

“The Vision of Daniel” from the St. Petersburg Genizah*

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■ Abstract

This article includes translation of a “new” Vision of Daniel as it survived, albeit incomplete. It reflects a “meeting point” between three monotheistic religions in the ninth and tenth centuries CE. A comparative study of the work enables the reconstruction of its missing parts. The Vision may have been composed in the area where al-Mu‘tašim battled Theophilus in the 830s CE, namely, northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia. An “updated” appendix was added around 1000 CE. Towards the end of the Vision, exact times are replaced with “flexible times,” a moderate expression of the cosmic changes found in similar eschatological works. The two

* This research was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (grant No. 2087/18). Translations from the Hebrew in this article are by Elli Fischer; I have incorporated some of his notes on the text, and they are marked [EF]. Translation of numbers follows the originals, which alternate between the use of letters and words to represent numbers. I studied this text during my stay at the Einstein Center Chronoi, Berlin. I would like to thank the members of its executive board, Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Christoph Marksches, and Hermann Parzinger, and our very skilled research associates, Irene Sibbing-Plantholt, Eva Rosenstock, Stefanie Rabe, Yosef Elharar, as well as Chronoi’s dedicated team for their daily assistance. The contributions of Chronoi’s fellows (especially Emmanouela Grypeou) to thinking about time in the context of this work are unique, matched only by their willingness to give generously from much of their own time to clarify many of the subjects discussed below. Israel J. Yuval, Oded Irshai, Meir Bar-Asher, Michael Stone, and David B. Cook read a draft of this paper and shared their thoughts with me; the latter’s notes are signed [DBC]. I want to thank the teams of the Oriental reading room, Olga Vasilievskaya, Boris Zaykovsky, and the Electronic Document Delivery Service of the NLR, St. Petersburg for their permission to publish the text and their dedicated professional accompaniment of my work. The anonymous reviewers are thanked for critically reading the manuscript and suggesting substantial improvements.

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anti-messiahs described, constructed as integrations of Jewish-Christian-Muslim traditions of the apocalyptic devils, reflect the shifting identities of messianic figures, who will reveal themselves once again (*Parousia*), albeit as demonic antichrists. One of the two is an inversion of the Christian image of Moses/Jesus, whereas the second is Armilus.

■ Keywords

Jewish Apocrypha, Vision of Daniel, Abbasid Caliphs, Fatimid Caliphs, al-Sufyānī, al-Mu'taṣim, Theophilus, the Son of the Daughter of Levi

■ I. The Work¹

Genizah scholars have been conditioned by necessity to collect fragments of a work scattered in several different libraries to reconstruct them, to the degree possible. Exceptional in this regard is the Karaite Genizah in St. Petersburg, which was transferred there almost intact by Abraham Firkovich. This accounts for the appearance of continuous, nearly complete works in the Firkovich collections of the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg. One such work is a new additional and different vision of Daniel from the St. Petersburg Genizah, the subject of this article. The article includes the first complete transcription and translation of the Vision of Daniel as it survived, albeit incomplete, in a sole manuscript from the St. Petersburg collection. The article includes a comparative study of related versions of a parallel work, enabling a reconstruction of its missing part.²

¹ The text, MS St. Petersburg National Library, Firkovich Collection, Series A 293 (formerly 22), folios 1a-4a is described in the library's catalog as: "Apocryphal prophecies attributed to the prophet Daniel." See also in KTIV, the National Library of Israel, the following: The National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, Russia Ms. EVR I 293; Film no. F 51121 (Reel 23); System no. 990000786990205171-1 (<https://bit.ly/NLI-990000786990205171-1>). Thanks to Edna Engel (NLI) for dating the MS. The manuscript was first mentioned in Menahem Ben-Sasson, "Firkovich's Second Collection: Notes on Historical and Halakhic Material," *Jewish Studies* 31 (1991) 47–67, at 61 (Hebrew). On the unique features of the Karaite Genizah in Cairo and the circumstances of its transfer to Russia, see Zeev Elkin and Menahem Ben-Sasson, "Abraham Firkovich and the Cairo Genizahs in Light of his Personal Archive," *Pe'amim* 90 (2002) 51–95; for the first collection (Series A), especially 53–59 (Hebrew). At the time, I sent copies of my reading of the manuscript to David Cook and Lorenzo DiTommaso, as they were preparing their studies of Daniel and Apocalyptic literature; see: Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (SVTP 20; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 87 n. 2, 93 n. 23, 97, 154, 184–85, 200, 461 (Nevu'ot Daniel [§2.22]); David B. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (SLAEI 21; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) 8 n. 19. See also Hillel Newman, "Midrashei Geula of Yehuda Even-Shmuel" (full citation in the next note) xciii n. 93; Matthias Henze, *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 11; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 5 n. 7. The Vision discussed here is not close to another Genizah text, already known as "Vision of Daniel" or "The Vision of Daniel by the River Kebar," from JTS-NYC MS Schechter 5, published almost a century ago (see DiTommaso [§2.17], 162–170, 459–461).

² See Yehuda Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula: Chapters of Jewish Apocalypse Dating from the Completion of the Babylonian Talmud Until the Sixth Millennium* (3rd ed.; Jerusalem: Carmel, 2017) (Hebrew); this edition includes new introductions: Oded Irshai, "If You See Kingdoms Struggling

A. Physical Characteristics, Date, and Provenance of the MS.

The copy of the Vision under discussion, written in Hebrew in a Byzantine script, was made in the fourteenth century. The beginning is fragmentary, and its content is reconstructed herein based on a detailed comparison with another vision attributed to Daniel, similar in many respects to this Vision. After the Vision, the copyist of this manuscript copied a story about a child and the Book of Genesis (three pages)³ and a chapter on the fast days (seven pages).⁴

This fragmentary copy of the Vision has no title, but it should be described as a Vision of Daniel since Daniel is mentioned three times as having heard (Appendix, f. 2b, ll. 1,3; f. 4a, l.7) things from an angel. The author of this work concludes with a passage that indicates that he viewed the work as a vision that Jeremiah, Elijah, and Zerubbabel instructed him to write down, and which he revealed to Ezra the Scribe.

The Vision was written originally in typical medieval literary Hebrew. The main part of the Vision was composed in the mid-ninth century in the borderlands between Muslim Syria and Byzantium. Both time and place are established on the basis of historical figures and events described in detail within the Vision.

Against One Another, Anticipate the Footfalls of the Messiah': Chronography and Apocalypse in Late Antiquity," i–li (including an updated discussion on the dating of the Book of Zerubbabel, at xxviii–xxxii); Hillel Newman, "Midrashei Geula of Yehuda Even-Shmuel: A Methodological and Historical Critique," lii–xcvi. Joseph Dan, *History of Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism: Ancient Times* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Shazar, 2008) 1:189–94, 215–18 (Hebrew), emphasizes the primacy and influence of the Book of Daniel (including on the early Christian Apocalypse of John) on intelligible paths to the eschaton and on the three things that are missing from its depictions of the eschaton (messianism, mysticism, and human action). As will be seen in the ensuing discussion, the Vision of Daniel keeps to this trend. On the updating of this paradigm over time, see: Oded Irshai, "Dating the Eschaton: Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Calculations in Late Antiquity," in *Apocalyptic Time* (ed. Albert I. Baumgarten; SHR 86; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 113–53; Joseph Yahalom, "The Transition of Kingdom in Eretz Israel as Conceived by Poets and Homilists," *Shalem* 6 (1992) 1–22 (Hebrew); as well as the thorough updates in the aforementioned introductions by Irshai and Newman; Moshe Gil, "The Apocalypse of Zerubbabel in Judaeo-Arabic," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 165 (2006) 1–98. For new English translations of a few of these texts, accompanied by brief introductions, scholarly annotation and commentary, and synoptic studies of these texts, see John Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (RBS 45; Atlanta: SBL, 2005); Martha Himmelfarb, *Jewish Messiahs in a Christian Empire: A History of the Book of Zerubbabel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

³ See Anat Shapira, *A Midrash on the Ten Commandments: Text, Sources, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 2005) 67–69, 178–79 (Hebrew); Nissim ben Jacob, *An Elegant Composition concerning Relief after Adversity [Sefer Ma'asiyot ve-hu Hibbur Yafeh me-ha-Yeshu'ah]* (trans. and ed. H. Z. Hirschberg; Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1954) 51–52 (Hebrew); Shraga Abramson, *Five Books by Rabbi Nissim Gaon* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1965) 397–404 (Hebrew; the version in this manuscript is closer to the version that appears on 400–403); Eli Yassif, *Ninety-Nine Tales: The Jerusalem Manuscript Cycle of Legends in Jewish Folklore of the Middle Ages* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2014) 231–32, 282 (Hebrew); idem, *The Hebrew Collection of Tales in the Middle Ages* (Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMe'uhad, 2004) 18–19 (Hebrew).

⁴ Shulamit Elizur, *Wherefore Have We Fasted? "Megilat Ta'anit Batra" and Similar Lists of Fasts* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2007) 163–96 (Hebrew).

B. Contents and Outline

The missing parts of the Vision of Daniel can be reconstructed with a high degree of probability by comparing it with parallels in other visions, chief among them being chapters 7–12 of the biblical Book of Daniel. Several versions of redemption have a similar structure, including a prophetic introduction, in which: 1) an angel brings tidings of the eschaton to the visionary; 2) a prophetic-historical section relates to events that transpired and to characters who were active as a “prophecy after the event” (*vaticinium ex eventu*); 3) the apocalyptic vision is described.

In general, the visions, including the names of rulers, are written cryptically and allusively. The era and events of their rule are encrypted in code-names, numerological calculations, and oblique references, if only to give them the aura of prophecies about future events. The writer foretells the future, and the reliability of the vision extends from historical figures and past events to descriptions of the eschaton.⁵

The structure of the Vision of Daniel is similar to that of biblical Book of Daniel, and, as will become evident in the discussion below, it is likely that the content of the Vision is almost identical to that of the Judeo-Persian vision named *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*,⁶ where, as in the Vision of Daniel, an angel reveals to Daniel a portrait of the end of days, including the rise to power of a series of rulers and an accounting of the duration and features of each of their respective reigns. There, the first rulers in the series are Persian Zoroastrians. Afterward there is a gap of four centuries, whereupon the list continues—as in The Vision—with Ishmaelite rulers, the first of whom is Muḥammad. This information about the rulers is likewise part of the *vaticinium ex eventu* whose realization, as it were, gives greater validity to prophecies about the future.

We will content ourselves with a study of the introduction to the list of rulers in *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*, as it is presumed to be similar to the missing introduction of the extant Vision of Daniel fragments.⁷

⁵ On Dan 7–12, see Michael Segal, *Dreams, Riddles, and Visions: Textual, Contextual, and Intertextual Approaches to the Book of Daniel* (BZAW 455; Berlin: DeGruyter, 2016) 155–78; Joseph Dan, *Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism*, 3:998–1027. On methods of studying the history of apocalyptic works, see Paul J. Alexander, “Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources,” *AHR* 73 (1968) 997–1018. On *Sefer Zerubbabel*, see Himmelfarb, *Zerubbabel*, 13–34, 120–43; Newman, “Methodological Critique,” lvi n. 8, lxxiii–lxxiv; Gil, “Zerubbabel,” 1–15; on the rich Daniel literature, see DiTommaso, *Daniel*.

