A History of the Jews in Babylonia

I. The Parthian Period

Jacob Neusner

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A HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN BABYLONIA

I. THE PARTHIAN PERIOD

BY

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To

Richard N. Frye

and

Morton Smith

Rātīh i pat gōwišn hān kē hač har frārōn-dānišn u ākāsih i.š mat ēstēt ō arzānīkān āmōzēt...

Est généreux en parole celui qui enseigne à ceux qui en sont dignes toute la sagesse supérieure et toutes les connaissances qu'il a acquises.

Škand Gumanik Vičar I, 50.
Trans. P. J. de Menasce.

By the same author:

A Life of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, Ca. 1-80 C.E., Leiden, 1962: E. J. Brill, Studia Post-biblica VI.

Fellowship in Judaism: The First Century and Today, London, 1963: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd.

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PREFACE

The study of any aspect of Near and Middle Eastern history presents formidable obstacles. The civilizations of the region exhibited both mosaic and palimpsest qualities. An extraordinary variety of peoples, languages, and cultures, both indigenous and imported, flourished side by side. In the long succession of world empires, peoples were shifted from place to place, and new political and cultural forms were superimposed upon antecedent traditions. Questions of origins, influences, and survivals from an earlier period to a much later one require consideration of three thousand and more years of continuous historical settlement. One period cannot always easily be defined apart from, or against, earlier or later ones. Furthermore, few scholars can be prepared to cope with the area over its long development, or, alas, even at a single point in it, for mastery of the languages and literatures indispensable for comparative and integrated inquiry is exceedingly difficult to attain. A careful definition of my purpose will, I hope, sufficiently limit this inquiry to render it both defensible and useful.

Here I begin the task of writing a history of the Jews in Babylonia under the Arsacid and Sasanid empires. My plan is to synthesize existing knowledge of the subject and, at a number of points, to add to that synthesis. Since the Jewish sources (apart from Josephus) are neither widely known nor, by those who know them, historically interpreted, I have not hesitated to cite extensively the relevant Talmudic documents. On the other hand, I have not revised the scholarly consensus on Parthian matters in any significant way, and therefore do not consider in detail numerous, well-known facts, e.g., of Parthian-Roman relations, of Parthian dynastic history, or Parthian and Mesopotamian-Babylonian cultural history. These are cited where relevant, with bibliographical references provided for those who want to pursue such questions further. In general, a knowledge of the works on political history of Wolski, Debevoise, Rawlinson, and (for Palestine), Schürer, and on cultural history, of Rostovtzeff, Tarn, McDowell, Widengren, and Frye, all cited in the bibliography, will be useful to

the reader. I believe that brief citations and summaries of these and other writers will suffice for my purposes. Extensive studies on Jewish history in Parthia simply do not exist. Only a few historians have given serious attention to the Jews in the Parthian empire, and these have mainly ignored Parthian history to concentrate on internal developments. I have found very useful the writings of Yavetz, Halevi, and Zuri and, on specific matters, others such as Brüll and Lazarus, cited below. Since most Jewish historians (Dubnow, Graetz, Weiss, Krauss, etc.) have taken at face value the Talmudic tradition that before Rav came to Babylonia (ca. 220 c.e.), there were no significant religious or cultural developments, and since Halevi, Zuri, and Yavetz do not give coherent and detailed accounts, or discuss the Parthian background of Jewish history, I believe that a contribution to our understanding of Babylonian Jewry in the Parthian period is possible.

In general, my work is in the tradition of several scholars who began approximately thirty years ago to reconsider the whole question of Parthian political and cultural history. Echoing the attitude of the classical historians, earlier scholars had viewed the Arsacid period as one in which declining Hellenistic culture was replaced by decadent barbarism. The Parthians were, in the opinion of earlier writers, never well-governed, if they were governed at all; they added nothing to, and changed nothing in, human civilization. Likewise, Krauss said, the "uncivilized" Parthians "of course" could not influence the religion or history of the Jews in their empire. Rostovtzeff and Tarn first pointed out, however, that the Parthians played an extremely important role in Near Eastern history, and that evidences of an original and creative cultural enterprise are, in fact, available. (We shall return to this question in Chapter One.) Here I want to add to the consensus on Parthia that the history and culture of the Babylonian Jews reveal substantial development under the Parthians, and that Arsacid rule did not mark a period of stagnation, but of considerable creativity among the Jews.

The main reason that Parthia has fared so poorly at the hands of posterity is the paucity of sources. Our information comes mainly from Greek and Latin writers. They were interested in Parthia only at the specific points at which Parthia interested Rome. Their comments on Parthian political and cultural affairs were based not infrequently on second-hand information, occidental disdain for the alien orientals, or Roman political propaganda. Further information, from coins, archaeological remains, and the like, is frequently con-

jectural. There are long spaces of time, for example at the end of the third century b.c.e., and again in parts of the first and second centuries c.e., for which little or no clear information remains. Furthermore the Sasanid Iranians did not choose to preserve traditions on the Arsacids, and the Greek and Parthian sources were irrevocably lost, because no one saw fit to keep them. We know of substantial writings on Parthia, such as those of the "Trogus source" of Justin, Apollodorus of Artemita, Arrian, and Dio, which were available to ancient writers but are not, except in fragments, to us. Those who did preserve literature had little interest in Parthia, and the remains of Arsacid history in the Armenian and Syriac writers do not reflect clear light on Parthia, being garbled and inconsistent.

The same difficulty affects the writing of Jewish history. While I shall try to show that certain limited parts of Talmudic literature originated in Babylonian Jewry during this period, I have otherwise been unable to find any Talmudic sayings, stories, or the like, introduced into Jewish tradition in Babylonia during the Tannaitic period. I had to begin by isolating the names of all Tannaim who had any connection at all with Babylonian Jewry before 226 (in this, Halevi and Zuri were extremely helpful), and collecting all sayings related to them in Talmudic literature. On such a basis, sequential and narrative history is not easily written. Just as the later Iranian traditions denigrated the religious and political achievements of the Arsacids, so the later Amoraic traditions, both in Palestine and in Babylonia, are almost silent on Babylonian Jewry under the Arsacids, though occasionally an extravagant claim, with little to support it, is made in behalf of one or another of the Babylonian Tannaim (Hillel, Hiyya and his sons).

Religions in the Parthian period, specifically, the various types of religion within the Mazdayasnian 'idiom,' have been much discussed, particularly as they allegedly influenced Palestinian Judaism. I do not believe that the influence of Iran on Israelite religion has been definitively delineated. Distinctions between good and evil, light and dark, elaborate angelologies, emphasis on ritual purity, and the like, which we find in Palestinian Jewish sources, may have more than one point of origin. They do not by themselves indicate the presence of Iranian ideas. Furthermore, such questions are mainly important for Palestine, and not for Babylonia, during this period, simply because we know too little about Babylonian Judaism to isolate Iranian elements. Given the ambiguity of the religious evidence, the political and social reconstruction must be prior. What it yields may make possible for the first

time a reliable interpretation of religious data. Therefore, while I have consulted studies on the Jewish response to Zoroastrianism, I have not discussed this matter.

The divisions of this study were imposed by the nature of available information. For the period from the Parthians' conquest of Babylonia, ca. 140 b.c.e., to their brief rule in Jerusalem, ca. 40 b.c.e., there is not a single direct reference to Babylonian Jewry, though considerable information is available about the Parthians in Palestine. I have therefore discussed the few references to relationships between Parthians and Jews, mainly in the west, and tried to infer occasionally what the situation of Babylonian Jewry may have been. The second period, from ca. 40 b.c.e. to the end of the reign of Vologases I, 79 c.e., forms a coherent division. It was marked at the outset by political anarchy, and closed with manifest trends toward the reorganization both of the Arsacid state and of the Jewish community, the latter date coinciding approximately with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. For the third period, from the reorganization of the Arsacid empire to its fall, we have considerable information about the Jews, and are able to follow the growth of both political and cultural-religious institutions. The final chapter traces the growth of Tannaitic Judaism in Babylonia during the same period, providing information on Tannaim who lived there for some part of their lives.

A number of major themes in Parthian-Jewish history emerge clearly. It will be useful to delineate them here, so that the reader will find it easier to follow them in the chapters in which they occur. The first is the theme of the Parthian and Babylonian Jewish *entente cordiale*, beginning in the time of John Hyrcanus at the end of the second century b.c.e., and marked by significant action in the next three centuries. The basis for this apparent agreement is outlined, and its continuing relevance explained, in Chapter One, Section vi; Chapter Two, Section vii; and Chapter Three, Sections i, ii, iii, iv, and v. Its effects will be noted throughout. There can be no doubt whatever that the Parthian government and the Jewish community of Babylonia, and part of that in Palestine as well, worked together consistently, frequently, and in substantial and important ways to oppose Seleucid, and then Roman hegemony in the Mesopotamian valley. The second is the theme of the growth of Jewish institutions of self-government in Babylonia. I propose to date the effective beginning of the institution of the exilarchate in the years following the rise of Vologases I. Before that time, there is evidence that some Jews found a significant place in

Parthian feudal politics. After it, there can be no question that a formal and recognized position was achieved by a Jewish ethnarch. The issue is treated in Chapter Two, Section vii, and Chapter Three, Sections viii and ix, with significant material bearing on the theme in Chapter Two, Sections iii and vii, and Chapter Three, Sections vi and vii. A third continuing theme concerns the complex relationships between the Palestinian Jewish center and the Babylonian diaspora. We must take account of the interests of both communities, both those interests held in common, such as the cult in Jerusalem, study and transmission of the Mosaic revelation, and the profitable opportunities open to an international community settled on both sides of a fluctuating and contested frontier, as well as interests tending to set one group off from the other. These latter include, on the Mesopotamian side, the need to develop autonomous instruments of politics and culture, and to preserve independence, in political matters, from the Palestinians; and on the Palestinian side, the need to enlist the power of the diaspora community in its struggle with Rome, and the absolute determination to exert as much authority and influence as was possible over world Jewry. These themes occur in Chapter Two, Sections i, iv, v, vi, ix; Chapter Three, Sections ii, iv, vi, ix; and Chapter Four, Sections ii, v, and vi. A fourth theme, treated in Chapter One, Sections iii and iv; Chapter Two, Sections iii and viii; and Chapter Three, Sections vi and vii, is the relationship of the Jews to Parthian culture. I have been impressed by the evidences that some Jews in Mesopotamia did, in fact, assimilate aspects of Parthian culture, including its feudal politics, and have considered this evidence whenever it became available. A fifth theme is the gradual, but in the second century c.e. extremely rapid, growth of Pharisaic-Tannaitic Judaism in Babylonia. The central issue recognized by most students of Tannaitic Judaism in Babylonia is whether there was an "Oral Torah" in Babylonia before the coming of Rav. I believe it is here answered definitively in the affirmative. The classical views are traced in Appendix III, and the parallel phenomenon of the spread of Christianity is alluded to in Chapter Two, Section v, and discussed in Appendix II. I am not certain what, exactly, was the content of Pharisaic-Tannaitic Judaism in the Babylonian academies, though in Appendix VII and in Chapter Four, Section vi, a contribution is made toward defining it where possible. There is every likelihood that further study of the legal sayings of Rav and Samuel will yield much more information, though I have postponed that study to a future volume. On the other hand, we have substantial

information on the Tannaim who brought that tradition to the east, and cultivated it there, on the institutions they developed for its transmission, and on some of the students they trained. This information is in Chapter Two, Sections v and vi; Chapter Three, Sections iii, viii, and ix; and Chapter Four, Sections i, ii, iii, iv, and v; and Appendix VII. The reader may find some biographical sections rather tedious; yet I know of no better way of presenting extant information on men than by biographical categories. I wish that it were possible better to integrate this information into the historical narrative, and, of course, considerable biographical data have been so integrated, in Chapter Two, Sections ii, v, vi; Chapter Three, Sections iii, v, vi, viii, and ix; and Chapter Four, Section vi. Yet more of it, perhaps too much, remains discrete. Finally, I must emphasize that substantial discussions are devoted to problems I have been unable adequately to solve; these occur throughout, but notably in Appendices IV and VI.

Having noted the recurrence of these themes, the reader will doubtless ask why the writer chose to present this history chronologically rather than thematically. The answer is that I believe the first task of the historian to be the recovery of order and sequence. An interpretive essay may follow, but at the outset of a new inquiry, one needs to find out *just what happened*, and history is best understood when we see what came first and what came afterward. Nonetheless, I recognize that the reader may not find his task simple. He will find distressingly few final and definitive statements, and a large portion of conjecture, hypothesis, and sheer *post facto* interpretation. Given the nature of the sources, I do not believe I could have done otherwise. We know, as I have said above, very little. When sources are few, conjecture multiplies, as indeed it must. Furthermore, the reader may find tedious the relatively lengthy presentation of relevant Jewish sources, followed by hypothesis and historical interpretation. I could justify no other form. There are two stages in historical inquiry, as in archaeology. The first is to uncover the site; the second, to restore it. These stages must be kept separate, so that the artifacts may be studied and then brought together again, in a state closer to their original and living condition than that in which they were uncovered. In history also one needs to uncover and examine before one is able to restore and recreate. Here I have begun the first stage. I could not have written indicatively, therefore, when my evidence was doubtful and my interpretation of it conjectural, and hence the recurrent use of the subjunctive voice in its many forms. I have tried to find language appropriate to the level of

historical knowledge which I believe to have been reached. There may be better ways, but this is the only one congruent to my understanding of the historian's craft.

I am thankful to the Philip W. Lown Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies at Brandeis University, and to its director, Professor Alexander Altmann, for providing a two-year research associateship in which I was able to complete my research. Dr. Charles Berlin of the Harvard College Library offered important bibliographical assistance, for which I am much indebted. Professors Richard N. Frye, Harvard University, and Morton Smith, Columbia University, gave many critical comments, though whatever deficiencies the study may contain are, of course, mine alone.

Finally, my wife, Suzanne, drew Map I. To her are due thanks for this, and so much else.

