Jewish Magic Literature in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages

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Our knowledge of the Judaism of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages is, for the most part, determined by the literary canon which the leading class of Judaism in this period, the Rabbis and later the Geonim, produced. Magical practices and incantations are indeed a component of this canon, but only in the form and above all emphasis which the authors and redactors of the canon of classical rabbinic literature authorized. As such, it is not surprising that research into Jewish magic has up until recent times been largely influenced by the general summary of talmudic magic presented by Ludwig Blau2 despite the publication a short time before by Moses Gaster of one of the most important and exclusive magic texts of Judaism in late antiquity, namely Harba de-Moshe.3 On the basis of this material, the discussion concerning the degree of influence which Jewish magic had upon the Greek magic papyri edited by Preisendanz,4 a discussion which continues to this day, has remained rather fruitless.5 Only those who had forgotten Gaster's Harba de-Moshe, or had indeed failed to take notice of it at all, could perceive as the sensation it was then proclaimed to be, Mordecai Margaliot's lecture to the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in 1965 on Sefer ha-Razim, the 'newly recovered book of magic from the talmudic period' (so the subtitle of the 1966 edition).

In the meantime, research into Jewish literature of magic in a more narrow sense has made some progress. The edition of the Synopse6 and the Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur7 brought to light the important aspect of the interweaving of early Jewish mysticism with magical elements. In 1981, shortly before his death, Gershom Scholem published the Havdala

1 This contribution is the slightly revised and annotated version of a lecture given on 12 September 1989 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, by invitation of the Institute for Jewish Studies at University College, London. I thank my student, Aubrey Pomerance, for the English translation of this paper and Pamela Vermes for further editing.


6 Tübingen 1981 (= TSAJ, 2).

7 Tübingen 1984 (= TSAJ, 6).
de-Rabbi ‘Aqiva, an eminent magic text whose main part is not surprisingly contained in Hekhalot Zuṭarti, one of the classical texts of Hekhalot literature. In 1983 an English translation of Sefer ha-Razim was published, and in 1985 Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked presented the authoritative edition of the hitherto known amulets and magic bowls in which a number of amulets and fragments of magic books from the Cairo Genizah are included.

It now proves that these recent publications are but the tip of an iceberg. A systematic search for magic texts among the Cairo Genizah fragments preserved in Cambridge has produced unimaginable treasures. During two relatively brief visits to Cambridge, I was able to assemble a collection of more than 100 photographs of magic texts, and it quickly became apparent that the magic fragments are by no means restricted to the (well-known) box K 1 of the Old Series but are also dispersed throughout the Additional and New Series. This rich and albeit fortuitous find has been systematized by Shaul Shaked, who scanned each fragment in the Cambridge Genizah texts for magical content. The result is an immense quantity, tremendous both in number and variety, of fragments in the Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish, Judeo-Persian and Syrian languages. Professor Shaked is preparing a catalogue of these fragments. Furthermore, we are both planning a joint edition and translation of a corpus of the most important Hebrew and Aramaic fragments.

In what follows, I would like to present a number of examples taken from published texts as well as from Genizah material as yet unpublished. I shall, in doing so, select different literary types and attempt to discuss both the formal aspects and contents of magic literature.

1. Incantation Prayers

One of the major characteristics of Hekhalot literature is the conjuring of angels to execute the will of man. As recent research has shown, incantations pervade all levels of Hekhalot literature, although in different contexts. In certain texts, incantation is so central that it has either pushed

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the transmission of the Heavenly Journey into the background, or so saturated it that it has become a magical act.\textsuperscript{11}

In the Hekhalot texts a close connection between incantation and prayer is clearly discernible. The magical element can be very varied. Some of the incantational prayers could indeed figure, in a similar form, in the Siddur, as the following text from Ma'\'a\'se Merkava illustrates:

One who wishes to make use of this great secret, let him recite (the names of the) angels which stand behind the hayyot ha-qodesh ... (nomina barbarum follow). And he shall utter a prayer that they do not bring him into ruin, for they rage more than any army in the heights.
And which is the prayer?
Praised are You Lord, my God and Creator, great and fearful, Eternal One, powerful over the whole Merkava.
Who is like You, powerful in the heights?
Grant me success with all of my limbs,
so that I may reflect upon the Gates of Wisdom,
explore the ways of understanding,
perceive the chambers of the Torah
and reflect upon the hidden treasure of blessing ...
Save me from all those who stand raging,
so that they may love me in Your presence,
and I will understand.
For Your splendour continues eternally;
therefore I will eternally praise the holiness of Your name
and sanctify Your great and holy name.
The great seal shall be upon my limbs ...\textsuperscript{12}

Here it is only the final sentence of the text with its reference to the 'great seal' which reveals its magical element. (The 'great seal' is known from other Hekhalot texts, often in connection with the 'fearful crown').\textsuperscript{13} In this text, as in all other Hekhalot writings, regardless of the degree of magical penetration, the decisive element is that the adjuration of angels is directed towards the perception and understanding of the Torah. The aim of the adjuration is complete command of the Torah and insight into its hidden 'secrets' and 'treasures'.

