for Yelinek; see Yelinek, *Beit Hamidrash* 5, 117 note; Even Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 207), that is, about two thousand years later than our inscription.

26. If this interpretation is correct, one may cite another phrase from *Ma'ase Dani'el alaw ha-Shalom*:

תחת ירושלים החרבה יוריד ירושלים הבנויה משמים ונצר מגזע ישי הוא המשיח בן דוד יראה [...] ומשיח בן יוסף יומת ונס משיח בן דוד יתנוסס

"Instead of the destroyed Jerusalem He will bring down from heaven the built Jerusalem, and

There seems to be no doubt that the author belonged to the group supporting the Davidic Messiah. Since our text is formulated in the name of Gabriel, one may perhaps refer to it (temporarily) as "Gabriel's Vision."

PALEOGRAPHY

The script of this text is a "Jewish" formal hand, typical of the Herodian period, written by a professional scribe. However, the handwriting looks rather careless. This may be due to the inconvenient conditions created by writing in ink on a hard and large surface. The stone being undressed in the back, it may have stood erect when the scribe copied the text, possibly from a scroll. But even if it was lying on the floor or on a raised surface, it would presumably have been difficult to write on it in an elegant script because of its large size. The script may be securely dated to about the late first century B.C.E. or the early first century C.E. It shows many affinities with the scripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the comparative script chart (p. 26), we indicate only two other alphabets, chosen at random, of two manuscripts of the *Damascus Document* from Qumran (4Q269 [PAM 43.268], 4Q270 [PAM 43.295-99]), dating to about the early first century C.E.

Following is a description of the main characteristics of the script appearing on the stone. The letters are suspended from the incised guidelines similarly to the treatment in the Qumran scrolls. The spacing between the lines and the columns, as well as the relative size of the letters, show a striking similarity of proportion to that in the scrolls. (They are slightly more than double in comparison to the same parameters as evidenced in 4Q270. However, the columns on the stone seem to be proportionally narrower.) The spacing between the guidelines is about 17–18 mm. The average height of *het* is about 5–6 mm, the letters varying a little in size. The average number of letters in a line is 30–33.

The most important letters for the dating of this script to the period of the Dead Sea Scrolls are *lamed*, with a small and narrow body, and the long and narrow final *mem*, with the "sting" on its "roof" and the open lower left corner (see, e.g., the word *Yrwšlm* in line 39).

The earliest features of this script are typical of the late first century B.C.E. These are mainly the long and open final *mem*, with its left stroke beginning high above the "roof" and ending occasionally above the base stroke; the relatively long medial *kaf*; the triangular loop at the top of *yod* and *waw*; the backward-leaning *alef*, *gimel*, and *šade*; the slanting base of *tet*; and the wavy final *nun*.

an offspring of the family of Yishai, the Messiah son of David, will see [...] and the Messiah son of Joseph will be killed and the flag of the Messiah son of David will flutter" (Yelinek, *Beit Hamidrash* 5, 128; Even Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 225); but see what Even Shmuel wrote concerning this verse (*Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 207–8).

4Q269
PM 43.268

4Q270
PM 43.295-99

Hazon Gabriel

KKKKKK
 ככככככ
 א
 מממממ
 תתתתתתת
 יייייייייי
 ו
 ח
 ט
 קקקקקקק
 צצצצצ
 לללללל
 זזזזזזזז
 פפ
 ננננננ
 ס
 עעעעעע
 ג
 דדדדד
 פפפפפ
 קקקק
 ששששש
 תתתתתתת

KKKKKKKKKKK
 ככככככככככ
 אאא
 מממממממ
 תתתתתתתתת
 ייייייייי
 ו
 חחחחחחח
 טטטטטט
 קקקקקקקקק
 צצצצצצצצ
 לללללללל
 זזזזזזזזזז
 פפפפפפפ
 נננננננ
 ססססס
 עעעעעעעע
 גגגגגג
 דד
 פפפפפ
 פפפפפפפ
 קקקקקקק
 שששששששש
 תתתתתתתתת

