

Unveiling the Hidden— Anticipating the Future

*Divinatory Practices among Jews
between Qumran and the Modern Period*

Edited by

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Jewish Oneiric Divination: From Daniel's Prayer to the Genizah *Še'ilat Ḥalom*

Alessia Bellusci

In antiquity, dreams were highly regarded on both a private and social level and, to some extent, oneiric fragments shaped the social consciousness of the ancient world.¹ The ancients often took their dreams to heart, believing they were messages from the non-human world (from god/s, angels, demons or deceased people) and most cultures exploited the liminality of the oneiric experience for divinatory purposes, translating the vivid impressions left on dreamers in signs that could be read and interpreted.² In this contribution, I would like to draw attention to a specific form of oneiric divination—i.e. the dream request—that has been performed cross-culturally and throughout a long time span, focusing on the Jewish variant of this technique, which is known by the name of *še'ilat ḥalom*. I will survey this dream behavior, which is documented in Jewish sources from the tenth century onwards, based on the rich evidence uncovered in the Cairo Genizah. In particular, to exemplify

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- 1 The following study was written during my doctoral research project—*The History of the She'elat Ḥalom in the Middle East: From the Medieval Era back to Late Antiquity* (PhD dissertation, Tel Aviv University, 2016), which will be published in Alessia Bellusci, *Dream Requests in the Middle East: The History of the She'elat Ḥalom from the Medieval Era back to Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming)—in part supported by the *Yad ha-Nadiv Foundation*. A version of this paper was presented at the *Workshop on Jewish Divination* organized by Josefina Rodríguez-Arribas at the *International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (IKGF)*, Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Erlangen (17–18 March 2015). I am deeply grateful to Josefina Rodríguez-Arribas for inviting me to participate in the workshop and to those who offered me their comments and suggestions on this occasion. I would also like to thank Professor Gideon Bohak of Tel Aviv University, who directed me toward the study of the *še'ilat ḥalom*, for offering his generous guidance and valuable comments. I consider myself solely responsible for the views expressed herein and for any possible error or mistake.
 - 2 For the thesis that oneiric structures can be culturally shaped, see Eric R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966 [1951]), 102–134; Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 10–11; Maurizio Bettini, *Alle porte dei sogni* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2009), especially 47 and 56; and William V. Harris, *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), especially 14–17.

the specific Jewish character of this magical technique and its marked relation to prayer, I will examine a long recipe for *še'ilat ḥalom* preserved on an early twelfth-century Genizah fragment, i.e. MS Cambridge University Library Taylor Schechter Collection Box K 1.111, and written in the form of a prayer. After providing its annotated transcription and translation into English, I will comment on the recipe, showing its several connections with other Jewish and non-Jewish textual excerpts. Finally, the long quotation from the *Book of Daniel* registered in the Genizah recipe will be the starting point to briefly re-examine relevant excerpts from the Biblical apocalyptic book in light of the Genizah evidence and consider the *še'ilat ḥalom* from a diachronic perspective in the wider context of Jewish divination.

1 The *Še'ilat Ḥalom* according to the Evidence of the Cairo Genizah

By the term “dream request” I refer to a divinatory technique, in which, through different methods, a person auto-induces a dream on a specific topic to foretell the future, convey hidden knowledge or receive an answer to a certain question. The topic of the request may concern specific day-to-day matters, such as finding lost property, general knowledge or spiritual gifts. Some techniques for dream request are based on the definition of pre-coded oneiric signs, to which is attributed a certain meaning, such as in dream interpretation traditions, while other oneiric practices of this kind imply a direct encounter with a numinous being or a non-human entity in an epiphany dream.³ Dream requests have been performed in various manners by people of all ranks and beliefs in different historical and geographical contexts and, particularly, within Near-Eastern and Mediterranean cultures.

The idea that kings, rulers, and prophets might have a privileged relationship with the divine through message dreams is already documented in the earliest literary and religious texts from the Ancient Near East.⁴ Similarly, the first evidence of the existence of standardized ritual acts aimed at provoking divinatory dreams is found in ancient ritual texts from Mari, Babylonia, and Egypt.⁵

3 On epiphany dreams, see Harris, *Dreams and Experience*, 23–90.

4 See Robert K. Gnuse, “The Temple Experience of Jaddus in the Antiquities of Josephus: A Report of Jewish Dream Incubation,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 83 (1993): 349–368, especially 356–357; and Gil H. Renberg, *Where Dreams May Come. Incubation Sanctuaries in the Greco-Roman World*, 2 vols. (Leiden, Brill, 2017), 1:36–73.

5 Marco Bonechi and Jean-Marie Durand, “Oniromancie et magie à Mari à l'époque d'Ebla,” *Quaderni di Semitistica* 18 (1992): 151–159; Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives*

Yet the earliest attestations of a well-developed technique for dream request are found in the late antique corpus of the Greek and Demotic magical papyri.⁶ The more than thirty dream requests in the corpus—which describe both simple divinatory techniques and complex multi-stage rituals, often involving lamp divination and the instruction to write down/recite specific *phylacteria*—might have been related to Classical dream incubation, perhaps even representing a privatized and miniaturized version of it.⁷ The technique of the dream request is documented also in Christian and Islamic sources and is still performed nowadays in certain religious communities.⁸ In particular, according to Islamic traditions, the dream request—in Arabic *istikāra*—has been prac-

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- in the Biblical World*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 47; Wayne Horowitz, “Astral Tablets in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 90 (2000): 194–206; Kasia Szpakowska, *Behind Closed Eyes: Dreams and Nightmares in Ancient Egypt* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2003), 147–151; and Renberg, *Where Dreams May Come*, 1:76–77.
- 6 For an overview of the corpus of Greek magical papyri, see William M. Brashear, “The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994),” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Part 11—Principat*, ed. W. Haase and H. Temporini, 37.6 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 18.5:3380–3684. Most of the spells are edited in Karl Preisendanz (ed.), *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1931), and in Robert Walter Daniel and Franco Maltomini (eds.), *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990–1992). For an English translation of most of the papyri, see Hans Dieter Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986). On the dream requests preserved in the magical papyri, see Samson Eitrem, “Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 175–187; and Lubja M. Bortolani, “‘We Are such Stuff as Dream Oracles are Made on’: Greek and Egyptian Traditions and Divine Personas in the Dream Divination Spells of the Magical Papyri,” in *Cultural Plurality in Ancient Magical Texts and Practices: Proceedings of the IWH Symposium 12th–13th September 2014, Heidelberg*, ed. Ljuba M. Bortolani, William D. Furley, Svenja Nagel, and Joachim F. Quack (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 149–170. On a possible domestic form of dream incubation outside the corpus of the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, see Renberg, *Where Dreams May Come*, 1:4–5.
- 7 On the phenomenon of the miniaturization of temple rituals, see Jonathan Z. Smith, “Trading Places,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 13–27; Ian S. Moyer and Jacco Dieleman, “Miniaturization and the Opening of the Mouth in a Greek Magical Text (PGM XII.270–350),” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 3, 1 (2003): 47–72. On privatization, see David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). For a different interpretation of the origin of the dream requests in the corpus of the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, see Bortolani, “‘We Are such Stuff as Dream Oracles are Made on.’”
- 8 For contemporary psychological techniques applied to problem solving, see Deirdre Barrett, “‘Committee of Sleep’: A Study of Dream Incubation for Problem Solving,” *Dreaming: Journal of the Association for the Study of Dreams* 3 (1993): 115–123.

ticed without interruption from the Islamic Golden Age to the contemporary era.⁹ Several medieval Latin manuscripts of ritual magic preserve recipes for receiving a revelatory dream on a specific subject or enlightenment of a more open-ended nature, thus demonstrating that the use of oneiric magic, and specifically dream requests, was widespread also within Christianity.¹⁰

Like their neighbors, the Jews had been performing oneiric divinatory techniques since antiquity. With its many accounts of dreaming and prophetic dreams, in fact, the Hebrew Bible not only legitimized the discussion of the oneiric experience in later Jewish texts, but also established the authoritative precedent for the performance of oneiric divination.¹¹ Yet the Hebrew

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- 9 Toufic Fahd, "Istikhāra," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Peri Bearman, Thierry Bianquis, Clifford E. Bosworth, Emeri van Donzel, and Wolfhart P. Heinrichs, 12 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005 [2nd edition]), vol. 4, available online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3682, accessed 6 November 2020; Hidayet Aydar, "Istikhara and Dreams: Learning about the Future through Dreaming," in *Dreaming in Christianity and Islam: Culture, Conflict and Creativity*, ed. Kelley Bulkeley, Patricia Davis, and Kate Adams (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 123–136. For ethnographic examples of *istiḳāra* as practiced by contemporary Muslims, see Iain Edgar and David Henig, "Istikhāra: The Guidance and Practice of Islamic Dream Incubation Through Ethnographic Comparison," *History and Anthropology* 21, 3 (2010): 251–262.
- 10 Frank Klaassen, "Magical Dream Provocation in the Later Middle Ages," *Esoterica* 8 (2006): 120–147. See two medieval Christian dream requests in the fifteenth-century Latin magical book, MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek *Codex Latinus Monacensis* 849 (from now on *CLM* 849), fol. 35^r–36^r and fol. 106^r–v. The manuscript, preserved at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, is edited and commented on in Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud, Gloucester: Sutton Publishing, 1997). For the relevant passages on the dream requests, see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 234–235 and 342–343. Specific forms of collective dream request/dream incubation are practiced nowadays in contemporary Orthodox Christianity; see Kimberley C. Patton, "A Great and Strange Correction': Intentionality, Locality, and Epiphany in the Category of Dream Incubation," *History of Religions* 43, 3 (2004): 194–223, especially 196.
- 11 On Biblical passages describing dream experiences exhibiting a divine revelatory character (e.g., Gen 28:10–22), see Ruth Fidler, "Dreams Speak Falsely"? *Dream Theophanies in the Bible: Their Place in Ancient Israelite Faith and Traditions* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2005) (in Hebrew). Considering the authoritativeness of the Biblical text, even the rabbis could not completely deny the authority of the oneiric experience as a *medium* between God and man, concluding that "dreams are one sixtieth of prophecy" (*TB Berakot* 57b). This is, however, only one of the many opinions on dreams preserved in rabbinic literature; for an opposite interpretation of the oneiric phenomenon, consider, for instance, Rabbi Samuel ben Nahmani's statement that men see in a dream only what is suggested in their own thoughts (*TB Berakot* 55b). For a thorough analysis of dream conceptions and practices in rabbinic literature, see Haim Weiss, "All Dreams Follow the Mouth": *A Reading in the Talmudic Dreams Tractate* (Tel Aviv and Beer Sheva: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan Devir Publishing House, and Heksherim Institute, 2011) (in Hebrew); see also Philip S. Alexander, "A

expression *še'ilat ḥalom* (שאלת־שאלת חלום)—which literally means “dream request”¹²—is not documented in sources before the end of the Early Middle Ages. This datum does not necessarily imply that Jews did not engage in this specific oneiric technique in an earlier period. Yet lack of the technical term *še'ilat ḥalom*—or, as a matter of fact, any name/title—in earlier Jewish documents might suggest a phase in which the *še'ilat ḥalom* was not fully defined and distinct from other oneiric or divinatory techniques. Both the first outsider and insider sources on this oneiric technique do not precede the tenth and eleventh century CE, respectively, and all originate from the East, either Palestine, Babylonia, Ifriqiya, or Egypt.¹³ Only from the twelfth-thirteenth century onwards is the *še'ilat ḥalom* mentioned also in Ashkenazi documents (i.e. the writings of *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*, *Ba'alei Tosafot* and kabbalists),¹⁴ while only

Sixtieth Part of Prophecy': The Problem of Continuing Revelation in Judaism,” in *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed. Essays in Honor of John F.A. Sawyer*, ed. Jon Davies, Graham Harvey, and Wilfred G.E. Watson (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 414–433; and “Bavli Berakhot 55a–57b: The Talmudic Dream Book in Context,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 46 (1995): 230–248; Yuval Harari, *Early Jewish Magic, Research, Method, Sources* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, Ben-Zvi Institute, and Hebrew University, 2010) (in Hebrew), recently amplified in its English version, *Jewish Magic before the Rise of Kabbalah* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2017), 431–445.

