



“The Kittim and the Historical Context of the War Scroll”

Oren Ableman

Kittim in the Hebrew Bible (non-eschatological contexts)

Genesis 10:4 (=1 Chronicles 1:7)

וּבְנֵי יָוָן אֵלִישָׁה וְתַרְשִׁישׁ כְּתִים וְרֹדָנִים:

The descendants of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, **Kittim**, and Rodanim.

Isaiah 23:1

מִשָּׂא צָר הֵילִילוּ | אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ כִּי־שָׁדַד מִבַּיִת מִבּוֹא מֵאַרְץ כְּתִים נִגְלָה־לָמוֹ:

The oracle concerning Tyre. Wail, O ships of Tarshish, for your fortress is destroyed.

When they came in from **Cyprus** they learned of it.

Isaiah 23:12

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא־תוֹסִיפִי עוֹד לְעֹלֹז הַמַּעֲשָׂקָה בְּתוֹלַת בַּת־צִידוֹן כְּתִים קוֹמִי עֲבְרִי גַם־שָׁם לֹא־יִנּוּחַ לָךְ:

He said: You will exult no longer, O oppressed virgin daughter Sidon; rise, cross over to **Cyprus** — even there you will have no rest.

Jeremiah 2:10

כִּי עֲבְרוּ אֵי כְּתִים וְרָאוּ וְקָדַר שְׁלָחוּ וְהִתְבּוֹנְנוּ מֵאֵד וְרָאוּ הֵן הִיְתָה כְּזֹאת:

Cross to the coasts of **Cyprus** and look, send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing.

Ezekiel 27:6

אֵלּוֹנִים מִבָּשָׁן עָשׂוּ מִשׁוֹטֵיךָ קַרְשֵׁךָ עֲשׂוּ־שֵׁן בַּת־אֲשֵׁרִים מֵאֵי כְּתִים:

From oaks of Bashan they made your oars; they made your deck of pines from the coasts of **Cyprus**, inlaid with ivory.



Kittim in Second Temple Literature

1 Maccabees 1:1

Καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ πατάξαι Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Φιλίππου Μακεδόνα, ὃς ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ γῆς **Χεττιμ**, καὶ ἐπάταξεν τὸν Δαρεῖον βασιλέα Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν ἀντ' αὐτοῦ, πρότερον ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

After Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came from the land of **Kittim**, had defeated King Darius of the Persians and the Medes, he succeeded him as king. (He had previously become king of Greece.)

1 Maccabees 8:5

καὶ τὸν Φίλιππον καὶ τὸν Περσέα **Κιτιέων** βασιλέα καὶ τοὺς ἐπηρμένους ἐπ' αὐτοὺς συνέτριψαν αὐτοὺς ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ κατεκράτησαν αὐτῶν·

They (= *the Romans*) had crushed in battle and conquered Philip, and King Perseus of the **Macedonians** (*Gr: Kittim*), and the others who rose up against them.

Jubilees 24:28-29

28. And Isaac on that day cursed the Philistines and said: 'Cursed be the Philistines unto the day of wrath and indignation from the midst of all nations; may God make them a derision and a curse and an object of wrath and indignation in the hands of the sinners the Gentiles and in the hands of the **Kittim**.

29. And whoever escapes the sword of the enemy and the **Kittim**, may the righteous nation root out in judgment from under heaven; for they shall be the enemies and foes of my children throughout their generations upon the earth.

Jubilees 37:10

And there came to them from Moab and from the children of Ammon, those who were hired, one thousand chosen men, and from Philistia, one thousand chosen men of war, and from Edom and from the Horites one thousand chosen fighting men, and from the **Kittim** mighty men of war.

Josephus Antiquities 1.128

Χέθιμος δὲ **Χέθιμα** τὴν νῆσον ἔσχε, Κύπρος αὕτη νῦν καλεῖται, καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς νῆσοί τε πᾶσαι καὶ τὰ πλείω τῶν παρὰ θάλατταν **Χέθη** ὑπὸ Ἑβραίων ὀνομάζονται: μάρτυς δέ μου τῷ λόγῳ μία τῶν ἐν Κύπρῳ πόλεων ἰσχύσασα τὴν προσηγορίαν φυλάξαι: **Κίτιον** γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐξελληνισάντων αὐτὴν καλεῖται μηδ' οὕτως διαφυγοῦσα τοῦ **Χεθίμου** τὸ ὄνομα.