KKKKKKKKK
 כככ
 אאאא
 ממממ
 תתתתתתת
 ייייייייי
 וו
 חחח
 טטטטט
 קקקקקקקק
 צצצצצצצ
 לללללל
 זזזזזזזזז
 פפפפפפפפ
 נננננננ
 ססססס
 עעעעעע
 גג
 דד
 פפפפפ
 פפפפפ
 קקקק
 שששששששש
 תתתתתתתת

The latest features of this script are typical of the early first century C.E. Among these we may cite a number of extra ornamental additions on certain letters, mainly the ornaments on the right stroke of *alef* and *šade* as well as the ornamental additions on top of the left down stroke of the seven letters known as *sha^catnez getz* (*shin*, *ayin*, *tet*, *nun*, *zayin*, *gimel*, and *šade*); the occasional occurrences of the "tail" of *bet*; the almost horizontal base strokes of *bet*, *kaf*, *mem*, *nun*, and *šade*; the closed and short *samek*; and the short *tav* with the left down stroke bending its bottom in an angle to the left.

Following are the descriptions of individual letters.²⁷

Alef leans backward, a feature inherited from its ancestor, the Aramaic *alef*. The medial stroke slants down slightly to the right while the right and left "arms" stretch in opposite directions, the left one starting near the top of the medial stroke and terminating above the imaginary base line. Both "arms" occasionally have additional ornaments in the form of a small stroke that joins the main stroke in a to-and-fro movement (cf. a similar phenomenon in 4Q269; the *alef* of 4Q270 has only the right ornamental addition).

Bet has an almost horizontal "roof" starting with a high serif. Its horizontal base stroke, drawn from left to right, occasionally ends beyond its meeting point with the right down stroke, creating a small "tail" at the lower, right corner. This feature appears sporadically in the second century B.C.E. and becomes characteristic of *bet* in ca. the first century C.E.

Gimel leans backward, its down stroke being almost erect, and its left "leg" stretches forward in a convex curve. This feature sporadically appears in the second century B.C.E. and is typical of the *gimel* of the first century. An additional short stroke occasionally appears to the right of its top, typical of the "Jewish" Herodian book hand.

Dalet has a quite distinctive serif slanting down toward the left end of its "roof." Its right down stroke starts above its meeting point with the right end of the "roof." The letter appears mostly in an erect position.

He has a wavy "roof" formed with one stroke rather than two, the latter being typical of the Herodian *he* (cf. both 4Q269 and 4Q270). The wavy "roof" of *he* is typical of the semiformal hand from the Hasmonean to the post-Herodian periods.

Waw mostly differs from the shorter *yod*, both occasionally having a triangular "loop" to the left of their top, typical of the "Jewish" Herodian script (cf. both 4Q269 and 4Q270; this feature is common in a certain type of ossuary inscription as well as in the Copper Scroll). The letter mostly stands upright.

Zayin has a thickened top, perhaps made with a to-and-fro movement (cf. both 4Q269 and 4Q270).

Het is made with a wavy right down stroke, starting above the right end of

27. Cf. the tracing of the inscription, and see also the alphabetical charts showing the development of the "Jewish" scripts, in Yardeni, *Textbook*, vol. B, 166–211.

the crossbar. This right down stroke is typical of *het* already in the Aramaic script of the mid-fourth century B.C.E., and continues into the "Jewish" script of the Herodian period. The left down stroke occasionally begins at the left end of the crossbar or somewhat above it.

Tet is already a small letter. It has a straight, slanting base stroke and a short left down stroke unlike the round base and the high left down stroke of the Aramaic *tet*. At the top of its left down stroke an additional ornament occasionally appears, drawn with a to-and-fro movement. This ornamental addition—as well as that on top of the left down stroke of *gimel*, *zayin*, *nun*, *ayin*, and *šade*—is the origin of the ornamental additions on top of the left down stroke of these seven letters in later Torah scrolls and sacred documents. The right stroke begins inside the letter and curves clockwise until it touches the right end of the base stroke.