JACOB NEUSNER

Hanover, New Hampshire
29 Elul 5724
6 September 1964

CHRONOLOGY

I. To the End of the First Century c.e.

141 b.c.e. – Mithridates I took Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.
129 b.c.e. – John Hyrcanus fought Parthia as an ally of Antiochus VII Sidetes.
122 b.c.e. – Mithridates II established permanently the rule of Parthia in Babylonia.
Ca. 85 b.c.e. – Parthian embassy came to Jerusalem to make an alliance with Alexander Jannaeus against Tigranes II of Armenia.
Ca. 83-69 b.c.e. – Palestine a tributary dependency of Armenia. Tigranes deported Jews from Palestine to Tigranocerta.
53 b.c.e. – Romans defeated decisively by Parthia at Carrhae.
53-50 b.c.e. – Parthian raids on Syria.
40-37 b.c.e. – Parthians took Jerusalem, drove out Herod, and established Antigonus on the throne.
Ca. 35-30 b.c.e. – Hyrcanus returned to Jerusalem from Parthia; Herod appointed a Babylonian Jew as high priest.
Ca. 20-10 b.c.e. – Hillel migrated from Babylonia to Palestine.
Ca. 20-10 b.c.e. – Zamaris and his retainers fled from Parthia, were resettled by Herod in Trachanea, and founded Bathyra.
Ca. 20-35 c.e. – Anileus and Asineus established a Jewish state in Babylonia.[1]
Ca. 30-40 c.e. – Conversion of Adiabene's royal family to Judaism.
Ca. 30-70 c.e. – Judah ben Bathyra (I) lived in Nisibis, collected Temple offerings in northern Mesopotamia as abent of Jerusalem authorities.
Ca. 50 c.e. – Nehemiah of Bet Deli settled in Babylonia.
60 c.e. – Death of Izates, coronation of Monobazes II.
70 c.e. – Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.
79 c.e. – Death of Vologases I.

II. Political Events in the Second Century c.e.

114-117 – Trajan's invasion of Parthia, resisted by Jews throughout northern Mesopotamia, including Adiabene.
129 – Hadrian pacified the Parthian frontier.
132-135 – Bar Kokhba War.

[1] See pp. 61-62.

Ca. 150-155 – Conspiracy of R. Nathan and R. Meir against the Patriarch R. Simeon b. Gamaliel.
161-165 – Vologases III fought a war against Rome, lost Ctesiphon.
193-199 – War of Parthia against Rome.
Ca. 190-200 – R. Ishmael b. R. Yosi and R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon handed over to the Romans Palestinian Jewish "brigands".

III. The Exilarchate in the Second Century c.e.

Ca. 50-79 – Parthian reorganization of the empire, including consideration of the "Jewish question".
Ca. 100-135 – R. Nathan's Father acted as Jewish authority, wearing the kamara.
Ca. 145 – R. Hananiah intercalated the Jewish calendar in Babylonia, forced to retract by the Palestinian patriarch supported by Babylonians.
Ca. 155 – R. Yosi b. Kefar and R. Dosetai b. R. Yannai were forced to submit to the authority of Babylonian Jewish officials bearing Iranian names and wearing Iranian dress.
Ca. 140-170 – Exilarchate of Nahum/Nehemiah/Yohanan/Shafat.
Ca. 170-210 – Exilarchate of R. Huna/'Anan.

IV. Religious and Cultural Events in the Second Century c.e.[1]

[All dates are approximate]

Ca. 70-130 – Hananiah the Nephew of R. Joshua and R. Judah b. Bathyra (II) in Mesopotamia-Babylonia, the former in Nehardea, the latter in Nisibis.
Ca. 135 – Students of R. Akiba fled to Nisibis, studied with R. Judah b. Bathyra for approximately a decade, returned to Palestine Ca. 140-145, participated in the consistery of Usha.
Ca. 135 – Students of R. Ishmael, R. Josiah, R. Jonathan fled to Babylonia, settled in Huẓal and founded an academy there.
Ca. 135-150 – R. Josiah, R. Jonathan, and R. Nathan studied together in Huẓal; beginning of the Mekhilta tractates Pisḥa and Nezikin.
150-160 – Death of R. Hananiah the Nephew of R. Joshua.
160-170 – Death of R. Judah b. Bathyra (II).
160-220 – Huẓal academy continued to flourish; students included

[1] See p. 128.

R. Aḥai b. Josiah, Issi b. Judah, possibly also Yosi b. Kefar, Dosethai b. R. Yannai, R. Ḥiyya, and Rav, and Samuel.

180 – R. Ḥiyya, sons Hezekiah and Judah, nephews Rav and Rabba b. Ḥana migrated to Palestine.

150-230 – Levi b. Sisi and Abba b. Abba, Father of Samuel, flourished.

180-190 – R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama studied in Babylonia with R. Hamnuna Scribe of Babylonia.

217 – Death of R. Judah the Prince.

220-230 – Permanent settlement of Rav in Babylonia.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJSL	=	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
AO	=	Acta Orientalia
ArcO	=	Archiv Orientalni
Bab. Talmud	=	Babylonian Talmud (Sometimes, TB)
BOR	=	Babylonian and Oriental Record
BSOS	=	Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies, London
CAH	=	Cambridge Ancient History
CPJ	=	Corpus Papyrorum Judaicorum, ed. Tcherikover and Fuks
HUCA	=	Hebrew Union College Annual
IA	=	Iranica Antiqua
IEJ	=	Israel Exploration Journal
JA	=	Journal Asiatique
JaJGL	=	Jahrbücher für Judische Geschichte und Literatur
JaJLG	=	Jahrbuch der judisch. Literatur Gesellschaft
JAOS	=	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	=	Journal of Biblical Literature
JE	=	Jewish Encyclopedia
JJS	=	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES	=	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JQR	=	Jewish Quarterly Review
JR	=	Journal of Religion
JRAS	=	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JRS	=	Journal of Roman Studies
MDO	=	Mittel. der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
MGWJ	=	Monatschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums
MO	=	Monde Oriental
MWJ	=	Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums
PAAJR	=	Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research
Pope	=	A. U. Pope, *Survey of Persian Art*, New York, 1938, Vol. I.
REJ	=	Revue des Etudes Juives
RHR	=	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
RSO	=	Revista degli Studi Orientali
WDOG	=	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentl. der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
WZKM	=	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
Yer. Talmud	=	Palestinian Talmud (Sometimes, TP)
ZDMG	=	Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft
ZNW	=	Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

All Hebrw articles are listed by English title, the journal notation indicating that the article appeared in Hebrew. Hebrew journals quoted include the following:

Biẓaron
Ḥoreb
Sinai
Tarbiẓ
Zion (Ziyyon)

The translation of titles of Hebrew books is listed immediately afterward in brackets.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM MITHRIDATES I TO ORODES II
Ca. 140-40 b.c.e.

1. Babylonia

Babylonia was one of the most prosperous regions of the ancient Middle East. The Euphrates-Tigris river system, rising in the Armenian highlands of Asia Minor, assured a constant, if, in the case of the Tigris, turbulent, supply of water. The current of both rivers was swift, the Euphrates dropping 800 feet between Anatolia and the Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Baghdad) region, and the Tigris, nearly 1,000. Both rivers are at their lowest in September and October, and rise from December to the summer months. The lower Mesopotamian valley is extremely flat, alternating between marshland and low mud plains. Much of the region is now undisturbed swamp. Shallow lakes cover a large part of the Babylonian land-area. The climate is intensely hot in summer (May-October), and relatively cold and damp in winter (December-March). During the summer, shade temperatures range from 95 to 120 degrees F., although away from the rivers and lakes, the air is not particularly humid. Rainfall occurs only during the winter.[1]

Agriculture in the area was very prosperous. Babylonia was the granary of the Achemenids, according to Herodotus returning 3000-fold on plantings of barley, and 50 to 150-fold of wheat. It produced in addition millet, sesame, and abundant, nourishing dates. (Today Iraq produces about 80 per cent of the world's supply of dates.) Under the early Achemenids, when the food of the court was supplied by the satrapies in rotation for a ficed portion of the year, Babylonia was assigned four months, and thus was reckoned to produce one third of the entire surplus agricultural yield of the empire.[2]

From the earliest times, the flow of water was controlled for agricultural purposes by an elaborate system of canals, sluices, dams,

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[1] W. B. Fisher, *The Middle East, A Physical, Social, and Regional Geography* (London, 1961), pp. 357-71.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 371-76. George Rawlinson, *Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy* (New York; 1873), pp. 14, 79; and J. Newman, *Agricultural Life of the Jews in Babylonia Between the Years 200 C.E. and 500 C.E.* (London, 1932), *passim.*

embankments, and dikes. Variation in relative level between Tigris and Euphrates made it easy to lead water from the Euphrates to the Tigris in the Babylonian region. Because of spring flooding, the water could not be allowed merely to inundate the land, as in Egypt, but had to be controlled within the river banks by levees. An ancient, elaborate canal system irrigated arid areas, drained water-logged zones, and washed away excessive salinity in the soil.[1]

Natural prosperity resulting from fertile, alluvial soil and abundant water was, moreover, greatly enhanced by the geographical advantages of Babylonia. Numerous trade routes centered in the relatively thin neck of land between the Tigris and Euphrates at Babylon-Seleucia-Ctesiphon. One route emerged from the north-west Euphrates valley, beginning in the Syrian ports and extending over the fertile crescent to Babylonia, and from there to the Iranian plateau and thence to China. Other routes extended to Babylonia from the southern ports on the Indian Ocean. The rivers were navigable for hundreds of miles, though with difficulty during the spring floods, and upstream navigation was not ever possible because of the swift current. Beyond Dura, therefore, the trade routes branched off into the desert, or through Circesium, Nisibis, and Edessa further north. More important, the only really convenient crossing place was at Babylon, for here the extent of marsh-land was somewhat reduced, and the flat and firm steppe provided a useful east-west route. Further, the passes of the Zagros mountains led naturally to the south, where movement was easier, rather than through mountainous Armenia. Thus the Seleucia-Ctesiphon region was particularly important as the junction of east-west, and north, north-east, and southern routes. From the most ancient times, one city after another grew up in succession within a limited area, each serving in its time as emporium and entrepot for great commercial routes.[2] The area was rich in treasure and well watered (Jeremiah 51.13), and supported a large population in conditions of prosperity.

Because of its antiquity and changing fortunes, the region was, by the second century b.c.e., a mosaic of peoples, languages, and cultures.[3] In addition to Jews, who had been exiled there in the sixth century

[1] Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 376-80.

[2] Commercial matters relating to the Jews will be discussed below, Ch. Three, see VI. In general, see Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-87; and for the Jews, J. Newman, *Commercial Life of the Jews in Babylonia Between the Years 200 and 500 C.E.* (London, n.d.).

[3] Victor Chapot, *La Frontière de l'Euphrate de Pompée à la Conquête Arabe* (Paris, 1907), p. 28.

b.c.e., and remained in large numbers, the Babylonian region contained numerous Babylonians, who spoke Aramaic and also (through their priests) preserved Akkadian; Macedonians and Greeks; Syrians, Arabs, and other Semites; Armenians and Iranians; and occasional Indians and Chinese. Many of the cities had largely Hellenized populations, particularly Seleucia, Charax-Spasinu and Artemita; others, particularly Babylon and Uruk, were centers of the ancient Babylonian cuneiform civilization; while still others, particularly Ctesiphon, were populated by great numbers of Parthian government officials, troops and traders. Yet few cities were inhabited by a single ethnic or religious group, and all exhibited a measure of Hellenistic culture; Susa, far to the east, conducted its municipal affairs according to accepted Seleucid forms and in the Greek language long into the Parthian period, while Babylonians, Syrians, Jews, and Greeks mingled in the streets of Seleucia. We know, moreover, that the Greek and native Babylonian elements were intimately intertwined.[1]

II. Survival of Babylonian Civilization

Of the cultural and ethnic groups in Babylonia, the Babylonian-Akkadian was oldest and best established. Numerous business documents, almost all dealing with cultic matters, indicate that the ancient temples preserved the old life, served the ancestral gods, and continued to collect the offerings of the faithful for the support of priests. The city of Babylon itself had gone into a long period of decline after the founding of Seleucia at the end of the fourth century b.c.e., for trade and population centered in the new capital. Yet Babylon itself was inhabited, and Temple priests continued to sacrifice to Bel and Beltis, pray for the king and his sons, and make astronomical observations until the first century c.e. Cuneiform writing was preserved, the last inscription dating from the first century c.e. Chaldean astronomical schools flourished, attracting Greek students as well as others. These schools of Chaldean learning persisted in Hipparene, Orchene, and elsewhere long after the decline of Babylon itself, and the final ruin of the place may be dated no earlier than the first century c.e. One cannot, however, describe the surviving Akkadian civilization as

[1] M. Rostovtzeff, "Seleucid Babylonia," *Yale Classical Studies III* (New Haven, 1932), p. 22. The seal impressions exhibit such a mixture of native and Greek elements, for example. See in particular J. Bidez, "Les Ecoles chaldéennes sous Alexandre et les Seleucides", *Wélanges ffapart*, Brussels, 1935.

vigorous. It mainly consisted of some priests sitting on the ruins in Babylon and Uruk, observing astronomical phenomena and practicing other genres of cuneiform literature. But the contribution of Babylon to the syncretistic civilization of the Middle East was significant. Babylonian astronomy, astrology, mathematics, and medicine were studied and developed by Greek inhabitants of the region, and Babylonian astrology flooded the western world. Jews acquired knowledge of Babylonian law, astronomy, and medicine, and some were impressed also (see below, Chapter Four) with astrology. Palmyra and Dura, in the western desert, exhibited considerable Babylonian influence in architecture and, even more, in religion. Adad and Nanaia were the chief deities of Dura, Bel reached Ecbatana, Palmyra, and Cappadocia, the Babylonian New Year was celebrated at Assur, and popular Mazdaism was influenced by Babylonian ideas. Ahura Mazda was equated with Bel as, elsewhere, he was equated with Zeus. Babylonian culture was also affected by Parthian, for at Uruk, attached to the temple of Anu, was a Parthian chapel, and we know that Antiochus Epiphanes founded a Greek colony, with a theater and gymnasium, and was called "Founder of the City" and "The Savior of Asia," in neo-Babylonian cuneiform texts. Thus he apparently tried to Hellenize Babylon as he did Jerusalem, with what success we do not know. In all, however, Babylon gave more than she received. The Babylonian for the most part preserved his civilization, language, and religion unmodified by Greece or Iran. His was the law in western Asia which was least touched by Greek law, and that law still governed internal commerce. While the Greek system of registration of documents was accepted by Babylonians, Greek commercial vocabulary did not supplant that of Babylon. On the whole, neither Greece nor Iran gave very much to Babylonia, and, though both were in some measure affected by her, the total effect was not great, outside of astrology and other religious matters.[1] When Babylonian civilization at last faded

