

# A Genizah finished product for *She'elat Halom* based on *Sefer Ha-Razim*

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**ABSTRACT** The article presents the commented edition of a medieval finished product for *She'elat Halom* uncovered in the Cairo Genizah, which contains a literal quotation from a divinatory recipe preserved in *Sefer ha-Razim* (the *Books of Mysteries*), a famous Jewish literary book of magic dating back to late antiquity. The pertinent citation of a section from *Sefer ha-Razim* in a document, whose codicological features show that it had actually been used in a magical ritual before being thrown in the storehouse of the medieval Ben Ezra synagogue, provides substantial evidence on the transmission of Jewish divinatory lore and on the relationship between literary books of magic and finished products. The article examines in detail the textual correspondence between *Sefer ha-Razim* and the Genizah finished product, highlighting the linguistic and ritualistic analogy between the medieval technique of *She'elat Halom* and a specific divinatory recipe transmitted in *Sefer Ha-Razim* (SHR I §§109–14).

**I**N THE LAST DECADES, a remarkable number of Jewish magical texts have been identified and published, greatly enriching the scholarly understanding of Jewish magic and of its transmission throughout the centuries.<sup>1</sup> With a few exceptions, most of these ‘insider’ sources do not pre-date the ninth century.<sup>2</sup> Yet, many magical fragments uncovered in the Cairo

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1. For an exhaustive overview of the scholarship on Jewish magic and on the textual material published so far, see G. Bohak, ‘Prolegomena to the Study of the Jewish Magical Tradition’, *Currents in Biblical Research* 8 (2009), pp. 107–50.

2. By ‘insider’ sources, I refer to textual and archaeological evidence produced and used by Jewish

Genizah and several sections devoted to magic in medieval European and Oriental codices include magical material much earlier than the epoch in which they were copied.<sup>3</sup> Some of these medieval texts have in fact turned out to be copies of copies of magical compositions from late antiquity and beyond, which underwent an endless process of re-edition, translation and re-translation from one idiom to another.<sup>4</sup>

The different types of magical document discovered so far – from personalized finished products designated for active use during the ritual praxis to impersonal recipes annotated in free-formularies or in literary books of magic – attest to a wide and dynamic circulation of magical knowledge to almost all social layers of Jewish society.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, the Jewish literary books of magic that survived to the Middle Ages well exemplify the scribal character assumed by Jewish magic from the Byzantine era onwards and ascertain that this tradition had crystallized to a certain degree.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the free-formularies, single recipes and finished products prove the effective exchange between professionals and everyday users, giving us exceptional insight into the microhistory of the Jews and their neighbours.<sup>7</sup>

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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 engage in magical rituals; see G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 70. For a description of Jewish magical material pre-dating the Islamic Conquest, see *ibid.*, pp. 149–69, 183–94.

3. For a survey on the magical material uncovered in the Cairo Genizah, see G. Bohak, ‘Towards a Catalogue of the Magical, Astrological, Divinatory, and Alchemical Fragments from the Cambridge Genizah Collections’, in B. Outhwaite and S. Bhayro (eds), *From a Sacred Source: Genizah Studies in Honour of Professor Stefan C. Reif* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 53–79. Among the very few publications on Jewish manuscripts of magical content, see the remarkable studies of M. Benayahu, ‘The Book “Shoshan Yesod ha-Olam” by Rabbi Joseph Tirshom (MS Sassoon 290)’, in I. Weinstock (ed.), *Temirin* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1972), vol. I, pp. 187–269; G. Bohak, *A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of Jewish Magic: MS New York Public Library, Heb. 190 (Formerly Sassoon 56). Introduction, Annotated Edition and Facsimile*, 2 vols (in Hebrew; Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2014).

4. A pertinent example is given by the medieval reuse of an erotic spell first attested to in the fifth–sixth-century CE clay shreds from Horvat Rimmon; see Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, pp. 156–8.

5. By the term ‘recipe’, I refer to an impersonal text aimed at transmitting the instructions to engage in a magical ritual. By the expression ‘finished product’, I refer to an inscribed magical object designed for active use, which includes details regarding a specific user and about the precise goal of the magical enterprise. For an exhaustive survey on the Jewish magical texts and artefacts produced from late antiquity throughout the Middle Ages, see G. Bohak, ‘Reconstructing Jewish Magical Recipe Books from the Cairo Genizah’, *Ginzei Qedem* 1 (2005), pp. 9\*–29\*; *idem*, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, pp. 148–226.

6. For an introduction to Jewish literary books of magic, see Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, p. 169–82.

7. C. Ginzburg, ‘Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It’, *Critical Inquiry* 20:1 (Autumn 1993), pp. 10–35.

These sources are deeply interwoven and, together, define a picture, in which the theoretical and mostly impersonal knowledge of literary books of magic and free-formularies is put into effect *hic et nunc* in the personal practices attested to in single recipes and, overall, in finished products.

While scholars have already noted a few cases of textual correspondence between finished products and known recipes and between recipes preserved in different free-formularies, only a couple of Jewish finished products have turned out to be based on rituals described in late antique literary books of magic.<sup>8</sup> In what follows, I edit and discuss a document of this kind: namely, a finished product uncovered in the Cairo Genizah that was based on a specific recipe from the famous book of magic known by the name of *Sefer Ha-Razim* (the *Book of Mysteries*). The finished product, which was aimed at engaging in a specific oneiric technique called *She'elat Halom*, includes a long list of angelic names corresponding to those invoked in a divinatory ritual described in *Sefer Ha-Razim*. By analysing the textual correspondence between the late antique literary book and the medieval finished product, my article seeks to unveil the dynamics of development and circulation of the *She'elat Halom* within the Jewish community of Fustāṭ and to highlight the transmission and reuse of ancient Jewish divinatory lore throughout the Middle Ages.

### A finished product for *She'elat Halom* from the Cairo Genizah

The fragment I wish to present belongs to the Elkan Nathan Adler Collection in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, shelf mark JTSL ENA NS 12.5. It is a narrow paper leaf, 23.7 cm high and 10.3 cm wide. The leaf exhibits 23 lines written in black ink in the upper part of the recto, while the verso is blank. The handwriting, Oriental common square script,

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8. Beside the fragment presented here, there are two other Genizah finished products possibly based on *Sefer Ha-Razim*. One is discussed in B. Rebiger and P. Schäfer (eds), *Sefer ha-Razim I und II: Das Buch der Geheimnisse I und II*, 2 vols (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 132; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), vol. 1, pp. 190\*–91\*, and vol. 2, p. 331. The second is edited in G. Bohak and A. Bellusci, 'The Greek Prayer to Helios in *Sepher Ha-Razim*, in Light of New Textual Evidence', in J.F. Quack (ed.), *Cultural Plurality in Ancient Magical Texts and Practices* (Orientalische Religionen in der Antike; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming). For the relationship between the late antique literary book of magic known as *Harba de-Moshe* and a personalized handbook of magic, see O.-P. Saar, 'Success, Protection and Grace: Three Fragments of a Personalized Magical Handbook', *Ginzei Qedem* 3 (2007), pp. 101\*–33\*, especially p. 131\*.

indicates that the fragment was probably written by an unprofessional writer in the twelfth–thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The leaf, generally well preserved, is torn in the superior extremity and in the left margin, thus missing at least a couple of lines. The fragment JTSL ENA NS 12.5 represents a finished product for finding a hidden treasure by means of a specific dream technique. The document deserves particular attention, since it transmits a long citation from *Sefer ha-Razim*, a famous Jewish literary book of magic from late antiquity. In what follow I offer a transcription and translation of the Genizah fragment, together with a detailed discussion of the activated spell it contains.<sup>10</sup>

## JTSL ENA NS 12.5 r

- .1 [ ]
- .2 אנח ]
- .3 רבה דת[ראו] לנו מקום
- .4 הזהובים [הטמו]נין<sup>11</sup> בזו הדירה
- .5 באמת ובקושטה בשם בוא[ל]
- .6 נוהריאל דבבאל דימתמר דבאל
- .7 מחשין אתור דיאס: בכיתאל
- .8 סרורא אהים וא<sup>12</sup> אהגויה פרופיאל
- .9 מכסיאל עלזיאל תכורכס קרומיאל
- .10 רמיאל לחסון סלחאל אחיאל אבר
- .11 אובר סרוגיאל ידואל שמש[אל]
- .12 שפטיאל רחביא אחמודא
- .13 מרמדין אנוך אלפרט
- .14 אומיגדא קרוכנס שרפיאל
- .15 גדריאל ארהודא פורטניאל
- .16 אנמיאל רהטיאל דיתרון
- .17 חזא[ל] פתו[אל] גלגלא דמנצר
- .18 זיאל זיאל השבעתי עליכם

9. I wish to thank Dr Edna Engel of the National Library of Israel for kindly performing the palaeographic analysis of the fragment.