Yod resembles *waw*, but is mostly shorter.

Medial *kaf* is somewhat longer than *bet*. Around the middle of the Herodian period, they became equal in height. Unlike *bet*, its base line does not exceed its meeting point with the down stroke.

Final *kaf* resembles *dalet* but is considerably longer.

Lamed is typical of the "Jewish" book hand evidenced in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It has a small and short "body" and a high "mast" with a thickened top, occasionally made like the triangular "loop" of *waw* and *yod*.

Medial *mem* is already of medial height as a result of the process of leveling the height of the letters in the early Herodian period. It has an almost horizontal base stroke and a straight and upright "back." Its serif seems to be already an independent stroke, its "roof" and left down stroke having merged together into one stroke beginning at the top of the "back" and slanting down to the left, but terminating high above the left end of the base stroke. This form of *mem* is typical of the late Herodian period.

Final *mem* occasionally appears in medial position (cf. the epitaph of King Uzziah with the final *mem* in the word *lmph*). The long final *mem* appears sporadically in the Herodian period and is typical of the "Jewish" script of the Hasmonean period. A clear example of an early form of final *mem*, still open at its lower left corner, appears, for example, in line 41. In our inscription there are a few cases of a cursive, round final *mem* (see, e.g., *hg²ym* in line 13, and *ʿlhym* in line 29; cf. also, e.g., 4Q448 [early first century B.C.E.; Yardeni, *Textbook*, vol. A, 253]).

Medial *nun* has an ornamental addition at the top of its vertical stroke and an almost horizontal base stroke, forming an angular corner (cf. 4Q269 and 4Q270).

Final *nun* has an ornamental addition similar to that of the medial *nun*.

Samek is already small and closed at its lower left corner (cf. 4Q269 and 4Q270). Open forms of *samek* still appear sporadically in documents dating to around the beginning of the Christian era.

Ayin appears in various sizes, that is, a smaller form (e.g., *ʿbdy* in line 16) and a larger form (e.g., *ʿl* in line 67), as a result of the careless writing. The letter leans

backwards (cf. 4Q270). Its right stroke bends at its top to the left, whereas its left stroke occasionally has an ornamental addition at its top made with a to-and-fro movement, the letter being part of the seven *sha'atnez getz* letters (see above, in the discussion of *tet*).

Medial *pe* is relatively short. Its typical "nose" is relatively short (cf., e.g., *lpny* in line 16 and *lpnk* in line 17). Since it has no serif it is easily distinguishable from *bet* and *kaf*.

Final *pe* seems to appear in line 32. Unlike medial *pe*, it has a clear "nose" (unless the reading ³*lwp* is wrong and it is a *waw* with a triangular "loop").

Medial *šade* occasionally has the tops of its strokes bending toward each other in a manner similar to *ayin*. The letter leans backwards, its left stroke bending at its bottom in an angle to the left, creating an almost horizontal base, while its right stroke stretches back to the right. The ornament occasionally appearing at the end of the right "arm" is made similarly to that at the right "arm" of *alef*, whereas the top of its left stroke sometimes has an ornamental addition, also made with a to-and-fro movement similarly to the other *sha'atnez getz* letters.

Final *šade* resembles medial *šade* but for its long left stroke, which in some cases curves to the left.

Qof has proportions similar to the *qof* of 4Q269 and 4Q270. It has an almost triangular "body," its size resembling that of *lamed*. The right stroke slants down toward the relatively short and somewhat wavy "leg," sometimes touching it.

Resh clearly differs from *dalet* in that it has no protrusion at its upper right corner (similarly to 4Q269 and 4Q270).