[1] On Babylonian culture in the Parthian period, see M. Rostovtzeff, "Syria and the East," *Cambridge Ancient History* [hereafter, *CAH*] (Cambridge, 1928), VII, 163-64; Henri Seyrig, "Palmyra and the East," *Journal of Roman Studies*, XL, 1950, pp. 1-8, surveying the Babylonian influence on Palmyrene culture; Theophilus G. Pinches, *The Old Testament* (London, 1902), pp. 474-86; S. A. Pallis, *The Antiquity of Iraq, A Handbook of Assyriology*, pp. 35-6, and on Antiochus' Hellenistic establishment, p. 31; W. W. Tarn, "Parthia," in *CAH*, IX, pp. 596-97; on excavations for the Parthian period, see Oscar Reuther, *Die Innenstadt von Babylon (Merkes)*, WDOG, 47 (Leipzig, 1926); Maximilian Streck, "Seleucia and Ktesiphon," *Der Alte Orient*, XVI, 3/4, 1917, p. 9; R. Koldewey, *Das wiederentstehende Babylon* (Leipzig, 1925); E. Bikerman, *Institutions des Seléucides* (Paris, 1938), p. 176,

away, gradually and imperceptibly, and Babylon had gone back to desert by the time of Pliny the Elder (23-79 c.e.), only the Jews took note of the fact, ni a series of polemical, anti-Babylonian benedictions:

> R. Hamnuna said in a discourse: If one sees the wicked Babylon, he should say five benedictions. On seeing Babylon itself, he says, Blessed be he who has destroyed the wicked Babylon. On seeing [the ruins of] the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, he says, Blessed be he who destroyed the palace of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar. On seeing the lions' den or the fiery furnace, he says, Blessed be he who wrought miracles for our ancestors in this place. On seeing the statue of Hermes, he says, Blessed be he who shows long suffering to those that transgress his will. On seeing the place from which dust is carried away [the ruins were quarried for building materials] he says, Blessed be he who says and does, who decrees and carries out.

Thus the prophecy of the Sibylline Oracle was fulfilled, though less violently than she had predicted:

> Woe unto thee, Babylon and race of Assyrian men, a rushing destruction is coming one day upon the whole land of sinners, and a crash shall destroy the whole country of men... For from the air from above there shall come to thee Babylon... and to the children of wrath eternal perdition. And then thou shalt be as thou wast before, as though thou hadst not been born. And then thou shalt be surfeited with blood, as formerly thou didst thyself spill the blood of good men and just, whose blood even now cries into the farthest heaven...
>
> Woe unto thee Babylon, golden throned and golden sandalled, thou who for many years wast queen, sole sovereign of the world, of old so great and cosmopolitan, no more shalt thou lie on golden mountains and by Euphrates streams. Thou shalt be levelled by an earthquake's shock, and the dread Parthians have made thee rattle through and through...[1]

"The city was mainly a center of Chaldean savants and schools." See also Strabo, *Geography*, XVI, i, 6; Pliny, *Natural History*, VI, 122-23. On Babylonian religious architectural forms in Dura, see Oscar Reuther, "Parthian Architecture," in A. U. Pope, *Survey of Persian Art* (New York, 1938), p. 435. On Babylonian influence on the Greeks, Babylonian law and commercial separatism, and Babylonian contributions to Greek astrology and astronomy, see also W. W. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 55-8; O. Neugebauer, "History of Ancient Astronomy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, IV, 1945, pp. 1-35; on medicine, see Pallis, *op. cit.*, pp. 734-36. Professor J. J. Finkelstein offered useful comments, in a private communication. See also O. Neugebauer, *The Exart Sciences in Antiquity* (N.Y. 1962), p. 97f., on the substantial influence of Greek mathematical theory on Babylonian astronomy.

[1] Bab. Talmud, Berakhoth 57b. On use of earth for building elsewhere, see Jacob Obermeyer, *Die Landschaft Babylonien im Zeitalter des Talmuds und des Gaonats* (Frankfurt a/M, 1929), p. 303, and S. Krauss, "Babylon, post-Biblical data,7 *JE*, II, 400-401. Krauss holds that the reference to the statue of Hermes, is, in fact, to a

In fact, neither the "dread Parthians," nor the Seleucids, nor earthquakes had violently destroyed the ancient city and its civilization. The gradual loss of population and trade, over a period from 300 b.c.e. to the first century c.e., left the town to decay and die, a monument to past glories and (for a time) to the tenacity of the remaining priests and servants of the Temples.

III. Greeks in Babylonia

Hellenism, both as an independent culture and as a modulation of antecedent Babylonian and Iranian traditions, dominated Babylonia, as it did the other western satrapies of Parthia, throughout this period. By "Hellenism" many phenomena are meant. Here we refer to the use of Greek language and the preservation of Greek literary, dramatic, artistic, political, and other cultural forms and conventions. That the Parthians themselves were deeply influenced by Seleucid Hellenism is indicated, *inter alia*, by the use of Greek on most Parthian coins; by the appropriation of Hellenistic art and architecture;[1] by the preservation of Seleucid political institutions; and by the cultivation of Hellenistic literature at the Arsacid court. This was a perfectly natural tendency. The Parthians came to Babylonia without highly developed political or cultural traditions. They were a nomad people and readily appropriated what they found useful or attractive in the culture of the peoples they conquered. They presented themselves, in their earliest coins, as Hellenistic kings, and used Hellenistic insignia of authority. Having little choice, they found this a perfectly satisfactory situation. Later on, under Mithridates II, they began to refer back to Achemenid glories, calling themselves by the ancient title "king of kings," and propagating the story that they were in fact descended from the Achemenid seed. Still later, in the first century e.c., they began to cultivate ancient Iranian religious traditions. According to the Denkart, they oversaw

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statue of the god Nebo. Also, Sibylline Books, III, lines 303-13, ed. R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1913, I-II), II, p. 384. The passage is dated by Badt, cited by H. O. Lanchester, to 140 b.c.e. See also Sibylline Books, V, lines 434-39, Charles II, p. 405. The second quotation is no earlier than the first century. See also N. C. Debevo se, *Political History of Parthia* (Chicago, 1938), pp. 21f.

[1] On the problem of Parthian art, see Roman Ghirshman, *Iran: Parthians and Sassanians* (Paris, 1962, in *The Arts of Mankind*, eds. André Malraux and George Salles), pp. 1-119, 257-83. On the change in artistic conventions at the time of Mithridates II, see p. 17. Further references on this subject will be found in the General Bibliography.

the editing of the Avesta.[1] Coins indicate that they first inscribed Parthian, in Aramaic letters, in their mints under Vologases I. Likewise, from the time of Mithridates II, Parthian architecture, as an amalgamation of Hellenistic and Iranian forms, began to develop. Nonetheless, the impact of acquired Hellenistic civilization remained strong throughout the entire Arsacid period. It was certainly not inappropriate that the great victory at Carrhae, in 54 b.c.e., should allegedly have been announced to the court by Greek players, presenting the famous scene in Euripedes' *Bacchae*, where Agave and the Bacchanate come upon the stage with the mutilated remains of Pentheus. When the head of Crassus was thrown in among them, they sang,

> From the mountain to the hall
> New-cut tendril, see, we bring
> Blessed prey!

However, Babylonian Hellenism was nourished not merely by an alien people, but was preserved and developed by a large, wealthy, and cultured Greek and Macedonian population.

The center of Hellenistic culture in Babylonia was, of course, Seleucia, though large numbers of Hellenes lived in other places throughout the land. Seleucia had been the capital of the Seleucid Babylonian satrapy from the time of Seleucus I. It was built on the site of the ancient Babylonian settlement of Opis, and outside its self-governing polis of Greeks, the city contained numerous Babylonians, Syrians, and Jews. The Seleucid governor-general of the east lived in Seleucia (under the Seleucids, this was usually the heir-apparent) with his staff, guard, army, and chancery. The city was an important military and naval base, and its population was enormous. The native elements were quite separate and did not influence the affairs of the city. After the Parthians conquered Babylonia, Seleucia continued to prosper, enjoying full local autonomy from ca. 142 b.c.e. to 43 c.e. The Parthians did not conquer the city, but acquired suzerainty there by treaty, and doubtless on terms highly advantageous to Seleucians. Hence the Parthians' normal tendency to preserve local administrative practices in the conquered area, combined with the exceptionally favorable circumstances of the transfer of power from Seleucids to Arsacids,

[1] See my "Parthian Political Ideology," *Iranica Antiqua*, III, 1, 40-59. On the editing of the Avesta in the first century C.E., see especially J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion de L'Iran Ancien* (Paris, 1962), pp. 40-49, and W. B. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth Century Books* (Oxford, 1943), p. 149-170, esp. 155-8. Bailey holds that the transmission was oral.

assured the continued autonomy and prosperity of the great center. Even the founding of Ctesiphon across the river had little immediate impact on the economic prosperity of the Hellenistic city. Ctesiphon was at the beginning mainly a military and political center, and international trade continued to pass through Seleucia, though after the founding of Vologasias, in the first century, Seleucia began, like Babylon earlier, to decline. The Hellenistic commercial aristocracy of the city supported cultural endeavors, as patrons of literature, art, and academies. Since, moreover, the city contained a substantial Jewish population, one ought not te be surprised to find there a Hellenized Jew, Zachalias, to whom reference is made.[1]

Seleucia was not the only city in which Hellenistic citizens were governed by their own laws. We know that the same was true in Susa as late as the first century c.e. Susa was a free Hellenistic city, not under the satrapy of Elymais, but directly under the shahanshah, and from an extant letter of Ardavan III, we know that the Arsacid chancellery in Ctesiphon, as well as the Susa polis, continued to use Greek and to follow good Seleucid style. Other Greek cities and colonies such as that at Dura preserved Greek language and political forms as well. Thus for both cultural and political reasons, the Parthian shahanshahs called themselves "Philhellenes," and favored the Hellenistic element in their empire, indicating how important an influence was exerted throughout the Arsacid period by the descendants of Macedonian and Greek troops and colonists.[2]

We know that varied schools of philosophy flourished in Hellenistic

[1] On Zachalias, see below, p. 10, n. 2. On the influence of non-Hellenistic population in Seleucia, see Rostovtzeff, in *CAH*, p. 187. On Seleucia, see R. H. McDowell *Coins from Seleucia on the Tigris* (Ann Arbor, 1935), pp. 53-4, 151, 149, 217f; Leroy Waterman, *Preliminary Report upon the Excavation at Tel Umar, Iraq* (Ann Arbor, 1931), and *Second Preliminary Report*, etc. (Ann Arbor, 1933); R. H. McDowell, *Stamped and Inscribed Objects from Seleucia on the Tigris* (Ann Arbor, 1935), pp. 167-68, 227; Victor Chapot, "Les Destinées de l'Héllenisme au delà de l'Euphrate," *Mémoire de la Societé Nationale des Antiquaires de France*, LXIII, 7th ser. III, pp. 207-96; on Jews in Seleucia, Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.9.1, A. Neubauer, *La Géographie du Talmud* (Paris, 1867), p. 359; and J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain* (Paris, 1914), I, 201; also M. Streck, *op. cit.*, p. 10, and S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archaeologie* (Leipzig, 1911), II, 71.

[2] See E. H. Minns, "Parchments from the Parthian Period," *Journal of Hellenistic Studies*, XXXV, 1915, p. 59; John E. Gilmore, "Babylonia under the Greeks and Parthians," *English Historical Review*, VII, 1892, pp. 1-10; F. Cumont, "Une Lettre du roi Artaban III à la ville de Suse," *Comptes rendues de l'Academie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres* (Paris, 1932), pp. 238-60; A. Cowley, "The Pahlavi Documents from Avroman," *JRAS*, 1919, pp. 147-54. See also Bickerman, *op. cit.*, p. 172. For the Parthian coinage, see General Bibliography.

Babylonia, and Greek metaphysicians, astronomers, naturalists, historians, geographers, and physicians worked there. The Parthian court made considerable use of such trained and able men for building its bureaucracy. The men we hear of under the Seleucids are normally those who migrated to the west, Diogenes of Seleucia (240-152) to Athens, and the stoics Apollophanes of Antioch (or Nisibis) and Apollodorus of Seleucia to Athens to study under Ariston and Diogenes, respectively. Likewise, Agothocles of Seleucia lived at Cyzicus, and Euphrator of Seleucia at the school of Tion the sceptic. But only a few men of learning who stayed in the region, such as Apollophanes of Seleucia, physician to Antiochus III, won recognition in the west also, and there may have been many of local repute. After the Parthian conquest, however, the loss of political ties to the west apparently resulted in greater emphasis on the Hellenistic cultural heritage. Tarn holds that Hellenistic migration to the west ceased. Such cities as Susa, Artemita, Antioch in Mesene, and Seleucia on the Persian Gulf, in addition to Seleucia on the Tigris, all became centers of Hellenistic learning. For example, Archedemus of Tarsus went to Babylonia from Athens and established a Stoic school "with succession," though we do not know how long the succession lasted. Later on, the Greek scribes continued to write correct Greek, and therefore we can be certain that training in grammar and rhetoric remained at an acceptable level in the Greek cities. In the second century b.c.e. Seleucus of Seleucia, an astronomer, flourished. Greeks came from the west to study astronomy and astrology in Babylonia, as we have noted. Several Greek historians flourished in the reign of Mithridates II. Chief among them was Apollodorus of Artemita (ca. 130-87 b.c.e.), who wrote a history of Parthia which served as Strabo's chief source. A second such historian is called by Tarn "the Trogus Source," that is, the source used by Trogus Pompeius for his "Parthia," and thus the base of Justin's epitome; the author of the "Trogus Source" lived to about 87 b.c.e. A third was the Greek who was Plutarch's main source for the Parthian information in his life of Crassus; he flourished after Carrhae (54) but before Antony (36). Finally, there was the well-known geographer, Isidorus of Charax, ca. 30/25 b.c.e. to 19 c.e. His geographical account of the Parthian empire has been lost, but his "Parthian Stations" survived. He apparently reproduces, in part, an official survey of the Empire made in the time of Mithridates II. We know moreover of Herodorus of Susa, who wrote a poem "whose language and elaborate metre show the vitality of Hellenism in his city." Others were Seleucus,

a metaphysician, astronomer, and cosmographer; Herodicus, a grammarian; Dorotheus the Chaldean, a naturalist; and Teucres the Babylonian.[1] The advent of the Parthians did not mark a break in the cultural history of the Greek cities, which retained their constitutions and magistrates, their schools, language, and law, long after the decline of Seleucid power. With a continuing stream of visitors to and from the Hellenistic west, such as Diogenes the Epicurean and Amphicrates of Athens, the Babylonian Greeks did not lose contact with the centers of Hellenism.