10. A preliminary edition of the fragment is found in A. Bellusci, 'Dream Requests from the Cairo Genizah', unpublished M.A. thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2011, pp. 95–7.

11. The reconstruction of the lacuna is based on the parallel text in T-S K 24.19 and Washington Freer Gallery 15, edited, respectively, in G. Bohak, 'Cracking the Code and Finding the Gold: A Dream Request from the Cairo Genizah', in J.A. Álvarez-Pedrosa Núñez and S. Torallas Tovar (eds), *Edición de Textos Mágicos de la Antigüedad y de la Edad Media* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010), pp. 9–23, and Y. Harari, 'Metatron and the Treasure of Gold: Notes on a Dream Inquiry Text from the Cairo Genizah', in G. Bohak, Y. Harari and S. Shaked (eds), *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 289–320.

12. רא shall be emended as אר, on the basis of the parallel in the manuscript New York, Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, JTS 8117 (JTS 8117). See below, p. 315.

19. כולכם בשם בוראכם קדוש  
 20. ושקאל מלככם שתגידו ל[י]  
 21. לי לי לי את שאלותי  
 22. ובקשתי באמת גלוי אמן  
 23. סלה

## Translation:

1. [ ]  
 2. [ ]  
 3. great, that you show us the place  
 4. of the gold coins in this apartment  
 5. in true and straight manner, in the name of BW'[L],  
 6. NWHRY'L, DBB'L, DYMTMR, DB'L,  
 7. MHŠYN, 'TWR, DY'S: BBYT'L  
 8. SRWR', 'HYM, or 'AHGYWH, PRWPY'L,  
 9. MKSY'L, 'LZY'L, TKWRKS, QRWMY'L,  
 10. RMY'L, LHŠWN, SLHY'L, 'HY'L, 'BR,  
 11. 'WBR, SRWGY'L, YDW'L, ŠMŠY'[L],  
 12. ŠPTY'L, RHBY', 'HMWD',  
 13. MRMDYN, 'NWK, 'LPRT,  
 14. 'WMYGD', QRWKNS, ŠRPY'L,  
 15. GDRY'L, 'RHWD', PWRṬNY'L,  
 16. 'GMY'L, RHTY'L, DYTRWN,  
 17. ḤZ'[L, PTW]'L, GLGL', DMNŠR,  
 18. ZZY'L, ZZY'L, I adjured you  
 19. all of you, in the name of your Holy Creator  
 20. and ŠQ'L your king, that you tell me,  
 21. to me, to me, to me, my questions  
 22. and my request in a true and unconcealed manner. Amen  
 23. Selah

*Analysis*

Due to a significant hole in the upper part, the text preserved in the Genizah fragment JTSL ENA NS 12.5 lacks a title and begins *in medias res*. Yet, the first legible lines (ll. 3–5) refer to the disclosure of hidden gold coins, thus pointing to a spell for finding a treasure. The expressions דתראו לנו, תגידו לי and בקשתי, in lines 3 and 20–22, reveal the divinatory character of the incantation and characterize it as ‘dream request’. This term refers to a specific divinatory technique attested to in Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures since antiquity and used to auto-induce a dream on

a certain topic to foretell the future or convey hidden knowledge.<sup>13</sup> A Jewish variant of this technique is known by the *terminus technicus* *She'elat Halom* and is documented in sources since the tenth century onwards.<sup>14</sup> Among the magical fragments of the Cairo Genizah there are more than 50 *She'elat Halom* (pl. of *She'elat Halom*) written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Judeo-Arabic.<sup>15</sup> Most of them belong to the classical period of the Cairo Genizah and represent the earliest insider evidence of this practice within the Jewish world.<sup>16</sup>

The Genizah corpus of *She'elat Halom*, for the most part composed of magical recipes, also includes six finished products written in a given circumstance

13. For Old Babylonian texts of this kind, see the so-called Prayers to the Gods of the Night, in the Hermitage tablet (ER.M. 15642) and in its parallel AO 6769, ll. 1–25; W. Horowitz, 'Astral Tablets in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 90 (2000), pp. 194–206. About thirty dream requests are preserved in the corpus of Greek and Demotic Magical Papyri; see S. Eitrem, 'Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual', in C.A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds), *Magica Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 175–87. See also J.F. Quack, 'Remarks on Egyptian Rituals of Dream-Sending', in P.I.M. Kousoulis (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology: Studies on the Boundaries between the Demonic and the Divine in Egyptian Magic* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 175; Louvain: Peeters, 2011), pp. 129–50; 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 Quack, *Cultural Plurality*.

14. In the tenth century CE, the Karaite Salmon b. Yeruham accuses the Rabbinic authorities of engaging in the technique of *She'elat Halom*, as part of his effort to discredit them; see MS Firkowicz, 2, Hebrew–Arabic collection, no. 2273, fol. 5, and J. Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature* (New York: Ktav Publication House, 1972; reprint of the Cincinnati, 1931–5 edn), vol. 2, pp. 82–3. The technique of *She'elat Halom* is discussed in Hai Gaon's response to the rabbis of Kairouan about the question of the efficacy and legitimacy of using the divine Name and other magical techniques; for the text, see S. Emanuel, *Newly Discovered Geonic Responsa* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Ofek, 1995), particularly pp. 126–7 and 137–8. Allusions to this dream practice are found in Abraham Ibn Ezra's commentary to Exodus; see Abraham Ibn Ezra, *Commentary to Exodus* (Long Version), 14:19. And in some of Maimonides' writings, see the passages in *Mishneh Torah*, *Min Ha-Mitzvot*, n. 35, the passage in *Hilkhot Avodat Kokhavim*, 11:13, and *Moreh Nevukhim*, II, 42.

15. Two recipes for *She'elat Halom* preserved on the Genizah fragment T-S K 1.28 [1a, ll. 11–17–1b, ll. 1–8; 1b, ll. 8–16] are published in P. Schäfer and S. Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 133–50, especially, p. 136. The Genizah recipe for *She'elat Halom* preserved on AIU VI C 6 [A, ll. 4–8] is published in E. Abate, *Sigillare il mondo. Amuleti e ricette dalla Geniza* (Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2015), pp. 198–210, especially p. 201. The recipe for *She'elat Halom* preserved on the Genizah fragment T-S K 1.111 is published in A. Bellusci, 'Jewish Oneiric Divination: From Daniel's Prayer to the Genizah *She'elat Halom*', in J. Rodríguez Arribas (ed.), *Divinatory Practices among Jews* (Micrologus Library; SISMELE, Edizioni del Galluzzo: Firenze, forthcoming); a preliminary edition of the fragment is found in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 57–64. Sixteen additional Genizah *She'elat Halom* are edited, translated and commented upon in *ibid.*, pp. 45–104. Beside the indication of the title, i.e. *שאלת הלום* or *לשאלת הלום*, the most important criteria I used to identify these magical fragments include: the presence of specific angelic names, nomina barbara and Biblical verses, the use of verbal expressions such as *הודיעוני* and *הודיעוני* and *הראוני* and *הראוני*, the description of a standard dream ritual and codified oneiric symbols.

