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**Addendum to November 2011's Fragment of the Month** FRAGMENT OF THE MONTH ARCHIVE

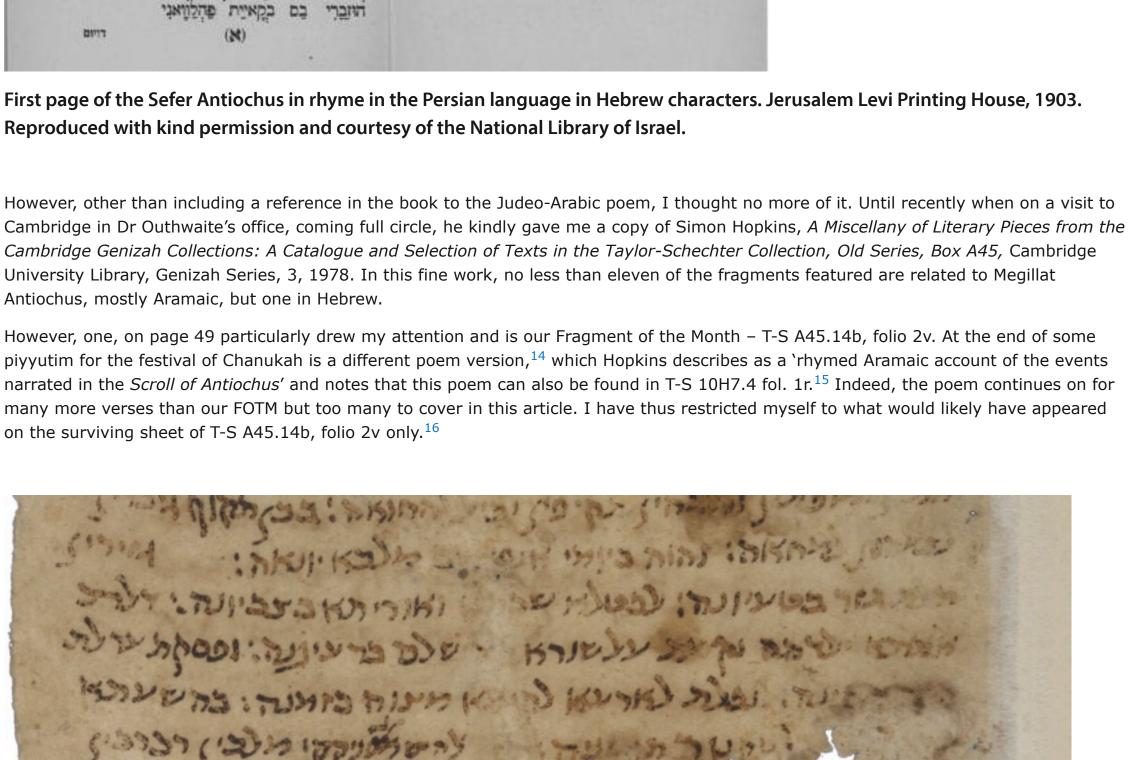
somewhere between the second and fifth century CE, most likely in the second century itself'. It does not mention Chanukah by name (hence Gaster thinks this suggests it is quite early). However, its big champion was Sa'adya Gaon in c. 930, in Sefer HaGalui. He treated it almost as if it were part of the biblical canon. Likely, this was as a polemic against the Karaites who did not accept Chanukah as a hag (festival) since it is not in the Tanakh. Possibly because of his support, it was attached to many Tanakh codices with *nequdot* (pointing) and te amim (trope) and was divided into parašiyyot. Isaiah de Trani (Italy 1180–1250) reports it as a custom to read this on Chanukah in his tosafot to Sukkah 44b, and thanks to Sa'adya's support, 'it was invested in almost canonical dignity' according to R. Nissim Gaon in the 13th C.<sup>9</sup>

 The Maccabees have a sister who goads them to go to war for her honour<sup>10</sup> • Yehudah dies before they recapture the Temple • The miracle of the oil is in it, which is not present in the Apocryphal tale

It found its way into the Yemenite Siddur (Tiqlal) and several other siddurim such as 'Avodat Yisrael (1868) and the Birnbaum siddur (1949) and manzorim. The long-term popularity of the work was confirmed by the recovery of many copies in the Cairo Genizah. Making the situation even more complex, there is also a secondary Aramaic text which Abrahams notes is in the Genizah, which differs

scroll.