⁶ See: Dan Y. Shapira, “‘Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl’—or ‘The Story of Daniel’—in Judaeo-Persian: The Text and its Translation,” *Sefumot* 22 (1999) 337–66 (Hebrew); thanks to Shapira for his continued interest and willingness to consult on my work on the Vision. For similarities between *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl* and Sibylla Tiburtina, see Lutz Greisiger, *Messias—Endkaiser—Antichrist: Politische Apokalyptik unter Juden und Christen des Nahen Ostens am Vorabend der arabischen Eroberung* (Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 21; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014) 164–65, 247–50. This similarity could explain the connection of some sources to the *Qiṣṣa*, albeit not to the current version of it, which is dated to the 10th cent. See Shapira, 349, line 37 (in Judeo-Persian; the translation is on 362 and nn. 65–66). See also below, n. 17, and in the main text between nn. 28 and 29.

⁷ A list of rulers, their defining features, and the combinations of their names appears also in

As will be proposed in greater detail below, the close relationship between these two works makes it likely that their similarity extends to their respective openings. Thus, the first part of the Vision of Daniel presumably recounts, as does *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*, how Daniel prayed to God for salvation, as Jerusalem had been destroyed. God sent him an angel to illuminate for him the redemptive process, with reference to historical events. Dan Shapira has shown that the Judeo-Persian text of this part of the work is an abbreviated translation and reworking of sources that the author of *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl* had before him.⁸

Outline of the Vision of Daniel:

I. The revelation of the word of God to Daniel reconstructed from *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*

1. Daniel's prayer to God for salvation
2. God sends an angel to illuminate for Daniel the historical-redemptive process
3. The angel brings tidings of the eschaton to Daniel]

II. Signs of the messiah: *vaticinium ex eventu*; the prophetic-historical section; events and characters

1. The "exact" Umayyad list of the kings of Ishmael
2. Early Abbasid caliphs
3. The "vague list" of the kings of Ishmael

III. Pre-messianic pangs

1. The son of Levi's daughter with Gog and Magog
2. Armilus, son of the She-Statue
3. Messiah, son of Joseph
4. The flight to the desert

IV. Redemption

1. Extermination of the remaining evildoers
2. Resurrection of the dead
3. Rebuilding of Jerusalem
4. Ingathering of exiles
5. The age of the messiah: eternal life; the banquet of messiah; kingship; and priesthood

an eschatological vision from a Genizah fragment published in Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot* (2nd ed.; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Ktab Wasepher, 1968) 2:504–505 (Hebrew). See also the corrections and notes in Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula*, 438–39. Some of the figures from the Umayyad Caliphate and their deeds appear in an eschatological text called "Nistarot De-Rashbi" [The Secrets of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai], published in Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula*, 163–98 (especially the list of caliphs at 177–78); Newman, "Methodological Critique," lxxxii–lxxxviii.

⁸ Shapira, "Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl," 339–40; on the apocalypses presented as records of revelatory, mystical experiences, as opposed to the "ascent" apocalypses, which are part of a trend toward the textualization of revelations, reading them as self-referential, fictional narratives about ascent, driven in part by Biblical exegesis, see Martha Himmelfarb, "Ascent to Heaven" in *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 95–114; eadem, "Revelation and Rabbinization in Sefer Zerubbabel and Sefer Eliyyahu," in *Revelation, Literature, and Community in Late Antiquity* (ed. Philippa Townsend and Moulie Vidas; TSAJ 146 Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 217–35.

V. Conclusion

1. Daniel finds the vision comforting and uplifting
2. Elijah, Zerubbabel, and Ezra instruct Daniel to write down the prophecy
3. The angel instructs Daniel to seal The Vision until the time of Israel’s salvation.

■ II. The Prophetic-Historical Sections of the Vision of Daniel

A. The Vision of Daniel and Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl

The vision of the future that begins with a list of rulers constitutes a return to the pattern established in the visions of the biblical Book of Daniel chapters 7 and 11.⁹ Our Vision of Daniel is easier to read than most other visions, because its author details each ruler by number, name, years of activity, and deeds. It stands to reason that this level of detail was provided by a later redactor-interpreter who incorporated the identifications and made explicit what the earlier writer left vague. This can be seen from the description of the reign of the Abbāsīd Caliph Abu D̲ja‘far al-Manṣūr, a description that appears twice in the Vision of Daniel, one after another, with the second interpreting the first:

Vision of Daniel 1a, lines 6-14	Vision of Daniel 1a, lines 14-20
XIII. Then will reign Abu D̲ja‘far. A great sage with strong opinions he will be; like a wolf, he robs and hoards much gold and silver, leaving nothing for people	XVII [XIV?].
who seek bread and find none for he will leave nothing in their hands;	and those who remain seek, but there is nothing, for he will leave nothing in their hands;
they will offer animals for sale, but there will be no buyer;	they will offer animals for sale, but there will be no buyer
he will bury silver vessels in hiding places	from the silver vessels in their hands. He will hoard silver and gold and bury it in hiding places
And he will be revealed to the Ishmaelites in their salvation.	and in the future he will be revealed to people in their salvation
He will be a great sage, a reader of books. He will go to pray at the temple of his mistake[n religion] and die on the way.	and he will be a great sage and a reader of books, and he will ask and seek and demand wisdom; and he will go to celebrate at the temple of his mistake[n religion] and die on the way.
And his reign will be 22 years,	And his reign will be 22 years,

⁹ Segal, *Daniel*, 52–54, 133, and see below regarding the “He-Goat.”

whereupon he will give away his ring so that it will not be left in the hands of the members of his house.	whereupon he will give his ring to the members of his household.
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Both versions include the same details, using almost identical terminology; the author interpreted one text by means of a similar variant. Perhaps the text from which the copyist worked contained the other variant in the margins or between the lines, and the copyist of our manuscript then incorporated it, with all its mistakes, into the main flow of the text. Alternatively, perhaps he was not careful and simply copied these sections twice.

Among the details copied is the number XVII, which originally designated the next ruler (XIV), or the fourth ruler after Abu D̲jaʿfar (XVII). Either way, this interpolation and the consequent disruption of the text's linear flow caused the omission of the rulers' ordinal numbering. This narrow window into the *modus operandi* of the author or copyist of the Vision indicates later stages of correction and redaction of the original text, including the apposition of ordinal numbers to the names of rulers. Abu D̲jaʿfar al-Manṣūr indeed ruled for twenty-two years. He founded Baghdad and built the new official residence of the caliph, Madīnat as-Salām, around which the city developed. He did much to cultivate the city as the capital of the Islamic empire. The historian al-Yaʿqubi describes Abu D̲jaʿfar's accumulation of gold and silver.¹⁰ As for the ring mentioned in the Vision, it may allude to his naming of a successor before his death. Abu D̲jaʿfar died in 775 while making a religious pilgrimage to Mecca. He was buried at an unknown site on the road to Mecca.

Not all the descriptions of rulers in the Vision of Daniel fit the known historical facts about the duration and features of their reigns. Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik was the seventh Umayyad caliph and the eleventh caliph after Muḥammad. He reigned for two years (715–717), not ten. Here he is listed as the tenth caliph, and there are several ways to account for this discrepancy. For one, some Syrian and Syrian-influenced apocalypses and histories do not list Ali as even having been a caliph. Another possibility to consider is that Sulaymān is called the tenth because Muʿawiya II, who died as a child, is omitted from this list, though included in other official lists.

The brief description in the Vision of Daniel can fit with his reign, which is characterized by military campaigns in the east and west, against various powers, including the Byzantine Empire, Djurdjān, and Ṭabaristān, which were then part of the Persian sphere. The number of years and the description of his deeds fit better with the tenth caliph, Sulaymān's brother, Al-Walid I, and "head to the sages" is

¹⁰ *The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Yaʿqūbī, Volume 3: An English Translation* (IHC 3; ed. Matthew S. Gordon et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2018) 1123, <https://brill.com/view/title/36431>. There are many sources that affirm this view of Manṣūr; for instance, the translation of al-Tabari describes Abu D̲jaʿfar al-Manṣūr as someone whose main interest was to accumulate money and to withhold it from Muslims [DBC].

a more apt description of their father, Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (685–705), who was considered a learned ruler.

The two sources, Vision of Daniel and *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*, are juxtaposed below according to the order of rulers, so as to clarify the connection between them.

The Vision of Daniel	Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl
X. Sulaymān. A great commotion will be in the East and in the West, and the king of Babylon will reign and be a head to the sages, and the king of the West will die in his days. His reign will last for 10 years.	After him, another will arise. He will come from the East to the West and ensnare the whole world. He will act benevolently toward people, and he will rule the whole world for 10 years and 5 days, and he will die.
In the <i>Qiṣṣa</i> he is the tenth ruler after Muḥammad but described similarly.	
XI. ‘Umar. In his days will be peace in the world and serenity among people. And he will reign 3 years.	After him will arise another from Babylon, and there will be peace among people. He will be benevolent to the Israelites. He will reign for 13 years and then die.
‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (717–720) had a reputation for pleasantness and mercy. The mention of 13 years in <i>Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl</i> is perhaps a copyist’s error that should be “3.”	
XII. Yazīd. A wolf of the desert he will be, robbing people, and then he will die; he will reign 8 years and 2 months.	Another will then arise. He will build mosques and their minarets, and people will worship five times each day. He will claim prophecy, and he will call people before him. He will reign for one year and two months, and he will die.
The vagueness about the period from 720–754 is perhaps attributable to the fact that it is covered by Yazīd , of whom there were three during that time, neither the first nor the second of which clearly fits the above description (although Yazīd III [744], who was known as Yazīd al-Naqīs because he cut people’s allowances, fits well with the idea of “robbing people”). This confusion between the three makes the description in this section unclear. Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik, or Yazīd II (720–724), was a cousin of Umar. In his era, there was a series of military rebellions that were cruelly repressed. The civil war against the ‘Abbāsids also began in his time. Descriptions of this ruler are entirely different; the one in the Vision of Daniel is more apt, though the duration of his reign does not fit. Perhaps the copyist mistook 4 (τ) or 5 (π) for 8 (π). The version in <i>Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl</i> , where this ruler claims prophecy, seems more like al-Walid II.	
XIII. Then will reign Abū D̲ja‘far . . .	After him, another will arise, and he will be wise; he will gather silver and gold, people will have happiness, and there will be peace throughout the world. He will be benevolent to the Israelites. He will die in his home, and he will reign for three and a half years.
These passages were discussed above, II, A.	