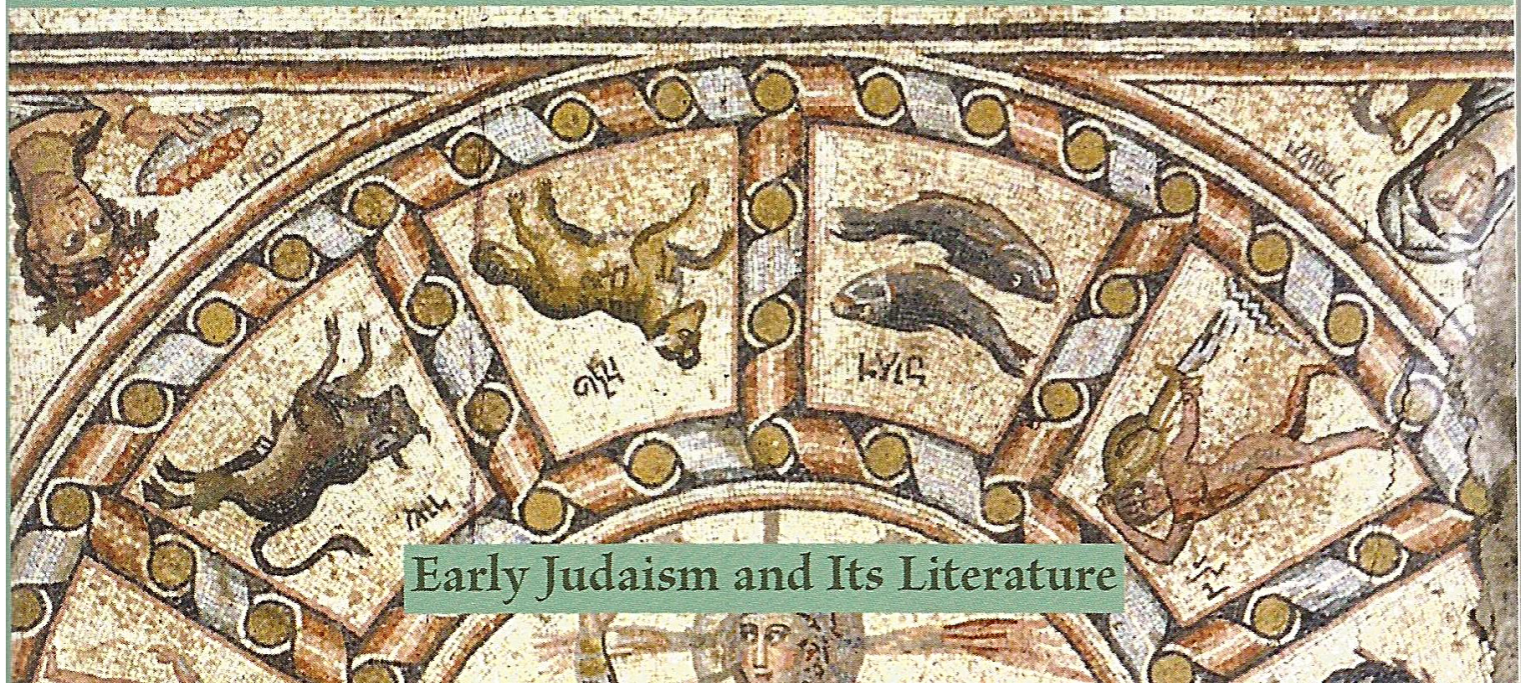
Shin has a vertical left stroke, often exceeding its meeting point with the right "arm." As a result of the careless writing, its right "arm" occasionally bends at its top. Since the letter leans backwards, the lower part of its right "arm" looks like an almost horizontal base stroke, but for the most part the letter retains its triangular form. The middle stroke also sometimes has an ornamental addition in a form that is also found on top of the right arm of *alef* and *šade*, and the left stroke sometimes also has an ornamental addition made with a to-and-fro movement, similar to the other *sha'atnez getz* letters.

Tav bends its left down stroke at its bottom to the left, creating a right angle with its "foot" (similarly to 4Q270). Its left down stroke starts high above its "roof," and sometimes cuts through the "roof" as the result of the careless writing.



HAZON GABRIEL
New Readings of the Gabriel Revelation

EDITED BY MATTHIAS HENZE



Early Judaism and Its Literature