בסותי רום בורד קשבר פראווא



all the more immediate given this was likely written later in life in Fustat (Old Cairo). We have his signature (see image detail below from T-S 8J7.1), from a 'short letter from Abraham b. Nathan to an unknown recipient, acknowledging the receipt of cheese and a corresponding hekšer (certificate of kashrut), brought by Şedaqa b. Šemarya'. Also, in Mosseri VII.74.1 where he describes himself as אב בית דין של כל ישראל, ('Av Bet Din of all Israel), the second most important post in (Jerusalemite) Jewry of the time.<sup>20</sup>

texts, though not that much neater.

which the text was held.

page as follows (with some doubtful letters marked with a dot):

Detail from T-S 8J7.1 showing his signature and describing himself as 'Av ha-Yeshiva'

services. Abraham's writing is somewhat more neatly executed than the script we would see him using when working in documentary legal

Nonetheless, it is excellent that we can attribute the copying of this poem to him, as he clearly thought it an important text. Moreover, it is

9. [ודע? להיס מפ]ניהם [מלכין רברבין] 10. [נאממ?? חלשין רפין: מאימתא ודחלתא] 11. [? ה כמא רברבין ותמהוהי כמא תקיפין: 12. [ביד קרב ונצחנו ???ה מתתיה] 1. And it was in the days of Antiochus the king

8. when [the king] arranged for Nikanor his second in command

12. [ ??? battle and the sons [?]<sup>35</sup> of Mattathias triumphed]

9. [??? ???] from before them [many kings]

10. [???? sickly and weak. ??? and fear]

11. [???

her teeth.<sup>40</sup>

value'.41

Michaels, Marc, Sefer Tagin Fragments from the Cairo Genizah, Brill 2021. 2 Michaels. Marc, Megillat B'ney Chashmonay (The Scroll of the Hasmonean Sons), Kulmus Publishing, 2013.

3 Including מגילת יונית, מגילת בני חשמונאי, מגילת חשמונאים, מגילת חונכה, מגלת מתתיהו, כתאב בני חשמונאי, ספר בית חשמונאי (The Scroll of the Greeks, The Scroll so the Sons of the Hasmoneans, The Scroll of the Hasmoneans, The Scroll of Chanukah, The Scroll of Mattityahu, The Book of the

5 For example, 'he [Alexander Janneus] was feasting with his concubines, in the sight of all the city, he ordered about eight hundred of them (Pharisees) to be crucified; and while they were living, he ordered the throats of their children and wives to be cut before their

eyes' (Josephus, Antiquities 13.14.2). Conversely his widow Salome Alexandra favoured them, 'the Pharisees governed her' and were 'the

9 R. Nissim Gaon, Hibbur Yafeh Meihayeshu'a, ed. H. Z. Hirschberg, Jerusalem, 5714, pp. 2-3. For a useful summary of how the megillah

10 These two key verses were in the original version of the text but have dropped out (either through scribal error or deliberately) from most extant manuscripts. I cover this in detail in Megillat B'ney Chashmonay, op. cit., pp. 106-114. The 'missing' verses cover Bagris introducing a form of droit du seigneur ('the lord's right') and the Maccabean brothers offering up their sister to placate him, and her

11 Covered in Abrahams, I, An Aramaic text of the Scroll of Antiochus from Jewish Quarterly Review 11. No. 2, 1989 pp. 291-299. I bring

12 Also known as Yūsuf ha-Yahūdī. 13 Several manuscripts of Antiochus Nāma are kept in the Library of the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem and the National Library of Israel. See Ofra Tirosh-Becker, Two Judeo-Arabic Translations of the Scroll of Antiochus from Ghardaïa (Algeria), pp.185-213 from The Festschrift Darkhei Noam - The Jews of Arab Lands edited by Carsten Schapkow, Shmuel Shepkaru and Alan T. Levenson, Brill 2015. 14 Based on the text of these two fragments and that of *Antiochus Nāma*, there appears to be no formal connection between them. For

15 This occurs at the base of fol. 1r, one of 4 separate pages on rag paper, approx. 13.5cm wide by 20cm long. They are housed in a

smart black binding with the words Sabbaths embossed on the spine. It is written on rag paper. Looking at its script, the closest match to

25 T-S 10H7.4 reads בצביונה. 26 T-S 10H7.4 reads ילדתה. The core difference noted by Hopkins. 27 Omitted from T-S 10H7.4.

it could also be the Hebrew המלך as we do see this word in Hebrew in the Aramaic text of the megillah.