Some of the magic fragments from the Genizah also call to mind the incantation prayers of Hekhalot literature, albeit with one decisive difference: they are free of the associations with the Torah which so dominate

\textsuperscript{12} Synopse, § 569.
\textsuperscript{13} Cf. P. Schäfer, Hekhalot-Studien, pp. 31 ff.
Hekhalot writings. An example is the (hitherto unpublished) fragment T.-S. K 1.4:14

[The beginning of the fragment is missing. It is likely to supplement: I turn] my countenance towards You in order to inquire of the throne of Your glory (כְּשָׁלוֹם דְּבַר מַלְפֵּס סְכָא בַּבוֹדֵי), for I am so despised in my own eyes, for who am I, and what15 is my life, that I raise my heart to You. Were it not for Your mercy, in which I trust and Your favour which I enjoy, I would perish in the eyes of my God16 and the God of my fathers—You are the Lord, filled with mercy.

Let me find grace and favour before You, to be drawn closer to You, to save myself in the protection of Your wings, to make great Your mercy over me, to unite with me (יַחַד לְךָ) Your attendants and servants and those who fulfill Your will—so that they may execute my will, to reveal to me all the secrets of the spirits (רוחות), demons (שָׁרֵי) and tormentors (סְעָנִים) which wander and walk upon the earth, to see Your work of wonders and to contemplate the results of Your wisdom, for numerous are (the wonders) which You have performed, You are the Lord, nothing is Your equal etc.18 ...
You live and are perpetual from eternity to eternity.
May it be pleasant before You, King of the world, God of heaven and earth, ...
that You grant me (the) permission, to observe and perceive the ways19 of the spirits, which are hidden ..., so that I may see them face to face and that they will not conceal themselves from me, at no time, when I call and conjure them ...

Another fragment (T.-S. K 1.25) which speaks of the 'order of the Merkava' (דָּרֶד הַמְּרָכָבוֹת)20 has the worshipper state his requests and prayers for favour (זָעֲנוֹת) at length before the Throne of Glory 'in order that You forgive my sins and pardon my sacrileges and transgressions, that You turn your anger away from me, that You be full of mercy on my behalf, that You hear my cries for help and fulfil my question and request'.21 These

14 Fol. 1b, l. 1 ff.
15 Literally: 'who'.
16 In the text with vowels: בנטָיָא אָלֹךְ (fol. 1b, l. 8).
17 Literally: 'who is filled with your mercy' (fol. 1b, l. 9).
19 פְּנֵי (v.) (fol. 2b, l. 6).
20 Fol. 1a, l. 1.
21 Fol. 1b, l. 6 ff.
requests are basically directed to God but here too the means of their fulfilment are the angels, who are to offer their services to men according to the territory which they govern ('to each of them according to that over which he is placed' [､ל ומ ש צ מ מג מ נ]): 'so that they protect me from all evil and keep away ... from me all my enemies who have raised themselves up against me with evil intent.'

The terminology (prayer language) of the first quoted Hekhalot text and both Genizah fragments is very similar, but differs greatly in regard to their intention. The one worshipper is wholly concerned with the revelation of the hidden secrets of the Torah, while the other hopes to obtain access to the secrets of the spirits and demons who dominate the world (K 1.4), and whose power can be used by man to protect him from his enemies (K 1.25).

2. The Magic Speech

The central element in all incantation texts is the magic formula by which the angel is adjured and forced to carry out man's will. Characteristic of all varieties of adjuration of an angel or group of angels, and further, of demons and all sorts of evil spirits regardless of the aim of the adjuration and degree of magical content, is the magic formula mashbia' ani 'alekha/ 'alekhem ('I adjure you').

2.1 The Adjuration of the šar ha-panim

The classical example from the Hekhalot literature of such an adjuration is the so-called adjuration of the šar ha-panim. The text (which is self-contained and well redacted) is artistically structured, the major elements being both an 'invocation' and an 'adjuration' in several stages. The invocation (with the formula 'I call you' [ani qore lekha]) states the object of the adjuration (the šar ha-panim = MeṭaṭṭRon) and thereafter its secret names in descending order (fourteen, five, and finally the one and great name, which with the exception of one letter is identical with the name of God); the actual adjuration always begins with the formula mashbia' ani 'alekha/ 'alekhem, sometimes enhanced by we-gozer u-meqayyem ani 'alekha/alekhem ('and decree and impose upon you').