<p>[XIV] After him will reign Maḥdī, his son. He will be wise, and a lover of harlotry he will be; he will profligately spend silver and gold in the world. There will be peace, and falsehood will proliferate in the world. He will go to the land of the East and die there, and his reign will last 10 years.</p>	<p>And his son will succeed him to the throne. He will be wise and will know God. He will profligately spend silver and gold for people, and there will be justice and uprightness in the world. He will be inclined to kindness for the Israelites. He will go to the East and die there, and his reign will be 10 years.</p>
<p>Abū ʿabd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿabd Allāh al-Manṣūr (775–785), who was called al-Maḥdī, was known as a lover of erotic poetry and music. During his reign, poets received generous patronage. His generosity was likened to “waves of charity.” The two versions are similar and fit both al-Maḥdī’s character and the duration of his reign. In 785, he was poisoned to death in Baghdad by one of his concubines.</p>	
<p>[XV] And after him will reign Mūsā, his youngest son; he will be fluid of mind and his desire will be to destroy the world. His reign will be one year and five days.</p>	<p>And his son will succeed him to the throne. He will be melancholic, insane, and ascetic, and he will want to destroy the world. He will reign for one year and 5 months, and he will die.</p>
<p>Abu Muḥammad Mūsā ibn Maḥdī al-Hādī, the fourth ʿAbbāsīd caliph, ruled in Baghdad for one year, from 785–786. According to tradition, he attempted to poison his mother; perhaps this is why both versions deem him insane. The versions are almost similar.</p>	
<p>[XVI] And after him will reign Hārūn his son; he will be a roaring lion and a harsh judge who upholds his designs and kills all the officers of the land and the sons of Ishmael; his desire will be to destroy the world in its entirety, and all his days he will shed blood. He will judge with truth, and he will rove and wander from East to West and from West to East: And he will capture cities and towns from the King of Edom and take a great many captives from them, and he will return to his place in peace. And a man from the East will rise against him and stir up the whole world against him all day long. He will shed blood, but not by his own deed [?]. He will call them heretics and pursue the people of the East but not overtake them. He will divide his kingdom in his lifetime among his three sons: Muḥammad in Babylon, the West to Ḳāsim and the East to Maʿmun: And he will die in exile, and his reign will be 23 years.¹¹</p>	<p>And his son will succeed him to the throne, and he will persecute and kill Ishmaelites. He will want to bring every man under his lordship. Misery will visit people, and he will come from East and West to wage war and shed blood. He will reside in Babylon. He will then go to Rome and battle the Romans, and for the people there will be tumult in the world. There will be misery, and he will return from Rome and go to the East. There he will wage wars and there he will reside. He will reign for 23 years, and he will die in the East. He will have three sons: One will go to the East, one to the West, and one to Babylon. There will not be a lone king.</p>

¹¹ It is astonishing that Hārūn is described as wanting to destroy the world and kill the Muslims (Ishmaelites), since usually Hārūn is portrayed so positively. There must be some unknown backstory. For more details of his reign, see n. 43 below.

Both versions of the detailed description fit the historical figure and the duration of his reign.	
[XVII] After him will reign Muḥammad his son; he will be wicked in deed but generous, and in his day everybody will earn a living. And in his day tumult and sword will dwell among brothers, and his brother will send against him a great general. He and his sons and brothers will abuse each other and both will kill many soldiers: His spurned brother will come to the country of Babylon and wage war with him. He will kill his brother, loot much, and plunder his treasuries. His reign will be 4 years and 6 months.	And the one who will be in Babylon—shall not reign; and the one who will be in the East—there will be tumult; he will go to the West, and he will conquer the West from his brother. There will be much bloodshed, and he will die.
Abu Musa Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Rashīd, or al-Amin (809–813), succeeded his father. Tāhir b. al-Ḥusayn, the general of his brother, al-Ma'mūn, reached Baghdad from the east, laid siege to it and breached the city gates. Al-Amin was killed by al-Ma'mūn's forces and decapitated. The description of his reign in the Vision of Daniel is detailed and reflects its instability, civil strife, and involvement of Tāhir. Its description of his reign's duration also fits the historical record. <i>Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl</i> does not specify the battles and does not indicate the duration of his reign.	

A close study of the two traditions about the order of Ishmaelite kings whose reigns precede the redemption indicates that they both derive from a single tradition. The Vision of Daniel is more polished and orderly, not only because it gives names and ordinal numbers for each ruler, but because it provides details about the reigns of most of the rulers.

B. Time, Place, and Language of the Vision

In both traditions, the lists of Muslim rulers do not end with the heirs of Hārūn al-Rashīd in the ninth century. They continue to other rulers, though their identification is not as obvious, and the contents of the two traditions are not as similar. Likewise, the contents of the last, apocalyptic sections of the two traditions differ. The differences with respect to later Muslim rulers and the apocalyptic section indicate that the war of the three brothers and their reigns marked the endpoint of the tradition. The works were written soon after those events, and the events and rulers that appear afterward, in both works, are the updates of authors-copyists. They updated the time of the beginning of the eschaton to their own days.

Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl stops in the middle of the period of strife between the three sons of Hārūn al-Rashīd. It gives a brief description of the reign of al-Amin (809–813) and adds a sentence that summarizes the brothers' struggle. From there it goes on to describe a Shia revolution in the caliphate.¹²

¹² Meir Bar-Asher suggested that the person who updated *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl* may have been referring to the reign of al-Ma'mun, just after the reign of his brother, al-Amin, during which he

The Vision of Daniel goes on to describe, with a continuity and clarity that are similar to the earlier descriptions, another brief period: the reigns of al-Ma'mūn (813–833) and his brother al-Mu'taṣim (833–842). Al-Ma'mūn ruled the caliphate for twenty turbulent years. The Vision of Daniel describes them thus:

After him, his brother will reign in his place: And after him will reign an officer from his family, Muḥammad by name, and people will change his name. God will bring success to his kingdom, and his enemies will be given in his hands; he will strike and stir up the city of the South, and they will bring him much money from everywhere. And the land will be desolate, and he will die. In his life he will change many things in his kingdom, and he will love building; all his days he will be involved in building. (1b ll. 15–20)

The reign of Abu al-'Abbās Abdallah al-Ma'mūn, the eldest son of Hārūn al-Raṣhīd, is characterized by a flourishing of science and culture. During his reign, many places of study and learning were established, including the Bayt al-Hikmah, a center for scientific study that included a large library. Shortly before his death (October 8, 833), he named his brother Kāsim as his successor, under the name al-Mu'taṣim.

Al-Mu'taṣim first ruled the eastern regions of the caliphate, and afterwards he mounted a successful military campaign against Egypt even while al-Ma'mūn still reigned. Al-Mu'taṣim's entire nine-year reign (833–842) was filled with revolts and wars, in the east and the west: Hamadan, Khurasan, Iraq (against the Khwarezmians and against the Zutt, who, after their defeat, were paraded through Baghdad and then sent to fight against the Byzantines). The description of the nineteenth ruler in the Vision of Daniel fits the career of al-Mu'taṣim:

After him another king from the East will come with a large force and will reach the country of Babylon. He will capture it and shed much blood. And from there he will go to the West, and against him will stand the He-Goat whose name is Zafini/Zufyani, and they will both do battle, and he will kill the He-Goat, and the Easterner will come to Egypt, and lay it waste. He will shed an inestimable amount of blood therein. And he will turn back and come to Damascus and shed blood in it like water. (1b–2a)

The "He-Goat" is the description given to the king of Greece in the biblical Book of Daniel (8:5, 8). Indeed, al-Mu'taṣim and his army waged a series of battles against the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (829–842). The war began with the Byzantine

appointed the Shia Imam 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 818, the eighth of the Twelve Imams) as his successor, raising great hopes among the Shia. However, it was an empty promise. In fact, it was most likely al-Ma'mūn who gave the order to poison al-Riḍā. This is much discussed in both Sunni and Shia sources; perhaps it is to this that the author of *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl* refers. See, for instance, Farhad Daftary, *A History of Shi'i Islam* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 60–63; Meir Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imami Shiism* (IPTS 37; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 3–4. This event occurred closer in time to the reign of al-Amin than either of the other events mentioned—the rise of the Būyids and the Fāṭimids—which were much later than al-Amin's era. However, the updates of the apocalypses are connected to the time period of the person composing the updates.

attack on several ‘Abbāsīd fortresses along the border between the two realms. The ‘Abbāsīd army defeated Theophilos at the Battle of Anzen on July 21, 838. Ankara fell to the ‘Abbāsīds, who went on to conquer other Byzantine territories, including Amorium, the cradle of the dynasty to which Theophilos belonged. The battles between al-Mu‘taṣīm and Theophilos involved vast territories due to the alliances that Theophilos had made with regions abutting the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate and because the outcome of the battles varied each time.

Life in the battle zones was prone to both Christian and Muslim propaganda, which accompanied the battles that seemed as though they would determine the fate of the world. Such a historical setting is liable to become an incubator of eschatological visions for each warring party and for minorities in the war-torn regions. Some of them, like the northern Danube and Bulgaria, were forcibly dragged into military campaigns. It is easy to see the appearance of a Byzantine king and the recurrent battles against the ‘Abbāsīd Empire as the realization of the vision of the beasts in the biblical Book of Daniel and the requisite defeat of the king of Greece as a stage that heralds the end of days. This is likely the reason for calling the king of Greece in the Vision of Daniel by the moniker by which he is called in the biblical book, “the He-Goat,” and this is the “historical” endpoint of the Vision of Daniel’s composition—after the winter of 842, when Theophilos died.¹³

To the military and political tension in the ‘Abbāsīd realms during the reign of al-Mu‘taṣīm we may add an episode of revolt that occurred in the margins of the

¹³ The description of the events comes from several sources. See *Storm and Stress Along the Northern Frontiers of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate: The Caliphate of Al-Mu‘taṣīm A.D. 833–842/A.H. 218–227* (ed. and trans. C. E. Bosworth; vol. 33 of *The History of Al-Tabari*; Albany: SUNY Press, 1991) 93–95 and n. 196; this contains discussion of sources parallel to al-Tabari as well. See also the summary in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492* (ed. Jonathan Shepard; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 390–92. On the influence of the late-7th cent. Syriac Christian Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius on feeling and writing, see *ibid.* at the relevant index entries; on its influence on several visions of Daniel, see Christopher Bonura, “When Did the Legend of the Last Emperor Originate? A New Look at the Textual Relationship between the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius and the Tiburtine Sibyl,” *Viator* 47.3 (2016) 47–100; Irshai, “Chronography and Apocalypse,” xlv–xlix. On Jewish distress in Byzantium during the reign of Theophilos, see Roly Zylbersztein, “Byzantine Views on the Jews: Studies in Polemical Discourse in the Byzantine Empire from the Seventh Century through the Eleventh Century” (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007) 46–48, 162–65. An echo of the events of that time—the conquest of Cilicia (827–829) and the organization of a fleet at Attalia to conquer Constantinople (846)—are found in an apocalyptic vision attributed to John Chrysostom concerning the Vision of Daniel and connected to the aforementioned Pseudo-Methodius; see: Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 72–77; DiTommaso, *Daniel* [§2.15], 155–58, 362–63; András Kraft, *The Last Roman Emperor Topos in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (MA thesis, Central European University, 2011) 55–57; *idem*, “The Last Roman Emperor Topos in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition,” *Byzantion* 82 (2012) 213–57; George T. Zervos, “Apocalypse of Daniel (Ninth Century A.D.): A New Translation and Interpretation,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983) 755–70. On the eschatological mood in Muslim society around the year 200 AH (815–816 CE), see David Cook, “The Apocalyptic Year 200/815–16 and the Events Surrounding It,” in *Apocalyptic Time*, 41–68.

main events in the caliphate, in Transjordan and Palestine. This episode bothered the caliph and generated a great deal of interest among residents of the area near the revolt, and especially the residents of Jerusalem, Ramle, and Nablus. In 841, the revolt of Abū Ḥarb Tamīm broke out in those regions, the latter known as al-Mubārqa‘ (“the Veiled One”; he covered his face so he would not be recognized). It was said that al-Mubārqa‘ was from a Yemeni tribe (al-Yamānī), and according to some sources he went up to Jerusalem and put its population—Muslims, Christians, and Jews—to flight. Those same sources say that he burnt down mosques and churches, was about to burn down the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and dealt a terrible blow to the Samaritan community in Nablus. Abū Ḥarb attracted a group of adherents through his preaching and moralizing; his band of believers found refuge in the highlands of Urdunn (around the Sea of Galilee). His charismatic leadership earned him renown, and some ascribed to him the authority of a messiah-rebel against the ‘Abbāsids, who would restore the throne of the caliphate to the Umayyads. Indeed, his conquests reached as far as Damascus, which he flooded with the blood of his victims.