'glorious one' which perhaps gives a view as to his own self-importance. He was born c. 215 BCE and ruled the Seleucid Empire from 175 BCE until his death in 164 BCE.

41 A full transcription and translation of the rest of the extant poem in T-S 10H7.4 would be most illuminating in that respect.

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> Fragment of the Month: December

T-S A45.14, fol. 2v Some years ago, my first dealings with the Cambridge Genizah Unit involved seeking permission to use some images from the Genizah of fragments from Megillat Antiochus. I was engaged in creating a Hebrew tiqqun (scribal copyist's guide) employing visual midrash<sup>1</sup> and commentary and had hunted down a fair number of manuscripts and printed texts (though far from comprehensive as it subsequently transpired – some were simply not accessible). Nonetheless, I made the best of it and put the tiqqun out under the title מגלת בני חשמונאי, The Scrolls of the Hasmonean Sons, largely concentrating on the later Hebrew translation, but with a promise to one day return and do a more comprehensive examination of the Aramaic original.

Megillat Antiochus, as it is mostly known (though it has gone by various names)<sup>3</sup> is an interesting pseudo-Biblical book. Jews read Esther on Purim, Ruth on Shavuot, Shir ha-Shirim on Pesach, Kohelet on Sukkot, Eicha on Tisha B'Av and Yonah on Yom Kippur. A book for every occasion. But nothing on Chanukah. Possibly this is because the story was preserved by Christians as part of the Apocrypha in Maccabees and no details of their history.

• The main villain is Bagris (otherwise unknown, but may be the Bacchides of I Macc. 7:8 and Josephus Wars 1:2-3) • Mattathias recites a refrain about each of his sons comparing them to past biblical heroes – very much like Jacob blessing his sons on his death-bed

quite considerably from the generally more popular text we find. 11 One other variant I did come across was a poem. This is a lengthy Judeo-Persian work that is entitled Antiochus Nāma (The Book of Antiochus), composed in 1749 by Yūsuf ben Iṣhaq ben Mūsā<sup>12</sup> from Bukhara. Indeed, it was a Bukharan scribal friend of mine, Yehudah Malkiel, who had first drawn my attention to this poem. The poem was published in pointed Hebrew characters as Sefer Megillat Antiochus be-ḥaruzim ... bi-leshon Paras in Jerusalem, Levi Printing House in 1903 (see image below). 13 This also reminded me of a similar poem

version of Megillat Esther that can accompany Yemenite megillot – no doubt another attempt to give additional status to the Antiochus

46 A 4672 229.7: H292

Above: detail from T-S 10H7.4, fol.1r, showing the start of the Antiochus poem Hopkins provides a transcription of T-S A45.14b 2v and notes some small differences in his transcription between the two. This FOTM seeks to build on his work; to take a closer look and fill lacunae in the text caused by the damage; also, to provide a translation and a view as to how this interesting fragmentary poem relates to the story, as it unfolds in the megillah. Both versions have many faded and missing letters. To try and compensate for that I went to the Genizah Unit armed with my trusty electronic microscope in case ink traces yielded any further information either in standard, ultraviolet or infrared light. It did not disappoint, and through a very close reading of the two fragments, I have been able to add some more letters and words into the transcription and reconstruction below. Each page of our FOTM measures 10.7cm x 13cm, though likely it was originally 13cm square. It constitutes the top part of two leaves, the bottom part is missing. It employs a semi-square Oriental script (i.e. with cursive elements, for example, the 'N'-shaped 'alef and a much more curved *lamed* with little horizontal top bar). Hopkins notes that 'the fragment [i.e. T-S A45.14] is very probably in the hand of Abraham b. Nathan' and will therefore date from c. 1100' and that this suggestion was made to him by Prof. M. Gil. Abraham b. Nathan is known to have written a fair number of documents found in the Genizah<sup>18</sup> and signed even more in his capacity as a dayyan (judge) or 'ed (witness) and a comparison of those scripts with our FOTM easily confirms Gil's suggestion. Abraham's writing is very distinctive, in particular his 'N' shaped 'alef. However, unlike the legal documents or letters he penned on paper, and contrary to T-S 10H7.4, our FOTM, T-S A45.14, is instead written on parchment. It is possible that this is because the piyyutim and the Antiochus poem were of a liturgical nature and a) had a higher status demanding the use of parchment and b) may have needed a more permanent substrate since it was going to be used repeatedly in