IV. Jews in Babylonia

The Jews of Babylonia had every opportunity to acquire a knowledge of Greek culture, for they lived in very large numbers in the vicinity of Seleucia, as well as in the city itself, and their settlements were concentrated in the surrounding region. Other Jewish communities were found in the other chief Hellenistic cities, a commercial community existing in Charax Spasinu (one of its members converted an Adiabenian prince, for example), in Susa (R. Judah the Susan is buried in Beth Shearim, Palestine), and, of course, in Dura. In some of these places, particularly Dura, Hellenism may have made considerable impact on the Jewish community. Most Jews, however, did not speak Greek, but Aramaic (this is inferred from Josephus' writings, and from the later literature), and in later periods produced literature in Hebrew and Aramaic. On the other hand, it is perfectly obvious that some Jews must have known much Greek in order to live in the Greek cities, and many Jews knew little, if only to read the coins of the realm and communicate with their neighbors. We know, also, from a reference to Zachalias,[2] that there may have been at least one Hellenized Jew;

[1] For discussion of Greek culture east of the Euphrates, see especially, B. Haussoullier, "Inscriptions grècques de Babylonie," *Klio*, IX, 1909, pp. 361-63; Victor Chapot, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-45; John E. Gilmore, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5; W. W. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, pp. 22-62; Tarn, "Parthia," *CAH*, IX, pp. 596f; E. R. Bevan, *House of Seleucus* (London, 1902), p. 256. For Apollodorus of Artemita, see F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* (Leiden, 1958), IIIc, item 779. For Apollophanes of Seleucia, see Chapot, "Destinées," p. 241; for Seleucus, p. 243; for Zachalias, p. 244. For Teucres the Babylonian, see A. von Gutschmid, "Über Teukros den Babylonier," *ZDMG*, XV, 1861, pp. 104-106.

[2] On Zachalias, see Pliny, *Natural History* 37.60, line 169, "Zachalias of Babylon, in the volumes which he dedicates to King Mithridates, attributes man's destiny to the influence of precious stones." He also says they may cure diseases of the eyes and liver, and recommends their use to insure success to petitions addressed to kings (this last, presumably, for more than medicinal reasons). The only indication that he may have been a Jew is his name, though clearly if he was a Jew, he was not "normative." See Chapot, *loc. cit.*, n. 13 and Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. D. E.

and there must have been many others who were influenced by Greek letters and art. Further, Jews who had dealings with the higher ranks of the Parthian administration certainly knew Parthian, and some bore Parthian names, as we shall see below. Nonetheless, by and large, the Jews formed a separate cultural-ethnic group in Babylonia, perhaps influenced by their neighbors, but engaged mainly by their inherited culture. The Jews in Babylonia were certainly not so Hellenized as their Alexandrian brethren, for there is not a shred of evidence to indicate that they were, but they were not less Hellenized than their Palestinian brethren.

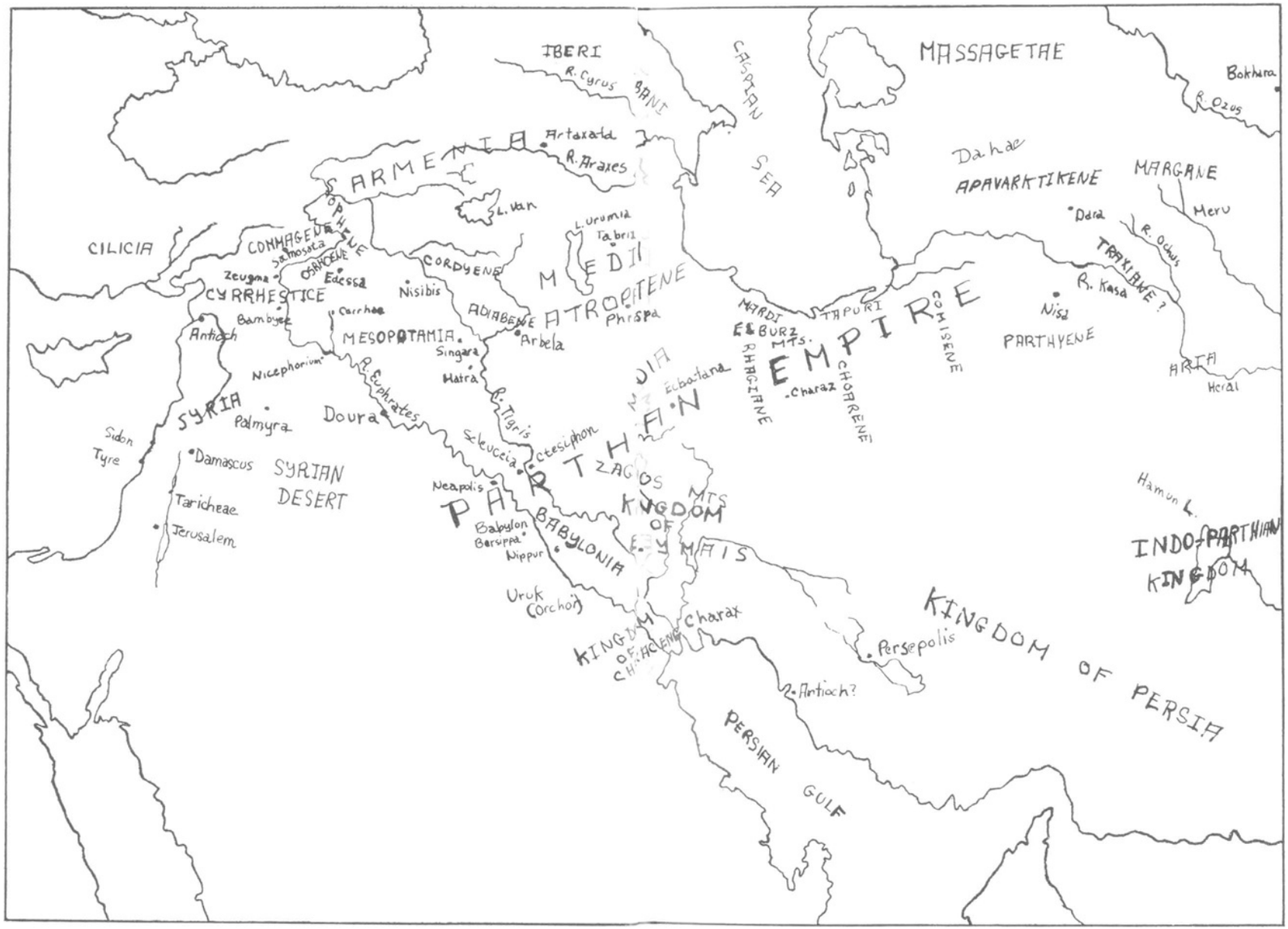
By the time Parthians reached Babylonia, Jews had lived there under Babylonian, Achemenid, and Seleucid rule for more than four and a half centuries. Brought by force in the early sixth century b.c.e., they remained by choice long afterward, only a small number of them returning to Palestine when given the opportunity by the Achemenids. Very little is known, however, about Babylonian Jewry before the first century b.c.e. and still less about Jews in Mesopotamia and Iran Proper. Few references to the Jews in the trans-Euphrates territories of the Seleucids survive. Josephus reports that Jews fought in Alexander's army, but refused to assist in the restoration of the ruined temple of Bel at Babylon, a story not repeated by Strabo or Arrian in their accounts of the event.[1] The Persian emperor Artaxerxes Ochus had earlier transported a large number of Jews to Hyrcania, ca. 340 b.c.e., where they remained at least to the fifth century c.e., but this had apparently been on account of a revolt, and some hold that the Artaxerxes in question was, in fact, Artaxerxes (Ardashir) the first Sasanid shahanshah (ca. 226-242 c.e.).[2] At any rate, Alexander's conquest did

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Eichholz (Cambridge, 1962), X, pp. 301-303, and trans. John Bostock and H. T. Riley (London, 1867), VI, pp. 451-52, 468.

[1] Josephus, Contra Apion, I, 192. Compare Arrian, Exped. Alex., VII, 17, and Strabo, Geography, XVI, 1, 5, line 738. See trans. H. St. J. Thackeray (Cambridge, 1956), I, p. 241, note a.

[2] See J. Juster, *op. cit.*, I, 203, n. 3, citing Eusebius, Chronicle, II, 112-13, Syncellus I, 486, and Orosius, 3, 7, 6. See also E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in Greco-Roman Times* (New York, 1963), IX, p. 14, and J. Marquart, *Eranšahr, nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenaci* (Berlin, 1901), p. 143, A2. Marquart cites Th. Reinach, in *Semitic Studies in Memory of Alexander Kohuth*, pp. 457f, who thinks that this was in the time of Ardashir. As to the Jewish name Hyrcanus, found for example as John Hyrcanus and Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, Marquart holds that this has nothing to do with the territory of Hyrcania, but is an Aramaic form. But compare Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 273, n. 2, who holds that a Jew belonging to a family settled in Hyrcania, returning to Palestine, would at first be distinguished by the personal designation "the Hyrcanian," and thus the name would come to be a distinctive



I. The Middle East in Parthian Times

not elicit, so far as we can tell, a strong reaction on the part of Babylonian Jews. There is no reason to believe that they responded much differently from Babylonians or Greeks to the Parthian conquest two centuries later. The region changed hands many times, but its inhabitants changed very little. Further, we have reason to believe that the Jews in the Mesopotamian valley were loyal to the Seleucid government, as those in the Roman diaspora were later loyal to Rome. Josephus reports that Antiochus the Great at the end of the third century b.c.e. sent two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylonia to Lydia and Phrygia, in Asia Minor, which were in revolt. The loyalty of the Jews would assist in the pacification of the rebellious lands.[1] We have a further reverence to Jewish cooperation with the Seleucids.[2] They cooperated in the defense of Babylonia against an invading force (II Maccabees 8.20):

> Then he rehearsed to them the aid repeatedly vouchsafed in the days of their ancestors... as in the battle fought against the Galatians in Babylonia, where only 8,000 men together with 4,000 Macedonians took the field and where, after the Macedonians were hard pressed, the 8,000 slew 120,000, oiwing to the aid vouchsafed from heaven, and won rich booty.

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designation of the family, by analogy to the names Yaddua the Babylonian and Nahum the Median. See also Schuerer's discussion, II, ii, 223, of the Jews in Hyrcania. He holds that it was Artaxerxes Ochus who brought with him Jewish captives from Egypt (ca. 340 b.c.e.) and settled them in Hyrcania. See also F. W. Koenig, in *Wiener Zeitschrift far Kunde des Morgenlandes*, XXX, 1926, pp. 23f, cited by B. Mazar, "The Tobiads," *Israel Exploration Journal*, VII, 1957, pp. 138-39, who holds that the name Hyrcanus comes from *vurkan* [sic!] (O.P.), "an Iranian aristocratic name." The name *wurk* does exist; see F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Hildesheim, 1963), p. 377, but Bartholomae (*Altiranisches Wörterbuch* [Berlin, 1961]) lists no such name in Old Persian, see cols. 1963-68. Whatever the origin of the name of the region Hyrcania, therefore, the name "Hyrcanus" found in Palestine is best interpreted, following Schuerer, to indicat familial origin, however remote, in Hyrcania.

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities*, XII, 147-53. For the date, see the note of Ralph Marcus (trans., Cambridge, 1943), VII, p. 77, note c. But Marcus cites Reinach, who notes (quoting Josephus) that allegedly Judeophile decrees of the Persians and Macedonians were preserved only by the Jews themselves, p. 79, note e. See also E. R. Bevan, *House of Seleucus* (London, 1902), II, p. 166, Schuerer, *op. cit.*, II, ii, pp. 223-24, See also V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1959), p. 288, on Jewish settlements in Lydia and Phrygia.

[2] In both instances, Gallic raiders in Asia Minor were opposed by Seleucid armies. If this is Antiochus III, then we may further understand his reliance on Babylonian Jews to pacify revolted territories, noted above. See S. Krauss, *JE*, II, p, 407; II Maccabees 8.20 (ed. R. H. Charles, I, 142), commentary by J. Moffatt; F. M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabees* (Paris, 1949), p. 391.

Nothing more is known of this engagement, though it has been speculated that the Jews were fighting in the army of Antiochus the Great against a body of Gallic invaders in 221-220, or earlier, in the ranks of Antiochus Soter (281-261). Like the Jews in Alexandria, the Babylonian Jews were loyal to the imperial power and were doubtless favored by it. As a minority group in the region, they probably depended upon its protection, rather than upon their own natural strength, and the Seleucids had veery reason to cultivate such a useful group. At the very least, we hear of absolutely no Babylonian Jewish rebellion at the time of the Maccabean revolt, and Bickerman concludes that the Palestinian affair made no impact whatever in Babylonia.[1] Thus the situation of the Jews in the Seleucid east was similar to that of the Jews in the Roman orient; the diaspora had interests of its own, which led the exilic communities to cooperate with the central government and to ignore events in Palestine when intervention on behalf of Palestinian Jewry would have jeopardized their own interests. In this same way, later on, the Jews of Alexandria, Cyrenaica, Antioch, and Cyprus remained quiescent during the Roman campaign against the Jewish rebels in Palestine, but rebelled violently and for a time effectively when their own interests were seriously threatened by Trajan's Mesopotamian and Babylonian campaign (114-117), as we shall note below.