- 12 This is the translation adopted by Gideon Bohak and which I use throughout this study; see Gideon Bohak, “Cracking the Code and Finding the Gold: A Dream Request from the Cairo Genizah,” in *Edición de Textos Mágicos de la Antigüedad y de la Edad Media*, ed. Juan A. Alvarez-Pedrosa Nuñez and Sofia Torallas Tovar, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010), 9–23. Other scholars, such as Yuval Harari, translate the Hebrew expression *še'ilat ḥalom* as dream inquiry, see, for instance, Yuval Harari, “Metatron and the Treasure of Gold: Notes on a Dream Inquiry Text from the Cairo Genizah,” in *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*, ed. Gideon Bohak, Yuval Harari, and Shaul Shaked (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 289–320.
- 13 By the expression “insider evidence,” I refer to textual and archaeological sources produced and used by Jewish magicians and their clients, as opposed to “outsider evidence,” i.e. all the references to Jewish magic preserved in non-magical literature or written by people who did not necessarily engage in magical rituals; see Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008), 70–71. The first outsider sources on the *še'ilat ḥalom* are found in a few Karaite excerpts written in Palestine in the first half of the tenth century, published in Jacob Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, 2 vols. (New York: Ktav, 1972 [1931–1935]), 2:82–83; the famous description of the technique in the eleventh-century Babylonian response of Hai Gaon to the rabbis of Kairouan, published in Simcha Emmanuel, *Newly Discovered Gaonic Responsa* (Jerusalem: Ofek, 1995), 126–127 and 137–138 (in Hebrew). The first insider evidence on the *še'ilat ḥalom* is found among the fragments of the Cairo Genizah, on which see below, 106–112.
- 14 Among the most relevant studies on the *še'ilat ḥalom* in the medieval Ashkenazi world is Monford Harris, “Dreams in *Sefer Hasidim*,” *Proceeding of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 31 (1963): 51–80; Joseph Dan, “The Dream Theory of the *Ḥassidim* from Ashkenaz,”

the late medieval and modern recipes for this purpose can be found in European and Oriental Hebrew kabbalistic and magical codices or printed books.¹⁵ Today, a simple search on the Internet is sufficient to ascertain that, at least in Israel, experts in practical kabbalah and magic offer instructions for engaging in a *še'ilat ḥalom* along with the amulets (*segullot*) they sell online.¹⁶

To understand the development and nature of the *še'ilat ḥalom*, it is necessary to go back to the earliest sources attesting to the performance of this oneiric technique in the Jewish world. Therefore, in what follows, I offer a summary of my findings based on the analysis of a corpus of more than fifty specimens selected from the earliest fragments from the Cairo Genizah which document the actual use of the *še'ilat ḥalom* within the Jewish community of Fuṣṭāṭ (Old Cairo).¹⁷ The Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom* are in the form of both recipes, i.e. texts aimed at transmitting the instructions for engaging in the oneiric technique, and finished products, i.e. texts designed for active use and part of the

Sinai 68 (1971): 288–293 (in Hebrew); Tamar Alexander-Frizer, “Dream Narratives in *Sefer Hasidim*,” *Trumah* 12 (2002): 65–79; Moshe Idel, *Nocturnal Kabbalists* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2006), 15–36 and 91–119 (in Hebrew); Reuven Margalioṭ, *Responsa from Heaven* (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1957) (in Hebrew); Pinchas Roth, “Responsa from Heaven: Fragments of a New Manuscript of *She'elot u-Teshuvot min ha-Shamayim* from Gerona,” *Materia Giudaica* 15–16 (2010–2011): 555–564; Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering through the Lattices: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999); and “Dreams as a Determinant of Jewish Law and Practice in Northern Europe during the High Middle Ages,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History. Festschrift in Honor of Robert Chazan*, ed. David Engel, Lawrence Schiffmann, and Elliot Wolfson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 111–143.

15 For recipes for *še'ilat ḥalom* in modern printed books based on late medieval and modern Hebrew codices, see, for instance, *Sefer Raziel ha-malach* (Amsterdam, 1701), fols. 33^v and 40^r; and Nissim Hamawy, *Rabbi Abraham Hamuy (1838–1886) and His Place in Modern Jewish Magic* (PhD dissertation, Tel Aviv University, 2014), 308–328 (in Hebrew).

16 For instance, see the instructions provided by the *Tavori Center for Kabbalah, Psychology and Judaism*, available online at <http://www.tavori.co.il/%D7%A9%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%AA-%D7%97%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%9D/>, accessed 6 November 2020. The personal notebook of the famous kabbalist Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri (died 2006), includes a remarkable number of recipes for *še'ilat ḥalom*. For the history and legitimacy of the practice of *še'ilat ḥalom* in Jewish culture from a rabbinic perspective, see Rabbi Boaz Shalom's popular book on Jewish conceptions and traditions on dreams, oneiric practices and dream interpretations, *The Theory of Dreams* (Jerusalem: Feldheim-Yafe Nof, 2006), 141–160.

17 On the discovery of the Cairo Genizah and the treasure of Genizah fragments, see Stefan C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (London: Curzon, 2000; and Richmond, Surrey: Routledge, 2000); and Stefan C. Reif and Shulamit Reif (eds.), *The Cambridge Genizah Collections: Their Contents and Significance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

magical praxis itself. Some recipes are written on loose sheets, while others originally were part of more extensive magical writings.¹⁸ Together, then, the different Genizah specimens inform us about the production and transmission of magical and divinatory knowledge associated with this specific technique. According to the Genizah sources, the *še'ilat ḥalom* is a technique mainly based on ritual sleep and linguistic magic, i.e. a set of magical acts that exploit the power of speech, either written or uttered.¹⁹ Although not necessarily explicated in the instructions, ritual sleep represents the *conditio sine qua non* for the fulfilment of the *še'ilat ḥalom*, since it enables experiencing a ritual dream, which simultaneously represents the means and result of the divinatory act.²⁰ Attaining a state of oneiric consciousness represents the fundamental ritual pattern that distinguishes the *še'ilat ḥalom* from other techniques aimed at acquiring information, such as the *še'ilah be-haqiṣ* ("request on awakening") or the conjuration of angels, which are carried out during wakefulness or altered states of consciousness.²¹ Furthermore, the oneiric material produced by the user while dreaming represents also the temporal and spatial dimension in which the desired information can be retrieved, in other words, the attainment of the magical-divinatory goal itself. According to the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom*, the magical activities aimed at attaining the ritual sleep were preceded by a preparatory period of three or seven days during which users observed alimentary and sexual restrictions (or, in general, avoidance of any contact with women) and purified themselves and their corresponding sleeping places. Ascetic norms of this kind, common in apocalyptic and mystical Jewish texts and clearly aimed at transforming the user's body and the place where the ritual was set to a pure and fit environment for the encounter with the divine entity invoked, are attested in non-Jewish dream requests as well.²²

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- 18 For a general and exhaustive overview on the different types of Jewish magical documents from the Cairo Genizah, see Gideon Bohak, "Reconstructing Jewish Magical Recipe Books from the Cairo Genizah," *Ginzei Qedem* 1 (2005): 9*–29*. For a detailed description of the corpus of the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom*, see Bellusci, *Dream Requests in the Middle East*, ch. 2.
- 19 Besides linguistic magic, the Genizah recipes for *še'ilat ḥalom* include, in a few cases, magical acts not related to the power of words; see Bellusci, *Dream Requests in the Middle East*, ch. 2. This linguistic aspect (written or uttered speech) is also present in bibliomantic practices; see Chapter Five of this book, 182–183.
- 20 Ritual sleep is generally indicated in the recipes by specific spatial and temporal settings in regard to the bedchamber at night.
- 21 On these ways of divination, see Yuval Harari, "Divination through the Dead in Jewish Tradition of Magic (Jewish Dream Magic I)," *El Prezente: Studies in Sephardic Culture* 8–9 (2015): 167–219 (in Hebrew); and Yuval Harari, "Demonic Dream Divination (Jewish Dream Magic II)," *Te'uda* 28 (2017): 187–232 (in Hebrew).
- 22 Michael D. Swartz, "Like the Ministering Angels': Ritual Purity in Early Jewish Mysticism

As mentioned, if we exclude ritual sleep, the *še'ilat ḥalom* is a technique mainly based on linguistic magic, where a set of adjurations, invocations, magical formulae, and prayers are uttered by users with the intent of activating the ritual dream in which the revelation is believed to be delivered. Linguistic magical segments vary consistently in the different Genizah recipes and finished products for *še'ilat ḥalom*, dictating the length and wordiness of the text and, thus, producing the most relevant differences from a literary and linguistic point of view. On the performative side, these dissimilarities may indicate different traditions of the *še'ilat ḥalom* or highlight specific developments and mutations in the history of this practice. Most of the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom* register standard pleas aimed at expressing the content of the divinatory question of the type “the request that I am going to ask is such and such.”²³ A few Genizah recipes articulate this standard formula listing some possible topics of divination, such as travelling, trade, and choosing a spouse. All the relevant Genizah sources present verbal constructions such as תראוני\הראוני (“show me”) and תודיעוני\הודיעוני (“let me know”), which are technical expressions often attested in Jewish divinatory texts, such as Dan 2:5, תהודיעוני חלמא, ופְּשְׁרָהּ (“you will make known to me the dream and its interpretation”; translation mine). The adjuration of the angels, generally in the form “I adjure you [pl.]” (משביע אני עליכם), is also a recurrent feature in most of the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom*.²⁴ Many of the Genizah sources show that the angels were often adjured by the name of the Jewish God. A few Genizah recipes include instructions to write down the adjuration and the request on a piece of paper or parch-

and Magic,” *Association of Jewish Studies Review* 19 (1994): 135–167; and Michael D. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 153–172. For examples of the prescription of observing ascetic norms in the dream requests from the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, see PGM VII 359–369; 478–490; 664–685; 703–726; 747–748; 795–845, translated in Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 127, 131, 137, 138, 139, 140–141. For a relevant example in the medieval Christian world, see the instructions in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fol. 106^r, edited in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 342–343.

23 For a pertinent example, see the recipe edited in this contribution, MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 *verso*, right side of the bifolio, line 2.

24 On the adjuration in Jewish magical texts, see Yuval Harari, “What Is a Magical Text: Methodological Reflections Aimed at Redefining Early Jewish Magic,” in *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*, ed. Shaul Shaked (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 91–124. The adjuration of the angels, as well as pleas containing the matter of the request, either in a general or more specific form, are documented also in non-Jewish dream requests; see, for instance, PGM XII 148–150, published in Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 158–159; and MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fol. 35^v and fol. 36^r, edited in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 234–235.

ment and position it near the user's body, under his head or pillow.²⁵ It is likely that users believed that placing their questions under the ear would enable them to hear the pertinent answer during the dream. Similarly, it is possible that they expected to find upon awakening an answer to their request written down on these papers, probably through automatic writing.²⁶ This assumption seems to be confirmed by some codicological features of the Genizah finished products for *še'ilat ḥalom*, most of which were written only on the upper part of long and tiny fragments whose bottom part was left blank for writing the answer; in addition, most of these papers exhibit clear signs that they had been folded, suggesting that they might have been actually placed under the user's head/pillow while sleeping.²⁷ The adjurations and standard pleas listing the topics of divination found in the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom* tend to be quite homogenous, with divine, angelic, and magical names representing the only substantial variable in the formula. Much more heterogeneous are, instead, the prayers associated with the oneiric technique. Most of them consist of clusters of Biblical verses, generally related to dreams or visions, joined together to form a fluid text.²⁸ A few fragments register actual prayers belonging to the statutory liturgy, such as the *Amidah*, *Šema' al-ha-miṭah*, *Birkat ha-mapil*, and so on, while others document prayers, which are not part of the Jewish liturgical canon and are not preserved in other Jewish sources.²⁹ These unknown

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- 25 See, for instance, the relative instruction in the fragment MS Philadelphia Halper 475 *recto*, line 10, edited in Alessia Bellusci, *Dream Requests from the Cairo Genizah* (MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2011), 46, and in MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.28, fol. 1^r, line 15, edited in Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994–1999), 1:136.
- 26 On automatic writing related to the technique of *še'ilat ḥalom*, see Harris, "Dreams in *Sefer Ḥasidim*," 53; Amos Goldreich, *Automatic Writing in Zoharic Literature and Modernism* (Los Angeles: Cherub, 2010), especially 302, 303–316, and 318 (in Hebrew); and Harari, "Demonic Dream Divination," 213.
- 27 A similar practice is well documented also in non-Jewish dream requests. For instance, a Graeco-Egyptian recipe for an oracular Sarapis gem instructs users to put on the index finger of their left hand a ring with the image and the name of Sarapis engraved on it and sleep holding the stone to their left ear; see PGM V 447–458, published in Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 109. For the instruction of writing down a series of angelical and magical names on a virgin parchment that shall be placed under the user's right ear, when s/he goes to sleep, see the Latin dream request in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fol. 35^v, edited in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 234.
- 28 The most quoted Biblical verses are Ezek 1:1, Num 12:6–8, Dan 2:19–22, Gen 24:49, Amos 3:8, and Ps 91:1; see Bellusci, *Dream Requests in the Middle East*, ch. 3.
- 29 For an extensive study of the prayers associated to the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom*, see Bellusci, *Dream Requests in the Middle East*, ch. 3. The association between the *še'ilat ḥalom* and the recitation of commanded prayers is attested also in non-Genizah sources, see Moshe

prayers, an example of which will be given in the next section of this contribution, are often close to the style of Hekhalot and early *piyyut* and seem to be based on a specific textual tradition transmitted at least since the eleventh century onwards, when they were appropriated by medieval Cairene users who engaged in the technique of *še'ilat ḥalom*. The occurrence of the same prayers in the different Genizah recipes provides remarkable evidence of their circulation among people interested in the performance of the *še'ilat ḥalom*. The considerable number of known and unknown prayers associated with the Genizah *še'ilat ḥalom* suggests the importance of prayer in the context of this magical technique. The recurrence of Biblical verses and liturgical prayers is a known phenomenon characterizing Jewish magic in general.³⁰ The use of the same textual material in liturgical *piyyut*, Hekhalot, and magical literature emphasises the cultural proximity and, often, overlapping of these distinct traditions documenting the diffusion of a religious attitude (magical piety) connecting magic with some of the values and beliefs expressed by normative Judaism.³¹ In the case of the *še'ilat ḥalom*—or, at least, in the case of the *še'ilat ḥalom* as portrayed in the early evidence of the Cairo Genizah—the (re)use of prayers seems even more accentuated and might suggest that, from an emic standpoint, this magical technique was perceived as a form of prayer.³²

Idel, "On *She'elat Ḥalom* in *Hasidei Askenaz*: Sources and Influences," *Materia Giudaica* 10, 1 (2005): 99–109, especially 101–102.