5. onto the walls of Jerusalem – this was her idea. She separated off 6. the foreskin of her son with her teeth.<sup>33</sup> She fell to the earth 7. to establish the commandment in her days. At that time<sup>34</sup>

Line 9's reconstruction explains the tops of the letters ניהם that remain on the T-S A45.14 fragment. Hopkins has incorrectly read the

remains of the *mem sofit* as a *nun* with a dot on it. The only issue comes on line 10 where there was clearly a *bet*, likely followed by an

גזַר לָהוֹן אֱלַהֶהוֹן שַׁבְּתָא יַרְחַא וּמְהִילוּתַא (and will annul from them the covenant<sup>37</sup> that their God<sup>38</sup> decreed with them – the Sabbath, the new

As with the author of the megillah, circumcision<sup>39</sup> is clearly a major concern for our poet, though he skips over one story of a man and wife being hanged before their suckling babe, which they had just circumcised, to focus on a more horrific episode regarding a woman who made a particular stand over *milah*. The original tale reads as follows אַתָּתָא דִּי יָלִידַת בַּר דָמִית בַּעַלַהּ וּגָזַרְתַּיהּ לָתְמַנָיִא יוֹמִין וּסְלֵיקת עַל שׁוּרַא and also) דִּיְרוּשְׁלֵם וּבְרַהּ גְזֵירַא בִּידַהּ: עֲנָת וַאֲמַרַת לָךְ אָמְרִין בַּגְרִיס חַיָּיבָא אַתּוּן סְבִרִין לְבַטָּלָא מִנָּנָא קְיָימָא דִּי גְזַר ... וְאַפֵּלַת יָת בְּרַהּ לְאַרְעָא וּנְפַלַת בַּתְרוֹהִי וּמִיתוּ תַּרְוֵיהוֹן כַּחְדָא: a women who gave birth to a son after the death of her husband and she had circumcised him at eight days, she went up onto the walls of

Jerusalem and her son, who had been circumcised was in her hand. And she answered and said, "to you Bagris the sinner let it be said that we will never abolish from amongst us the covenant that was cut with us ... and she dropped her son to the ground and she fell after him and the two died as one). Here our poet has apparently made the tale even more gruesome by relating that she circumcised him with

Perhaps the oddest part of the poem is the next section where we learn that the king sent Nikanor, his second-in-command, and

player going forward, initially attacking some Jews holed up in a cave (to avoid profaning Shabbat), burning them out.

presumably battle commenced. In the megillah, as noted, Nikanor had already been assassinated, and it is Bagris who was the main

From the reconstruction of the remaining lines, the poem then seems to turn to a familiar theme of the victory of the few versus the many, where presumably the vast forces of Antiochus with mighty commanders caused the Jews to be sickly and fearful. Indeed, in the megillah it takes some considerable prompting for the brothers to go into battle, either from the death of some one thousand men and

From the odd ordering of the poem, the focus on Nikanor, the mention of banning the Torah instead of the new moon, and the teeth

and some elements were selected or reworked and re-ordered as they had a more contemporary relevance, or just added for 'shock

women burnt in the cave, or (given the missing verses) from their sister who shames them into battle. Yet, into the breach finally step out

enabled circumcision, one wonders whether the poem was fully based on the megillah at all, or whether it had more of an independent life

moon and circumcision). The banning of the Torah, noted in the poetic version, is not mentioned in the megillah.

The poem starts like the megillah with a reference to the villain of the piece, King Antiochus  $IV^{36}$  the Seleucid ruler, described here as King of Greece. However, it then misses out all of the establishing information about the king, his greatness and his cities and, crucially, his number two, Bagris. Also, the entire adventure concerning Yoḥanan, his hidden dagger and assassination of Nikanor, mentioned above. It also omits Bagris attacking Jerusalem in revenge. Instead, our poem leaps to a repeated refrain from the megillah and the prime cause of the difficulties chronicled – the three decrees that were imposed upon the Jews and that led to their revolt. In Megillat Antiochus they are reported, on four occasions, as וּנְבַטֵּל מִנְהוֹן קִיימֵא דִּי

Chanukah heroes, the sons of Mattathias who triumph.

Sons of Hasmonea, The Book of the House of Hasmonea).

real administrators of the public affairs' (Josephus, Wars 1:5:2).

