So far in my investigation of M, I have determined that cols. 1–2 form a unified introduction to the rest of the document. Integral to the scroll is that the eschatological war will take place in two stages: the first is a short but violent War against the Kittim in the Land of Israel, fought by the sectarians and others in Judah who have not aligned themselves with the Kittim. In this war, the three restored tribes of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin will still be divided between those faithful to God’s covenant, also called the “people of God” (עם אל), and those who have been unfaithful, namely the “violators of the covenant” (ברית מרשיעי). But this war, as dramatic as it may be, is only a prelude, an event marking the beginning of a new era in Israel’s history, that of the messianic age and the spreading of its universal rule. Having been miraculously established in the Land of Israel as a result of the War against the Kittim, it will then be the Sons of Light’s responsibility to bring it about in the rest of the world by a 33 year-long war of world conquest, the War of the Divisions. I have highlighted that in between the two, drastic changes will take place, two of its most important ones being that Jerusalem will be liberated of its wicked rulers so that proper temple worship can be reinstated, and that Israel’s exiles from all tribes will be gathered into the land, comprising a new and entirely unified “congregation of Israel” (ישראל עדת). A six-year preparatory period will allow the nation to ready itself for the 33 years of wars still to be fought. What was not conquered during that initial battle will be by the time these campaigns are over, establishing Jacob and his seed as God’s chosen, and only, people.

While these first two columns contain significant differences, allowing one to consider the possibility that they may have emanated from diverse sources and were only joined together in a late phase in
the redaction of the composition, it must be noted that they are not contradictory in any way. Differences do not necessarily mean contradiction, especially if, as I suggest, two successive stages in the war are being described. Furthermore, the way the first two columns complement each other is particularly evident in two areas. First, col. 1 makes it clear that the war being described is only a beginning, requiring a continuation, a kind of fulfilling. This matches up with the chronology of the war as described in col. 2, which is missing a beginning, a first stage already concluded. Second, the geography of conquered peoples and nations of the two columns complement each other, forming a single picture, one which is comprehensive of the entire world as seen through the lens of the Table of Nations being applied to an Ionian map. Such complementarity reflects, in my opinion, the effort of a single author. To separate them as if they were the result of a diachronic development in the scroll’s composition is doing injustice to the text. This is not to say that it is impossible for the War of the Kittim and the War of the Divisions to have come from two different traditions which were combined in M. What I am emphasizing here is that cols. 1 and 2 need not have had a separate anterior history so that at some point they needed to be combined. This difference may seem minor, but it is vital for understanding the rest of the scroll, for it implies that these two columns are the only proper foundation upon which the rest of the composition must be interpreted.

My investigation of the other columns in M concluded that cols. 3–9 relate explicitly to the second stage, the War of the Divisions. About this there is no disagreement in scholarship. Similarly, I determined that cols. 15–19 reflect the War against the Kittim and its characteristics. This too has been noticed by all who have studied M. What I have highlighted, however, is that these columns include an innovation that stands in contradiction to the War against the Kittim as described in col. 1: rather than being against the Kittim and their few allies, the battle is now to be a universal one, against all foreign nations.1 Such a war is irreconcilable with either col. 1 or 2.

1 This, in my opinion, is one of the strongest arguments against supposing that col. 1 is the latest phase in the scroll’s history of composition as suggested by Davies (IQM, 113). Such a contradiction between cols. 15–19 and col. 1 preclude