- 30 Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1993), 22–31. For instance, the same phenomenon is documented in the Babylonian incantation bowls; see Shaul Shaked, "Peace be Upon You, Exalted Angels: On Hekhalot, Liturgy and Incantation Bowls," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 2, 3 (1995): 197–219. Already in the seventh century BCE, a prayer associated with the official cult (the priestly blessing) was incorporated in an amulet for magical use; see Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 30; and Gabriel Barkay, Marilyn J. Lundberg, Andrew G. Vaughn, and Bruce Zuckerman, "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 334 (2004): 41–71.
- 31 Michael D. Swartz, "Cultic Motifs in the Literature of Jewish Magic," *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 85 (2000): 62–75 (in Hebrew), especially n. 30; Michael D. Swartz, "Magical Piety in Ancient and Medieval Judaism," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 167–183; and Michael D. Swartz, "*Alay le-shabbah*: A Liturgical Prayer in *Ma'aseh Merkabah*," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 77 (1986–1987): 179–190. For the notion of "magical piety" in relation to prayers in bibliomantic practices, see Chapter Five of this book, 186–191.
- 32 Consider, for instance, that the *še'ilat ḥalom* is mentioned as "the prayer of the dream" (התפלה של חלום) in the letter of the rabbis of Kairouan to Ḥai Gaon, i.e. one of the earliest outsider sources documenting this behavior; for the text, see Emmanuel, *Newly Discovered Gaonic Responsa*, 126. See also my detailed analysis of the association between the *še'ilat*

Several Genizah recipes and finished products for *še'ilot ḥalom* include a literary report of the expected dream, which was, thus, pre-established and codified in a written or verbal form before the actual oneiric experience. Since it is impossible to reconstruct the segment of ritual sleep/dream, due to both the lack of information in the Genizah evidence and the elusive nature of dreams, these anticipated reports of the expected oneiric material represent the closest window on the dreaming mind of medieval Jews of Fustāt that we can hope to attain.³³ As is clear from both the earliest outsider and insider sources, the expected dream could assume two main forms: either an oneiric encounter with a non-human creature, or the oneiric perception of codified signs, which, in the written report, follow a binary system aimed at producing yes-or-no answers and are expressed in a conditional sentence (protasis and apodosis: “if I see X, show me Y”).³⁴ Both typologies of dream experience—the apparition of a non-human entity, or pre-coded signs—are documented also in non-Jewish dream requests.³⁵ Nevertheless, the second typology is seldom attested in non-Jewish and later Jewish sources and seems specifically associated with the earliest middle-eastern Jewish *še'ilot ḥalom*, where the coded signs are indicated by standard formulae and good/bad *omina* correspond to people, places, or objects whose traits are based on the dualism between good/evil, Jewish/non-Jewish, and pure/impure. The anticipated exposition of the dream represents

ḥalom and prayer in the context of the history of the oneiric technique, in Bellusci, *Dream Requests in the Middle East*, ch. 1.

- 33 For a detailed study of this topic, see Alessia Bellusci, “Immaginazione e modelli onirici tardo antichi nei frammenti magici della Genizah del Cairo,” *Materia Giudaica* 23 (2018): 65–77; and *Dream Requests in the Middle East*, ch. 5.
- 34 For a relevant example in outsider sources, see the passage in the response of Hai Gaon to the rabbi of Kairouan, edited in Emmanuel, *Newly Discovered Gaonic Responsa*, especially 126 and 137. For an insider source mentioning the apparition of an angel, see the recipe edited in this contribution, fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 *recto*, left side of the bifolio, lines 16–18. For the reference to dream signs in insider sources, see, for instance, fragment MS Philadelphia Halper 475, lines 4–9, edited in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, 46–49, and partially quoted in Rebecca M. Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 237 n. 338.
- 35 The belief in an epiphany dream in which an otherworldly entity visits the user and reveals the divination in truth and without danger is attested in both Graeco-Egyptian and medieval Christian dream requests; see, respectively, *Inscriptiones Graecae* XIV 2413, 16^r, lines 3–8, translated in Renberg, *Where Dreams May Come*, 1:4; and MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fol. 106^v, edited in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 343. A binary system of coded signs is featured in two dream requests in the corpus of the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, i.e. PGM XX11b, 27–31 and 32–35, published in Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 261, as well as in certain Islamic traditions of *istikāra*, on which see Aydar, “Istikhāra,” 123.

the response itself to the issued question. From a performative point of view, then, this pattern has a double function, i.e. setting the parameters for understanding/interpreting the dream (listening to the angel; decoding the oneiric signs), as well as exercising psychological conditioning on users, so that they may actually experience a dream on the desired topic.

As I attempted to show with the previous analysis, the evidence of the Cairo Genizah enables us to reconstruct the ritual dynamics according to which the *še'ilat ḥalom* was performed by the Jews of Fuṣṭāṭ, as well as certain literary features and textual traditions associated with the technique. It ought to be noted that even the earliest recipes for *še'ilat ḥalom* uncovered in the Cairo Genizah exhibit standard linguistic and ritualistic features, thus pointing to a certain degree of ritual maturity already reached in the eleventh century and suggesting that this technique might have developed earlier in Jewish culture. Before discussing this hypothesis further and showing the relationship between the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom* and earlier Jewish divinatory texts, I would like to present a remarkable specimen of *še'ilat ḥalom* from the Cairo Genizah, which will exemplify the ritual and literary features of the technique discussed above, providing also a relevant textual basis for the comparative analysis that will follow.

2 The Prayer of the Dream: A Recipe for *Še'ilat Ḥalom* from the Cairo Genizah

The fragment I present here belongs to the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection in the Cambridge University Library, shelf mark TS K 1.111.³⁶ It is a paper bifolio (two leaves), 16.662 cm high and 22.741 cm wide. Each leaf of the bifolio presents one column with a range of 13–20 lines written in black ink. The bifolio is mostly preserved and exhibits only a few tears. It is written on both sides, in the following order: (A) *verso*, left side of the bifolio, (B) *recto*, right side, (C) *recto*, left side, (D) *verso*, right side. The bottom part of the last page of the composition (D), about a third of the leaf, is left blank and the text is incomplete. The quite beautiful and neat handwriting, Oriental common square script, can

³⁶ A preliminary edition of the fragment is found in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, 57–64. Part of the text is quoted by Weiss, in an online paper, Haim Weiss, “Incubation Dreams and Invitation of a Dream in the Ancient World” (in Hebrew), available online at <http://www.hebpsy.net/community.asp?id=96&cat=article&articleid=1489>, accessed 20 July 2019; and in Weiss, “*All Dreams Follow the Mouth*,” 45 n. 62. Haim Weiss incorrectly refers to the fragment as MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.101 (a Genizah fragment, which also transmits a recipe for *še'ilat ḥalom*).

be dated to the early twelfth century. The fragment is written in Hebrew and Aramaic with Tiberian vocalization.³⁷ Although the text is left incomplete in its *explicit*, the indication of the title in the *incipit* (*verso*, left side, line 2), “Tested *še’ilat ḥalom*” (שְׁאִילַת חֲלוֹם בְּדִיקָה), leaves no doubt that we are dealing with the Jewish variant of the oneiric technique known as the dream request. The fragment might have been the inner quire of a free-formulary of magical recipes, or, more probably, a single recipe produced by or for a certain user. Yet the lack of personal details in the text prevents us from speculating about whether and how the fragment had been used in the magical praxis. The text of the recipe is remarkably long and in the form of a prayer exhibiting a marked poetic tone. The main theme underlying the prayer, part of which is created by the juxtaposition of Biblical verses, concerns the disparity between the moral inferiority of human nature and God’s perfection, emphasized throughout the text by the use of many divine attributes built in different linguistic structures. Although the recipe does not quote from any known Jewish liturgical composition, it includes a few liturgical-mystical motifs and finds some parallels with other Jewish and non-Jewish dream requests (Islamic and Christian). Below, I offer the transcription and translation into English of the recipe followed by a detailed discussion of the rich textual material it transmits.

37 I wish to thank Amir Ashur of Tel Aviv University for kindly performing the paleographic analysis of the fragment.

A. Verso, left side of the bifolio

1. בשמך ר>חמנ< א
2. שאילת חלום בדיקה
3. אָנָא יְיָ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת
4. יוֹשֵׁב הַכְּרוּבִים³⁸ מְבַקֵּשׁ אֲנִי מִמֶּךָ ב>==< תי³⁹
5. בְּאֵלֵהוּתְךָ וּסְמִיכְתִּי⁴⁰ בְּעֲנוּתְנוּתְךָ וּתְמִיכְתִּי
6. בְּחִסְדוֹתְךָ וּשְׁעִינְתִּי בְּטוֹבְתְךָ וּבְטִיחְתִּי
7. בְּרַחֲמֵנוּתְךָ וּתְקוּנְתִי בְּחַמְלַתְךָ וּמְזִכִּיר
8. אֲנִי הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה שְׁמֶךָ הַנְּעִים הַחֲבִיב בְּנִפְשׁוֹת⁴¹
9. וּמְתוֹק בְּלִבְבוֹת וְעָרֵב בְּכַלְיוֹת יְיָ אֵל רַחוּם⁴²
10. וְחֲנוּן אֲרֶךְ אַפִּים וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאַמֶּת⁴³ וּג' בְּאֵתִי⁴⁴
11. בְּאֵתִי⁴⁵ אֵלֶיךָ הַלֵּילָה בְּזִכְרוֹן מִשֶּׁה עֲבַדְךָ ה>נאמר⁴⁶
12. בְּעִבּוּרוֹ אִם יְהִי נְבִיאֲכֶם יְיָ בְּמִרְאֵה אֱלֹוֹ
13. אֲתוֹדַע בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדַבֵּר בּוֹ לֹא כֵן עֲבַדִּי מִשֶּׁה
14. בְּכָל בֵּיתִינְאָ מִן הוּא אֵל פֶּה אֲדַבֵּר בּוֹ
15. וּמִרְאֵה וְלֹא בְּחִידוֹת וּתְמוֹנֹת יְיָ יְבִיט⁴⁷ וּגַם
16. אִישׁ חֲמוּדוֹת⁴⁸ עֲבַדְךָ שְׁאַמֵּר לְפָנַי כְּבוֹדְךָ
17. לְהוֹי שְׁמִיה דְּאֱלֹהָא מְבוֹרֵךְ מִן עֲלְמָא

38 The invocation is modulated on Isa 37:16, אַתָּה-הוּא, יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ; אֵתָה עֲשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ.

39 Unfortunately, the three middle letters in this word are unclear; after the *bet*, there is a letter vocalized in *segol*, while the letter before the *tav*, perhaps an *ayin*, is vocalized with *ševa*. In the transcription published by Haim Weiss, the *lacuna* is reconstructed as *בתמכתי*; see Weiss, “Incubation Dreams.”

40 There is a letter written above the *samek*, perhaps a correction added by the copyist, but it is unreadable.

41 The word *בנפשות* and, especially the letter *tav*, is written above the line, into a curved orientation.

42 The word *רחום* and, especially the letter *mem*, is written above the line, into a curved orientation.

43 Exod 34:6, וְיַעֲבֹר יְהוָה עַל-פָּנָיו, וְיִקְרָא, יְהוָה יְהוָה, אֵל רַחוּם וְחֲנוּן-אֲרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאַמֶּת.

44 The word *באתי* is written above the line.

45 The word *באתי*, already written at the end of the previous line, is repeated.

46 Although the ink is faded, the reconstruction *הנאמר* is quite likely.

47 Num 12:6–8, וַיֹּאמֶר, שְׁמַעוּ-נָא דְבָרַי; אִם-יְהִי, נְבִיאֲכֶם יְהוָה בְּמִרְאֵה אֱלֹוֹ אֲתוֹדַע, בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדַבֵּר-בוֹ. לֹא-כֵן, עֲבַדִּי מִשֶּׁה: בְּכָל-בֵּיתִי, נֶאֱמַן הוּא. פֶּה אֵל-פֶּה אֲדַבֵּר-בוֹ, וּמִרְאֵה וְלֹא בְּחִידוֹת, וּתְמוֹנֹת יְהוָה, יְבִיט; וּמַדּוּעַ לֹא יֵרְאֶתְם, לְדַבֵּר בְּעַבְדֵי בְּמִשְׁהָ.

48 Dan 10:11, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי דְּנִיאל אִישׁ-חֲמוּדוֹת הָבִן בְּדְבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי דֹבֵר אֵלֶיךָ, וְעֹמֵד עַל-עַמְדָּךָ כִּי, עֲתָה, שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ; וּבְדַבְּרוֹ עָמִי אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה, עֲמַדְתִּי מִרְעִיד.