A messianic figure to whom are attributed designs to restore the Umayyad caliphate was known in Muslim tradition as “al-Sufyānī.” The demonic characteristics of an enemy of the messiah and the world were ascribed to him; this sometimes included an unnatural, fearsome visage.

Perhaps the author of the Vision of Daniel refers to al-Sufyānī among the enemies of al-Mu‘taṣim when he writes, “the He-Goat (Zefir ‘Izim) whose name is Zafini,” for the Hebrew “Zafini” (צפני) can be vocalized as Z/Sufyānī (זֶ/סֻפְיָאֲנִי). Abū Ḥarb, like Theophilus, waged war against al-Mu‘taṣim, and eschatological feelings could have developed around his campaign, particularly in connection with the devastation that occurred in Jerusalem and Nablus. It follows that the combination of the He-Goat and al-Sufyānī could have become a generic name for all of al-Mu‘taṣim’s enemies.¹⁴

The information that we have accumulated thus far demonstrates the writer of the Vision of Daniel’s familiarity with Muslim history. The time of its composition and the events that underlie the determination that the time of redemption had

¹⁴ Al-Sufyānī was named for Abu Sufyan, the patriarch of one of the two branches of the Banu Umayya, the Umayyad clan. See in detail: Herbert Eisenstein, “Die Erhebung des Mubārqa‘ in Palaestina,” *Orientalia* 55 (1986) 454–58; *Al-Tabari*, 203–206; Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 295–96 (§414); DiTommaso, *Daniel*, 171–72, discussing the Arabic apocalypse published in David B. Cook, “An Early Muslim Daniel Apocalypse,” *Arabica* 49 (2002) 55–96. Al-Sufyānī is mentioned explicitly in a Genizah fragment of the Vision of Zerubbabel. See Gil, “Zerubbabel,” 49–50, 66 [section X, lines 1–8]. See Gil’s discussion of the fragment as well, at 15–16. On Al-Sufyānī in Muslim tradition, and on 9th-cent. anticipation of his advent after the age of al-Amin ibn Hārūn al-Rashīd, see Wilfred Madelung, “The Sufyānī between Tradition and History,” *Studia Islamica* 63 (1984) 5–48 (reprinted in idem, *Religious and Ethnic Movements in Medieval Islam* [Abingdon, UK: Variorum, 1992]); idem, “al-Sufyānī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.; ed. P. Bearman et al.; Leiden, Brill, 2022) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8902; Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, 48–52, see below n. 22.

arrived indicate that the work may have been composed in the area where al-Mu‘tašim battled Theophilos: the areas of northern Syria and Anatolia bound by Aleppo, Antioch, Tarsus, and Edessa. Alternatively, it could have been composed in the region where the agents of al-Mu‘tašim battled Abū Ḥarb Tamīm, known as al-Mubarka‘, namely, in Palestine. Both took place in the year 842.

We can also determine the language in which this tradition was written and the stages of revision it underwent before arriving at the extant versions. The fluency of the text of the Vision of Daniel and its integration of certain turns of phrase attest to its composition in Hebrew. Aharon Maman of Hebrew University’s Department of Hebrew Language confirmed this conclusion after a meticulous reading of the text. He concluded his note: “On balance, the work is of a high Biblical stylistic register, riven with quite a few Rabbinic expressions and a few medieval ones. The work seems to have been composed in Hebrew originally, though there are a few instances where foreign influence, like Arabic, might be detectable. In general, the language is clear and typical of medieval literary Hebrew.” The prophetic style of the Vision draws on the biblical Book of Daniel to present itself as prophecy and cites Scripture passim as a proof to its direct revelation, even if by means of an angel.¹⁵

Shapira proposes that the middle part of *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*, which describes the gentile kingdoms, is an independent work based on the Vision of Daniel. Shapira maintains that *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl* is not an original composition. He further proposes that there is a connection between the middle part of the work and Shia Iranian apocalypses of the type known as “malāḥim, *Malḥamat Dāniyāl*.”¹⁶

C. “Updating” the Vision

At the endpoint of the Vision of Daniel, after the winter of 842, when Theophilos died, the author goes on to describe the massive battles that portend the eschaton, marking them with a new introduction: “After all of these.”

At some point between the 840s and the late-tenth century, someone attempted to “revive” the Vision and add another bit of prophecy around the year 1000, a century-and-a-half after the age of al-Mu‘tašim and Theophilos. The addition of a short passage foretells the rise of the Fāṭimids:

Then the sons of Fāṭima will crown 5 kings: The name of the most senior among them is Mahdī, and his reign will be 3 years. In their days, there will be sword, pestilence, and famine: and they will be erased and pass from the world as though they never were. (2a ll. 1–4)

¹⁵ Examples of Rabbinic Hebrew include, *inter alia*, using: ראש לחכמים, ויטמון במטמונים, ארך חטמון, אמה, ומתיר(א)ים[!] את נשותיהן אילו לאילו, והולכין אצלן, הקדוש ברוך הוא, מלך מלכי המלכים, האילו, בעל-דין, ומלכות שלו. See the critical apparatus of the text, in the appendix, for further examples; on the use of prophetic first person’s style in different visions, see DiTommaso, *Daniel*, 108–22.

¹⁶ Shapira, “*Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*,” 339. On Malāḥim, see Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, 28–30, 255–78; idem, “Muslim Daniel Apocalypse”; idem, “Apocalypse,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE* (ed. K. Fleet et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2007) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0019; idem, “Malāḥim,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4848.

Thus, the author concludes the list of twenty rulers who will reign before the eschatological vision transpires. Al-Mahdī, ‘Ubayd Allāh, 909–934, was indeed the founder of the Fāṭimid dynasty, but he reigned for 24 years, not 3, as recorded in the Vision. Of the first five Fāṭimid kings, none ruled only three years, bringing the eschatological moment of the Vision to the proximity of year 995. We could hypothesize that this addendum was written in that time, when the confluence of world events could have led the one who updated the Vision to the conclusion that he was witnessing both the end of the Fāṭimid dynasty and the imminent unfolding of the eschatological moment. The events, dates and acute messianic expectations that the author of the addendum probably had in mind or could be influenced by include:

1. The death of the fifth Fāṭimid king al-‘Aziz in 996 bringing the five Fāṭimid kings scenario to a close.
2. A series of major revolts; the Tyre revolts, aided by a number of Byzantine attacks against Egypt and Syria, led by Emperor Basil II, took place in 996.¹⁷
3. A major earthquake in the Damascus area and the Ba‘lbak region, where a village got swallowed up by the earth in 991.
4. A plague of locusts in 993 and a major famine in Egypt in 997.¹⁸
5. The easterner, “the king from the east,” could hypothetically have been seen (by that time) as the Qarmatians, since they did come from the east, shed plenty of blood, waged multiple battles in Syria, and terrorized Syrians all the way through the third part of the tenth century.¹⁹
6. This time was just before the year 400 AH and close to the end of the millennium CE, thus producing messianic fervor among Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.²⁰
7. Another apocalyptical text, found in the Cairo Genizah and reconstructed and edited by Moshe Gil, refers, according to Gil’s reconstruction, to the 990s. This text is an updated version of the Apocalypse of Zerubbabel.²¹
8. In historical and apocalyptical writings of these years one can find, again, al-Sufyānī.²²

¹⁷ Gil, *Palestine*, 369–70.

¹⁸ *Itti ‘āz al-hunafā bi-ahbār al-a‘imma al-fāṭimiyīn al-hulafā, li-Taḳī ad-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī* (Cairo: Taḥqīq Ḡamāl ad-Dīn aš-Šaiyāl Al-Maḡlis al-A‘lā li-š-Šu‘ūn al-Islāmiya: Lagnat Iḥyā’ at-Turāṭ al-Islāmī, 1390 [H]) 1.16.

¹⁹ W. Madelung, “Qarmatī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0451.

²⁰ See Richard Landes, “Millenarianism / Millennialism,” in *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion* (ed. Robert Segal and Kocku Von Stuckrad; Leiden: Brill, 2016) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/9789004249707_vsr_COM_00000370; see also idem, “Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography, 100–800 CE,” in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (ed. Werner Verbeke et al.; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988) 137–209.

²¹ Gil, “Zerubbabel,” is a reconstruction of the text from nineteen fragments found in six Genizah manuscripts.

²² A Sufyāni appearance in the year 385/995: *ba‘atha Mufarraj bin Dughpūl al-Jarāh bi-rajul min a‘mal al-Sham za‘ma innahu al-Sufyāni fa-shahara ‘ala jamal wa-huwa yusfa’*; see *Itti ‘āz al-hunafā*, 1.285. For the first al-Sufyānī in the Vision, see above, n. 14.

With regard to the dating and the relationship of the Sufyānī snippet at the end of the earlier section of the apocalypse, and then to the Fāṭimid update, one might consider that while the identification of Al-Sufyānī in the original apocalypse was with al-Mubaraqā, the fact is that there was a whole series of Sufyānī appearances in Syria, all the way up to the 1400s. Perhaps the removal of such a key figure was taken as a sign that the dynasty was at a close. The writer of the Fāṭimid section was living in greater Syria (because it does not seem likely that many outside of Syria would know about Al-Sufyānī or care about him by the late 990s), and there was another Sufyānī appearance at that time, just as there were a whole series of revolts against the Fāṭimids. Someone in Syria looking for the apocalypse at that point might note the bloodshed, followed by Al-Sufyānī's appearance and the end of the Fāṭimids. Although one could say that such disasters are always occurring somewhere, apocalyptic predictions are so often sparked by a confluence of events where each confirms the others as being significant. During the last decade of the tenth century, the apocalypse might very well have seemed to be coming to pass, so the visions predicting it were worth updating. Thus, contrary to the statement of the Vision, the dynasty was not destroyed after five rulers. Another nine Fāṭimids reigned in Egypt until 1171. The abbreviated, mistaken, and deficient update indicates that it was a late addition to the text. The author of the updated part of the Vision estimated that the dynasty would have five rulers in order to keep to the pattern from chapter 7 and the beginning of chapter 11 of the Book of Daniel: There will be three kings in Persia, the fourth will have great wealth, and the fifth will be a warrior. After the fifth king, the eschaton will come to fruition.²³ If the Vision of Daniel was indeed before the author of *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*, then the latter described the Fāṭimids as conquerors who arrived to remove the most identifiable sign of the 'Abbāsids—black clothes—and replace them with white garments.²⁴

The descriptions of the end of days in the Vision of Daniel and *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl* are also similar in most of their details, and both resemble a collection from the descriptive tradition of the apocalyptic literature. This has been described and discussed at length in the scholarly literature. Its components, many already detailed in *Sefer Zerubbabel*, are: the appearance of a terrible giant with clearly physical features, named Armilus; Armilus kills those among the gentiles and Israel; Gog and Magog arrive, and the people of Israel are persecuted; the nations of the north, south, and west gather together; decrees against religion are propagated, and Armilus claims to be the messiah; Armilus is tested in the performance of signs and wonders, and he partially succeeds; Messiah ben Joseph, arrives, wages war against Armilus, and is killed; the remnants of Israel flee to the desert; Daniel prays for Israel in its distress; the angel appears and foretells a turning of the tides

²³ See M. Canard, "Fāṭimids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0218; Heinz Halm, "Fāṭimids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27045.