There were also large numbers of Jews settled in ancient Bet Adini, the satrapy of Adiabene of Seleucid and Arsacid times. There the ten tribes of Northern Israel had been deposited by the Assyrians, and while they were few in number, constituting mainly the Israelite upper classes, they doubtless continued to survive. References to the "ten tribes" and their eventual return to Palestine were made as late as the second century c.e. The center of their settlements was probably Nisibis, in western Adiabene. On the Mygdonius River, an affluent of the Khabur, itself a tributary to the Euphrates, Nisibis was at the center of the localities mentioned earlier in II Kings 17.6 and 18.11, where the northern tribes had been brought, and we know that in the first century c.e., the town was a center for the collection and transmission of Temple offerings, along with Nehardea, to the south in Babylonia. From this fact we may conclude that considerable contributions were raised in that area, for the only other trans-Euphrates collection point was at the heart of the Babylonian Jewish communi-

[1] E. Bickerman, *Der Gott der Makkabäer* (Berlin, 1937), p. 121; A. Bouché-LeClercq, *Histoire des Séleucides* (Paris, 1913), p. 264.

ties. Hence either by natural increase or by conversion, the descendants of the early captives increased in number, and by the time of the conversion of the Adiabenian royal family to Judaism (see Chapter Two, section viii, below) they must have formed a significant part of the population of northern Mesopotamia.[1]

In addition to Jewish settlements in Adiabene and Babylonia, there were smaller communities at the following places east of the Euphrates: Mesopotamia: Dura-Europos, Nicephorium, Carrhae, Edessa; Elamis: Susa, Gundashapuhr; Media: Gazaca; and Hyrcania.[2] However, we cannot date the beginnings of these centers. We know, moreover (see below), that Tigranes I transferred Jews from northern Palestine to Armenia (as he moved other populations from Asia Minor to the homeland), and hence by the first century, northern Mesopotamia, as well as Babylonia, contained considerable numbers of Jews. Thus we read in Acts 2.9 that pilgrims came to Jerusalem, both Jews and proselytes, from Parthia, Media, Elam, and Mesopotamia, as well as from the Roman diaspora. The numbers of Jews in the trans-Euphrates region thus greatly increased from the time of the first exile, and the extent of Jewish settlement likewise grew under the Achaemenid and Seleucid regimes.

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[1] Schuerer, *op. cit.*, II, ii, pp. 223, 224-25, n. 14. R. Akiba (Mishnah Sanhedrin 10.3) visited the area, and after his return the Tannaim discussed whether the "ten tribes" would return from captivity. But there is no doubt, in the discussion, that the ten tribes existed. On Nisibis, see Ch. Two, Section V. Schuerer says that around Nisibis were grouped the descendants of the ten tribes, and around Nehardea, the descendants of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, increased in both instances by subsequent additions. For the ten tribes in Talmudic literature, see Hamburger, *Real-Encyclopedie*, II, 1281, s.v. Zehn Stahme; IV Ezra 13.39-47; and also Assumption of Moses in R. H. Charles, *op. cit.*, II, p. 410. See also Philo, Leg. ad Gaium 31, line 216, "...and beyond the Euphrates, since that Babylon and many other satrapies were occupied by Jews was known to him not only by report but by experience. For every year envoys were dispatched for the sacred purpose of conveying to the temple a great quantity of gold and silver... and these envoys travel over the pathless, trackless, endless routes..." See also Josephus, *Antiquities*, XI, 5, 2, lines 131-33. On ancient Jewish colonies in Adiabene, as well as Armenia, see also Louis Dillemann, *Haute-Mésopotamie Orientale et Pays Adjacents* (Paris, 1962), pp. 99-100.

[2] Juster, *op. cit.*, I, 199-203; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, II, ii, 223-25. As to Jewish settlements in Babylonia itself, the evidence in the Tannaitic sources touches only the following: Nehardea, Nehar Pekod, Kifri, and Huẓal, though we have reason to believe that many other localities were occupied by Jews; and from other sources, we know that Jews were in Seleucia, Charax Spasinu, and the Mesopotamian, Adiabenian, and Armenian satrapies, as well as Dura-Europos. Hatra does not seem to have had a Jewish population. For a survey of the later evidence (Amoraic period) on Jewish settlement, see Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, and Neubauer, *op. cit.*, passim. See also Philo, *Gaium*, 282, Josephus, *Antiquities*, XV, 14, 39.

Every territory in the plain of the Tigris and Euphrates, from Armenia to the Persian gulf, as well as northeastward to the Caspian Sea, and eastward to Media, contained Jewish populations, and in some of these places, particularly Babylonia and Adiabene, these settlements were populous and strong. This is a point repeatedly made by Josephus and Philo in their dealings with Rome, partly of course for political reasons. The fact that neither Pliny nor Strabo mentions the existence of Jewish communities in the Tigris-Euphrates valley indicates that from the perspective of the ethnography of the region as a whole, the Jews were not a dominant group. They were certainly not a majority in any one place, including Babylonia itself, although doubtless some towns and villages, such as Nehardea, Huẓal, and Nehar Pekod, were mainly Jewish. The Jews were probably fewer in numbers than Iranians, most certainly fewer than Greeks and Babylonians and possibly also than the smaller Semitic ethnic groups ("Syrians") viewed as a whole. But they were settled over a far greater geographical area than any other group. While the Greeks were mainly living in a few major cities, the Babylonians around Babylon itself, and the Parthians were a small governing class in many places, being a majority population in only a few cities outside of Iran Proper, the Jews must have formed minority communities in almost every city of the Euphrates valley and throughout the western satrapies of Parthia (some were in the east as well, in Afghanistan, and in India, but we do now know when they reached there). Further, the Jews occupied large tracts of farmland outside of the major cities in Babylonia. Thus while they were nowhere the majority of a region, they were everywhere a significant group. Their numbers were constantly augmented by migration from Palestine (particularly in the second century c.e.), conversion, and natural increase. They doubtless grew in relative demographic importance and, even more so, in economic and political power. But it must be emphasized that when the Parthians reached Babylonia, the Jews were only one group among several in the area, and not the most powerful, that had to be conciliated.

v. Parthians in Babylonia

The Parthians were latecomers to the Euphrates-Tigris valley, though of course some Iranians, particularly Persians, remained from the time of the Achemenids. The Parthians were originally a nomadic tribe, the Parni, settled in Parthia, and gradually they came to be called

by the name of the territory. The first Parthian ruler, Arsaces, established the dynasty approximately 240 b.c.e., and following him, all Parthian shahanshahs bore the eponymic Arsaces. The expansion of the Arsacids beyond the limits of Parthia itself began with the annexation of Hyrcania, but the growth of the empire proceeded very slowly. In the east, the Parthians had to contend with continuing pressure from nomadic peoples from the steppes, while the Seleucids gave way only after dogged resistance, and then because of dynastic troubles or of pressure from other parts of their diverse empire, or, mainly, from Rome. The real founder of the Parthian empire was MithridatesI, who ascended the throne in 171. He conquered western Iran, reaching Media in 155 and Seleucia in 141. After some vicissitudes, to which we shall return, the Parthians definitely established their hold on Babylonia by the time of Mithridates II, ca. 120 b.c.e. and held it until 226 c.e., with brief intervals of Roman occupation.[1]

Of Babylonia's many conquerors, the Parthians least affected the life of the settled peoples. There is no evidence that the culture of the area during the Parthian period was significantly influenced by northern Iranian elements. Unlike the Achemenids and Seleucids, the Parthians were not greatly concerned with the cultural or religious affairs of the conquered territories. They had no interest in changing the language or governmental structure of their subjects. They made every effort, on the contrary, to conciliate the various groups in their empire. They did, it is true, found new cities for Iranian settlement, but were careful to preserve the rights of the older ones and to avoid imposing upon commercial centers the rigors of military settlement or alien government. They were a military aristocracy, which found it most convenient to rule not directly but through various kinds of authorities, each appropriate to the area governed, to whom they maintained a feudal relationship and to whose subjects they desired little direct relationship at all. Indeed, the feudal analogy is most useful, if not entirely precise, for understanding Parthian political techniques. The various parts of their realm were ruled by great noble families, allegedly seven in all, such as the Surens, Karens, and Mihrans. These families commanded

[1] On the rise of Parthia, see Richard N. Frye, *Heritage of Persia* (London, 1963), pp. 172f. N. C. Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-22; A. von Gutschmid, *Geschichte Irans* (Tubingen, 188), pp. 31-53; F. Justi, *Geschichte des Alten Persiens* (Berlin, 1878), pp. 148-52; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-69; and General Bibliography. On Parthian art, architecture, and religion, see p. 6 n. 1, and General Bibliography. I summarize very briefly those points essential to this study. See especially the articles of Wolski, cited in General Bibliography, on the origins and early history of the Arsacids

detachments of the army in battle and wielded semi-dependent suzerainty in their fiefdoms. The "king of kings" was such in fact as well as in title, for he dealt apparently as *primus inter pares* with powerful lords. Occasionally (frequently in the first century), he was deposed by them in favor of some collateral candidate of the Arsacid family. Owing to the vastness of their territories, stretching from the Oxus river to the Persian gulf, and from the Euphrates to the Punjab, this system of powerful local authorities, with autonomous cities where necessary (such as Seleucia and Susa), and other kinds of relationships to power-groups in the empire (such as the Jews), provided the necessary flexibility for continuing, if not always efficient, government. Thus when the center was weak, the extremities could come to its rescue, as they did in the terrible Roman invasions of the second century. The neighboring kingdom of Armenia exhibited considerable similarities to the Parthian government. It too was governed by great noble families and a king who himself held large tracts of land; and it too survived, for fifteen hundred years, the vagaries of Middle Eastern politics. We may suppose that the Arsacids thus preserved the original nomadic nobility, rewarding them for their services by gifts of land which would provide a base for future political and military power. The rapid conquest of immense territories forced the Arsacids to improvise administrative measures to govern under conditions they had never earlier known. This was a system vastly different from that of Rome, which ,by the first century, was evolving toward a powerful central government under a monarch who held a virtual monopoly of real power. The Arsacids had little choice in the matter at the outset because of the circumstances of their conquest and antecedent political traditions and, later on, because of the increasing power of the local nobility.

The Parthians retained Achemenid-Seleucid traditions of government where they could, and since Greek culture had been dominant, preserved the forms of Hellenistic monarchy. Where there were differences between Hellenistic and Arsacid forms, these were explicable by reference to the existence of specific, nomadic traditions. These differences mainly concerned inner political conflicts, rather than relationships to the subject peoples. One such difference was the strange Parthian law of succession. The empire was governed by a council of nobles and priests, and dynastic change was governed increasingly by the opinion of the nobles, rather than by right of primogeniture. Armenia and Adiabene followed the Arsacid pattern. Further,

as the Parthians conquered Seleucid territory, they found in addition to the various municipal governments a decayed satrapal system, built upon the eparchs and hyparchs. The Parthian nobility had, in places, to be superimposed upon this structure. Various relatives and followers were granted "feudal" fiefs. This was, as we have noted, entirely natural procedure for a new and hungry conqueror. As the nobility settled down, and intermarried with the old upper classes, local loyalties took the place of former dynastic ones. The great noble families, assembling their own armies, were influential in the conduct of imperial affairs. Thus although titles were confused and it is impossible to ascertain specific levels of power and authority represented by various honorifics, feudalism does provide the most useful analogy for understanding Parthian government, even though a systematic feudal structure cannot be discerned.

The army was mainly a cavalry force, relying on highly fluid tactics for success. It was notably weak in the arts of siege and holding large territories, but advanced in the art of fighting from horseback. The "Parthian shot," which consisted of a backward volley during a feigned retreat, was a difficult tactic to learn, and even more difficult to counter, as the Romans found at Carrhae. Taxes do not appear to have weighed heavily on the subjects. The Arsacids depended in large measure upon their own land holdings and on direct commercial duties, rather than on taxes of agricultural produce imposed by a central regime uniformly on all territories.

No literature remains from the Arsacids themselves. Greek served as their official language; Greek drama was cultivated at their court, as we have noted, and at Nisa a Greek theater was excavated. At the same time, Parthian poet-musicians (gosans) preserved ancient East Iranian legends, embellishing these with heroic tales from other sources. Parthian art was at first greatly influenced by Greek conventions, but the old motifs of hunt, banquet, war, and sacrifice were preserved. The Parthians were thus by no means barbarians, but possessed a highly adaptable and rich cultural heritage. Frye states:

> The social life, the art, oral literature, and political organization of the Parthians, such as we know them, all testify to the heroic quality of the Parthian way of life, and appropriately, they have left their name in modern Persian as *pahlavan*, hero, brave man.[1]

[1] Frye, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90. Further discussion of Parthian government will be found in Jozef Wolski, "L'Empire de Rome et les Peuples Avoisinants du Proche Orient," *Eos, Commentarii Societatis Philologae Polonorum*, L, 1959/60, 1, pp. 61-68.

As to Parthian religion, evidence is very scanty indeed. Certainly we know that many religions flourished within the Parthian empire; in addition to Judaism, various Hellenistic, Babylonian, and other cults were observed in the cities of Dura, Palmyra, and elsewhere. There can be no doubt, moreover, that the Good Religion of the Mazdayasnians continued to be cultivated. Though Zoroastrianism as we know it from Sasanid times may have taken shape in the Arsacid period, we have no way to trace its development. In general, the Parthians were as flexible and tolerant in religious matters as they were in politics and, at best, in Frye's judgment, we may speak of a "general Mazdayasnian religious predominance," within which were many subdivisions and even aberrations. Nonetheless, the dominant influence in Parthian religion was that of the Magi, who were, as in later periods, in charge of formal rites and cultic activities, though their influence on the religions of the Babylonian area was limited by the existence of powerful competing traditions.[1]

Guided by classical writers, who called the Parthians a "mere herd of a people," modern scholars before the discovery of Dura tended to view Parthia as a mere interim state, between the Achemenid and Sasanid empires, and its culture was described as a decadent form of oriental Hellenism. The old view, summarized by Rostovtzeff, is as follows:

> The... centuries of the domination of the Parthians... formed a long period of transition, between the two glorious and creative periods of Iranian history, that of the Achaemenids and that of the Sassanian kings. Though true Iranians, the Parthian Arsacids were never regarded as national rulers... but as foreigners.