A. *Verso*, left side of the bifolio

1. In Your Name, oh Merciful
2. *š'ilat ḥalom*, tested.
3. Oh, YY God, God of Israel, God of hosts
4. who are enthroned above the cherubim (Isa 37:16) I request from You.
My (?) is
5. in Your divinity, and my confidence is in your acceptance, and my sustainment is
6. in Your piety, and my trust is in Your kindness, and my confidence is
7. in Your mercy and my hope is in Your compassion. And I remember
8. in this night Your gracious name, which is lovely in the souls,
9. and sweet in the hearts and pleasant in the kidneys, "*The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful*
10. *and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,*" and so on (Exod 34:6). I came
11. I came (*sic*) to You this night in memory of Moses Your servant <on whom was said>
12. on his behalf, "*When there are prophets among you, I the Lord make myself*
13. *known to them in visions; I speak to them in dreams. Not so with My servant Moses;*
14. *he is entrusted with all My house. With him I speak face to face,*
15. *clearly, not in riddles; and he beholds the form of the Lord"* (Num 12:6–8).
And also
16. <in the memory of> "*a man greatly beloved"* (Dan 10:11), Your servant who said before Your Glory:
17. "*Blessed be the name of God from age*

18. <ועד עלמא די> 49 חכמתא וגבורתא די לה היא 50
 19. <והוא מה> שנא <ע> דניא > 1 וזמניא 51
 20. <מהעדה מלכין ומ> הקים מלכין

B. *Recto*, right side of the bifolio

1. יִהְיֶה חֲכֵמְתָא לְחַכִּימִין > ומנ > דעא 52 והוא גְּלִי
 2. עִמְיָקְתָא ומסתרְתָּה יְד > ע > מה בחשוכָּה
 3. וְנִהוּרָא עֵמִיָּה שְׂרִי 53 וְהִנְנִי מִתְנַפֵּל לְפָנֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ 54
 4. רְחֵמִיךָ מִשְׁתַּטִּיחַ לְפָנֶיךָ חֲסִידֶיךָ שְׂתַתֵּן
 5. לִי הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה לְפָנֶם מְשׁוּרֵת הַדִּין וְתַעֲנִינִי
 6. וְאַף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין אֲנִי רְאוּי חֲסִידֶיךָ רְאוּיִים
 7. וְאַף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין אֲנִי הַגּוֹן רְחֵמֶיךָ הַגּוֹנִין
 8. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן חֲסִידוֹתֶיךָ וְהַמְצֵא בְּצַרְתִּי הַלֵּילָה
 9. הַזֶּה וְהַבְּנִינִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבִּי וְמֵה אֹמֵר אֶת
 10. אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִדַּע וְמֵה אֲצַפְצַף אֶת אֲשֶׁר לֹא
 11. תִּבִּין וְכֹל תַּעֲלוּמוֹת גְּלוּיֹת לְפָנֶיךָ וְכֹל מַחֲשַׁבוֹת 55
 12. לְנַגְדֶיךָ 56 וְכֹל מִסְתַּרְתּוֹתֵי פְרוֹשׁוֹת לְנַגְדֶיךָ 57 וְאִם הָעֵן > ו > תִּי
 13. אֹרְחוֹתֵי כְּמֹדוֹתֵי סֶלַח כְּמֹדוֹתֶיךָ כִּי אֵל
 14. אַתָּה אֶתְלָה 58 וְלֹא אִישׁ וּלְפָנֶיךָ גְּדוּלְתֶיךָ מֵה יִסְכֵן
 15. גַּבְרָא 59 וְמֵה יִצְדַק אָנוּשׁ עִם אֵל וְמֵה יִזְכֶּה
 16. יְלוּד אִשָּׁה 60 עִם יוֹצְרוֹ וְלוּלֵי מִשְׁמַעוֹ ס > ... <

49 Here, the bifolio is torn: a consistent portion of the paper is completely missing from line 18 to the bottom. The reconstructions I added in brackets here and in lines 19 and 20 are plausible on the grounds of the related Biblical verses.

50 Here, the ink is completely faded.

51 Even though the ink is faded, it is possible to read the word זמניא.

52 Although the ink is faded in this passage, it is possible to read ומנדעא.

53 Dan 2:20–22, וְנִהוּרָא, וְאֹמֵר לְהוּא שְׂמֵה דִּי אֱלֹהָא מְבַרְךָ, מִן עֲלֵמָא וְעַד עֲלֵמָא: דִּי חֲכֵמְתָא, דִּי חֲכֵמְתָא, וְגִבּוֹרְתָא, דִּי לֵה-הִיא. וְהוּא מְהַשְׁנֵא עֲדָנִיא, וְזַמְנִיא, מְהַעֲדָה מְלָכִין, וּמְהַקִּים מְלָכִין; יִהְיֶה חֲכֵמְתָא לְחַכִּימִין, וּמְנִדְעָא לְיַדְעֵי בִּינָה. הוּא גְּלֵא עִמְיָקְתָא, וּמִסְתַּרְתָּא; יְדַע מָה בְּחֻשׁוֹכָא, וְנִהוּרָא (וְנִהוּרָא) עֵמִיָּה שְׂרִיא.

54 לפניך written above the line is emendation for לפניך.

55 The letters *bet*, *waw*, and *tav* of the word מחשבות are written above the line.

56 לְנַגְדֶיךָ is written in the right margin; the copyist might have added it in a second time.

57 Lines 9–12 seem to rephrase some topics from Ps 139, see my discussion below, 117, 124–125.

58 אֶתְלָה is written in the right margin as emendation for אֶתְלָה.

59 כִּי-אֹמֵר, לֹא יִסְכֵן-; Job 34:9; הַלֵּילָל יִסְכֵן-גַּבְרָא—כִּי-יִסְכֵן עֲלֵימוֹ מִשְׁכִּיל, Job 22:2; כִּי-תֵאמַר, לֹא יִסְכֵן-; Job 35:3; גַּבְרָא—בְּרִצְחוֹ, עִם-אֱלֹהִים בִּתְ-תֵאמַר, מֵה-יִסְכֵן-לָךְ; מָה-אֲעֵל, מִחֻטְאֵתִי, Job 35:3; גַּבְרָא—בְּרִצְחוֹ, עִם-אֱלֹהִים.

60 וְמֵה-יִצְדַק אָנוּשׁ עִם-אֵל; וְמֵה-יִזְכֶּה, יְלוּד אִשָּׁה, Job 25:4.

18. *<to age, for> wisdom and power are <his>.*
 19. *<He ch>anges <t>imes <and> seasons,*
 20. *<deposes kings and s>ets up kings;*

B. *Recto*, right side of the bifolio

1. *he gives wisdom to the wise <and kn>owledge <to those who have understanding>.⁶¹*
He reveals
 2. *deep and hidden things; he kno<ws> what is in the darkness,*
 3. *and light dwells with him” (Dan 2:20–22). And here I am, I throw myself*
down before You, before
 4. *Your mercy I prostrate myself, before Your piety, <so> that You shall give*
 5. *me, in this night, beyond the due measure and You shall answer me;*
 6. *and even though I am not worthy, Your benevolences are worthy*
 7. *and even though I am not adequate, Your mercies are adequate,*
 8. *operate for the sake of Your piety and be present in my sorrow, this*
 9. *night, and make me understand what is in my heart. And what can I say*
that
 10. *You will not know, and what can I whisper that You will not*
 11. *understand; and all my secrets are disclosed in front of You and all my*
thoughts are
 12. *in front of You, and all my mysteries are explained in front of You.⁶² And*
if I have twis<t>ed
 13. *my ways, <not> according to my measures, forgive <me, but> according*
to Your measures, since You are
 14. *God and not a man, and to Your greatness how can a man be of benefit*
(Job 22:3),
 15. *and “how then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of*
woman
 16. *be pure” (Job 25:4) at the presence of his creator? And were it not for*
<...>

61 The section “to those who have understanding” of Dan 2:21 is omitted; I report it between < >.

62 Lines 9–12 seem to rephrase some topics from Ps 139.

- .17 ומרבות טובתִיךְ <...>
 .18 יִ <...> סיפרו <...> ל<...>

C. *Recto*, left side of the bifolio

- .1 על בא<==ת>ך לא קידמתי לפניך ואולם
 .2 משכני רחמך לבוא למול גדולתיך וגם
 .3 מלאני לבי אבטח בך להתחנן לפני
 .4 תהלתיך ובטיחותי חמלתיך למצוא חן
 .5 וחסד בעיניך ועתה יי אלהים התאזר
 .6 ברחמיך והתעטף בחסדיך ופשוט לי הלילה
 .7 הזה את ידיך וקבליני בטובך ותקרב
 .8 ישועתי לפניך ואל יגערו בי מעשיי להרחקיני⁶³
 .9 מלפניך כי אתה היודע ועד כי לבי לזהט
 .10 אחר אלהותיך וְחַנְיָתִי מְחַזְקֶת בְּאִמּוֹנְתֶיךָ
 .11 וְאִין לִי אֶלָּא אֶתָּה בְּכֹל שְׂאִילְתִּי וְאִין לִי אֶלָּא אֶתָּה
 .12 בְּכֹל בְּקִשְׁתִּי⁶⁴ הַתְּרַצָּה וְעֲנִי לְפִי מֵרַחֵב
 .13 בְּבִקְשֹׁתַי בְּקִצְרוֹת בִּינְתִי בְּשִׂאלְתִּי וְאִם⁶⁵
 .14 לֹא יִדְעֵתִי לְשֹׁאֵל כְּהוֹנֵן אֶתָּה כּוֹנְנֵתִי⁶⁶
 .15 וְאִם לֹא יִדְעֵתִי לְשֹׁאֵל כְּרְאוּי אֶתָּה תְּעַנֵּנִי
 .16 וְשִׁלַּח לִי מִלֵּאךְ טוֹב לְהוֹדִיעֵנִי מִשְׂאֵלִי

63 The section “to those who have understanding” of Dan 2:21 is omitted; I report it between < >.

64 There is a subtle line over the letters *šin* and *tav* of the word בקשתי.

65 The expression וְאִם is written above the line.

66 The letters *nun* and *yod* of the word כּוֹנְנֵתִי are written above the line.

17. and the vastness of Your kindnesses <...>
 18. (?) <...> (?) <...> (?) <...>

C. *Recto*, left side of the *bifolio*

1. on (?) I shall not have come before you, but
 2. Your mercy pulled me to come before Your greatness, and
 3. my heart filled me <so that> I shall be secure in You to implore in front
 4. of Your glory, and my safety is Your compassion to find grace
 5. and favor in Your eyes. And now, Lord, God, gird Yourself
 6. in Your mercies, and cover Yourself in Your grace, and reach out to me,
 in this
 7. night, Your hands, and receive me in Your kindness, and bring
 8. my salvation in front of You and may my deeds not reproach me to dis-
 tance myself
 9. from you, since You are He who knows and is witness that my heart is
 fervent
 10. for Your Divinity, and my hesitation is strengthened in the faith in You,⁶⁷
 11. and I have nothing but You in all my questions, and I have nothing but
 You
 12. in all my requests. Consent and answer to me according to the extension
 13. of my request, in the shortcoming of my understanding in my question-
 ing, and if
 14. I do not know how to ask properly, You have created me
 15. and if I do not know how to ask in a correct manner, You shall answer
 me,
 16. And send me a good angel who will make known to me <concerning>
 my request,

67 Here, I consider חניתי as contracted form for חנייתי, formed by the feminine verbal noun חניה (from the root *חנה), with the meaning of “being,” “halting,” “staying,” in the construct state and with the attached enclitic form of the possessive pronoun of speaking person singular. The reading of מחזקת is unsure, but the final *tav* corroborates the hypothesis that this is a feminine participle referred to חניה, which in Hebrew is feminine. The translation “I placed my holding” is also plausible, considering חניתי as a *Qal* form from the root *חני, perfective, speaking person singular; in this case, מחזקת would be an error for מחזקתי and the term מחזקה would have been used by the author for conveying the meaning of “holding,” “belongings,” “dominion”; compare with the expression ואני חניתי יי בגיא בדבר יי in an anonymous *piyyut* dated to the eleventh century and preserved on the Genizah fragment St. Petersburg Russian National Library Antonin B 73 (single fragment written on one side), line 15.

17. בנחת בשקט בקורת <ר וּח ובלא >נ גף ובלא
 18. <ק צף ובלא גַעַר כי אם במדת הַנְחוּתִיךְ הַנְחוּתִיךְ⁶⁸
 19. <...> שִׁיכֵן הַכֹּל קִיִּים⁶⁹

D. *Verso*, right side of the bifolio

1. אשר תנוח בה יראי שמיד <...> פדינו כי
 2. המשאל אשר⁷⁰ אבקש והוא כך וכך ויתן לי
 3. אות אשר אודיעיהו או מופת אביניהו
 4. או פסוק מתורתך או מדברי נביאיך
 5. כי בזאת נפלאו עמיד מכל העם אשר
 6. על פני האדמה⁷¹ יי יי עניני יי יי עניני
 7. יי יי עניני יי יי וגם אליכם אישים אקרא⁷²
 8. גְהוּצְטָרְאֵל וּפְהוּצְטָרְיֵאֵל השימות
 9. המיוקרים המקדשים המאירים
 10. על כל כ' גדודי רקיע שתבקש⁷³ עלי רחמים⁷⁴
 11. לפני ה⁷⁵ המלך הגדול המלך על כל
 12. מלך והמושל הרב אשר הוא מלך⁷⁶
 13. מושל על כל מלך הוא הממליך אשר⁷⁷

68 הַנְחוּתִיךְ is written in the left margin as emendation for הַנְחוּתִיךְ.

69 The line is written upside down. The copyist, or someone else, might have added it at a later time. The handwriting might be different from that characterizing the rest of the document. This addition might have had the function of validating the document, as it was common to add formulae such as והכול שריר וקיים ("everything is valid and firm") to bills of divorce and other documents, see *TB Bava batra*, 160b–161a; and *TB Gittin* 81b.

70 The letter *sin* of the word אשר is written above the line.

71 Exod 33:16, אָנִי, וְנִפְלִינִי, וְנִפְלִינִי, עִמָּנִי, בְּלִבְתֶּךָ עִמָּנִי, הַלֹּא, וְעִמָּדָה לִּי, אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה וְנִפְלִינִי, where נפלאו is error for נפלינו; the personal pronoun אני is omitted.

72 אֲלֵיכֶם אִישִׁים אֶקְרָא; וְקוּלִי, אֶל-בְּנֵי אָדָם.

73 The letter *tav* of the word שתבקש is written above the line as emendation.

74 The letters *yod* and *mem* of the word רחמים are written above the line.

75 Error for האל.

76 There is a small sign over the letter *he* of the personal pronoun הוא and three dots over the word מלך.

77 The word אשר is written above the line.

17. in a peaceful, serene and composed <s>pirit, with no <i>njury and with
no
18. <a>nger, and with no rebuke, but in the measure of Your stillness,
19. And everything is valid and exists⁷⁸

D. *Verso*, right side of the bifolio

1. in which you make rest those who fear your Name, <...> and redeem us,
for
2. the request that I will ask, which is this and this, And *he shall give me*
3. *a sign which I shall recognize, or a wonder that I will understand*
4. *or a verse from Your Torah or from the words of Your prophets*
5. since in this, “*we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people*
6. *on the face of the Earth*” (Exod 33:16), YY YY answer me YY YY answer me
7. YY YY answer me YY YY. And also “*to you, O people, I call*” (Prov 8:4)
8. Geḥuṣṭari’el (GHWṢṬR’L) and Pehuṣṭari’al (PHWṢṬRY’L), the honored
9. sanctified names, which illuminate
10. over all the twenty regiments of the firmament, that you shall ask mercy,
for my sake,
11. before God, the great king, the king above every
12. king and the great ruler who is the king,
13. the ruler above every king he is the one who makes kings that who⁷⁹

78 The sentence is written upside down and was probably added later on by the copyist to validate the document; see the transcription of the fragment on 120, note 69 above.