Cethimus possessed the island **Cethima**: it is now called Cyprus; and from that it is that all islands, and the greatest part of the sea-coasts, are named **Cethim** by the Hebrews: and one city there is in Cyprus that has been able to preserve its denomination; it has been called **Citius** by those who use the language of the Greeks, and has not, by the use of that dialect, escaped the name of **Cethim**.

Kittim in the Hebrew Bible (eschatological contexts)

Numbers 24:15-24

וַיֵּשֶׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר נֹאם בְּלִעַם בְּנֹו בְּעֹר וַנֹּאם הַגִּבֹּר שְׁתֵּם הָעֵינַן: נֹאם שִׁמְעֵ אִמְרֵי־אֵל וַיִּדְעַ דְּעַת עֲלִיֹן מַחֲזֵה שְׂדֵי יַחֲזֵה נִפְל וּגְלוֹי עֵינַיִם: אֲרָאֲנֹו וְלֹא עֵתָה אֲשׁוּרְנֹו וְלֹא קְרוּב דְּרִדְךָ בּוֹכָב מִיַּעֲקֹב וְקָם שִׁבְט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וּמַחֲחִן פְּאֲתֵי מוֹאָב וְקִרְקֹר כָּל־בְּנֵי־שֵׁת: וְהָיָה אֲדֹום יִרְשָׁה וְהָיָה יִרְשָׁה שְׁעִיר אִיבֵי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשָׂה חֵיל: וַיִּרְדְּ מִיַּעֲקֹב וְהָאֲבִיד שְׂרִיד מַעִיר: וַיִּרְא אֶת־עַמְלֶק וַיֵּשֶׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר רֵאשִׁית גֹּזִים עַמְלֶק וְאַחֲרֵיתֹו עַדִּי אֲבַד: וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַקֵּינִי וַיֵּשֶׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵיתֹן מוֹשְׁבֶךָ וְשֵׁים בְּסַלְעַ קַנְזֶךָ: כִּי אִם־יְהִיָּה לְבַעַר קִינֹו עַד־מָה אֲשׁוּר תִּשְׁבְּךָ: וַיֵּשֶׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֹוִי מִי יַחֲזֵה מִשְׁמֹו אֵל: וְצִים מִיַּד כְּתִים וְעֲנֹו עֲבָר וְגַם־הוּא עַדִּי אֲבַד:

So he uttered his oracle, saying: “The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is clear, the oracle of one who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, but with his eyes uncovered: I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near — a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites. Edom will become a possession, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly. One out of Jacob shall rule, and destroy the survivors of Ir.” Then he looked on Amalek, and uttered his oracle, saying: “First among the nations was Amalek, but its end is to perish forever.” Then he looked on the Kenite, and uttered his oracle, saying: “Enduring is your dwelling place, and your nest is set in the rock; yet Kain is destined for burning. How long shall Asshur take you away captive?” Again he uttered his oracle, saying: “Alas, who shall live when God does this? But ships shall come from **Kittim** and shall afflict Asshur and Eber; and he also shall perish forever.”

Daniel 11:25-35

וַיַּעַר כְּחוֹ וּלְבָבוֹ עַל־מַלְךְ הַנְּגִבַּת בְּחֵיל גְּדוֹל וּמַלְךְ הַנְּגִבַּת יַתְגַּרָּה לְמַלְחָמָה בְּחֵיל־גְּדוֹל וְעֲצוּם עַד־מָאֵד וְלֹא יַעֲמֹד כִּי־יַחֲשָׁבוּ עָלָיו מַחֲשָׁבוֹת: וְאֲכָלִי פֶת־בָּגֹו יִשְׁבְּרוּהוּ וְחֵילֹו יִשְׁטוּף וְנִפְלוּ חֲלָלִים רַבִּים: וּשְׁנֵיהֶם הַמְּלָכִים לְבָבָם לְמַעַע וְעַל־שְׁלֹחַן אֶחָד כָּנָב יִדְבְּרוּ וְלֹא תִצְלַח כִּי־עוֹד קִץ לְמוֹעֵד: וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶרְצוֹ בְּרִכּוּשׁ גְּדוֹל וּלְבָבוֹ עַל־בְּרִית