16. The Genizah fragments attributed to the classical period are the earliest strata of the Cairo Genizah, dated from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries; see Bohak, 'Reconstructing', p. 12.

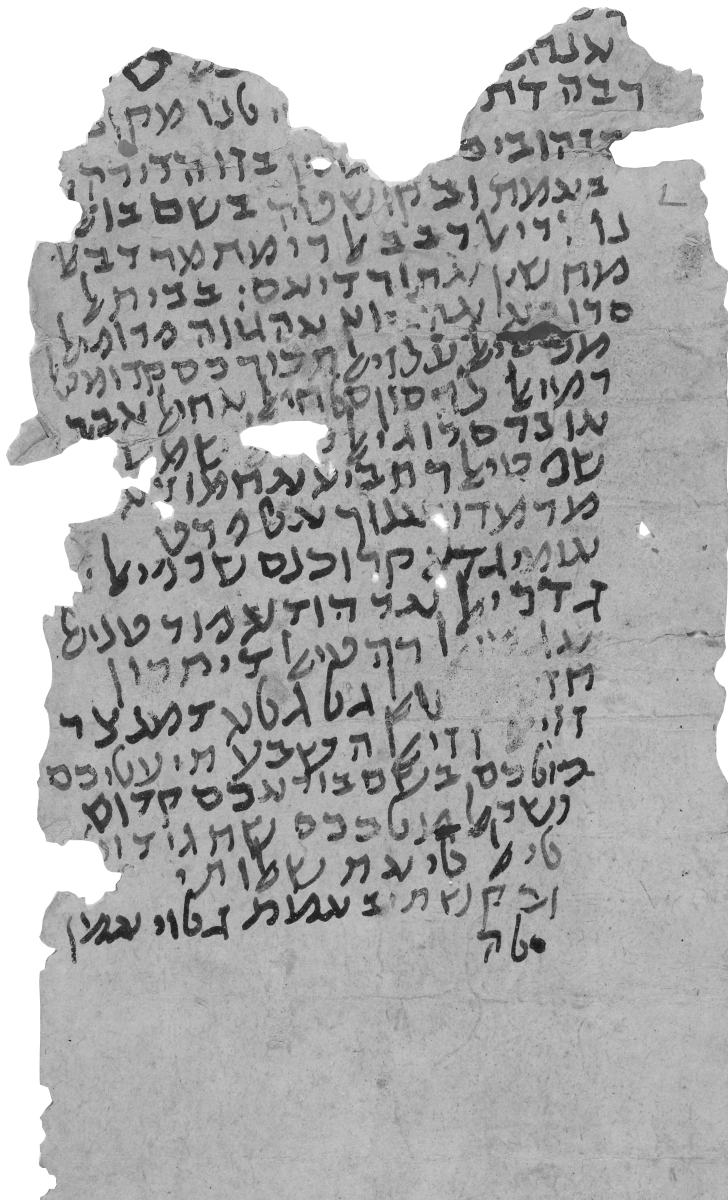


FIGURE 1 Genizah Fragment JTSL ENA NS 12.5, Elkan Nathan Adler Collection, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York. (Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.)

by or for a certain person and aimed to achieve specific information. The fragment edited here (JTSL ENA NS 12.5) is one of those,<sup>17</sup> as is clear from its specific codicological and palaeographical features pointing to its active use during the magical praxis. The long and narrow shape of the fragment and its precise folds on the horizontal side indicate, in fact, that the leaf was folded and placed near the user's body after being inscribed.<sup>18</sup> This specific use is well documented in the recipes for *She'elat Halom* preserved among the Genizah fragments and in medieval codices instructing users to write magical names on the palm of their hand or on a piece of paper and put it under their head or pillow while sleeping.<sup>19</sup> The bottom part of the recto and the verso might have been left blank on purpose for writing the expected answer after the dream.<sup>20</sup>

Being written as a finished product, the fragment reports only direct formulas and adjurations, entirely omitting the instructions on how to engage in the magical performance. Nonetheless, it is possible to reconstruct the ritual performed by the users on the basis of the other recipes for *She'elat Halom* from the Cairo Genizah. According to the sources, users generally

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17. Three other finished products for *She'elat Halom* (T-S K 24.19; Washington Freer Gallery 15; Mosseri VI.5) have already been published in, respectively, Bohak, 'Cracking the Code', Harari, 'Metatron and the Treasure', and A. Bellusci, 'A Dream Request for Šedaqah ben Maqmalyah: Mosseri VI.5', <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/fofm/december-2014/index.html>, accessed 22 December 2014. Two additional Genizah finished products for this purpose are found, respectively, on the unpublished fragment JTSL ENA 3778.8, and on T-S K 1.29, edited in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 90–5. While the finished product preserved in Mosseri VI.5 was intended for improving the user's spirituality, the one in T-S K 1.29 was probably aimed at acquiring grace or a political/economical favour from the ruling authority.

18. Alternatively, the folds on the leaf might suggest that the spell was delivered by the magical expert to his/her client in the form of a message, or that the fragment was folded just before being discarded in the Cairo Genizah.

19. For instance, see the instructions given in: T-S K 1.28, 1a, l. 15, in Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, p. 136; Philadelphia Halper 475, recto, l. 10, and T-S A.S. 108.184, verso, l. 6, in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 46–7 and 54. The practice of placing inscribed objects near the user's body during sleep is attested to also in Graeco-Egyptian sources; for instance, see the spells preserved in PGM V 447–58 and PDM lxi, 63–78, in H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation. Including the Demotic Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 109 and 288 respectively.

20. Within Ashkenazi communities and in later periods, users believed that the answer to their *She'elat Halom* would have been found registered on the paper in the morning through automatic writing; see M. Harris, 'Dreams in Sefer Hasidim', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 31 (1963), pp. 51–80, especially p. 53; A. Goldreich, *Automatic Writing in Zoharic Literature and Modernism* (in Hebrew; Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2010). Nevertheless, I believe that automatic writing cannot be associated with the *She'elat Halom* as performed in early medieval Oriental Jewish communities, since there is no reference whatsoever to it in the relevant outsider and insider sources. It is possible, instead, that the space left blank on the Genizah finished products for *She'elat Halom* was meant for users to annotate, first thing upon awaking, the oneiric answer obtained during the ritual sleep. In this case, the act of writing would represent a recalling process.



observed a period of three days, during which they fasted or ate only certain food, abstained from contact with women, and purified themselves and their sleeping place.<sup>21</sup> Afterwards, they usually recited prayers or biblical verses, and adjured the angels by uttering magical names.<sup>22</sup> The abstinence from food and the mantric recitation of formulas and *nomina barbara* clearly facilitated the achievement of a psychological state, in which the oneiric experience can be oriented and controlled.<sup>23</sup> Although the place designated for the ritual activity was the bedchamber or a private location, in some cases users first went to the synagogue and pronounced their request after or as part of the religious liturgy.<sup>24</sup>

Before going to sleep, the users of this specific finished product were probably also required to read the angelic names registered in lines 5–18 and adjure them by the name of the Jewish God and of a certain שָׁל, in all likelihood an angel of higher rank (ll. 18–20). An additional invocation or adjuration of an angel might have originally been written in the missing lines in the upper part of the fragment, since the first legible word is רְבָה, an epithet generally referring to angelic entities in magical texts.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that even after folding the paper and placing it near their body, the users kept repeating their specific request, registered in lines 3–5, in order to orientate their dreaming activity on the desired subject. They might also have pronounced the standard formulas באמת ובקושטא and

21. The instructions for observing purity norms are first mentioned in the letter of the rabbis of Kairouan to Hay Gaon: ומתענינים כמה ימים, לא אוכלים בשר ולא שותים יין ולנים במקום טהרה; see Emanuel, *Newly Discovered*, p. 126. The recipe in Philadelphia Halper 475 instructs users to wash themselves in water before going to sleep and to wear pure garments. The recipe in JTSL ENA 3294.8–9 prescribes lying down in a pure place, on pure bed linen. In JTSL ENA 1628.40–41, users are required to purify themselves from every impurity and to fast from food and liquids, except for a little salt. For the above-mentioned texts and other examples, see Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 20–22.