79 The text is left incomplete.

As mentioned above, the recipe for *še'ilat ḥalom* presented in this contribution is in the form of a long prayer. According to its content and style, the prayer can be divided into four different textual sections, on which I shall now comment. The first section of the prayer (*verso*, left side, lines 4–10), which follows the heading formula and the specific title of the recipe (respectively on the *verso*, left side, line 1 and 2), begins with an invocation to the God of Israel which includes a common formula rephrasing Isa 37:16 (*verso*, left side, lines 3–4). The text, then, goes on with a generic request (*verso*, left side, line 4), a brief section aimed at emphasizing the user's trust in God (*verso*, left side, lines 4–7), and a second invocation to God, in which the divine name is exalted (*verso*, left side, lines 7–10). In lines 4–7, the prayer combines together a series of feelings/attitudes of mind of the user (בְּ...<...>תִּי, וְסִמְכָתִי, תְּמִיכָתִי, וְשִׁעֲנִיתִי, וּבִטְיַחְתִּי) with a series of divine attributes (בְּאֱלֹהוּתְךָ, בְּעֲנֻנּוֹתֶיךָ, בְּחִסְדוֹתֶיךָ, בְּטוֹבָתְךָ), in the structure “My X (attitude of mind) is in Your Y (divine attribute).”⁸⁰ A similar linguistic construction is observed in a *še'ilat ḥalom* in Judaeo-Arabic preserved on the Genizah fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, which reads:⁸¹ אִימָאנָא בְךָ וְתַקָּה בַפְצִלְךָ וְיִקִּין בְּרַבּוּבִיתְךָ, i.e. “the faith (אִימָן) is in You and the confidence (תַּקָּה) is in Your Grace and the certitude (יִקִּין) is in Your Divinity” (*recto*, line 15).⁸² The second invocation to God in MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111, this time by the divine name “Y Y Y,” is followed by a partial quotation from Exod 34:6, the verse from which the thirteen divine attributes are traditionally derived. The divine name “Y Y Y” is preceded by two highly poetic formulae of the type “the divine name is X in the Y,” where x is one or more adjectives attributed to God's name (הַנְּעִים עֵרַב (הַחַבִּיב, מֵתוֹק, עֵרַב (בְּנַפְשׁוֹת, בְּלִבּוֹת, בְּכַלִּיּוֹת) and Y is one of the common locations of human sentiments and thoughts according to ancient Jewish conceptions (בְּנַפְשׁוֹת, בְּלִבּוֹת, בְּכַלִּיּוֹת). A similar expression emphasizing the lovability of God's name is found in MS

80 Unfortunately, the text in this passage that would have corresponded to the attitude of mind paired with בְּאֱלֹהוּתְךָ is illegible.

81 The fragment, also dated to the early twelfth century, is published in Shaul Shaked, “On Jewish Literature of Magic in Muslim Countries: Comments and Specimens,” *Pe'amim* 15 (1983) 15–28 (in Hebrew), where the author presents it as an example of the “new Judaeo-Arabic style of adjurations in the Cairo Genizah”; see Shaked, “On Jewish Literature of Magic in Muslim Countries,” 15. The recipe is also edited in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, 64–69.

82 Alternatively, the terms אִימָנָא תַקָּה יִקִּין might be interpreted as adjectives/participles; in this second case, the translation would be “I am faithful to You and I am devout in Your Grace and I am certain in Your Divinity.” Later on in the fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, lines 17 and 22, the divine attributes are substituted by divine names, i.e. אֱלֹהֵנָא (gracious), אֱלִמְנָא (benefactor), and רַב אֱלֵעֲלָמִין (“the eternal living One”).

Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, line 10, ובאחב אסמאיך אליך (“and in Your most lovely name”), right before the invocation of “YH YHYHYH” and the divine name related to Isa 37:16 (יְי צְבָאוֹת יִי יוֹשֵׁב הַכְּרוֹבוֹת אֱלֹהֵי שָׂדֵי אֱהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֱהִיָּה).

The second section of the prayer featured on MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 (*verso*, left side, lines 9–20; *recto*, right side, lines 1–3) is remarkable in establishing a deep relation with the *Book of Daniel*, which, in my view, represents one of the earliest sources on which the technique of the *šē'ilat ḥalom* is based.⁸³ Here, the text preserves a plea in memory of the patriarch Moses and the prophet Daniel (*verso*, left side, respectively, line 11 and 16) formed by the juxtaposition of the Biblical quotations from, respectively, Num 12:6–8 and Dan 10:11 and 2:20–22 (respectively, *verso*, left side, lines 12–15 and *verso*, left side, lines 16–17; *recto*, right side, lines 1–3), passages highly related to revelation and often quoted in Jewish dream requests.⁸⁴ The quotation from the *Book of Daniel* corresponds to part of the prayer raised by the prophet Daniel to thank God after receiving the sought “vision of the night” with the answer to Nebuchadnezzar’s request (Dan 2:20–23).⁸⁵ The brief prayer emphasizes that the God of Israel transmits his wisdom and hidden knowledge to those who are wise and already have a certain knowledge (יְהִיב חֲכָמָתָא לְחַכְמִין) ומְדַע לְיָדַעֵי בִינָה חֲכָמָתָא (Dan 2:21). In the Biblical text, the same expression חֲכָמָתָא וְגִבּוֹרָתָא is first applied to God (דֵּי חֲכָמָתָא וְגִבּוֹרָתָא דֵּי לָהּ-הִיא) (Dan 2:20) and then to his prophet Daniel (דֵּי חֲכָמָתָא וְגִבּוֹרָתָא יְהִיבָתָּ לִּי) (Dan 2:23), thus highlighting the direct passage of divine knowledge from God to the human party. According to the theocentric ideology expressed in the Biblical passage, Daniel succeeds in

83 The Biblical book of Daniel has also a decisive presence in Bar Ḥiyya’s discussion of the meaning of the practitioners that Nebuchadnezzar summoned to help him; see Chapter Seven of this book, 245–248.

84 A similar passage is featured in the parallel recipe in Judaeo-Arabic, in the fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, lines 3–10. Moses is considered an arch-magician in Jewish magical tradition; see Peter Schäfer, “Jewish liturgy and magic” in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 1:541–556, especially 1:551–553; here, however, the reference to Moses alludes to the prophet’s unique relationship with God, with whom he spoke directly. As we shall soon see, Daniel is a prophet deeply connected with dream divination and the *šē'ilat ḥalom*. Num 12:6–8 and Dan 2:20–22 are the most quoted Biblical verses according to the Genizah *šē'ilot ḥalom*.

85 This is the second prayer uttered by Daniel in the second chapter of the book, while the first, which is not reported in the Scriptures, was a prayer of mercy aimed at soliciting the revelation (Dan 2:18). The verse from Dan 2:23, not quoted in this specific Genizah recipe, includes the linguistic pattern הוֹדַעְתָּנִי, an expression similar to that found in Dan 2:5 and adopted in most of the Genizah *šē'ilot ḥalom*; see my discussion above, 108. In the *Book of Daniel*, the content of the revelation is made explicit in Dan 2:31–45.

getting insight into Nebuchadnezzar's dream thanks to God's mercy rather than due to personal merit, or through magical-divinatory techniques (Dan 2:27–28). Yet the insistence on Daniel's own wisdom and knowledge, in this specific passage as well as in the rest of the book (e.g., Dan 1:4, 1:17 and 2:21), implicitly points to the great importance of these prerogatives in the process of obtaining the revelation.⁸⁶ By quoting Daniel's prayer, the user of the Genizah *še'ilat ḥalom* not only expresses his/her confidence in divine omnipotence, but also identifies him/herself with the Biblical prophet who, at least in part, possesses specific technical skills mastered in the field of divination. These same divinatory oneiric techniques, unspecified in Scripture, were probably associated with the *še'ilat ḥalom* by those practicing it in Fustāt.

The third section of the prayer (*recto*, right side, lines 3–18; *recto*, left side, lines 1–15) is the longest and develops two main motifs, i.e. the unworthiness of human nature in contrast to God's mercifulness, and God's omniscience. The theme of human imperfection and inferiority is discussed both in personal terms, denouncing the user's sins and inadequacy (*recto*, right side, lines 6–7; 12–13; *recto*, left side, lines 8; 14–15), and general terms, quoting and paraphrasing a few verses from the *Book of Job* that express the misery of the human condition (*recto*, right side, lines 14–16). The contrast between human unworthiness and God's merits, which dominates the whole section, motivates the user's appeal to divine compassion and the request to be answered not according to what he/she actually deserves, but according to God's mercy (*recto*, right

86 From the first chapter, the *Book of Daniel* focuses on the theme of wisdom. This is evident also from a linguistic perspective, as different Hebrew/Aramaic roots linked to the concept of knowledge/wisdom occur several times throughout the texts in relation to both Nebuchadnezzar's court experts and Daniel and his companions, as if wisdom was an essential quality to ascend the ranks of the Babylonian court. Furthermore, these roots, constructed either as verbs or nouns, are often associated to expressions containing the terms "dream" (חלום\חלמא), "vision" (חזון\מראה), "thought" (רעיון\הרהור) suggesting that, in the *Book of Daniel*, wisdom overlaps with divination and may correspond to a form of mantic wisdom. In this perspective, being wise at the Babylonian court demanded the capacity of understanding and revealing hidden knowledge, such as the content and meaning of a dream. Given the understanding of visions and dreams (Dan 1:17), Daniel succeeds, then, in sparing himself and his companions' life only by "showing his wisdom," i.e. by telling the king the content of his dream and providing the right interpretation of it (Dan 2:29–45). See my analysis in Andrea Bellandi, Alessia Bellusci, Amedeo Cappelli, and Emiliano Giovannetti, "Graphic Visualization in Literary Text Interpretation," in *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Information Visualization IV 2014*, ed. Ebad Banissi et al. (Piscataway, NJ: The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Computer Society, 2014), 392–397, available online at <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/stamp/stamp.jsp?tp=&arnumber=6902939>, accessed 6 November 2020 (login required).

TABLE 3.1 Comparison between MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 and Ps 139.

Ps 139	MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111
<p>יְהוָה חִקְרָתִי, וַתֵּדַע. אֵתָהּ יְדַעְתָּ, שְׁבִתִי וְקוּמִי; בִּגְנֹתָהּ לָרַעִי, מִרְחוּק. אֶרְחִי וְרִבְעִי יוֹרִיתִי; וְכָל-דְּרָכֵי הַסִּפְּנָתָהּ. כִּי אֵין מְלָה, בְּלִשׁוֹנִי; הֵן יְהוָה, יְדַעְתָּ כְּלָהּ. (verses 2–4)</p>	<p>ומה אומר את אשר לא תדע ומה אצפצף את אשר לא תבין (<i>recto</i>, right side, lines 10–11)</p>
<p>לֹא-נִכְחַד עֵצְמִי, מִמֶּנָּךְ; אֲשֶׁר-עֲשִׂיתִי בְּסִתְּךָ; רַקְמָתִי, בְּתַחְתִּיּוֹת אָרֶץ. גְּלָמִי, רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ (verses 15–16)</p>	<p>וְכָל תַּעֲלֹמוֹת גְּלוּיֹת לְפָנֶיךָ וְכָל מַחְשְׁבוֹת לְנַגְדֶּיךָ וְכָל מַסְתַּתְרוֹתֵי פְרוּשׁוֹת לְנַגְדֶּיךָ (<i>recto</i>, right side, lines 11–12)</p>
<p>חִקְרָנִי אֵל, וְדַע לְבָבִי; בְּחִנְיִי, וְדַע שְׂרַעְפִּי. וְרֹאֵה, אִם-דָּרַךְ-עֲצָב בִּי; וּנְחַנְיִי, בְּדָרְךָ עוֹלָם. (verses 23–24)</p>	<p>כי אתה היודע ועד כי לבי לוהט אחר אלהותיך (<i>recto</i>, left side, lines 9–11)</p>
<p>כִּי-אֵתָהּ, קִנִּיתִי כְלִיָּתִי; תִּסְכַּנִּי, בְּבִטָּון אִמִּי. (verse 13)</p>	<p>ואם לא ידעתי לשאול כהוגן אתה כוננתני (<i>recto</i>, left side, line 14)</p>

side, lines 4–5; 13).⁸⁷ The motif of divine omniscience seems to be revisited from the poetic meditation on God's intimate knowledge of its creature preserved in Ps 139 (see Table 3.1).

In the Genizah fragment, God is addressed and solicited to operate for the sake of the user with different tones. A few passages feature verbal expressions in the imperfective with optative value (i.e. *תקרב*, *תתן*, and *תעניני*, respectively on the *recto*, right side, lines 4–5 and *recto*, left side, lines 7 and 15). In no less than ten instances, however, the prayer presents actual commands to

87 This seems to contradict the Jewish doctrine of reward and punishment, according to which divine justice assigns men the just reward for their good deeds and the just retribution for their sins. In this respect, it does not seem a coincidence that, right after this passage, the prayer draws on the *Book of Job*, the only Biblical exception to the doctrine of reward and punishment. Both the expressions *שָׂתַתְּנוּ לִי הַלִּלָּה הַזֶּה לְפָנַי מִשׁוֹרַת הַדָּיָן* (*recto*, right side, lines 4–5) and *<לֹא> כְּמִדּוֹתֵי סֶלַח כְּמִדּוֹתֶיךָ* (*recto*, right side, line 13) might be compared to the verses from the *Pater Noster*: “Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris,” obviously used in the opposite meaning.