קָדַשׁ וְעָשָׂה וְשָׁב לְאַרְצוֹ: לְמוֹעֵד יָשׁוּב וּבָא בְּגָב וְלֹא־תִהְיֶה כְּרֹאשׁוֹנָה וְכֹאחֲרֹנָה: וּבָאוּ בּוֹ צַיִים פְּתִיחַ וְנִכְאָה וְשָׁב וְזָעַם עַל־בְּרִית־קֹדֶשׁ וְעָשָׂה וְשָׁב וַיְבֹן עַל־עֲזָבֵי בְרִית קֹדֶשׁ: וְזֹרְעִים מִמֶּנּוּ יַעֲמְדוּ וְחִלְלוּ הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הַמְּעוֹז וְהַסִּירוּ הַתְּמִיד וְנָתְנוּ הַשְּׁקוּץ מְשׁוּמָם: וּמְרִשִׁיעֵי בְרִית יַחְנִיף בַּחֲלֻקוֹת וְעַם יִדְעֵי אֱלֹהֵיו יַחֲזִקוּ וְעָשׂוּ: וּמִשְׁכַּבְלֵי עַם יִבְיִנוּ לְרַבִּים וְנִכְשְׁלוּ בַּחֲרָב וּבַלְּהָבָה בְּשָׁבִי וּבְבִזָּה יָמִים: וּבַהֲפָשְׁלָם יַעֲזְרוּ עִזָּר מַעֲט וְנִלְווּ עֲלֵיהֶם רַבִּים בַּחֲלֻקֻּקוֹת: וּמִן־הַמִּשְׁכַּבְלִים יִכָּשְׁלוּ לְצָרוֹף בָּהֶם וּלְבָרָר וּלְלַבֵּן עַד־עֵת קֵץ כִּי־עוֹד לְמוֹעֵד:

He shall stir up his power and determination against the king of the south with a great army, and the king of the south shall wage war with a much greater and stronger army. But he shall not succeed, for plots shall be devised against him by those who eat of the royal rations. They shall break him, his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall slain. The two kings, their minds bent on evil, shall sit at one table and exchange lies. But it shall not succeed, for there remains an end at the time appointed. He shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. He shall work his will, and return to his own land. At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but this time it shall not be as it was before. For ships of **Kittim** shall come against him, and he shall lose heart and withdraw. He shall be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay heed to those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces sent by him shall occupy and profane the temple and fortress. They shall abolish the regular burnt offering and set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with intrigue those who violate the covenant; but the people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm and take action. The wise among the people shall give understanding to many; for some days, however, they shall fall by sword and flame, and suffer captivity and plunder. When they fall victim, they shall receive a little help, and many shall join them insincerely. Some of the wise shall fall, so that they may be refined, purified, and cleansed, until the time of the end, for there is still an interval until the time appointed.

Daniel 11:40-12:3

וּבָעֵת קֵץ יִתְנַגַּח עִמּוֹ מֶלֶךְ הַנְּגֻב וַיִּשְׁתַּעַר עָלָיו מֶלֶךְ הַצָּפוֹן בְּרִכָּב וּבַפָּרָשִׁים וּבַאֲנָיוֹת רַבּוֹת וּבָא בְּאַרְצוֹת וְשָׁטַף וְעָבַר: וּבָא בְּאַרְץ הַצִּבִי וְרַבּוֹת יִכָּשְׁלוּ וְאַלֵּה יִמְלִטוּ מִיָּדוֹ אֲדוֹם וּמוֹאָב וְרֵאשִׁית בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ בְּאַרְצוֹת וְאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא תִהְיֶה לְפִלִּיטָה: וּמִשָּׁל בְּמִכְמֹנֵי הַזֶּהָב וְהַכֶּסֶף וּבְכָל חֲמֻדוֹת מִצְרַיִם וּלְבָיִם וְכֹשִׁים בְּמַצְעָדָיו: וַיִּשְׁמַעוֹת יְבַהֲלֵהוּ מִמְזֻרַח וּמִצָּפוֹן וַיִּצָּא בַּחֲמָא גְדֻלָּה לְהִשְׁמִיד וְלִהְחָרִים רַבִּים: וַיִּטַע אֱהֲלֵי אִפְדָּנוֹ בֵּין יָמִים לְהִרְצִיב־קֹדֶשׁ וּבָא עַד־קִצּוֹ וְאַיִן עוֹזָר לוֹ: וּבָעֵת הַהִיא יַעֲמֵד מִיכָאֵל הַשָּׁר הַגָּדוֹל הַעֲמֹד עַל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְהִיָּתַח



עַת צָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִהְיֶתָה מֵהַיּוֹת גְּזוֹי עַד הָעֵת הַהִיא וּבֵעֵת הַהִיא יִמְלֹט עִמָּךְ כָּל־הַנִּמְצָא כְּתוּב בְּסֵפֶר: וְרַבִּים
מִיִּשְׁנֵי אֲדָמַת־עַפְרָר יִקְיִצּוּ אֱלֹהִים לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם וְאֱלֹהִים לְחַרְפּוֹת לְדָרְאֹן עוֹלָם: וְהַמְשַׁבְּלִים יִזְהָרוּ כְּזֹהָר הַרְקִיעַ
וּמִצְדִּיקֵי הַרַבִּים כְּכּוֹכְבֵים לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him. But the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. He shall advance against countries and pass through like a flood. He shall come into the beautiful land, and tens of thousands shall fall victim, but Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites shall escape from his power. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the riches of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train. But reports from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to bring ruin and complete destruction to many. He shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with no one to help him. At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Kittim in the Sectarian Texts

Pesher Nahum (4Q169) frg. 3-4 col. 1:1-3

אֲשֶׁר הִלַּךְ אַרְי לְבוֹא שֵׁם גּוֹר אַרְי [זַאֲיִן מַחְרִיד . פִּשְׁרוֹ עַל דְּמִי] טְרוֹס מֶלֶךְ יוֹן אֲשֶׁר בִּקֵּשׁ לְבוֹא יְרוּשָׁלַיִם
בְּעֵצַת דּוֹרְשֵׁי הַחֲלֻקוֹת [וְלוֹא בֵּא כִי לּוֹא נָתַן אֶל אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם] בְּיַד מַלְכֵי יוֹן מֵאַנְתִּיכּוֹס עַד עֲמוּד מוֹשֵׁלִי
כְּתוּבִים וְאַחַר תְּרַמֵּס

Where a lion went to go into it, a lion cub [without anyone confining him. Its interpretation concerns Deme]trius, king of Yavan, who wanted to enter Jerusalem on the advice of the Seekers of Smooth Things [but he did not enter, for God had not given Jerusalem] into the hand of the kings of Yavan from Antiochus up to the rise of the chiefs of the Kittim. But later, it will be trampled



Pesher Habakkuk 3:6-11

וקול מנמרים סוסו וחדו מזאבי ערב פשו ופרשו פרשו מרחוק יעופו כנשר חש לאכול כולו לחמס יבוא
מגמת פניהם קדים פ[שר]ו על הכתיאים אשר ידושו את הארץ בסוס[יהם] ובבהמתם. וממרחק יבואו
מאיי הים לאכול [את] כול העמים כנשר

*Their horses are swifter than panthers; they are keener than wolves at night. Their war-horses paw the ground, gallop, from afar they come flying like an eagle, hastening to eat. All of them come to use violence; their faces ever forward. Its inter[pretation] concerns the **Kittim**, who trample the land with [their] horse[s] and their animals and come from far off, from the islands of the sea, to devour all the nations, like an eagle*

Pesher Habakkuk 4:10-13

פשרו[ע]ל מושלי הכתיאים אשר בעצת בית אשמ[תם] יעבורו איש מלפני רעיהו מושלי[הם] זה אחר זה
יבואו לשחית את הא[רץ]

Its interpretation [con]cerns the chiefs of the **Kittim**, who on the council of [their] house of guilt will pass by one before the other; [their] chiefs, [o]ne after another, will come to raze the la[nd].

