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Messiah bar Ephraim in the Targums

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Abstract

This article examines the references to Messiah bar Ephraim in the Targums, and concludes that the Targumic Tosefta to Zech. 12.10, where Messiah bar Ephraim is vanquished, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Exod. 40.9-11, where he is the vanquisher, both predate the Christian period. The apparent conflict between his suffering and conquering roles may indicate a belief that bar Ephraim's death effects the final redemption. References in the Targum to the Song of Songs are also considered.

Keywords: Messiah bar Ephraim, Messiah ben Joseph, Josephite Messiah, Suffering Messiah, Messiah, Targums, rabbinic literature

Rabbinic texts from the first and second millennia CE feature Messiah ben/bar Ephraim, a latterday Ephraimite king who dies in eschatological warfare.[1] This article examines the references to Messiah bar Ephraim in

1. For more on the Josephite–Ephraimite Messiah generally, see my 'Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis Differ: Messiah ben Joseph in the Babylonian Talmud', *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 8 (2005), pp. 77-90; 'The Fourth Deliverer: A Josephite Messiah in 4QTestimonia', *Bib* 86.4 (2005), pp. 545-53; 'Firstborn *Shor* and *Rem*: A Sacrificial Josephite Messiah in *1 Enoch 90.37-38* and Deuteronomy 33.17', *JSP* 15.3 (2006), pp. 211-28; 'Messiah ben Joseph: A Sacrifice of Atonement for Israel', *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 10 (forthcoming [June 2007]). The midrashim about Messiah ben Joseph cited in this article, *Aggadat Mashiah*, *Otot ha-Mashiah*, *Sefer Zerubbabel*, *Asereth Melakhim*, *Pirqei Mashiah* §5-6, and *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai*, are cited in Hebrew with English

the Targums and discusses the interpretation and dating of the traditions which they contain.[2]

1. *Targumic Tosefta to Zechariah 12.10*

Our first text is the Targumic Tosefta to Zech. 12.10 from the margin of the Codex Reuchlinianus.[3] It is worth comparing with the biblical text and the standard text of Targum Jonathan:

Zech. 12.10	*Standard Targ. Jon. on Zech. 12.10*	*Targ. Tosefta on Zech. 12.10*
ושפכתי על־בית דויד	ואשפוך על בית דויד	ואשרי על בית דוד ועל
ועל יושב ירושלם רוח חן	ועל יתבי ירושלם רוח	יתבי ירושלם רוח נבואה
ותחנונים	חסד ורחמין	וצלותא דקשוט

translation in my *The Message of the Psalter* (JSOTSup, 252; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 304-50. I have also cited examples of Psalms texts applied to Messiah ben Joseph in 'Les psaumes dans le Judaïsme rabbinique', *RTL* 36.2 (2005), pp. 187-89.

2. The prevailing view is that Messiah ben Joseph is a late idea, arising perhaps from Bar Kokhba's defeat in 135 CE. For this theory see, J. Hamburger, *Realenzyklopädie des Judentums* (Strelitz i. M., 1874), II, p. 768; J. Levy, 'Mashiaḥ', *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1876–89), III, pp. 270-72; A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (*s.l.* 1883), p. 79 n. 1, 434-35; H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: Beck, 1924–28), II, p. 294; J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pp. 487-492; S. Hurwitz, *Die Gestalt des sterbenden Messias: Religionspsychologische Aspekte der jüdischen Apokalyptik* (Studien aus dem C.G. Jung-Institut, 8; Zürich/ Stuttgart: Rascher, 1958) pp. 178-80; G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: Fontana–Collins 1973), pp. 139-40; J. Heinemann, 'The Messiah of Ephraim and the Premature Exodus of the Tribe of Ephraim', *HTR* 68 (1975), pp. 1-15, who suggests that an existing militant Ephraim Messiah became a dying messiah by analogy with Bar Kokhba. R.P. Gordon cautiously mentions Heinemann's view in 'The Ephraimite Messiah and the Targum(s) to Zech. 12.10', in J.C. Exum and H.G.M. Williamson (eds.), *Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J.A. Clines* (JSOTSup, 373; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), pp. 189-200 (194). For my part, I have proposed that there is evidence for the Josephite Messiah not only from the early first century CE ('Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis'), but also from before 100 BCE ('The Fourth Deliverer', p. 553; 'Firstborn *Shor* and *Rem*').

3. For the Codex Reuchlinianus marginal text, see A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (4 vols. in 5; Leiden: Brill, 1962), III, p. 495. According to R.P. Gordon, the manuscript dates from 1105 CE (K.J. Cathcart and R.P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets* [The Aramaic Bible, 14; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989], p. 19). For the standard Targum text, see P. de Lagarde, *Prophetae Chaldaice* (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1967 [1872]), p. 484. The translations are my own.

		ומן בתר כדין יפק משיח בר אפרים לאגחא קרבא עים גוג ויקטול יתיה גוג קדם תרעא דירושלם
והביטו אלי את אשר־דקרו	ויבעון מן קדמי על דאטלטלו	ויסתכלון לוותי ויבעון מיני מטול מא דקרו עממיא למשיח בר אפרים
וספדו עליו כמספד על־היחיד	ויספדון עלוהי כמא דספדין על יחידא	ויספדון עלוהי כמא דספדין אבא ואמא על בר יחידאי
והמר עליו כהמר על־הבכו.	ויימרון עלוהי כמא דממרן על בוכרא.	ויתמררון עלוהי כמא דמתמררין על בוכרא.
And I shall pour out upon the house of David and upon the dweller of Jerusalem a spirit of favour and supplications.	And I shall pour out upon the house of David and upon the dwellers of Jerusalem a spirit of loyal-love and compassion.	And I shall cause to rest upon the house of David and upon the dwellers of Jerusalem a spirit of prophecy and true prayer. And afterwards Messiah bar Ephraim shall go forth to engage in battle with Gog, and Gog will slay him before the gate of Jerusalem.
And they shall look to me whom they have pierced	And they will inquire of me because they were exiled,	And they will look to me and inquire of me why the nations pierced Messiah bar Ephraim,
and they will mourn for him just as the mourning for the only one	and they will mourn for him just as they mourn for an only one	and they will mourn for him just as a father and mother mourn for an only son
and will be in bitterness over him like the bitterness over a firstborn.	and will be in bitterness over him like the bitterness over a firstborn.	and will be in bitterness over him like the bitterness over a firstborn.

a. *Interpretation*

The Tosefta differs from Zechariah and the standard Targum Jonathan in three areas.

(i) *Messiah bar Ephraim.* The Tosefta features a figure absent from both the Zecharian text and Targum Jonathan: Messiah bar Ephraim. Where does the meturgeman derive this figure and why does he insert him at this point? Messiah bar Ephraim is clearly the figure whom the Talmud and

later commentators identify within Zech. 12.10 as Messiah ben Joseph.[4] (Ephraim being Joseph's son, any bar Ephraim is *ipso facto* a ben Joseph.) The question, then, is not simply why the meturgeman inserts Messiah bar Ephraim into Zech. 12.10, but why Israelite literature in general identifies Zech. 12.10 with a Josephite Messiah. There seem to be several clues within the verse and its context.