6 See Gaster, M, Transactions of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, 1893.

was used, see Golinkin, David, Schechter on Judaism, Volume 5, Issue No. 1, November 2010.

a translation of this alternative in my book, pp. 160–168. I am working on this variant for a future article.

8 A polemical treatise against David b. Zakkai (the Exilarch) and his followers.

calling on them to protect her honour and embarrassing them into going to battle.

Garden: An Anthology of Judeo-Persian Literature, Gorgia Press, 2013, pp. 159–175.

4 See Talmud Bavli Shabbat 21b.

7 In *Lešonenu* 23.

**Footnotes** 1 Otiyyot Mešunnot such as large, small, reversed and ornamented letters, with some adapted from Sefer Tagin, my main PhD focus. See

the translation of this work, see Vera Basch Moreen, Chapter 3 An Apocryphal Epic, 'Imrānī,'s Ḥannukkah nāmāh from Queen Esther's

22 T-S 10H7.4 reads גזירין. 23 T-S 10H7.4 reads בטעיונה. Dr Ben Outhwaite also noted that he, Abraham, may have started to write the *lamed* that follows and then stopped and corrected it to the : which marks the verse end. 24 Written sideways in the margin, probably added by Abraham when he realised he had omitted it.

30 The reš in שדר is clear in T-S 10H7.4. Hopkins posits from context that the missing word thereafter is 'the king'. In T-S 10H7.4 there is a lamed-shaped hole, where the ink has corroded through the substrate at this point, supporting this. The Aramaic מלכא is more likely but

34 Generally translated into the Hebrew version as באותה שעה (at that same hour). 35 Likely 'sons' given the context. 36 We are used to vocalising his name as אַנְטִיוֹכוּ (Antiyokhus) but the Yemenites refer to him as אַנְטִיוּכַס (Antyukhas) and some of the pointed handwritten manuscripts give אַנְטִיוּכֶּס (Antyukhes). This is Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Epiphanes is Greek for 'god manifest' or the

allow them to compete naked in the Greek sports. On the other hand, both the Megillah and the books of the Maccabees show that faithful 40 My thanks to Dr Ben Outhwaite for this gruesome insight, and to Matthew Morgenstern for confirming the reading. I was initially

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The Abrahams alternative text is similar to the books of the Maccabees here suggesting that what they were putting an end to was [יכל מיני] ובטילו (מ)ביתא עלתא ומנחתא וניכסת קודשא [וניסוכין] [זמרא דקודשא (all types of holy songs and annulled from The House (i.e. the Temple), burnt offerings, minha offerings, holy sacrifices and libations). 38 Many texts omit reference to God here and just refer to the covenant in a more passive manner e.g. 'the covenant that has been made

31 Hopkins transcribes this as [תניינ[יה, omitting the first *yod*.

28 T-S 10H7.4 reads לקימא.

29 T-S 10H7.4 reads בזימנה.

32 Lit. 'make worthless'.

33 Lit. 'with her tooth'.

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I and II. Partly, it may be because the Rabbis were not that keen on Chanukah with barely a mention in the Talmud<sup>4</sup> because it is all about war and celebrates the Hasmoneans, with whom the Pharisees had a bit of a love-hate relationship. So, Chanukah brought mixed emotions for the rabbis and their statement concentrates on the miracle of the oil and just gives a single mention to the Bet Ḥašmonay Probably written in the land of Israel, and originally in Aramaic, the megillah seems to be similar to the style of Targum Ongelos and deliberately archaizing, imitating a 'biblical style' – particularly mimicking the book of Esther. Moses Gaster claims it was written between 2nd and 5th century<sup>6</sup> though *Halakhot Gedolot* (Venice 1548, 141d) assigns it to the 'oldest schools of Hillel and Shammai' - which is unlikely. Professor Menahem Zvi Kaddari also believes that that 'there is reason to narrow the dating of the Scroll of Antiochus to However, the story it contains is quite 'fanciful' in parts and bears only some relationship to the accepted 'history' as reported in books I and II of the Maccabees and in Josephus. Thus, its value is questioned by many, and perhaps this is why it was rejected over time. In this very different 'plot' we find, for example, that: The main hero is the brother Yonanan not Yehudah (Judah the Maccabee) • Yoḥanan is presented as a Kohen Gadol – when he was not, and uses this 'false identity' to kill Nicanor with a concealed dagger (very similar to the Ehud and Eglon story in Judges 3:16-22) Antiochus apparently dies at sea instead of falling from a chariot (I Macc. 6:9 and 16) • There are no lists of battles and skirmishes, just one large battle. Regardless of these inaccuracies, it was a popular text amongst the Italians and Yemenites but also in Spain, France, Persia, Buchara etc.