Thus they were viewed as nomad-barbarians, Phil-Hellenes ruling chiefly with the support of Greek cities, but their Hellenism itself was a mere veneer. In short, Rostovtzeff says,

> It was the view that the Parthian kings were but an accident in the history of the Iranian world. They were not themselves creative in any field, whether in government, religion, or art. Their only service to mankind was in not destroying the elements of Greek culture in their empire, but in allowing them to develop unmolested.[2]

On the influence of North Iranian culture in Babylonia, see McDowell, *Coins*, pp. 205f. See also Tarn, "Parthia," *CAH*, IX, 594ff.

[1] See Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion de L'Iran Ancien*, 224-44.

[2] M. I. Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art," *Yale Classical Studies V* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 155-304, esp. 159-64. As to classical attitudes, note for example Philo, *Gaium*, 10, who compared the Parthians to the Sarmatians

The view of the Jews in the Parthian empire was not different; for example, Krauss wrote, "Of course the uncultivated Parthians could exercise no religious influence upon the Jews." Yet the classical writers were, obviously, not observing impartially but reflected the occidentals' reluctance to view any of their neighbors as civilized people. While the Romans were correct elsewhere, they were wrong about the Parthians. This we know from the recent investigations into the nature of Parthian art and architecture, and guided by insights gained from them, into a reconsideration of the historical significance of the Parthians. Their achievements were not negligible, but highly significant. Their principal task was the defense of the frontiers of the east against the nomadic invasions constantly sweeping over the Caucasus and out of Turkestan. Moreover, they united a large section of the Achemenid empire, reaching (for a very brief period) its geographical limits. They too held the Euphrates frontier against Rome, with brief intervals, for centuries. The Seleucids never broke Parthia, but on the contrary, the Parthians were able to hold their own against them, even when faced with enemies on the eastern and northern fronts, and they later were able to exploit the growing weakness of the Seleucid empire to their own advantage. They stood against the ablest Roman armies, at the zenith of Roman diplomatic and military strength, and repelled their incursions again and again, always with the help of their subject peoples, who time and again opposed the Roman advance down the Euphrates. Such loyalty suggests that the Parthians had won the small peoples of the Euphrates valley to their empire by ties of economic self-interest and political loyalty. Considering the disparate ethnic groups in the Euphrates valley, this required considerable diplomatic sophistication. To offer such resistance and to sustain such power over four and a half centuries—a longer dynasty than Iran ever had before or since—the Parthians must have been not only a strong and cultured state, but must have possessed a flexible structure of military and political power and a loyal and highly resourceful population.[1]

In the summer of 141 b.c.e. the Parthians first advanced into Babylo-

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and Scythians, "races which are no less savage than the Germans." Likewise, see M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities* (Oxford, 1932), p. 98, who points out that according to Tacitus and Cassius Dio, Parthia was weak, worn by internal strife, ruled by uncivilized kings who were cruel, weak, and cowardly. As to the Jewish view cited, see S. Krauss, *op. cit.*, *JE*, II, 405.

[1] See Wolski, *op. cit.*, p. 61; Frye, *op. cit.*, pp. 182f.

nia. For the next twenty years, the country remained in a state of unrest, as the Parthians were unable to hold the territory because of eastern invasions, Seleucid resistance, and the brief rise of the Hellenistic state of Characene.[1] Mithridates evacuated the area in December of 141, to meet an eastern invasion, and the Seleucid Demetrius recovered the area. Mithridates returned in 140/139. Thus Babylonia changed hands three times in the space of less than three years. In the year 139, all the regions east of the Euphrates, including Babylonia, Mesene, Characene, Elymaea, were in Mithridates' hands. But when he died, the Seleucid Antiochus VII Sidetes recovered the area and ruled the western possessions of the Parthians for about a decade. In 129 Phraates II (136-127) took Babylonia and killed Antiochus Sidetes. But he did not then establish Parthian rule in Babylonia. Characene broke away and set up an independent kingdom under the satrap Hyspaosines. He enlarged his realm and took over Babylonia and all the towns of Mesene, founding Charax Spasinu and issuing his own coins. A triumphant compaign led by the Parthian general Himerus, a Hyrcanian, restored Parthian sovereignty to all of Mesene, Characene, and Babylonia between 126 and 123. Himerus, however, apparently hoped to establish himself in the area, and issued coins with the title "king of Babylon" in 124/3. Himerus was notorious for his ill-treatment of the Hellenes in Babylonia and fought a war with the Mesenians; he also sold many Babylonians into slavery and destroyed some of the temples of Babylon itself.[2] Mithridates II took the region again in 122, recovering Seleucia and Babylon and extending Parthian rule finally and permanently to the Euphrates. Thus Babylonia passed out of Seleucid control several years before it was securely in Parthian possession.

Babylonia remained safely in the hands of Mithridates II until his

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[1] On the conquest of Babylonia (141 et seq.) by the Parthians, see Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-27, 29-40; von Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-58, 75-79; Justi, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-54; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78, 96-111. On the careers of Mithridates I and Phraates II, see also W. W. Tarn, *op. cit.*, pp. 578-94; also Walter Otto, s.v. "Himeros," *PW*, col. 1638-41; F. X. Kugler, *Von Moses bis Paulus* (Muenster in Westfalen, 1922), pp. 338-45; W. W. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 30; R. H. McDowell, *Stamped and Inscribed Objects*, pp. 167-68; R. H. McDowell, *Coins*, pp. 54-5, 205-27; Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, *CAH*, VII, pp. 187-88; S. A. Pallis, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-6; E. R. Bevan, *op. cit.*, II, 245f; and especially S. A. Nodelman, "A Preliminary History of Characene," *Berytus* 13, 1960, 83-122.

[2] McDowell, *Coins*, pp. 202-203, 219; see also Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 38-9; Otto in *PW*, s.v. "Himeros," and Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 112, and Nodelman, *op. cit.*, See also A. M. Simonetta, "A New Essay on the Indo-Greeks etc.", *East and West*, N.S., 9; 1958, 164-5.

old age. In 91 b.c.e. Gotarzes I appeared as independent ruler of Babylonia, although all we know for certain is that he was recognized as king in Babylon. The further extent of his authority is not known. At any rate, as a contender for the throne, he remained in control of the area after Mithridates' death in 87. We have no reason to believe, however, that contention for the throne, centering around Babylonia, greatly affected the trade or agricultural life of the area. Gotarzes held Babylonia until 81/80, when the territory passed into the hands of a new rebel, Orodes I. When, later on, Mithridates III (58-55) was expelled by the nobles, he started a civil war and, in the course of it, won over Babylonia including Seleucia, before 55 b.c.e., though the troops of Orodes retook Seleucia and Babylonia, and executed the pretender in 55. Orodes held the territory until his death in 37, and it was not touched by the Romans in their invasion of 54-3, or by Antony in 39-31 during his unsuccessful Armenian adventure.[1]

The Greek colonies had every reason to accept Parthian rule.[2] While they may have preferred Seleucid government, their chief interest was access to, and protection of, the trade and communication routes to the east. The Parthians controlled these routes. At the same time, the Parthians could not maintain themselves in Babylonia without Greek support. The Greeks were a source of educated, able administrators, and also troops. Thus when the city of Seleucia was first occupied, there was no change in its administration. The civic coinage continued to bear the city's name, and the polis to enjoy full autonomy. The city entered upon an era of economic growth and prosperity. The ease with which the Parthians took the city and its surrounding territories and returned to them when they could, suggests that the Seleucians made a good bargain with the new conquerors and were not adverse to the change of government. Certainly the Jews of the area did not oppose the Parthian conquest. While they had, as we have noted, been well treated by the Seleucids, some may not have revered the memory of Antiochus IV himself, though they may have done nothing to oppose his Palestinian policy. The Babylonians were doubtless offended by the Seleucids' parallel policy of Hellenization, and the creation of a center

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[1] See Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 48-9, 51-2, 76-8, 93-5; and Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 105, 108, 149.

[2] On the reaction of various peoples in Babylonia to the Parthian conquest, see especially R. H. McDowell, *Coins*, pp. 205f; E. H. Minns, *op. cit.*, *Journal of Hellenistic Studies*, XXXV, 1915, p. 59; T. G. Pinches, *op. cit.*, p. 484; and, for the Jews, below, pp. 23–25.

of Hellenism at Babylon could not have pleased the priests and tradesmen there. But the chief reason for the acquiescence of the various ethnic groups to Parthian conquest was the military power and vigor of the Parthians themselves. Furthermore, no group was directly threatened by Parthian hegemony. The Parthian nobles themselves could not have found Babylonia a very appealing area in which to acquire broad estates, for it was cut up by canals and so intensively cultivated as to be undesirable for hunting and the chase. For their part, the Parthians realized the great importance of Greek commercial and banking classes centered at Seleucia and also understood the importance of preserving agricultural and pastoral prosperity. Keeping peace in the area was to the advantage of all parties, and the Parthians eventually demonstrated that they could hold the area and pacify it. Indeed, for the Seleucians, the later expansion (under Mithridates II in particular) of Parthia into central Asia had wholly beneficial consequences for their commerce, for the trade routes were secured by their own government. The loyalty of a Hellenistic city to an oriental government was not new; the Greek cities of Asia Minor had preferred, Persian trade and security to ties of Athenian kinship and culture, and to paying Athenian tribute. For the same reason, Seleucia had to accept the suzerainty of whoever held the Iranian plateau. Hence the Arsacids gained sources of regular revenue; the Seleucians, access to the eastern routes; the Babylonian Jews, a tolerant and distant ruler; and the Babylonians, continued maintenance of the status quo.

VI. Parthians and Jews

The Babylonian Jews were probably not the first Jews Parthia ruled, for Parthia had held Hyrcania for more than three quarters of a century before reaching Babylonia and probably had some contact with Jews in Media as well. But the Babylonian Jews were more important than these communities, and their willingness to accept Parthian suzerainty (or that of any other power capable of keeping peace and order) made them a significant source of support for the new regime. At the same time, the Parthians must have become aware that beyond the Euphrates, in Syria and Palestine, large numbers of other Jews lived, relations with whom would be affected by their treatment of Babylonian Jewry. (This awareness could not have been postponed beyond the Roman rescript of 140 b.c.e., as we shall see below.) Furthermore, the Palestinian Jews and the Parthians had a strong common interest, namely,

the destruction of Seleucid power. The rapid expansion of Parthia into Mesopotamia coincided with the establishment of the Hasmonean state. Both Palestinian Jews and Parthians had helped one another. Jewish rebellion in the 160's had certainly eased pressure on Mithridates I, and the victory, conversely, of Phraates II over Antiochus Sidetes in 129 helped the Palestinian Jews decisively to recover their independence. The common international interest, therefore, of Palestinian Jews and Parthians, and the importance of the Jewish community in Babylonia to the Parthians, were powerful factors in assuring for Babylonian Jewry good treatment and maintenance of its right to continued peaceful existence. But before 100 b.c.e., there is only inferential evidence that a formal Parthian-Hasmonean entente was recognized, and that the Jews and Parthians succeeded in working in concert against Seleucid power. It was the Romans, and not the Jews or the Parthians, who destroyed the Seleucid state.[1]

Contact between Parthians and Hasmoneans began in an indirect way, in 140/139, with a circular from Rome sent to various Middle Eastern peoples including the Parthians, announcing Roman friendship for the Jews. This document was preserved by Josephus (Antiquities 14.8.5, L. 145-7) as well as in I Maccabees 15.16-24. Its date has been disputed, for Josephus places it in the time of Hyrcanus II. The arguments in favor of the earlier dating seem to me to be conclusive.[2] The letter reached the Arsacid court at the time of its conquest of Babylonia and informed the rising empire that the Palestinian brethren of its Jewish subjects had powerful support.

The next recorded contact was on the battlefield. If the Romans' pledge of protection to the Hasmonean state impressed the Parthians, they must have had to reconsider their opinion when John Hyrcanus confronted them as an ally of the Seleucid Antiochus VII Sidetes, who had again reduced the Hasmonean state to dependence. Hyrcanus was forced to accompany Antiochus VII on his campaign against the Parthians in 129 b.c.e. He was not a willing ally, however, for he and his troops refused to fight on a Jewish festival, Shavuoth, and on the preceding Sabbath. The Jews rested for two days. Since the Hasmoneans had been willing to fight on holy days in Palestine, the Seleucids

[1] Rostovtzeff, *CAH*, VII, p. 160.

[2] See *The First Book of Maccabees*, An English translation by Sidney Tedesche, introduction and commentary by Solomon Zeitlin (New York, 1950), pp. 40-3, 233-35, and Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 266-68. Also, Abel, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-69; Bickerman, *Gott*, p. 175; and John C. Dancy, *A Commentary on I Maccabees* (Oxford, 1954), 190-91.

must have found such piety disconcerting; and the Parthians must have remembered it, for in the campaigns against Anilai and Asinai in the early first century c.e., they consistently planned to attack on the Sabbath, thinking the Jews would not fight, and were defeated several times when they did. At any rate, Antiochus was later defeated, and Hyrcanus, having escaped the debacle, returned home and recovered his independence. He must, therefore, have known that Arsacid success promised directly beneficial consequences for Jewish Palestine.[1]

Before the time of Pompey, however, only one further recorded meeting between Palestinian Jews and the Arsacids took place. According to Tannaitic tradition,[2] a Parthian embassy was sent to the court of Alexander Jannaeus (104-78 b.c.e.). The embassy was not mentioned by Josephus. The source is as follows:

> It was taught, Three hundred Nezirim came up [to Jerusalem] in the time of R. Simeon b. Shetach. For one hundred fifty of them he found a means of freeing them of their vow of Neziruth, while for one hundred fifty he did not. He came to Yannai the King. He said to him, There are here three hundred Nezirim, who require nine hundred offerings, so you give half from your funds, and I shall give half from mine. He sent him four hundred and fifty. A gossiper went forth, and said to Yannai that he (Simeon) had given nothing of his own funds. When Yannai the King heard, he was angered. Simeon b. Shetach was frightened and fled. After some days important men came up from the Persian Empire to Yannai the King. When they were sitting and eating, they said to him, We remember that there is here a certain old man, who used to say before us wise sayings. Let him teach us something. Send and summon him...