²⁴ See: Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners from the East: The Establishment of the 'Abbāsīd State: Incubation of a Revolt* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983) 12–28, 50–54, 178–85.

for Israel—they will prevail; Messiah ben Joseph will be resurrected and will successfully battle Armilus; the dead will be resurrected; Israel's diaspora will be gathered to Jerusalem; Jerusalem and the Temple will be rebuilt; the Temple will function once again.²⁵

These details do not appear in every work, nor do they appear in the same order. The order of events, the names of the people associated with the messiah and the process of redemption, the details of the redemption of the people, the redemption and rebuilding of Jerusalem—these all vary from vision to vision. However, with respect to all of these elements, the Vision of Daniel and *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl* are almost completely identical.²⁶ Nevertheless, the Vision of Daniel has several singular details that do not appear in *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*. They primarily relate to the two enemies of the messiah: the Son of the Daughter of Levi and Armilus.

In two apocalyptic sources, apparently written in Syria, the Son of the Daughter of Levi appears as a figure preceding the advent of the savior-enemy, the antichrist or Dajjāl. The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel and the Syriac Apocalypse of Small Daniel (first third of the seventh century) state:

It will be in those days; a woman will bear a son from the tribe of the house of Levi. And there will appear on him these signs: something will be represented on his skin like weapons of war, the details of a breastplate, a bow, and a sword, a spear, an iron dagger, and chariots of war. His countenance will be like the countenance of a burning furnace, and his eyes like burning coals. Between his eyes, he has a horn whose tip is broken off, and something, which has the appearance of a serpent, is coming out of it. (89, v.2)

A similar Syrian Muslim tradition, the apocalyptic work of Nu'aym b. Ḥammād al-Marwazī (pre-844), reported that before the appearance of the Dajjāl it is said that a son will be “born in Baysan from a tribe belonging to Levi ibn Ya'qub. In his body are the signs of a sword, a shield, a lance and a knife.”

²⁵ Amos Funkenstein, “A Schedule for the End of the World: The Origins and Persistence of the Apocalyptic Mentality,” in *Visions of Apocalypse: End or Rebirth* (ed. Saul Friedländer et al.; New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985) 44–60 [= Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 70–87]. On satanic figures in Rabbinic literature, see the summary by Joseph Dan, *Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism*, 2:506–41, and especially 539–40 (on Armilus); idem, “Armilus: The Jewish Antichrist and the Origins and Dating of the Sefer Zerubbabel,” in *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco* (ed. Peter Schäfer and Mark R. Cohen; SHR 77; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 73–104; Himmelfarb, *Zerubbabel*, 3–7, 32–38, 56–59, 126–36. On the early dating of the traditions about Armilus and Messiah ben Joseph, see Israel Knohl, “The Suffering Messiah according to the Book of Zerubbabel and Midrash Pesiqta Rabbati,” in *Milhemet Gog u-Magog* (ed. David Ariel-Yoel et al.; Tel-Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth, 2001) 32–37 (Hebrew); idem, “On ‘the Son of God,’ Armilus, and Messiah ben Joseph,” *Tarbiz* 68 (1998) 13–37 (Hebrew); on earlier (3rd–6th cent.) texts mentioning Armilus, see Marius Nel, “The Signs of the Messiah (*’otot hamashiach*) and Jewish apocalypticism,” *Journal of Early Christian History* 2 (2012) 63–79; below, n. 30.

²⁶ The names that are the same in both visions are: Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Ezra, and Zerubbabel. See also the chart comparing 24 different visions of Daniel (with respect to 15 apocalyptic features) in DiTommaso, *Daniel*, 198.

In a separate discussion, dedicated to the enemies of the redeemer, I propose that the Vision of Daniel is a Jewish inversion of the Christian and Muslim anti-messianic concept. Jesus will reveal himself again in the future, but not as a messiah (*christos*), rather, as an “anti-messiah” (antichrist). This procedure, in which one group’s messiah is deemed the antichrist by another group, is common in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim apocalyptic literature. The Vision of Daniel internalizes both the Qur’anic view that identifies the first Moses with the second Moses and the Christian concept of Jesus’s second coming at the end of days, thus turning it on its head. To the description of the two figures of the messiah’s enemies in the Vision of Daniel, based on the two principles that are most fitting for inverting the description of the figure of Jesus in Islam and Christianity—miracle-working and the messiahship—demonic elements are added. These demonic elements are found in ancient Christian and Jewish traditions that describe Gog and Magog and Armilus.

The uniqueness of the Vision of Daniel lies in the image of the Son of the Daughter of Levi. The combination of these two figures in the Vision reflects the shifting of the identities of those who are considered messiahs who will reveal themselves once again (*Parousia*) in Christian and Muslim literature; they become demonic antichrists in the eyes of the author of the Vision. In the Vision of Daniel, one of the two is the inversion of the Christian image of Moses/Jesus, whereas the second antichrist is the canonic Armilus, charged with significance.²⁷

■ III. Redemption in the Vision of Daniel and Other Visions

Among the visions of redemption composed by Jews in the medieval era, few have survived, and these were attributed primarily to Zerubbabel and Daniel. This contrasts sharply with other genres of writing from that era—works of law (*halakhah*), philosophy, legends and stories, liturgical and lyrical poetry, and linguistics—of which many works have survived. Nevertheless, the relative rarity of this genre does not indicate the importance of hope for redemption and the

²⁷ Menahem Ben-Sasson, “Messiahs and Anti-Messiahs in the Vision of Daniel,” in *The Elder Will Serve the Younger: Myths and Symbols in Dialogue between Judaism and Christianity: A Tribute to Israel Jacob Yuval* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2022) 111–65 (Hebrew); idem, “Inverting the Image of the Redeemer and his Enemies in Apocalyptic: An Example of Interreligious Discourse in Four Visions of Daniel,” *Zion* 87 (2022) 313–33 (Hebrew); I hope to complete a book length discussion with a critical edition of this text. For the two enemies, see Henze, *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, 46–47 (text), 89–90 (trans.); DiTommaso, *Daniel* [§2.5], 113–23. This part of the apocalypse is similar, almost verbatim, to another vision of Daniel known as Small Daniel; see: Sebastian Brock, “‘The Young Daniel’: A Little-Known Syriac Apocalyptic Text: Introduction and Translation,” in *Revealed Wisdom: Studies in Apocalyptic in Honor of C. Rowland* (ed. John Ashton; AJEC 88; Leiden: Brill, 2014) 267–85, esp. 269. For the Muslim tradition, see “*The Book of Tribulations*”: *The Syrian Muslim Apocalyptic Tradition* (ed. and trans. David Cook; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017) 325 (trans. 1450); Alexandra Cuffel, “Jewish Tribes and Women in the Genesis and Battle of the Dajjal: Nu’ayim Ibn Ḥammād Al-Khuzā’ī Al-Marwzī’s Kitāb Al-Fitan,” in *Peoples of the Apocalypse: Eschatological Beliefs and Political Scenarios* (ed. Wolfram Brandes et al.; Millennium-Studien / Millennium Studies 63; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016) 129–46, at 133–34. For another similar aspect of these visions, see below at nn. 37–38.

interest it held for people of that era. The presence of hope for redemption and the end of days is discernible, in varying levels of tension and activism, in exegesis and matter-of-fact statements in most conventional literary genres.²⁸

Visions of redemption are unique in that they present a concrete, detailed picture of how redemption will play out, relying on the significant authority of the visionary and premised on a solid, “factual” basis, namely, the fulfillment of prophecies specified in the vision. The apocalyptic discourse that followed the withdrawal of the Fourth Empire—Rome—was copied into an examination of the history of the Arabic Caliphate. That is, a schema that had already been fixed into consciousness had to undergo a paradigm shift. However, the intensity of the Persian and Arab conquests was such that it required an update to this paradigm, and this was settled long before the composition of the Vision of Daniel under discussion.²⁹

As a class, visions of Daniel are common in Christian apocalyptic visions and several Muslim ones as well, because the Book of Daniel is the only book in the Hebrew Bible that contains an apocalyptic vision, making Daniel a convenient attribution for pseudepigraphic writers. To this unique feature we can add the fact that the vision in the Book of Daniel is opaque, leaving plenty of room for later writers of visions to use his name and the central motifs of his book in their own works, expanding on his descriptions, projecting his writings and their knowledge of their own times onto a “past future” that is being realized before their eyes, and continuing from there to an apocalypse that conforms to the patterns that had crystallized in the apocalyptic literature. This class of “Visions of Daniel” includes many dozens of works, written in various languages from late antiquity until the late medieval era.³⁰

In positioning the Vision within the larger contexts of post-rabbinic apocalyptic works and the re-emergence of robust early mediaeval apocalyptic speculation during the seventh through ninth centuries, one sees similarities in motifs and events that have been mentioned already above, all in the context of major events that took place in the Middle East while empires clashed with one another. The time and spiritual climate were ripe to accept such writings and update them to fit with their agonies and hopes. Focusing on several motifs from the “scenery” of the redemption can indicate certain commonalities:

²⁸ For the variegated expressions of these hopes in Jewish literature, see Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1995); R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, “Messianism: Jewish Messianism,” *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987; accessible at <https://bit.ly/EOR-JewishMessianism>); Gerald J. Blidstein, “Messiah in Rabbinic Thought,” (cited in Louis Jacobs, “Messiah,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/messiah>).

²⁹ See above, n. 7.

³⁰ See DiTommaso, *Daniel*. On the connection between the visions of Gabriel and Daniel, see Israel Knohl, “The Apocalyptic and Messianic Dimensions of the ‘Gabriel Revelation’ in their Historical Context,” in *Hazon Gabriel: New Readings of the Gabriel Revelation* (ed. Matthias Henze; EJL 29; Atlanta: SBL, 2011) 39–59; and above, n. 25.

A. *The Burning of the Wicked*

Towards its end, the Vision describes the ultimate punishment of the enemies of the redeemer:

And the son of Jesse will burn all the wicked ones with the breath of his lips, and he will cast their carcass to the earth, where the fowl of the sky will eat them, as will the beast of the earth. And for seven years the Israelites will not need wood for kindling in their ovens, for they will burn stakes of broom shrubs from the peoples. (3b)

This tradition, based on Ezekiel 39:9, the third prophecy about Gog and Magog, is discussed in the Book of Elijah,³¹ which states:

And then the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise up Gog and Magog and all of its branches, and then all of the peoples of the earth will gather and surround Jerusalem, to wage war against it. And the messiah will arrive, and with the help of the Holy One, blessed be He, will wage war against them. . . . And the Holy One, blessed be He, will gather all the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the land to eat of their flesh and drink of their blood for twelve months. . . . And Israel will use their weapons for kindling for seven years, as it is said (Ezek 39:9), “Then the inhabitants of the cities of Israel will go out and make fires and feed them with the weapons—shields and bucklers . . . ; they shall use them as fuel for seven years.”