שונאחי בוד יך שאוזי סיתם נאו

Detail from Mos. VII.74.1 showing a loftier title

We know quite a bit about Abraham, his status in the community and the challenges he faced in the leadership struggles in the Yeshivat Eretz Israel (Land of Israel Gaonate). That he took time to write out a poem connected to Megillat Antiochus also speaks to the respect in

On the basis of the estimated size of the original page, the script height and line spacing, there were likely 12 lines of the poem. Using the extant elements from our FOTM T-S A45.14 alongside the T-S 10H7.4 fragment (largely from line 9 onwards) we can reconstruct the first

1. והוה ביומי אנטיוכס מלכא

2. יונאה: גזירן<sup>22</sup> תלת גזר

 $^{24}$ נמהילותא  $^{23}$  : לבטלא [שב]תא ואוריתא  $^{24}$ 

4. בצביוניה $^{25}$ : דל[ת] אית[תא ילדה $^{26}$ ] וקמת

על שורא די[רוש]לם בר[עי]ונ[ה]: ופסקת

6. ית<sup>27</sup> ערלת [בר]ה בש[ינ]ה: ונפלת לארעא

ר. לקיימא $^{28}$  [מצ]וה בזימנה $^{29}$ : בה שעתא

:  $^{31}$ ניקנור תיניינ[יה] אד[ר מ]ל[כא] לניקנור תיניינ

2. of Greece: That three decrees were decreed 3. in their error. To abolish<sup>32</sup> the sabbath, the Torah and circumcision 4. was their desire. A woman lifted up her son and went up

'ayin in T-S A45.14 fragment, but in the reconstruction using the other fragment, these letters do not appear. The poem contents may have diverged. Sadly, having examined the manuscript in its melinex, this element appears to have folded over during conservation (see detail below) but was flat in the printed version in Hopkins book.

Close up of part of T-S A45.14 showing how the manuscript was folded under

how many great officers and astonished at how many mighty ones.]

Either way, it is another celebration of the Chanukah miracle that at least two of the scribes in the Genizah, (one, our FOTM, written by a man of some considerable standing in the community), felt worthy to bring to our attention. Ḥag Chanukah sameaḥ.

an example dated manuscript is with T-S K6.24 written in 1095 in Cairo by Avraham b. Aharon, script 62, Beit Arie, Engle & Yardeni, Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts, Volume 1: Oriental and Yemenite scripts, Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, Jerusalem, 1987. 16 Perhaps a full transcription and translation of the rest of poem will be in a future article. 17 Hopkins, op. cit., p. 46. 18 Certainly not an exhaustive list, but examples of other fragments in Cambridge's collection written by Abraham and that show the wide range of legal activity he was involved include: T-S 10J27.3 (a betrothal deed), T-S 16.120 (ketubba), T-S 18J1.17 (a deed of sale), Moss. VII.9.2 (a court record), T-S 6J11.8 (legal document concerning financial matters), T-S 8.101 (responsa), T-S 10J13.11 (a letter), T-S

16.168 (a partnership agreement), T-S 20.121 (testimony over a legal dispute), T-S 24.74 (a court record over an assault) and part of T-S

39 Those Jews who were anxious to leave their heritage behind tried to cover up their circumcision with a painful operation (epispasm) to

20.93 (a record of a complaint). It therefore nice to see this *dayyan* penning a religious text. 19 See https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-00008-J-00007-00001/1 20 See https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MOSSERI-VII-00074-00001/1 21 For an excellent short summary see Elinoar Bareket, Abraham ben Nathan son of Nathan ben Abraham in Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman, Brill 2010, accessed 02/05/23. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1878-9781\_ejiw\_SIM\_0000220

37 I Maccabees 1:47–51 amplifies the edict that they would 'forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices, and atonements to be made in the Temple of God. And should prohibit the sabbath, and the festival days, to be celebrated ... and that they should leave their children uncircumcised.' Josephus similarly explains that Antiochus 'put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months' and that 'he compelled the Jews to dissolve the laws of their country, and to keep their infants uncircumcised.'

Jews were prepared to become martyred to protect *milah*, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. thinking that there was an error here and the word should be בשיניה (while he [the baby] slept).

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