The detail concerning a "Persian embassy" is mentioned *en passant*, and since the point of the story does not depend on it, should be taken seriously. Whatever the historicity of the story itself, it is clear that the

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[1] Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIII, 249-53; Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-4; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 279. Classical sources are cited by Marcus, VII, 353, note f; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99. According to Justin, xxxviii, 10, 5, many of the Parthian tributaries adhered to the Seleucid cause, but there is no reason to assume that the Babylonian Jews were among them, despite the presence among Antiochus' forces of a Palestinian Jewish force. One may add the following speculation: it is entirely probable that Hyrcanus was captured by the Parthians in Sidetes' debacle. If so, they would likely have sent him back to make trouble for the Seleucids. They did likewise with Sidetes' brother, Demetrius, whom they had earlier captured, and now released, to add more contenders to the throne. This was a regular technique of ancient politics, and accounts also for Herod's anxiety to recover the person of Hyrcanus. Hence Debevoise suggestion (p. 26 n. 1) is entirely plausible.

[2] Pal. Talmud Berakhoth 7.2, Nazir 5.3. Text is translated from Berakhoth, no substantial changes in Nazir. See also Debevoise, *op. cit.*, 94-95.

Pharisees preserved a memory of an occasion, rare and notable, on which a Parthian delegation was entertained by Alexander Jannaeus, and associated with that occasion the story of their split with the Hasmoneans. A historical foundation for this story is discernible. We know that Tigranes I the Great of Armenia invaded Syria and Northern Palestine in ca. 83 b.c.e., and that from then to 69 he held large tracts of the Mediterranean coast and parts of Galilee (Josephus, Antiquities XII, 419-421). This was certainly contrary to the interests of Alexander Jannaeus. The Parthian government was also alarmed by the successes of Tigranes and his ally, Mithridates of Pontus. Gotarzes, the shahanshah, had been attacked by the Armenians in 87, and Tigranes had advanced through Adiabene and into Media and Atropatene to the east and, as we have noted, to the southwest as far as Phoenicia and northern Palestine. It would certainly have been sensible for the Parthians to come to an agreement with the Hasmoneans to oppose jointly a power threatening both states, and in such circumstance, an embassy would have been called for. Hence there is historical support for the story, though its narrative is not necessarily reliable in detail. This was the first formal meeting between Palestinian Jews and Parthians, so far as we know. Before that time, there may have been awareness of mutual interests, but there was to our knowledge no agreement for coordinated action between the Jews and Parthians. Debevoise says that John Hyrcanus' attack on Syrian cities after the ill-fated Parthian expedition served the interests of the Arsacids. The Josephus passage to which he refers makes it clear that this was obviously not during Antiochus' campaign, but after his death. Nonetheless the value to Mithridates II of later harassment of the Seleucids is entirely evident. Thus one must conclude that the common interests of Hasmoneans and Arsacids at this period were perfectly clear, and there is good reason to infer that before ca. 85 b.c.e., they were recognized by the two governments, and that some action was probably taken on that account.

During Tigranes' invasion, a number of Jews were exiled to Armenia and resettled in the Armenian homeland. This was part of Tigranes' effort to foster the development of Armenia by building up the commercial centers of Armenia. He forcibly resettled populations of Cappadocia and Cilicia as well. Thus the Jewish population of northern Mesopotamia was further increased in the first century b.c.e.[1]

[1] Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-31, 133-49. See also Neubauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-71, for further references to Armenia in Talmudic

These early relationships were thus sporadic and indirect. The first important contact between Parthia and Jewish Palestine was the result of Roman intervention in the Near East. From that time to the end of Arsacid rule, some Jews in Palestine and the Arsacids shared a common cause, the exclusion of Rome from the Near East. If their common opposition to the Seleucids did not ever result in united action, that to the Romans did. From the middle of the first century b.c.e., there were Jews in Palestine who looked to Parthia for deliverance from Rome. Further, we may note that whatever the earlier attitude of Babylonian Jewry to Seleucid rule, there could have been no ambivalence whatever toward alien Rome. Roman conquest of the Tigris-Euphrates valley was consistently opposed by Babylonian Jews. The threat to Roman frontiers from the hostile Jewish (and other) populations on the Euphrates was recognized by Rome in the first century c.e. and afterward.

Roman intervention into Near Eastern politics began with an action entirely beneficial to both Hasmoneans and Arsacids.[1] Lucullus forced Tigranes the Great to withdraw from Palestine. The Armenian hold on northern Mesopotamia, Adiabene, and the Parthian satrapies was likewise weakened, as Tigranes had to defend his own homeland against Roman assault. But this was a short-lived benefit, for it became obvious that Rome would not so quickly abandon Palestine as had the Armenians. Pompey conquered Mithridates of Pontus in 66 and, at the same time, Tigranes submitted to Roman rule. The Romans then followed a parallel policy in Palestine and Parthia. In both cases, they sought to interfere in domestic politics to their own benefit. Thus Gabinius tried to settle a dispute for the Parthian throne,[2] as Pompey intervened in the dispute between the Hasmonean brothers Alexander and Aristobulus II. In 63 Pompey took Jerusalem, made the Hasmonean state tributary to Rome, and curtailed its frontiers. Hyrcanus II was made high priest, without title of king. Pompey preserved the

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literature; and H. Rosenthal, "Armenia," *JE*, II, 117-18; Juster, *op. cit.*, I, 199, and my "Jews in Pagan Armenia," *JAOS* LXXXIV. On the relations of Tigranes and the Jews, see Rosenthal, p. 117. Tigranes took a large number of Jews captive, and deported them to Armavir and Vardges on the Ksakh river, which became a great commercial center. While the deportations are not attested in the classical sources, but only in Armenian traditions, resettlement of foreigners was a policy of Tigranes, and there is no reason to doubt that he applied it to the Jews. See Moses Xorenazi, Histoire d'Arménie, ed. P. E. Le Vaillant de Florival, Paris, 1841, I-II, II, ch. 14. See also Baron, *History*, II 404-405.

[1] For a summary of events leading to Carrhae, see Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-95; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-81.

[2] The comparison is made by Wolski, in *Eos*, L, 64-65.

Jewish government, assuming for Rome only the hegemony of the region. As elsewhere, Rome preferred to leave local government in the hands of the constituted, loyalist native authorities. The result, however, was the creation of an anti-Roman party, consisting of the followers of Aristobulus and those who preferred an independent state to Roman suzerainty. These may have hoped for help from Parthia and, a decade later in 53, after the Parthians decisively defeated the legions of Crassus at Carrhae, these hopes may seem to have been vindicated. The Romans under Cassius, however, quickly made it clear that they would remain in Palestine and pacified a local revolt of followers of Aristobulus.[1] Nonetheless, the political consequences of Carrhae were substantial. The Parthians recovered all of Mesopotamia, and Armenia was made a Parthian dependency. The whole east was aroused, though it is obvious from events in Palestine and elsewhere that the oriental peoples could not seize the opportunity to drive out Roman armies. Parthian indecisiveness was the main reason for the failure of the Roman orient to revolt, for the shahanshah Orodes lacked the ability to exploit his victory. Parthians made a few desultory raids in Syria and were driven back by Cassius to their frontiers. They neither cared about the hopes of some Jews that they would restore a Jewish state in Palestine, nor tried to exploit them.

For the next ten years, the Parthians were not active. In 51 they invaded Syria, besieging Cassius with his troops in Antioch. But their force was small and light. The Parthians could not besiege the town for long, and mainly wanted plunder, which they got in abundance. Ten years later, in 40, they took the field again, this time under Pacorus, a son of Orodes and a vigorous leader. Pacorus pushed southward down the coast of the Mediterranean and sent a detachment into Palestine. By this time, the Hasmonean scion was powerless, for Hyrcanus, the high priest, had become a mere tool of Phasael and Herod. Antigonus, nephew of Hyrcanus, had earlier tried to wrest power from his uncle without success. The Parthian invasion gave him a new opportunity.

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[1] Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIV, 119-21. See also Debevoise, *op. cit.*, p. 95, Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 176. Debevoise writes of a "pro-Parthian" and "pro-Roman" party among the Jews. But there were clearly large numbers of Jews who were not moved by either Parthian or Roman victory; the followers of Antigonus favored the former, those of Herod and Hyrcanus, the latter; but others, particularly those such as the Pharisees, who were estranged from both groups, could not have cared who won. Later, however, a clear-cut pro-Parthian sentiment is discernible among some of the Pharisees, in the second century in particular. See below, Ch. Three, section III.

He sent a large donation to Pacorus, including both gold and a promise of women (it is clear that he was promising to give him the wives of his enemies). A special squadron was detailed to help the Jews establish a pro-Parthian government in Jerusalem. Antigonus brought a large number of Jews to join the Parthian forces, and, defeating all opposition in the north near Mt. Carmel, the combined army moved on Jerusalem. Herod fled to Masada, his last stronghold. In Jerusalem, Antigonus mutilated his uncle's ear, so that he would be unfit to hold office in the future; Phasael killed himself in Parthian captivity; and Antigonus was made king. Hyrcanus was carried away to Babylonia, to return in 37 after the Parthians and their Jewish allies had been expelled. Thus the Parthians restored an independent, Hasmonean government in Jerusalem.[1] Elsewhere in the Near East, likewise, they were received by local supporters. According to Dio, the Syrian provinces were disaffected because of Roman ill-treatment and were favorably disposed to Pacorus because of "his justice and his mildness, an affection great as they had felt for the best kings that had ever ruled them..."[2] Thus Pacorus' Palestine policy was part of his larger scheme to win over the Near East.

We do not know what would have happened had Pacorus lived. He was obviously a true heir of Mithridates II. By a combination of sagacity and power he could have permanently established Parthian rule over the Near Eastern peoples, if he had sustained the Parthian presence in their territories. If so, the course of Jewish and Roman history would have gone very differently indeed. But Pacorus was killed in a brief engagement in 38, and the Parthians did not have another leader like him. They withdrew across the Euphrates, and Rome re-established herself in Syria, by 37 restoring Herod to power in Jerusalem.[3]

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[1] On the Parthians' invasion of Palestine and intervention in Jerusalem politics, see Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-120; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 371-99, Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, 187-96; A. H. M. Jones, *The Herods of Judaea* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 39-47. See also J. Darmesteter, "Les Parthes à Jerusalem," *Journal Asiatique*, IX, ser, iv, 1894, pp. 43-54, summarizing the classical sources. These events are fully discussed by Rawlinson, Debevoise, and Schuerer, *inter alia*. It is clear that Pacorus' policy in Palestine was part of his consistent effort to develop alliances among the petty princes and dynasts of the Near East.

[2] Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, trans. E. Cary and H. B. Foster (London, 1914 et seq., vols. I-IX), see Book 48, 24, lines 4-5, on the invasion of Pacorus. On pro-Parthian sentiment, see 24, line 7-8; 49. 20.4.

[3] On the death of Pacorus and its results in Parthia, see Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-95. On the restoration of Herod, see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 401f.

Parthian fortunes took a rapid turn for the worse as the disputed succession to the throne of Orodes prevented the continuance of strong and stable government. During the next century, Parthia was increasingly wracked by dynastic disputes. Babylonia was not directly affected either by the withdrawal from Syria and Palestine, or by the weakening power of the central government, except as the disputes were exploited by elements of the Babylonian population, either to achieve some kind of local independence,[1] or to participate in the dynastic struggle. For some Palestinian Jews, on the other hand, the weakness of Parthia constituted a considerable setback. Those who rejected both Herodian rule and Roman suzerainty continued to hope for help from the east. They never forgot that for a brief time, the Hasmonean house ruled Jerusalem independently and legitimately on account of Parthian prowess. While no further direct contact between Parthia and Jewish Palestine can be demonstrated, a series of coincidences of Jewish-Roman and Parthian-Roman struggles suggests that some recognized the value of coordinated action (as we shall see *inf.* Chapters Two and Three). But the next time an Iranian army encamped before Jerusalem was in 614 c.e., and for those who held, from 37 b.c.e. to the seventh century, that the coming of the Messiah would be heralded by Persian conquest, the intervening centuries brought little hope.[2]

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[1] For example, Seleucian Greeks and some of the Babylonian Jews both established autonomous states between 20 and 50 c.e. See below, Ch. Two, pp. 50-58.

[2] R. Simeon b. Yohai, for instance. See Lamentations Rabbati 1.13, Song of Songs Rabbah 8.10, and compare the saying of Yosi b. Kisma, Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 98a. See my "Studies on the Problem of Tannaim in Babylonia (ca. 130-160 c.e.)," *PAAJR*, XXX, pp. 112-13, and Ch. Three, pp. 73-82. For the importance of "Persia" in Jewish messianic imagery, see Judah Ibn-Samuel, *Midrashei Ge'ulah* (Jerusalem, 1954), *passim*, and on Parthia, see Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (trans. W. F. Stinespring; New York, 1955), pp. 277, 297, 432-34.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM PHRAATES IV TO VOLOGASES I
Ca. 40 b.c.e. to 79 c.e.