First, the figure of Zech. 12.10 appears to be a Messiah in the fuller sense; that is, a divinely appointed eschatological king. The events are to take place at the future consummation 'on that day' (Zech. 12.3-11 *et passim*). He is the LORD's representative, for the divine oracle makes his piercing like the piercing of the LORD himself. He is also a king. He is mourned by the royal and noble clans of Judah and Levi (12.12). The mourning is compared to the mourning for Hadad-Rimmon, or 'Highness Baal'.[5] The Targum on v. 11 confirms the same point, comparing the mourning to the lamentation for kings Ahab and Josiah. Torrey sums it up thus:

> Bear in mind that this is in the setting of eschatology, the whole chapter makes this plain; and also, that the picture drawn of the universal lamentation either points to a royal figure or else is intolerable exaggeration.[6]

This eschatological king displays Josephite characteristics. First, like Joseph, he is pierced (דקרו). For Jacob equates Joseph's sufferings with piercing by arrows: 'The archers bitterly attacked him, and shot at him, and hated him' (Gen. 49.23). Similarly, just as it was Judah who 'pierced' Joseph and then looked to him (Gen. 37.26-27; 45.3), so too Judahites pierce this figure and then look to him. And just as Joseph's sufferings brought life to those who despised him (Gen. 50.20-21), so too here. For

4. *B. Suk.* 52a; *Asereth Melakhim* 4.14; *Midrash Wayyosha* 18.15 (A. Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* [=*BHM*] [6 vols. in 2; Leipzig: Vollrath, 1853–77; Photog. repr. Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967], I, p. 56); *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai* 25; Saadia, *Kitab al Amanat* VIII.5 (*The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* [trans. Rosenblatt; New Haven, 1948], pp. 301-302); Rashi on *Suk.* 52a; Ibn Ezra on Zech. 12.10; Abravanel on Zech. 12.10; Alshekh, *Marot ha-Zove'ot* on Zech. 12.10. See also the citation of Zech. 12.12 at *Aggadat Mashiah* 27. It is notable that Rashi, although endorsing this interpretation of Zech. 12 in his commentary on *Suk.* 52a, records it merely as a view of 'many' in his Bible commentary. Kimḥi disputes it in his commentary on Zech. 12.10.

5. Hadad is a pseudonym of Baal at *Baal* 2.i.46; 4.vii.36; 12.i.41 (J.C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978], pp. 43, 65, 134). For the acclamation 'Highness Baal' (*mlkn. ʾalʾiyn. bʿl*) see *Baal* III.E.40 (Gibson, *Canaanite Myths*, p. 54).

6. C.C. Torrey, 'The Messiah Son of Ephraim', *JBL* 66 (1947), pp. 253-77 (272).

when 'the house of David and the dweller of Jerusalem' mourn their abuse of the pierced one, a fountain is opened to cleanse them from sin and impurity.[7]

Second, the figure of Zech. 12.10 is, like Joseph, mourned as a firstborn. Jacob bestowed on Joseph primogeniture over all his sons in place of disgraced Reuben (1 Chron. 5.1-2). He received the firstborn's preeminence and double portion (Gen. 37.2, 3, 14; 48.22; 49.26) and his tribes are blessed with the name of firstborn (Deut. 33.17). And his apparent decease was bitterly mourned (Gen. 37.35). In fact, mourning for a titular firstborn also marks his son Ephraim. For second-born Ephraim also received firstborn status as a tribe of Israel in his own right (Gen. 48.5-20; Jer. 31.9) and his descendants, like his father Joseph, were taken away and bitterly mourned (Jer. 31.15). Therefore Joseph–Ephraim, like Zechariah's figure, can certainly be regarded as a bitterly-mourned firstborn.

Third, the Josephite identity of Zechariah's figure is confirmed by Amos 8.10, the stepping-stone between Gen. 37.35 and Zech. 12.10. For Amos takes the Genesis *mourning* (אבל) to predict *mourning of an only one* (אבל יחיד) for the coming exile of the tribes of Joseph. Amos's phrase is then modified by Zechariah to *mourning of an only one* (ספד יחיד) who, by analogy with Amos and Genesis, must be a Josephite.[8]

Fourth, the pierced one of Zech. 12.10 can be identified with the figure of Zech. 11.12-13, who, like Joseph at Gen. 37.28, is priced for silver.[9]

7. That the events of 13.1 are a consequence of those of 12.10-14 is seen from the fact that the fountain is opened to cleanse 'the house of David and the inhabitant of Jerusalem' (13.1), precisely those who in 12.10 mourn in repentant supplication. That the phrase 'the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem' (12.10; 13.1) functions as an *inclusio* around the pericope is noted by P. Lamarche, *Zacharie IX–XIV* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1961), pp. 85-86, who argues that Zech. 12.10–13.1 is a literary unit with the structure ABB′A′; and by W. Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja 1–8, Sacharja 9–14, Maleachi* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1976), p. 227; R.L. Smith, *Micah–Malachi* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), p. 280, also notes its literary-structural significance.

8. *Tefillat Rav Shimon ben Yohai* (*BHM* IV.117-26: 125) applies the preceding verse, Amos 8.9, to Messiah ben Joseph. Amos 8.9 is interpreted also of Josiah (*B. MK* 25b) who, like the figure of Zech. 12.10, is pierced through at Megiddo (2 Kgs 23.29-30; 2 Chron. 35.24-25; 1 Esd. 1.32).

9. Among modern commentators, the identification is made by Lamarche, *Zacharie*, pp. 150-52; Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja*, pp. 223-24; M.C. Black, *The Rejected and Slain Messiah Who is Coming with his Angels* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1991), p. 85; P.R. Ackroyd, 'Zechariah', in M. Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1962), pp. 646-55 (654-55). Among ancient interpreters, see *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai*, which cites

For the figure of Zech. 11.12-13 shares the divine authority of the king of 12.10. He is the LORD's shepherd-king (רעי, 11.17; 13.7) and trusted confidant (גבר עמיתי, 13.7); he identifies himself with the LORD (כרתי, 11.10); the LORD identifies himself with him (יקרתי, 11.13); he has authority to break the bond between Israel and Judah (11.4-17). Like the figure of 12.10, he is pierced in an act of violence (11.17; 13.7). These similarities are confirmed by the fact that the two shepherd passages form an *inclusio* around the description of the pierced one in ch. 12 (11.4-17; 13.7-9). So it seems fair to deduce that the pierced king of Zech. 12.10 is also the stricken shepherd who, like Joseph, is priced for silver. And if the parallel between Joseph's sale-price and the shepherd's hire is not exact, yet the pricing of an individual for a given number of silver pieces is unique to these two figures in the Old Testament.[10]

Finally, the wider context of Zechariah 9–12 has repeated references to the redemption of the tribes of Joseph-Ephraim. The prisoners to be freed from the waterless pit (9.11) are certainly Josephites, their imprisonment being a verbal reference to the pits of Joseph and their Benjamite brother Jeremiah (שלחתי...מבור אין מים בו; cf. Gen. 37.24; Jer. 38.6).[11] These gathered exiles are to be recompensed with Joseph's double portion (9.12).[12] Ephraim and Judah together will contend with the nations (9.13). The house of Joseph will be saved and restored; they will be mighty men; they will be gathered in and redeemed and return from the nations (10.6-12). Then again the brotherhood between Judah and Israel is broken (11.14), after which the shepherd is smitten, the king pierced (11.17; 12.10). All in all, the Ephraimite flavour of these chapters supports the

Zech. 12.10 of Messiah ben Joseph and then describes the consequent exile with Zech. 13.9, which describes the events following the death of the stricken shepherd, and *Otot ha-Mashiah*, which likewise cites Zech. 13.9 of the events following Ben Joseph's death. For the general messianic interpretation of the shepherd, see Mt. 26.31; Mk 14.27 (Zech. 13.7); *Gen. R.* 98.9 (Zech. 11.12). For a more detailed discussion of the messianism of Zech. 9–12, see Mitchell, *Message*, pp. 200-209.