The aim of the adjuration is only vaguely hinted at. The angel is asked to descend and fulfil the adept's wish and this is continually repeated in new phrases: 'I adjure you and decree upon you that you will further be bound

22 Fol. 1a, l. 2 ff.
to my will, that you adopt my conjuring commands, execute my desire and fulfil my request!"25

When you hear an adjuration with this name, honour your name, hurry, descend and carry out the will of him who has adjured you. Should you delay, I will cast you into Rigyon's persecuting fire and put another in your place.26

I adjure you and decree and impose upon you that you do not transgress and delay my words and make no changes in all my commands.27

The true purpose of these increasingly elaborate adjuration formulae is only mentioned in the introduction28 to the adjuration, and at one point only in the adjuration itself:29

With what does one conjure the šar ha-panim, to descend upon the earth (and) to reveal to man the mysteries above and below, the hidden (sources) of wisdom and the shrewdness of knowledge?30

Although the Torah is not expressly mentioned here, there can be no doubt that the terms used (ta'aluma, hokhma, orma, tushiyya) refer to knowledge of the Torah. The adjuration of the šar ha-panim is, therefore, obviously a Torah charm: the angel is adjured to give man complete insight into the secrets of the Torah.

2.2 Sheva'de-Eliyahu

This reference to the Torah is absent from one text, several fragments of which I have published in Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur. This text can be completely reconstructed with the help of these fragments and a parallel version in the Oxford manuscript Michael 9.31 It has the title Sheva' de-Eliyahu or Sheva' Zuṭarti, 'The seven (requests or adjurations) of Elijah' or 'The little Amidah'. Indeed, the seven eulogies of the seven benedictions of the Shabbat Amidah are the continuous structural element upon which the text is built. As in the adjuration of the šar ha-panim, an angel is adjured through an ascending order of adjuration formulae (mashbia' ani 'alekha). Following I Kings 19:11 this angel is described as a 'great (and) strong spirit (ruah gedola hazaq, whereby ruah here means 'spirit' = angel and not 'wind' as in the biblical verse) who tears up mountains and shatters cliffs'; from the context it is apparent that here Metatron is meant (as is the case in the adjuration of the šar ha-panim). Here too, the objective is the fulfilment of man's will by an angel. It is not, however, concerned with the conveyance of

25 Synopse, § 627.
26 Ibid., § 636.
27 Ibid., § 638.
28 Ibid., § 623.
29 Ibid., § 634.
30 Ibid., § 623.
31 Fol. 115a ff.
Torah knowledge, but as the often repeated litany-like formula states, 'that he bring about redemption and rescue from oppression and dispel every spirit from my body and every demon from me, Amen, Amen, Sela'.

The adjuration therefore no longer aims at mastering the Torah, but the spirits which threaten men, and this with the help of the 'great and powerful spirit', Metatron. Metatron, the šar ha-panim, has been transformed from the Lord of the Torah to the Lord of the Spirits.

2.3 Sefer ha-Razim

The hitherto most comprehensive collection of Jewish incantation texts appears in the edition of Margalioth's Sefer ha-Razim published in 1966. This book contains a whole catalogue of incantations which are incorporated into the external framework of the description of the seven heavens and their respective groups of angels. An overview of the themes, i.e. the aims of the individual adjurations, provides an interesting spectrum. Formally, the adjurations are for the most part introduced with mashbia 'ani 'alekhem/'alekha, sometimes with mevaqqesh ani mikkem ('I request from you') or with moser ani lakhem ('I transmit to you'). The themes are widely mixed and devoid of systematic order. They are concerned with the healing of illness as well as with the killing of an enemy, the sinking of his ship or the destruction of the walls of his home. An important role is played by love charms and in general by the domination of persons: the winning of a king’s trust, the governance of a city’s inhabitants, gaining of the sympathies of other people, the capture of a fugitive, insight into another person’s thoughts and dreams, the prevention of evil slander, the transformation of an enemy into an ally, the inhibition of sleep, the liberation of a friend from an unfavourable judgement, the reinstatement in his former positions of someone who has fallen out of favour. Needless to say, the adjurer not only has power over his fellow men but also over the

32 Geniza-Fragmente, p. 142, fol. 1b, l. 2 f. and passim.
33 I, 32 (quotation according to יפר = 'firmament' (Roman numeral) and line (Arabic numeral) of Margalioth’s edition).
spirits who execute his will,\textsuperscript{48} and over nature. He can ignite a stove in the cold,\textsuperscript{49} or cause the opposite to happen and extinguish fire in the bathhouse,\textsuperscript{50} or fill a house with fire without burning it,\textsuperscript{51} and he can even spur on a tired racehorse.\textsuperscript{52} Last but not least, the purpose of many adjurations is to discover the future: to know the events of each and every year;\textsuperscript{53} to consult the dead;\textsuperscript{54} to look at the sun in the daytime without sustaining injury and to question it concerning good and evil, life and death;\textsuperscript{55} to see and consult the sun at night;\textsuperscript{56} to foresee the month in which one will die, and generally to know what will happen in each individual month (harvest, war, plague and epidemics).\textsuperscript{57}

Such is the thematic spectrum of the adjurations in \textit{Sefer ha-Razim}.\textsuperscript{58} The adjurer who follows the instructions set out in \textit{Sefer ha-Razim} proves himself to be master of his fellow-men, of the spirits and of nature, and he knows the future. There is no mention here at all of the Torah, or of the fear of forgetting it, a subject so dominant in the Hekhalot texts.

The objects of the adjuration are in most cases, but by no means exclusively the angels, who are seen as the rulers of the various heavens; in addition to the angels not only are the sun\textsuperscript{59} and the moon\textsuperscript{60} conjured, but also the salamander\textsuperscript{61} and even the Hermes \textit{Kriophoros} = rambearer.\textsuperscript{62} Typical of the syncretistic character of these texts is the Greek prayer to Helios recited by one to whom the sun appears during the night:\textsuperscript{63}

\begin{quote}
Holy Helios, who rises in the east, good mariner, trustworthy leader of the sun's rays, reliable (witness), who of old didst establish the mighty wheel (of the heavens), holy orderer, ruler of the axis (of the heaven), Lord, Brilliant Leader, King, Soldier. I, N. son of N., present my supplication before you, that you will appear to me without causing me terror, and you will conceal nothing from me and tell me truthfully all that I desire.
\end{quote}

2.4 Amulets

Jewish amulets have only in part been edited until now and no comprehensive formal analysis of them or their contents has yet been

\textsuperscript{48} I, 188.
\textsuperscript{49} II, 83.
\textsuperscript{50} III, 20.
\textsuperscript{51} III, 47.
\textsuperscript{52} III, 35.
\textsuperscript{53} I, 98.
\textsuperscript{54} I, 178.
\textsuperscript{55} IV, 25.
\textsuperscript{56} IV, 43.
\textsuperscript{57} V, 15.
\textsuperscript{58} Only IV, 25 is absent: Who goes on a journey or into war.
\textsuperscript{59} I, 98; II, 147.
\textsuperscript{60} II, 166.
\textsuperscript{61} III, 20.
\textsuperscript{62} I, 178.
\textsuperscript{63} IV, 61 ff.; translation Morgan, \textit{Sepher Ha-Razim}, p. 71.
undertaken. The most extensive collection is that by J. Naveh and Sh. Shaked in their book *Amulets and Magic Bowls. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* which appeared in 1985. This volume includes, with few exceptions\(^{64}\) (aside from the magic bowls which will not be considered here), all hitherto known amulets from Palestine and bordering countries\(^{65}\) in Aramaic and Hebrew respectively, written on silver, copper, bronze and lead sheets, as well as (only) one on a potsherd. In addition, five amulets (besides a number of pages from magic books) have been published from the still mostly unknown and unevaluated material from the Cairo Genizah; these amulets are naturally written on paper or leather, one of them on cloth.

The formula *mashbia’ ani ‘alekha/’alekhem* in its various forms also plays a major role in the amulets edited by Naveh and Shaked as well as in other unedited amulets which I have examined. Thus in the first amulet edited by Naveh and Shaked, the concern is that a certain Quzma son of Salminu ‘be healed from all pain from this day to eternity’ (**אָמָה בָּרָךְ לְפִלְּטֵי מְכָל**).\(^{66}\) To this end, a ‘spirit of the bones’ is adjured, ‘that walks within the tendons and the bones of Quzma son of Salinu’ (**מסננה עֲלֵךְ וְרָמָה דְּחַי מַשַּלְכַּת בְּרֵיחָיו וְגִנּוֹר וְדִקֵּחָה בָּרָךְ לְפִלְּטֵי**).\(^{67}\) Likewise against illness, concretely against ‘fever and shivering’ (**דַּבֵּשׁ תַּחְרֵיָה**), an amulet is to work for Aqemu daughter of Em-rabban, ‘whether it is from day to day, or from week to week, or from year to year, or from month to month’.\(^{68}\) The spirits, apparently ‘the shadow spirit and the male and female spirit’ (**הַמְשַלֵּית וְרָמָה וְדִקֶּבָּה**),\(^{69}\) are adjured with the formula *mashbias’ ani ‘alekhem*, ‘by the name of His right hand and the might of [His holiness], His vigour, BYH YH BYH YH BY[H Lord of] Hosts, the God of Israel’.\(^{70}\) Fever and shivering, as symptoms of numerous illnesses, are named particularly often in the amulets. A fine example of an almost classical adjuration is amulet no. 9, in which the demon itself is called ‘fever and shivering’:

> Against you, the spirit which is called fever (and) shivering (**אָמָה אֲוֹרִיָּה**): Be exercised from the body of Marian the daughter of Esther, from the two hundred and forty eight limbs which are in her. I adjure you (**מסננה אֹתֵנ לְפִלְּטֵי**), be exercised from her, in the name of Him who lives and exists, of Him who suspended the sky without chains, and set up the earth without pillars, and the

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\(^{65}\) Syria, Turkey (near the Syrian border), Jordan, Egypt.

\(^{66}\) Amulet 1, l. 10 f. The translation follows Naveh and Shaked but sometimes minor changes have been made.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., l. 21 f.

\(^{68}\) Amulet 4, l. 28 ff.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., l. 15.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., l. 32 ff.
sea and the wilderness are terrified (?) by His presence, and the mountains
and the hills tremble.71

Of particular interest is the love charm which was apparently inscribed
on unfired clay and thereafter thrown into the fire to be baked:

You holy and mighty angels. [I adjure] you (משבח ואלה), just as [this
sherd burns, so shall] burn the heart of R[... son/daughter of] [Mar]ian after
me, I ... [... and you should turn his/her heart and mind and kidney, so [that
he/she will do] my desire in this [...].72

Most numerous among the amulets edited by Naveh and Shaked are
general adjurations against spirits and demons by which people have been
possessed, as for example, in the fragmentary amulet no. 12, in which the
formula 아ָשֶׁר (משבח הלל על כל הרוח האָלֹל) (‘I [adjure] against every spirit’) or
משבח אתא על כל הרוח (‘I adjure you, spirit’) is frequently repeated.73 The same
holds true for the amulets from the Genizah, for example fragment no. 4: ‘I
adjure you, spirit and demon’ (משבח אתא רוח ואיש)74 ... Further I
adjure you, all spirits and all demons and all harmful spirits and all Satans,
and all grief and all pain and all kinds of troubles?5 ... Further [I adjure
you] all spirits and demons and harmful spirits76 ...’; or also fragment no. 7:

I adjure against you (משבח אתא עליב gammel), spirits, (female) demons, evil eye,
affliction (סנף רע), evil Satan, all kinds of misfortune. In the name of
I-am-who-I-am, which shakes the whole world. In the name of Him who,
(when) the sea heard (it), split, (when) the fire heard (it), was extinguished,
(when) the rocks heard (it), they broke, (when) the stone heard (it), exploded.
So should you depart, go away, withdraw and not approach Banina daughter
of Yeman, from this day on and forever, Amen, Amen, Amen, Sela.77

All sorts of spirits and demons are at the centre of the amulets, whereby
great importance is often laid on naming them as precisely as possible in
order that one is not overlooked and then able to carry out his evil work
without hindrance. Here too, however, there is no mention at all of the
Torah. I quote a translation of a hitherto unpublished amulet from the
Cairo Genizah, which contains all of the above mentioned elements:78

I further adjure you and decree upon you (שאדו מכשbac או והחר עליב כומנ), all you
(various) types of male and female demons, male and female Liliths, evil
spirits, male and female harmful spirits, male and female, which are made
from fire, from water, from air, and from earth. And very particularly you

71 Amulet 9, 1. 1 ff.
72 Amulet 10, l. 3 ff.
73 Amulet 12, l. 1.9.32. Compare also Amulet 6, l. 7 and Amulet 8, l. 3.
74 Geniza 4, l. 8 f.
75 Ibid., l. 11 ff.
76 Ibid., l. 15 f.
77 Geniza 7, l. 5 ff.; cf. also l. 17 f.
78 T.-S. K 1.30, l. 3 ff.
seven spirits which Ashmedai, the King of the demons, taught King Solomon. Those which penetrate the entrails of women and crush their issue ... I decree upon you, all you (various) types of harmful diseases, harmful pains, all types of vomiting, diarrhoea, indispositions, pain and weakness, which could befall the woman Haviva daughter of Zahara. In the name of El Shaddai, before whom you tremble and whom you fear. In the name of Michael, your master. In the name of Ashmedai, your King. ... So that you depart, go away (?), flee and stay away from this woman and do not continue to approach her for all eternity. Depart, depart from her to another place and do not again approach her. By the power of this holy combination (of letters) which (is as follows): $\mathbb{S}$ $\mathbb{S}$ $\mathbb{M}$ $\mathbb{T}$ $\mathbb{T}$ $\mathbb{S}$ $\mathbb{M}$ $\mathbb{H}$ NKY. That she shall have no pain, neither during the time of her menstruation nor when she is pure. She shall be healthy all the days (of her life), Amen.
And if you transgress this my word, I will strike you with iron whips, which are the four holy mothers, namely Bilha, Rachel, Zilpah and Lea. Therefore, fulfill this my word, then shall the blessing of goodness be upon you, Amen.

3. The Magical Act

As we have seen, the incantation formula may stand alone or be accompanied by magical acts (and likewise, magical acts can be described without being combined with an incantation formula). The magical act to which I shall now turn is also embedded in a language of formulae, and this allows us to categorize the texts accordingly. It should first be noted that the amulets are largely free of magical acts; directions for these are to be found, as would be expected, in collections of magic recipes which one can provisionally call 'Books of Magic'.

3.1 The Formula im bqqashta/tevaqqesh/rašita

The formula most often used to designate the desired aim and its appropriate magical act is the bqqashta-formula. It consists of the phrase יָדַֽו בִּקְשָׁה (sometimes also also רָזִית) + the verb in the infinitive + the verb in the imperative (mostly קָה or כִּהְבֶּה and the like), thus 'if you wish to do such and such ... take such and such ... or write upon such and such ...'. The most comprehensive collection of such magic instructions (which are for the most part, but not always, combined with the adjuration formula mashbia' ani 'alekha/'alekhem) is to be found in Sefer ha-Razim. The Aramaic equivalent יַא בִּקְשָׁת + the verb in the infinitive + the verb in the imperative (מנ or כוה or אָמְרו כוה or the like) is above all evidenced in Harba de-Moshe.

The spectrum of possible magic aids is once again exceptionally large. Let us cast a brief glance at Sefer ha-Razim to obtain a general overview. There, most frequently mentioned are thin metal plates (טֶּפֶס, Latin lamellae)

79 הָקָּשָׁה instead of הָקָּשָׁה
80 תְּפָדָה instead of תְּפָדָה.
inscribed with magic names and formulae; they are made of gold, silver, copper, iron, tin or lead. Only once is there found the well-known material from the Greek magic papyri, the χάρτης ἱερατικόν, i.e. the papyrus utilized by Egyptian priests famous for their magical practices. The recording of magic formulae on metal plates or papyrus is mostly accompanied by other magical acts, particularly often the burning of myrrh and frankincense; spikenard oil and balsam, wine, honey, water, fine flour or baked cakes, leaves or roots of plants, are also important ingredients in the magical act. A typical example is the following description of the cure for a sick person:

If you wish to heal a man who has had a stroke and half of him is dried up, either by an (evil) spirit or by witchcraft, take spikenard oil and three measures of honey and stand facing the sun as it rises, repeating three times each day for seven days the name of his mother and the name of the angels who stand upon the sixth step. And on the seventh day take him and stand him naked before the sun, and smear oil all over his flesh, while burning myrrh, frankincense, and chosen spices in the sunlight. Then again write upon a silver lamella (the names of) these angels of glory with these characters ... (here follow several signs in a magic alphabet). (Write these on the lamella) as an amulet and put it on his neck with a (cord of) asbestos and incense of spices. Write it thus on the twentieth of the month and you will succeed.

Many cases also require more extravagant aids. To win over a king, a ruler, a rich man, or the heart of an important, rich and beautiful woman, it is necessary to have the heart and blood of a lion cub which must be slaughtered with a bronze knife. To gain the love of an important and beautiful woman, it can however suffice to put the sweat of ones' own face into a new glass vessel and—following the correct adjurations—then have it buried under her front door. Other aids are a white cock (when one wishes to speak with the moon and the stars), a handful of ashes from beneath the bread offering of an idol (when one wishes to silence someone), the head of a black dog that never saw light during its days (when one wishes to prevent one's enemy from sleeping), a salamander (which is naturally connected with fire), and the fat which covers the brain of a black ox; the latter is helpful against migraine or blindness:

81 I, 95; it is also attested in Harba de-Moshe = Synopse, § 613. Cf. Margaliot, Sefer ha-Razim, pp. 1 f.
82 II, 95 ff.; translation Morgan, Sepher Ha-Razim, pp. 51 f.
83 I, 119.
84 I, 143.
85 I, 161.
86 II, 19.
87 II, 62.
88 III, 17.
If you wish to cure a headache (affecting) half the head or to bind or rebuke the spirit causing blindness, take fat that covers the brain of a black ox, and while in (a state of) purity, write on it the names of these angels and place it in a silver tubular case, then bind the tube with seven colours and place it beside the pain... 89

The exact time and location for the magical act also play a part. During the day, one should stand facing the sun, 90 but often at night—at midnight 91 or at the third hour of the night 92—facing the moon. In addition to the sea coast, 93 graves 94 and places where convicted people were buried or executed 95 were especially favoured.

The baqqasha-formula with its various forms (frequently only the infinitive without תְּנַשֵׁה (ta-niṣṭeḥ)) is also often found in the unpublished fragments from the Cairo Genizah. I quote but one example in which the magical act consists of drawing a circle. Circle drawing is, as we know, a very old and widely popular magic practice. In Jewish sources, the best known example is Honi the circle drawer (ha-metaggel), who drew a circle (גדת), stood inside it (ל╯ך נים) and prayed for rain. 96 In all magic texts with which I am acquainted, the circle serves a protective function (as in the case with Honi). Whoever finds himself inside the circle is protected from attacks by evil spirits. 97 J. Trachtenberg 98 points to the custom of German Jews to draw a circle around the bed of a woman who had just given birth, or the habit of oriental Jews to walk around the coffin of a dead person seven times and recite psalms in order to ward off demons. One of these Genizah fragments testifies to exactly the opposite function of the circle, namely to capture demons, thereby recalling the function of the magic bowls, which were obviously used primarily as traps for demons. 99

If you wish (שְׁתַמְּקָה (š̂-ṭam-kâ) to rule over the demons and over all the evil spirits as well as over the twelve families (of spirits) which descended from heaven in the days of Satan, their father, first learn this book in its entirety, their names and the names of their families, each individual type of them. At the hour in which you wish to force them with power and to make them act against their will, go to a place where no people live—to a mountain, to a field or to a house standing alone in which no women live—, sweep the house clean and make a

89 II, 182 ff.; translation Morgan, Sepher Ha-Razim, p. 59.
90 II, 145; IV, 27.
91 II, 47.
92 IV, 44.
93 I, 221.
94 I, 176.
95 I, 187.
96 bTaan 23a parr.
97 Such a circle (עֲשָׂר) is also mentioned in a Genizah fragment published by Gottheil and Worrell; cf. R. Gottheil and W. H. Worrell, Fragments from the Cairo Genizah in the Freer Collection, New York 1927, p. 106, l. 4.
98 Jewish Magic and Superstition, New York 1939, p. 121.
circle (‘משלי) in front of the entrance (of the house). Supply the circle with four openings for the four directions of the heavens and lay upon each one ... 100

Unfortunately the text breaks off at this point, but there can be little doubt that a description follows of how the spirits can be forced through the four openings and then held captive in order to have them serve one’s desires.

3.2 Books of Magic

The numerically largest group of fragments belongs to earlier apparently comprehensive books of magic which contained whole collections of incantations and magic recipes for all sorts of occasions. They are formally recognizable by the fact that the introductory formula, which states the aim of the magical act, is in most cases reduced to the verb in the infinitive with the associated command, or to a noun in the dative, which acts as a heading, thus: ‘In order to achieve such and such ... do such and such’, or ‘for such and such ... do such and such’.

The spectrum of themes and corresponding magical acts contained in the books of magic is, as might be expected, very broad. If my preliminary impression is correct, the dominant themes are those connected with a woman’s pregnancy: the barren woman (לְעַטְרֵה דֶּאָּרָא לִילַדָּה); 101 the danger of losing the child (לָאֲחַהַתָּא דֶּאָּרָא מַפַּאי); 102 difficulties when giving birth (לָאֲחַהַתָּא דֶּאָּרָא מַפַּאי); 103 the child dying in the womb (לָאֲחַהַתָּא דֶּאָּרָא מַפַּאי); 104 and even abortion (לָאֲחַהַתָּא מַאָרָב). 105 An important role is also played by themes connected with the relationship between man and woman, thus all possible sorts of love charms. As an example, I quote a love charm said to be ‘tried and proven’ (בָּחֵי וָמֶשֶׁד): 106

For love. Tried and proven.
Take an egg and pour out that which is in it through a small hole. When the egg is empty, take from the blood of (the) man and from the blood of (the) woman and fill the egg completely (with it). Seal the hole in the egg with wax and write with the blood (of the man and the woman) the name of the man and the name of the woman (on the eggshell) and bury it in the ground. Immediately, great love will be between the two, so that the one can no more be separated from the other. And this (charm) is proven.

Other themes are the interpretation of dreams (סָמָאִי חַלְוָה), 107 and the healing of diseases, but also everyday things like the opening of locked

100 T.-S. K 1.1.
101 E.g. T.-S. K 1.19, fol. 1b, l. 5 ff.; ibid., fol. 2b, l. 6 ff.
102 E.g. T.-S. K 1.19, fol. 1b, l. 14; T.-S. K 1.28, fol. 2a, l. 3 ff.
103 E.g. T.-S. K 1.28, fol. 2a, l. 6 ff.; T.-S. K 1.19, fol. 1b, l. 17 f.-2a, l. 2; T.-S. NS 322.10, fol. 1a, l. 1 ff.; ibid., fol. 2a, l. 1 ff.
104 E.g. T.-S. NS 322.10, fol. 1b, l. 1 ff.
105 E.g. T.-S. NS 322.10, fol. 1b, l. 27 ff.; ibid., fol. 2a, l. 13 ff. (לָאֲחַהַתָּא מַפַּאי).
106 T.-S. K 1.28, fol. 1a, l. 2 ff.
107 E.g. T.-S. K 1.28, fol. 1a, l. 11 ff.
doors) \(108\) or how to make another person well-disposed towards oneself (למחתרת דעה האומן), \(109\) or how to quiet a crying child (לטיר הרוחה). \(110\) Magical acts and incantations are also often used in order to help find hidden or stolen treasures, for example: \(111\)

To find a treasure.
Take virgin wax, a clay vessel (?), sulphur, the bones of the hand of a human corpse, and indeed from the fingers, crush [it] (?) carefully and mix everything together. Then take a rope from a person who has been hanged and make of it a wick. And when you take the hand of the human corpse from which you have made ...

The continuation of this text is unfortunately corrupt, so that we are unable to reconstruct the undoubtedly potent magic. Search for treasure is also the aim of another text in the same fragment, in which under the heading 'treasure' (מסמס) a magical custom is described which was apparently widespread among both Jews and Christians during the Middle Ages. \(112\) The magic consists of having an innocent child look into a shining surface (water, finger-nail and the like) upon which figures then appear and who will answer the desired questions. It is possible that the 'princes of oil and eggs' \(113\) mentioned in the Talmud are an allusion to this custom. Trachtenberg quotes several documents from late medieval Germany which describe this practice at length. The fragment from the Genizah is a further important link towards the reconstruction of this custom, which is considerably older than the examples cited by Trachtenberg and clearly stems from oriental Jewry. \(114\)

'A treasure.
Take a glass mirror and a lad to look into it, or a virgin girl ... Purify the understanding of this lad and his heart, so that he can understand what will be asked of the spirits. Thereafter, say three times (the following words) in the right and in the left ear of the lad ... (nomina barbarum follow). Then lay your hand upon the head of the lad and recite this incantation until the lad sees the figure of a person in the mirror. I adjure you, great Apulis \(115\) ... (?) \(116\) with the great name of your Master, who is YHWH, and with the name of the angel ...

\(108\) T.-S. K. 1.19, fol. 2b, l. 17 ff.
\(109\) T.-S. K. 1.28, fol. 1b, l. 13 ff.
\(110\) Ibid., fol. 2a, l. 1 ff.
\(111\) T.-S. K. 1.3, fol. 1b, l. 14 ff.
\(113\) bSan 101a: 'One may question the princes of oil and eggs, but they lie.'
\(114\) T.-S. K. 1.3, fol. 1a, l. 9 ff. Cf. also R. Gottheil and W. H. Worrell, Fragments from the Cairo Genizah in the Freer Collection, pp. 76 ff.
\(115\) אפוליוס. Is it possible that here a reference is being made to the famous Apologia by Apuleius who was put on trial for sorcery some time between 155 and 158 C.E.? Cf. A. Abt, Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei, Gießen 1908 (= RVV, 4.2).
\(116\) The missing word is difficult to read; it is probably 'of Shaddai'.
Here, too, the immediate continuation is corrupt. In what follows, the Book of the Torah with the ten commandments plays a part in the actual questioning of the adjured spirit, and it is expressly stated that the adjuration and the magical act must take place 'at night by the light of the candle'.

Finally, attention should be drawn to a type of text which is also incorporated into the Hekhalot literature. These are the magical acts and incantations subsumed under the heading מנוחת לב (literally, the 'opening of the heart'). For example:

Take a new bowl and write each day for three days these names. Wash them (= the names) then away with water and drink (the water). And this is what you shall write ... (nomina barbarum follow).

Or a similar example:

Write and wipe away (that which is written) with water. Then knead barley flour in that water and make three cakes from it. Eat one of these cakes each day before study, and this is what you shall write ... (again nomina barbarum follow).

By 'study' (לומדים) is obviously meant study of the Torah, i.e. this and other similar texts serve the purpose of facilitating the study of the Torah and of guarding against forgetting the Torah. We are dealing, therefore, with a Torah charm, which enjoys the same position as every other type of charm described in the Genizah magic texts (following the first quoted מנוחת לב is a charm with the heading מנוחת לב ['to hatred'], which is intended to cause 'hatred, animosity and conflict between X and Y'). Without any doubt, its theme (the Torah) made possible the integration into the Hekhalot literature, where, in the framework of the text named Ma'ase Merkava, several such Torah charms are recorded. The magical act consists there also of writing names or formulae on certain items, wiping away the formula with a liquid and drinking the liquid in order to incorporate, in the truest sense of the word, the indwelling potency of the magic formula. Here is just one example:

A cup made of silver ... (nomina barbarum follow). These are the orders of Michael, the great prince of Israel, whom you shall keep for the study of the teaching in my heart, Amen, Amen, Sela, Hallelujah.

117 Ibid., fol. 1b, 1r 10 f.
118 T.-S. K 1.132, fol. 1a, 1r 1 ff.
119 Ibid., fol. 2b, 1r 1 ff.
120 Ibid., fol. 1a, 1r 10 ff.
121 There, however, in one manuscript only and not surprisingly in the manuscript New York 8121.
122 Synopse, §§ 573–578.
123 Sometimes the formulae are only written upon edible things—leaves, eggs—which are thereafter eaten.
124 Synopse, § 576.
Write (this) upon a cup made of silver, wipe away (that which is written) with wine and drink the wine. Then count fourteen times 'heed our voice' (= the fifteenth benediction of the Sixteen-Amidah) and at the last time let him say: 'He who answers the prayer' (i.e. the eulogy).

With this, I come to the end. Only a small part of the various types of magic literature within the hitherto unexplored treasure of the Cairo Genizah has been discussed. An important place among the extant fragments is further occupied by the Books of Destiny (מִסְדֵּר הָבָשָׂה), which were apparently used to gain knowledge concerning certain practical questions (trade, business, inheritance, collection of debt, economic circumstances in old age, travel, escaped slaves, the course of a pregnancy, the health of a newborn infant, how long a person has to serve in prison, among others). Furthermore, we find astrological manuals, farmers' almanacs, texts concerning the connection between the constellations and individual destiny, chiromancy (study of the lines and marks of the palm of the hand) and metoposcopy (study of the lines of the forehead) etc. All of these texts can be examined not only on the basis of their contents, but also formally and thus be classified accordingly. Both the arrangement of the contents and the formal classification of these texts (alongside and together with the urgent need for an edition and translation) will be an important task of future research. In the end, we shall then not only know more about the connection between religion, mysticism and magic within the Judaism of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and its relationship to Islam and Christianity, but above all (and for this purpose these texts are an outstanding source) more about the actual social conditions, the way of life, the fears and needs of the Jews (and particularly those of the often quoted simple folk) of late antiquity and the Middle Ages.