22. For a complete list of the quoted biblical verses, see Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 107–8. In some recipes the biblical verses have to be recited several times, backwards and forwards, and sometimes the quotations are joined together to form a prayer.

23. On contemporary psychological techniques applied to problem solving, see D. Barrett, “‘Committee of Sleep’: A Study of Dream Incubation for Problem Solving”, in *Dreaming: Journal of the Association for the Study of Dreams* 3 (1993), pp. 115–23.

24. For the practice of performing part of the *She'elat Halom* in the synagogue, during the religious liturgy and, specifically, during the recitation of the *Amidah* prayer, see JTSL ENA 2699.1, recto, ll. 21–6, and verso, ll. 6–15; Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 98–101.

25. For instance, רְבָה שְׂרָה and רְבָה רִגְתִּיאַל are documented in two different Genizah *She'elat Halom*, in JTSL ENA 3294.8–9, verso, l. 2, and JTSL ENA 1628.41, recto, ll. 10–12, respectively; see Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 48 and 78.

גלוי שתגידו לי לי לי לי את שאלותי ובקשתי באמת גלוי, respectively in lines 5 and 20–22, to encourage a clear disclosure of the craved issue.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, we cannot establish the identity of the users of the fragments, since their names are not preserved on the leaf.<sup>27</sup> The personal names might have been originally annotated in the torn portion in the upper part of the paper, or deliberately omitted in writing so that users might have only uttered them aloud when engaging in the ritual.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the rough handwriting on the paper might suggest that the users themselves have produced the finished product without the help of an expert magician and, thus, did not feel the need to write down their names, since the magical object was probably only designated for their personal use.<sup>29</sup> The occurrence of the personal pronoun in the plural form in line 3 (לנו) might indicate that the magical document was meant for more than one user.<sup>30</sup> I believe the iteration of the personal pronoun in the singular form four times, in lines 20–21 (לי לי לי לי), corroborates my hypothesis. Each repetition might have been meant for a different participant in the magical venture. When actually performing the ritual, each user might have substituted the formula ‘to me’ with his/her personal name. The performance of a double or multiple dream incubation is attested to in at least two other Genizah finished products for *She’elat Halom*, namely Washington Freer Gallery 15 and T-S K 1.29.<sup>31</sup> In both cases, the users were probably relatives – son and mother in the former, father and sons in the latter – interested in obtaining useful information on a common matter pertaining to their lives. They might have engaged in

26. Formulae of this type are often found in recipes for *She’elat Halom* and well express the expectation of a clear and unambiguous response implied by dream divination.

27. Although all the other Genizah finished products for *She’elat Halom* report the users’ names, only in one case may we attempt to establish their identity, namely in T-S K 1.29; see G. Bohak and O.P. Saar, ‘Genizah Magical Texts Prepared for or against Named Individuals’, *Revue des Études Juives* 174.1–2 (2015), pp. 77–110, especially pp. 84–5.

28. The absence of personal names on the leaf might be taken to argue that the fragment originally represented a prefabricated finished product specifically aimed at finding a treasure by means of the ritual of *She’elat Halom*.

29. On the other hand, the literal quotation from *SHR* – on which see below, pp. 315–17 – may indicate that the person/s who wrote the fragment had a certain degree of magical expertise. In fact, they explicitly followed a tradition transmitted in a literary book of magic, a writing that probably circulated chiefly among experts or apprentices of Jewish magic, who would have used it as a practical guide to produce activated spells for themselves or for their clients. On the poor scribal skills of certain Cairene ‘semi-literate magicians’, see Bohak and Saar, ‘Genizah Magical Texts’, p. 88.

30. Alternatively, the plural form might be considered a *pluralis majestatis*.

31. Edited respectively in Harari, ‘Metatron and the Treasure’, pp. 308–13, and Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 90–95.

the ritual together or on their own, during the same night or on different nights. The decision to involve more than one character in the ritual might have aimed at increasing the chance of receiving the desired revelation as well as at introducing an objective parameter to control the reliability of a subjective activity such as dreaming.<sup>32</sup> The specific goal of the finished product preserved in JTSL ENA NS 12.5 – that is, finding gold coins previously buried in the apartment (lines 3–4) – might concur to explain the plurality of users involved in the dream practice. After the sudden death of a relative, different members of the same family might have decided to retrieve their inheritance by means of a *She'elat Ḥalom*.<sup>33</sup> The expression בזו הדירה in line 4 seems to suggest that the users performed the dream technique in their own house or in the residence of a relative where they suspected the patrimony was buried.

The users of the fragment clearly expected the answer to their quest to be revealed in their dreams, but, unfortunately, we do not have evidence of what they actually dreamt. Nevertheless, the Genizah recipes for *She'elat Ḥalom* give us a taste of their oneiric material, which could have involved either auditory or visual perception, or both. Users awaited to experience either an 'auditory dream' showing an otherworldly figure (an angel or a deceased person), who would transmit the requested knowledge in a verbal form, or a 'visual dream' characterized by the vision of specific coded symbols, whose meaning was already established before the performance.<sup>34</sup> In the fragment JTSL ENA NS 12.5, the formula דתראה לנו מקום in line 3 indicates that

32. Double dreams are documented also in the Graeco-Roman and Christian incubatory traditions; see for instance E.J. Edelstein and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1945), vol. I, pp. 169–75, and M. Dorati and G. Guidorizzi, 'La letteratura incubatoria', in O. Pecere and A. Stramaglia (eds), *La letteratura di consumo nel mondo Greco-Latino, Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Cassino 14–17 settembre 1994)* (Cassino: Università degli studi di Cassino, 1996), pp. 360–64.

33. In antiquity, it was common to hide monetary property at home. Jewish tales from different epochs and geographical areas narrate the attempts of relatives to locate the sum of money, after the owner had suddenly passed away without telling anyone where he/she had hidden it. For instance, see the Talmudic stories in *bBer.* 18b, *bBer.* 56b; see also the discussion of *Sefer Ḥasidim* §1456, in Harris, 'Dreams in *Sefer Ḥasidim*', pp. 73–4, and T. Alexander-Frizer, 'Dream Narratives in *Sefer Ḥasidim*', *Terumah* 12 (2002), pp. 65–78, especially p. 76.

34. On auditory and visual dreams stimulated by the technique of *She'elat Ḥalom*, see Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 28–39. The tradition transmitted in *bBer.* 55a–57b points to two types of dream as well. One type is related to the sense of hearing, since dreamers merely dream to read biblical verses, as it is made clear by the expression באקריין בחלמין ('we had to read') used in the text. The other type is related to visual perception, since the passage lists symbolic images introduced by expressions employing the verbal root חזה\*. For a thorough study on the dream material in *bBer.* 55a–57b, see H. Weiss, 'All Dreams Follow the Mouth': *A Reading in the Talmudic Dreams Tractate* (in Hebrew; Be'er Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2011).

the users expected a visual dream, in which they would actually picture the location of the lost patrimony. Yet the expression לִי תַגִּידוּ in lines 20–21 also confirms their belief in the epiphany of an angel or a non-human entity, who would directly reveal to them the sought information.