10. Twenty silver pieces may have been the going price for teenage Joseph, but the shepherd's 'fine hire' of thirty silver pieces was derisory, being the redemption price of a woman (Lev. 27.3-5).

11. Jeremiah is very much the prophet of the banished tribes of Ephraim. Jer. 30–33 is the longest sustained treatment of the theme of the restoration of the ten tribes in the Bible. *B. Arak.* 33a tells how Jeremiah gathered (elements of) the ten tribes and Josiah ruled over them.

12. Joseph's double portion as honorary firstborn (1 Chron. 5.1-2) included both an extra portion of land (Gen. 48.22) and two tribes of Israel descending from him, Ephraim and Manasseh, each with a full inheritance in their own right (Gen. 48.13-22).

idea that this Messiah is himself an Ephraimite, whose sufferings result from the hostility between Judah and Ephraim.

These, then, are probably the elements which prompted the meturgeman to find an Ephraimite–Josephite Messiah in Zech. 12.10. In that case, in inserting Messiah bar Ephraim into Zech. 12.10, he was simply making explicit the Josephite characteristics which he felt were implicit in Zechariah's king. He may have done this because he wanted to clarify what rightly seemed obscure. He may also have been concerned to show that the LORD, the speaker of the oracle (12.1, 4, 9), is not himself the slain one, as v. 10 might suggest.

It is, of course, quite beside the point whether we as modern readers can understand the text this way. Our concern is where the meturgeman and other ancient authorities derived their interpretation. Yet, if we find it hard to see how the meturgeman could draw a Josephite Messiah from this veiled imagery, we should perhaps consider that he was relying not on Zechariah alone, but on a still older tradition which he saw underlying Zechariah's figure, namely, the coming Josephite hero of Deut. 33.17.[13]

(ii) *Gog.* A second non-Zecharian figure who appears in the Targum is Gog, the slayer of Messiah bar Ephraim. Unlike Bar Ephraim, Gog is named in the Bible. He is, of course, Ezekiel's latterday prince of Rosh, Meshekh and Tubal who comes with his horde to wage war on Israel, gathered from exile in the latter days, but is shattered by divine judgment on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38–39). However, the Targum inserts a detail that Ezekiel omits—before his defeat, Gog slays Messiah bar Ephraim.

How does Gog gain this extra kudos? Clearly Ezekiel 38–39 allows him some success. He does invade Israel and cover it like a cloud before his eventual demise (38.16-22). Such an eschatological invasion resembles the attacks described at Zech. 9.14-17; 12.2-9 and 14.1-13 where the invaders threaten Jerusalem and ravage the city.[14] It therefore seems that

13. See my 'Firstborn *Shor* and *Rem*', pp. 223-24. The coming Ephraimite hero of Deut. 33.17 is likened to a firstborn bull who becomes a wild ox with horns which will conquer all nations. Three things are notable: (1) the text speaks of a Josephite hero, like Joshua; (2) since the firstborn bull is a sacrificial animal, this hero must suffer sacrificially before his exaltation as a triumphant wild ox (Num. 23.22; Job 39.9-12); (3) since Joshua did not conquer all nations, nor was it his remit (Josh. 3.10), this hero was bound to be looked for in the future (so too Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum NT*, II.293).

14. It is not clear how far the three passages Zech. 9.14-17; 12.2-9, and 14.1-13 indicate one event. Certainly, in each case more is told of the invaders' success. In 9.14-17,

the Targum equates Gog's invasion in Ezekiel with the Zecharian invasions, slotting the Zecharian details into Ezekiel's vision, perhaps between vv. 17 and 18 of Ezekiel 38.[15] This allows Gog's campaign such initial success that he can slay the Josephite Messiah at the gate of Jerusalem, before he and his horde are blown away by the intervention of God.[16] In making these connections, the Targum would again appear to be making explicit what is implied in Zechariah, for the Zecharian text itself seems to draw on Ezekiel,[17] while Ezekiel, in turn, claimed to be passing on a older tradition (Ezek. 38.17; cf. Jer. 26.16-19).

(iii) *The exoneration of the house of David and the dwellers in Jerusalem.* In Zech. 12.10 those responsible for the death of the pierced Messiah appear to be 'the house of David and the dweller in Jerusalem' for it is

they invade the land and attack Jerusalem (Mitchell, *Message*, pp. 141-42); in 12.3-9, they besiege Jerusalem (12.2); and in 14.1-13, they ravage the city (14.2). However, there are similarities in language between Zech. 12.3-9 and 14.1-13 in particular. There is the gathering of all nations (12.3; 14.2), panic (12.4; 14.13), and blindness of men and beasts (12.4; 14.12-15). This may suggest that these two invasions should be equated.

15. So too Rashi, who comments at Ezek. 38:17, 'Zechariah also prophesied concerning the wars of Gog and Magog: *And I will gather all the nations*, etc.'; and at Zech. 14.2, where he names Gog as the leader of that invasion.

16. The death of Messiah bar Ephraim at the gate of Jerusalem reappears in later texts. See *Aggadat Mashiah* 21-27; *Otot ha-Mashiah* 9.1; *Sefer Zerubbabel* 40; *Pirqei Mashiah* 5.45 (between the Ephraim and Corner Gates); *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai* 25-26 (East Gate); and *Pereq Rav Yoshiyyahu* (*BHM* VI.112-116: 115). Elsewhere he simply dies at Jerusalem: *Asereth Melakhim* 4.14; *Tefillat Rav Shimon ben Yohai* (*BHM* IV.125; the unstated location is Jerusalem, since he makes war with the 'camp' of Armilus, and Armilus later turns to destroy Jerusalem 'a second time'); *Zohar* Shlakh Lekha 136. The origin of the idea may be this Targum itself, drawing on Zech. 12.2 or 14.1-2.