God expressed in the imperative: פשוט, התעטר, התאזר, סלח, הַבְּיָנִי, הַמִּצָּא, הַבְּיָנִי, סלח, הַתְּרַצֶּה קבליני, and עֲנֵנִי (*recto*, right side, lines 8–9; 13; *recto*, left side, lines 5–7 and 12). The most meaningful of these commands for the sake of the *še'ilat halom* is that of making known to the user, on this night, what is concealed in his/her heart (הַלִּילָה הַזֶּה וְהַבְּיָנִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבִּי) on the *recto*, right side, lines 8–9), which is found also in the Judaeo-Arabic *še'ilat halom* preserved on MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325 line 12, אַן תַּכְשֵׁף הַדָּה אֶלְלִילָה מֵא פִי נַפְשִׁי (‘‘that You reveal, on this night, what is in my soul’’). The passage draws on the last part of Dan 2:30: וְאִנְּהָ, לֹא בַחֲכֵמָה דִּי-אִיתִי בִּי מִן-בְּלַחֲמֵיָא, רְזָא דְנָה, גְּלִי לִי; לְהֹן, וְנִדְעַע עַל-דְּבַרְתִּי דִּי פִשְׁרָא לְמַלְכָא יְהוּדָעוֹן, וְרַעְיוֹנֵי לְבַבְךָ, תַּנְדַּע אֲנִי אוּדְעַךְ מַה בַּלְבַּךְ (*Sefer ha-razim* ‘‘The Book of Mysteries’’ 1 §109), thus establishing a deep connection between these three texts.⁸⁸ As in the first section of the prayer, divine attributes are used abundantly also here and are often employed as a synecdoche for the Divinity itself.⁸⁹ The theme of human helplessness and meaninglessness in comparison to God’s perfection is found in at least two non-Jewish medieval texts related to the dream request technique. A plea emphasizing the disparity between God’s mighty and human unworthiness is associated with an *istikāra* tradition (the Islamic version of the

88 One of the most famous Jewish books of magic, *Sefer ha-razim* was probably edited in Palestine in the Pre-Islamic period; see Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 170–175. The book was first published in Mordechai Margalio, *Sefer Ha-Razim, A Newly Recovered Book of Magic from the Talmudic Period Collected from Genizah Fragments and other Sources* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Acharonot, 1966) (in Hebrew). For a more recent edition, see Bill Rebiger and Peter Schäfer, *Sefer ha-razim I und II: Das Buch der Geheimnisse I und II*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009). Throughout the paper, when I quote from *Sefer ha-razim*, I follow Margalio’s edition, unless otherwise stated; however, to refer to the relevant passages, I follow Rebiger and Schäfer’s edition. For a concordance between the two editions, see Rebiger and Schäfer, *Sefer ha-razim*, 1:x1. For a discussion of the specific passage quoted in the contribution, see Alessia Bellusci, ‘‘A Genizah finished Product for *She’elat Halom* based on *Sefer ha-Razim*,’’ *Journal of Jewish Studies* 67, 2 (2016): 305–326. On the relationship between the *Book of Daniel*, *Sefer ha-razim*, and the *še’ilat halom*, see my discussion below, in the next section of the chapter, 134–137.

89 In the third section, divine attributes mainly occur in the following linguistic structures: (1) ‘‘My X (attitude of mind) is Your Y (divine attribute)’’ [*recto*, left side, line 4]; (2) ‘‘I (the user) X (action expressed by a verbal voice with the participle, infinitive, or perfective) in front of Y (divine attribute)’’ [*recto*, right side, lines 3–4; *recto*, left side, lines 2–4]; (3) ‘‘Although I (the user) am not X (adjective, singular form), Your Y (divine attribute, plural form) are X (adjective, plural form)’’ [*recto*, right side, lines 6–7]; (4) ‘‘X (verbal voice in imperative referred to God) for the sake of Your Y (divine attribute)’’ [*recto*, right side, line 8; *recto*, left side, lines 5–7]. Divine attributes are mentioned also on the *recto*, right side, lines 17; 14–15; *recto*, left side, lines 2; 9–10; yet the linguistic structures in which they occur are unclear or less relevant.

dream request) in a section of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, an authoritative collection of *ḥadīth* composed by the ninth century Persian Muslim scholar Muḥammad ibn Isma‘il al-Ju‘fi al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870);⁹⁰ in the book, the *ḥadīth* is attributed to Jābir ibn ‘Abdūllah, one of the Prophet’s companions. The passage, which is still recited during the *salāt al-istikāra*, reads as follows:⁹¹

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ
وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ

My lord, I seek your benevolence through your knowledge, I turn for your assistance through your might. On the sake of your magnificent excellence, I beseech you, for you are capable, while I am incapable, you have knowledge, while I am ignorant; you are the one who knows matters unseen.

In the Islamic text, the reference to God’s knowledge and human ignorance (“You have knowledge, but I do not”) explains the choice of practicing *istikāra*, whose literal meaning is “seeking the good.”⁹² Since only God knows what is best for man, one should trust divine judgment rather than his/hers and should solicit it by means of *istikāra*.⁹³ A prayer similar to the one preserved in the Genizah fragment is found also in a long recipe for engaging in a dream request for finding a hidden treasure registered in the fifteenth century MS Munich Bay-

90 On the author and his work see Jonathan A.C. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhari and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill 2007), 65–81.

91 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ḥadīth* by Jābir ibn ‘Abdūllah; see Muhammad M. Khan (Arabic ed. and English transl.), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih al-Bukhari*, 9 vols. (Riyadh: Darus-salam, 1997 [1979]), 2:157–158; online as *Sahih al-Bukhari* 1166 (Book 19, *Ḥadīth* 45), available online at <http://sunnah.com/bukhari/19>, accessed 20 July 2019.

92 The term *istikāra* (اسْتِخَارَة) is the *maṣdar* (verbal noun) in the tenth form from the root *خ ي ر*.

93 *Qur‘ān, Surah al-baqara* 2/216:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كَرِهٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ
شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (“For you fighting has been ordained, even though hateful to you. But you might hate a thing and it is good for you and love a thing and it is bad for you. God knows, while you know not”); for the translation, see *Saheeh International Qur‘an*, available online at <http://quran.com/2/216>, accessed 20 July 2019. This verse shares with the previous supplication the language of knowing and not knowing.

erische Staatsbibliothek *CLM* 849.⁹⁴ Besides a couple of prayers belonging to the official liturgy, the Latin recipe presents three unknown prayers, the first of which is a plea to God, the Creator, so that he will receive the cry of his unworthy creature:⁹⁵

O rabi, rabi, rex meus et deus meus ac dominus dominancium, qui conditor es uniuersorum, exaudi oracionem mei, misere et indigne creature, et redempcionis tue in hac hora et semper,⁹⁶ et indignus clamor meus ad te perueniat.

O rabbi, rabbi, my king and my God, and Lord of lords, you who are the creator of all things, hear the prayer which I, a wretched and unworthy creature, make, and <be mindful?> of your redemption in this hour and always, and may my unworthy cry come unto Thee.

A further appeal to divine mercy is found later on in the Latin recipe, in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek *CLM* 849, fol. 106 *verso*, *et velis respicere ad offensiones meas* (“and that you may be willing to see beyond my offences”), a passage focusing on the same theme underlying the Hebrew prayer, according to which the unworthy creature asks to be answered not for his/her merits but for his/her faith (MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111, *recto*, left side, lines 8–9). Although the Genizah prayer is much more articulated than the above-mentioned Christian and Islamic supplications, there is a conceptual and, perhaps, even textual correspondence between these sources, which all stem from Abrahamic traditions and are related to the oneiric technique of the dream request.

The textual sections surveyed so far, which roughly correspond to three quarters of the *še'ilat ḥalom* preserved on MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111, do not exhibit magical features. The text is, in fact, in the form of a prayer that could have been recited also outside the context of the oneiric technique. The situation changes drastically in the fourth section (*recto*, left

94 The recipe is edited in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 342–343. On MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek *CLM* 849, see above, 104, note 10. For finished products for *še'ilat ḥalom* specifically aimed at finding a treasure, see Bohak, “Cracking the Code”; Harari, “Metatron and the Treasure”; and Bellusci, “A Genizah finished Product.”

95 The prayers from the official liturgy are: *Asperges me*, *Gloria Patri*, and *Miserere*; see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 342. For the three unknown prayers see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 342–343. For the following quotation and its translation, see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 342 and 114, respectively.

96 As noted by Richard Kieckhefer, who indicates “*sic* in MS,” here a verb is probably missing; see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 342, note b.

side, lines 16–19; *verso*, right side, 1–13), which includes several magical linguistic devices and formulae employed to communicate with non-human entities and obtain the sought revelation.⁹⁷ This section presents, in fact, a plea to God to send a trustworthy angel in charge of delivering the requested answer in the dream (*recto*, left side, lines 16–18), as well as a generic formula that users would have needed to substitute with the divinatory topic in which they were interested (*verso*, right side, line 2), both features typically documented among the Genizah *šē'ilot ḥalom*. The text presents an additional specific formula associated with the genre of the *šē'ilat ḥalom* followed by a quotation from Exod 33:16, a verse deeply related to divination: \ אֹת אֲשֶׁר אֹדִיעֶיהָ אוּ מוֹפֵת אֲבִינֶיהָ \ וִיתֵן לִי \ אוּ פֶסוּק מִתּוֹרַתְךָ אוּ מִדְּבַרֵי נְבִיאֶיךָ \ כִּי בִזְאֵת נִפְלְאוּ עִמָּיךְ מִכָּל הָעַם אֲשֶׁר \ עַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה (*verso*, right side, lines 2–6: “And he shall give me / a sign which I shall recognize, or a wonder that I will understand / or a verse from Your Torah or from the words of Your prophets / since in this, *we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people / on the face of the earth*”). The formula and the Biblical verse are used to emphasize that the oneiric answer expected in the dream has to be intelligible to users, who are entitled to a special communication with God as part of the nation of Israel. The formula adopts the typical phraseology used to refer to divination since the Hebrew Bible: the terms אֹת (“sign”) and מוֹפֵת (“wonder”) are used a few times in Scripture either to indicate the activity of false prophets and diviners, such as in Deut 13:1–2, or a God-sent message, such as in Isa 20:3. A similar formula, which refers, though, only to “a verse” and “a sign,” is found in the parallel recipe in Judaeo-Arabic:⁹⁸

97 For the presence of magical names in magical texts and linguistic magic associated with Jews, see Chapter Ten of this book, 313–322 and 326–327.

98 Fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, lines 12–14. A slightly different version of the formula is found in the *Adjunction of the Prince of Dream* included in the synopsis of Hekhalot texts; see Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), 56 (§ 505); and Lesses, *Ritual Practices*, 395–313. A similar version is documented also in a fourteenth-fifteenth century Genizah recipe for *šē'ilat ḥalom*; see MS Jewish Theological Seminary 1628, fols. 41^r–42^v, edited in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, 79. Markedly corrupted versions of the formula occur also in the Genizah *šē'ilot ḥalom* preserved on MSS Cambridge University Library TS Misc 11.125, TS NS 307.54, and TS AS 108.184, edited in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, 37–38. In these fragments the formula is integrated with additional words and becomes a string of *voces magicae*, suggesting that at least certain copyists did not understand the original meaning of the text and interpreted it as a series of magical words; see my discussion in *Dream Requests in the Middle East*, ch. 3. A certain “sign” expected to be made by the oneiric visitor is mentioned also in the Latin dream request preserved in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fol. 106^v, “et signum ibi faciat vt cognoscam verum et ipsam veritatem” (“and make a sign there, so that I may know it as true, and <I may know> the truth itself”), edited in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 343 and 114 (translation).

ותעטיני איה מן כתאבך | אלמקדס או יוערקי עלי דלילא יוצח לי מא אצמרתה פי אמר
<כדא וכ>דא וּמא יכון מנה וּמא <י>אול אמרי אליה |

And give me a verse from Your Holy Book, or a sign shall be shown to me, <which> shall explain to me what is concealed in me, <on the> matter, <that is this and t>his, and what shall happen with it, and what shall be the interpretation of my request (lit. matter).⁹⁹

After the formula, the fourth and final section of the recipe-prayer presents an invocation to God formed by the abbreviation of the *Tetragrammaton* iterated twice (י״י) followed by a command expressed by the imperative of עני* and the enclitic pronoun of the first person in the singular נִי (עניני). It is possible that the iteration of the command three times aimed at aiding the user to attain the sought dreaming state.¹⁰⁰ At the end, the prayer is addressed to two additional entities (אִישִׁים), most certainly angels, who are first introduced by a quotation from Prov 8:4 and then called by their personal names, i.e. *Gehuṣṭariʿel* and *Pehuṣṭariʿal* (גְּהוּצְטַרְיָאֵל וּפְהוּצְטַרְיָאֵל) (*verso*, right side, lines 8–13). These same exact names (with the only difference of a letter!), גְּהוּצְטַרְיָאֵל וּפְהוּצְטַרְיָאֵל, are documented also in the *šēʿilat ḥalom* on the fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, lines 18–19, where they occur without vocalization and inscribed in magical cartouches.¹⁰¹ According to the text in the fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111, *Gehuṣṭariʿel* and *Pehuṣṭariʿal* seem

99 I understand the verbal expression יאול as imperfective, second form from the root *أول, “to interpret or explain (a dream or text),” cf. أول الأحلام. Note here a possible relation between dream divination and bibliomancy (“give me a verse from Your Holy Book”); see a similar example in Chapter Five of this book, 169–170.