### The quotation from *Sefer Ha-Razim*

The exceptionality of the Genizah fragment JTSL ENA NS 12.5 lies in the list of angelic names registered in lines 5–18, which entirely corresponds to a section from the late antique Jewish literary book of magic known as *Sefer Ha-Razim*, *The Book of Mysteries* (from now on *SHR*).<sup>35</sup> Pseudo-epigraphically attributed to the angel Razi'el, *SHR* describes the seven firmaments composing the celestial world, registering for each section and subsection the names of the angels dwelling there and several magical recipes for different purposes.<sup>36</sup> The angelic names preserved in the Genizah finished product correspond to those registered in the seventh subsection of the first firmament, namely *SHR* I §107. Remarkably, these names are quoted in the *She'elat Halom* in the exact order followed in *SHR*, thus showing that whoever wrote the fragment in the twelfth or thirteenth century copied directly from a version of the literary book of magic that was at their disposal. This hypothesis seems to be corroborated by the occurrence of the expression וְאֵ in line 8, which may be an error for וְאוּ, the coordinating conjunction 'or', used in this case to introduce two different *lectiones* of a certain name, אֵהֲגִירוּהָ and אֵהֲרִים.<sup>37</sup> When uttering the names loudly during the actual ritual, users would skip the conjunction 'or'. Similarly, if the spell had been transmitted orally, we would not have found the conjunction 'or' written in the fragment. This is not the case: the person who wrote the finished product either consulted

35. There is a scholarly consensus that *SHR* was composed in late antiquity, before the Islamic Conquest. The book was first published in an eclectic edition in M. Margalioth, *Sefer Ha-Razim: A Newly Recovered Book of Magic from the Talmudic Period Collected from Genizah Fragments and other Sources* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Yedit Aharonot, 1966). A synopsis of the most relevant manuscripts of *SHR* is published in Rebiger and Schäfer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II*. For exhaustive introductions to *SHR*, see Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, pp. 170–75, and Y. Harari, *Early Jewish Magic: Research, Method, Sources* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2010), pp. 215–20. Here, when referring to *SHR*, I adopt the numeration of paragraphs of the synopsis in Rebiger and Schäfer's synopsis.

36. There is often a certain correlation between the role of the angels of a specific celestial compartment and the magical recipes which follow.

37. The two letters וְאֵ in line 8 cannot be part of the angelic name that precedes them, since it ends with a *mem sofit*.

different manuscripts of *SHR* or copied from a version of the book already reporting an emendation with the additional angelic name. At least one copy of *SHR* presents, in fact, two *lectiones* for the name listed in this position introduced by the conjunction 'or', namely מחגייה and אחגייה.<sup>38</sup>

A thorough analysis of the different *lectiones* of *SHR* §107 in the most reliable manuscripts shows that the angelic list in the Genizah finished product matches most closely an eleventh-century copy of the book written in Judeo-Arabic, which was also discarded in the Cairo Genizah and is today conserved at the Bodleian Library, Heb.f.45, fols 16a–16b.<sup>39</sup> In particular, only the fragments JTSL ENA NS 12.5 and Heb.f.45 present the exact same *lectiones* for the angels נוחריאל, דבבאל, דימתמר, דבאל, בביתאל, מכסיאל, סלחאל, תכורכס, דמנצר, דמזיאל, מרמדין, אחמורא, סלחאל, תכורכס, while the other manuscripts attest to other variants. Yet even between JTSL ENA NS 12.5 and Heb.f.45 there is no direct genealogical relationship. They present slightly different *lectiones* for a couple of angels, and JTSL ENA NS 12.5 includes the *lectio* קרוכנס attested to only in a nineteenth century Yemenite manuscript Bill Gross 42. Furthermore, the fragment JTSL ENA NS 12.5 is the only one that reports the *lectiones* אהים, אתור, שרפיאל, אומיגדא, אהים and that repeats the name זיאל twice, thus attesting to another line of editorial transmission.

Although not genealogically related, the Genizah fragments JTSL ENA NS 12.5 and Heb.f.45 were both presumably produced in the Jewish community of medieval Cairo in a chronological interval of only one century, roughly three generations of users. Thus, it is safe to argue that the finished product for *She'elat Halom* discussed here was based on a copy of *SHR* that was not too diverse from that preserved on the fragment Heb.f.45, at least for what concerns the list of angelic names in §107. The copy of *SHR* employed to fabricate the finished product preserved on JTSL ENA NS 12.5 might have also been written in Judeo-Arabic, since this idiom was the mother tongue

38. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, JTS 8117 (JTS 8117).

39. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb.f.45, fols 1a–18b; see Rebiger and Schäfer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II*, vol. 1, p. 8. The other manuscripts analysed in my study are: Moscow, Russian State Library, Günzburg 738 (Günz. 738), an Italian fifteenth-century codex; Moscow, Russian State Library, Günzburg 248 (Günz. 248), a Sefardi-Oriental sixteenth-century codex; Tel Aviv, Bill Gross Private Collection, Bill Gross 42; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Hébr. 849 (Hébr. 849), an Ashkenazi fifteenth–sixteenth century codex; Florence, *Biblioteca Laurenziana*, Plut. 44.23 (Plut. 44.23), an Italian, sixteenth-century manuscript; New York, Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, JTS 8117 (JTS 8117), an Italian, seventeenth–eighteenth century codex; on these manuscripts, see, *ibid.*, pp. 3, 18, 20–22, 24, 26, 27.

of the Jews of Fustāt. Together, the Genizah fragments Heb.f.45 and JTSL ENA NS 12.5 represent the earliest sources of the magical book for the specific passage *SHR* I §107 that survived.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the deep affinity between the *lectiones* of the angelic names exhibited by these two fragments highlights the reliability of the Judeo-Arabic translation of *SHR*.

### A recipe for divination from *Sefer Ha-Razim* and the technique of *She'elat Halom*

The users of the finished product preserved on JTSL ENA NS 12.5 wrote down the angelic names from *SHR* I §107 with the intention of reading them aloud during the ritual before going to sleep, according to the technique of *She'elat Halom*. Adjuring the angels listed in *SHR* was one of the ways this book was originally used. Some of the recipes in *SHR*, in fact, explicitly instruct users to write down and utter the angelic names reported in the different subsections of the book during the actual magical practice associated with them. The angels listed in the passage relevant for this study are governed by the overseer Bo'el and are in charge of dreaming, of revealing the content and interpretation of dreams to whomever approaches them in purity (*SHR* I §108). The sequence of angelic names is followed in the book by a long divinatory recipe for 'knowing the dream and its interpretation' (*SHR* I §§109–14), which reads:<sup>41</sup>

40. The earliest manuscript that has preserved *SHR* I §107 is Heb.f.45, as noted above, a copy in Judeo-Arabic. Beside the fragment presented here, the earliest manuscript transmitting this specific passage in the original Hebrew is Günz. 738 from the fifteenth century.