The Vision of Daniel specifies that the kindling will be stakes made of broom-wood due to a tradition about how long they burn; this traces back to another Jewish tradition, from the sixth century:

And not just any coals, but the coals of broom-wood (Ps 120:4); all other coals, if they are extinguished outside, are also extinguished inside. However, coals of broom-wood, even if they are extinguished outside, they still burn on the inside. . . . It happened with one broom shrub that they lit a fire with it and it remained lit for eighteen months, a winter, a summer, and a winter. (*Gen. Rab.* 98:19)

B. *Heavenly Jerusalem*

The full redemption detailed in the Vision describes the miraculous rebuilding of Jerusalem and resumption of the Temple service: “And the Living God will lower Jerusalem already built, from heaven, with chains of iron, and He will set it upon four [mountains]: Tabor, Carmel, Hermon, and the Mount of Olives: And the heavens and the earth will be renewed and they will build Jerusalem with precious stones and gems.” (3b)

³¹ “The Book of Elijah,” in Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula*, 46 (alternate versions at 376–77). On the Book of Elijah, see Reeves, *Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse*, 29–31; Himmelfarb, “Revelation and Rabbinization,” 217–35; Newman, “Methodological Critique,” lxxiv–lxxxii.

These lines reflect several biblical passages from Isaiah, Zechariah, and Ezekiel that describe the greatness of the future Jerusalem. “Heavenly Jerusalem” was a dominant motif in the scenery of the redemption and is mentioned in other apocalyptic works. The tradition about the descent of the Temple from heaven and the links between this tradition and Christian traditions have been discussed in their historical context. The tradition intensified after the Muslim conquest in response to the development of Muslim traditions about Muḥammad’s ascent to the heavens from the site of the Temple. Thus, the same description is found also in the Syriac Vision of Daniel: “Then the New Jerusalem will be built, and Zion will be completely inhabited. The mighty Lord will build Zion, and his holy Christ will shine in Jerusalem. Mighty men will build her walls, and holy angels will complete her towers.”³² In commenting on this passage, Henze states that, “in the Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel . . . no connection is made between the earthly and the New Jerusalem. The Heavenly Jerusalem is not like a model of the Jerusalem of David and Solomon but is the locus of intense angelic activity.” As with other motifs, we find a similar description in the Vision, following other examples of Jewish and Christian apocalypses.

C. The Flight to the Wilderness and “Flexible Time”

Part of the eschatological portrait in several apocalyptic works is a flight into the wilderness from the antichrist. In the Vision of Daniel, there are three flights from the antichrist into the wilderness: 1) The flight of the Ishmaelites from the Son of the Daughter of Levi into the wilderness of Paran (where the biblical Ishmael grew up); 2) the flight of Israel, together with Messiah ben Joseph, into the wilderness from Armilus; 3) the flight of Israel into the wilderness of Judah after the killing of Messiah ben Joseph.

The last flight, into the wilderness of Judah, is unique in that it is specified by a different, flexible time period of forty days and forty nights. They represent a different temporal rhythm. The way that the stay in the wilderness is described is unique to the Vision of Daniel and *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*:

³² Henze, *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, 107, and his detailed note 217; regarding the “heavenly Jerusalem” in other apocalypses, compare with Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula*, 11–22; on the links between this tradition and Christian traditions, see Dan, *Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism*, 3:1016–17 and the references in the footnotes there; on response to Muslim traditions, see: Uri Rubin, *Between Jerusalem and Mecca: Sanctity and Salvation in the Quran and the Islamic Tradition* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2020) 29–44 (Hebrew).

Vision of Daniel	<i>Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl</i>
Then the people of Israel will flee to the wilderness, put ashes on their heads, rend their garments, and weep in the wilderness of Judah for 40 days and 40 nights, weeping upon weeping, wailing upon wailing, the weeping of the righteous and the weeping of the wicked.	And the Israelites will flee, women, men, and children. They will gather in the wilderness and lament [the killing]. They will wallow in the dust and shout a great shout to the Lord for 40 days.
And the Living God will bring down food for them from the heavens, and a spring of water will go forth from beneath the Sanctuary, and they will drink.	Then the Lord will return His providence to the Israelites, and He will open springs of water from the heavens.
And for them a month will be like a week, a week like a day, and a day like an hour.	A month will be like a week, and a week will be like a day, and a day like an hour.

A flight into the wilderness is also mentioned in one of the two aforementioned Syriac apocalypses of Daniel from the seventh century:

All the ends of the earth will be terrified and agitated, and [fear will fall] upon all peoples, nations, and tongues (after Dan 3:31), and upon those who dwell by the seas and those who live in the wilderness, and great fear will fall upon them and trembling will seize them. Then from the west they will flee to the east, and from the east to the west, and from the north to the south, and from the south to the north. (98, v.26)

The wilderness is the locus of an interim stay during messianic pangs as well as a target for rebuilding normal civilization in redemption times in all four visions of Daniel. There is, however, a unique calculation of the time, a “Flexible Time,” in these works:

The Vision of Daniel	<i>Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl</i>	Syriac Daniel	Small Daniel
And for them a month will be like a week, a week like a day, and a day like an hour.	A month will be like a week, and a week will be like a day, and a day like an hour.	And the days will be short and the days of the months will hasten, and the times of the year will be changed, and the courses of the sun and moon will be proved false.	The days of the months will be short, the days of the year will quickly go by. The courses of the sun and the moon will be changed and those times will be filled with deception.

Other apocalypses, like the Book of Elijah, have a tradition about the fixed dates of the future redemption. The Book of Elijah concludes: “Then will come the last day, which is as long as forty days.” Like other time periods in the Book of Elijah,

this, too, is a fixed time period, the source of which may be a tradition that relates to the day on which humankind is judged.³³

The different and unique temporal rhythm of the end of days was already written about in Daniel 9:25–27, where several figures of weeks (7, 62, 1, ½) are mentioned and left for readers to decipher.³⁴

“Flexible time,” like “encrypted time,” is a vital component of apocalyptic visions. The damage caused to the faithful upon the dashing of hopes connected to a concrete time can bring about the denial of future redemption. Indicating the possibility that the times of redemption will be “flexible” creates an opening for the hope that the times will not only extend but also be shortened, compressed. “Flexible time” is a moderate expression of the cosmic changes found in eschatological works. *Prima facie*, its use does not require the upheaval of nature and the world order. Therefore, the redemptive processes can appear suddenly, with an abbreviation of the bad years, like those described in connection with the flight to the wilderness. The description of “return” appears in apocalyptic visions, in the sense of a return to the mythic time after the exodus from Egypt, with all its formative components, including: redemption, lawgiving, and the formation of a people. The joining of “mythic time” with “apocalyptic time” is expected, for in both cases, rules prevail that are different from the rules that govern normal times: They are concrete times with a beginning and end, which entail events; they need not be consecutive or develop according to the normal course of our world. They are dramatic, dangerous times; they contain enchantment and are pregnant with possibility; when such times flow, their heroes are not subject to any temporal influence. Rather, they control time by giving direction to regular events.³⁵

³³ On flight to the wilderness in the Syriac vision of Daniel, see Henze, *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, 98; on flexibility of time, see *ibid.*, 82; Brock, “Young Daniel,” 275–77; on other similarities between these four Visions of Daniel, see above, at n. 27. For other apocalypses see Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula*, 46 [= *Beit Ha-Midrash* 3, 67]; see also the different fixed calculations of *Alpha Beta De-Rabbi Aqiba* relating to forty days: “The next day is forty days long, for it takes forty days for a fetus to form, and the Torah was given in forty days. Therefore, he is judged according to that day which is forty days, like the day of man, but not like the day of the Holy One, blessed be He, for the day of the Holy One, blessed be He, is a thousand years” (*Beit Ha-Midrash* 3, 39).

³⁴ On the calculation of days in its Scriptural contexts, see Segal, *Daniel*, 168–71. This scheme in the Book of Daniel was mediated extensively during the centuries preceding the text of the Vision of Daniel. The calculation of the times and identification of the various fragments and figures it contains have been the subject of numerous interpretations of the Church Fathers and, to a lesser extent, the Rabbis. Compare to what has been said about “the motif of time-compression,” with additional examples, by John C. Reeves, “An Enochic Citation in Barnabas 4.3 and the Oracles of Hystaspes,” in *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder* (ed. John C. Reeves and John Kampen; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) 265–67. (I thank the HTR anonymous reader for this contribution.)

³⁵ On the encounter between historical time and apocalyptic time, with all its components, as an opportunity to shatter linear time by returning to ideal-mythic time, see Yonina Garber-Talmon, “The Concept of Time in Primitive Myths,” *Iyyun* 2 (1952) 201–14 (Hebrew); Funkenstein, “Schedule,” 48–49; Nissan Rubin, *Twisting Frames: Dynamics of Change in Rabbinic Literature* (Jerusalem: Hillel Ben-Hayim, 2019) 130–49 (Hebrew). On the importance of the linear component

In the four visions of Daniel as well, up until the time of redemption, processes unfold within the normal temporal and world order. The “prophesied” events that happened and were still happening, traumatic as they may have been, occurred within a normal natural and temporal framework. It was therefore sufficient for the author to include them as part of the divine plan. Transitional, liminal “flexible time” is deployed for the transition to the eschatological era, the age of redemption. At the beginning of the eschatological era, the mythic figures of messiahs and their enemies become active, and they, too, will perform deeds that conform to the normal functioning of the world order. They will wage large-scale wars and perform great acts of artifice that seem miraculous. The true miracle—the resurrection of the dead—remains to signify the truth of the ultimate redeemer, Messiah ben David.

D. The Conclusion of the Vision

Immediately following the forty days and nights in the wilderness comes the conclusion of the main part of these visions, even though redemption and vengeance are not complete even after the disappearance of the Son of the Daughter of Levi and the killing of Armilus by Messiah ben Joseph. Alongside the extermination of the remaining evildoers, this final redemptive process also lays the (positive) foundation for renewal and rebuilding, including: the resurrection of the dead, the ingathering of the dispersed of Israel, the construction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the restoration of the prescribed service of God in the Temple. These tasks are assigned, in part, to Messiah ben David. The final sequence of the ultimate salvation is initiated by God, independent of Israel’s cries or conduct.

The conclusion of the Vision seeks to imbue its author, Daniel, with the authority of the vanguard of the new world. It returns to the conclusion in the twelfth chapter of the biblical Book of Daniel and uses its methods and terminology to conceal the time of redemption.³⁶ Yet Daniel’s encounter with Jeremiah, Elijah, and Zerubbabel, and his report to Ezra about the salvation of Israel, Messiah ben David, and the secrets of the Vision offer some slight indication about the contents of the lost beginning of the text. Jeremiah, Ezra, and Zerubbabel are mentioned several times at the beginning of *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*. The Judeo-Persian version of the vision opens with Jeremiah: “I am Daniel, of the sons of King Jeconia of Judah, who was in Jerusalem, in the Temple. There was a man with us named Jeremiah

of eschatological time and its “shattering” through ritual, see also: Claudine Gauthier, “Temps et eschatology,” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 162.2 (2013) 123–41, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-archives-de-sciences-sociales-des-religions-2013-2-page-123.htm>. On the link between mythic time and eschatological time, see Galit Hasan-Rokem and Israel Jacob Yuval, “Myth, History, and Eschatology in a Rabbinic Treatise on Birth,” in *Talmudic Transgressions: Engaging the Work of Daniel Boyarin* (ed. C. E. Fonrobert et al.; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 181; Leiden: Brill, 2017) 243–73. On the sharing of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions and their amalgamation in sketching the figure of a charlatan messiah, see Rubin, *Between Jerusalem and Mecca*, 67, 102–104.