100 According to certain Islamic traditions, users invoke the name “Allah” until they fall asleep, see Aydar, “Istikhāra,” 128. In the Latin recipe in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fol. 106^v, the name of a non-human entity invoked in the dream request is also repeated three times: “Oriens Oriens Oriens precor rogo et peto benignissime Oriens vt votum meum adimpleas” (“Orient, Orient, Orient, I pray, beg, and ask, O most benign Orient, that you may fulfil my petition”), see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 343 and 114 (translation).

101 The Arabic expression يا أيها الملائكة (يا أيها الملائكة) “oh you angels”, in the Judaeo-Arabic fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325 line 19, clarifies that *Gehuṣṭariʿel* and *Pehuṣṭariʿal* are angels. The recipe contains two additional cartouches on the *recto*, lines 19 and 20, each of which reads, respectively, נְדִי בּוֹנְדִי and סְרָא בּוֹנְדִי (or נְרִי בּוֹנְרִי and סְרָא בּוֹנְרִי, since it is difficult to distinguish *reš* from *dalet* in the document), which are probably angelic names too. Alternative or corrupted forms for GHWṢṬRʿL and PHWṢṬRYʿL are possibly documented in the *šēʿilat ḥalom* on MS Jewish Theological Seminary 1628, fol. 41^r, line 16, פּתמִיאל (PTMYʿL) and גְּרִיאלְנֵר (GRYʿLNR), where they follow the formula “show me a sign, etc.” discussed above, 129–130.

to be considered as chief-angels extending their power over the twenty regiments of the firmament and are believed to be suited to intercede for the user with God. The same function as inter-agents is attributed to the two angelic creatures in the parallel recipe in Judaeo-Arabic, where they are invited to assist users in obtaining their request.¹⁰² The invocation of *Gehuṣṣariʿel* and *Pehuṣṣariʿal* and the specific description of God as “King who makes kings,” in MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 *verso*, right side, lines 8–13, which presumably paraphrase the verse from Dan 2:21 “He deposes kings and sets up kings,” may be compared also to a section of the Latin dream request preserved in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek *CLM* 849:¹⁰³

O Oriens benigne maior pars mundi celi terre/que sator cuius nuta omnia tam celestia / quam terrestria provide facta sunt confirma in/tellectum meum in hoc opere per tui regni domi/nium quod nunquam dimittitur. Rege et paue me in hac mea supplicatione et precor te per tuos / reges quod tenet et stringit sanat et confirmat¹⁰⁴ / et per omnes regias tuas potestas.

O gracious Orient, the greater part of the world, creator of heaven and Earth, by whose will all things both celestial and terrestrial were providentially made, strengthen my understanding in this work by the dominion of your kingdom, which is never lost. Guide and fear (?) me in this my supplication. And I pray you, by your kings that hold fast and bind, restore and strengthen, and by your powers in all kingdoms.

102 אן תחסנא עוני עלא אלסביל אלתי | אב>א<ח-ה לכמא באלקלמא ותסהלוהא עלי לאצל אלי מטלבי | הדה אללילה אמין רב אלעאלמין, “that you will benefit me in the way that is permitted to you in the (name of) the word and that you will make easier for me to attain my request on this night, amen, eternal living One”; see MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, lines 20–22. Shaul Shaked interprets the expression באלקלמא as a reference to the *Calamus* and, therefore, to Islamic traditions on the creation of the world by means of the Holy Pen (*Qurʾān*, *Surah al-qalam* 68 and *Surah al-ʿalaq* 96/4); see Shaked, “On Jewish Literature,” 18; I believe that (قلم) באלקלמא might be a copyist error for (كلمة) אלכלמא (word). The formula רב אלעאלמין seems, instead, an Islamic motif, as argued by Shaked there, but I do not believe it proves Muslim influence, as it is a very common expression.

103 For the following quotation and its translation, see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 343 and 114, respectively. Those sections not translated by Kieckhefer were integrated by me with the help of Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, to whom I am very grateful.

104 The Latin of “tenet et stringit sanat et confirmat” is quite problematic, as highlighted also by Richard Kieckhefer who flags it with “sic in MS”: it is possible that the verbal forms should have been plural, as well as the following expression “tuas potestas.” I am grateful to Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum for these suggestions.

Although apparently far more powerful, Oriens—possibly a spirit or angelic creature, whose precise nature eludes us¹⁰⁵—can be compared to *Gehuṣṭariʿel* and *Pehuṣṭariʿal*, since, like them, he is in charge of lesser angels (lit. *tuos reges*) under his command.

3 Concluding Notes: Daniel's Prayer and the *Še'ilat Ḥalom*

The recipe for *še'ilat ḥalom* preserved on the fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 shares many features with the revelatory experience undergone by Daniel before disclosing the content and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the second chapter of the *Book of Daniel*.¹⁰⁶ Not only does the Genizah recipe quote most of the thanksgiving prayer raised by Daniel (Dan 2:20–22), but it is also structured as a prayer of mercy for receiving a revelation such as that uttered by Daniel and his companions (Dan 2:17–19). It is possible that at least the author of the recipe on MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 considered the *Book of Daniel* as an authoritative source in relation to the *še'ilat ḥalom*. Therefore, a brief discussion of the relevant excerpts from the Biblical book and its relationship with the *še'ilat ḥalom* is in order here. At the beginning of the second chapter of the *Book of Daniel*, the Neo-Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar is described as having dreams so disturbing that they interfere with his natural sleep (Dan 2:1). To cope with the state of anxiety triggered by these unpleasant and unclear oneiric visions,

105 Regarding the entity called Oriens, Kieckhefer argues that “it would be hazardous to posit a direct connection here with the goddess-figure Oriente said to have been venerated in the territory of Milan in the late fourteenth century, but ... the traditional ancient and medieval primacy of the direction east obviously lies behind the construction of a chief deity”; see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 155. Oriens is mentioned also in a recipe for obtaining a horse in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fols. 33^v and 34^r; see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 231–232. In another passage of the Latin recipe for dream request in MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 849, fol. 106^r, God is referred to as “dominus dominancium,” similarly to מַלְךְ \ מַלְךְ עַל כָּל \ מַלְךְ עַל כָּל and רַב אֱלֵעֲאֵלְמִין in, respectively, fragments MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 *verso*, right side, lines 11–12, and MS Cambridge University Library TS AS 143.325, line 22.

106 The revelatory experiences narrated in the *Book of Daniel* (second century BCE) signal the transition from Prophecy to Apocalyptic; for an updated overview on the most relevant research on the book, see David M. Valeta, “The Book of Daniel in Recent Research (Part 1),” *Currents in Biblical Research* 6, 3 (2008): 330–354. As with other Jewish and non-Jewish apocalyptic writings, the *Book of Daniel* insists on the motif of wisdom as an enlightenment delivered to men from a non-human source and describes divine revelations conveyed through oneiric visions and similar divinatory techniques.

Nebuchadnezzar calls the court experts to “reveal” to him his dreams (Dan 2:2). Instead of describing the content of his oneiric vision, Nebuchadnezzar expects the court experts to tell him the topic of his dream before interpreting it, a clever stratagem devised to test their expertise.¹⁰⁷ The inevitable failure of Nebuchadnezzar’s court experts in revealing and interpreting the dream brings Daniel to the scene (Dan 2:13). Although the Biblical text does not specify the procedure followed by Daniel to get insight into the king’s dream and interpretation, it seems clear that the prophet’s vision was induced through prayer and, perhaps, by means of other ritual acts, omitted in the final redaction of the Biblical text, while the prophet was in a private place, probably lying down on his bed, *וַאֲזַל אֶל בֵּיתוֹ* (“Then Daniel went to his house”) (Dan 2:17). In particular, the revelation was preceded by a phase of intense prayer carried out by Daniel and his companions, with a plea of mercy oriented on a specific matter, *וְלִחְנֻנִיָּה מִיִּשְׁאֵל וְעֲזָרְיָה חֲבֵרֹהִי, מִלְּתָא הוֹדַע \ וְרַחֲמִין, לְמַבְטָא מִן-קַדְמֵ אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמַיָּא, עַל-רָזָא, דְּדִנְהָ* (“and informed his companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery”) (Dan 2:18).¹⁰⁸ The relation between prayer and oneiric revelation is quite explicit in the text, as Daniel receives the divine answer as a consequence of praying, *אֲדִין, יֵלִי לְדִנְיָאֵל בְּחֻזָּא דִּי-לֵילְיָא—רָזָא וְגַלִּי* (“then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night”) (Dan 2: 19).¹⁰⁹ As I attempted to show in this contribution, praying also represents a key element for acquiring divine knowledge in the medieval technique of *šē’ilat ḥalom* and a prayer of mercy is the form in which the recipe on MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 is written.¹¹⁰ The ques-

107 The oddity of the king’s request is remarked on in the Biblical texts by the courtiers themselves (Dan 2:10–11). In the Biblical account on Joseph and the Pharaoh’s dreams in Gen 41:14–36, instead, the Pharaoh first reveals the content of his dreams and, then, asks for their interpretation; on the dependence of Daniel’s tales at Nebuchadnezzar’s court on the story of Joseph at the Egyptian court, see Robert Gnuse, “The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurring Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 7 (1990): 29–53; and Matthew S. Rindge, “Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, 1 (2010): 85–104.

108 That the prayer was raised for a specific issue is emphasised also by the occurrence of the active participle from the root *בעי\בעא**, with the meaning of “willing/requesting,” in the expression *הוֹדַעְתְּנִי דִּי-בְעִינָא מִנְּךָ* in Dan 2:23, passage that, together with Dan 2:5, becomes the model for the standard pleas registered in the Genizah *šē’ilot ḥalom* (e.g., *תודיעוני דבר זה*).

109 Throughout the *Book of Daniel*, most of the revelatory experiences have a nocturnal and oneiric character; see my analysis in Bellandi et al., “Graphic Visualization,” especially 393 (Fig. d).

110 The collective recitation of the prayer described in the Biblical excerpt is not incompati-

tion that arises from these observations (and which becomes contentious in most historical studies of phenomena documented only from a certain epoch onwards) is whether the Cairene users of the *še'ilat ḥalom* kept alive a Second Temple period tradition or developed a new divinatory oneiric tradition, deliberately grounding it on the Biblical exemplum. While it is difficult to provide an adequate answer to this matter without definitive textual evidence, it is safe to suggest that the *še'ilat ḥalom*, as we know it from the tenth century onwards, developed from a sub-stratum of Jewish divinatory practices aimed at obtaining or sending knowledge, some of which date back to the Second Temple period and are associated with the *Book of Daniel*. It remains, however, uncertain when and how the process of differentiation that brought the *še'ilat ḥalom* to be the specific and distinct oneiric technique documented in the medieval sources exactly began. Furthermore, the occurrence of Biblical motifs and technical language from the *Book of Daniel* in the Genizah recipes is not accidental. Whether continuously transmitted throughout time or reintroduced in the Middle Ages, the above-mentioned earlier features reflect the intentional attempt of Cairene Jews to root (or maintain) the *še'ilat ḥalom* within Jewish tradition, perhaps to legitimate its use and distinguish it from analogous foreign techniques performed within neighboring cultures.

The fundamental affinity between the *še'ilat ḥalom* and the relevant excerpt from the *Book of Daniel* becomes even more striking in light of a divinatory recipe preserved in *Sefer ha-razim* (I §§ 109–114).¹¹¹ This late antique text seems, in fact, to be based on a magical reading of the Biblical passage and might represent an important connecting link between the traditions embedded in the Biblical account on Daniel and those developed in relation to the medieval *še'ilat ḥalom*. Both the *Book of Daniel* and the recipe from *Sefer ha-razim* highlight the notion of wisdom, conceived as a form of hidden knowledge revealed by a non-human entity (God or the angels) to those men capable and worthy to receive it (Dan 2:21; *Sefer ha-razim* I § 108). In particular, the purpose and circumstance of use of the divinatory recipe from the late antique book are quite

ble with the performance of an oneiric technique. A couple of finished products for *še'ilat ḥalom* from the Cairo Genizah attest to the enactment of a collective incubation; see Bellusci, "A Genizah finished Product," especially 314. In the case of the *Book of Daniel*, it is clear, though, that despite the direct involvement of his companions in the ritual, the prophet is the sole person to perceive the oneiric vision.

111 For the dynamics of the divinatory ritual outlined in *Sefer ha-razim* and its implications for the study of the Genizah *še'ilat ḥalom*, see Bellusci, "A Genizah finished Product," where I edit a Genizah finished product for *še'ilat ḥalom* including a long literal quotation from the divinatory recipe in *Sefer ha-razim*, thus providing further evidence of the relationship between the late antique book and the technique of *še'ilat ḥalom*.

specific and seem to paraphrase the Biblical account on Nebuchadnezzar's first dream.¹¹² In both texts, the divination/revelation is functional to the attainment of favor in the eyes of a certain person and the divinatory performance is enacted on behalf of a third party.¹¹³ The diviner, either Daniel or the user of the magical recipe, is supposed to deliver the content of the divination in a specific public setting and, specifically, at court. In the recipe from *Sefer ha-razim*, the addition of public offices (the head of the city and the governor) besides the king reflects political and social changes in the transition from the Seleucid Era to late antiquity, while the reference to a friend of the user confers a domestic tone to the magical text. Although the situation described in *Sefer ha-razim* is far less dramatic than the Biblical scenario in which Daniel and his companion literally risk their lives, the subject of the divination is analogous, concerning both the content of the dream and its interpretation.¹¹⁴ The ritualistic similarities between the account of Daniel in the second chapter of the Biblical book and the late antique magical recipe are less evident. Highly indebted to Graeco-Egyptian magical lore of the type attested to in the corpus of the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, the passage from *Sefer ha-razim* describes a complex multi-stage ritual for divination that involves scrying techniques.¹¹⁵ Yet both texts describe a nocturnal divination (Dan 2:19; *Sefer ha-razim* I §§ 110–

112 אם יקראך המלך או ראש העיר או שליט או חברך ובקשתה להודיעו מחמתך דבר לפני אני או אודיעך מה בלבך עלי ומה חשבתה עלי ומה אתה חפץ לעשות ומה פתרון חלומך "If the king, or the head of the city, or the governor, or your friend summons you, and you want to make known to them something from your wisdom in front of them, I will make known to you what is in your heart concerning me, and what you thought about me, and what you wish to do, and what is the interpretation of your dream," *Sefer ha-razim* I § 109 (the translation is mine).