Pesher Habakkuk 6:1-8

... הכתיאים ויוסיפו את הונם עם כול שללם כדגת הים. ואשר אמר: על כן יזבח לחרמו ויקטר למכמרתו.
פשרו אשר המה זבחים לאותותם וכלי מלחמותם המה מוראם. כיא בהם שמן חלקו ומאכלו ברי פשרו
אשר המה מחלקים את עולם ואת מסם מאכלם על כול העמים שנה בשנה לחריב ארצות רבות.

... the **Kittim**, and they gather their wealth with all their loot like fish of the sea. And what it says: *This is why he offers sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his trawl.* Its interpretation: they offer sacrifices to their standards and their weapons of war are the object of their worship. *Since by them his portion is fat and his food rich.* Its interpretation: they distribute their yoke and their tribute, which is their food, upon all the peoples, year after year, to lay waste many lands.

War Scroll 1QM col. 1:1-7

1. לִמְ[שכיל סרד] המלחמה. ראשית משלוח יד בני אור להחל בגורל בני חושך בחיל בליעל בגדוד אדום
ומואב ובני עמון 2. וה[... ..] פלשת ובגדודי כתיי אשור ועמהם בעזר מרשיעי ברית. בני לוי ובני יהודה



ובני בנימין גולת המדבר ילחמו במ 3. [לכול גודיהם בשוב גולת בני אור ממדבר העמים לחנות במדבר ירושלים. ואחר המלחמה יעלו משם. 4. וְנִלְחַם מֶלֶךְ] הכתיים במצרים ובקצו יצא בחמה גדולה להלחם במלכי הצפון ואפו להשמיד ולהכרית את קרן 5. וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. והיא עת ישועה לעם אל וקץ ממשל לכול אנשי גורלו וכלת עולמים לכול גורל בליעל. והיתה מהומה 6. גְּדוּלָה] בְּבְנֵי יִפְתָּ ונפל אשור ואין עוזר לו וסרה ממשלת כתיים להכניע רשעה לאין שארית ופלטה לוא תהיה 7. לְכֹל בְּנֵי חוּשֶׁךְ.

For the *M[askil: The Rule of] the War*. The first attack by the Sons of Light will be launched against the lot of the Sons of Darkness, against the army of Belial, against the troop of Edom and of Moab and of the sons of Ammon and [...] Philistia, and against the troops of the **Kittim** of Ashur, with them aid by the violators of the covenant. The sons of Levi, the sons of Judah and the sons of Benjamin, the exiled of the desert, will wage war against them [...] all their troops, when the exiled Sons of Light return from the desert of the peoples to camp in the desert of Jerusalem. And after the war, they shall go up from there. A[nd the king] of the **Kittim** [will wage war] against Egypt. And in his (appointed) period, he will go out with great rage to wage war against the kings of the North, and (in) his wrath to exterminate and cut down the horn of I[srael. And th]is is a time of salvation for the people of God and a period of rule for all the men of his lot, and of everlasting destruction for all the lot of Belial. There will be g[reat] panic [among] the sons of Japhet, Ashur shall fall and there will be no help for him; the rule of the **Kittim** will come to an end, wickedness having been defeated, with no remnant, and there will be no escape for [any of the Sons] of Darkness.

War Scroll 1QM col. 15:1-3

כיא היא עת צרה לישראל [אל ותעו] דת מלחמה בכול הגויים וגורל אל בפדות עולמים וכלה לכול גוי רשעה. וכול [ע]תודין המלחמה ילכו וחנו נגד מלך הכתיים ונגד כול חיל בליעל הנועדים עמו ליום נ[קם] בחרב אל.

For this is a time of turmoil for Isra[el and a servi]ce of war against all the nations. For God's lot there will be everlasting redemption and destruction for all the wicked nations. All those r[eady for] the war shall go and camp opposite the king of the **Kittim** and opposite all the army of Belial assembled with him for the day of ven[geance] by God's sword.