17. See, for instance, the earthquake (Zech. 14.4-5, 10; Ezek. 38.19-20), plague (Zech. 14.12-15; Ezek. 38.22), the enemy's mutual self-destruction (Zech. 14.13; Ezek. 38.21), the ultimate exaltation of Jerusalem (Zech. 14.10-11; 16-21; Ezek. 40–48), the river from Jerusalem (Zech. 14.8; Ezek. 47.1-12), and a dozen other points of similarity which I have listed in Mitchell, *Message*, p. 147. The dependence of Zech. 9–14 on Ezek. 38–39 is widely noted by commentators (Black, *The Rejected and Slain Messiah*, pp. 48-50; C. Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope: A Commentary on the Books of Haggai and Zechariah* [International Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], p. 115; R. Mason, 'The Use of Earlier Biblical Materials in Zechariah IX–XIV: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis' [unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, 1973]; M. Delcor, 'Les sources du Deutero-Zacharie et ses procédés d'emprunt', *RB* 59 [1952], pp. 385-411; H.G. Mitchell, J.M.P. Smith and J.A. Bewer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Jonah* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912], pp. 236-39).

said of them that 'they will look to me whom they have pierced'. However, both the standard Targum Jonathan and the Tosefta seem concerned to exonerate them. The standard Targum simply rewrites the passage so that they enquire why they were exiled. The Tosefta, however, retains the enquiry as to the king's death, but shifts the responsibility for it by taking the subject of the second verb—'they have pierced' (דקרו)—to be the nations rather than the Jerusalemites.[18] Certainly, the Hebrew third person plural not infrequently indicates the indefinite person.[19] But to assume the indefinite person for דקרו is hardly warranted when והביטו only four words before is definite. And to assume a new definite subject ('the nations') when none intervenes amounts to rewriting the biblical text.

In the Zecharian oracle the LORD speaks as if he himself has been slain in his royal representative, and says that the house of David and the Jerusalemites will gaze upon him. In the Tosefta, however, they rather enquire of the LORD why the Messiah has been slain. This requires, first, that Hebrew אלי ('to me') becomes Aramaic מיני ('from me') and, second, that Hebrew את אשר ('whom', 'which') becomes מטול מא ('for what reason'). Neither change can be justified on the basis of the Hebrew.

Again, in Zechariah the LORD 'pours out' (ושפכתי) on the house of David and the Jerusalemites a spirit of 'grace and prayers-for-mercy' (חן ותחנונים) to repent of their deed. But in the Targum Tosefta he merely 'causes to rest' (ואשרי) on them 'a spirit of prophecy and true prayer' (נבואה וצלותא דקשוט) to comprehend the cause of the king's death. And whereas in Zechariah the pouring out of the spirit follows the king's death and leads to contrition for it, in the Targum Tosefta the resting of the spirit precedes the Messiah's going out to battle, and is therefore unconnected with his death. These changes diminish both the LORD's gracious activity and the repentance of the house of David and the Jerusalemites, so mitigating their guilt.

The cumulative effect of these changes is to rewrite Zech. 12.10, both in substance and in emphasis. The house of David and the dwellers in Jerusalem are exonerated of the culpability which is theirs in Zechariah. They do not gaze upon the LORD slain in his representative, but simply enquire of him; thus the LORD need not pour out on them repentance, but only give them a spirit of prophecy and prayer; the blame for the deed is

18. The nations become the standard subject of the verb in later interpretation. See Rashi on Zech. 12.10 and *Suk*. 52a; Ibn Ezra on Zech. 12.10; Kimḥi on Zech. 12.10.

19. As it does also in English, as, for example, in a phrase such as, 'They say the weather will be fine tomorrow'.

laid upon Gog and the nations. Given the Judean sympathies of the Targum tradition, these changes are understandable. But clearly their justification is found less in Zechariah than in the presupposition that Judeans cannot be guilty of the deed described.

b. *Dating*

Although current views tend toward a later redaction date, *Targum Jonathan* clearly contains early elements. As regards the passage in hand, it appears from the citations of the Targum to Zech. 12.11 in *B. Meg.* 3a and *B. MḲ* 28b that 'the forerunner of the ST [Standard Targum] text predated R. Joseph by a significant period of time'.[20] Since Rab Joseph died in 323 CE, that takes us back to at least the middle of the third century. Moreover, in *B. MḲ* 28b, it is R. Akiva, who lived two centuries before (50–135 CE), who cites the Targum absolutely verbatim.[21] So an early date for the Targum on the preceding verse should hardly be excluded.

In this case Gordon has suggested that the Tosefta is older than the standard Targum, and that the omission of the piercing in the latter may be due to its being 'subjected to (incomplete) revision as a reaction to Christian citation of this verse as a messianic prooftext'.[22] Several considerations support this view and ultimately suggest that the ideas found in the Tosefta derive from before the turn of the era.

First, there appear to be marks of revision in the standard Targum. For, in exchanging the Bible text's piercing with 'And they shall inquire before me why they were exiled', it gives no indication who is the object of the next phrase, 'and they shall mourn for him'. The former subject of the pronoun has been excised and not replaced.[23] The Tosefta reading should therefore be preferred as the more original, not only because of its unique content, but also because of its grammatical superiority, while the standard Targum appears to be a hasty abridgement of the Tosefta.

20. Gordon, 'The Ephraimite Messiah', p. 191 n. 7. Gordon notes that 'there is no reason to assume that the Talmudic quotation has been assimilated to the ST [Standard Targum] text' (p. 191) for elsewhere 'Talmudic quotations of Targum texts can differ significantly from the standardized version (cf. Zeph. 3.18 as quoted in *b. Ber.* 28a).'

21. Allowing, of course, for orthographic differences, such as דקטל instead of די קטל, which are inevitable in transcribing oral tradition.

22. Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum*, p. 220 n. 2.

23. Gordon rightly notes that at this point 'ST…descends into obscurity and possibly even grammatical incongruence' ('The Ephraimite Messiah', p. 185).

That this abridgement took place in reaction to Christian citation, as Gordon suggests, is supported by early Christian use of Zech. 12.10. John's Gospel advances it as a proof-text (19.37) in relation to its own Messiah ben Joseph (1.45)—whatever the patronymic may mean there.[24] So does Johannine tradition elsewhere (Rev. 1.7). Indeed, such Christian citation of the verse would appear to demonstrate its existing messianic interpretation in Israel. For, since proof-texts by their nature must be acknowledged as such by one's readership, and since John's Gospel was almost certainly written for Israelites,[25] one can fairly deduce that Israel recognized a pierced Messiah in Zech. 12.10 before John's Gospel appeared, that is, in the second half of the first century.[26] Such a deduction is confirmed by the *baraitha* at *B. Suk.* 52a, the record of a temple debate from between 55 and 65 CE, which cites Zech. 12.10 as a messianic proof-text.[27]

Finally, textual arguments aside, it must be said that this Tosefta, and the messianic interpretation of Zech. 12.10 in general, could hardly have arisen in the Christian period. For there would have been small advantage to the Judean establishment in interpreting Zech. 12.10 of a Messiah from northern Israel, slain at Jerusalem's gate, after the death of Jesus of Nazareth. That would simply have given credence to Nazarene claims, something the Judean elite would have been concerned to avoid.[28]

24. I share the view of R. Pietrantonio ('El Mesías Asesinado: El Mesías ben Efraim en el Evangelio de Juan', *RevBíb* 44 [1982/85], pp. 1-64) that John's Gospel presents Jesus as Messiah ben Joseph.