113 This is also the main difference between the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom* and the ritual technique performed by Daniel and paraphrased in the recipe in *Sefer ha-razim*. In the former, the topic of the divination sought in an induced dream is personal and involves the specific interest of the individual(s) engaging in the *še'ilat ḥalom*. In the latter, the topic of the divination—possibly experienced in a dream vision by Daniel and in a nocturnal encounter with a non-human entity according to *Sefer ha-razim*—concerns the content of the dream of a third party.

114 The late antique recipe goes even further, promising to reveal also the third party's will and personal opinion about the user-diviner; see *Sefer ha-razim* I § 109.

115 On scrying techniques in later Jewish traditions, see Samuel Daiches, *Babylonian Oil Magic in the Talmud and in Later Jewish Literature* (London: Jews' College Publication, 1913); Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939), 219–222; Joseph Dan, "The Princes of the Cup and the Princes of the Thumb," *Tarbiz* 32 (1963): 359–369 (in Hebrew); and Yoram Bilu, "The Princes of the Oil: New Light on an Old Phenomenon," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37, 3 (1981): 269–277.

111) and assign an important role to prayer (Dan 2:18; 20–23; *Sefer ha-razim* I § 111). Although including the adjuration formula, the prayer in *Sefer ha-razim* exhibits a marked *piyyuṭ* tone and exalts God's splendor and strength over the natural elements, paraphrasing Biblical verses (Isa 40:12, Ps 104:4, Nahum 1:4, Ps 107:33). The spatial setting differs in the two texts, described as indoor space in the Biblical book (Daniel's house in Dan 2:17) and outdoor in *Sefer ha-razim* (an aquatic location, either a river or the sea, in *Sefer ha-razim* I § 110). Extending the analysis to the rest of the *Book of Daniel*, however, one notices that two additional revelations associated with the prophet take place in proximity to a river, respectively the 'Ulay and Hiddekel (Dan 8:2; 10:4), according to a well-known pattern typical of prophetic and apocalyptic traditions (Ezek 1:1; 1 Enoch 13:7–10).¹¹⁶ Similarly, the ascetic norms prescribed in the magical text from *Sefer ha-razim* I § 110, i.e. alimentary and dressing restrictions, might intentionally hark back to the ascetic behavior observed by Daniel later on in the book (Dan 9:3; 10:2–3).¹¹⁷ Besides the occurrence of the technical expression תודיעני (*Sefer ha-razim* I § 111) appropriated from the *Book of Daniel* (Dan 2:5; 2:23), the recipe from *Sefer ha-razim* presents the expected divination using the same phraseology exhibited in the Biblical story. In particular, the human-like apparition expected to be visualized according to the magical recipe in *Sefer ha-razim* I § 111: ותראה שיתגלה לך עמוד אש וענן עליה כדמות איש (“and you will see that a pillar of fire will appear to you, and on its top a cloud resembling the image of a man”), brings to mind the angelic figure with human physical details appeared to Daniel in his third and fourth visions (Dan 8:15 and 10:16): כְּמַרְאֵה-גִבּוֹר and כְּדְמוּת בְּנֵי אָדָם. As noted, the belief in the vision of an otherworldly figure with human features and in charge of revealing hidden knowledge is central also in medieval traditions associated with the *še'ilat ḥalom*. I believe the above textual analysis supports the thesis that the divinatory recipe preserved in *Sefer ha-razim* was intentionally composed on the model of Daniel's revelations and, specifically, on the basis of the account of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar in the

116 Consider also *Re'uyyot Yehezqel*, a midrash in Hebrew on the fourteen opening words of the Biblical book of Ezekiel; see Ithamar Gruenwald, “The Mirror and the Technique of Prophetic and Apocalyptic Vision,” *Beth Mikra* 40 (1970): 95–97 (in Hebrew); Ithamar Gruenwald, “The Visions of Ezekiel,” in *Temirin. Text and Studies in Kabbalah and Hasidism*, ed. Israel Weinstock (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1972), 101–139 (in Hebrew); Moshe Idel, “On the Medieval Development of an Ancient Technique for Prophetic Vision,” *Sinai* 86 (1979–1980): 1–7 (in Hebrew); Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 74–111; and David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1988), especially 226–238 and 263–278.

117 These are, however, common and standardized ascetic norms both for apocalyptic and mystical Jewish texts; see the references above, 107.

second chapter of the Biblical book. This implies that the author/s of *Sefer ha-razim*, or more precisely of the specific recipe in *Sefer ha-razim* I §§ 109–114, read and understood the Biblical story as a divinatory technique aimed at obtaining insight into a third party's thought, will and dream. Whether the traditions embedded in the *Book of Daniel*, *Sefer ha-razim* and the Genizah *še'ilot ḥalom* should be interpreted as expressions of different stages of the same phenomenon through time or progressive attempts to reawaken and revisit earlier uses/texts, their threefold phenomenological and, to a certain extent, philological relationship is undoubted. The *še'ilat ḥalom* in its medieval form—identified as a ritual essentially based on a phase of intense prayer aimed at producing an oneiric revelation on a specific topic—deliberately follows earlier divinatory traditions well rooted in Jewish culture.

We noted that, from a phenomenological perspective, the *še'ilat ḥalom* can be compared to non-Jewish attestations of the dream request and be interpreted as a specific cultural behavior related to dreams which was performed and transmitted within the Mediterranean and Near-Eastern area from antiquity to the Middle Ages. Yet, as I attempted to demonstrate with the detailed analysis of the recipe preserved on the Genizah fragment MS Cambridge University Library TS K 1.111 and the discussion of the relevant accounts from the *Book of Daniel* and *Sefer ha-razim*, the *še'ilat ḥalom* exhibits a certain degree of cultural autonomy and historical originality. In its medieval fixed and standardized forms, well documented by the fragments from the Cairo Genizah, the *še'ilat ḥalom* shows an explicit Jewish character, evident in the effort of conforming to a specific Jewish divinatory tradition. Even though this specific ritual behavior is attested within Jewish culture only from the tenth century onwards, some of its features are well rooted in earlier Jewish Apocalyptic and divinatory traditions. The relationship between the *Book of Daniel*, *Sefer ha-razim* and the *še'ilat ḥalom*, discussed in this contribution, attests to the continuity of specific Jewish divinatory lore from the Second Temple period throughout the Middle Ages. The Genizah recipes and finished products for *še'ilat ḥalom* represent, then, the mature product of a specific Jewish technical knowledge transmitted through the centuries and evolved under the influence of, or in contrast to, non-Jewish traditions and in response to different occurrences within Jewish society, yet preserving its Jewish heritage.

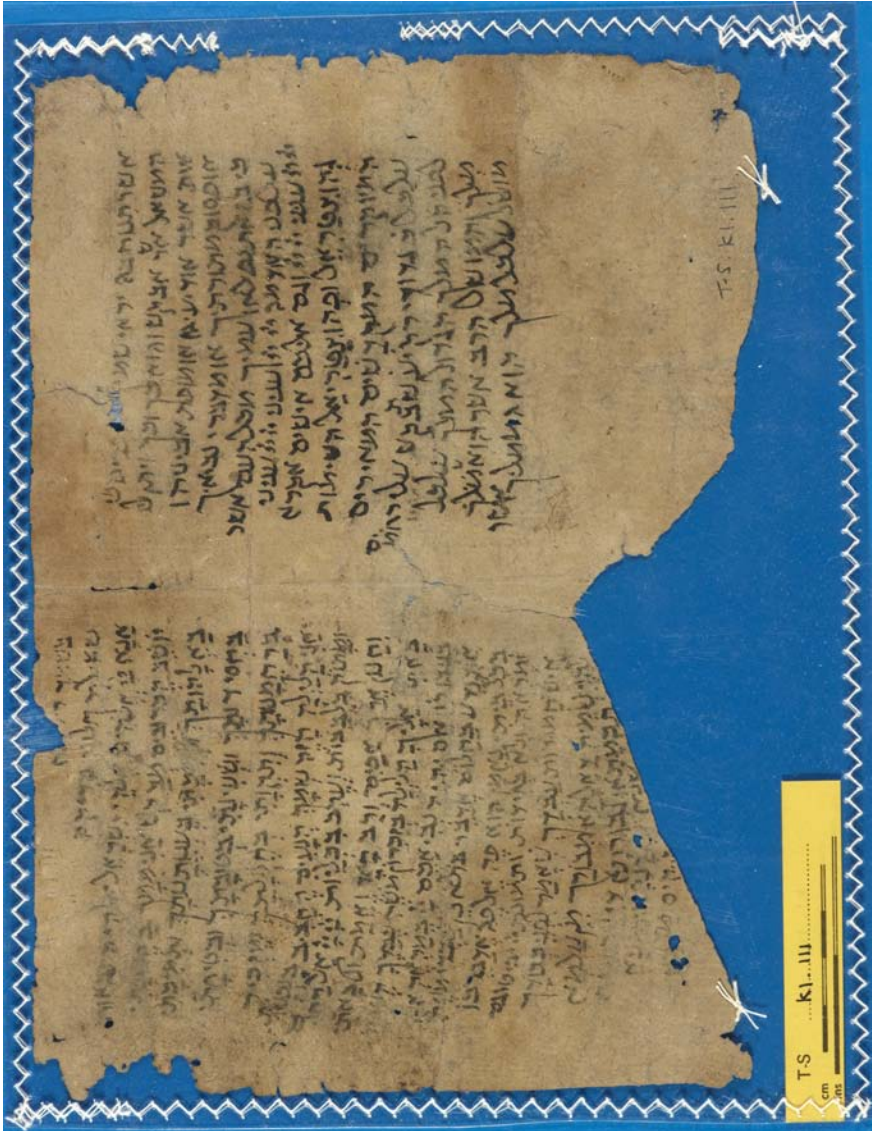


FIGURE 3.1 MS Cambridge University Library TS K.1.111^v.
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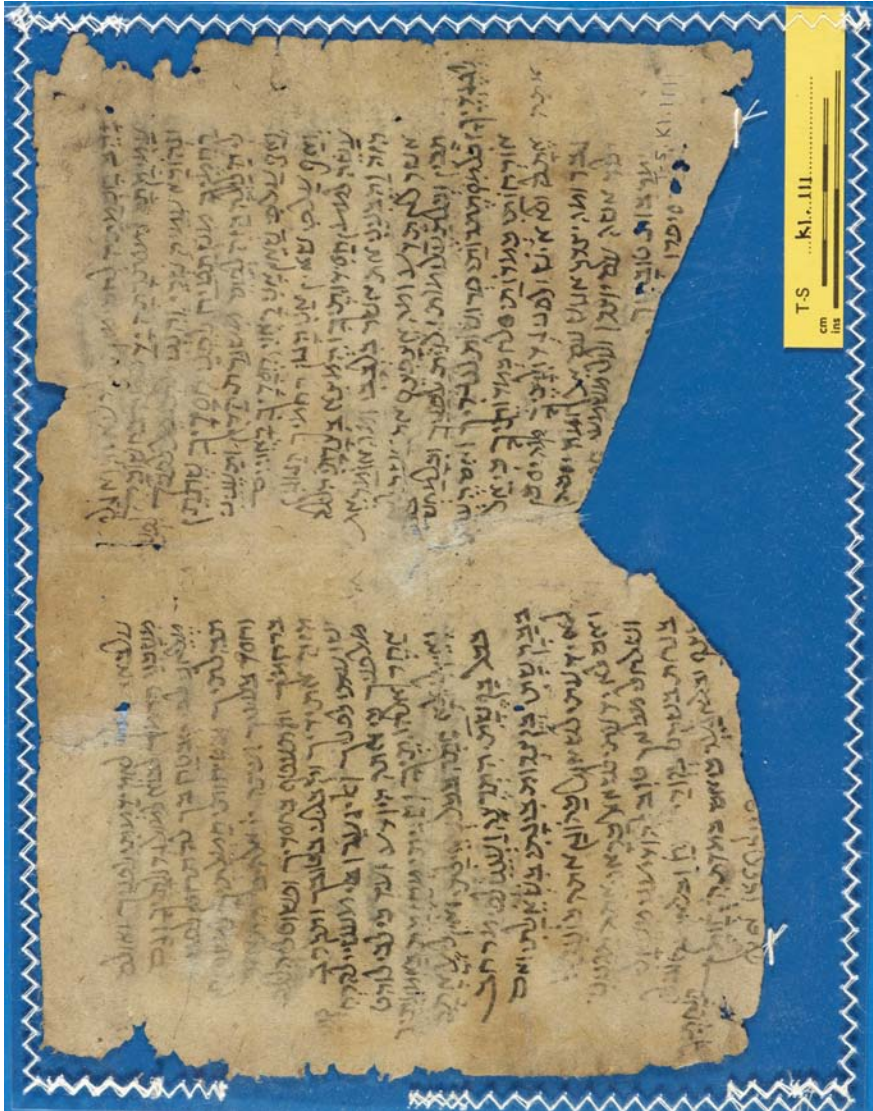


FIGURE 3.2 MS Cambridge University Library TS K.1.111^f.

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