³⁶ On the elements of obscuring the apocalypse, see Funkenstein, “Schedule,” 46–47.

ben Hilkiyah who was always obedient to the Lord.” Jeremiah is the authority figure who initiates Daniel on his path, just before the destruction of the Temple, just as Ezra and Zerubbabel appear a bit later, after the Jews were permitted to return and rebuild the Temple. Concluding the Vision with Jeremiah, Zerubbabel, and a report to Ezra returns the reader to figures familiar from the beginning of the Vision. Thus, it stands to reason that the Vision of Daniel’s opening was similar to that of *Qiṣṣa-ye Dāniyāl*.

■ IV. Concluding Comments

The Vision of Daniel is thus a Hebrew eschatological work composed in the late-ninth century and relating to contemporary events, in an area under Muslim control where the caliphate battled the Byzantine Empire. The work draws from Scriptural, midrashic, and especially apocalyptic Jewish sources but also interfaces with Christian and Muslim theological realms, especially in those parts devoted to enemies of the messiah and the world, which invert and incorporate non-Jewish eschatological images. During the era of the Vision’s composition, several Jewish false messiahs appeared, offering alternative models of Jewish leadership and worldviews that altered the natural and temporal order. The Vision is true to the legacy of tradition both in the behavior it expects from the Jewish public and in the conception of time, it proposes. In its view, the persecutions, crises, and pressures faced by the Jews are part of a larger image of the world that assures ultimate redemption, irrespective of repentance. Miracles—direct divine intervention in wars, ingathering of exiles, the lowering of the Temple, the resurrection of the dead, and the end of death—occur only at the end of the redemptive process; the only condition of the fulfillment of the redemption is loyalty to tradition and commitment to this historical worldview.

■ V. Appendix: The New Vision of Daniel

MS St. Petersburg National Library, Firkovich Collection, Series A 293 (formerly 22), folios 1a–4a

Pages 1–8: A Collection of Stories and Midrashim

[1a]

1. X. Sulaymān. A great commotion will be in the East and in the West,
2. and the king of Babylon will reign and be a head to the sages,³⁷ and the king of the West will die
3. in his days. His reign will last for 10 years: XI. Umar. In his days will be peace
4. in the world and serenity among people. And he will reign 3 years: XII. Yazīd.
5. A wolf of the desert he will be,³⁸ robbing people, and then he will die;
6. he will reign³⁹ 8 years and 2 months. XIII. Then will reign Abu D̲j̲a' far. A great sage
7. with strong opinions he will be; like a wolf, he robs and hoards much gold
8. and silver, leaving nothing for people who seek bread and find none
9. for he will leave nothing⁴⁰ in their hands; they will offer animals for sale
10. but there will be no buyer; he will bury silver vessels in hiding places
11. And he will be revealed to the Ishmaelites in their salvation.⁴¹ He will be a great sage, a reader
12. of books. He will go to pray at the temple of his mistake[n religion] and die on the way.
13. And his reign will be 22 years, whereupon he will give away his ring so that it will not be left
14. in the hands of the members of his house XVII [XIV?], and those who remain seek, but there is nothing, for
15. he will leave nothing in their hands; they will offer animals for sale, but there will be no
16. buyer from the silver vessels in their hands. He will hoard silver and gold and bury it
17. in hiding places; and in the future he will be revealed to people in their salvation
18. and he will be a great sage and a reader of books, and he will ask and seek
19. and demand wisdom; and he will go to celebrate at the temple of his mistake[n religion] and die on the way

³⁷ This (ראש לשועלים) is a familiar pattern in Rabbinic Hebrew, e.g., “head to foxes” (ראש לחכמים). According to the *Historical Dictionary*, the earliest attestation of “head to the sages” (ראש לחכמים) is: “Moses was head to the sages and head to the prophets” (*Toledot Ben-Sira*, Version A [MS Oxford, Bodleian 1466] 226). [Note by Aharon Maman (=AM).]

³⁸ Jer 5:6.

³⁹ There is a question as to whether this word (מלך) is of the inverted past tense, in which case it means “he will reign,” or the simple past (“he reigned”). The same question arises with respect to many verbs in this work [AM]. The translation adopts the inverted past (or prophetic future) tense.

⁴⁰ Medieval, primarily Karaite, Hebrew. According to the *Historical Dictionary*, the earliest attestation of בעבור שלא is in Benjamin al-Nahawendi’s 9th-cent. *Sefer Ha-Dinim* [AM].

⁴¹ The same idea is articulated again in line 17: “in the future he will be revealed to people in their salvation.” Perhaps this alludes to the consolidation of the public around Abu D̲j̲a' far al-Manṣūr after he put down a series of rebellions tinged with messianism: that of Abu Muslim, the architect of the ‘Abbāsīd revolution, and that of Muḥammad ibn Abdallah al-Hasan, the Mahdi, who will reveal himself once again in the future.

20. And his reign will be 22 years, whereupon he will give his ring to the members of his household.

21. After him will reign [XIV] Mahdi his son. He will be wise, and a lover of harlotry

22. he will be; he will profligately spend silver and gold in the world. There will be peace, and falsehood

23. will proliferate in the world. He will go to the land of the East and die there, and his reign

24. will last 10 years: [XV] And after him will reign Musa, his youngest son; he will be fluid

25. of mind⁴² and his desire will be to destroy the world. His reign will be

26. one year and five days. [XVI] And after him will reign Hārūn his son; he will be a roaring lion and a harsh judge⁴³

[1b]

1. who upholds his designs⁴⁴ and kills all the officers of the land and the sons of Ishmael; his desire

2. will be to destroy the world in its entirety, and all his days he will shed blood. He will judge with

3. truth, and he will rove and wander from East to West and from West to East:

4. And he will capture cities and towns from the King of Edom and take a great many captives from them,

5. And he will return to his place in peace. And a man from the East will rise against him and stir⁴⁵ up the

⁴² This is a unique expression. Perhaps it means “inundated with immorality in his mind” or “determined of mind” [AM].

⁴³ As in the morning benedictions (and immediately below), “a judge of truth” (בעל דין אמת). Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809) devoted most of his reign to holy war. When he was still young, in 779, his father, the caliph al-Mahdi, dispatched him at the head of a military campaign that penetrated the heart of the Byzantine Empire. Due to his success, he was appointed ruler of the western portions of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate. In 781, Hārūn al-Rashīd returned to Byzantium and advanced to its capital through a great series of victories. The Byzantines requested a cease-fire in exchange for a large monetary compensation. Six years before he died, he arranged how his kingdom would be inherited: he declared his eldest son, al-Amīn, as his heir; to his younger son, al-Ma’mūn, he gave the district of Merw, the capital of K̲h̲urāsān, which was declared autonomous. The appointment of his heirs began on 794; in response to the wishes of members of his family, al-Rashīd named as his first successor Muḥammad (al-Amīn), the only caliph born to parents both of whom were ‘Abbāsīds; proclaimed initially in K̲h̲urāsān by his guardian al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī, he subsequently received the bay‘a in Baghdād. As for ‘Abd Allāh (al-Ma’mūn), he had to wait until the age of puberty to be declared second heir of al-Rashīd, in 183/799, under the guardianship of D̲j̲a’ far b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī, the caliph’s favorite. While reviving the Marwānid tradition of appointing two heirs to the throne in order to guarantee the stability of the regime and the future of the dynasty, al-Rashīd made an innovation in appointing a third successor, al-Kāsim (al-Mu’tasim), the son of a concubine, sponsored by his ‘Abbāsīd guardian ‘Abd al-Malik b. Šāliḥ. Following Hārūn’s death, the plan was not carried out; a civil war broke out, leading to the disintegration of the centralized ‘Abbāsīd empire. One wonders whether the apocalyptic writers’ portrayal of the tripartite division between al-Amin, al-Ma’mūn, and al-Qasim (Mu’tasim) is basically a Shem, Ham and Japheth-type division of the world, with al-Amin as Ham, and Ma’mūn as Shem, and al-Mu’tasim as Japheth the conqueror [DBC].

⁴⁴ Based on Isa 44:23: “But uphold the word of My servant and fulfill the design of My messengers.”

⁴⁵ The basic language of the text is Biblical Hebrew, and this (ייהם) is an outstanding example of it [AM].

6. whole world against him all day long. He will shed blood,⁴⁶ but not by his own deed [?].⁴⁷ He will call
7. them heretics and pursue the people of the East but not overtake them. He will divide
8. his kingdom in his lifetime among his three sons: Muḥammad in Babylon, the West to Kāsīm
9. and the East to Ma'mūn: And he will die in exile, and his reign will be 23 years: After him will reign [XVII] Muḥammad
10. his son; he will be wicked in deed but generous, and in his day everybody will earn a living.
11. And in his day tumult and sword will dwell among brothers, and his brother will send against him
12. a great general. He and his sons and brothers will abuse each other and both will kill
13. many soldiers: His spurned brother will come to the country of Babylon and wage war
14. with him. He will kill his brother, loot much, and plunder his treasuries. His reign will be
15. 4 years and 6 months. [XVIII] After him, his brother⁴⁸ will reign in his place:
16. And after him will reign an officer from his family, Muḥammad by name, and people will change
17. his name. God will bring success to his kingdom, and his enemies will be given in his hands;
18. he will strike and stir up the city of the South, and they will bring him much money from everywhere.
19. And the land will be desolate, and he will die. In his life he will change many things
20. in his kingdom, and he will love building; all his days he will be involved in building: [XIX] After him
21. another king from the East will come with a large force and will reach the country of Babylon.
22. He will capture it and shed much blood. And from there he will go to the West, and against him will
23. stand the He-Goat whose name is Zafīni/Zufyāni and they will both do battle,
24. And he will kill the He-Goat, and the Easterner will come to Egypt, and lay
25. it waste. He will shed an inestimable amount of blood therein. And he will turn back

[2a]

1. and come to Damascus and shed blood in it like water. Then the sons of
2. Fāṭīma will crown 5 kings: The name of the most senior among them is [XX] Mahdi, and his⁴⁹ reign
3. will be 3 years. In their days, there will be sword, pestilence, and famine: and they will be erased
4. and pass from the world as though they never were: After all of these,
5. the Daughter of Levi will become pregnant and give birth to a son; his stature will be fifteen cubits

⁴⁶ "Shedder of blood" (שׂוֹפֵךְ דָּמִים) is a Rabbinic phrase, though the singular (שׂוֹפֵךְ דָּם) is biblical (Gen 9:6) [AM].

⁴⁷ I.e., not by his own hand, but by proxy [AM]. However, see below, 2b, line 10, and the note there.

⁴⁸ The original (אָחִי) is a mistake caused by similarity to the next line. "His brother" (אָחִיו) is correct.

⁴⁹ This construct (וּמְלִכּוֹתוֹ שְׁלוֹ) is clearly Rabbinic Hebrew [AM].

6. higher than the mountains; the Ishmaelites will be killed beforehand, and those who remain
 7. will flee to the wilderness of Paran.⁵⁰ The Son of the Daughter of Levi will grow stronger,
 and all the
 8. Northerners along with him. And he will pitch his tent from East to West, which is the
 country of
 9. Babylon. In it they will kill three thousand and a thousand until the waters of the Tigris
 become
 10. dried and turn to blood. Those who come or go will have no respite from the drawn sword,
 11. looting, and much plundering: The living will say to the dead, Fortunate are you
 12. for you are in graves.⁵¹ And the Son of the Daughter of Levi will go forth with a large
 army, and everyone
 13. who sees him will flee from before him. And he will have many signs:
 14. He will be a hundred cubits tall and ten cubits wide;
 15. the length of his nose⁵² will be one cubit. His hair will be long and blond:
 16. His eyes will be small,⁵³ his teeth long, his beard long,
 17. his beard 3 cubits long. Woe and misery⁵⁴ betides all the people of the world from him
 18. and from dread of him. The whole world will say that he is Messiah, but he will not be:
 19. And with him will be all Northerners, and the Easterners and Westerners as well, except
 20. for the Southerners, who will flee from him; and a remnant of the Ishmaelites
 21. will flee with them, and survivors of the sword along with them. And he will spread his net
 22. over all the inhabitants of the earth: Then Gog and Magog will hear and come
 23. to meet him; their signs are: each of them has four eyes,
 24. two in front of them and two behind them, and they pressure the whole world.
 25. He chases Israel to destroy them, but the Holy One, blessed be He,⁵⁵ will save them;
 and He will fight

[2b]

1. them and destroy them: And I, Daniel, upon hearing these words
 2. from the mouth of the angel, I shuddered, I spoke rashly⁵⁶ and said to the angel
 3. of God: What will be with my children, my people? He told me: Daniel incline your ear,
 4. open your eyes,⁵⁷ and understand all that I speak to you, and all the words
 5. I have said to you are truth.⁵⁸ And I further tell
 6. you that the offspring of the Female Figure will join with the Son of the Daughter of
 Levi; his name is Armilus,
 7. a son of Belial, bleary-eyed.⁵⁹ He will also speak riddles. They will gather to him—

⁵⁰ The link between Ishmael and the wilderness of Paran is based on Gen 21:11.

⁵¹ Based on midrashic traditions about Jer 22:10.

⁵² This (חוטם) is the Rabbinic Hebrew term for “nose”; the biblical term is אף.

⁵³ Perhaps based on Zech 11:17.

⁵⁴ Based on Prov 23:29–30.

⁵⁵ This name for God (הקדוש ברוך הוא) is a Rabbinic Hebrew expression. Likewise, 3a, line 21 and 3b, line 4.

⁵⁶ The scribe/copyist might have written פני instead of פי as in Eccl 5:1 [EF].

⁵⁷ Based on Dan 9:18.

⁵⁸ Based on Dan 8:25, which emphasizes the truth of the visions to Daniel. See also Dan 10:20 and 11:1–2.

⁵⁹ The scribe/copyist might have had written טרופות instead of טרוטות (see: BT San 107b [=BT Sot. 47a]) [Elli Fischer (= EF)].

8. all the wicked men and sons of Belial and a ruthless nation of spillers
9. of blood who permit their wives to one another.⁶⁰ They will say that
10. serving him is greater than serving any of the peoples.⁶¹ They will go to him,
11. to the West, and believe in him and tell him: You are Messiah.
12. He then calls for fish from the sea, and they emerge and are given to him; he calls for the beast
13. of the field and the bird of the sky and they come to him. They take them
14. and slaughter them. And many of your people will follow him,
15. believing and not believing in the covenant of our God. And people from among the children
16. of Israel who believe in our God's covenant join.
17. And He will take them—one per town and two per family⁶²—and lead them to the Holy Place.
18. And the living God will send a righteous man from the children of Ephraim, who will go and gather
19. the sages of Israel and bring them to Armilus the Edomite, the wicked son of Belial,
20. and they will ask him: Are you Messiah?
21. And he will say to them: I am Messiah, and I am your king and your redeemer. They will say
22. to him: We ask for three signs from you. If you tell us,
23. we believe you that you are Messiah. He will say to them:
24. What are the signs that you ask? And they will say: The Staff
25. of Moses, son of Amram, with which he performed signs in Egypt and turned

[3a]

1. the rivers to blood. And he will bring them a staff that resembles the Staff of Moses
2. and it will bud flower and yield almonds. And they will also tell him: Bring us
3. the Jar of Manna, and he will bring it to them. And so will do the righteous Ephraimite
4. and the sages of Israel who will be with him: They will go to the desert and wear sackcloth
5. and sit on the ashes and dress the Torah scroll in sackcloth and sprinkle
6. dust⁶³ on their heads and they will come and weep in a loud voice and say: Our God, God of
7. our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob: Overlook our stubbornness,
8. our wickedness, and our sins;⁶⁴ and have mercy on us, and hear our prayers and cries
9. and pleas,⁶⁵ and do not deliver us into the hand of this son of Belial. And the Living God⁶⁶
10. will answer them: My people! Do not fear him, for I will not deliver you
11. into the hand of this son of Belial. Go to him and say to him: Resurrect for us
12. the dead. Immediately, that righteous Ephraimite, together with the righteous of Israel,
13. say to him: Resurrect the dead for us. He immediately becomes angry at
14. the righteous Ephraimite, kills him, and burns him in fire. Then the people of Israel
15. will flee to the wilderness, put ashes on their heads, rend their garments,

⁶⁰ This (אֵילִן לְאֵילִן) and the verbs that follow immediately are Rabbinic Hebrew [AM].

⁶¹ I.e., serving him is more prestigious than serving others. See also above, 1b, line 6, n. 46.

⁶² Based on Jer 3:14.

⁶³ The writer/copyist replaced here (l. 5 and l. 6) ashes [=אפר] with dust [=עפר] [EF].

⁶⁴ Based on Deut 9:27 (in the singular case).

⁶⁵ The entire prayer here is linked to the confession and petition in Dan 9:4–19.

⁶⁶ This is a poetic name that originates in Scripture (e.g., Ps 42:4) and often appears in poetry and liturgy. It reappears here on lines 18 and 20 as well as line 3 on 3b [AM].

16. and weep in the wilderness of Judah for 40 days and 40 nights, weeping upon weeping,
 17. wailing upon wailing, the weeping of the righteous and the weeping of the wicked:
 18. And the Living God will bring down food for them from the heavens, and a spring
 19. of water will go forth from beneath the Sanctuary, and they will drink. And for them a
 month will be like a week,
 20. a week like a day, and a day like an hour: And the Living God will remember Israel
 21. and redeem them from the hand of the enemy. The Holy One, blessed be He, will give
 permission to Messiah,
 22. the son of Joseph, so that he may go out and fight with them. He will kill the son of
 Belial, the son of the Female Figure,
 23. and all those nations will gather together and come upon Israel until their roots are
 24. uprooted from the land. And those who remain, who did not gather
 25. and did not come against Israel will struggle with one another⁶⁷ until

[3b]

1. they destroy each other, as it written: "Nation was crushed by nation and city by city,
 2. for God stirred them to panic with every kind of trouble."⁶⁸ And the Living God will
 remember
 3. Israel, and a great darkness will come upon those who remain of the nations that will
 fall by the sword
 4. and He will shine a light upon Israel as He did⁶⁹ for them in Egypt. And the Holy One,
 blessed be He,
 5. will watch over them from the heavens and have mercy on them; He will stand on the
 Mount of Olives
 6. and the mountain will split in dread of Him.⁷⁰ And the scion of Jesse will be on His right
 and Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel
 7. to His left, and Elijah the Prophet with them. And the son of Jesse will burn all the
 wicked ones
 8. with the breath of his lips,⁷¹ and he will cast their carcass to the earth, where the fowl of
 the sky will eat them,
 9. as will the beast of the earth. And for seven years the Israelites will not need wood for
 kindling
 10. in their ovens, for they will burn stakes of broom shrubs from the peoples:⁷²
 11. And Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, will blow a great shofar and gather
 12. all of My people, Israel, from the four corners of the earth. And the son of Jesse will wake
 13. those who dwell in the dust. He will go forth from below the Mount of Olives, and the
 righteous among them
 14. will be carried on wings of eagles, and the remaining saints
 15. on the clouds of heaven: And the Living God will lower Jerusalem.
 16. And God will lower Jerusalem, already built, from heaven, with chains of iron,

⁶⁷ Compare: "And I will put discord between the nations and a great hatred between Edom and Ishmael so that they struggle with one another and do not annihilate My people Israel" (Chaim Meir Horowitz, "Aggadot Rabbi Ishmael," in *Bet Eqed ha-Aggadot* [Frankfurt: 1881] 59–60).

⁶⁸ 2 Chron 15:6.

⁶⁹ This (כשעש) is a medieval Hebrew usage.

⁷⁰ Based on Zech 14:4.

⁷¹ Based on Isa 11:4, the description of the "shoot from the stump of Jesse."

⁷² Based on Ezek 39:9; see above, nn. 31–32.

17. and He will set it upon four [mountains]: Tabor, Carmel, Hermon, and the Mount
 18. of Olives: [And the heavens] and the earth will be renewed,⁷³ and they will build
 Jerusalem with precious stones
 19. and gems, and they will bring Israel up [to Jerusalem] with acclaim, rejoicing, song,
 and praise:
 20. And Abraham will sit on the right [of the son of Jesse], and Moses will sit to the left,
 21. and they will all enter Jerusalem joyfully, and they will say to Moses: Look! This
 22. is your people, the flock you pastured! And Abraham and Moses will walk before you,
 23. and the Living God will bring down the manna for them, as of yore: Death will be
 swallowed up
 24. forever. And Messiah, the son of David, will arise after all the wars of Messiah,
 25. son of Joseph; he will appear as a king, and he will draw out the Leviathan with a hook
 and raise it

[4a]

1. from the sea. And the Behemoths that he pastures on a thousand mountains, Messiah
 will slaughter
 2. all three of them severely (?).⁷⁴ And they will eat and rejoice a great joy,
 3. unlike any other that has been made from the day the world was created
 4. until this day. They will bow and give praise to their Creator with thanks,
 5. with songs, and with ecstasy. High Priests and Levites will sing,
 6. Aaron the High Priest and the Priests will offer sacrifices and slaughter them,
 7. for all time (?): And I, Daniel, upon hearing these words,
 8. rejoiced greatly; I honored, extolled, and praised
 9. the Supreme King of kings,⁷⁵ and I said to the angel: When will these visions
 10. [be fulfilled]? He told me: Lie with your forefathers and arise to accept your fate
 11. at the end of days.⁷⁶ Thereupon Jeremiah and Elijah and Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel,
 came to me
 12. and said: Write down this vision. I revealed it to Ezra
 13. the Scribe, and it uplifted me; and I revealed the redemption of Israel, and about the scion,
 14. the son of [Jesse],⁷⁷ so that [Ezra] reveals these secrets⁷⁸ to the sages, for it will remain
 hidden until
 15. the time of Israel's salvation. Written and sealed.

⁷³ Based on Isa 65:17 and 66:22.

⁷⁴ The third is Ziz. Based on Leviticus Rabbah 13:3; Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula*, 197.

⁷⁵ "Supreme King of kings" (מלך מלכי המלכים) is a Rabbinic Hebrew usage [AM].

⁷⁶ Based on Dan 12:12, the final verse of the book of Daniel.

⁷⁷ The consecutive words *ישׁי שיגילנו* apparently caused the erasure of the first word.

⁷⁸ The phrase *שיגילנו הרזים* reflects Rabbinic Hebrew usage [AM].