25. The frequent recourse to biblical imagery and texts in John's Gospel suggests that its intended readership was Israelite. For more, see K. Bornhäuser, *Das Johannesevangelium: eine Missionsschrift für Israel* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928); J.A.T. Robinson, 'The Destination and Purpose of St John's Gospel', *NTS* 6 (1960), pp. 117-31; G.J. Brooke, 'Christ and the Law in John 7–10', in B. Lindars (ed.), *Law and Religion: Essays in the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1988), pp. 102-12; D.A. Carson, 'The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:30-31 Reconsidered', *JBL* 108 (1987), pp. 639-51; *idem*, *The Gospel according to John* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1991), pp. 90-93.

26. Post-100 CE dates for John's Gospel have been ruled out by the discovery of Papyrus Egerton. Modern estimates range from 55–95 CE (Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, pp. 84-86). The lack of reference to the destruction of the Temple, an event foretold within the Gospel itself (Jn 2.19), is thought by some to indicate a date before 70 CE (see J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* [London: SCM Press, 1976]). The Revelation is generally regarded as originating during Diocletian's persecution, c. 95 CE.

27. For the dating, see Mitchell, 'Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis', p. 79.

28. The point is made also by Torrey, 'The Messiah Son of Ephraim', p. 257.

It therefore appears that the idea of Messiah bar Ephraim—and this Tosefta which enshrines his memory—predates Christian times. It is not clear by how much. But, for the idea of the Josephite Messiah to survive the vehement reaction to Nazarene claims at all, it was probably well established before the turn of the era.

One final point should be considered. In Zechariah, the slayer of the Josephite king is royal Judah and the Jerusalemites—perhaps as an expression of the ancient sibling rivalry between Judah and Joseph–Ephraim (11.14). But in the Tosefta, his slayer is Gog and the nations. If, then, this Messiah bar Ephraim tradition predates Nazarene claims, is the Targum view of who killed him equally as old? There are two options: either the activity of Gog or the nations was added to existing Messiah bar Ephraim traditions as an initial defence against Nazarene accusations before the whole passage was later revised in the standard Targum, or else the deed was already attributed to Gog before the Nazarene movement, in which case the idea that Judah could not be responsible for the death of Zechariah's king predates the events of 30 CE. It would appear from LXX that the latter option may be preferable, since its 'they will look to me because they [the enemy?] have triumphed and they will mourn for him' may suggest that the death of Zechariah's king was already being attributed to the nations before the Christian period.[29]

2. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan *on Exodus 40.9-11*

Our second text is from the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.[30] It is one of those passages describing the furnishings of the tabernacle upon which this Targum often supplies haggadic details:

9 ותיסב ית משחא דרבותא ותרבי ית משכנא וית כל דביה ותקדש יתיה מטול כליל דמלכותא דבית יהודה ומלכא משיחא דעתיד למיפרק ית ישראל בסוף יומיא 10 ותרבי ית מדבחא דעלתא וית כל מנוי ותקדש ית מדבחא ויהי מדבחא קדש קודשין מטול כלילא דכהונתא דאהרן ובנוי ואליהו כהנא רבא דעתיד למשתלחא בסוף

9. You shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it; you shall consecrate it for the sake of the crown of the kingdom of the house of Judah, and of the King Messiah who is destined to redeem Israel at the end of days. 10. You shall anoint the altar of burnt offerings and all its utensils, and consecrate

29. καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρός με ἀνθ' ὧν κατωρχήσαντο καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν.

30. The text is from E.G. Clarke with W.E. Aufrecht, J.C. Hurd and F. Spitzer, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1984), pp. 117-18. The translation is my own.

גלוותא 11 ותרבי ית כיורא ויתּ בסיסיה ותקדש יתיה מטול יהושע משומשנך רבא דסנהדרין דעמיה דעל ידוי עתידה ארעא דישראל למיתפלגא ומשיחא בר אפרים דנפיק מיניה דעל ידוי עתידין בית ישראל למנצחא לגוג ולסיעתיה בסוף יומיא

the altar, and the altar will be most holy for the sake of the crown of the priesthood of Aaron and his sons, and of Elijah the high priest who is to be sent at the end of the exiles. 11. You shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it for the sake of Joshua, your attendant, the head of the Sanhedrin of his people, by whose hand the land of Israel is to be divided, and of Messiah bar Ephraim, who will proceed from him, and by whose hand the house of Israel will conquer Gog and his horde at the end of days.

a. *Interpretation*

The text is tripartite, each section relating to the three foremost tribes of Israel: Judah, Aaron (Levi), and Ephraim. Each section tells how the tabernacle and its vessels must be anointed on behalf of representatives of these tribes. Each tribe has two sets of representatives, the first historical, the second eschatological. The three eschatological heroes are explicitly messianic. They are the King Messiah from Judah and Messiah bar Ephraim from Joshua, who are to come 'at the end of days'; and Elijah the (anointed) high priest who is to come 'at the end of the exiles'.

Three interpretational issues emerge from the passage: first, literary genre; second, bar Ephraim's Joshuanic descent; third, his vanquishing of Gog.

(i) *Literary genre.* The passage is a polymessianic testimonium, a genre well-attested elsewhere. For instance, 4Q175 (4QTestimonia), dating from about 100 BCE, features texts denoting Prophet, King Messiah, Priest Messiah, and Joshua (Josephite–Ephraimite) Messiah.[31] The 'Four Craftsmen' *baraitha* of rabbinic literature, which displays such similarities to 4Q175 as to suggest that both derive from a common second century BCE source, features the same four figures.[32] *Testament of Naphtali* 5.1-8, another early text, features the same figures as our Targum—

31. For a discussion of the tetramessianism of 4Q175, see my 'The Fourth Deliverer'.

32. The various versions of the 'Four Craftsmen' texts are at *Pes. R.* 15.14-15; *Pes. K.* 5.9; *Song R.* 2.13.4; *Suk.* 52b; *SER* 96; *Yalq* on Zech 1.20 (568). For the dating of these texts and their underlying tradition, see my 'The Fourth Deliverer', pp. 547-49, and 'Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis Differ', pp. 84-89. A later version of the 'Four Craftsmen', *Num. R.* 14.1, ousts the Priest Messiah in favour of a Messiah from Manasseh.

Levi (Aaron), Judah and Joseph—as eschatological patriarchs.[33] A host of later texts feature Prophet, King Messiah and Josephite Messiah.[34]

Our present text is therefore very much one of a family. It strongly resembles *Testament of Naphtali* 5.1-8 in featuring Judahite King, Levite Priest and Josephite Messiah figures. It also resembles the tetramessianic 4Q175 and the 'Four Craftsmen', but has only one Prophet-Priest instead of two separate figures. It therefore seems to fall, so to speak, amidst these texts, all of which it resembles in clarity and brevity. It resembles the later midrashim in being trimessianic, but differs from them in featuring an eschatological Priest, a figure absent from the midrashim, and in its brevity, for the later texts tend to be lengthy.

(ii) *Joshuanic descent.* In this passage Messiah bar Ephraim is not only the son of Joseph and Ephraim, but also of the great Ephraimite captain, Joshua. If one were to find any ambiguity about physical descent in the verb נפיק ('proceed from'), the matter would be confirmed by the parallel with the King Messiah's descent from the royal house of Judah, and Elijah's from Aaron.[35] In fact, Bar Ephraim's Joshuanic descent is a

33. The dating of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* is notoriously disputed. Estimates vary from second century BCE with later interpolations to second century CE with use of earlier material. However, since 'the Aramaic Levi text has a large amount of the material that appears in the *Testament of Levi*, and a [Hebrew] *Testament of Naphtali* (4Q215) shares some points with the Greek work of the same name' (J.C. VanderKam, *Introduction to Early Judaism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001], p. 101), clearly some form of some of the testaments, including the *Testament of Naphtali*, existed early. For our present purpose it is enough to note that even latest estimates for *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are early compared to the apocalyptic midrashim cited above.

34. Many midrashim feature Ben Joseph, Elijah and Ben David (the first five in the following list are given in Hebrew and English in Mitchell, *Message*, pp. 304-50): *Aggadat Mashiah*; *Otot ha-Mashiah* 7-9; *Sefer Zerubbabel*; *Asereth Melakhim*; *Pirqei Mashiah* 5-6 (Nehemiah ben Hushiel = ben Joseph; cf. 'The Fourth Deliverer', p. 552 n. 36); *Pirkei Hekhalot Rabbati* 39-40 (ed. S.A. Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot* [Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kuk, 1952–55; repr. Jerusalem: Ktav ve-Sepher, 1968]), I.134; *Tefillat Rav Shimon ben Yohai* (*BHM* IV.124-25); *Pereq Rav Yoshiyyahu* (*BHM* VI.112-16); Saadia Gaon, *Kitab al Amanat* VIII.5-6 (ed. Rosenblatt, 301-304). The *Zohar* depicts Messiah bar Joseph–Ephraim, Messiah bar David and Moses (Faithful Shepherd) in trio (Bereshit 234; Mishpatim 483; Pinḥas 582; Ki Tetze 62, cf. 48). Bimessianic texts featuring Ben Joseph are too many to list. I have cited some in 'Rabbi Dosa' and in 'Les psaumes dans le Judaïsme rabbinique', pp. 187-89.

35. Elijah is usually said to be a descendant of Aaron, as at *Targ. Ps.-J.* on Exod. 6.18 (cf. *Yalkut* I.245b, last 2 lines, col. *c*.) and Deut. 30.4 (cf. also Exod. 4.13); *SER* 18 (ed. M. Friedmann [Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1969], pp. 97-98); *Pirkei Hekhalot Rabbati* 40.2

genealogical necessity. For, there being only one stirps from Ephraim to Joshua, any princely Ephraimite must necessarily trace descent from Joshua.[36] Although I am not aware of this matter of Joshuanic descent elsewhere, it would seem to be implied in the many texts which present him as a Joshuanic antitype, or which present Joshua as a messianic type.[37]

(iii) *The vanquishing of Gog.* Like his ancestor Joshua, bar Ephraim will be a military leader, vanquishing Gog and his horde. Such a presentation is consistent with his familiar designation in Palestinian texts as the War Messiah (משוח מלחמה).[38] Yet it seems to stand in striking contradiction to

(Wertheimer I.134). The idea is found also in patristic literature (Epiphanius, *Hæres* 55.3). His priestly descent is also implied in the common idea that he is identical with Phinehas ben Aaron (e.g. Pseudo-Philo, *LAB* 48.1-2; *PRE* §29.6, §47.3; *Targ. Ps.-J.* on Num. 25.12, where Phinehas is granted the function of Elijah at Mal. 3.23 [4.5]; Origen, *PG* XIV.225; cf. G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–30], II, p. 358). In *Sefer Zerubbabel*, he is called 'Elijah ben Eleazar' (cited in Mitchell, *Message*, pp. 317, 341). However, other opinions regard him as a Benjamite (*SER* 18; cf. 1 Chron. 8.27) or a Gadite (*Gen. R.* 71), or from Tishbe in Naphtali (Tob. 1.2; cf. Kimḥi on 1 Kgs 17.1).

36. E.G. Hirsch ('Joshua', in *JE*, VII, pp. 282-83) says that Joshua married Rahab and died without male issue, a view which Strack–Billerbeck (II, p. 296) advance against Bar Ephraim's Joshuanic descent, noting, however, that his lack of male issue is disputed. In fact, the proof-texts cited (*Zeb.* 116b; *Meg.* 14a; *Yalq.* Josh. §9) do not support the claim, and it does not reappear in *EJ.* Elsewhere there are traditions that Rahab married into Judah (Mt. 1.5; *Yalq. Shim.* on Joshua, §9).

37. For Joshua as messianic type, see my 'The Fourth Deliverer', pp. 550-53. For Bar Ephraim as Joshuanic antitype, see particularly those texts which apply to both figures the Ephraimite wild ox of Deut. 33.17: *Gen. R.* 6.9; 39.11; 75.12 (Joshua); 75.6; 95 MSV; 99.2 (Ben Joseph); *Num. R.* 2.7 (Joshua); 20.4 (Israel under Joshua); 14.1 (Ben Joseph); *Yalq.* I.959 (Joshua); II.568-70 (Ben Joseph). Elsewhere, Deut. 33.17 is applied to Ben Joseph–Ephraim at *Sifrê* on Deut. 33.16 (*Pisqa* 353); *Midr. Tanh.* §11.3 (ed. Buber, 102b); *Gen. R.* 75.6; 99.2; *PRE* 22a.ii; *AgBer* §79; *Num. R.* 14.1; *Zohar*, Mishpatim, 479, 481, 483; Pinḥas, 565, 567, 745; Ki Tetze, 21, 62. See also 1 En. 90.37-38 where the Messiah is presented in terms of the Josephite oxen of Deut. 33.17 (see my 'The Fourth Deliverer', pp. 550-51; Torrey, 'The Messiah Son of Ephraim', p. 267).

38. The identification is explicit at *Gen. R.* 99.2; *Midr. Tan.* §11.3 (ed. Buber, 102b); *Num. R.* 14.1; *AgBer* §63 (*BHM* IV, 87); 'Jelamdenu-Fragmente' §20 from *Kuntres Acharon* to *Yalq*. on the Pentateuch (*BHM* VI, 81). *Gen. R.* 75.6 and 99.2 apply the blessing on Joseph (Deut. 33.17) to the War Messiah. It is also noted by commentators: G.H. Dalman, *Der leidende und der sterbende Messias der synagoge* (Berlin: Reuther, 1888), p. 6; L. Ginzberg, 'Eine unbekannte jüdische Sekte', *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 58 (1914), p. 421; Heinemann, 'The Messiah of

our previous text, the Tosefta to Zech. 12.10, where it is Gog who vanquishes bar Ephraim. Two explanations are possible: first, that there were two separate traditions regarding the career of bar Ephraim; second, that the two ideas are related, the death of bar Ephraim somehow effecting the destruction of Gog and the final deliverance.

The first of these options allows two further possibilities. Either two apparently contradictory traditions co-existed side by side, or else Messiah bar Ephraim was originally a conquering War Messiah who later became a suffering Messiah, as Heinemann has suggested.[39] (A third possibility, that Bar Ephraim was a suffering Messiah who became a conquering Messiah, need not detain us. Not only has it not been suggested, but it assumes as a starting point the issue under dispute, that is, an early date for the suffering Ephraimite Messiah.) As regards Heinemann's proposal, I have suggested that *1 En.* 90.37-38 shows that the suffering and conquering aspects of the Josephite Messiah were already derived from Deut. 33.17 by the early second century BCE.[40] If that is so, any theory that the War Messiah became a suffering Messiah only in the later Targum period is ruled out. As for the independent co-existence of separate conquering and suffering traditions of the Josephite Messiah, the evidence would appear to be against it. For, while some shorter texts may feature only the one or other idea, fuller accounts usually speak of both. They generally describe Ben Joseph's initial military success, followed by his death, which is then followed by the appearance of Ben David and the defeat of the enemy.[41]

The second explanation, that bar Ephraim's death somehow effects Gog's defeat, has perhaps more to recommend it. There is, as noted above, the widespread idea that his death is the precursor to the appearance of

Ephraim', p. 7; H. Freedman and M. Simon, *The Midrash* (London: Soncino, 1939), I, p. 698 n. 2; IX, p. 125 n. 3; M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes, 1950 [1903]), p. 852 ('Mashiaḥ').

39. J. Heinemann, 'The Messiah of Ephraim and the Premature Exodus of the Tribe of Ephraim', *HTR* 68 (1975), pp. 1-15.

40. That is, in the messianic bovids of Enoch's *Animal Apocalypse*. Cf. my 'Firstborn *Shor* and *Rem*', and my comments at n. 13 above with those at 'The Fourth Deliverer', pp. 150-51.

41. See *Aggadat Mashiah*; *Otot ha-Mashiah*; *Sefer Zerubbabel*; *Asereth Melakhim*; *Pirqei Mashiah*; *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai*; *Pirkei Hekhalot Rabbati* §39-40; *Midrash Wayyosha* on Exod. 15.18 (*BHM* I.55-57); *Tefillat Rav Shimon ben Yohai* (*BHM* IV.124-25); Saadia Gaon, *Kitab al Amanat* VIII.5-6. See too *Pereq Rav Yoshiyyahu* (*BHM* VI.115) where Ben Joseph's death is not described, but is implied in his resurrection.

Ben David. That it is a necessary precursor is confirmed by the substantial evidence that his death was seen as a propitiating sacrifice.[42] In the Bible, the coming Josephite warrior of Deut. 33.17 is represented by the firstborn of a *shor*, an animal dedicated to sacrifice, while the death of the Josephite king in Zech. 12.10 opens the fountain to cleanse from sin in 13.1.[43] In later literature, the Josephite Lamb of God at *T. Ben*. 3.8 destroys Beliar by dying.[44] The discussion at *B. Suk.* 52a recognizes in Zech. 12.10–13.1 a link between the death of Messiah ben Joseph and the death of the evil inclination.[45] *Pesikta Rabbati* 36–37 represents the Ephraim Messiah's sufferings as effecting the destruction of Satan, bearing the sins of Israel, and bringing in the King Messiah and redemption. Saadia Gaon says that Messiah ben Joseph will purge Israel like one who purges with lye, if they have not repented, in order that the final redemption may come.[46] Another writer of the same period says—quite without explanation, as if citing a familiar tradition—'If they [Israel] are not pure, Messiah ben Ephraim will come; and if they are pure, Messiah ben David will come'.[47] Later authorities might be cited to the same effect.[48] Taken in the wider context of Israelite and Near Eastern tradition about the life-giving power of the mortal suffering of exalted figures—whether Moab's heir (2 Kgs 3.26-27), or Isaiah's servant of the LORD (Isa. 52.12–53.12), or Baal, or Jesus the Nazarene—such passages appear to support the case for seeing the death of Messiah bar Ephraim as effecting the final deliverance. Such a view would reconcile the apparently diverse traditions as to his suffering and conquering roles.

b. *Dating*

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan was still receiving input in the Islamic period, as the giving of Islamic names to Ishmael's wives at Gen. 21.21 attests.

42. For a fuller discussion of this subject and the relevant passages, see D.C. Mitchell, 'Messiah ben Joseph: A Sacrifice of Atonement for Israel'.

43. Cf. n. 7 above.

44. For a discussion of text and dating, see J.C. O'Neill, 'The Lamb of God in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,' *JSNT* 2 (1979), pp. 2-30.

45. See 'Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis Differ', pp. 78-79.

46. *Kitab al-Amanat* VIII.6 (ed. Rosenblatt, 304).

47. *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai* 23, cited in Mitchell, *Message*, pp. 331, 348; *BHM* III.78-82.

48. See Alshekh, *Marot ha-Zove'ot* on Zech. 12.10; Naphtali ben Asher Altschuler, *Ayyalah Sheluhah* (Cracow, 1593) on Isa. 53.4; Samuel b. Abraham Lañado, *Keli Paz* on Isa. 52.13; and Isaiah Horowitz (1555–1630), *Shney Luḥot ha-Berit* (Fürth 1724 [Amsterdam, 1649]), 299b.

But the bulk of its material is considerably older.[49] So, once again, each passage must be assessed on its own merits.

I would suggest a date for the passage from between c. 30 BCE and 30 CE. The *terminus a quo* derives from the combined priest-prophet Elijah, as opposed to separate Prophet Elijah and Priest Messiah figures, as in 4Q175 and the 'Four Craftsmen'. For the Priest Messiah features prominently in Hasmonean period texts, taking precedence even over the King Messiah from Judah.[50] But after the eclipse of the Hasmonean dynasty in c. 30 BCE, he falls into decline until his virtually complete disappearance after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.[51] Thus, the reduced role of the Priest Messiah in this Targum seems to indicate a date after 30 BCE.

The *terminus ad quem* derives from Messiah bar Ephraim's Joshuanic descent. Antipathy to Nazarene claims would have precluded the invention of a Joshua (Ἰησοῦς) Messiah after such a figure was advanced by the Nazarenes. (Indeed, later silence about the Josephite Messiah's Joshuanic descent may derive from the same cause.) This would require that the oral form of this Targum derives from before about 30 CE.

This date of c. 30 BCE to 30 CE is supported by internal literary features. The simple polypartite testimonial form most resembles the early testimonia 4Q175 and the 'Four Craftsmen', while the Prophet, King and Priest figures resemble *T. Naph.* 5. It lacks the narrative style of the apocalyptic midrashim of the early first millennium CE and differs still more from the highly digressive haggadic material of the Islamic period.

3. *Targum on Song of Songs §4.5 and §7.4*

Two references to Messiah bar Ephraim occur in the Targum to the Song of Songs, in §4.5 and §7.4. As the second passage is simply a repetition of the first half of the first, I shall deal only with §4.5. It is as follows:[52]

49. As regards an early date for parts of the Palestinian Targum tradition, see M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (AnBib, 27; Pontifical Biblical Institute: Rome, 1966), pp. 64-66, 112-17, 256-58, who dates some passages as early as the second century BCE; and R. LeDéaut, 'The Targumim', in W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989 [4 vols. 1984–2006]), II, pp. 563-90 (568-75).

50. See, e.g., *T. Reub*. 6.7-12; *T. Jud*. 21.1-5 and 1QSa 2.14-20

51. I have presented the evidence for the limited period of the Priest Messiah's popularity elsewhere. See, e.g., my 'Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis Differ', pp. 85-88.

52. The text is from P. de Lagarde, *Hagiographa Chaldaice* (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1967 [1873]), p. 154.

תרין פריקין דעתידין למפרקיך משיח בר דוד ומשיח בר אפרים דמין למשה ואהרן בני יוכבד דאמתילו לתרין אורזילין תיומי טביא והוון רעין לעמא בית ישראל בזכותהון ארבעין שנין במדברא במנא ובעופין פטימין ומי בארא דמרים:

Two deliverers shall there be to deliver you, Messiah bar David and Messiah bar Ephraim, who are like to Moses and Aaron, the sons of Jochebed, who were as fair as two gazelles that are twins. And they fed the people of the house of Israel, in their righteousness, forty years in the wilderness, with manna and with fat fowls and the waters of the well of Miriam.

Messiah bar David and Messiah bar Ephraim are compared, apparently respectively, to Moses and Aaron. Together, like Moses and Aaron, they will deliver Israel. Thus Messiah bar Ephraim is not a minor figure, but a key player in the final redemption, standing shoulder to shoulder with bar David. The comparison with Aaron may allude to the idea that he makes atonement for Israel (cf. Lev. 16.24, 32-33).

The reference to Moses and Aaron leading Israel forty years in the wilderness may simply be a reminiscence of the Exodus. However, it may connect typologically with events of Messiah bar Ephraim's career, particularly the years of his temporary kingdom before the coming of Ben David[53] or other details.[54] In the same way, it may be implied that the two Messiahs, like Moses and Aaron, will miraculously provide food and drink for Israel.

There is no obvious evidence regarding the date of this Targum passage.

53. His kingdom lasts 40 years at *Aggadat Mashiah* 22; *Midrash Aleph Beth* 11b.4 (ed. D.F. Sawyer, University of South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, 39; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993); *Sefer Zerubbabel* 38; while at *Sefer Elijah* an unspecified Messiah rules 40 years before the attack of Gog (M. Buttenwieser, *Die hebräische Elias-Apokalypse* [Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1897]). Messiah ben Joseph rules for an unspecified period at *Asereth Melakhim* 4.13; *Otot ha-Mashiah* 5.7-8; *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai* 22; *Tefillat Rav Shimon ben Yohai* (*BHM* IV.124-25); Saadia, *Kitab al Amanat* VIII.5 (ed. Rosenblatt, 301).

54. There is a 40-day period of oppression under Armilus at *Asereth Melakhim*, and Messiah ben Joseph's body lies unburied 40 days at *Pirkei Hekhalot Rabbati* §39.1. But if one wants to maintain a link with the Targum's wilderness, then 45 days appears to be all that is on offer. There is a 45-day wilderness exile after ben Joseph-Ephraim's death at *Aggadat Mashiah* 30-32; *Otot ha-Mashiah* 7.13-20; *Pirqei Mashiah* 5.45; *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai* 25; *Tefillat Rav Shimon ben Yohai* (*BHM* IV.125); *Pereq Rav Yoshiyyahu* (*BHM* I.115); and an unspecified period of exile at *Sefer Zerubbabel* 43-44; *Asereth Melakhim* 4.14; Saadia, *Kitab* VIII.5 (ed. Rosenblatt, 303).

4. *Conclusion*

A Josephite Messiah features in the Targums on each of the three sections of the Bible: Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings. He is invariably called Messiah bar Ephraim. None of his other known pseudonyms appear, whether Messiah ben Joseph, as in the Talmud (*B. Suk.* 52), or War Messiah, or Nehemiah ben Hushiel.[55] Later literature, including the Aramaic *Zohar*, frequently features the Hebrew form 'Messiah ben Ephraim',[56] while אפרים משיח צדקי ('Ephraim Messiah of my righteousness; Ephraim my lawful Messiah') is also well attested.[57] But the Aramaic form—משיח(א) בר אפרים ('Messiah bar Ephraim')—is exclusive to the Targums. They are therefore the first known source to apply the Ephraim patronymic to the Messiah and the only one to do so in its Aramaic form. However, the reason why they prefer the Ephraim patronymic, while the Talmud, for instance, prefers the Joseph one, is not obvious.

In the Targumic Tosefta to Zech. 12.10, Messiah bar Ephraim is slain by Gog. It appears that this tradition predates the Christian period. In the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, bar Ephraim vanquishes Gog. Internal evidence indicates that this tradition also predates Christian times. I am aware that such datings may not currently be popular, but I see no other possible conclusions on the basis of the evidence.

The apparent discrepancy between bar Ephraim as vanquishing and vanquished can perhaps be reconciled in the well-attested idea that his death effects the final redemption. Here it is worth noting that it is the Babylonian Targum tradition that speaks of his death, while the Palestinian tradition omits it. This resembles the Talmuds, where the Bavli speaks of Ben Joseph's death (Suk. 52a) while the Yerushalmi appears to have excised it.[58] This may suggest that the Ben Joseph–Ephraim tradition was regarded as less threatening in Babylon than in Palestine, where the

55. Nehemiah ben Hushiel is a frequent pseudonym for Messiah ben Joseph. See *Otot ha-Mashiah* §6-7; *Pirqei Hekhalot Rabbati* §39.1; *Sefer Zerubbabel* 38-42; *Tefillat Rav Shimon ben Yohai* (*BHM* IV, 125); *Pereq R. Yoshiyahu* (*BHM* VI, 114-115); *Pirqei Mashiah* §5.

56. *Midr. Pss.* §60.3; 87.6; *Sefer Zerubbabel* 36; *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai* 22-26; Ibn Ezra on Ps. 80.18; *Zohar*, Mishpatim, 477, 478; Beha'alotcha, 92; Pinḥas, 565, 582. At *Pirkei Hekhalot Rabbati*, §39, he is 'a man of Ephraim ben Joseph'.

57. *Pes. R.* 34, 36-37; *Pirqei Mashiah* §6.1; *Midrash Aleph Beth* §11b.15; *Pirkei Hekhalot Rabbati* §38.

58. See my comments at 'Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis', pp. 82-83.

messianic crises associated with Jesus, Bar Kokhba, and the destruction of temple and nation were still vivid. On the other hand, one may allow that these two Targums represent distinct schools of thought about Bar Ephraim. But evidence elsewhere suggests that his death is not a later idea; it would appear to be present from the beginning.[59]

The Targum on the Song of Songs likens the coming deliverers Bar David and Bar Ephraim to the former deliverers Moses and Aaron, but offers no evidence for dating.

59. As noted above (n. 13), the death of the Josephite Messiah is implicit in the sacrificial firstborn ox of Deut. 33.17 and 1 En. 90.37-38, and explicit in *B. Suk*. 52a. The idea that he might not die does not appear before the *Zohar* (Mishpatim 477; Beha'alotcha 92; Ki Tetze 21), which itself affirms his death elsewhere (Shlach Lecha 174; Balak 342; Ki Tetze 62).