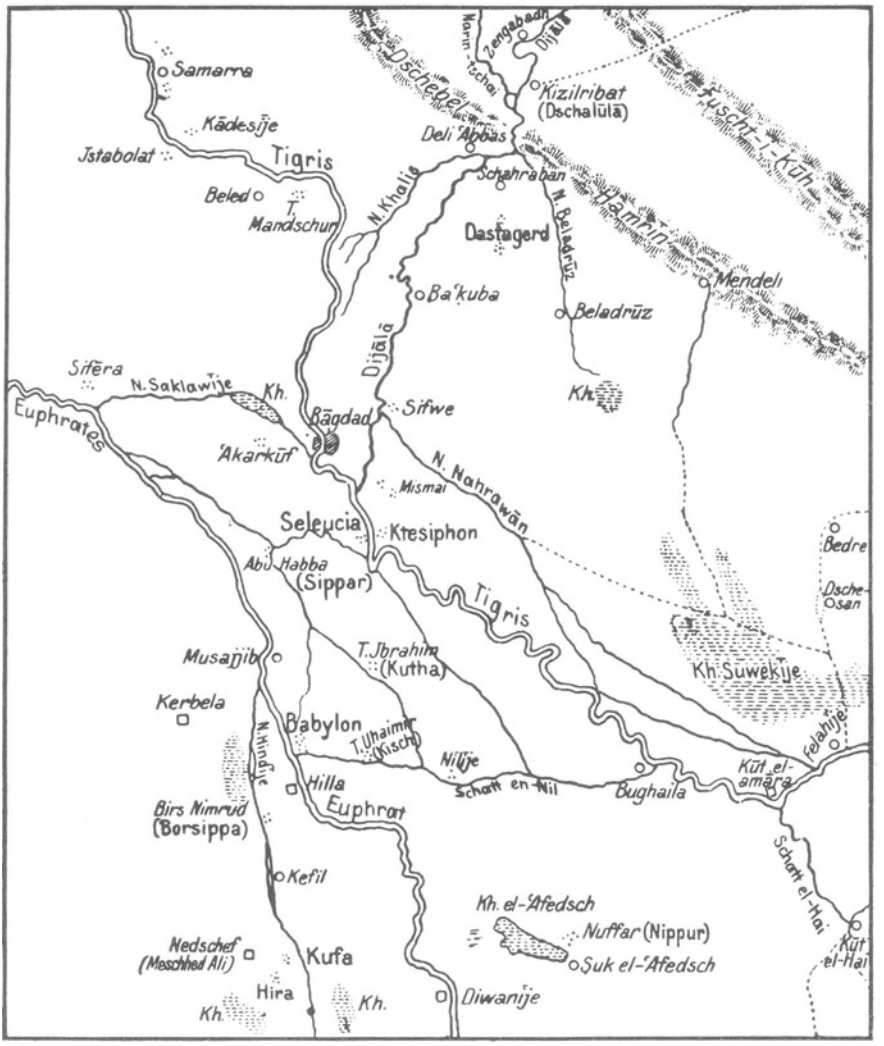
1. Herod and Babylonian Jewry

Phraates IV came to power before 37 b.c.e., approximately the same time that Herod was restored to power in Palestine. Both rulers had in common an aversion to irenic politics, and each arranged to murder all whose claim to the throne might be recognized, Phraates' father Orodes and all his brothers, Herod's Hasmonean in-laws and some of his children falling victim to the dynastic insecurity of the two monarchs. Herod's only direct dealing with Parthia was in connection with the return of Hyrcanus; he sent an embassy to the Parthian court, and, over the protests of the local community, Hyrcanus returned to Jerusalem, where, in 30, he was assassinated. Later, another relation, Pheroras, Herod's brother, was accused of planning to flee to Parthia.[1]

For Herod,[2] Babylonian Jewry posed a complex problem. On the one hand, the trans-Euphrates community was a loyal and important group within the Parthian empire. It could, and, in the case of Hyrcanus, did give shelter and support to Herod's enemies, and this was a prospect that Herod obviously feared. Further, Jews in Palestine who opposed his rule remembered the earlier Parthian occupation and doubtless tried to arouse their Babylonian brethren to support further anti-Herodian and anti-Roman activities on the part of the Parthian government. Moreover, the Parthians' first direct contact with Palestinian Jewry had made them aware of the possibilities for international intrigue among disaffected Jews there, and had a new Antigonus arisen at the right moment, Parthian support might well have been made available to him, either directly (unlikely in this period), or

[1] Josephus, *War*, I, 433, 486. *Antiquities*, XV, 11-20. See Debevoise, *op. cit.*, 121-23. It was, Josephus reports, through the influence of Babylonian Jews that Barzapharnes earlier allowed Hyrcanus to be liberated after his capture and deportation to Babylonia.

[2] On the career of Herod, see Schürer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 400-67; Walter Otto, *Herodes, Beiträge zur Geschichte des letzten jüdischen Königshauses*, Stuttgart, 1913; A. Schalit, *Hordos HaMelekh, Ha'Ish u-Po'alo* [in Hebrew: Herod the King, The Man and His Work] (Jerusalem, 1960); A. H. M. Jones, *Herods of Judaea* (Oxford, 1938); and Albert Réville, "Les Hérodes et le Rêve Hérodien," *Revue de l'Histoire des Réligions* (Paris, 1894, 1-42).



II. Babylonia
Source: Maximilian Streck, Seleucia und Ktesiphon, Der Alte Orient XVI, 3/4, Leipzig, 1917

through Babylonian Jewish intervention (as happened in the second century) in Palestinian politics. On the other hand, Herod himself recognized the potential value to his plans of a conciliated and loyal Babylonian Jewish party, and made every effort to win over the friendship and respect of Babylonian Jews. He represented himself to the Romans as their most reliable ally for Palestinian affairs, as indeed he was. How much more valuable he could be to Rome if he were able to demonstrate influence on Jews not merely in Palestine, but in the territories of Parthia as well. Subversion of minority groups in the enemy country was, after all, a game at which more than one could play. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that Herod aspired to a greater realm than Palestine. Like everyone in the Near East, he knew that in the preceding half century, at least three great empires had taken over the Near East, Armenia under Tigranes in alliance with Pontus under Mithridates, Parthia under Orodes and general Pacorus; and, finally, Rome under Crassus, Pompey, and Antony, in succession. Rome's hold was, from the perspective of 37 b.c.e., neither old nor apparently permanent. She had been driven out quickly, and her power, while impressive, was being wasted in civil strife. It was by no means beyond possibility for Herod to hope for an empire in the Near East, particularly in Palestine, Syria, some of the Hellenistic cities and dependencies, and Babylonia, which was then, like all the western satrapies of Parthia, in a state of unrest on account of the dynastic struggles of Phraates IV and his competitors. Such an empire would have to be built on the foundations of two groups, the Jews and the Greeks. Herod tried, therefore, to win the loyalty of the Jews centered in Palestine, Babylonia, and northern Mesopotamia, and the Greeks in Antioch, Rhodes, and southern Syria. To the Greek cities, such as Rhodes and Antioch, Herod gave munificent donations, paving streets here, building theaters and temples there. He pacified the brigands of northern Galilee as the first act of his new reign, and this doubtless impressed the Greek and pagan Semitic settlers with his efficiency and capacity to govern effectively. He built up the economy of Jewish Palestine, ending unemployment by large public works; tried to win the friendship of the people by magnificently rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem, and made every effort to conciliate Babylonian Jewry, treating with great kindness migrants from the east and taking care to placate Babylonian Jewish opinion when he could. Throughout the Roman diaspora, likewise, Herod presented himself wherever and whenever he could as the protector and patron of the Jews. There is no other

explanation for these activities, extending far beyond the duties of the "king of the Jews" in Palestine alone. Herod clearly hoped to establish not only a dynasty, but an empire, as others had succeeded in doing in the Near East even to his own time.[1]

Herod's first appointment as high priest was a Babylonian Jew of sacerdotal family, Hananel. Such an appointment was good policy for three reasons. First, it assured that an obscure person, with no local, Palestinian connections, would hold the once-powerful office. Second, it must have indicated to Babylonian Jewry immediately the honor and regard that Herod held for the exilic community. Babylonian Jewry later prided itself on its pure genealogy and held that all other countries were by comparison tainted. There is no reason to believe that this was an innovation. Hence Herod would have honored the Babylonians specifically in a matter of great concern to them by recognizing the pure lineage of one of their priestly families. Third, it prevented Hyrcanus (then in Babylonia) from returning to power. Hyrcanus had been greatly honored in Babylonia and was treated by the Jews there "as their high priest and king." He doubtless hoped to return to his high office in Jerusalem, and, with powerful backing from Babylonian Jewry, would have posed an immediate threat to Herod's tenure. Further, the Parthians themselves treated Hyrcanus honorably, and may have intended to use him, as they had Antigonus earlier, as a means of intervening, when it became convenient, into Palestinian politics. By appointing another Babylonian Jew, Herod thus at once placated the diaspora community and prevented the return to office of a far more powerful and influential figure. His success, shortly afterward, in recovering the person of Hyrcanus (noted above) and his grave concern to return him to Palestine, even through negotiations carried on at the highest level with Phraates' government, indicate the importance which he attached to the matter. Thus his appointment of the Babylonian Hananel was an act of considerable political astuteness.[2]

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[1] See Réville, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Here we are concerned only with Herod's sporadic relationships with Babylonian Jewry, but they cannot be understood without reference to his larger policy toward the Jewish and Hellenistic groups. Agrippa also claimed to speak for the diaspora Jews; see Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

[2] On the appointment of Hananel and the treatment of Hyrcanus, see *Antiquities*, XV, 2, 1-4. See Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 420; Schalit, *op. cit.*, pp. 63 and 376, n. 17. There is a rabbinic tradition about "Hanamel the Egyptian," and some have, therefore, identified the two. See Mishnah Parah 3.5. Schalit goes so far as to identify Hanamel/Hananel with the uncle of Jeremiah! Compare Otto, *op. cit.*, col. 38. However, there is no reason to deny the tradition of Josephus, for the Talmudic tradition on the burning of the red heifer is notoriously inexact, as I have demon-

While Herod himself was an Idumean, it became politically expedient for him to claim that his family had originated in the Babylonian exile. It was conventional, at this period and afterward, for any claimant to legitimate power in Israel to allege that he was of Davidic origin. We know of the following who claimed, or in whose behalf was claimed, such lineage: the Hasmoneans, Jesus, Hillel, Judah the Prince, Ḥiyya, the Babylonian Exilarch R. Huna, the later Herodians (through the Hasmonean line), and Herod himself. We know, of course, that at the same period, the Arsacids were advancing a claim to descent from the Achemenids, a claim they never originally made when they took power, but only at the time of Mithridates II and afterward. For Herod the claim of Babylonian origin would have provided a more reasonable foundation for the additional claim to Davidic descent than that available to an Idumaean.[1] There is no doubt what-

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strated elsewhere, and the Tannaim had no really precise information on the matter. See my *Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 51-53. On preventing the Arsacids from using Hyrcanus, see Schalit, *op cit*, p. 377, n. 25; compare Otto, *op. cit.*, col. 39; compare *War*, I, 22, 1 (433-34) and *Antiquities*, cited above. Schalit thinks that the basis of Herod's apprehension of Hyrcanus was his superior claim to the throne, but this does not exclude the likelihood that such a claim could be enforced only by military power, and the one substantial source of power outside of Rome was Parthia. In the light of the previous (within the past decade, in fact) intervention of Parthia in behalf of another pretender and against Herod himself, I conclude that Herod feared not only Hyrcanus' lineage, but, even more, his trans-Euphrates support! On such possibility that Parthia would shelter, then use a pretender to Palestinian authority, see also William R. Farmer, "Judas, Simon, and Athronges," *New Testament Studies*, IV, 1958, pp. 151, 154. In any case, if this was the Parthians' intention, then they were only following the Romans' policy of intervening in dynastic disputes of their neighbors, and of holding in reserve candidates for the Parthian throne, whom they put forward at the opportune time. This was done by them in Armenia and Parthia at the time of Nero, and in Parthia after Trajan's invastion. See L. Dillemann, *op. cit.*, p. 289. Having failed to take Babylonia, Trajan fell back on the political tactics of his predecessor and tried to force the Parthians to accept Parthamaspates, his candidate, as shahanshah.

[1] See Schalit, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 234; p. 346, n. 16; p. 453, n. 567; and pp. 481-82, nn. 964-65. There were no solid foundations, so far as we can tell, to any of these claims. See Y. Liver, *Toldot bet David* (Jerusalem, 1959), *passim*. We shall return to this question in Ch. Three, in connection with R. Judah's relationship to R. Hiyya and R. Huna. On the Arsacid's claim to Achemenid origin, see my "Parthian Political Ideology," *Iranica Antiqua*, III, i, 1964. In any case, we do not know how Herod "proved" this genealogy. See *Antiquities*, 14.1.3, 1.9, "But there was a certain friend of Hyrcanus, an Idumaean called Antipater,... Nicolas of Damascus, to be sure, says that his family belonged to the leading Jews who came to Judaea from Babylon, but he says this in order to please Antipater's son Herod, who became king of the Jews by a certain turn of fortune..." See Marcus, VII, pp. 452-53, notes b and c. I see no reason to disagree with Jacoby, cited by Marcus, note c, who argues that Nicolas really did invent a Babylonian Jewish ancestry for

ever of the spuriousness of Herod's claim, and the only interest it has for us is in supplying an additional evidence that he cultivated Babylonian Jewish friendship and support.

II. Hillel

Hillel[1] came to Jerusalem from Babylonia at some point in Herod's reign and quickly achieved prominence in the Pharisaic party. Two questions concerning Hillel interest us here; first, that of his pre-Palestinian training, if any, and second, that of his relationships with Herod and, tangentially, Herod's relationships with the Pharisees. Hillel came to Palestine as a poor man and, in a controversy with the Bne Bathyra, demonstrated his ingenuity and genius, and was forthwith recognized as *nasi*. Hillel's Babylonian origins are obscure, and it has even been maintained that he came from Alexandria. Kaminka argued that a *beraita* implies the presence of Hillel in Alexandria. He also notes that Hillel was once in Jericho, and since Jericho was under Cleopatra's rule for a time, "this also confirms my suggestion, He was perhaps a member of the local Sanhedrin..." Kaminka argues that Alexandria was occasionally called Babylonia. Daube argued that the numerous parallels between Hillelite exegesis and that of Hellenistic exegetes of Homer suggest a solid Hellenistic education and hence Alexandrian origin. But as we have already noted, a Babylonian did not have to travel to Alexandria to learn either Greek or Hellenistic exegesis, for in Seleucia and elsewhere such studies were pursued. As to the implication of the *beraita* cited by Kaminka, consideration of the *beraita*, which follows, indicates merely that Hillel may have been in

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Herod. It certainly would have been reasonable to have done so, and entirely conventional. It is, additionally, worth noting that Herod's name and that of Orodes, father of Phraates IV, were orthographically almost identical. See F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), s.v. Hurauda, p. 133. We know that Babylonian Jews did take Iranian names, see Ch. Three, p. 94-97. This would not, of course, "prove" that Herod was Babylonian, or that his name was chosen because of its Iranian origins, *pace* B. Mazar, *IEJ*, VII, 1957, pp. 138-39, on Hyrcanus.

[1] The literature on Hillel's career is enormous. For brief but useful summaries, see N. N. Glatzer, *Hillel the Elder, The Emergence of Classical Judaism* (New York, 1956), