

THE LOST TEN TRIBES
IN
MEDIEVAL JEWISH LITERATURE

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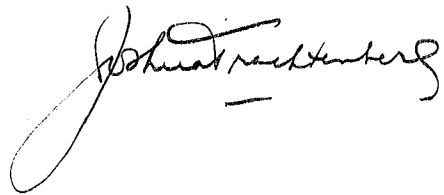
INTRODUCTION

I present here a record of the reports concerning the lost ten tribes which have come down to us from Jewish medieval sources. My purpose has been merely to trace the course of the legend; the following, I believe, is the fullest collection of such material. It had been my purpose, originally, to use this material as a basis for extended sociological study, and I had planned additional chapters on such subjects as: The Legend and the Jews, being an analysis of the psychological and social reasons for the popularity of the legend among the Jews, as well as its effect upon them; The Legend and the Christians, being an analysis of Christian interest in the legend of the ten tribes; The Legend and Jewish-Christian Relations; Prester John and the Jews; the Bnai Moshe, the Rechabites, and the Kenites; the Sambation; etc. However, due to the exigencies of time and space I have been unable to carry out my original intention, and have progressed no further than a presentation of the material which was to serve as basis for further study, in itself no mean task. I hope that I shall some day be enabled to continue with the work. I have, however, indicated in the notes from time to time some of the considerations which would enter into an analysis of the subjects mentioned above.

I have not limited myself to the period which is usually designated as the Middle Ages, but have attempted to trace the development of the legend from its beginnings until the present day. The spirit of the legend is essentially medieval, regardless of the year which marks any particular recording of it, and this

is the reason for my overstepping the literal bounds which the title indicates.

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus for the interest which he displayed in the work and for the stimulation which his assistance provided, and Arthur Zuckerman for valuable assistance in handling Latin and German texts. The gathering of the material here presented proved to be a most pleasant and educative task; it has opened for me the door to many books which had been mere names heretofore, and has developed within me an interest which I hope will find expression in further study of the literature and life of the Jews.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Arthur Zuckerman', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

May 14, 1930.

I

The legend of the lost ten tribes finds its source in the accounts of the exile of Israel which are to be found in the Bible. More than one reference to such an exile exists; their number and their vagueness make them fit subject for speculation and legendary expansion. "In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maacah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria." ¹ "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away unto Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." ² "And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it; even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king of Assyria carried Israel away unto Assyria and put them in Halah, and in Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." ³ "And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tillegath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought

them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river of Gozan, unto this day." ⁴

Ezekiel XXXVII:15-28, in which the prophet symbolizes the ultimate re-union of Judah and Israel by the act of placing together two sticks, one inscribed, "For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions," the other, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and of all the house of Israel his companions," which become one in his hand, leads us to believe that by the time that these verses were written the legend of the lost tribes of Israel was taking shape. However, it is not until the time of the Talmudic literature that we have any references to the effect that the ten tribes of Israel were in exile in a body, that their whereabouts are uncertain, that the conditions of their existence differ from those of the other two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, that their fate is or is not ultimately tied up with the fate of these two tribes. These are the elements which compose the legend. The uncertainty, the differences of opinion, the ambiguity, which the few remarks of the Rabbis on this subject display, leave no doubt that they had no definite information, but mere rumor, and were toying with a tradition which they found already full-blown.

Let us turn first to Josephus, who tells us quite definitely that "there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers."⁵ He is content to present the bare outlines of the tradition, but the legendary has already crept in.

The Rabbis, with more time on their hands, go further. R. Jehuda bar Simon, commenting on Gen. XXX:34, says that "the ten tribes were not exiled to the same place as were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The ten tribes were sent to a region surrounded by the river Sambation ⁶ while Judah and Benjamin are scattered among all the nations." ⁷ He would then place all the ten tribes within the territory circumscribed by this mythical river. However there are differences of opinion on this point.

R. Samuel bar Nahman is quoted to the effect that "Israel was exiled in three sections: one to the region within the orbit of the Sanbation, one to Daphne of Antochia, and one which was covered by a cloud." ⁸ The Pesikta Rabati differs somewhat in its version of the three exiles: "One section was exiled to the Sambation, and one within the area of the Sambation, which is as far from the Sambation as that river is from Palestine, and the third went to Daphne of Ravlasah where it was swallowed up. But for this last group God will make paths under the earth which they will follow until they reach the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, which will burst open so that they may come forth." ⁹ R. Abba bar Kahana gives the location of the places mentioned in II Kings XVIII:9-11 as follows: "Halah is הלח, Habor is חבור, the river Gozan is גוזן (Ganges?), the cities of the Medes are מדינה (Hamadan) and its vicinity. But another opinion has it that this last should read נחאבנד (Nehawend) and its vicinity." ¹⁰ Finally we have the view that when the redemption comes "the exiles who are within the area of the Sambation, and those who are among the dark mountains" will be included. This passage goes on to interpret Isaiah

XLIX:9 as referring to "the exiles who are within the Sambation area, those who are within the cloud of darkness,"¹¹ and those who are at Daphne of Antochia."¹²

Thus, according to Rabbinic opinion, the tribes are located in the following places: 1) all of them are within the region of the Sambation; 2) part are within the region of the Sambation; 3) part are at Daphne of Antochia; 4) part were covered by a cloud; 5) part are at the Sambation, meaning, on this side of it; 6) part are in the "dark mountains"; 7) part are in various places between Persia and India. The Rabbis knew that the Jews were widely dispersed, and to this extent their opinions are based on fact: they had probably heard of Jews residing in the various places they mention, assuming, of course, that the place-names they employ refer to actual places; their connection of these Jews with members of the ten tribes is no doubt mere speculation, coupled with vague tradition. With the question of where these places to which they refer were located, I shall not concern myself here.¹³ My concern is with the opinion of the Middle Ages on this question, and with the wide ramifications which the imagination of that visionary age built about the simple statements of the Rabbis and the Bible.¹⁴

There are various references in the apocalyptic literature to the ten tribes and their fate, but only one carries us beyond the point to which the Rabbis had the temerity to advance, and discusses not merely the whereabouts of the tribes, but also the circumstances surrounding their exile and the conditions of their life. "These are the ten tribes which were led away captive out of their own land in the days of Josiah the king, which (tribes) Salmanesar the king of the Assyrians led away captive; he carried them across the River, and (thus) they were transported into another

land. But they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a land further distant, where the human race had never dwelt, there at least to keep their statutes which they had not kept in their own land.

And they entered by the narrow passages of the river Euphrates. For the Most High then wrought wonders for them, and stayed the springs of the River until they were passed over. And through that country there was a great way to go, (a journey) of a year and a half; and that region was called Arzareth. There they have dwelt until the last times; and now when they are about to come again, the Most High will again stay the springs of the River, that they may be able to pass over."¹⁵ The tribes have become an ideal group, seeking to inhabit a land "where the human race had never dwelt" so that they might "keep their statutes" and thoroughly repent their former sins; God performs miracles for them; their return is bound up with the redemption.

II

During several centuries we have no definite report that the subject of the ten tribes stimulated the imagination to weave new fancies, to evoke new pictures of their fate. The subject must however have remained one for speculation, for we do have references to the Bnai Moshe, who are involved in the destiny of the tribes, during these years.¹⁶ Further, Manasseh b. Israel tells us that the Christian geographer, Abraham Artelli, reports that in 576, in the time of king Perusias of Persia, the tribe of Naphtali waged war against the king of Tartary and conquered part of his land. Another Christian, Agatius, mentions this tribe, with the report that Naphtali fought Perusias twice. The first time they dealt him a severe defeat, forcing an ignominious treaty upon him, by the terms of which he submitted to their overlordship. When, after a time, he rebelled, his army was again defeated and he himself killed. Other historians of Persia mention this war, as does also Azariah dei Rossi in his פ'י'ח' 7/KA.^{16a}

These accounts of the tribe of Naphtali come from a late period and it is uncertain at how early a time they were current. However the statement 28 / פ'י'ח' 7/KA in one version of the letter from Kairowan to Zemah Gaon¹⁷ is clear evidence that rumors anent the state of the ten tribes were rather scarce in the years preceding the coming of Eldad Ha Dani.

Toward the end of the ninth century a strange character appeared upon the Jewish scene. We know of him from two sources, the letter from Kairowan to Zemah Gaon reporting the arrival of this man from a mysterious world, and Zemah's reply; and the שני שאלות, the story of Eldad, which has been the popular version of the Eldad story through the centuries. I shall summarize these accounts as they appear in Abraham Epstein's work on the subject.¹⁸

The letter from Kairowan informs the Gaon that a stranger has visited the city, a man named Eldad Ha Dani, and told them of four tribes, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher, which occupy the land of Havila, where gold comes from. They have a judge named Abdon, and their ~~capital~~ capital punishment is according to the שני שאלות, the four methods of capital punishment prescribed by the Rabbis. They have a powerful army and successfully wage war against their enemies, the seven kings of Cush, but whoever among them is unfitted for war is set apart as שני שאלות.¹⁹ They have the entire Torah, but they do not read the Book of Esther in their synagogues because they were not present ~~at~~ when the miracle which that book commemorates occurred; nor do they read the Book of Lamentations publicly, because it is so heartrending. Their Talmud mentions no teachers by name, but transmits all its teachings as coming from God through Moses and Joshua.²⁰ The four tribes do not combine their forces, but wage war as distinct units. Each tribe spends three months of the year at war; during these months the soldiers rest only on the Sabbath, and even then, if they are attacked they are permitted to defend themselves. Among them are a number

of the descendants of Samson and Delilah, who are extraordinarily strong and brave, and who are the most fearless warriors in their midst.²¹ The members of these four tribes speak only Hebrew; Eldad speaks only Hebrew, and claims that he knows no other language, but his Hebrew is interspersed with many strange words. The Talmud of these tribes is written in Hebrew, and is in the main like ours, though some differences exist. Here a list of halachoth which Eldad has repeated to them from the Talmud of the tribes is introduced.²² The letter continues that Eldad told them that when Israel was exiled to Babylon the Bnai Moshe were asked to sing their hymns and to play their harps for the pleasure of the conqueror.²³ They bit off their fingers so that they could not comply with this request.²⁴ A cloud settled about them, raised them with their families and all their belongings and carried them off to Havila,²⁵ where they were set down during the night. In the morning they discovered that a river of sand and stones, containing no water²⁶ surrounded them. This river flowed six days and rested on the Sabbath. On Sabbath eve a thick cloud encompassed the river and remained there until the Sabbath had departed, so that no one might approach the river while it was at rest --- this was the Sambation.²⁷ In places the river is quite narrow and across these places the four tribes communicate with the Bnai Moshe. They are shut in by the river, and neither they nor the tribes can cross to each other.

The tribe of Dan in Havila, knew nothing of the destruction of the temple, until the tribes of Naphtali, Gad, and Asher, which had been living with Issachar²⁸ but which had left them as the result of a quarrel (they had been called אֶלְדָּאד וְעֵדָד, descendants

of servant girls, and were insulted) came to join them in Havila, and told them of the destruction. This is the gist of the letter from Kairowan.

The reply of Zemah Gaon²⁹ is of interest. He states that he had heard of Eldad from two men, R. Isaac^b. Mar, and R. Simha, who had met him and had reported that part of Eldad's tradition accorded with Rabbinic tradition while part differed. Our scriptural and other sources, he writes, attest the veracity of his story for we know that in the eighth year of Ahaz Sennacherib exiled the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali; that was about sixty-four years after the building of the sanctuary.³⁰ Dan refused to submit to the rule of the foreigner and went to Cush, a rich and fertile land where they dwelt in peace and in the service of the Lord, so that they possess two crowns, the crown of the Torah and the crown of Dominion. The Rabbis teach that there were ten exiles, four at the hand of Sennacherib, four at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, one by Vespasian and one by Hadrian, but the tribe of Dan is not mentioned as having been included in any one of these, which corroborates the tradition that it went to Cush of its own accord 135 years before the destruction of the first temple.³¹

Zemah welcomes the report that the tribes employ the four methods of capital punishment prescribed by the Rabbis, for *shib*, strangulation, is not mentioned in the Torah, and San. 52b has it that "Any death sentence prescribed in the Torah with no stipulation as to the method to be employed, refers to strangulation,"^{31a} so that Eldad who does not possess the later Talmudic law, proves the truth of this Talmudic rule. The Midrash agrees with Eldad's

story about the Bnai Moshe and the Sambation. The differences between the halachoth which Eldad cites and oyrā are due to several reasons: 1) after Moses' death many of the laws which he had received on Mount Sinai were forgotten;³² 2) and even between the Palestinian and the Babylonian versions of the tradition there are slight differences; 3) and besides, it is quite likely that in his extended wanderings, and the troubles he went through, Eldad forgot or confused some of the halachoth. One would expect Eldad's tradition to have been preserved in the original tongue, Hebrew. As to the absence of names of teachers in his Talmud, the laws were taught anonymously during the period of the temple. But the Torah is one; the Mishnā and the Talmud all stem from one source. Zerah praises the four tribes for their highly laudable practise of praying first for the welfare of the scholars of Babylon and then for the rest of the Diaspora.³³

Several versions of the $\alpha\alpha\kappa \gamma\alpha\alpha$ have been published by Jellinek, Epstein and Muller.³⁴ I shall summarize here the version which appears in Epstein's book as $\gamma\alpha \gamma/\alpha\alpha$, pp. 22-29, with references where necessary to the other recensions.³⁵ This account, written in the first person, tells that Eldad and a companion from the tribe of Asher went aboard a trading vessel to transact business with the sailors, and that a storm suddenly arose which drove the ship on to a foreign shore, the land of $\alpha/\gamma\alpha/\gamma$,³⁶ where it was shipwrecked.. The natives of this strange land were negro cannibals. With little ado they seized Eldad and his companion, consumed the latter, who was unfortunately plump, and set Eldad aside for fattening, so that he too might make a juicy meal.³⁷ After a few months, during which time Eldad exerted himself to remain thin and unpalatable,

the country was invaded and Eldad was carried off captive among others. These captors, among whom he remained as a slave for four years³⁸ were fire-worshippers.³⁹ He was finally taken to the city of ג'זק ,⁴⁰ where a Jew from the tribe of Issachar purchased him for thrity-two gold pieces, and brought him to his land in the mountains of פ/דא .⁴¹ The tribe of Issachar is nominally under Persian rule, but their sole interest is Morah.⁴² They live in peace and enjoy great prosperity, possessing large herds of cattle and camels and asses, but no horses, and other possessions and many slaves. They speak Hebrew and Persian.⁴³ They have no weapons of war, for there is no need of these among them; there is no dissension among the members of the tribe, nor is there any thievery; if they come across money or garments on the road they do not even attempt to take possession of them. Their judge is named Nahshon; they preserve the four methods of capital punishment prescribed by the Rabbis. They do not do their own work in the fields, but purchase what they need.⁴⁴

Zebulon lives near-by in the mountains of זכד ,⁴⁵ and inhabits hair-tents. They, too, preserve the זכד א'ד א/א'א'ז . They are independent, owing allegiance to no outside power. They support themselves through trading.

Reuben is to be found to the north, beyond the mountains of Paran. It is a warlike tribe, and is often joined on its raiding expeditions by Zebulon. In fact, these two tribes employ the trade of highway-robbery as their main source of income.⁴⁶ This tribe, too, speaks Hebrew and Persian.⁴⁷

These three tribes possess the Bible, the Mishna, the Talmud,

and the Midrashim. On the Sabbath they read the Torah in Hebrew and expound it in Persian.

Ephraim and half the tribe of Manasseh are in the mountains near Mecca. They are mighty men, hard, seasoned warriors and highway men, and are expert horsemen. They subsist almost exclusively on their spoil.

Simeon and half the tribe of Manasseh are in the land of the Chaldeans,⁴⁸ six months' distance from the other tribes. They form a mighty and numerous people, and exact tribute from twenty-five kings, some of them Moslems.⁴⁹

The account continues after this enumeration of the ten tribes which dwell in Asia, to report that the sorry plight of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, in the Diaspora, subjected to the tyranny of non-Jews, is known to the four tribes which dwell in Havila, and that they sympathise with their unhappy brethren. A tradition of the tribe of Dan has it that when Jeroboam built the golden calves and called upon Israel to revolt against the southern kingdom, the tribes of the north refused to shed the blood of their brethren. His counsellors advised him that since the tribe of Dan contained the best warriors of all the northern tribes, he should employ them to lead the revolt. But Dan, too, refused to participate in the internecine conflict. Instead they prepared to fight Jeroboam himself. However, God would not permit them to carry out this resolve, and they determined to ~~xxxx~~ leave the country. They planned in turn to remove to Egypt, Edom and Moab, but in deference to the Biblical prohibitions⁵⁰ they followed the course of the river Pishon⁵¹ on camels until they reached Cush, south of Egypt, where they subdued the native inhabitants and remained to multiply and enjoy great

prosperity. Some time after this event the king of Assyria invaded Israel and exiled Reuben and Gad and one half Manasseh to Halah and Habor, on the river Gozan, and to the cities of the Medes; a second time he came and exiled Asher and Naphtali to Assyria. After his death Naphtali, Gad and Asher removed to Cush, to Havila, where they still reside with Dan, and join that tribe in fighting off the seven kings of Cush. The name of their king is Uzziel, and the chief prince is Elizaphan of the sons of Oholeab of the tribe of Dan.⁵²

The banner of their king is white, with the Shema inscribed upon it in black characters. In war time they muster 120,000 men. Each tribe spends three months of the year at war, and divides its spoil among its own members. The descendants of Samson of the tribe of Dan are the fiercest warriors in the tribe;⁵³ they spend all their time in warfare. The four tribes have a unique war-song⁵⁴ and fight with the Shema on their lips. After a war the king divides the spoil among the people, first taking his share, then apportioning a share to the scholars, and then giving the balance of the people their portion. They possess the Bible, the Mishnah, the Talmud, and the Midrashim, which they teach אברהם אבינו, משה אבינו, דוד אבינו, mentioning no other teachers by name.

The tribe of the Bnai Moshe lives near them, beyond the river Sambation. They communicate with the four tribes by shouting across the river, or by sending pigeons across with messages tied to their legs.⁵⁵ They are five times the number of the Jews who left Egypt. On the Sabbath a fire blazes along the bank of the Sambation which the four tribes inhabit, so that none may approach the river, or cross it. Then follows Eldad's genealogy back to Dan and Jacob.

Another version of the Eldad story which is interesting for its deviations from the above account^s is preserved in the work of the Karaite, Judah Hadassi, Eshkol Hakofer.⁵⁶ This account has it that Eldad and his companion were seized by cannibals while on a trading voyage. The other was immediately consumed while Eldad was put aside to fatten. He was fortunately taken ill, so that he could neither eat nor drink, and so remained too thin for consumption. One night when he heard that his captor had left his home he escaped from the pit where he was confined, found a sword and killed all the inhabitants of his captor's house, and escaped to the river. The members of the tribe pursued him, but could not enter the river after him because their feet were like sponges which soaked up the water! Eldad swam a long distance and then found a tree floating on the surface of the river which carried him to Egypt. There he sold the tree and with the proceeds returned to his native land. Hadassi continues with a tale of dwarfs who were annually required to fight off an invasion of birds, which they did one year with the aid of a giant from Constantinople. It is not clear what connection this story has with the Eldad account. He concludes with the remark that the story which Eldad had told about the Jews beyond the Sambation is correct, for we know that a company of righteous Israelites was secreted beyond the Sambation before the exile; these ~~xxx~~ observe the precepts of the Torah, but have no Mishna, ^{Gomorra} Gomorrah, or calculation such as ours.

This is then the astounding story which Eldad incorporated into the legendry of his people,⁵⁷ which served to feed their imaginations, and which produced as its offspring a continual flow of equally astounding tales of the discovery of the ten tribes

through the centuries until the very present. It will be of value to summarize the main elements of his account so that we may follow them through their vicissitudes in later years.

1) Eldad told of four tribes which reside in Havila, in the land of Cush, which is probably in the south of Arabia, Yemen, or across the Gulf of Aden, on the east coast of Africa; and of the other six tribes residing in various places in Asia. 2) These tribes are independent, having rulers who are chosen from their own midst. 3) They are powerful warriors, strong and fearless, waging war successfully upon their neighbors and subduing them, having in one case as many as twenty-five kings subject to them. 4) They are prosperous, own large properties in flocks, lands and slaves, and support themselves through trading, farming and taking spoil. 5) They remain good Jews, have the Torah, the Mishna, the Talmud and the Midrash. The differences which exist between their tradition and that of Judah and Benjamin are slight and easily explainable. They teach their tradition בדברי תורה, בלשון חז"ל, בלשון חז"ל, בלשון חז"ל. They have the traditional four methods of capital punishment. They still speak Hebrew, along with Persian and Arabic. They read the Torah on the Sabbath in Hebrew and expound it in Persian. They retain a lively interest in the fate of their brethren, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. 6) Among them there is a group set aside specifically for study, and in fact an entire tribe, that of Issachar, is devoted to that pursuit. 7) Among the tribe of Dan are to be found the descendants of Samson and Delilah, who are the foremost warriors of all.⁵⁸ 8) Near the four tribes is the Sambation river, and across that river dwell the Bnai Moshe, whose life borders on the Utopian.

We shall have occasion to meet these qualities of the ten tribes which the Eldad story portrays so eloquently and so dramatically from time to time in various guises, from the pens of divers writers in many centuries. Eldad's story beyond question has been the basis of the later accumulation of legend about the subject of the ten tribes, but this is ^{not} due solely to the great popularity of the book, but also to the fact that the elements involved were even before Eldad part of Jewish tradition ^{58a} which all Jews possessed and which Eldad reinforced, and that the Jews were predisposed by their physical situation in the Diaspora and their consequent psychological reaction to all such stories, to continue toying with the possibilities of the situation. ⁵⁹

There has been much difference of opinion among modern scholars as to the truth of Eldad's story and the character of the man, ⁶⁰ but the medieval readers of his account almost unanimously accepted it as true and handed it down from generation to generation as a faithful account of the ten lost tribes.

Saadia seems to accept the fact of the existence of the Bnai Moshe as a distinct entity. In his Arabic commentary to Psalm LXX he states that בְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה is equivalent to בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, a prayer by or for the Bnai Moshe. ^{60a}

In the middle of the tenth century we hear another rumor concerning one of the tribes, Dan again. Dunash ibn Tamim, in his commentary to the Sefer Yezirah, which has been attributed to R. Jacob b. Nissim, makes the following statement: "If God will help me and lengthen my days, I shall complete the book which I have begun, in which I attempt to show that Hebrew is the first of all languages; that it is the tongue which Adam spoke; and that after it came Arabic which is closely related to Hebrew.....the substance of this

I have received from the children of the Danite who came to us from the land of Israel."⁶¹ On the basis of this passage an attempt has been made to show that Eldad lived during the time of Dunash, but this is impossible for various reasons, nor, indeed, were it true that Eldad lived in the time of Dunash, does his reference to Danites in the plural, who knew Arabic and discoursed learnedly on it to him at some length, have anything in common with the account of Eldad that we have. He is evidently referring here to people in Palestine who claimed to be Danites, or, more likely, to people coming to Palestine from independent lands who claimed to be Danites.⁶²

Toward the end of the eleventh century⁶³ we have another rumor about the ten tribes, directly bound up with a Messianic movement which seems to have attained considerable proportions. A letter which David Kaufmann published⁶⁴ apprises us of the fact that the Jews of Germany looked for the coming of the Messiah in the 256th lunar cycle, based on the word לך -256 in Jeremiah XXXI:7, which cycle would end in the year 1104. Certain events which occurred at that time confirmed them in their view: the first Crusade, which they interpreted to be the great world war between God and Magag which must precede the coming of the Messiah, and further a report that the ten tribes, behind the dark mountains were preparing to unite with the other two tribes to fight the common enemy, and redeem the people of Israel. According to this report the dark mountains, situated near Germany, had all at once become lit up with great brilliancy, another sign of the end of the contemporary world order.⁶⁵ The writer of the letter, Menahem b. Eliah, states that French Jews had at that time sent a special messenger to Constantinople to pro-

cure information on the course of events. It seems from the letter that a movement of German Jews had commenced toward the east, in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, to be near Palestine when the great moment would arrive.⁶⁶ Even the Khazars were reported to have joined this movement. Signs and wonders were performed everywhere; Elijah appeared and re-appeared; in Salonica, where the Jewish community had been severely mistreated, the Jews were given complete freedom, taxes were abolished, and other marked signs of favor were shown them.⁶⁷ This is all the information that the letter of Menahem gives us; we may imagine the end of this Messianic movement, about which nothing more than we have here is known, when we realize that instead of the ten tribes the enthusiasts who survived the arduous journey found the Crusaders awaiting them in the east.

Abraham Yagel⁶⁸ informs us of another event in Germany during the same period of the Crusades, in which the ten tribes were involved. It seems that a wicked king had come into power who permitted himself to come under the influence of a certain priest who hated the Jews, and who by his ability to perform magic intended to seriously harm them. The Jews requested the king to grant them time to secure an equally potent champion, which he did. Just as this respite expired a man from the ten tribes appeared who by his superior magic confounded this evil priest and saved the Jews from destruction.⁶⁹

R. Abraham b. Hiya, the astronomer, (1065-1136) says in his book *Sefer HaYotzer*: "And if you say there are seventy-two peoples according to the scholars, and in conformity with the seventy-two elders whom Moses gathered from among Israel (including Eldad and Medad who remained in the camp) and here only seventy of them are

enumerated, and you ask, where are the other two? I say to you, the one is the Bnai Moshe, for God promised Moses that his sons would be a great people, as it is written 'And I will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they,' so that in the time of the Messiah his sons would constitute one great people of the seventy-two nations, and the other is the Bnai Levi."⁷⁰

III

Our next important report of the ten tribes comes from Benjamin of Tudela, who from 1160 to 1173 journeyed through eastern Europe, Asia and northern Africa. The record of his voyages and his experiences is one of the most important travel accounts of the Middle Ages, and for the report of Jewish conditions which it presents, it is inestimably valuable.⁷¹ Benjamin was intensely interested in the Jewish communities of the cities which he visited, and records faithfully what he saw. He also reports many interesting items which he did not see himself, but which he learned through the agency of others.⁷² Among these is an interesting account of members of the ten tribes.

A distance of twenty-eight days from Thibet, he says,⁷³ are the mountains of Nisabur, on the river Gozan. It is said that among these mountains of Nisabur dwell four tribes of Israel, Dan, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali, the first group of exiles which Salmanasar deported. They possess an extensive territory in the mountains, which comprises many large cities and villages. They are not subject to foreign rule, but are governed by a prince from among themselves, named Joseph Amarkala Halevi. There are many scholars among them. They are farmers, and also carry on war extensively, even through the desert to the border of Cush (India?).⁷⁴ They have an alliance with the Kofar al Turak, a fierce warlike tribe, who worship the wind, and dwell in the desert; who eat raw meat, and have instead

of noses two small holes through which they breathe.⁷⁵ Not long before Benjamin heard of them, these latter had invaded a province of the kingdom of Persia and looted it. In reprisal the king of Persia advanced against them with a large army. But the guide lost his way in the desert and the king was left in a sorry plight, with a large army lost in the desert and his food supply rapidly giving out. The army wandered along until it came, on a Sabbath⁷⁶ to the mountains of Nisabur. On the flanks of these mountains they found large, fruitful orchards unguarded and in the distance they discerned a large city. The army spread through the orchard and regaled itself unmolested. Then the king sent two messengers to the city on the hill. These told the guard at the gate, "We are subjects of the king of Persia, and we have come to inquire whom you serve." The guard replied, "We are Jews, and there is no king or ruler over us from a foreign nation; we have one ruler and he is a Jew." The messengers further inquired concerning the Kofar al Turak of whom they were in search, but the Jewish guard refused to give them any information on the ground that they were the allies of the Jews, and that whoever attacked them, enlisted the opposition of the Jews as well. The messengers returned to the king with this report.⁷ "The king was very much affrighted by this news. On the next day the Jews notified the king to prepare to defend himself against their attack, but the king replied, 'I have come to wage war not against you but against the Kofar al Turak, my enemies. And if you insist on attacking me I will take vengeance on the Jews who are in my kingdom, and kill them all, for I know that you are stronger than me in this situation.'.....And the Jews decided among themselves to comply with the request of the king of Persia because of the Jews

who were in his kingdom,"⁷⁷ and consequently permitted his army to enter their country and treated him with great honor. But they remained faithful to their allies and warned them of the approach of the king so that they defended themselves and defeated him.⁷⁸ One of these Jews from the mountains of Nisabur, R. Moses, was taken to Persia by a knight and enslaved. This man won renown as an archer; the king became interested in him, but though he offered him many inducements to be converted, he remained true to his faith. It was from this R. Moses that Benjamin learned this story.

Benjamin has one other report of the tribes. He records⁷⁹ that twenty-one days' journey through the desert of Sheba or al-Yemen⁸⁰ are the abodes of Jews called רַחַבִּיטָּה, Rechabites.⁸¹ Their ruler is Rabbi Hanan the prince. They possess a large country where they rule independently, being subject to no foreign power. "They undertake warring expeditions into distant countries with the desert Arabs, their neighbors and allies. Their neighbors all fear these Jews. Some of them are farmers, and cattle raisers. They give a tithe of their possessions to the scholars, who spend all their time in the study of the Law, and to the poor and to the ascetics, the רַחֲמֵי שְׂכָרִים, who eat no meat and drink no wine, wear black garments, and live in caves or hidden houses, and fast every day but Sabbaths and holidays, and continually implore the mercy of God for the Jews in exile, that he have compassion on them for the sake of His Name, as well as on the Jews of Tema and Telmas. In the latter city there are about 100,000 Jews who are governed by their prince Salmon, brother of the prince Hanan, who are descended of the house of David, and possess a genealogical

table which attests this. In lawsuits where they are doubtful of the proper decision they correspond with their relative, the prince of the captivity in Bagdad. They fast forty days each year, and pray for all the Jews who are in exile."⁸²

Benjamin proceeds to tell of their extensive lands, their beautiful cities, their great wealth, and the large number of Jews who inhabit that land. Then he remarks, "men say that they are the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, who were carried into captivity by Salmanasar, king of Assyria, and were brought there, where they built these great, fortified cities, and carry on war with all the kingdoms round about; they cannot be reached with ease because of the eighteen day journey through the desert which separates them from the rest of the world."⁸³

Benjamin did not visit the countries where he places these tribes of Israel, nor does he pretend to have done so; not only are the accounts of the tribes in the second part of his book which he devotes to things he has learned of from hearsay rather than from personal experience, but in addition he is careful to indicate that these are hearsay reports. It is clear, then, that these reports of the tribes were current in the countries through which he travelled, and that the lost tribes were a fairly lively topic of discussion and comment, and invention.

Benjamin also mentions other independent Jewish tribes in the Orient which he does not refer to as being part of the ten tribes, but we may be sure that to his imaginative readers of the middle ages, this omission was no preventive to making the connection and thinking of them as part of the tribes. So he tells us that "in Tarmod (Tadmor or Palmyra) there are about two thousand Jews. They are valiant in war and fight with the Christians and with the Arabs,

who are under the dominion of Nur-ed-din, the king, and help the Ishmaelites their neighbors. At their head are R. Isaac Hajvani, R. Nathan, and R. Uzziel."⁸⁴ Another group of independent Jews is to be found in the land of Mulahid, four/days' journey from Nehawend (in Persia); "among them (the inhabitants of that land) there are four communities of Israel who go forth with them in war-time. They are not under the rule of the king of Persia, but reside in the high mountains, and descend from these mountains to pillage and to capture booty, and then return to the mountains, and none can overcome them. They are under the authority of the Head of the Captivity in Babylon."⁸⁵

We may summarize Benjamin's reports of the tribes as follows:

- 1) They are independent, and are ruled by one of themselves, who is a descendant of the house of David.
- 2) There are many scholars among them; scholarship is an honored pursuit; they support these scholars, as well as their poor, and the ascetics.
- 3) They are prosperous farmers and herders, possess vast territories, and beautiful cities; they are very numerous.
- 4) They are valiant warriors, and spend much time in warfare; they are generally feared.
- 5) They observe the Sabbath and the holidays, and in other ways show that they are good Jews.
- 6) They are of good moral character, as evidenced by the fact that they are faithful to their allies.
- 7) They are interested in the welfare of their Jewish brethren, for they will not jeopardize their well-being, and pray for them; they mourn the loss of Jerusalem and the ruin of Zion; they recognize the authority of the Exilarch.

It is of interest to note that Petahiah of Ratisbon, who travelled to the east in the years 1178-1185, immediately following Benjamin's trip, has left us in his *sefer* no report of the tribes

whatsoever. This is especially surprising in view of the fact that Benjamin but a few years before had heard so much about them.

Eetahāah however, does tell us that the descendants of the Rechabites live among the dark mountains.⁸⁶

"The apostate Joshua Lorca (Hieronymus de Sancta Fide) pretends," according to Neubauer⁸⁷ "to have found in the letters of Maimonides that the ten tribes formed a great nation, of which one part was under the dominion of Persia, whose king was called by the Arabs the Great Sultan, while another part remained independent in the neighborhood of the land of Prester John, with whom they made an alliance."⁸⁸

Abraham Yagel, in his *אברהם יאגל*, also asserts that Maimonides expressed a positive opinion on the subject of the ten tribes, and in fact, quotes from his responsa. He says, "Moreover, in Maimonides' letters, which are not yet printed, it is stated as follows: 'As to your question concerning the ten tribes, know ye, that their existence is quite certain, and we expect ~~know~~ daily their arrival from the dark mountains, the river of Gozan, and the river Sambat-ion, places where now they are hidden away.....Further, children of the Rechabites came at that time, of whom my father (blessed be his memory) told me that they observe the precepts of their ancestors; that they are numerous as the sand of the sea; that they expect the help of God; and that they know the judgments, statutes and mysteries of the Law."⁸⁹

During the thirteenth century we have but two meagre references to the tribes. R. Tanhūm Yerushalmi in his commentary on Lamentations says: " *אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* (Lam. IV:8) is like *אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*,

(Ps. CII:6). There are those who translate, in accordance with the explanation of a desert Jew known as the Danite, who traces his ancestry to the tribe of Dan, that clinging (פֶּדָד) is also expressed by פֶּדָד .⁹⁰ Of course this may be a reference to Eldad Ha Dani similar to other such references to him,⁹¹ but it may also be a reference to some man in the time of R. Tanhum who came from the desert and claimed to be a Danite.⁹²

A fragment of an old document which A. Harkavy published⁹³ informs us that a certain Jacob Ha Nassi, of the house of David, a magician who lived in Susa, ~~between 1240 and 1276~~ some time between 1240 and 1276 travelled to the dark mountains, which he finds are called thus because they are covered by dark, low clouds.^{93a} There he found four Jewish communities living in peace and plenty in a land where no wild beast nor drawn sword was to be found. These people were farmers, who lived in tents and spoke Aramaic. When he told them of the misfortunes he had encountered in his travels, they were very sympathetic. They took him across the Sabation to their king, who asked after the customs of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, in their exile, and whether they recognized the ^{existed} פֶּדָד ;^{93b} whether there ~~was~~ among them hatred, and envy, and false swearing. Jacob replied in the affirmative. The king told him that because this was so they had lengthened the period of the exile, for if these sins were not to be found among them the redemption would have come in 1240. Jacob stayed among these people for some time. He reports that when they encamped for war their army covered an area forty miles by three in extent; they were accompanied by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day; their movements were directed by a certain prophet who

resided among them. This prophet ordered him to tell his brethren in exile to turn from their evil ways, for the redemption would come in 1276, and they must be prepared for the great event. Jacob asked for a sign so that they would believe him when he transmitted to them this message, for they are a stiff-necked people. The prophet gave him as a sign certain "names" and made him promise that he would use them to bring about the repentance of the Jews. Jacob returned to his city, Susa, and told all this, and when people asked for a sign, he made the walls fall by the use of these "names". Then all the stiff-necked Jews and even the apostates repented. Jacob demanded of the king of Persia that he withdraw his evil decrees against the Jews, and when the king responded by increasing his persecutions, Jacob uttered the Ineffable Name and most of the inhabitants of the city died. The king apologised and mended his ways. Then letters were dispatched to all the Jewish communities of the Diaspora apprising them of this great event.

The strength of the contemporary belief in the continued existence of the tribes is illustrated by the fact that Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia (who lived from 1240 to some time after 1291) set out for Palestine to find the Sambation and the ten tribes. His quest was interrupted by the Crusades. What immediate cause determined him to undertake his journey is unknown.

The fourteenth century is strangely silent concerning the tribes. Yet an incident which occurred during this century is significant of the strength with which both Jews and Christians held the belief that the ten tribes still existed, though in this case, at least part of them not in a distant land, but in the midst of their brethren of Judah and Benjamin. When Alfonso XI expelled the Saracens from Toledo, the Jews of that city petitioned the king

for permission to remain, on the ground that they had not been involved in the crucifixion of Jesus, since they were descended from a part of the ten tribes which had been exiled to Tarshish. Their petition was granted!⁹⁴

In 1419, the year which was computed to ^{be} the date of the fulfillment of Obadiah's prophecy against Edom (Rome), Joseph b. Jehuda Sarko, teacher and secretary in the first half of the fifteenth century to various Italian communities, sent a letter to R. Amram, Nagid of Egypt, introducing to him two Italian Jews.⁹⁵ This letter tells that a rumor had reached Europe that the ten tribes were rising to free their brethren from the oppression to which they were subjected in the exile. In Nisan, 1419, (the month of redemption), an embassy had arrived at the Papal court in Rome, bearing this rumor.⁹⁶ The two men bearing this letter of introduction, R. Elias, and R. Benjamin b. Elhanan, both scholars of repute, had been dispatched by the Jewish community to obtain further information, if possible, in Egypt. They would go into detail on certain points which the letter slurred over, of necessity. Joseph b. Jehuda bespoke the Nagid's assistance in their mission.

In 1454, we hear,⁹⁷ a report was current that the Sambation had dried up and that the tribes were crossing to wage war against Prester John, the Christian monarch, and subsequently to destroy the entire Christian civilization.

In 1456 R. Abraham Ha Levi, a meshulach from Jerusalem, carried with him a letter, dated that year, which apprised the Jews of Europe that merchants had brought letters to the king of Egypt from Prester John to the effect that the king of the Jews was waging ^a terrible war upon him, and that his defeat was certain unless Egypt came to his assistance against the common enemy.⁹⁸

The king, fearing that the Jews in Egypt would go to the aid of the Jewish king, in the event that he next attacked him, decreed a general expulsion of Jews from his lands. But he fell very ill, and the Jews with the aid of God and some bribes induced his physicians to tell him that his illness was a divine punishment for his evil decree of expulsion. "Then the king turned to them and asked whether they didn't know that their king, who is destined to redeem them, had risen with a tremendous army of Jews and is daily waging war against Prester John? And that they have already conquered even mightier empires than their own? The Jews of Egypt would no doubt wish to unite themselves to their own kingdom, which would certainly attack him. For this reason he wished to either drive the Jews from his kingdom altogether, or kill them, or convert them."⁹⁹ The Jews argued with the king, told him the stories of Pharaoh and of Sisera who try as they might, could not frustrate the will of God, and finally induced him to revoke his decree.¹⁰⁰

Isaac Abarbanel, (1437-1508), has an interesting note in his commentary on Jeremiah III:14, where he says: "I have seen a trustworthy document, brought by certain westerners who travel from Portugal to India to import spices, and who testify that they met there (in India) many Jews and received this document from the hand of one of their learned men. These Jews claim that they are descended from those whom Sennacherib exiled from the cities of Judah before the destruction of Jerusalem, and whom he placed behind the dark mountains, whence they did not return at the time of the second temple."¹⁰¹

During the fifteenth century a letter purporting to come from Prester John¹⁰² achieved a good deal of popularity among Jews in a

Hebrew translation in two forms, one addressed to the Emperor Frederick and one to the Pope, the latter of which exists in two versions, one to an anonymous Pope and the other, dated 1442, to Pope Eugenius IV. These letters contain very interesting information about the ten tribes.

The following passage is from the letter addressed to the anonymous Pope: "Know that from the stone sea flows a river, which comes from Paradise, passing between us and the great country of the mighty Daniel, king of the Jews. This river flows all the week days, but remains quiet on the Sabbath day. When full, this river carries a great quantity of precious stones; consequently, no one can pass it except on the Sabbath. But we watch the Jews, for if they should pass they would cause great mischief to the whole world, to the Christians, the Ishmaelites, as well as to all the nations and tongues under the Heaven, for no nation could resist them. But we have in this region sixteen great and fortified cities, built of stones, which we may call the strongest cities in the world. The distance from one town to the other is half a mile; each city is provided with a thousand horsemen, ten thousand foot-soldiers, and ten thousand archers, who watch the mountains and its passages, in order not to let the Jews pass; they are indeed so numerous that if once they cross over, they could fight the whole world. Know also, that for each of my fortresses the King Daniel possess ten; the Jews are so rich in precious stones that they construct their houses with them, as we do with coloured stones. Do not consider as exaggerated what I report concerning the King Daniel, for he has with him three hundred Jewish kings, whose people have submitted to him; besides these, Daniel has also three thousand dukes, counts,

and other important men; in fact, we know that his land is endless; and he who has never heard of this people has heard nothing."¹⁰³

The passage anent the tribes in the letter addressed to the Emperor Frederick is as follows: "On the one side of our country is a river, on the border of which all kinds of excellent ~~xxxxxx~~ spices are found. Near to it is another river, full of stones, which falls into the ocean, which flows between the sea and the Nine Tribes of Israel. This river runs all the week till the Sabbath day, when it rests; it carries large and small stones to the sea, like a river of water does; consequently the Nine Tribes of Israel cannot pass the river. On the other side we have forty-four towns, built of very strong stones, and the distance between one town and another is not more than a bowshot. And in order to guard them we have 44,000 horsemen, 50,000 bowmen, and 30,000 men on horseback(?) guard the cities from an attack by the children of Israel, for if they could pass the river they would destroy the world. The Israelites possess ten of the cities. We make known to you that for these ten cities, and for other expenses which we are obliged to make for the great king of Israel, he gives us yearly a hundred camels, loaded with gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; besides this he pays a tribute for our not ravaging the land which lies between us and themselves. Know also that the great king of Israel has under his dominion 200 kings, who hold their lands only with his permission. Besides these kings there are 2,300 governors and princes. In his countries flow the two rivers coming from the Garden of Eden. On the mountains near our town dwell Gog and Magog; they are called so because they are descendants of two brothers of Israelitish family, the one called Gog and the other Magog^o, and from them our ances-

tors have conquered our cities. And at the foot of this mountain, from the side of Israel, we have the great city called *קריית*, which is impregnable, except by treachery."¹⁰⁴

The letter addressed to the Pope Eugenius makes no specific mention of the tribes, but the reference is nevertheless clear: "There is also in our land a sea of sand, which only we can pass; it carries to us some precious stones; when we cross it there is never a storm, but when one of us is not crossing it, it rages like the others. We also have forty cities, the finest and the strongest in the world, which are situated a bowshot from each other. In them we have stationed 10,000 knights, 20,000 ballistra-ists, 2,000 archers, and 100,000 horsemen who guard the mountains continually so that those cursed ones may not cross over, for if they should, they would destroy the whole world. They have ten towns for each one of ours.....And know that this king because of ^Awom we are required to maintain this guard is not our friend, for he is not a Christian. He has under him 240 crowned kings, who obey his commands, and in addition he has three dukes, 100 marquises, and 3,200 barons and their subjects, who live on the mountain. On this mountain is a city called Ronda, which is absolutely impregnable. And he exacts tribute from us!"¹⁰⁵

The letters of Obadiah of Bertinoro, while making but one rather sceptical reference to the tribe of Dan, do however contain matter which is germane to our subject. In his first letter from Jerusalem, dated 1488, he states: "I have made inquiries concerning the River Sambation, but I could obtain no definite information. Certain it is that a man has arrived from the land of the Prester John, which lies between great mountains, and extends ten days'

journey, who says that there is the dwelling of the Bene Israel, and that they are in continuous warfare with Prester John. He nearly exterminated them, and the small remainder was subjected by him to vexations, which are only equalled by those which the Great Kingdom suffered in the time of the Maccabees. But, with God's mercy, other kings arose in India, less cruel than their predecessor, and the Bene Israel were able to lift up their heads, and increased in number. They still pay tribute to the Prester John, but are not ~~xxxxxx~~ subjected to persecutions. Forty years ago they were at war with their neighbors, and prisoners were made on both sides. Some of the Bene Israel were brought as prisoners to be sold in Egypt, but the Jews in this country redeemed them. I have seen two of them, who were black, but not so dark as the Cushites (Ethiopians). I could not distinguish whether they were Karaites ^r or Rabbinites, for, on the one hand, they observe the Karaite rule of not having any fire in their houses during the Sabbath day and on the other hand, they follow the Rabb^Qinite prescriptions. They believe themselves to be descendants of the tribe of Dan, and they say that the pepper and other spices which the Cushites sell come from their land. All this I have seen with my own eyes, and heard with my own ears, although these men knew but very little Hebrew, and their Arabic could not be well understood by the men of this land. The following fact is well-known here -- viz., that the Mohammedans, who go on pilgrimage from here to Mecca, (and they carry with them not less than 4,000 camels), pass through a great and terrible desert where they are sometimes attacked by a giant nation of which one pursues a thousand. The name of this nation, is according to the Arabs, 'Sons of El Shaddai', because they invoke in their wars the El

Shaddai. The Mohammedans assert that each of the Bene El Shaddai carries a camel load on one shoulder, while with the hand they hold the spear for fighting. It is also well known that they observe the Jewish religion, and it is said that they are the descendants of the Rechabites."¹⁰⁶

Obadiah's second letter addressed to his brother from Jerusalem on the 27th of Elul, 1489, contains a report of the Bnai Moshe and the Sambation and Prester John which are of interest. In this letter he denies that certain miracles, reported to his brother, have occurred in Palestine (with special reference to the grave of a Sephardi where cures, etc., have been supposedly effected, which he has heard of but has not been able to verify.). Then he tells of Jews who came to Jerusalem from Aden (he thinks that the Garden of Eden must be in this region), who reported that their Moslem ruler is kind to them. They have no copies of the Talmud, but do have Alfassi's work, commentaries to it, and Rambam. "These Jews" he says, "told me that according to the report of certain trustworthy Moslem traders, which have been generally accepted among them, the river known as Sambation is to be found in the desert, about fifty days' distance from that land. It completely surrounds the land which the Israelites inhabit; it hurls stones and sand, and rests on the Sabbath. And the reason that no Jews go there is because they do not wish to desecrate the Sabbath. The tradition among them is that these ~~xxx~~ Israelites beyond the Sambation are the Bnai Moshe, pure and holy as are the heavenly angels, among whom there is no sin. Across the Sambation there are many Israelites numerous as the sands of the sea, with kings and princes of their own, but these are not so holy and pure as those who are encompassed by the river.

These Jews (from Aden) told this clearly and ~~specifically~~ explicitly, for they have no doubts about the matter, and are a^s positive about it as they are about the sun.

"An old German Rabbi who was born and raised in this city, told me that he remembers that in his youth other Jews came from Aden, just as these had come, who told exactly the same story, no more and no less.

"These Jews from Aden also told that the Jews who live at the boundary of their land, of whom I wrote you in my first letter, are fighting Prester John, and some of them who have been brought as captives to Cairo, I have seen with my own eyes. Their land is about a month's distance from ^{that of} the other Jews who live beyond the Sambat-ion. We are daily getting reports from Christians who have come from the land of Prester John, that he has dealt these Jews a very severe blow. We fear that, God forbid, this rumor is true, for it has been raised about a good deal. May the Lord protect his people and his servants."¹⁰⁷

A third letter of Obadiah's, from Hebron, Dec. 15, 1489, neglects our subject altogether.¹⁰⁸

R. David ibn Avi Zimra of Cairo (1470-1573) in his Responsa¹⁰⁹ says of a female slave brought from Abyssinia that she is a member of the tribe of Dan, which dwells in the mountains of Cush.

Dr. Jacob Mann has published the last four pages of a printed brochure which were among the Genizah finds of the late Dr. Schechter, which he suggests may be an incunabulum, printed before 1492.¹¹⁰

This is a printed version of a letter, purporting to come from the "sons of Gad and of Reuben". They have heard evil reports of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah: they steal, are immoral, murder, drink

"yayin neseh", harbor hatreds, intermarry with the Christians, and in general follow their ways. The letter reminds the members of these two tribes of how Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple, and of the evils which Titus brought upon them because of their sins, and yet they continue their wicked ways, though they are scattered in Spain¹¹¹ and Italy and among the Berbers of North Africa. Look at us, it exhorts them, Gad and Reuben, who are always victorious in war. Adbeel and Mibsam¹¹² who were in India told us that there are Jews there too who are victorious in war and subjugate their enemies. No unclean animals are among us, nor is there any lying, or thievery, or immorality, or murder, or hatred; we are united and prosperous, and possess many slaves; the banks of the river Gozan are heavily laden with fruit trees so that any one may help himself. The Kenites live to the right of us, and the Rechabites on the other side. During the summers we change our residences leaving our property behind, nor has any one of us less than seven slaves. As for you, our brethren, take heart, strengthen yourselves to live justly and righteously, so that our redemption may come speedily..

IV

Just as the first quarter of the sixteenth century was drawing to a close European Jewry was startled by a new and novel manifestation of the continued existence of the ten tribes. Eldad Ha Dani had come as a fugitive, a forced representative of his tribes to Judah and Benjamin; the other characters of whom we have heard faint rumors who were connected with the tribes appeared on the scene quite fortuitously, disclosed their identity and disappeared. David Reubeni injected a new note into the drama of the lost tribes who persistently refused to remain entirely lost. He came to Europe as the accredited representative of his people, embarked on a mission which promised to have world-wide significance, and as such was he received at the courts of the Pope, and of Portugal, with all the honor and deference due such a personage.^{112a}

Abraham Ferissol, a contemporary, gives us the following description of this strange man who has remained an enigma in Jewish history, and who, had his venture succeeded, bade fair to change its entire subsequent course. "According to reports these are the characteristics of this Jew: he is ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ short and thin, but fearless; he prays a great deal; he is dark as a result of frequent self-discipline through fasting; (often) spending six consecutive days and nights in fast, according to writers; he speaks mainly in Hebrew, but not very intelligibly, like a stammerer; several times when noted people and cardinals came to visit him at his home in Rome he has refused to see them; when he ~~ex~~ rode through Rome on

an ass to see the sights, he entered (the courtyard of) St. Peter's and refused to descend from his mount until he had reached the very door of the cathedral; he (usually) is preceded by a crowd of about ten Jews and more than two hundred Christians."^{112b} We could have wished for a fuller, more detailed description of the man, but this account suffices to explain why this character so different from the subservient, fearful Jews of the day, should have evoked so much interest and should have received such respectful attention from even the highest powers of Christendom. The following is a summary of his diary, which will serve to give us a better picture of his character, but unfortunately offers us little positive information about the people whom he claimed to represent.^{112c}

The record opens with the statement that it is David Reubeni, brother of king Joseph, who rules over 300,000 members of the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, in the *נחל נחל*, and who has seventy counsellors, who is the author of the diary. He has been sent by his brother the king, and his counsellors, on a mission to the Pope. He describes his journey through the desert and up the Nile, in some detail. He travelled disguised as a Moslem, and was received with great honor in the courts of the various monarchs whose realms he visited. However, despite his simulation and the difficulties it created, he remained faithful to Jewish ritual prescriptions, was careful about his food, ^{prayed} ~~fasted~~ regularly, fasted frequently, and observed the special days of the calendar. He arrived in Cairo on Rosh Hodesh Adar, 1523. In this city he disclosed his identity to a Jewish min^tster, but was refused assistance on the ground that the latter was a pseudo-Moslem, and might get into trouble if he offered Reubeni shelter. He travelled from Cairo

to Gaza, then to Hebron, and from there to Jerusalem. In this latter city he was met by ten messengers from his brother Joseph, but a lacuna in the text prevents us, unfortunately, from knowing what transpired. In Jerusalem certain miracles occurred which seemed to point to a speedy change of the world order and confirmed him in his resolve to continue with his mission. He returned to Gaza, where in the company of some Jews he had, for the first time since he left his native land, some wine. Not until he reached Venice by way of Alexandria did he openly proclaim his identity, though previously he had from time to time disclosed himself to individual Jews. In Venice he found that the opinion of the Jewish community was divided, so far as its attitude toward him and his story was concerned. On erev Purim, 1524, he arrived at a little town outside of Rome, where he stayed at the home of a friendly Jew. The next day, Purim, he bought an ox and did with it as the seventy elders had commanded him! What it was that he did he does not specify. On the day after Purim, the 15th of Adar, 1524, he entered Rome.

In Rome he secured the support of a group of influential Jews who helped him arrange an audience with the Pope. The Pope received him very graciously, recognized his position as an ambassador, and undertook to defray his expenses while he remained in Rome.¹¹³ At this audience he told the Pope that his brother Joseph and his counsellors had instructed him to advise the Pope to make peace between the king of France and the Emperor, (Francis I and Charles V were at war at this time.) He asked for letters to these two monarchs and to Prester John, bespeaking their aid for Joseph, the king of the tribes of Israel, in his enterprise. The Pope replied that it was not possible for him to bring about peace between the two

warring rulers, but he promised to write in his behalf to the king of Portugal, who, because of his large navy could be of more assistance to him. David Reubeni stayed at the homes of various Jews during his sojourn of one year in Rome. He goes into great detail in describing the vicissitudes of that year, his illnesses, his troubles with his servants, etc. He is quite forceful in his opinions of ^f some of the characters, Jewish and non-Jewish, with whom he came into contact. In general he seems to have been a very proud, independent individual. He was regarded with a great deal of interest and curiosity by the masses and the official circles of Rome. He received frequent visits from members of the nobility and was on intimate terms with some of them. He had sufficient influence with the Pope to be able to aid Jews in tight circumstances.¹¹⁴ The Portuguese ambassador in Rome, Don Miguel, was not very favorably disposed toward him, and he had difficulty in securing from him a safe-conduct to enter Portugal. At one time the ambassador's tactics angered him so that he attacked him with his own sword and would have seriously injured him, had bystanders not prevented him. He admitted, in fact boasted, that ^(t) had been his intention to kill the Portuguese and promised that should the opportunity arise he would yet carry out his resolve. Finally he secured letters of introduction to Prester John and to the king of Portugal from the Pope and went to Pisa to await the promised safe-conduct from the Portuguese ambassador. This finally came, after seven months, during which time he had himself indignantly written to the king, and the ambassador at Rome had been replaced by another, Don Martin. At Livorno, before he embarked, he received some gifts from the Pope.

He landed at Tavira, on the south-east coast of Portugal. He

was received with honor and deference and was escorted to Almerino, where the king was staying. His fearless, impulsive character is well illustrated by an incident which occurred in Tavira. A French monk, in his presence, and before a crowd of Christians, slandered the Jews and denied that there was a Jewish king. Reubeni promptly threw him out of a window! On the route from Tavira to the court, he was besieged at every stopping place by Marranos, who had heard of his coming and who bewilderedly expected him to perform miracles in their behalf. They were frequently rebuked by Christians for kissing his hand and doing him other such honors. He himself says, "I told them at each place to which we came that I am the son of the king, Solomon, and that I hadn't come to them with any signs of Kabalistic machinations, but that I have been a simple soldier from my very youth and that I had come to help and to obtain help from both the king and yourselves. We shall see what path it will be along which the Lord will lead me to Palestine."¹¹⁵

David found, when he arrived at the royal court, that Don Miguel, the former ambassador to Rome, had preceded him and had slandered him to the king, insinuating that he would make trouble with the Marranos. David was so angered ~~with~~ by this that when he had his audience with the king he refused to kiss his hand. Nevertheless he made a good impression, and was promised that he would receive the aid which he sought.¹¹⁶ He tells of meeting a certain sea captain who told that on one of trips twenty years before, he had heard of a Jewish kingdom ruled by one, Solomon (the name of David's father), and who thus corroborated his story. The king had a house outfitted for him near his own palace. While recounting an interview he had with an important official, an envoy to Portugal from the king of Fez, he gives us the first full account

of what his mission in Europe was. "We have been trained," he says, "from our youth, in warlike pursuits; yet our warfare has been solely by means of a sword and spear and bow. Now we wish, with the help of God, to go up against Jerusalem and to conquer all the land of Palestine from the hand of the Moslems, for the "end" and the time of the redemption has arrived. I have come to secure skilled artisans who know how to construct (modern) weapons of war and cannon, who will come to my land to ply their trade there and teach our soldiers."¹¹⁷

The Mohammedan official to whom he tells this informs him that his countrymen too believe that the Jews will regain their independence, and David promises that when that day comes, and the Jews have the upper hand, they will deal kindly with the nations that have been kind to the Jews. David further tells him that his ancestors "have been Jewish kings in the *אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן* since the destruction of the temple. In *אֶרֶץ* dwell Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh; there are nine and one-half ^(other) tribes in the land of Cush, all independent. Those nearest us are the two tribes, Simeon and Benjamin (!), which are on the Nile above the kingdom of Sheva. They inhabit the land between the two rivers, the White and the Black, which latter is the Nile; their land is large and productive; their king is Baruch, son of the king Japheth; he has four sons, named Saadia, Abraham, *אֶלְהָנָה* (?), and Moses. They too, like us, are about 300,000 in number, and both our peoples are on good terms with each other."¹¹⁸ This man then asked what his plan of campaign was and he replied, "First we will take Palestine and its environs, then our officers will go out to the west and to the east to gather the scattered ones of Israel, and whoever will be

wise among the kings of the Moslems will transport the Jews in his realm to Jerusalem of his own accord."¹¹⁹ His guest then informed him that the "Jews in Fez and round about it, and also the Moslems, say that you are a prophet ~~am~~ or the Messiah. And I replied, 'God forbid! I am a greater sinner before God than any one of them. I have killed many men; in one day I killed as many as forty of the enemy. I am ^{not} a scholar, nor a Kabbalist, nor a prophet. I am merely a general and the son of the king Solomon, a descendant of David, son of Jesse, and my brother Joseph rules over 300,000 people in the

נ/אח נאנא. The Marranos in Portugal and the Jews in Italy and in all the places through which I have passed, also took me to be a scholar, or a Kabbalist, or a prophet, but I told them too, God forbid! I am a sinner. I have been a soldier from my youth until the present."¹²⁰

David records that an envoy from the land ס/א נ/א in India¹²¹ near נ/אח, arrived at the Portuguese court and when questioned reported that נ/אח was inhabited by a strong and prosperous Jewish nation, whose king's name was Joseph, thus again substantiating David's story.

He received an epistle from the king Sherif of the land west of Fez, which is at the extreme edge of habitable land, which told of a raid made upon his country by Jews from the desert and asked whether David knew anything of this. He replied, as usual, but with some significant additions, "I am from the נ/אח נאנא; there are about 300,000 Jews there, may God add to their numbers a thousand times, from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. My brother Joseph is their king and I am the general in chief of the army. Nine and a half other tribes live in the land of the blacks, the land of Cush, in four regions, and the Bnai Moshe

are in another place, at the river Sambation.....The two tribes, Simeon and Benjamin are at the head of the Nile.....they have informed us that they have heard of and know of the other tribes who are near them, while our land is far off toward the east."¹²²

He tells a group of Marranos who have come to interview him, "Know that I am an envoy, sent ~~for~~ upon this mission by the king Joseph, my brother, and his counsellors. I have come from the east to the west in the service of Him, whose name be praised, and for the sake of Israel, to gather them from all their places and to bring them to Jerusalem, the holy city."¹²³

The king promised to let him have eight ships and 4,000 large and small cannon and guns. However David had continually been in hot water as a result of rumors concerning his relations with the Marranos who insisted on doing him singular honor despite his protests, and when a Marrano secretary of the court circumcised himself¹²⁴ David was blamed and was ordered to leave the land without the ships and guns that the king had promised him. And so David left Portugal to return to Rome, disgusted with the untoward result of his efforts, but determined to continue them unabated until he reached his goal. His departure was accompanied by great lamentation on the part of the Marranos who had hoped that he might be instrumental in easing their sorry lot. On the voyage back, his ship was forced to land at Almeria, in Spain. There he was arrested, but at the command of the Emperor Charles V he was released, and granted a safe-conduct through Spain. He resumed his voyage, making several stops. The diary breaks off with David in Cartagena in 1527, where he has had some trouble with the local authorities.

From other sources we know that David finally returned to Italy and resumed his negotiations with the Pope. In 1529 he met Solomon

Molcho in Venice. Molcho had had a colorful career, and was now preaching Messianic sermons in the cities of Italy. We know little of Reubeni's activities during these years. He seems to have fallen under the spell of the inspired Molcho, as did even the Pope, and to have been associated with him. In 1532 the two journeyed to Ratisbon, where a council was in session to consider means of dealing with the Turkish menace, in a coach bearing a red flag with the ensign 'DJ'. They appeared before the Emperor Charles V and endeavored to persuade him to call the Jews to arms against the Turks. His response was to place them both in chains. Molcho was turned over^{to} the Inquisition as a renegade from Catholicism and burned at the stake that same year. Reubeni was brought to Spain, where he probably died in prison. Thus was extinguished this burst of flame in the dark panorama of Jewish history. The Reubeni episode is intriguing; whether its riddle will ever be untangled is improbable.¹²⁵ It is of interest to note, however, that the information about the tribes which we may glean from Reubeni's writings is most scanty indeed, disappointingly so. And the little we have is quite confused and ambiguous.

The tribes of Gad and Reuben, and one half the tribe of Manasseh, comprising about 300,000 people, live in the *nah nah*, ruled by Joseph, son of Solomon, descended from David. The members of these tribes, as exemplified by David, are pious, observant Jews, strong and courageous, proud and independent in character; they seem to be engaged largely in warfare. They maintain a lively interest in^{the welfare of} world Jewry, and are anxious to undertake a campaign against the Moslems in an effort to restore an independent Jewish nation in Palestine. There are also nine and a half tribes in Cush¹²⁶ of which Simeon and

Benjamin¹²⁷ on the upper Nile, are nearest to David's country. These two tribes are ruled by a king from among themselves, and are as populous as are David's tribes; but it seems he knows of the other seven and a half tribes only through having heard these two tell of them. The Bani Moshe are on the Sambation.¹²⁸

Abraham Ferissol, in chapter 14 of his work אברהם פריסול, (completed Rosh Hodesh Kislev, 1525) confirms David Reubeni's record of his activities preserved in his diary. He says, in 1523 we heard from Palestine that a Jew from the ten tribes had appeared there. He came to Venice and Rome in 1524. This man claimed to be from the two tribes which live in tents like the Rechabites in the ארץ ארבה, which is in Asia Major, not far from Jedda on the Red Sea. Not far from them are the balance of the ten tribes.¹²⁹ They have kings and princes and a large population, and produce many spices. Between the two groups is a strong Moslem people which prevents communication between them. When these Jews came in contact with Christian ships and saw the cannon on them, they determined to send an envoy to the Papacy, with letters of introduction from the Portuguese authorities in India. At any rate, whether his story is true or not, it was accepted as true by kings and princes and by the masses, who all believe now that the ten tribes still exist independently. He says that he travelled by caravan through Afabia Felix to the Red Sea, whet to Egypt, Palestine, and then to Rome. After eight months in Rome his credentials were confirmed by the king of Portugal. From reliable sources we learn that he actually did ask the Pope to get for him cannon and trained gunners to take back with him to Arabia. In return he offered to see to it that the Pope receives certain privileges in connection with the trade in spices. His purpose is to conquer Pal-

estine for the Jews. This day, Marheshvan, 1524, we have heard that the Pope is negotiating with the king of Portugal to help him get guns and gunners, and to procure for him a safe-conduct through Christian countries.

Dr. Jacob Mann has published in the *Revue des Etudes Juives*^{129a} a Genizah fragment containing a portion of a letter addressed to a certain Abraham, which he thinks emanated from David Reubeni or from a member of his retinue, and was destined for distant Jewish communities outside of Italy, in an effort to make propaganda for David and perhaps to raise funds to help him prosecute his mission.

The following is a summary of this extravagant letter. The extract preserved in the Geniza begins,they entered from the region of the Sambation, which surrounded them with a circumference three months' distance in length. Fire burned before and behind them and the seven clouds of glory encompassed them.¹³⁰ Be it known to you, our brethren scattered among the nations and oppressed in exile by Christendom and Islam, that we have sent out fearless, strong scouts to spy out the land and to determine how best we may enter Palestine and at which city we shall commence, since the Sambation has ceased flowing and has completely dried up, and our brethren, the Bnai Moshe, have streamed forth in countless numbers. We have mobilized our forces and have come to the city of Ancona; and we have crowned as our king Joseph the son of Solomon, of the descendants of Jesse, who has presented us with four banners inscribed with the Ineffable Name, and the ten commandments. One flag is for Reuben, Gad, and Asher, which comprise 320,000 expert, brave warriors; one for Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali, comprising 26,000 soldiers; one for Ephraim, Issachar and half the tribe of Manasseh, comprising 37,500. The tribe of Levi is also with us,

five times as numerous as are all the others and even more. Any one of these warriors can disperse a thousand of the enemy, and two can handle as many as ten thousand. But because of our sins only

Judah and Benjamin and half the tribe of Manasseh are left, exiled among the Christian and Moslem powers.¹³¹ But the king Joseph is saving the fourth flag until he can present it to Judah and Benjamin who are in exile. We have much cattle and horses and camels, and great wealth in gold and silver, so that these metals count for nothing among us. We have ten varieties of precious stones which we intend to use in the rehabilitation of Jerusalem, and we have two gates for Jerusalem made of these precious stones, which are ready to be set up; we also have the appurtenances of the temple worship which were hidden away.¹³² In a short while we are destined to rule all the world, and then we will take vengeance on the nations and force them to serve Israel. Our army advanced to Ancona, and there we divided up: Reuben, Gad, and Asher to advance on Rome, -- we are now encamped in a desert (!) four days' distance from Rome, where we are awaiting the time, which is near, when we will advance and destroy Rome and all Christendom, and bring back from Rome the vessels of the temple; Zebulon, Dan, and Naphtali went to mount ¹³³ ^{קדש}, and Mecca, and Jedda, which fell to their lot; Ephraim, Issachar, and Manasseh went to Morocco (^{מרוקו}) to gather Israel and to take vengeance on the peoples. The tribe of the Bnai Moshe went to Aden to deliver our brethren who are in exile there, and Elijah the Prophet is with them. We may not advance without the command of the Lord and Elijah. We have utterly destroyed the peoples who were under our rule, We left our country one and a half years ago to go to Ancona where we are now encamped. Woe to the nations when we come upon them! Not a fugitive will remain to them. Happy

is he who waits, for the hour of salvation is very near. Then follows an exhortation to Judah and Benjamin in the name of the king Joseph, to mend their ways. The fragment breaks off after the statement that they were in $\pi/\kappa/\alpha/\iota$ and $\gamma/\alpha/\eta$, and at the river Gozan, and at the river Sambation, from which places they have departed.

There are several points of resemblance between this letter, and the account of David Reubeni: David's brother, the king, was named Joseph; their father's name had been Solomon; David too had flags inscribed with the ten commandments; David's purpose too was ultimately to conquer Palestine. However, the tone of this letter differs so markedly from that of David's account of his mission, and so many of the statements in it have no point of contact at all with David's story, such as its confused description of the army of the nine and a half tribes, evidently modelled after Numbers II, its queer notions of the geography of Italy (a desert four days' distance from Rome!), etc., that it seems most unlikely that this fantastic epistle should have emanated from any quarters connected with David Reubeni, as Dr. Mann suggests. It is however, possible, that it is a product of a period not far distant from that of David, when his story was being diffused through the Jewish communities of Europe, and was utilized by the writer of the letter as the framework for his fantastic dream or charlatanism.

Abraham Ferissol, in his ρ/δ $\alpha/\kappa/\alpha$ $\alpha/\gamma/\kappa$,¹³⁴ mentions groups of independent Jews, rich in worldly goods and powerful, in North ~~Africa~~ India, and in northern Arabia, but he does not connect these in any way with the ten tribes.

Chayim Vital Calabrese (1543-1620) reports¹³⁵ that a R. Abraham,

a physician from Spain, had told him that a Portuguese ship had been driven in a storm to a large city on the island of *סודן*, near the coast of India, beyond which began the domain of the Indians, who are cannibals. There it was rumored that in the mountains some distance from the shore was the realm of a powerful Jewish king, *דניאל*, who had a very numerous body of subjects, very strong and fearless, any two of whom could drive off thousands. Vital does not state that these Jews are members of the ten tribes.

During the sixteenth century, as a result of the stimulus given to rumors concerning the ten tribes by David Reuben's spectacular activities in Europe, the literature on the tribes multiplied. A series of letters dispatched from ^{Palestine} ~~Jerusalem~~ to various communities in the Diaspora during this period¹³⁶ is evidence of how seriously the Jews of the time took the stories concerning the tribes which came to their ears, and of how assiduously they disseminated the scanty information that was available.

Two letters, addressed to R. Samuel of Sinegaglio, ~~xxxxxxx~~ which reached Castello, via Venice and Puglia, mention the lost ten tribes. In one it is reported that during the preceding fortnight a Jew had written from Alexandria wonderful things. "The river Sambation is now dry on Mondays and Thursdays and Saturdays in a miraculous way by the will of God; myriads of Jews who started from Halah, Habor, and the river Gozan have passed the Sambation, and are now encamped thirty days' journey from the Holy Land; by command of God they have to remain there two years, after which time they will go and conquer the Holy Land."^{136a}

In a second letter which the same R. Samuel of Sihegaglio received,¹³⁷ the writer reports that an emissary from the tribes has arrived here in Damascus, with whom I have had personal con-

tacts. He came here by way of Cairo. The prince who sent him is named Hananel, also called Armilus, because he waged war on Armilus, ¹³⁸ *חננאל*. This prince of the tribe of Reuben is 250 years old. He has crossed the river Sabation, for the river is completely dry, as though there had never been any water there, with 600,000 soldiers, part from the tribe of Dan, and part from the tribe of Reuben. When this envoy was in Cairo the Jews there laughed at him, and so he departed for Jerusalem; from there he went to *בבל* ^{138a} and thence to Damascus, where he is daily awaiting their arrival, *חננאל*. But before this emissary reached Damascus, letters were received here from Cairo warning us not to laugh at or to mock him as they had done, for after he left Cairo a letter had arrived from the tribe of Reuben signed by twelve princes and the chief prince, Hananel, called Armilus. The letter goes on to hint at further "signs" of the redemption, repeating *חננאל* ^{of} *חננאל*. It continues, it chances this very day that the master/this house invited the emissary from the tribes to dine with him, and while they were at table there came an inhabitant of a village near Damascus, who while returning home from a visit to the city, had been accosted by an old man ¹³⁹ who told him to return to Damascus, "where you will find my companion David. Tell him to make haste and not to talk too much, for he has remained there too long already; the work is great and the time is short." But before this villager had an opportunity to tell his story, the emissary stopped him and himself told what had happened. ¹⁴⁰

Another letter, addressed from Jerusalem to the congregation of Castello, reports that "the Viceroy of Naples had heard that the river Sambation was now at repose, and four of the tribes had passed the river, whilst the other five tribes ¹⁴¹ were ready to

pass. Amongst ~~them~~ those who had passed, was a nation numerous as the sand of the sea, with eighty kings and four princes, who carried with them an infinite amount of gold and silver, with armies and heroes too numerous to count.¹⁴² This letter also reports that a great earthquake has occurred in Spain and in Morocco; sixty cities, including Granada, Fez and Tunis are reported to have been destroyed. The report also has it that a great fire has broken out in London, which has wrought great havoc. In consequence of these and other "signs" the letter predicts that the redemption is near, and in fact, sets the date, 8th, 1530.¹⁴³

A letter, written in 1528, by the famous Kabbalist, Abraham Levi, contains the following information on the ten tribes: "Know that from Cairo to Suakin are fifty (days). From here to Falasa are three days; according to others, five days; the journey is very difficult. Falasa is a strong kingdom of Jews, who are valiant, and dwell intents, travelling from place to place to pasture their flocks. Their land is large and situated in high mountains, so that no one dares to go to war with them. From Falasa they go to another country called Salima which flows with milk. Near to those two kingdoms is Jubar, the land of the *Pharisees*, who pay tribute to the king of Falasa. We are not certain to which tribes these tribes belong. We believed up to the present time that they belonged to the tribes of Gad and Dan, for the Mohammedans who came from Jubar say that they are neighbors of Gad and Dan. Lately, however, we have heard that this land is called the land of Gad and Dan after the two brothers who reign there -- viz., Gad, the king, and Dan, the prince. We have further ascertained from the Mohammedans of Jubar and the Christians of Cush, which is Al-Habesh (Abyssinia), that the father of these two brothers was called Phineas, and also

Son of the Lion, because of his great strength. He died in battle against the Abyssinians, and left three sons -- viz., Gad, Dan, and Todros, who made war one against another. The last escaped to Abyssinia, where he became a Christian, brought a numerous army with him, came suddenly to Salima, and killed there about ten thousand Jews; he could not reach Falasa owing to the high mountains. Finally Todros fell into the hands of his two brothers, who killed him. This slaughter took place in the year 1504. They next fell upon their enemies and slew a great number of the Abyssinians. Another time Gad was made prisoner by one of the Abyssinian kings, who treated him with kindness, and an agreement was made that Gad should pay a yearly tribute of forty ounces, on promising that he would not give permission to the Portuguese to enter his land."¹⁴⁴

Another such letter dating from the same period is one from a certain Israel, sent from Jerusalem to Abraham of Perugia. He tells: "Last week, in the days of Hanukah, the Jew who was captured on the sea, and who was sold from hand to hand until he was at last bought at Alexandria in Egypt, where the Jews redeemed him, (he is nearly like a Cushite), told us that in his native country are thousands and tens of thousands of Jews with a great king, who makes war upon the Christians, their neighbors. He is the only king on the Nile (except the king of *Ḥam*, which is forty days' journey from Aden) who has Mohammedan and Christian subjects. This is a certain fact, which many men of his land and all men of Jerusalem affirm, that there are forty families (of Christians and Mohammedans). I had a conversation today with the Nagid about the ten tribes, and he told me that a Jew was staying at his house as a guest, who spoke Cushite and Hebrew. He said that in his country there is no written book of the Oral Law, and all casuistical rules

are reported in the name of Joshua the son of Nun; he said further that there are four tribes, Simeon, Issachar, and two others, which he does not remember. Issachar busies himself day and night with the learning of the Law, whilst the other tribes divide their time between the study of the Law and waging war upon their Christian neighbors.¹⁴⁵ There are many towers on the boundary, in which the valiant men of Israel keep watch; during the war they make signal by smoke ~~and~~ in the day and by fire in the night. When they are hard pressed, they ask counsel from heaven and they are answered in the following manner. The prince of Issachar envelops himself in his Talith and prays in a corner of the synagogue. The answer comes by fire from heaven which everybody sees, descending upon the head of the prince, but the answer is heard by him alone. Once the Cushites brought them a Jew from the Portuguese, to whom they put questions about the exiles, Jerusalem and the temple, to which he gave the following answer: 'We are in great troubles, wandering from nation to nation in captivity, the temple as well as Jerusalem is in ruins and in the hands of strangers.' Hearing this, they tore their garments and wept long and bitterly; they agreed to come in force to Jerusalem, but the prince told them to wait until he asked heaven about it. He did so in the way mentioned above and the answer came that the time of redemption had not yet come, and therefore nobody should leave his place at present, for the redemption was indeed near. Then came forward ten rich men who made a vow to go from nation to nation and from kingdom to kingdom until they came^e to Jerusalem. They went in ships with the Cushite till they came to the Portuguese possessions. Here the king sent for them and told them that he had heard of their might and riches, and how they fought with the Prester John, and above all how they were an-

swered from heaven, and he was ashamed at the exile to which he had banished the Jews. And in order that it should not be known in his dominions that there was still a remnant and hope for Israel, he would not allow them to land, and finally sent them to an island where they remained several months. He then sent for them and asked them what they meant to do. They answered that their intention was to go to Jerusalem. He said, Come in my ship and I will bring you to Jerusalem. So they did, but when they got on the open sea they were robbed by pirates, and sold as slaves with their wives and children. After some time one of them came in search of his wife and children and that was the prince's guest, in Egypt. As to the wonderful strength of these Jews, the prince stated that one night four thieves came ^{on} ~~to~~ the roof of my house and they (the inhabitants of the house) were all frightened. When the guest asked what the reason of their fright was, they told him what had happened. He at once looked to his sword and hurried alone after them until he put them to flight, saying that if there had been ten thieves it would have been just the same to him, for indeed, said he, 'we slay as many every day when war is waged against us.'"146

Raphael of Trevoux wrote from Jerusalem to the same Abraham: "Know, that the ten tribes are not on the other side of the river Sambation, but only the Bnai Moshe, and the ten tribes dwell on our side of the Sambation; they have no Talmud but only the Mishna, and the Mishne Torah of Maimonides, and all the Prophets of the first temple; but they are great Kabalists."147

Preceding this account, Raphael tells that about two years before he wrote this letter, while the young son of the Dayan of the native Jews of Jerusalem was taking a walk, he caught a white

dove which fluttered in his face, and found that the plumage under one of its wings was blue, and shaped like letters which proclaimed that the ten tribes were coming soon. On the way home to show this wonderful sight to his father, the bird escaped. "And later there came a young man from the ten tribes, whose father was a Reubenite and his mother a Danite. He brought us great good news concerning the redemption, and said that the tribes would come soon, with Reuben in the van. He said that the king of the tribe of Reuben had sent him to remove a certain stone from the western wall of the temple, which Jeroboam had placed there by magic. All the while that this stone remained there Israel would remain in exile. This young man boasted that he had removed the stone. He also said..... that the only thing^{that} keeps them (the tribes) from coming is the true tradition which they have not to hasten the "end" until they behold ten signs, eight of which they have already seen, and the other two are expected soon." Later the Nagid wrote to Raphael that this lad's story was all a lie, not to believe it, and to keep it from spreading. (Which he did, as this letter shows!) Later Jews from Egypt and from Gaza told him that twelve messengers from the tribes had come to the Jews of Egypt and told them to leave at once, because the land would soon be destroyed. And the Jews of Egypt are selling their property and leaving as rapidly as possible. He had also heard that a messenger from the tribes of Reuben had come to the Jews of Saloniki with a letter from the king of their tribe which advised them to emigrate to Palestine, for there the redemption would take effect first. He understands that about three hundred families from Saloniki are preparing to follow this advice after Pesach. In fact so many people are migrating to Palestine that lodg-

ing is scarce. And still a large company is expected to arrive soon from Egypt to settle in the land. As a result of these prognostications from the ten tribes, songs foretelling the speedy coming of the redemption are popular, and even the Mohammedans concur in these prophecies. He invites Abraham and his friends to come to Palestine for the big show.¹⁴⁸

Elijah of Pisaro, who lived about the year 1532, reports in a letter of his that a young Jew told him that in his country the Jews are independent, and that "round about them is the nation called Habesh (Abyssinia) who are Christians and in constant warfare with the Jews. These have a language of their own, which is neither Hebrew nor Arabic. They possess the Pentateuch with a commentary, but not the Talmud and its commentaries. I asked him about their religious observances, and I found that they have the scroll of Esther, but nothing of Hanukah. Their land is six months' journey distant from Palestine, and the river Gozan is there." Further on Elijah says that an old man who was in India told him that "the Jews there form a separate kingdom; that the Bnai Moshe are on an island of the Sambation. Facing them is the tribe of Manasseh. On the other side of the river dwell the tribes of Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. Issachar forms a province by itself, and has no communication with the other tribes. They are well versed in the Law, and are surrounded by fire-worshippers, and their language is Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian. Simeon dwells towards the south and forms a separate kingdom. Zebulon and Reuben are on the river Euphrates, the one on one side and the other on the pther side of the river. They possess the Mishna and the Talmud, and speak Hebrew and ~~Persian~~ Arabic. Ephraim (si) situated south of

Babylonia. They are strong men, who live upon spoil, and speak Hebrew."¹⁴⁹

Isaac b. Abraham b. Judah Akriah (1489-1575), one of the most talented Jews of this period, a forced wanderer most of his life, presents some interesting information. He says:¹⁵⁰ "I saw with my own eyes a letter sent from Safed by one, Judah Angelo, by name, a wicked, vile man, when I was fifteen years old, which was about thirty two years ago, in 1545. This letter contained the information that the tribes had approached close to Safed in countless numbers, seventy times the number of those who left Egypt, and it ^{even} gave the inscriptions on their flags, their designs, and their color, and the name of their king."¹⁵¹ Would that his words had been true! May he die before his time, for it was not enough for him that he mocked and derided us, but the rumor spread among the nations and they laughed at us and at the Torah of our God. May the bones of that evil one be crushed! And after him, there came along two other rascals in Safed, named Samuel Usque and Samuel Zarfi. They also were wiseacres, and each would say, quite artlessly as if he were not concocting the story, that he had conversed with a certain Arab who had just come from the land of the tribes. And when they would be speaking with some Mohammedan on business matters, and a Jew would pass by them and would try to listen in on their conversation, they would rebuke him, in order to substantiate their story, and later they would tell him, 'Why did you try to listen in on our conversation? That man is a Jew like us, but a member ^f of the tribes from the Sambation, and he doesn't wish to reveal himself to anyone but to us'.....And the masses ^f of Safed would believe them!"¹⁵²

Pranks such as these no doubt created a good deal of scepticism, and it is not surprising to find that Akriah continues

in essence, as follows:¹⁵³ I have heard many say that the ten tribes are independent, have their own king and great power, and lack nothing but the temple and prophecy, for they live in great peace and plenty. The report is that they have many kings subject to them, who fight their wars for them. They are said to live near the Sambation; some say that they live beyond the Sambation, others that they are very far from Yemen, and still others that they are beyond the river Gozan. Josephus says that they are near the dark mountains, and many say that they are near the kingdom of

7/20h, near the land of Prester John. I couldn't believe all this for various reasons: 1) in view of our present low status in this bitter exile, who can say that we are independent as we once were? 2) our sages specifically stated that the ten tribes will never return, for they are assimilated among the nations, and in fact, many of them are with us under Moslem and Christian rule. Despite the fact that I've read of them in Benjamin of Tudela, and Eldad Ha Dani, and David Reubeni, and the letter of Prester John, it seemed to me that these authors had invented these lies to inject courage into the hearts of our oppressed people, and I put no faith in them. But in 1562 I sailed to Cairo from Constantinople. On board was an old Turk who had been a soldier and who had taken part in a campaign from Egypt against Yemen and Aden. Another old Turk, whom I suspected to be really a Jew, asked whether he had come across any independent groups of Jews in that land, and he replied, "Yes, I saw with my own eyes, while we were crossing the sea to East India, a land on which no man had set foot, certain mountains that were inhabited. The pilot told us that these people were an invincible Jewish tribe. Our commander laughed and said, 'if they are Jews they cannot be as strong as you say,' and he wished to attack

them; but his counsellors dissuaded him, saying, 'if you conquer them, no special glory will be yours, for they are but miserable Jews, and if they conquer you, think of the shame of it, to be conquered by Jews!'¹⁵⁴ So he desisted." When I heard this with my own ears from such a trustworthy source (!) I rejoiced very much. When I got to Alexandria I heard much discussion concerning the ten tribes. A certain scholarly scribe came to me and said, knowing me as he did to be rather sceptical of the whole business, 'What do you say, now that it has been reported that we have a king in the land of Habesh?' I looked into the matter and found that the rumor had originated with the physician, R. Samuel Shalom, of Cairo. I visited R. Samuel when I got to that city, and he told me that about a month ago he had been called by his master, the governor, who asked him, 'Have you heard anything of a king of the Jews in these days?' He answered, yes, there were rumors concerning a Jewish king, but the Jews put no stock in them. Then the governor showed him a letter from the king ^{מלך א"י} (perhaps a corruption of Prester John), of the land of Habesh, which asked for help against an army of 12,000 Jewish horsemen.^{154a} Then, too, a man from Habesh ~~who~~ came through Cairo recently on his way to Constantinople, and he too spoke of this Jewish kingdom and offered to guide us there.

A letter from the city of Forli, in the Romagna, mentions several signs of the coming of the Messiah: the Turks are preparing to invade Venice (unless Ponte Negro is ceded to them) and Ragusa, and the king, Don Feranti, of Naples, has agreed to aid them; a Turkish spy has been caught in Ferrara who divulged the secret that twelve other Turkish spies are in Italy, but their purpose remains undisclosed; it is also rumored that the ten tribes

have killed the king of Persia; and the Indians have sent envoys to Venice to make known that the Jews are devastating their land, and massacring its inhabitants, and that unless aid is dispatched immediately they are all lost. The writer then relates that in a long drawn out battle with the Indians, the Jews sent runners back to the Sambation for reinforcements, and immediately 400,000 trained soldiers were rushed to the front. The Venetians were surprised at this news and sent a galley to investigate. It returned to report that this was all true and that great numbers of Jews were gathering in Jerusalem from all over the world. From the district of *Kōp*, near Genoa, more than 10,000 Jews have journeyed by sea to Jerusalem. When the Sultan heard of this mass movement of Jews, he was very much frightened, and immediately ceded to them the land of Palestine. This news is continually being confirmed by Jewish travellers. Jews in Bologna, Forli, Rome and Venice have passed the word along to keep this news quiet, for fear of trouble with the authorities. And this is only a small portion of what he might tell us, the writer asserts, of the portentous events that have transpired of late.¹⁵⁵

There can be no doubt, from this letter and others which have been presented above, that a sizable Messianic movement was in the making during this century, and that had a magnetic claimant to Messianic pretensions presented himself, the sentiment would have been precipitated at this time. As it was, it held over, and gathered force, until in the middle of the next century a man did appear who could and did utilize its possibilities. It is evident from these letters, how closely the reports concerning the ten tribes were bound up with the Messianic hopes of the Jews.

Neubauer says, "Nearly all these strange fictions came out of the brains of Italian Jews;¹⁵⁶ amongst the most eloquent of them is Abraham Yagel. We shall give a free translation of the twenty-second chapter of his work, Beth Yaar Hal-Lebanon.¹⁵⁷

"After giving the passages of the Talmudic literature, the fourth book of Esdras (of which he gives a Hebrew translation) and Josephus, he adds the following words, taken from a work containing additions to Ptolemy's Tables: 'New Africa,' the author says, 'is a part of the earth which was unknown to the ancient geographers, they not having found out the source of the Nile, which begins in the mountains, called by ancient writers, the Mountains of the Moon, and now the Mountains of \wedge ' \cup . In these mountains dwell an immense number of Jews, who pay tribute to the king of Ethiopia, called Prete John. We therefore' says Yagel, 'do not hesitate a moment to take these Jews to be descendants of the ten tribes, inasmuch as this northern corner was counted part of the territory of the Assyrian kings.' Here follows a passage which cannot be correctly read, many words and lines having been crossed out by the author, or a censor. The inference is, that a great physician, Moses Todros, said something in the year 5343 (1583) concerning the men of the tribe of Asher. Yagel refers them to the accounts of David the Reubenite and prior to him of Eldad. The rest of the illegible text seems to refer to some unhappy events in Germany during the Crusades in connection with a sorcerer."¹⁵⁸

Yagel says further on,¹⁵⁹ "It is clear to anyone who has his right senses, that the tribes still exist, and that they will return at the time when the Redeemer shall come to Zion. They are to be found amongst the three bands of exiles, of which one is inside

the river Sambation (and they were perhaps, the first exiles); they dwell in safety, have no other prince and superior but JHVH, their God, who reigns over them; they choose their princes from amongst themselves, and are those whom the Christian (whom I saw, and whose words I give in another place) found in great prosperity. They are surrounded on four sides; viz., towards the north by the Sambation and the Sand-sea, which stretches from east to west; on the west side they are closed in by the ocean (Mediterranean); towards the east and the south are high mountains, impassable from their great height, called the Mountains of the Sun and the Moon, which Alexander the Great tried to pass. And of these exiles it is said, 'To them that are in darkness show yourselves,'¹⁶⁰ for they are behind the dark mountains, and the river Gozan; indeed Nahmanides says the Gozan is the Sambation.¹⁶¹ The second part of them⁹ includes those who dwell on the other side of the river Sambation, viz., the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half of Manasseh, who were the second exiles. They are far from Babylonia, in the towns of the Medes, and are also scattered in Africa; some are eighty days distant from Babylonia, and from thence came David, the Reubenite. In order to search them one has to cross seas, rivers and deserts; they have princes, of their own nation, but pay tribute to the king of Ethiopia. They are constantly at war with their enemies in self-defense. Their rite is the same as ours, and only lately the great work of Maimonides reached them, which they accepted as their religious guide. But they knew also the Mishna and the Babylonian Talmud. Their territory reaches as far as Aden, to the land of Cush, and to the source of the Nile, where this river separates from the Euphrates (sic); they inhabit the strip between these two rivers. They are governed by a secretary of the king David, and

are very numerous, like the stars in heaven. With them are the children of Rehabiah and those of Moses, who number more than sixty myriads. Messengers were sent to them in the time of Pope Clement VII,¹⁶² a part of whom died on their way, and those remaining brought tidings concerning the greatness of the tribes, and their wide territories, having on the one side the King of Ethiopia and on the other the king of Persia. And the same says Benjamin." The third part Yagel puts in Arsata, in the boundaries of Riblah, according to IV Esdras, "whose dwellings remain now unknown, where they will remain until God remembers them. To sum up, Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh are on our side of the Sambation; the Rechabites, the Children of Moses, Zebulon, Dan, Naphtali, Gad (two tribes of Gad?), and Asher are on the other side of the Sambation; Ephraim, the other half of Manasseh, Simeon and Issachar are in Daphne of Ribla; Judah and Benjamin and most of the tribe of Levi are dispersed in Asia and Europe, as said by Josephus."

"And there is no doubt that in each exile of the four, there were many of the other tribes who went with the exiles according as they were more or less neighbors, so that each band of exiles was, indeed, mixed, comprising some of all the twelve tribes, in addition to men of other nations, who joined themselves to the exiles. Israel, of course, increased in numbers, and was scattered to the four winds of heaven to proclaim the name of our one God. This is in my opinion the reason of the many exiles and wanderings of our fathers and ourselves, viz., that the name of the one God and his power should be made known by us from sunrise to sunset, until there shall be (on earth) Jehovah one, and his name one, and all shall know and recognize that to him alone belongs greatness and ~~mg~~

might, and to no one else."¹⁶³

In a previous chapter Yagel makes this statement:¹⁶⁴ "I heard at Lucera from a Christian named Vincenzo Milano, who was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks nearly twenty-five years, and travelled over mountains and through valleys with caravans, the following story: He once left Algiers with a pasha named Asan Basan Bey, of Barbarossa, who lived in the time of king Selim, having with him about 40,000 Turkish warriors, and in the camp were also twelve Jews, most of them from Algiers. They travelled on the road to Barbary, then towards Fez, and then to India. Here they found in a certain place inhabitants, short as a man's arm, who fed upon grass, walked about naked, slept in caverns, and spoke an unintelligible language. The caravan left India to the left, passed all the land of the black king, and turned towards the west, until they reached the sand/sea. This is a desert full of sand, which is blown from place to place according to the wind, just as the waves on the great sea. And because it forms waves, it is called sand/sea. Going further west they came to a river, called Sambation, which, wonderful to say is full of water all the weekdays, so strong that it rolls along great stones and a quantity of sand, so that no ship dare venture upon it; but on Friday, toward sunset, the river rests and becomes quite dry, so that a child can cross it. It is said that the river is in some places one and a half, three, and four miles broad; it flows between north and south, having to the right the west and to the left the east, until it falls into the ocean; ships which venture on it lose their way; indeed, no ship is yet known to have returned safely from this river. When the pasha and a part of his troops (for the greater part remained on the other side) crossed the river one Sabbath day, they travelled about a day's

journey, and found inhabited cities and fertile land, where nothing was wanting; water came from the mountains in abundance. The cities were inhabited by Jews, fine looking men, with handsome women, all dressed with silk, purple, and fine woolen long dresses^s, reaching down to the heels as in Turkey. The girls as well as the women wear their hair loose on the shoulders, with the difference that the married women wore a thick veil, so that nothing of their face could be seen. Vincenzo had not praise enough for the beauty of these inhabitants and their wealth. They took their meals sitting on carpets spread on the ground, just as in Palestine. They said that they were freemen, not subject to any king; choosing their own prince from their own nation. He saw seven kings, in royal apparel, with gold crowns; their kingdoms^d were very extensive with many cities. One amongst them, however, was not dressed in kingly costume, but wore a black cloak, an old man with a distinguished face; the Ishmaelites call him the Pappos, and they learn from him their law, and all the kings bow before him, and honour him like an angel of the God of Hosts. The pasha and his escort with the twelve Jews from Algiers who travelled with him, said to the Jews of this country and their kings that he was sent by the great Sultan Selim, who wished them good, to ask them to pay him tribute, since God had given him all the countries under the sun. Should they refuse to pay tribute, he would take revenge upon their brethren in his dominions, destroying them and driving them out of his kingdom. The seven kings, together with the old man in black, asked time to consider the matter. After three months they sent this answer, that since they had been in their land they had never paid to any sultan or king a fixed tribute, and they were not willing to begin it now.

But for the sake of the dispersed of Judah who were under the power of the sultan, although they did not observe the Law of Moses and its precepts in the right way, as themselves, and therefore were only brothers by name, they were willing to give silver, gold, and precious stones as a present now, but the sultan must not ask tribute a second time; they would certainly not agree to it, but wage war against him with all their allies.¹⁶⁵ Thus they sent presents to the sultan as they promised, and gave also to the pasha precious garments. To the Jews who were with the pasha they presented, in addition to garments, three Hebrew books bound stiff, as in Italy, embroidered with gold and pearls. Vincenzo heard that these books were more precious to the Jews of this land than all jewels. Thus the pasha with his escort and the Jews with him who acted as interpreters, repassed the river in order to return to their own country. Vincenzo continued to say that after eighteen months' journey not a fourth part of the army returned, for three-quarters of them died on the journey through the sand/sea. For travelling there is possible only with a magnetic compass, just as in voyages by sea. And sometimes they were obliged to rest a day or two, or even a week, for fear of being buried under the sand, and becoming mummies. Indeed, many mummies were found in the desert, and more than one hundred and fifty were brought to Algiers."

So ends the crop of reports of the ten tribes produced by the sixteenth century, perhaps the most fertile period of all in these products.¹⁶⁶ There can be no doubt that the potent fertilizing agent which made this century so outstanding was the Reuben episode which opened it. The first half of the seventeenth century witnessed another such striking contact with the tribes, which, while

not as spectacular as that of about one hundred years before, nevertheless had much more serious repercussions upon the life of Jewry.¹⁶⁷

This is the Baruch Gad incident.

V

Before I recount the adventures of the famous Baruch Gad, I shall turn to those of another, equally interesting if less renowned.