41. The following English translation is mine; see also M.A. Morgan (trans.), *Sepher Ha-Razim: The Book of the Mysteries* (Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1983), pp. 41–2. The Hebrew text reads:

אם יקראך המלך או ראש העיר או שליט או חברך ובקשתה להודיעו מחמתך דבר לפניו אני  
אודיעך מה בלבך עלי ומה חשבתה עלי ומה אתה חפץ לעשות ומה פתרון חלומך תן לי זמן  
שלשה ימים ואודיעך כל שבליבך. וצא ביום הראשון על שפת הים או על שפת הנהר בשלש  
שעות בלילה והיה עטוף אסטולי חדשה ולא תאכל כל דקה ולא כל מוציא דם ולא תשתה יין  
וקח מור ולבונה זכה ותן על גחלי אש בכלי חרש חדש ותן פניך על המים ותזכיר שם השוטר  
עם שם מלאכי המחנה ג' פעמים ואתה רואה בעמוד אש בין השמים והארץ ואמור כן: משביע  
אני עליך במי שמדד בשעלו מים וגער במים ונסו מפניו ועשה רוחות פורחות באויר משרתי  
פניו אש לוהט וגער בים ויבשהו ונהרות ישים למדבר בשמו ובאותותיו אני משביע עליך ובשם  
ז' מלאכי מחנה השביעית המשרתים את כואל שתודיעני מה בלב פלו' בן פלו' ומה חפצו ומה  
פתרון חלומו ומה מחשבתו וכן בלילה השנית והשלישית. ותראה שיתגלה לך עמוד אש וענן  
עליה כדמות איש. שאלהו ויגד לך כל מה שאתה מבקש. ואם בקשתה להתירו השלך מן המים  
לשמים ג' פעמים מן הים או מן הנהר אשר אתה עומד עליו ואמור תחת לשונך: אורודי גריבאל  
פוטמוס סרגרי טליגוס אספדפורוס התרתי התרתי השקע ושוב לדרךך. ואמור כן ז' פעמים.  
וכל דבר עשה בטהרה ותצלית.

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 from your wisdom something 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. Give me a period of three days and I will make known to you all that is in your heart. And go out on Sunday to the seashore or to the river bank during the third hour of the night. And he is (lit. was) covered by a new robe, and do not eat vegetables nor anything which yields blood, and do not drink wine. And take myrrh and pure frankincense and place them on a brazier in a new earthen vessel. And turn your face towards the water and repeat the name of the overseer together with the name of the (other) angels of the encampment, three times. And you see a pillar of fire between heaven and earth, and say this: 'I adjure you by the One who measured the waters in the palm of His hand and rebuked the waters so that they fled from him (Isa. 40:12), and made winds flying in the air his attendants, as an ardent fire (Ps. 104:4), who rebuked the sea and dried it up (Nah. 1:4), and made rivers a desert (Ps. 107:33). By His name and by His letters, I adjure you, and by the name of the seven angels of the seventh encampment serving Bo'el, that you will make known to me what is in the heart of the person N son of N, and what is his/her wish, and what is the interpretation of his/her dream, and what is his/her thought.' And do this the second and the third night (as well). And you will see that a pillar of fire and cloud (Ex. 14:24) will appear to you, and on its top like the image of a man. Ask it and he will tell you whatever you want. And if you want to dismiss it, throw towards the sky, three times, some of the water from the sea or the river by which you are standing and say under your breath: 'Invisible Lord Bo'el, our shelter, perfect, shield-bearer, I free you, I free you, subside and return to your course.' Say this seven times. And do everything in purity and you will succeed.

The late antique divinatory recipe presented above exhibits several points in common with the technique of *She'elat Ḥalom* as performed in the medieval Jewish community of Fustāt according to the evidence of the Cairo Genizah fragments, thus reinforcing the relationship between the finished product JTSL ENA NS 12.5 and *SHR*. The recipe describes a complex multi-stage ritual for divination, one of the longest and more detailed in the whole book. Its general purpose is to obtain hidden knowledge to transmit to a third party in a quite specific circumstance; in other words, when the user is summoned by a public figure or by a friend, and asked to divine about the products of their conscious and unconscious mind (thoughts, will, dreams).<sup>42</sup>

42. All the recipes included in *SHR* begin by stating their goal through the formulas **אם בקשה** **אם**, **אם** or **הרצה אם** followed by an infinitive; the recipe in *SHR* I §§109–14 represents the only exception to this pattern, since it adopts a more complex formula to describe the purpose of the ritual. The typical *prothesis*, in this case **להודיעו רבקהשה**, represents a coordinate clause to another hypothetical clause, **אם יקראך המלך או ראש העיר או שליט או חברך** (§109). The reference to the divination

The acquisition of knowledge, either for material or for spiritual matters, also represents the main goal of the technique of *She'elat Halom*. Although the spatial and temporal setting of the *She'elat Halom* differs from that of the ritual in *SHR* (bedchamber/synagogue vs seashore/riverbank), both magical procedures should be performed in a pure place and during the night, at a very specific time. The technique of *She'elat Halom* does not involve the use of most of the *materia magica* required for the divinatory ritual in *SHR* (a brazier, myrrh, frankincense, a new earthen vessel, water from the water source), which entirely correspond to the standard paraphernalia listed in the other recipes in the book.<sup>43</sup> An exception is represented by the instruction to wear new garments (i.e. a new robe) and to sleep on new bed linen found in several recipes for *She'elat Halom*. Furthermore, both the divinatory ritual described in *SHR* and the *She'elat Halom* involve the observation of ascetic norms for a certain period.<sup>44</sup>

The *She'elat Halom* and the divinatory ritual from *SHR* undoubtedly differ in what concerns the actual magical technique used to achieve the desired information; the former is based on oneiric divination, the latter chiefly on scrying.<sup>45</sup> Yet both rituals explicitly refer to dreams and, when we deconstruct the practices into ritual segments, they exhibit some outstanding analogies concerning the magical operations. The burnt offering performed near a source of water (*SHR* I §110) is clearly not attested to in the ritual of *She'elat*

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concerning the dream and its interpretation, ומה חלמת ומה פתרון חלומך, is found in Günz. 738 and Bill Gross 42, while it is absent in the other major manuscripts transmitting this passage. The purpose and circumstance of use of the recipe seem to draw on the biblical tale narrated in Dan. 2, in which Daniel, summoned by Nebuchadnezzar, reveals to him and his court the content and interpretation of the king's dream. In both texts, the divinatory performance is enacted on behalf of a third party and aimed at acquiring favour in the eyes of a powerful person; see also below, note 57.

43. These objects are also mentioned in the Greco-Egyptian magical practices listed in the corpus of the Greek and Demotic magical papyri. In particular, the term אסטוּרִי (§110) is clearly a loanword from the Greek ἀστολή, 'robe'. In this specific recipe, the term adopted to indicate the recipient employed in the ritual is the Hebrew כְּלִי (§110), while throughout the book the Greek loanword פִּיאֵלִי is used.

44. Instructions on purity laws are found in ancient magical texts, both Jewish and non-Jewish; see M.D. Swartz, "Like the Ministering Angels": Ritual Purity in Early Jewish Mysticism and Magic', *Association of Jewish Studies Review* 19 (1994), pp. 135–67, and idem, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 153–72.

45. Scrying techniques, such as 'hydromancy' and 'catoptromancy', are documented in Jewish sources, where they are often referred to by the names of 'princes of the oil'. See S. Daiches, *Babylonian Oil Magic in the Talmud and in Later Jewish Literature*, (London: Jews College, 1913); J. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939), pp. 219–22; J. Dan, 'The Princes of the Cup and the Princes of the Thumb', *Tarbitz* 32 (1963) [Hebrew], pp. 359–69; Y. Bilu, "The Princes of the Oil": New Light on an Old Phenomenon', *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37:3 (1981), pp. 269–77.



*Halom*, at least as we know it from medieval sources. However, propitiatory offers represent a fundamental pattern in classical dream incubation. Similarly, in the Bible, King Solomon burns a thousand offerings on the bronze altar at Gibeon before receiving a night epiphany.<sup>46</sup> If we consider the *She'elat Halom* a later development of ancient Palestinian incubational rituals, the absence of burnt offerings might be understood as part of the overall process of miniaturization and privatization undergone by the medieval ritual.<sup>47</sup>

The recipe in *SHR* goes on instructing users to turn their faces towards the water and utter the names of the overseer of the seventh encampment, Bo'el, and of the other angels listed in *SHR* I §107, seven times. The *hif'il* form, imperfect, from the root \*זכר (תזכיר) represents the technical term employed in magical texts for invoking the non-human entities assisting in the magical ritual. According to the text, the angelic invocation is followed by the visualization of a 'pillar of fire' between heaven and earth.<sup>48</sup> As noted, the technique of *She'elat Halom* also involves the invocation of specific angels, and the Genizah finished product edited here addresses the same angels referred to in the recipe from *SHR*. However, the angelic names

46. 2 Chr. 1:6–7:

ויעל שלמה שם על-מזבח הקדשת. לפני יהוה, אשר, לאהל מועד; ויעל עליו עלות, אלה, בלילה ההוא.  
בראה אלהים לשלמו; ויאמר לו, שאל מה אתן-לך.

47. The phenomenon of miniaturization hypothesized for ancient Palestinian dream incubatory practices can be observed in the Graeco-Egyptian culture as well. The dream requests (Ὀνειρομαντήρα) attested to in the Greek and Demotic magical papyri might in fact represent the privatization of classical dream incubation, which was an institutionalized ritual activity. The dream requests documented in the magical papyri involve rituals performed in an unofficial manner and in a place not recognized by the central cult, while temple incubation took place at the sanctuaries and shrines of the Healing Gods.

48. The expression עמוד אש ('a pillar of fire') occurs several times in the Hebrew Bible in relation to God's nocturnal apparitions to Moses, and is generally used in parallel to עמוד ענן ('a pillar of cloud'), which indicates a diurnal divine epiphany; see, for instance, Ex. 13:21:

ויהנה דהלך לפניהם יומם בעמוד ענן, ולחמם הדרך, ולילה בעמוד אש. להאיר להם--ללכת, יומם  
ולילה

See, also, Ex. 13:22; Ezra 59:12; 19; the expression עמוד ענן occurs isolated in Ex. 14:19; Num. 12:5; 14:14; Ps. 99:7. Consider also the similar expression, 'a pillar of smoke' (עמוד עשן), which is documented in Judg. 20:40 and which occurs in another recipe for divination in *SHR* I §102. It is noteworthy that the same reference to the Mosaic revelation was appropriated in a recipe for 'those possessed by demons' in PGM IV 3007–86, which reads: 'I conjure you by the one who appeared to Osroel in a shining pillar and in a cloud by day'; see Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, p. 96. Most interestingly, a similar phenomenon has been documented during the great nocturnal celebration of Jesus' Transfiguration on Mount Tabor: 'a broad column of light, like a cloud, was annually seen to rise up about fifty yards away, from the shoulder of the darkened hills nearby, and fly over the church'; see K.C. Patton, 'A Great and Strange Correction': Intentionality, Locality, and Epiphany in the Category of Dream Incubation', *History of Religions* 43:3 (2004), pp. 194–223, especially pp. 195–6.

are written down on the Genizah fragment, while according to *SHR* they were only uttered by users, thus pointing to an apparent shift from an oral to a written form of magic.

Written or spoken, the adjuration has a central role in both texts. In the recipe, Bo'el is adjured by the names of the seven angels serving him, as well as by the name of the Jewish God.<sup>49</sup> As in *SHR*, the joint mentioning of the God of Israel together with angelic creatures is not rare in the Genizah *She'elat Halom*.<sup>50</sup> Part of the adjuration in *SHR* I §III paraphrases a couple of biblical verses (Isa. 40:12; Ps. 104:4; Nah. 1:4; Ps. 107:33). These passages from the Scripture emphasize the splendour and strength of the Jewish God over the natural elements through metaphors centred on water, thus amplifying the aquatic element of the ritual on a verbal level.<sup>51</sup> Quotations or paraphrases of biblical verses are often also included in recipes for *She'elat Halom*. The expression תודיעני built with the *hif'il* form from the root ידע\* together with the enclitic pronoun of first person and used in *SHR* to give the angels the command of making known the requested information represents a *terminus technicus* for divination and for the technique of *She'elat Halom*.<sup>52</sup>

In *SHR* the adjuration and the other formulas are believed to produce the visualization of 'a pillar of fire and cloud' and, on its top, a figure resembling the 'image of a man' (בדמות איש, *SHR* I §III).<sup>53</sup> Both outsider and insider sources attest to a similar belief as outcome of the technique of *She'elat Halom*. In their letter to Hay Gaon, in fact, the rabbis of Kairouan state that some of the wise men, who practised the technique of *She'elat Halom*, saw in their dreams a human figure, in the form of an old man or a young boy, telling them a verse related to the issue they had asked about.<sup>54</sup> Hay Gaon confirms their belief in his response and uses the expression 'Master of the Dream' (בעל חלום) found, with slight differences, in a few recipes from the Cairo

49. The angels listed in §107 are about 50. The number seven mentioned in the adjuration might be an error or a symbolic number.

50. An example of this phenomenon is offered even in the fragment presented here, lines 19–20.

51. 'By the One who measured the waters in the palm of His hand and rebuked the waters so that they fled from Him, and made winds flying in the air His personal servants, as a fiery flame, who rebuked the sea and dried it up, and made rivers a desert' (stress is mine).

52. For instance, תודיעני חלמא ופשרה in Dan. 2:5. Most of the Genizah recipes for *She'elat Halom* employ expressions like זה תודיעני דבר זה.

53. Similar expressions are found in Dan. 8:15, במראה-גבר, and in Dan. 10:16, בני אדם.

54. היה לכל אחד צורה ידועה לזה זקן ולזה בחור יתראה לו ויגיד לו פסוקים שיש בהם אותו ענין ששאל עליה; Emanuel, *Newly Discovered*, p. 126.

Genizah.<sup>55</sup> The recipe in *SHR* ends with a formula, in part transliterated from Ancient Greek, for dismissing the non-human apparition.<sup>56</sup> The technique of *She'elat Halom* clearly does not require formulas of this type, since the encounter with the non-human visitor is believed to happen in a dream, whose conclusion is signed by natural awakening.

To sum up the above analysis, the divinatory ritual described in *SHR* I §§109–14 is highly indebted to the Graeco-Egyptian magical lore attested to in the corpus of the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, but it also transmits Jewish Second Temple Apocalyptic traditions, such as those preserved in the Book of Daniel.<sup>57</sup> Most important, it anticipates several of the features that will characterize the medieval divinatory technique of *She'elat Halom*.

### *Sefer Ha-Razim* and the technique of *She'elat Halom* in the Jewish magical tradition

The finished product for *She'elat Halom* preserved in the Genizah fragment JTSL ENA NS 12.5 and edited here is one of the earliest sources deliberately quoting from *SHR*. In addition, it offers some valuable insight on the relationship between different types of magical sources. This small leaf from the Genizah represents, in fact, one of the rare pieces of evidence that a recipe

55. For the relevant part in Hay Gaon's response, see *ibid.*, pp. 137–8. The expression בעל חלום is attested to in *bSanh.* 30a and *bBer.* 10a. For recipes exhibiting the expressions בעל חלום or שר ההלום, see, for instance, JTSL ENA NS 70 and JTSL ENA 1628.41–42 in Bellusci, *Dream Requests*, pp. 70–1 and 76–86. On the later phenomenon of *maggidim*, i.e. angelic mentors constantly appearing to a specific dreamer, see S. Pines, 'Le Sefer Ha-Tamar et les Maggidim des Kabbalistes', in G. Vajda, G. Nahon and C. Touati (eds), *Hommage à Georges Vajda: Études d'Histoire et de Pensée Juives* (Louvain: Peeters, 1980), pp. 333–63.

56. The formulas employed in *SHR* I §111 to address the apparition include verbal expressions formed by the roots שאל\* and נגד\*, similarly to what is documented in the Genizah recipes for *She'elat Halom*. Morton Smith reconstructs the passage in *SHR* I §112 as a Greek hymn to Bo'el: ἀόρατε κύριε Βουήλ, ποτ' ἡμᾶς ἄρκιε, τελικός, ἀσπιδηφόρος ('invisible lord Bo'el, our shelter, perfect, shield-bearer'); see Margalioth, *Sefer Ha-Razim*, p. 12. For a different reconstruction, see S. Sznol, 'Sefer Ha Razim – El libro de los secretos introduccion y comentario al vocabulario griego', *Erytheia* 10:2 (1989), p. 277. According to Rebigier and Schäfer, the great discrepancies between the *lectiones* for this passage preclude our understanding of the original Greek; in particular, the two authors argue that it would be methodologically wrong to reconstruct the Greek text on the basis of Margalioth's eclectic edition; see Rebigier and Schäfer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II*, vol. 2, p. 232.

57. The divinatory recipe from *SHR* I §§109–14 shares several ritualistic and linguistic features with the revelation tales in the Book of Daniel. In particular, the author of this specific recipe read and understood the account on Nebuchadnezzar's first dream (Dan. 2) as a divinatory technique aimed at obtaining insight into a third party's thought, will and dream. Furthermore, he/she might have deliberately drawn on this biblical account when writing the magical spell that is now part of *SHR*. This argument is developed in Bellusci, 'Jewish Oneiric Divination'.

from a late antique literary book of magic was actually used as a guideline to produce a finished product for engaging in a magical praxis within the medieval Jewish community of Fustāt. The list of angelic names copied in the fragment from a section of *SHR* confirms the circulation of the magical book among medieval Cairenes and highlights the transmission and continuity of Jewish late antique magical lore throughout the medieval era.

The quotation from *SHR* found in JTSL ENA NS 12.5 also sheds some light on the development of the technique of *She'elat Halom* within the Jewish world and on its place in the wider context of Jewish divinatory practices. As noted above, the technique of *She'elat Halom* is documented in sources only from a relatively late period. Yet even the earliest evidence we have on this practice exhibits standard features and points to a certain degree of ritualistic maturity, suggesting that this technique might have been developed far earlier than the tenth century. The strong analogies found in the divinatory recipe in *SHR* I §§109–14 and in the recipes for *She'elat Halom* from the Cairo Genizah, outlined in this study, might indicate that the former represents the historical antecedent from which the latter developed. Part of the ancient divinatory lore preserved in the late antique literary book of magic might have been later absorbed in the technique of *She'elat Halom* as attested to in the Genizah fragments. Similarly, it is possible that the two related and yet different divinatory practices – the ritual in *SHR* I §§109–14 and the *She'elat Halom* – developed independently but were reworking an earlier common tradition. In either case, the affinity that emerged between the two rituals proves the existence of a specific Jewish divinatory and oneiric technical knowledge and to its continuation from late antiquity throughout the medieval era. Sometimes in between these eras, the technique of *She'elat Halom* developed in the forms known to us from the Middle Ages.

Unfortunately, we do not possess enough evidence to establish whether the writer of the single divinatory recipe in *SHR* I §§109–14 or the late antique redactor of the whole book had knowledge of the technique of *She'elat Halom*.<sup>58</sup> Yet we can safely argue that when the book started to circulate in

58. It is likely that some of the recipes included in *SHR*, among them the one preserved in *SHR* I §§109–14, had existed independently and pre-dated the later arrangement of the framework of the book; see P.S. Alexander, 'Sepher ha-Razim and the Problem of Black Magic in Early Judaism', in T. Klutz (ed.), *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon* (Journal of the Study of the New Testament Supplement, 245; London: T&T Clark International, 2003), pp. 170–90, especially, p. 173.

the medieval era some of the readers and users of the book understood this specific divinatory recipe in light of their acquaintance with the *She'elat Halom*. In particular, the twelfth–thirteenth-century Cairene users of the finished product on JTSL ENA NS 12.5 interpreted the passage in *SHR* I §§107–14, from which they quoted the list of angelic names, as suitable for attaining the technique of *She'elat Halom* or, at least, as a similar magical procedure for obtaining analogous results. Clearly, already in their generation *SHR* was regarded as a reliable source for enacting divinatory rituals, among them also the technique of *She'elat Halom*.

The reinterpretation and reuse of the divinatory material from *SHR* I §§107–14 in the perspective of the *She'elat Halom* during the medieval era goes beyond the Jewish community of Fustāt. For instance, Abraham Ibn Ezra states in his eleventh-century commentary to Exodus that, according to *Sefer ha-Razim* (or *Sefer Raziel*), it is possible to achieve the *She'elat Halom* through the recitation of the verse Ezek. 1:1, which has 72 letters.<sup>59</sup> The later version of *SHR* (from now on, *SHR* II), known also as *Sefer Adam*, is, in every respect, a treatise about the attainment of wisdom and foresight, which explicitly transmits traditions of oneiric divination.<sup>60</sup> *SHR* II, in fact, presents no magic procedures except for a long ritual of *She'elat Halom*.<sup>61</sup> I suggest reconsidering the relation between *SHR* and *SHR* II, already noted by scholars, and regarding the latter writing as a reinterpretation and reworking of the divinatory material transmitted in *SHR* I §§109–14 in light of the technique of *She'elat Halom*. Whoever redacted the later version of this literary book of magic (*SHR* II) was well acquainted with the technique of *She'elat Halom* and considered the divinatory tradition preserved in *SHR* as somehow related to it. At the time of the redaction of *SHR* II, the *She'elat*

59. וכן נאמר בספר הרזים, כל שואל שאלת חלום יקרא פסוק ויהי בשלשים שנה, גם הוא ע"ב, Abraham Ibn Ezra, *Commentary to Exodus* (Long Version), 14:19.

60. In his edition of *SHR*, Mordechai Margalioth shows how *Sefer Adam* is quoted together with *SHR* in the polemics of the Karaites against the Rabbanites. Margalioth identifies a passage of *Sefer Adam* in MS Oxford 1345, but since this version of the book is entirely lacking in Graecism, the scholar concludes that this writing is later than *SHR* and relies upon it; see Margalioth, *Sefer Ha-Razim*, pp. 30–33. *Sefer Adam* is edited in Rebiger and Schäfer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II*, vol. I, pp. 106\*–17\*. A portion of the book was first published in *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh* (Amsterdam, 1701), fols 3a–b, corresponding to *SHR* II §§362–74.

61. The relevant passage is contained in the microform in §§372–4; see Rebiger and Schäfer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II*, vol. I, pp. 108\*–9\*. Although in the incipit the book claims to give instructions on how to use the magical writing in the proper manner, it actually describes a ritual for dream incubation. Rebiger and Schäfer define it as a 'Mehrstufigen Ritualanweisungen für ein Schlacht und Brandopfer von zwei Tauben sowie für eine Trauminkubation'; see *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 12, 281.

*Halom* had already reached a vast diffusion within the Jewish world or, at least, within those Jewish communities in which the book circulated. Recipes for *She'elat Halom* preserved among later Genizah fragments and European and Oriental Jewish manuscripts actually confirm the diffusion of this oneiric technique in Jewish culture, attesting to its further developments, which often corresponded to different cultural and ideological currents. The later version of *SHR* (*SHR II*), entirely shaped in the form of a divinatory oneiric ritual, together with the medieval recipes for *She'elat Halom* represent, on the one hand, the result of the continuous interpretative process of Jewish magic and, on the other hand, the inescapable culmination of a very specific and well-rooted divinatory tradition.