In the 1630's two Polish Jews came to Lublin, after having travelled in the Orient, and published there a little book in Yiddish called ספר שוק אלף. The author, Gershon ben Eliezer Ha Levi, claimed to have visited all the Jewish kingdoms mentioned by Eldad, Benjamin of Tudela, David Reubeni, Ferissol and the Christian writers, the Sambation and the land of Prester John. The Catholic clergy, fearing the effects of such a book on the oppressed Jews of Poland, forbade its sale, confiscated all available copies and burned them in Warsaw. But these two Jews travelled through the land telling their tale, and everywhere they were accorded high honors by their gullible, wonder-loving Jewish hosts. Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, the Jew baiter, preserved a part of this book in his volume "Entdecktes Judentum," (Frankfort, 1700), which was reprinted in Amsterdam, in a Hebrew version, as ספר שוק אלף. This was again reprinted by Moses Edrei in his volume פיוט אלף, Amsterdam, 1818.¹⁶⁸

Gershon says that he had heard many rumors concerning the ten tribes, their great piety and prosperity, their power, their whereabouts, etc., but he had put no faith at all in these in view of the bitter exile to which the Jews were subjected. In 1630 he was in Alexandria where he had many conversations on the subject of the ten tribes. From there he went to Cairo, where he heard that a letter had been received in Saloniki, telling of the exploits of the Jews across the Sambation: that they had defeated

Pristian, and other tribes (P'JKO 'KA , he calls them), and he rejoiced that God had seen fit to fulfil the prophecy, "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet."¹⁶⁹ He went to Saloniki, and found there a caravan ready to depart, the pasha of which informed him that his caravan would pass the Sambation. He accompanied this caravan through the desert. (He describes animals he saw in the desert with five feet and three eyes, and other such marvels of nature.) He passed by the sea around the desert of Calicut, and came to the land of the P'JKO 'KA , two days' journey from the Sambation. From thence he journeyed to a city near the river, so near, in fact, that the thunder of its turbulent rush was constantly and clearly to be heard. When he wished to approach closer to the river, he was informed that this was not possible, since the king, Pristian, had posted guards along the bank to fight off the frequent depredations of the Jews from across the river. The king Pristian is a Mohammedan, he tells us! He remained in the city three weeks. During this time he scouted around for information about the river and the Jews, pretending himself to be a non-Jew, and found that the river quiets down two hours before the Sabbath sets in and at this time the Jews cross over and make their attacks, and this is why guards are stationed at the river. But on the Sabbath the Jews do not cross. He testifies from personal experience that the river actually ceases flowing two hours before the Sabbath begins. The people of the city showed him breaches in the walls and other souvenirs of the attacks by the Jews, and told him that the Jews are very prosperous, have an abundance of gold, wear fine colored clothes, but never black. The river is seventeen parasangs wide; it throws

stones six days of the week, and its tumult may be heard two days' journey away. On the Sabbath it is quiet, no water or rocks are to be found in it, only fine, snow-white sand. The natives consider the water of the river holy, and in truth it has a curative effect. Only Jews live on the other side of the river. They have twenty-four kings, and over them all is king Eliezer. He has a tremendous army, well-armed and trained. On the Sabbath the Jews guard their side of the river and if anyone crosses over they kill him immediately, except he be a Moslem trader. The horsemen literally live on their mounts, carrying their food with them; they have their feet tied under the horse's belly, because of its great speed. Another great king of the Jews is Daniel. The people are skilled artisans; the land is fruitful and very wealthy, containing precious stones and metals. Gershon^h relates how two of the king Daniel's sons fought off and defeated one thousand of the enemy. They are very careful about the rules of ritual cleanliness. The king of India and Pristian send gifts to the Jewish kings and continually court their favor.

In 1628, Gershon continues, eight European Jews crossed the Sambation. The king, who interviewed them, was amazed that Jews should have desecrated the Sabbath, but they excused themselves, telling him that they had been taken captive and had fled to his shelter. He tested them by requiring them to read from a Hebrew book, and when he found them proficient in this exercise, he permitted them to remain in his land. These Jews eventually married and settled there permanently.

Gershon further reports that he found descendants of the Rechabⁱtes living in the mountains of Nisabur; and in the ⁱן' 6'5 mountains he found descendants of the four tribes, Dan, Naphtali,

Zebulon¹⁷⁰ and Asher, who possess a vast territory, including all the desert to the border of Media. They are continually carrying on great wars with the king of Cush.

In 1630, the year in which Gershon began his adventuresome travels, a meshulah from Jerusalem, named Baruch Gad¹⁷¹ journeyed to Persia, where he was attacked by bandits in a desert and left to die. He wandered about for a while, and then met a warrior who questioned him in Hebrew and told him that he was a member of the tribe of Naphtali. This stranger fed Baruch, and asked him to wait for him while he told his tribe of his encounter with a member of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Baruch asked to go along, but he replied that the distance was too great for him in his weakened condition, and left him a charm to protect him from wild animals, and other dangers. This man returned in three days and told him that he had visited all the tribes and showed them the credentials Baruch carried from Jerusalem and told them of the great tribulations and sufferings of Israel in exile, as Baruch had related them to him. They were very much grieved by this sad news. He gave Baruch a letter from the tribes to carry back to Jerusalem. His own name, he said, was Malchiel. He conducted Baruch through the desert for three days to a place three days distant from the land of Shinar, and left him with his blessing. Baruch brought this letter to Jerusalem in 1646. In 1657 a copy of it was given to the Kabbalist, R. Nathan Spiro. Nine prominent rabbis of Jerusalem testified to the truth of Baruch Gad's story and to the accurateness of the copy. R. Nathan Spiro died in Reggio, Italy, in 1666. The famous Chayim Joseph David Azulai saw ~~a~~ this letter in the archives of the Jewish community of Reggio,¹⁷²

Later a copy of this copy came into the possession of the well-known Solomon Dubno, in whose library Moses Edrei found it and published it in his פ'וש ד'מ 1818, in 1818.¹⁷³ In 1832 a meshulah, Abraham Zalman, found the original copy among the communal records of Reggio, and incorporated it in his diary, from which it was republished by Jacob Sapir.¹⁷⁴

The purport of this letter which Baruch Gad brought to Jerusalem on his return from his momentous journey is as follows: We, your brethren, the Bnai Moshe, who are across the Sambation, greet you. We are very much grieved by the news of your sad lot in the exile, and the destruction of the temple. Some time ago a Moslem slave was brought to the four tribes, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher, who told them of the terrible things that have been happening to you. They sent him to us and when we heard of your unhappy circumstances we were very sorrowful. But we doubted the truth of his report, until to-day when we read the letter (which Baruch had carried) from you, telling of your misfortunes. And we set up a great mourning, and we wept bitterly to think that you had to bear this great punishment. But at the same^e time we rejoiced that God had made us freemen, ruling over great territories. We live beyond the Sambation, in which rocks clash against each other six days of the week, but which rests on the Sabbath. Flames envelop the banks of the river all through the Sabbath, so that no man may approach it. When our brethren of the four tribes wish to speak with us, we stand on opposite sides of the river and so we converse. We live in peace and security; there is no unclean thing, animal or bird or reptile within our borders. We live in fine, large houses, and we have extensive possessions of herds and flocks, and gold and silver, and

precious stones. Each of us lives at least one hundred and twenty years; never does a son ^r of daughter die during the lifetime of his parents. In number we are forty times as many as those who went out of Egypt. God has showered all these kindnesses on us because we observe his Torah and all his statutes and laws; we possess the Bible, the Mishna, the Talmud and the Midrashim. We never swear by the name of God, for if any one does so he invariably dies within three days. We preserve the four methods of capital punishment prescribed by the Rabbis; our judge is the Elder whose court is in the synagogue.

We frequently hear a voice speaking to us from heaven, a Bath Kol, which announces.....and on Friday last we heard the Bath Kol proclaim.....¹⁷⁵ And now brethren of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, do not lose hope in the Lord our God, for whom the Lord loves he tests; and as a father in his son will he show his delight in you soon; as we have already told you of the signs and wonders which we have heard so will we behold.....¹⁷⁵ Do not be surprised and wonder why it is that we and the four tribes who possess such great wealth and power do not sally forth to war against the nations. Be it known to you that we, the tribes (?) of the Bnai Moshe have not the power to cross the river until the time of the "end" when God will proclaim "to the prisoners, go forth; to them that are in darkness, show yourselves."¹⁷⁶ Likewise the four tribes have permission to cross their boundaries only when their kings carry on war with the seven kingdoms which are round about us. As for you, oh, holy people, trust in the Lord, etc. The letter is signed by the king, Ahitob, son of Azariah, the prince, Yehozadak, son of Uzar, and the elder, Uriel, son of Abiasaph.¹⁷⁷

The correspondence between this letter and Eldad's report is unmistakable; it seems to be based almost entirely upon him. Yet it

received unquestioning credence, and as late as 1818 Moses Edrei writes that its truth cannot be doubted.¹⁷⁸ But Jacob Sapir,¹⁷⁹ while he puts implicit faith in the signatures of the great rabbis of Jerusalem, cautiously intimates that it may not be entirely "kosher". "אשר נאמר בזה הספר כי כל ישראל יורשי ארץ חמשה עשר אלף שנה", he says.

The middle years of the seventeenth century were naturally ripe for further rumors concerning the ten tribes. The letter which Baruch Gad brought from the Bnai Moshe, the terrible Chmielnicki pogroms, the Sabbatai Zevi fiasco, all combined to create an unusually unsettled state in world Jewry, a mental and emotional receptiveness to the wildest stories which held forth some promise of improvement in the wretched condition of the Jews. A typical story concerning the tribes which dates from this period is the following: A meshulah ^{was} sent by the community of Safed to southern Arabia to collect funds, met in Sana, the capital of Yemen, a noble looking man who claimed to be a Danite. He was a brave warrior, tall and good-looking. He wore a long beard and curly hair reaching to his shoulders, oriental dress with a wide sash about his waist, embroidered with the words, "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path,"¹⁸⁰ and a broad sword hung from his side. He spoke a good Hebrew, but he spoke it sparingly and measuredly. He consumed only water and bread and his sleep was the sleep of a horse (very light). He washed frequently and assiduously. He asked the meshulah about Jerusalem and Palestine and about the condition of the Jews, and when he heard of their sad plight he broke down and wept bitterly for about half an hour. When asked about the Danites he said shortly, that they had an independent kingdom several months' distance east of Sana; their ruler was one of themselves;

they lived in great peace. He said that his prince had sent him to inquire about the lot of the scattered Jews. He agreed to take the meshulah through the desert with him to his tribe, but when the latter hesitated he grew angry and left. The next day the meshulah went in search of him but he was nowhere to be found. When he returned to Safed and told this story he was berated for his weakness and it was decided to send other meshulahim to ferret the matter out.¹⁸¹

This was the sort of story which was to be heard frequently in the east, and in fact throughout Europe at this time. But during these years a new type of theory concerning the tribes was being seriously promulgated in Jewish circles, and though it was not new to either those or to Christian circles, having been suggested with the discovery of America with which it concerned itself, it was gaining a new and lusty lease on life, which it holds even unto this day. This was the theory which Manasseh ben Israel propounded and popularized with such fervor in his book *קרבן* *ד/פ"ח*.¹⁸²

On the basis of the report of a Jewish traveller in the New World, Antony Montezinos (Aaron Ha Levi), who claimed that he had met Indians in America who claimed to be descended from the tribe of Reuben, and who recited the Shema, and observed certain Jewish customs, Manasseh set out to prove that part of the ten tribes was to be found in America. He differed from the Christian speculators on the continued existence of the tribes in the New World, in that the latter saw in the Indians generally descendants of the Israelites, but differed as to whether the alleged Jewish customs of the natives were due to their Jewish descent or to the machinations of Satan (which gives us some idea of the general level of the discussion among Christians), while he maintained that the first inhabitants

of America were the ten tribes, but the Tartars who followed conquered them and drove them into the Cordillera mountains where they took refuge. The Jewish customs of the Indians were derived from their Israelitish predecessors, whom they had driven into the mountains. Manasseh sums up his views on the matter thus:

"1. That the West Indies were anciently inhabited by a part of the ten tribes, which passed thither out of Tartary, by the Streight of Anian.

"2. That the Tribes are not in any one place, but in many; because the Prophets have foretold their return shall be into their Country, out of ^f divers places; Isaiah especially saith it shall be out of eight.

"3. That they did not returne to the Second Temple.

"4. That at this day they keep the Jewish Religion.

"5. That the prophecies concerning their returne to their Country, are of necessity to be fulfilled.

"6. That from all coasts of the World they shall meet in those two places, sc. Assyria and Aegypt; God preparing an easie, pleasant way, and abounding with all things, as Isaiah saith, ch. 49, and from thence they shall flie to Jerusalem, as birds to their nests.

"7. That their kingdome shall be no more divided, but the twelve Tribes shall be joined together under one Prince, that is under Messiah, the Son of David; and that they shall never be driven out of their land."¹⁸³

Manasseh goes through the long list of reports concerning the whereabouts of the tribes, all, or most, of which he accepts as true. The ten tribes are in consequence ubiquitous. He says: "Hither-

to we have shewed that the ten Tribes are in divers places, as in the West Indies, in Sina, in the confines of Tartary, beyond the river Sabbathion, and Euphrates, in Media, in the kingdom of the Habyssins; of all which the Prophet Isaiah is to be understood, in Isa. 11. 11. 'It shall come to passe in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Siniar, from Hamath and from the Islands of the Sea.'¹⁸⁴ From whence you may gather that it is meant of those places where the ten Tribes dwell."¹⁸⁵

He says of these descendants of the tribes who are domiciled in the New World: they are "men of tall stature, comely in presence, and have as great beards ~~and~~ as the Spaniards have, valiant and warlike, who are not skilled in Cannones, though the rest of the Indians use no other."^{185a} They are "white men, and bearded, well bred, well cloathed, and abounding with gold and silver; they dwell in cities enclosed with wals, and full of people."¹⁸⁶ "And our brethren (the ten tribes) do keep the law more zealously out of their land, than in it, as being neither ambitious, nor contentious (which hath sometimes happened with the family of David) by which means they might easily erre in the true Religion, not acknowledge Jerusalem, and withdraw that obedience, which is due to the Lord, and to his Temple."¹⁸⁷

Manasseh's book is clearly a "tendenzschrift". He hoped, by proving that since England is the only country in which the Jews do not reside, and since the redemption will take place when the Jews are scattered in all the countries of the globe,^{to show that} the admission of Jews to England will bring about the longed-for millenium. "My second motive is," he says, "because of the opinion of many

cy in this period, to the effect that the ten tribes were to be found in China. Manasseh b. Israel quotes a Christian writer,

מתיאס ריציא , who reports that a Catholic missionary in China, named Mathias Riccio, met a Jew in Peking whom he took to his church and who mistook the images of Mary and Jesus and John the Baptist for those of Rebecca, with Jacob and Esau, and was induced by the priest to worship them. Then the priest showed him a Latin Bible which contained some Hebrew words, and the man recognized them for Hebrew though he could not read them. This Jew told the priest that many Jews lived in the vicinity of Peking, who had synagogues and Scrolls of the Torah; some of them could speak Hebrew. The priest visited the community, and found that this man's story was true. He tried to convert the Jews but did not succeed. Many such stories filtered through from China at about this time, through Christian missionaries and travellers, and the Jews of Europe, and the Christians as well, naturally took these Chinese Jews to be members of the ten tribes.¹⁹²

VI

For a century the subject of the ten tribes was taboo, if we are to judge from the silence that prevailed concerning them in literary works. The reaction after the tragic events of the middle seventeenth century was too strong for a time to permit any repetition of the fantasies that had brought them on.¹⁹³ But toward the end of the eighteenth century, strangely enough with the beginning of our modern period, the power of that reaction waned; new bits of information drifted into European Jewries, a new interest was evoked. So we hear that in 1760 a letter came to the Jews of London from the Jews of Honan, China.¹⁹⁴ The Sephardic community of London sent a reply by the hand of the captain of a sailing vessel.¹⁹⁵ This letter evidences the strong suspicion of the Sephardim of London that the Jews of Honan were descended from the ten tribes.

Not long after, the well-known Naphtali Herz Wessely published a document which purported to be a portion of the chronicle of the Jews of Cochin, on the coast of Malabar.¹⁹⁶ This document was supposed to have been secured by an agent of the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon, one Marcellus Bless (מַרְסֵּלֶס בְּלֶס), from a converted Jew, Van Dort, who in 1757 had copied it from a Hebrew manuscript in the possession of the head of the Jewish community of Cochin and translated it into Dutch. A German scholar named Ritz found it among some papers of Bless and translated it into German; he tried to verify it by writing to Cochin, but got no results. The editor, Wessely, publishes his Hebrew translation of Ritz's German translation

of the Dutch translation of the Hebrew original. The chronicle states that in the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, Salmanasar carried Israel into captivity to Halah, Habor, on the river Gozan, and the cities of the Medes. In the year 894 (866 B.C.E.) Salmanasar III sent 460 Jewish families of these exiles as a gift to Porava, king of Yemen, who severely oppressed and enslaved them. These exiles took with them the Pentateuch, Joshua, Ruth, Judges, I and II Samuel, I Kings, the Song of Songs, the Psalms of David, Asaph, Heman, and the sons of Korah, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Riddles of Solomon, the prophecies of Gad, Nathan, Shemaiah, and Ahiah, Job, Jonah, and Isaiah, of which last book only eleven chapters remain to them. These books were divided into three portions, Pentateuch, Hagiographa, and Prophets. They placed each section into a case and put them in the care of their leader, Simon Rabban, of the tribe of Ephraim; he was the first in the Yemenite exile to be in charge of these cases.

As a result of the persecution of this king, most of these exiles left Judaism, but a few, under the leadership of Rabban, remained faithful to their faith. Rabban was forced to explain his obstinance to the king, who confiscated the holy books; but as a result of Rabban's argument the king let up somewhat on his persecution. In consequence of this confiscation of their holy books the remaining Jews of Yemen proclaimed a fast on the fifteenth of Elul, 897 (863 B.C.E.) which the Jews of Mecca and the coast of Malabar keep to this day. Then follows a prayer which Rabban offered up on this occasion.

In the fifth year of the rule of this king's son, Korsha, 907 (853 B.C.E.), on the tenth of Shevat, he returned the books and re-

voked all of his father's decrees against the Jews, as a result of which the Jews proclaimed a holiday on that day, which is still kept. Another prayer of Rabban's follows.

The leadership of the Jews of Yemen remained in the family of Rabban. In the year 1416 (344 B.C.E.) thousands of Jews were exiled by the king Prozos. One of the descendants of Simon Rabban, Simha, led them to Pona and Gozrati, which were under the rule of the Grand Mogul, where he heard that many Jews lived. In 2100 (340 C.E.) the Jews of this country were again severely oppressed and many were converted, except for seventy-two families, which, led by Joseph Rabban, migrated to Malabaf, where the king Fermal welcomed them and had his good wishes engraved upon two bronze tablets which still exist in Cochin. He gave Joseph Rabban and the heads of the community after him a plot of ground sixteen parasangs in circumference, called Bamekr, which is still in the possession of the incumbent Nassi, Joseph Hlagv.

The converted Jews in the land of the Mogul do not recognise the name "Jew", but when asked, from which people are you descended? they reply, from the children of Israel. They still keep the Sabbath, and Yom Kippur, and practise circumcision, and what is more surprising, still speak a fine Hebrew, though they no longer have the Torah.

Joseph Hlagv, the Nassi, still possesses two letters which Ahasuerus sent out concerning Haman and Mordecai, written in the Tamuli language. The natives of Malabar, who are called the Kanarinz,¹⁹⁷ also celebrate Purim with the Jews, for they say that at the time of its occurrence their king was subject to Ahasuerus, and they too would have been required to massacre the Jews, had the ^{countermanding} decree of Ahasuerus not been issued.

In the year 1650 C.E., on the fifth of Shevat, the last of the Rabban family, Josiah, Nassi of the Jews of Malabar, died and the position went to other families.

The document concludes with the statement that the computation of dates in this chronicle is from the exodus from Egypt, which all Jews know occurred in the year 2000 A.M.¹⁹⁸ This short chronicle was translated from the Hebrew original, Cochin, 1757; signed, Leopold Emanuel Jacob Van Dort.

Wessely in his notes accepts this story as true, and recognises these Jews as members of the ten tribes; he becomes quite excited over the prospect of obtaining the books they have and thus proving that the Torah had its present form and content before the destruction of the first temple, as well as gaining further information on the Jews of that early period. But he wonders how it is that although travellers and traders over a fairly long period have brought news of Jews living in the region of Malabar, no word of their descent from the ten tribes had come to Europe before this. He wonders how they reacted when they first heard ^{of} the Mishna and Talmud; whether they accepted them or not; how they interpret the laws of the Bible, etc. He asks all Jews who have occasion to visit that country to investigate the matter and to try to get further information.¹⁹⁹

Moses Edrei informs us that "In the year 1788, in the month of April, one of the principal Jews named Ezekiel Racby,²⁰⁰ sent a letter to Holland to the Jews, to inform them that the ten tribes were to be found in different places in India and China, and all this letter was printed and published in the kingdom of Holland."²⁰¹ I have been unable to locate this letter. Edrei may be referring to the extract of the Malabar chronicle which I have discussed above.

The nineteenth century saw no cessation in rumors and speculation about the ten tribes.²⁰² In America a leading Jewish jurist and statesman, Mordecai Manuel Noah, in a proclamation which he read in Buffalo, New York, on September 2, 1825, on the occasion of the dedication of his projected Jewish state of Ararat, declared that "The Indians of the American continent, in their admitted Asiatic origin, -- in their worship of God, -- in their dialect and language, -- in their sacrifices, marriages, divorces, burials, fastings, purifications, punishments, cities of refuge, divisions of tribes, -- in their High Priests, -- in their wars and in their victories, being in all probability the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, which were carried captive by the king of Assyria, measures will be adopted to make them sensible of their condition and finally re-unite them with their brethren, the chosen people."²⁰³

In 1837 Noah delivered a lengthy discourse before the Mercantile Library Association of New York, on "The Evidences of the American Indians being the Descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel."

The persecutions of 1830 in eastern Europe gave rise to a demand on the part of certain prominent Lithuanian Jews that the ten tribes and the Bnai Moshe be sought out, for it was understood that at one time in the past, when the Jews had been in trouble, these tribes had delivered them.²⁰⁴ In 1831, Baruch b. Samuel of Pinsk, who lived in Safed at the time, was sent by the great Kabalist, R. Israel of Safed, with a letter from the Ashkenazic community in Palestine, to the ten tribes and the Bnai Moshe. Baruch left Safed in Heshvan, 1831. He arrived in Sana, in Yemen, in Ab, 1833. The rabbi of the community in that city, Mari Yahya, accompanied him into the desert to the east of Sana to help him search out the tribes. Baruch, in the course of their wanderings in the desert, was bitten by a

snake which he killed with his sword, at the same time cutting his foot. He was in great pain and at a loss as to how to heal the wound when a sheep wandered by. Baruch caught it, killed it, and cutting its body open, placed his lacerated foot into the warm flesh. This cured him. He was very much surprised to find a sheep wandering in the desert so far from any habitation, but after a while he came upon a whole flock of sheep and its shepherd, This shepherd turned out to be a Jew,²⁰⁵ who took the letter which Baruch carried from the Rabbis of Palestine, and asked him to wait in the town of Chaidan nearby, while he informed his fellow-tribesmen of Baruch's quest. Baruch and the rabbi waited some time in Chaidan and then returned to Sana. Here Baruch, who had some skill in medicine, cured the king of a severe illness, and became ^chief physician and a favorite at the court. Court intrigues finally brought about his death at the hands of the king himself. Some time after his death two horsemen came to Chaidan to inquire after Baruch, and upon being informed that he had left, they departed without leaving word concerning their identity. When Mari Yahya of Sana heard of this he set out by himself to investigate. He never returned, nor was anything ever heard of him. This story was told to Jacob Sapir by Mari Said, the son of Mari Yahya, by the Ab Beth Din of Sana, and by others, and all the stories agreed in all details.²⁰⁶

Moses Edrei informs us that "In the Morning Herald (of London) of the fourteenth of November, 1832, there is an article entitled 'Jews in Thibet ', which states that the lost ten tribes of the Jews have been found in Li Bucharia.....They speak in Thibet the Hindoo language; though they are idolaters, they do believe there is an only God, and they believe in the Messiah, that he is

to come, and in their restoration to the holy land of Jerusalem. They are supposed to be ten millions in number; they keep the day of atonement (Kipur) the fast day of penitence, and holy day of Sabbath, etc.....

"I think this testimony from the Herald is very clear, and serves for a sufficient proof of the present existence of the ten tribes; and Thibet is a country well known to the public."²⁰⁷

During the first half of the nineteenth century reports were current that Jews had been found among the native populations of the Phillipines and Australia, and of course these must be descended from the lost ten tribes.²⁰⁸

In 1847 a young German Jew, Dr. Asche, a physician in the Sultan's army, was induced to go in search of the ten tribes by R. Joseph Schwartz. The only report he brought back was that while in Egypt he had been told that in Sana, Yemen, there was a man who traced his descent from the tribe of Dan.²⁰⁹

In 1854 Amram Maarabi of Safed went in search of the ten tribes, disguised as a dervish. He sought the Rechabites in the region ~~at~~ about Mecca, but that group eluded him. He then went to Yemen and spent some time travelling through the desert, but finally returned to Safed, his quest unfewarded.²¹⁰

In 1857 R. David Ashkenazi of Jerusalem went in search of the tribes, travelled through Arabi^a, then cr^dossed the Red Sea to Africa and wandered through ^{the}byssinia. When Jacob Sapir met him on Rosh ~~Hashana~~ Hashana, 1860, in Yemen, he had nothing as yet to report. He, too, finally returned to Jerusalem, admitting his failure.²¹¹

In 1868 a Messiah arose in Yemen who had a large following among the Jews of the eastern lands. He promised that on erev Rosh

Hodesh Iyar he would come with a large army composed of members of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and conquer Yemen. Needless to say, this army did not materialize. But as a result of his agitation the Jews of Yemen were placed in jeopardy, for the ^{local} authorities instituted a series of persecutions in reprisal.

Our account of the history of the legend of the ten tribes will not be complete without mention of some of the latest vagaries that have been spun about it. It is claimed, with massive compendia of facts and surmises to support the assertions, that the Irish, the English, the Japanese, the Armenians, the Afghans, the Bokhariots, the Turcomans, -- the list might be extended almost ad infinitum, -- are descended from the lost ten tribes. An article of Mormon belief has it that ^{part of} the lost tribes wandered to America and were finally destroyed by the American Lamanites.²¹²

Shmarya Levin, in his "Childhood in Exile", p. 253, remarks in connection with the frustration of Russia's ambitions in the Balkans and the Near East ~~at~~ by England and the other powers at the Berlin Peace Conference of 1878, after the Russo-Turkish War, that "not for nothing did certain of the Russian papers say that the legend of the ten tribes was no legend at all; that the English were the lost ten tribes and that Disraeli was descended from King David."

And to climax the entire account, to epitomize the absurdity of the millennially vain search, there exists a pseudo-Jewish congregation of Negroes in New York City, "The Commandment Keepers, Holy Church of the Living God, Pillar and Ground of Truth", at 29 West 131 Street, who claim that they are the pure, original Israelites of the tribe of Judah, and that the white Jews all are of the lost ten tribes!²¹³

APPENDIX A

In 5520-1760 information came to the Jewish community of London concerning the Jews of Honan, China. The following letter was sent to Honan by the Sephardim of London; it was written by R. Isaac Mendes Belisario, and signed by R. Raphael Meldola, the Chief Rabbi. This version of the letter is from "An Historical Account of the Ten Tribes", by Moses Edrehi, pp. 183ff.

"To our brethren, the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; to our brethren the disciples of Moses, the man of the Lord, and to all their princes, noblemen, chiefs, judges, magistrates and governors, residing in the empire of China, at the extremity of the east; may peace and ~~lx~~ happiness attend you.

"And may the Lord the God of our fathers open to you his bountiful treasures, and may he pour heavenly blessings on you in the highest degree; may he prosper you in all your undertakings, and make you exceedingly numerous on the face of the earth; may he defend and protect you from diseases and infirmities, may he prolong your days and bless them, and may your years be crowned with felicity for ever according to your heart's desire, in conformity to the fervent prayers and good wishes of us who are your brethren, residing in the kingdom of England.

Dear brethren, we are extremely anxious for your welfare, and desirous of knowing with certainty what truth and foundation there may be for the reports and relations, written by sundry persons who have travelled through your country, and all affirm that they have seen some of your children of Israel, and were by them informed that you are all his descendants, that you have a public place of worship in the province of Honan, where you pray to, and adore the Lord, the God of our

fathers, that you have the books of the law of Moses written on parchment in the same manner we have, and that such volume of the law is exactly like ours containing five books; the first book whereof begins with these words, 'Bereshith bara'; the second with 'Vahaleh Semot'; the third, 'Vayikra el Moseh'; the fourth, 'Bemidbar Sinai'; the fifth, 'Aleh Hadebarim'.

"You may easily conceive what joy and gladness must have filled our hearts on hearing such happy tidings; it is this that prompts us to this method of conveying our sentiments to all of you, our dear brethren. Peace to your chiefs and wise men! Acquainting them that the descendants of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levy, are dispersed all over the face of the globe, east, west, north, and south, whose numbers may be computed at ten millions, having increased and multiplied exceedingly through the mercies of God, who has never forsaken us during our captivity, but has inclined the hearts of princes in our behalf, especially in this happy country where we dwell in peace and security under the dominion of our Sovereign Lord King George the Second, whose glory and power may heaven increase, for he is most just and merciful! .

"We do not know, dear brethren, whether ye are descendants of the Ten Tribes which were carried into captivity in the days of Oseah the son of Elah, king of Israel, who was contemporary with Hezekiah, king of Judah, or whether you descend from the other tribes, being those of Judah, Benjamin, and Levy, as we are. We therefore most earnestly desire you would please to give us all the information you can in answer to the following questions, and you may write to us either in Hebrew, Arabic or Chinese, delivering your letter to the person who may present this to you, and he will take care to forward us your

favours. But previous to our queries, we think proper to acquaint you that we and all the Jews have the practice of reckoning the years from the creation of the world, and according to such computation ~~xx~~ this present year is the five thousand five hundred and twentieth ~~x~~ year.

"The first question we desire you to resolve is, from what part of the world, and from what particular country did your predecessors depart, when they came to reside in the country you now inhabit? In what year was it, according to any computation, or how many years are since elapsed? What was the name of the king of Israel, or the name of the king or emperor of China at that time; and if you cannot be exact, pray let us know at least how many hundred years have passed since that period.

"Second, Do you know whether there are any congregations or numbers of Israelites in Tartary, or in any countries near or distant from you, and whether they are descendants of the Ten Tribes, or of those of Judah, Benjamin, ^{or} ~~xxx~~ Levy?

"Third, Do you believe as we do in one only God who created the world, and gave us his holy law by the hands of Moses, his faithful servant?

"Do you believe that God will reward those that observe his precepts, and punish those that transgress them?

"Do you hope for and expect, that God will, when his infinite wisdom shall think it proper, gather us all from amongst the nations and resettle us in the Holy Land by means of a prince of the house of David, and that the holy temple will be then rebuilt and the kingdom of Israel re-established as of old?

"Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead?

"Fourth, Do you fix the day of the new moon, on the first day that you see it? or do you fix it according to any rule or account by which you know when the new moon should appear, celebrating that day as such, though you do not yet see the new moon?

"Fifth, Do you celebrate the festival of the new moon one day only, or two days; and sometimes two days, and other times only one day? What is your rule for such variation?

"We likewise desire to know how many days you celebrate as ~~holy~~ holy feasts, namely Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacle, and New Year?

"Sixth, Have you amongst you any wise learned men in the law, who explain the same according to ancient tradition, and what is the number of the works of labour which the Law enjoins us not to do on the Sabbath day?

"Seventh, Do each of you know from what tribe you descend; and have you priests and Levites amongst you, known to be of the tribe of Levy?

"Eighth, Have you any set form of prayer for public worship, or do you say your prayers extempore, according to the respective circumstances of each individual?

"Ninth, Are the names you give the twelve months of the year the following, which we use to denominate them, viz: -- The first we call Nisan; on the fifteenth day of this month ⁵ is Passover, or the feast of unleavened bread. The second is called Iyar; the third Sivan, and on the sixth day of this month is the feast of Pentecost. The fourth is called Tammuz; the seventeenth day of this month is a fast-day, in commemoration of the breach made in the wall of Jerusalem. The fifth is called Ab; the ninth day of this month is a fast-day, in commemoration of the destruction of the first and second Temple of Jerusalem. The sixth month is called Elul; the seventh is called Tisry;

the New Year's Day, which happens on the first of this month, is called Rosh Hashana, when we observe the ceremony of blowing the horn; the tenth day is the day of Atonement, the day of expiation, called Kipur; and on the fifteenth day of this same month is the feast of Tabernacles. The eighth month is called Chesvan. The ninth month is called Kislev. The twenty-fifth day of this month we rejoice and light candles, or lamps in commemoration of the great wonders, miracles, and deliverance which our fathers experienced during the second temple in the time of the high priest Chasmonay and his sons; when the Greeks being vanquished, and the temple restored to its purity, they found only one small vessel with sacred oil, and barley for one day only, yet it miraculously sufficed for eight days, when more sacred oil was found.

"The tenth month is called Tebet; and on the tenth day of this month is a fast-day, in commemoration of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, during the first temple.

"The eleventh month is Sebeth.

"The twelfth month is called Adar. The thirteenth day is a fast day, and the fourteenth and fifteenth days are kept as festivals called Purim, in commemoration of the miraculous preservation of our forefathers, who were doomed to destruction by the cursed Haman, in the time of Ahasuerus, but through God's mercies the fatal decree was annulled, by means of Mordecai and Queen Esther, and Haman and his ten sons were executed. We now crave your pardon for this great trouble, which we hope you will readily grant, since it is not only we who dwell here in England, who are ~~desirous~~ desirous of being rightly informed concerning the foregoing particulars, but it is the general and anxious wish of all our brethren in these parts to be truly acquainted with what relates to your origin and present condition,

and to be instructed as much as possible concerning the like circumstances of other Israelites, who we have reason to believe do reside in several other Eastern countries, so far distant and remote from us that we have not hitherto been able to learn whether they belong to the Ten Tribes or not, we who are descendants of the tribes of Judah, and Benjamin, as already observed, only know that the other Ten Tribes were driven away from the Holy Land, and carried into captivity in the time of Oseah, the son of Ela, king of Israel. But what became of them since; and to what parts they were obliged to retire; and where they hid themselves; we are totally uninformed to this day. You now perceive the great motives that render us so solicitous and inquisitive. You see the chief object of our enquiry, and we cannot doubt you will endeavour to satisfy us to the utmost of your power, assuring you that you will ever find us disposed to give you all the information you can desire, in answer to any questions you may please to demand of us; let us now conclude, offering our fervent prayer to the Lord the God of our fathers; that he may gather the dispersion of Israel, and the scattered remains of Judah from the four corners of the earth, as it is written in the Laws of Moses, the man of the Lord, in these words; 'The Lord God will restore you from your captivity and will have mercy on you, and he will return and collect you together from amongst all the nations whither the Lord your God has dispersed you, even if you be driven to the extremity of the heavens; the Lord your God will from thence call you forth, and assemble you together, and he will convey you to the land which your forefathers possessed, and you shall inherit it, and he will prosper you and make you more numerous than your fathers.' May it be so accomplished for the honor and glory of his great name, that your eyes may see it and our hearts rejoice! May we all arise, and go to the house of the Lord, for we are all brethren,

sons of our father Israel! May we prostrate and humble ourselves before the Lord our God, in our sacred and glorious temple! That ~~x~~ these blessings may be verified in your days and in ours; and in the days of all Israel our brethren, is the sincere and ardent prayer of us, dear brethren, who reside in this city of London, in the kingdom of England, on the twenty-fourth day of the Eleventh month called Sebat, in the year 5520 from the creation of the world, Amen.

"The prophet Jeremiah^h likewise assures us in the time when the Lord pleases, that he will save his people, the remnant of Israel; that he will bring them from the north, and gather them from the four corners of the earth, in great bodies to re-establish them in the Holy Land, for he is a father unto Israel, and Ephraim is his beloved son."

Edrehi comments, p.191, "This letter was sent by some respectable persons, who on their return from China brought an answer in the Chinese and Hebrew languages, which was afterwards translated into the English language for the Portuguese Jewish congregation; and the original was left in the museum of the India House. I could not find the copy, and suppose it has been lost....."

NOTES

1. II Kings, xv:29
2. II Kings, xvii:6
3. II Kings, xviii:9-11
4. I Chronicles, v:26
5. Antiquities, XI, v, 2
6. The Sambation, a river which in its swift flow carries along stones and sand, (or which consists solely of sand and stones, containing no water at all) so that no man may cross it; and which rests on the Sabbath, on which day it is either covered by a thick cloud or else by a sheath of flame, so that it may not be crossed; in some accounts it is not covered at all on the Sabbath, and it is possible to cross it on that day.

The first mention of the Sambation which we have is in the Rabbinic literature, where it is said that part or all of the ten tribes, or the Bnai Moshe (see note 16) are at or beyond the Sambation. Josephus, The Jewish War, VII, v, 1, informs us that "Titus Caesar tarried some time at Berytus, as we told you before. He thence removed, and exhibited magnificent shows in all those cities of Syria, through which he went, and made use of the captive Jews as public instances of the destruction of that nation. He then saw a river as he went along, of such a nature as deserves to be recorded in history, it runs in the middle between Arcea, belonging to Agrippa's kingdom, and Raphanea. It hath somewhat very peculiar in it; for when it runs its current is strong and has plenty of water, after which its springs fail for six days together ,

Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxxi:2, reports a river in Judea which runs six days and rests every seventh day. ~~It is not the Tiber.~~
Neither specifies that the seventh day is the Sabbath.

An Alexander story has it that on one of his voyages south of Egypt he came upon a river of sand which flowed water three days and sand three days. This is evidently a non-Jewish version of the

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1

(J.Q.R., O.S., I, 411-412; Kobez al Yad, IV, 39.)

"אברהם יצחק אלעזר עזרא הלוי לוי אבינו הלא שמואל קריין סתם אין"

ספר א. Kahana, "למה שלל ימים ובלילה אפילו טיפס אהא אמן בא

R. Matathias Ha Yizhari (En Duran? who was present at a dis-
putation in Tortosa toward the end of 1412? Graetz, IV, 208) says
of the Sambation which he claims to have visited and crossed: "Day
and night stones were flung hither and thither except on the Sab-
bath when they rested; and I had to wait until then, for there was

no way of crossing over, and in my opinion this river is testimony to and proof of the day of rest of Judaism. I also saw a mighty and fearful people, a people numerous as the sands of the sea, who in general believed in their Creator and held fast to the Torah of Moses b. Amram; who dwelt in great peace; and who practised cir-

cumcision." (בְּיָמַי הָאֵלֶּךְ אֶנְבִּיּוֹן. וְלֵבִי אֶעֱבָר נָהָר סַבְּתָא. וְכִנְנִי הָאֵלֶּךְ)

בְּלֵיל. כִּי חֲקִי נִחַל בָּא אֶבֶר נִקְלָן. אֵלֶּךְ אֶבֶר יִכְלֹל אֶעֱבָר לִפְנֵי אֵלֶּיךְ. וְאֵל סַבְּתָא

וְאֵל חֲרָבִי. כִּי יִמָּס וְלֵבִי אֶנְבִּיּוֹן גְּבִיּוֹן וְגִיּוֹן. # אֶבֶר יִכְלֹל נִלְבָּד לִקְדִּישׁ. וְכִנְנִי

עַבְדִּי יִכְלֹל נִלְבָּדִי אֶבֶר אֶחָד. כִּי אֶבֶר יִכְלֹל נִקְלָן אֶחָד. וְלֵבִי בְּעַד נִקְלָן כִּי אֶבֶר אֶחָד

בְּאֵיךְ אֶל לִפְנֵי אֶבֶר. גְּבִיּוֹן כִּי אֶבֶר יִכְלֹל נִקְלָן. וְאֵלֶּךְ עַבְדִּי נִחַל אֶלֶּךְ אֶלֶּךְ לִפְנֵי

"וְכִי הִכְלֹל וְאֶנְבִּיּוֹן הַנִּזְכָּר. וְאֶנְבִּיּוֹן הַנִּזְכָּר גִּלְגָּל וְגִלְגָּל. וְכִי הִכְלֹל וְאֶנְבִּיּוֹן

extract from his polemical work entitled, אֶחָד וְכִנְנִי, Kobez,

IV, 23.)

Abraham Yagel says that the planet Saturn rules the Sambation, and therefore it rests on the seventh day. (Kobez, IV, 39-40.)

But there is a statement in the Pirke d'r. Eliezer, ch.6, to the effect that יִכְלֹל נִלְבָּדִי לִמְעַל, Saturn rules on the fourth day of the week.

Manasseh b. Israel tells that "R. Selomo Jarchi who lived 540 years since mentions that River in Comment. Talm. saying, 'The stones and sand of that River do continually move all the six days of the week, until the seventh. R. Mardochus Japhe in his learned book Jephe Thoar saith.....that it was told him of an hour glasse filled with the sand of Sabbathion, which ranne all the weeke till the Sabbath. And I heard the same from my father; which testimony I accept as good, as I saw it myselfe; (for fathers do not use to impose upon their sons.) He told me that there was an Arabian at Lisborn, who had such an hour glasse; and that every Friday at evening he would walk in the street called the new street

and shew this glasse to Jewes who counterfeited Christianity, and say, 'Ye Jewes, shut up your shops, for now the Sabbath come.'...I should not speak of these glasses, if the authority of such a man whom I have alledged did not move me." (L. Wolf, Menasseh b. Israel's Mission, p. 37)

The translator of Menasseh's *Sefer Sapir* into English, in a letter (which Wolf prints, p. 69) says that "As for Menasseh's Sabbatical river, I know many authors have said it, but whether true or false, that is nothing to the Translator; and I am as farre from beleiving that story, as I am from the wilde opinions of Mr. Thrask." (Which must have been very wild indeed.)

Christian records of the Middle Ages also made much of rivers and seas which, if not the Sambation itself, certainly possessed many of its properties. The letters of Prester John speak of the Sambation and of a great sea of sand, which is evidently the desert. Krauss, Lehnwörter, II, 369, quotes a Latin author who speaks of "the Sea of Andalusia in which it is said ships cannot sail except on the Sabbath at the time of sunset when it is peaceful." (Mare Andalusiae in quo navis provehi non oisae dicitur, nisi die sabbati sole occidente, quo tempore tranquillum est.) The anonymous author of the "Itinerarium a Burdigala Hierusalem usque" maintains that the pool of Solomon dries up completely on the Sabbath. (L. Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, VI, 407)

Sir John Mandeville has it that in the land of Prester John "is the See that men clepen the gravely See, that is alle gravelle and Sond, with outen ony drope of Watre; and it ebbethe and flowethe in grete Wawes, as other Sees don; and it is never stille, ne in pes, in no maner cesoun. And no man may passe that See be Navye,

ne be no maner of craft; and therfore may no man knowe what Lond
in bezond that See.....And a three journeyes long from that See,
~~xxx~~ ben gret Mountaynes; out of the whiche gothe out a gret Flood,
that comethe out of Paradys: and it is fulle of precious stones,
with outen ony drope of Watre: and it rennethe thorghe the Desert
on that o syde; so that it makethe the See gravely: and it berethe
in to that See, and there it endethe. And that Flome rennethe also
three dayes in the Woke, and bryngethe with him grete Stones, and
the Roches also therewithe, and that gret plentee. And anon as thei
ben entred in to the gravely See, thei ben seyn no more; but lost
for evere more. And in the three dayes that that Ryvere rennethe,
no man dar entren in to it: but in the other dayes, men dar entren
wel y now." (Halliwell's edition, London, 1866, pp. 272-273)

Many opinions have been expressed as to the source of the
Sambation legend. I shall summarize several of them here. It should
first be noted that there seems to have been a place of that name
in Palestine at a very early date. A record of grain distributed
to Palestinian nobles by the royal granaries, probably at Thebes,
during the Middle Empire of Egypt, (after 2000 B.C.E.) lists
Sa-ma-du-na, which is Shabbathon, according to Prof. W. Max Muller,
(J.Q.R., N.S., IV, pp. 652 and 654.) This place-name is mentioned
in similar lists of Rameses III and Thutmosis III. The situation of
this place is uncertain. Ginzberg (Legends, VI, 408) suggests that
this place was probably situated on the river of the same name men-
tioned by Josephus (see above, p. 96), but it is unlikely that this
river had that name at so early a date, nor in fact does Josephus
say that Sabbathion was the name of that river, but merely that
it is called the Sabbatical River by the Jews.

Lazer suggests (אלקטור אלדנד אלד'ח, p. 10) that the name

7

אברהם

גורל כל אלה ימי הגלות אהנים והלל ה' אבות הים והנחל הולך והאבות והלל
(though the ירעה לל ימי הגלות והולך נלעים ושלל וינח

Lazer (Hidos, pp. 8ff.) suggests that the legend of the Sambation which made it a river which flowed only six days a week had its source in the report of a geyser which spouted boiling water intermittently with great noise; (see Josephus, Pliny, and Petahiah of Ratisbon above) later a volcano was added and the river was made to flow stones and sand. The idea of the Sambation as a river rather than a fountain, is due to the legend that a river surrounded the tribes in their exile. Such a river must naturally be of a miraculous character, and the Sambation seemed made to

order. Lazer suggests further that the legend of the Sambation was originally utilized as a proof of the Sabbath, in disputations with the ~~xxxx~~ Romans and other representatives of the pagan religions of the day, to whom the notion of a special day of rest seemed strange. When with the spread of Christianity, the need for proving the Sabbath was no longer pressing, a new need arose, that of strengthening the national unity of the oppressed and dispersed Jews. About the stories of independent Jewish groups in Africa and Asia was woven a web of fancy which glorified them as the chosen of God, who had thoroughly repented their sins, had been forgiven and upon whom now rested all God's glory. But how explain their laxness in coming forward to aid their suffering brethren? The mystery that surrounded the Sambation, its place, its connection with the Jewish religion through its Sabbatical properties, again made it handy in this instance. The Jews could not cross it before the time of redemption, when it would cease flowing! Thus the significance of the Sambation changed from a religious to a national-folk. 77

This theory too is most ingenious. There is no doubt that the river did have the significances which Lazer assigns to it, but the lines of division which marked the change of its significance is not as clear-cut as he would make it. In the middle ages the river still served to prove the Sabbath, as witness the comments of Yizhari, above p. 98, and of Menasseh b. Israel, above, p. 99-100, and the fact that ⁱⁿ the Zemiroth for the Sabbath, as in other parts of the ritual, the river is referred to in that light: in א'ס'ס we have the statement הנה נהר יוסף ויהי נהר יוסף, and in א'ס'ס : הנה נהר יוסף ויהי נהר יוסף. Nor is it likely that the change in the significance of the river to the Jews came about so consciously as he intimates. In the main,

R. Akiba as an active propagandist for the Bar Kochba revolt, attempted to fire the enthusiasm of Palestinian Jewry by telling them that the future of Judaism depended entirely upon them, the descendants of Judah and Benjamin."

Solomon Judah Rappaport (cf. Lazer, Hidos, p. 9, note 2) also connects Akiba's opinion with his interest in the Bar Kochba revolt. He believes that Akiba, in his travels, went in search of the ten tribes, -- i.e., Jews who lived in distant lands, -- to seek their aid in the projected rebellion, and his opinion quoted above was the result of his failure to interest them and to get their assistance, and his consequent disappointment and anger.

Josephus, too, implies that the Jews sought the aid of the exiled tribes, at the time of the destruction of the temple, when he says (Preface to The Jewish War, Par. 2) that "the Jews hoped that all of their nation which were beyond the Euphrates would have raised an insurrection together with them."

15. IV Ezra, xl11:41-47

16. The legend of the Bnai Moshe has its source in the promise of God, Deut. ix: 14, to make of the descendants of Moses a great people. The Rabbis took up this promise, which, since it was dependent ⁿ of the annihilation of the Jewish people, God could not directly fulfill, and in their fancy saw the ~~typogeny~~ ^{typogeny} of Moses living in unusual circumstances, beyond the marvellous river, Sambatyon, a life of great purity and piety, enjoying the blessing of God's special care. The Bnai Moshe became the embodiment of all the aspirations, political, social, and religious, of the dreamers of Israel.

Two Rabbinic references, typical of all, which merely posit

too, between you and them there is a swift river of sand, which rests only on the Sabbath. But still, ask God." God hearkened to the Prophet's request and commanded Gabriel to do as he desired. Mohammed rode on the B'rak, (a mythical animal) and in a trice he arrived at the home of this tribe. He found that they buried their dead near the doors of their houses so that they may continually keep in mind the day of their own death, All the houses are of equal height so that no one may exalt himself above his neighbors, and so that no high houses may shut out the air from the lower ones. They have no ruler or judge, since all their deeds are righteous, and there never is any strife among them. They sow and harvest according to the needs of the entire group, each one taking only what he requires and leaving the balance for the others. When one dies, they rejoice that one has passed away who was whole in his faith; they are sad when a child is born, for they know not whether he will live a life of purity and piety. Among them there is no usury, nor interest nor lewdness. Mohammed inquired whether there were any sick among them, and they replied, "no, since we do not sin, and sickness is only the atonement for sin." There are no wild beasts in their land to do them any harm.

Ibn Abbas was a nephew of Mohammed's. His teacher was Kab al Ahbar, a Jewish convert to Islam, who was well-versed in Jewish tradition. It was from him, no doubt, that Ibn Abbas learned this story about the Bnai Moshe.

Thus it was that the land of the Bnai Moshe became a sort of Utopia in the eyes of the Jews, and it is this character which it retains in later reports. cf. Eldad Ha Dani, etc. (Epstein, pp. 15-16)

See also addition to note 16 on p. 141.
16a. cf. Lazer, Hidos, p. 57

17. cf. D. H. Muller, Die Recensionen und Versionen des Eldad had-

Dani, Vienna, 1892, p. 48: this version of the letter is quite brief; the letter says: _____, and further: _____

דבבין ושהם כל השמים למטה למטה יתר מאי וממנו להם ודבאר אלם לא עצה את יל" ורחמי
אחסי עינים אולם, ומלך לא היה יביעו לנו מן השמים ואלו עב להם כ" אבר זה. כי יצו הקד"ש
אלמ את ישראל העלזים ודבארם כי יל פליטת... ור" אבר זה ולא היה כדון לאס ילם אבר עו
מן הדבר עב נדבר לא יפסקו פו מלצי מלך הולך הקדש ודברו ממקום גבול וק"ו

18. Abraham Epstein, _____ אבר דבני - ספרו וכלתיו העבירה למלך ע"י

_____ Pressburg, 1891, כמבי יב ופסוקים עתיקים עס ומלך והערה

19. The versions stress this point: Epstein, Eldad, Story 1. אוי שלא

_____ story 2, _____; רק ארבע נאמנים אלו למהלך ה"ו

_____ story 4, _____; מלך ושלם אלוים חלקם ואחר כך כולם נאמנים חלקם

_____ כל השלם חלקם עזיאל ומלך את כול עס כל ישראל --- גם נאמנים למהלך חלק ה"ו

But Zemah Gaon, in his reply, maintains that Judah and Benjamin

were superior to the ten tribes in their scholarship: _____ וקדש ה"א

אמלנו אף כנס דם נחמסקו החממה וכלו השלם לקחו ע"י יואל (צ"ל ושל) ואש"ל ויאל
ע"כ אמר אלו למהלך או ספיקה אחר גימט מלך --- לשם יואב ונמון החזיקו במלך ע"כ כלם
ibid., p. 7).

20. _____; Hisdai ibn Shaprut states
that Eldad quoted his halachoth also in the name of Othniel b.

Kenaz, see note 57.

21. There is no mention anywhere that Samson and Delilah had any
children. The only reference to any progeny of Samson's is this

passage from Sotah 110a, _____ ומהלך אבר ויהא לו את אלתו רבי

_____ בנאמנים כבי למעשה מלך.

22. These halahoth are concerned with _____ and _____. They
are edited in Epstein, op. cit.; Muller, op. cit.; and Max Schloess-
inger, The Ritual of Eldad Ha-Dani, Leipzig, 1908.

23. This story is based on Ps. cxxxvii and the Midrashim to it. The
life of the Bnai Moshe is truly Utopian, according to Eldad, see

note 16; there is no great wealth or poverty in the land, no theft, no wild animals; everyone lives 120 years and no children die during the lifetime of their parents. All the members of the tribe are pious and holy, ritually pure; they do not swear or use God's name in vain. They do all their own work, and have no slaves, for all men are equal there. They do not lock their doors at night, for there is no thievery among them. No unclean animals or birds or reptiles are to be found in the land, since these come to other countries because of their idolatries. Their gardens and orchards and fields produced hundredfold. cf. Epstein, op. cit., Introd., section IV; cf. Jellinek, *לחן חן*, IV, pp. 15-18, *מלכה בן* *לחן*, under the title *לחן חן*.

"The Genizah fragment (of the responsum) which has preserved a much older text than either the Cod. Oxf. or the ed. prin. or the Shalshelet (Hakabala, by Gedaliah b. Joseph ibn Yahya), warrants the doubt that Eldad made any specific mention of the Bnai Moshe. Its version makes it probable that in his story, as in the earlier Midrashim, it had been the Levites, and not the 'Sons of Moses' who refuse to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land and are saved by the interposition of a cloud from the wrath of their captors." Schloessinger, op. cit., pp. 109-110, and note on p. 117. The use of Bnai Moshe in the Gaon's reply may be either a later gloss, or may have originated with the Gaon.

24. *ibid*, p. 116, fol. 1, recto, ll. 3 ff., and note on p. 118, they merely intended to bite off their fingers.

25. *ibid*, ll. 7-10, and note on p. 119, the cloud merely concealed them while they were on their journey.

26. *ibid*, p. 116, fol. 1, verso, ll. 2-3, no mention that the river contained no water.

27. According to Schloessinger it is uncertain whether in Eldad's account the Sambation was mentioned at all. The Genizah fragment speaks merely of a stream which flows swiftly enough to bring down sand and rocks. It is not clear that Eldad's original description had the river stop flowing on the Sabbath, but the words, אין זמן שבת, are strangely omitted from the Genizah text. However, he does call the river Sanbation, or Sabatinus.

28. He means here the other six tribes, residing in Asia. He calls them Issachar because this was the first of these other tribes he came across on his travels. Epstein, p. 17, note 14. But see note 49 below.

29. This is the Zemah who was the Gaon of the academy at Sura during the years 882-887.

30. His figures are confused and wrong. cf. Epstein, p. 18.

31. The אֶלֶף בְּרֵאשִׁית, published in Jellinek's בראשית אד, IV, p. 133, enumerates the ten exiles as Zemah does here. Another version in Vol. V, p. 113, differs somewhat; but neither mentions the tribe of Dan. The enumeration in the Revelation of St. John, ch. vii, also omits mention of Dan, as do the versions of IV Ezra, xiii: 40. Epstein suggests that Judges xviii:30 may imply an early departure of Dan from Palestine.

31a. מ'טו (באמריק) מ'טו א'טו א'טו

32. cf. Tem. 16a.

33. וְלֹאֲנִי אֶבֶר לִפְנֵי מַלְאֲכָיו עַל חַטֹּאתַי הִרְאֵנוּ וְאַחֲרַיִךְ יְיָ רִחֵם עָלַי.

No statement to this effect appears in the letter from Kairowan.

Schloessinger, p. 114, casts doubt upon the genuineness of this

statement of the Gaon's, and that in the salutation of the letter
from Kairowan: אשר יראנו ושמענו מפי ה' אלהינו

אלה אשר נאמרו על פי מלך אבנן אלהים / ויהי דם. There
is no indication in the text, nor is it likely that the Danites

recognized the supremacy of the Gaon, or that they prayed for the scholars of Babylon before they prayed for the rest of the Diaspora, if they prayed for them at all. These passages are probably later insertions.

34. Jellinek, ^{הגאון מ'א}; Epstein, op. cit., Muller, op. cit.

35. Epstein thinks that this account of the adventures of Eldad is in reality a letter which Eldad sent ^{of} the Jewish communities of Spain. Muller, op. cit., maintains that on the contrary this account is the latest of the documents dealing with the Eldad episode. Epstein refutes this view in the *Revue des Etudes Juives*, XXV, pp. 30-43, and upholds the view which he expressed in his book. It is interesting to note in this connection Schloessinger's contention that Eldad wrote only halakha, op. cit., p. 4, note 18a, also p. 8. However Abraham Maimuni does mention a letter ^f of Eldad's, see note 57, and it is possible, following Epstein's view that this ^{is} the letter, greatly expanded and interpolated, to which Abraham Maimuni refers in his responsum. The problems of literary criticism do not directly concern us here; the fact is that this version of Eldad's story, whether it be from Eldad's pen or not, was widely current ~~xxxx~~ in Jewish and non-Jewish circles of the Middle Ages, and was an important factor in molding the legend of the lost ten tribes, as well as in other connections. See note 102.

36. There was a cannibal tribe on the southern coast of the Gulf of Aden called "Oromos". I use here and elsewhere notes of Dr. Jacob Mann to the ^{אורומים}.

37. There are variants of this story. One has it that when Eldad and the Asherite went aboard the ship to transact their business they were kidnapped and sold to the people of ^{פ'לג'א}, among whom

45. One version has ק'רד. Dr. Jacob Mann, *Glanures de la Gueniza*, R.E.J., 1922, p. 152, note 1, says this should be ק'רד, a mountain on the route from the Hedjaz to Mecca.

46. ק'רד ק'רד, which as Epstein explains, is a translation of the Arabic, "kata al tarik", which is the equivalent of the Hebrew, ק'רד.

47. See note 43.

48. ק'רד; other versions read ק'רד ק'רד, ק'רד ק'רד.

49. Max Schloessinger, op. cit., p. 4, note 17, "The responsum speaks of only four tribes, the Sefer Eldad gives an account of ten tribes.....If Eldad had indeed brought such astounding news as that of the rediscovery of the ten tribes, we may be sure that the Jews of Kairowan would ~~have~~ undoubtedly have been as much interested in this information, as in the divergences and peculiarities of Eldad's ritual, and that they would not have failed to report to the Gaon in their epistle that ten tribes had been rediscovered if Eldad's account had not restricted itself to four tribes." But from the responsum of Abraham Maimuni, see note 57, we see that at least as early as the thirteenth century Eldad was credited with an account of ten tribes in place of his original four tribes.

50. Ex. xiv:13; Deut. ii.

51. The Nile has been called ק'רד. However, this is more likely the river al Faisan in Yemen.

52. These names vary in the different versions.

53. See note 21.

54. The versions have different reports of this war-song. cf. Epstein, op. cit., p. 39, note 23, where he collates them.

55. This is the only source for the story about the pigeons.

56. ק'רד ק'רד, ק'רד ק'רד, reprinted in Epstein, pp. 63-65.

57. Eldad's report was universally credited by leaders of Jewish thought, and his opinion frequently cited as authoritative. Hisdai ibn Shaprut, in his letter to the king of the Khazars, said: אֲמַרְתִּימָן וְלֹא אֶלְלֵנוּ אִיל וְלֹא נִבְּרָן בַּד, הִיב מִיָּמֵינוּ הַלֵּל בֶּן עַד לְמִנְיָם לְבֵן בֶּן יִצְחָק, וְהִיב
מִדְּבַר הַלֵּל וְקִרְאָה לְמִלָּה אֶל דְּבַר הַלֵּל, וְלֹא דְבַר אֶל נִשְׁלֵם מִמֶּנּוּ. וְהַמֶּלֶךְ אֶבְרָהָם הַלֵּל
בֶּן הִיב אֲמַרְתִּימָן בֶּן קִרְיָה קִרְיָה אֶל יִשְׁרָאֵל אֶל אֶל וְהִיב הַמֶּלֶךְ. It seems from this statement that Eldad visited Spain in the time of Hisdai's grandfather.

Abraham Maimuni, in a responsum, translated from the Arabic by Adolf Neubauer, Kobez, IV, p. 63, after giving the Rabbinic references to the ten tribes, says: וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁכַּח אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְיִשְׁכַּח אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Jonah ibn Janah, in his ספר הלליות, (Hebrew translation by Judah ibn Tibbon, ed. Bacher, Berlin, 1896, s.v. הלל, p. 497) quotes Judah b. Koraish, who cites Eldad as authority for a certain interpretation of the root הלל.

Rashi on Prov. xx:1 quotes Moses Ha Darshan to the same effect. S. J. Rappaport (הלכות, note 47, quoted in Epstein, pp. 71-72) says: הזו"ר נאמר כיון שא"י אברהם קראו, וז"ל רביא ראוי ונבדל מן האדם
ומן קרית, נבדל מן האדם א' הולד.

Abraham ibn Ezra seems to have been the only sceptic. In commenting on Ex. ii:22 he refuses to accept Eldad's account as trustworthy. A. H. Silver, *Messianic Speculations in Israel*, p. 57, states that Meir of Rothenburg also doubted Eldad's veracity, but I have been unable to locate such a statement of his.

The popularity of the Eldad story is attested by the great variety of versions, editions and translations that exist, by the fact that the ספר הלליות was first printed in Mantua in about the year 1480, thus placing it among the earliest Hebrew books to have been printed; (Steinschneider, *Die Geschichtsliteratur der Juden*, Frankfurt, 1905, #13.); as well as by the frequency with which it was drawn upon by later raconteurs.

58. It is strange that later reports of the ten tribes make nothing at all of their opportunity here. There is not in any later account of the tribes any further mention of the descendants of Samson. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Samson at his best was not considered a great "tsaddik", while the other groups, such as the Bnai Moshe and the descendants of the Rechabites, provided more fertile material for speculation.

58a. See note 16.

59. See the Introduction.

60. These opinions range from one extreme to another: Eldad has been characterized as 1) an apologete, whose purpose in concocting his story was to refute the Christian theory that the loss of Jewish independence was a proof of God's rejection of Israel; 2) a polemicist against the Karaites; 3) a Karaite attempting to convert Rabbinites with a cock-and-bull story; 4) "a braggart and a secret Karaite," ~~and~~ an "adventurer and a charlatan"; "a rogue and a swindler" "devoid of any higher purpose"; 5) a non-existent individual, nothing more than a name attached to a story; 6) a truthful chronicler of conditions obtaining in his native country, etc. See Max Schloessinger, op. cit., ch. 1.

60a. Kobez, IV, p. 10; J. Q. R., O. S., I, 186 misinterprets.

61. אם יעזובי נאני ויאמר יי ואליהם הסדר שבתיהם לארץ כי לא יקבל נא
היה כללם, וכן היה לארץ ארץ הארץ, ואחרי העני, ולגוף נחיה ארצי, וזה כל
הכללם לארץ, וזה לא יאמר לארץ, וזה לא יאמר לארץ, ולגוף נחיה ארצי
אין העני כללם ארצי, וזה לא יאמר לארץ, וזה לא יאמר לארץ, ולגוף נחיה ארצי
 quoted in Epstein, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

62. אין ארץ may refer to an independent Jewish land, just as Eldad's halachoth are called הלא ארץ ילדא; the contention of Schloessinger, op. cit., p. 9, that הלא ארץ was an abbreviation of הלא ארץ ילדא from the opening words of Eldad's halachoth, אין ארץ ילדא, rather than of הלא ארץ ילדא, while no doubt correct, does not affect the argument since he himself admits that later glossators and commentators took this to signify הלא ארץ, implying by these words "the halachoth of an independent Jewish land", so that Dunash in using these words probably meant the same.

63. Judah b. Balam, at about this time stated, following M. J. Derenbourg's translation of his glosses to Isaiah, R.E.J., XVIII,

p. 74, "les dix tribus étaient dans le Khorasan, à ^{הח, הנה, 7} et ^{הנה} (IIK. xvii:6). Il paraît que ^{הנה} est le nom d'un fleuve du Khorasan appelé Chaboras, et que ^{הנה} est un fleuve qui baigne la ville de Gazna, qui est aujourd'hui la capitale du Khorasan." The implication is that Judah believes that the ten tribes are still in the places he mentions.

64. J.Q.R., O.S., X, pp. 139-151, A Hitherto Unknown/Movement ^{Messianic} Among the Jews, Particularly Those of Germany and the Byzantine Empire.

65. What more natural that when miracles are in order, for dark mountains to become suddenly bright?

66. The belief in the ten tribes in Germany must have been very strong for this report to have caused this mass movement. Benjamin of Tudela notes at the end of his itinerary that this belief continued as strong in the Germanic lands.

67. The Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Comnenus, at whose instance the first Crusade was undertaken, and the Patriarch, were believed to have extended their support to the Jews. Kaufmann asks, "Had the report about the expedition of the ten tribes reached the Emperor also? Did the orthodox Alexius give some amount of credence to the tales of the great Jewish force about the Sambation, and fear the latter as the avengers of all the injustice done to the Jews.....? Some belief in the protection, or at least, connivance ~~x~~ from the highest quarters must have been alive among the Jews of the Byzantine Empire," for the same Jews who previously had feared to breathe a word of their Messianic hopes now boldly avowed their aspirations.

68. Kobez, IV, p. 39

69. The reference to a like occurrence in the letter dispatched to the ten tribes by the Ashkenazic community in Palestine in 1831 seems to be to this same event. cf. Kobez, IV, 53-54.
70. Kobez, IV, p. 10.
71. Adler, Marcus N., The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, in J.Q.R., O.S., Vols. XVI, XVII, XVIII, and also published separately, London, 1907; Adolf Asher, The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, London, 1840-1841.
72. Adler, Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, Introd., pp. xii-xiii: "It is not unlikely that Benjamin may have undertaken his journey with the object of finding out where his expatriated brethren might find an asylum. It will be noted that Benjamin seems to use every effort to trace and to afford particulars of independent communities of Jews who had chiefs of their own, and owed no allegiance to the foreigner." Benjamin is naturally interested in reports of such communities, as any Jew in those days or to-day would be, but there is no reason to assume that the reason which Adler assigns to him was the exclusive, or even the foremost reason for his ~~making~~ making his trip. What his reason was, we do not know.
73. Asher, Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, p. 83.
74. Lazer, Hidos, pp. 36, 37, refers this story of the four tribes to an independent community of Jews residing in the mountains of Afghanistan.
- ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~. There is a widespread tradition that independent Jewish tribes were to be found in Khorasan until recent times. E.N. Adler, Jews in Many Lands, Phila. 1905, pp. 177-178, says: "They (the Jews of the Caucasus) told me that they talked Persian because they were the descendants of the Tribes of Israel whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had carried away captive.....the tradition is widespread among the Persian Jews and in the Caucasus that there have been many

independent tribes until recent years. I was told that in an Armenian monastery near Kutais ancient records are preserved which conclusively prove that Jews were paramount in the country three or four centuries ago." Graetz, Eng. Trans., III, pp. 433-434, also refers this story of Benjamin's to Khorasan.

75. These Kofar al Turak are beyond doubt identical with the so-called subjects of Prester John. In about the year 1125 a Chinese prince, who called himself Gur Khan, was driven from China, gathered an army and advanced westward and defeated the Shah of Persia near Samarkand, in September, 1141. The hosts of the Gur Khan are, called by Moslem historians, Al-Turk-al-Kuffar, i.e., the infidel Turks. They are also called the Ghuzz Turks. Henry Yule, Encyc, Brit., XXII, p. 305.

76. This is Adler's reading; Asher omits the word למא.

77. ויסמך למק פנים פה גבול. ויוס למי למא אלו לעזק אלו מלחמה ופא
גילת לא מאי מלחמה פנים כי הכסוף אל מוק אימי מאי מלחמה ואם נלחמים
אם כי אני אקח נקמי ואפוא את כל היבואים אל הכל מלחמי כי אני יודע כי
אם חקקים ומי חקק פנים ויבואים אלה ויבואים אלה ויבואים אלה ויבואים
למק פנים הלוי היבואים אל המלחמה.

Asher, Itinerary of Benjamin, p. 86.

78. In 1153 the Seljuk Sultan Sinjar Shahin-Shah undertook an expedition against the Ghuzz Turks. Graetz, III, pp. 433-434.

79. Asher, pp. 70-72.

80. Powerful Jewish tribes were settled in Yathrib, afterwards called Medina, and in the highlands of Khaibar and Teima, in north and middle Arabia. They were crushed by Mohammed. Information respecting Jewish sites in this region is meagre. In 1762 we have a report that there were still wild Jews in the Arabian peninsula. Adler, J.Q.R.,

O.S., Vol. XVII, p. 770, note 5.

81. Neubauer, J.Q.R., O.S., I, 191 reads כ"ט כ"ה, and Adler, J.Q.R., O.S., XVII, p. 762, reads כ"ה. In 1836 a missionary, Joseph Wolf, visited Arabia and made a fantastic report of an interview he had with some Rechabites.

82. Asher, pp. 70-72: ובלתיים לשלון לל וליה הך לאנץ גרמק עס בני ערה
לכניהם, הלי גרמק, וכל לכה היבאים גפחיוס גרמק, והפס ערבי אבוק
לכלי גרמק ואנזם רחמתי יבוס, ונחמתי עשור מכל אלז אפס אלהי גרמק
פולסיוס גמיר אביה גרמק ונחמתי ישרא אפולסיוס אלהי ציון ואלי יחלליס אין
אנליס הלז ואין למתי יין אפס אלהים פקדים למתיס אפס יולסיוס גמחול אן גמחול
גרמק (גרמקיס גמחולס) גמחולס ונחמתי כל ימי חייוס חולץ מן גמחול
לימיס גמחולס גמחולס גמיר רחמיס אפס הלז אל קול ישרא ליחמס אפס גמחול
גרמק אפס אל כל היבאים אנליס אפס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס יבוס
לס גמחול גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול
לגמחולס גמחול אפס גמחול קרמק גמחולס אפס גמחול אפס גמחול
היבאים היבאים גמחול.

83. Asher, p. 72: לאנזים בני אבס לסס גמחול אפס גמחול
לגמחולס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול
לאין אבס יבוס ליכנס אפס, למחולס אפס גמחול אפס גמחול.

84. Adler, p. 31.

85. *ibid.*, p. 54.

86. A. Kahana, ספרות דמסאריה הישראליה, Vol. I, p. 226: א/ב כללי
בגמחולס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול
אפס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול אפס גמחול.

87. Neubauer's reason for doubting the statements of Lorca and Yagel is that "it is most unlikely that Maimonides, who was so cautious concerning the Messianic advent, as can be seen from his letter addressed to the congregation of Yemen, should have made any definite statement about

great detail, due to the fear that it might be intercepted by Christian authorities.

97. Kobez, IV, p. 46.

98. *ibid*, pp. 46-50.

99. אין חזק חזק רוב ואז יבטחם לקם חכם שלא מביאם עס פיהבויס
אלו אין חזק ומספר רוב אנהאויס עס פיהבויס וואס וואס אנהאויס פיהבויס
אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס
Kobez, IV, p. 47. Compare the policy of this king with that of Fobiedonostsev,
in Russia, toward the end of the past century.

100. The letter goes on to tell of many signs and wonders in Jerusalem in 1454, miraculous voices from heaven, the לער פיהבויס of the temple area has risen six cubits, many strange dreams have been reported, etc. בעלזק כי מעמד יל אלו נלמד אנהאויס סיני פיהבויס
ביקחם הוא אנהאויס אנהאויס פיהבויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס
Kobez, IV, p. 48. But the Jews who live in Christian and Moslem lands will

not live to see the redemption unless they mend their ways, for they
will be destroyed in the wars between Christianity and Islam that
are in process. There follows an appeal for righteous living, an
account of the hardships of the Jews of Jerusalem, and an appeal
for funds. The letter closes with a reiteration of the statement
that the redemption is near.

101. ראוי ככה אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס
אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס
אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס
his comment of Jer. iii:14, "לא אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס אנהאויס"

102. See Sir Henry Yule's article in the Encyclopedia Britannica,

eleventh edition, Vol. XXII, pp. 304 ff., and the works of X Zarncke and Oppert on Prester John. Jewish writers agree that the details of the Prester John legend were strongly influenced by the stories of the ten tribes which were popular in Jewish and Christian circles, and in particular by the account of Eldad Ha Dani. A conscious effort was made by Christian apologetes to counteract the effect of the stories of Jewish independence and glory in distant lands, (cf. the suppression of the pamphlet Israel's Glory by the Polish clergy in the seventeenth century, see p. 69 above; ^{see also p. 55 top.}) stories which were generally accepted as true, by ascribing to the Christian monarch even greater glory and power, and by making the admittedly powerful Jewish kingdom subservient to the greater power of Prester John. See Lazer, Hidos, pp. 27-36; Epstein, Eldad, Introd., p. xxiii; Muller, Recensionen, pp. 4-8, where he presents some parallels between the Prester John letters and the Eldad account; note the frequent references to Prester John in the Jewish accounts of the ten tribes.

103. J.Q.R., O.S., I, pp. 192-193; and Kobez, IV, p. 14.

104. ~~ibid.~~ J.Q.R., O.S., I, p. 193; Kobez, IV, p. 19.

105. Kobez, IV, p. 66.

106. J.Q.R., O.S., I, pp. 195-196.

107. A. Neubauer, Zwei Briefe Obadiah's aus Bertinoro aus dem Jahre 5248 und 5249, in the Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Juden und des Judentums, Vol. III, pp. 193ff., Leipzig, 1863.

108. published by Dr. Alexander Marx, Israel's Glory, Vol. II-III, pp. 97-99.

109. Part IV, #219; cf. Lazer, Hidos, p. 32.

110. R.E.J., 1922, pp. 153-154.

111. This is one reason which leads Dr. Mann to surmise that this pamphlet was printed before 1492.

112. Gen. xxv:13, two sons of Ishmael.

112a. For a brief account of the especially unsettled conditions in Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century, which made it possible for David Reubeni to arouse so much interest in his project see A.H. Silver, *Messianic Speculations in Israel*, N.Y. 1927, pp. 110-116.

112b. — לְבָרַת הַיְּהוּדִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ אֲשֶׁר הִנָּחֵם הוּא קִרְיָהּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּהַלְלָתוֹ אֲנִי
מַגִּיד לְכָל אֶחָד מִכֶּם שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה שָׁמַיְמָה וְכִי שָׁמַיְמָה שֶׁלֹּא יָמִים וְלַיְלִים אֵל הַגָּדוֹל
אֵלֶּיךָ וְאֵל אֶתְרֵי בְּרִיָּהּ בְּכָל־הַיָּמִים עָדָה יִשְׁמַח הַלֵּל קִבֵּל כְּמוֹת הָאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי אֲפֻסִּים
בְּמֵאן אֲנִשְׁמֵם חֲלֻמִּים מְלֻמִּים בְּרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים וְכִי קִבֵּל אֵל פִּדְיוֹן וְכִי
בְּרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּמֵאן הַקָּדוֹשׁ אֲנִי אֶפְדֶּה אֶתְרֵי בְּרִיָּהּ אֲנִי אֶפְדֶּה אֶתְרֵי בְּרִיָּהּ
וְכִי אֵל אֶתְרֵי בְּרִיָּהּ אֲנִי אֶפְדֶּה אֶתְרֵי בְּרִיָּהּ אֲנִי אֶפְדֶּה אֶתְרֵי בְּרִיָּהּ
אֲנִי אֶפְדֶּה אֶתְרֵי בְּרִיָּהּ, ch. 14, end.

See

112c./ Eduard Biberfeld, *Reisebericht des David Reubeni*, Berlin, 1892; A. Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, Vol. II, pp. 132-223.

113. "The intercourse of Pope Clement VII and Joao III, the king of Portugal, with David Reubeni would be absolutely inexplicable, unless we assumed that the belief in the reality of the ten tribes had been long fostered in the Church by traditions already become venerable..... The existence of Prester John and his Christian realm was credited, and faith in the Jewish kings of the ten tribes and their formidable power was a correlative of this belief."

Kaufmann, J.Q.R., O.S., IV, p. 504.

"This would make intelligible Abraham Yagel's statement that Clement VII not only entered personal communication with David Reubeni, but equipped an expedition for the discovery of the ten tribes." *ibid*, p. 506.

coast of Malabar, where a Jewish community, headed by the Rabban family, existed for many centuries, see pp. 81ff. above. During the first quarter of the sixteenth century this colony was threatened by the growing Mohammedan power in Malabar and by the incursions of the Portuguese. "The Jewish raj or malik had sent his brother David to Europe to negotiate for aid against the Moslems. He was evidently the David Reubeni who appeared in Rome in March 1524.... Historians have called him an impostor. E.N. Adler rightly calls this a very cheap assumption, and observes that his name seems to have been Rabbani, altered by a sixteenth century interest in the lost ten tribes and a desire to make this Jewish "royal family" spring from the first-born of Israel." In 1524 the Moslems stormed the Jewish quarter of Cranganore, razed it, killed many Jews and drove the rest out, while the Portuguese strengthened their Cranganore fort and compelled the Jews to abandon their ancient trading privileges. A.H. Godbey, *The Lost Tribes, a Myth*, Duke University, 1930, p. 353.

If this last assumption is correct Reubeni's position was a singularly tragic one, for while he was carrying on his negotiations in Europe his people was being destroyed. However, this assumption neglects Reubeni's avowed purpose, not to defend his own country, but to attack the Moslem power in Palestine. Further, his description of his journey from his land to Europe makes it improbable that he came all the way from Malabar. (Abraham Ferissol locates the

7/26 in Asia Major near Jedda, see p. 46 above.)

126. This makes twelve tribes all told!

127. David evidently considered that the ten tribes had not been lost in a body at all, but still were joined to the other two.

128. This reference to the Bnai Moshe occurs only once in his enumerations of the tribes, and is probably a later interpolation.
129. Reubeni places the balance of the twelve tribes near his country; see notes 126 and 127.
- 129a. 1922, pp. 148-154, Glanures de la Gueniza, 1. A propos des dix tribus perdues, A.
130. The letter seems to have had here an account of the Bnai Moshe.
131. Dr. Mann calls attention to the fact that the writer naively admits that only these two and a half tribes remain!
132. cf. Yoma 52b.
133. Dr. Mann places this on the route from the Hedjaz to Mecca.
134. Chapters 15 and 24.
135. In his *ספר פתח חן*, Lemberg, n.d., p. 52.
136. Published by Neubauer in Kobez, IV, pp. 24-37.
- 136a. *J. Q. R., O.S., I, p. 200*
137. *ibid*, pp. 35-36.
138. *See p. 141 below.*
- 138a. Neubauer, J.Q.R., O.S., I, p. 200, takes this to be Sebaste (Sichem).
139. Neubauer, *ibid*, suggests that this may have been a reference to the prophet Elijah.
140. Neubauer, *ibid*, suggests that this David is none other than David Reubeni. This letter was copied by a scribe, Judah b. Solomon De Blanche (? *דוד בן שלמה*) in Castello, on the 28th of Ab, 5283-1523, (Kobez, IV, p. 36), when Reubeni was in Palestine. Perhaps this is one of the letters which brought the news of Reubeni's arrival in Palestine to Italy, to which Abraham Ferissol refers, see p. 46 above.
141. Nine tribes! cf. the letter of Prester John, p. 31 above.
142. J.Q.R., O.S., I, p. 199.

Menahem Man b. Solomon Ha Levi, as from Abraham Ferissol's אברהם פריסול
ספר אברהם, in the name of Isaac Akrish, but I have been un-
able to find it in that book. It is however, to be found in Isaac
Akrish's booklet אברהם אכריש, Constantinople, 1577?

154. cf. the story about Alexander and the Amazons, Tamid 32a.

154a.

cf. similar letter, pp. 28-29 above.

155. Kobez, IV, pp. 50-51.

156. As if these were all conscious fictions! There can be no
doubt that, though among them there were some who consciously in-
vented the stories they told, most of these men sincerely believed
these reports of the ten tribes which they retailed, and that there
was some basis ~~in~~ in fact for most of them, distorted though these
facts became through constant repetition and expansion. It would
be more correct to say that the fictional element of these stories
was the creation not of individuals but of the entire Jewish group,
which read into whatever tales of independent Jewish tribes that
came its way the characteristics it sought in them.

157. J.Q.R., O.S., I, p. 411; Kobez, IV, pp. 37ff.

158. See p. 18 above.

159. J.Q.R., O.S., I, pp. 412-413.

160. Isaiah xlix:9.

161. See note 6 above.

162. See note 113 above. 130.

163. This is highly reminiscent of the theory of the "Mission of
Israel" espoused by the Reform Movement several centuries later.
Even at this early date, this point of view had already gained vogue.
But in another place, Kobez, IV, p. 44, Yagel does not accept the

exile so complacently. He says: "If it is true ^{that} they (the tribes) are powerful and sovereign, why did He not do thus to the dispersed of Judah and Jerusalem, who are equally his children and his inheritance and in whose midst stood his holy temple and palace.....? Why should they be despoiled and plundered in their exile while the others rule independently in their own broad, fat land? Wherein did ~~the~~ we sin more than they?" etc.

164. ~~Kahxxxix~~ J.Q.R., O.S., I, pp. 413 ff.
165. cf. here the story of Benjamin's, p. 21 above.
166. We may unhesitatingly accept the statement of Joshua Lorca,
in the אגרת יבולא לורקי, where he discusses the numerous reports
of the existence of the ten tribes and their prosperity, that have
been brought to Europe, that no one doubts the fact: אלה דברי לאין
האל פלס; quoted from the אגרת יבולא לורקי, ed. Landau,
Antwerp, 1906, p. 3, by A.H. Silver, Messianic Speculation in Israel,
N.Y., 1927, p. 116.
167. See note 175 below.
168. See Lazer, Hidos, pp. 70-71.
169. Gen. xlix:10.
170. Or Gad, according to Lazer, Hidos, p. 73.
171. He is called, "Baruch," "Gad," and "Baruch Gad," in various
versions of the correspondence.
172. He says: בין אנכי ודבי עבדי בק"ק רוקח ראמה צנין אלף נעמה הנה
צירתי חבתי ואקלט ירושלים גולה נעמה מחמולת מנחתם הוחר לאמי בקי בהם מאך
גמתי הקבלת אפסקי הרבנים הנה לאמי האמץ כפי שזכרנו ספר
ספר גזירה, Leghorn, 1799, p. 86, quoted in Edrei, ספר גזירה
נס' , Amsterdam, 1818.
173. See Moses Edrehi, An Historical Account of the Ten Tribes
Settled Beyond the River Sambatyon in the East, London, 1836, p. 55.

174. אמן ספיר , Vol. I, Lyck, 1866, pp. 96a ff.; J.Q.R., O.S., I, p. 416; this letter is also published in מגלה ציון , by Eliakim Carmoly, Brussels, 1841.

175. A lacuna in the text. These are probably the passages to which the Rabbis of Jerusalem who made this copy at the request of R.

Nathan Spiro referred when they wrote in their covering letter:

לפיכך נכון עלהא בהם הלם נאמרין מן הנה המקרא או מנה מקרה נהנה למען
לגלות לא נאכל אפילו חר ניסר כי לש נאמנו בזה צדיקין אכן בהם הנה יקיד אכן
בניא פה כל נהנה אחיין היראליס; מגלה ציון , p. 10.

The letter which Baruch Gad brought to Jerusalem from the Bnai Moshe created a stir such as had not been felt in Israel since the days of the exile. The Messianic movement which stirred Jewry in the three parts of the old world was directly influenced by and an offspring of this letter. Baruch went further than did any of the others who told of the tribes; he brought a message from the tribes that they had heard a Bath Kol from heaven proclaim that the redemption was near. Although the Rabbis of Jerusalem did not copy the message of the Bath Kol, they state specifically in their introduction to the letter that Nathan Spiro, who was carrying the copy with him, would tell orally the words they feared to write, lest they precipitate a crisis among the Messiah-expectant Jews, whose hopes had been continually played upon during the previous century, but not realized, so that they were in a high state of tension. (see p. 61 above.) Their premonition was justified by the ensuing events. R. Nathan probably repeated the dangerous words with a good deal of unction, for who would not gladly carry such good news to suffering Israel? The words יבנה אבנא כי נהר נהבנא , give the secret away, and make evident what the Bath Kol must have proclaimed.

Sabbetai Zevi was twenty when this letter was brought to Jerusalem in 1646. It could not but have affected him, as it did all Jewry. The Zohar had predicted that the redemption would come in 1648. (לגזק ס' ע"ק ה"ל"ח נקוד' ס"ח נ"ל"ח, Lev. xxv:13. The numerical value of נקוד' is 5408, which is the year 1648. Zohar, נ"ח "ד.) But other books had predicted other dates for the redemption and nothing had happened in consequence. If this letter from the Bnai Moshe had not appeared just at this time perhaps nothing out of the way would have occurred now too. Though there is no definite proof, it seems almost certain that the message of the Bath Kol which the Bnai Moshe received, and which Sabbetai Zevi, and indeed, all Jewry, believed implicitly, must have been largely responsible for the movement which he inaugurated.

The redemption did not come in 1648, but Sabbetai Zevi was undaunted. In 1665 he proclaimed himself the Messiah, (the Millenarians in England set the year 1666 as the date of the Millenium), and announced that after he took the crown from the Sultan in Constantinople he would go to the Bnai Moshe beyond the Sambation, and the ten tribes, and bring them to Jerusalem. According to his prophet, Nathan Benjamin Levi, Moses was still alive there; when he was 3300 years old he had married and his daughter, Rebecca, who would be thirteen when Sabbetai would arrive, would become the mate of the Messiah. After the marriage Sabbetai would lead the ten tribes back, riding a lion, and using for a bridle a seven-headed snake. In fact, a rumor was spread that Nathan himself had already set out to gather Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, who would return first, like their ancestors in the days of Joshua, who had been the vanguard of the invasion of Palestine. (Lazer, Hidos, pp. 77-78.

176. Isaiah xlix:9.

Carmoly, 113 1111, pp. 19-20.

179. 700 JK, Vol. I, Lyck, 1866, p. 98a.

181. cf. Lazer, Hidos, p. 81.

182. cf. Lucien Wolf, Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell, Being a reprint of the Pamphlets published by Manasseh ben Israel to promote the Re-admission of the Jews to England, 1649-

1656; London, 1901.

183. *ibid*, p. 53.

184. He translates פ'ד "K", as "the Islands of the West,"
i.e., the West Indies, or America.

185. *ibid*, p. 40.

185a. *ibid*, p. 25.

186. *ibid*, p. 27.

187. *ibid*, p. 39.

188. Manasseh is insistent on this point. He says: "And who knowes but that shortly the truth of that Prognostick may appeare, which our Montezinos learned from the Mohanes ('after we have finished a certain business which we have with the wicked Spaniards, we will bring you out of your bondage, by God's help'; *ibid*, p. 17); answerable to that which Jacobus Verus, an Astrologer of Prague, writ after the apparition of the Comet in Ann. 1618. and dedicated to his Highnesse the Prince Palatine, where he thus discourseth: The Comet going towards the South, doth intimate that the Cities and Provinces which God doth threaten, are those of the West Indies, which shall revolt from the King of Spaine, who will find that losse greather than he imagined, not that the Indians rebell against him of themselves, but that they are prowoked to it being stirred up by others..... Thus far the Astrologer. Our ancient Rabbis say, though we doe not beleeve the Astrologers in all things, yet we doe not wholly reject them, who sometimes tell truth." *ibid*, p. 28.

Manasseh states further that "the shortnesse of time (when we beleeve our redemption shall appeare) is confirmed by this, that the Lord hath promised that he will gather the two Tribes, Jud-

ah and Benjamin, out of the foure quarters of the World..... From whence you may gather, that for the fulfilling of that, they must be scattered through all the corners of the World; as Daniel saith, Dan. 12. 7. 'And when the scattering of the holy people shall have an end, all these things shall be fulfilled.' And this appeares now to be done, when as our Synagogues are found in America." *ibid*, p. 52.

More specifically and definitely, Manasseh states, "Yet this I can affirm, that it (the fifth monarchy) shall be about the end of this age." "though we cannot exactly shew the time of our redemption, yet we judge it to be near." *ibid*, p. 46.

For a description of the conditions in England which made for a special interest in Manasseh's theories, see Wolf, Introduction to his book; and A. M. Hyamson, ~~English Literature~~ The Lost Tribes and the Influence of the Search for them on the Return of the Jews to England, in J.Q.R., O.S., XV, pp. 640-676.

189. "A Declaration to the Common-wealth of England, by Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel, shewing the Motives of his Coming into England," Wolf, p. 79.

190. *ibid*, pp. 81ff.

191. Max Schloessinger, *op. cit.*, p. 109, note 3,

192. S. M. Perlmann, The History of the Jews in China, London, 1913; a community of Jews has existed in China for a very long time, in the cities of Kai-fung-foo, in the province of Honan, Ning-po, Hong-chen, etc. Kai-fung-foo seems to have had the oldest settlement. This community, while maintaining its Jewish identity, became thoroughly integrated into the life of the country, so that we hear of some of ^{its members} ~~them~~ occupying prominent public offices, such as judges,

governors, generals, etc. Not until quite recently has this Jewish community drifted from Judaism, so that to-day but a mere vestige remains of this ^{once} large and tenacious group. Perlmann, p. 28ff., expresses his opinion that "the very first Jews who came to China ^{now lost} were a part of the exiles of the ten/tribes of Israel."

M. N. Adler, Chinese Jews, London, 1900, p. 6, says, "It is not impossible that sections of the ten tribes of Israel may have found their way to China, as we believe they did find their way to Cochin China." cf. pp. 70ff. above.

193. The following quotation, from the book פ'נא ופ'נא, written in Adrianople, 1701, and printed in Venice, 1707, taken from Edrei's Historical Account, p. 152, while thoroughly orthodox, injects a unique note into the discussion of the ten tribes. "We ought to make diligent search and enquiry concerning the Ten Tribes and their king, and to ascertain, if possible, in what province or city they are to be found, or what part of the world they inhabit. And in stating any particular spot where traces of them may be met with, it will be necessary to be extremely cautious, and we must be careful to bring proofs of our assertions; and those proofs also must be clear and distinct, on account of the great disposition to unbelief that so generally prevails."

194. ~~after~~ follows 195.

195. See Appendix A. M.N. Adler, Chinese Jews, p. 14, testifies, "I found among the Mss. in the British Museum an elaborate letter written in elegant Hebrew by the Haham Isaac, the son of the well-known David Nieto, dated Adar 1, 5520-1760," addressed to the Jews of China. He, too, says that he has been unable to find the answer which Moses Edrei mentions.

194. M. Edrei, An Historical Account of the Ten Tribes, pp. 183-191. It is of interest to note that this book, published in 1836,

and containing a translation of the author's פ'אן ארץ ירו , Amsterdam, 1818, with additional material, contains a list of subscribers (pp. 279-290) of 1044 names, only 45 of which (such names as Levy, Cohen, Lindo, Furtado, Da Costa, Azuelo, Jacobs, etc.) seem to be Jewish. This is a fair indication of Christian interest in the lost tribes.

196. Printed at the end of part I of the Prague, 1793, edition of Ferissol's פ'אן ארץ ירו , under the title ארץ ישראל .

197. J.J.Benjamin II, Eight Years in Asia and Africa, Hanover, 1859, p. 148, says, "The origin of this tribe (Kanarinz) is uncertain. I venture to start the notion that it is a remnant of the banished ten tribes of Israel, which, in the course of centuries, and under the most contrary circumstances, has forgotten its Israelitish origin." As if there weren't already too many such notions circulating as half-truths! But why shouldn't he have his fling too?

198. Wessely notes that the exodus occurred in 2448 A.M. The traditional date of the exodus, however, is 2540 A.M. But if we follow this date, all the dates in the chronicle are thrown off and become impossible. I have therefore followed in the text the calculation specified by Van Dort.

199. Lazer, Hidos, p. 64, brands this chronicle as a forgery. The order of the books mentioned is according to the Christian Bible: the division of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra, and the chapter divisions are late and of Christian origin, and were not accepted by the Jews until the era of printing began; etc. A.H.Godbey, The Lost Tribes, A Myth, pp. 349ff., states that Yemenite influence prevails among the Jews of Cochin, who are supposed to have originated with the arrival of a colony of seventy-two families under the

leadership of Joseph Rabban. The arrival of this colony ~~in~~ has been assumed by some writers to be the beginning of Jewish settlement in Cochin. Four copper plates (which still exist) granting various privileges and powers to Joseph Rabban and his descendants do not connect him with Yemen; do not even hint at the arrival of a colony; and deal with very old established trading points or corporations, the principal one being Anjuvannam, "The Five Castes", the honors and privileges of which are conferred on Joseph Rabban. The date of this grant is set at either 231, or 378 C.E. A certain autonomy existed after this among the Cochin Jews; Rabbani remained the name of the ruling family, with the title of raj or malik. In 1524 the Moslems destroyed the Jewish quarter of Cranganore, and drove the Jews out. Elkan Adler suggests that David Reubeni was really a Rabbani, see note 125 above.

Jacob Sapir, who visited Cochin, reported that David Shem Tob Halegvi, evidently related to the Joseph Hlagv of the chronicle, had in his possession a Chronicle of the Jews of Cochin, prepared by David Rachby in about the year, 1690. This chronicle states that the Jews first came to Malabar after the destruction of the second temple, and that there were later additions. It makes no mention of Joseph Rabban having come to Cochin with ^seventy-two families, though it mentions the tablets inscribed^d with the privileges accorded to him. See *PK*, Vol. II, Mainz, 1874, pp. 60-62.

200. Cf. David Rachby in note 199; these two are probably of the same family.

201. M. Edrei, Historical Account, p. 158.

202. There is a statement in the נחמן מברסלב (Nahman of Bratslaw) ix:2, that there are twelve gates of prayer, one for each tribe.

The Chassid must go to the Tsaddik when he offers his prayers, for he himself does not know which tribe he is descended from, and therefore he doesn't know the proper gate for his prayer; only through the Tsaddik, who does know the tribal ancestry of each Jew, can his prayer hope to find the proper gate and thus enter heaven. R. Nahman implies here that the ten tribes are not lost, but mixed among the Jews in the Diaspora. The continual reference is to twelve gates, twelve tribes, etc., and not once does he mention two tribes.

The Jews of Poland have for a long time had a legend to the effect that the members of the ten tribes are "red". The origin of the legend of the "Red Jews" is unknown. cf. Lazer, Hidos, pp. 79-80.

203. A.B.Makover, Mordecai M. Noah, N.Y., 1917, p. 55.

204. see p. 18 above.

205. J.Q.R., O.S., I. p. 4;8, makes this shepherd out to be a Danite.

206. Sapir, *נחמיה*, Vol. I, Lyck, 1866, pp. 93a-95b. Neubauer's account in J.Q.R., O.S., I, pp. 417ff., is confused. Neubauer confuses this Baruch with Baruch Gad, who had similar adventures two centuries previous, and runs together his account of the letter which the earlier Baruch carried from the Bnai Moshe to Palestine and the letter which the present Baruch carried from Palestine to the Bnai Moshe. Neubauer differs in many details from the account in *נחמיה*, from which his summary is evidently taken. The letter which Baruch carried to the tribes is printed in Kobez, IV, pp. 52-59 and Carmoly, *נחמיה*, pp. 21-46. This letter is addressed to the ten tribes, the Bnai Moshe, and the Rechabites. It is dated Rosh Hodesh Marheshvan, 1831, and is signed by R. Israel, for the community at large, R. Aryeh, for Jerusalem, R. Hayim

David Hakoton, for Tiberias, and R. Abraham Dov Ber, for Safed. The letter mentions Eldad Ha Dani; the event in Germany during the period of the Crusades when a member of the tribes saved the Jewish community of Germany by the use of superior witchcraft, see p. 18 above; David Reubeni; and finally an occurrence of two years previous when two meshulachim had met in Yemen a Danite named Issachar, who told them of his tribe, and then disappeared. The letter goes on to speak of the persecutions of European Jewry, and the great suffering which it must endure, and asks the king of the tribes to come to the help of his brethren.

207. M. Edrei, Historical Account, pp. 181-182.

208. Lazer, Hidos, pp. 69-70.

209. *ibid*, p. 83.

210. Sapir, ספיר , Vol. I, pp. 95b-96a.

211. *ibid*, p. 96a.

212. Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, 1917, # 10: "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this (the American) continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory."

213. A.H. Godbey, The Lost Tribes, A Myth, p. 253.

138. ספיר , "Romulus, a mythical personage, representative of wickedness, answering to the Christian anti-Christ." Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud, etc. The Messiah will overpower Armilus before he ushers in the Messianic age!

16. Addition: Lazer, Hidos, pp. 15ff. discusses a theory of S.J. Rappaport's which connects the Bnai Moshe, the Kenites, and the Rechabites. See also Ginzberg, Legends, VI, p. 409.

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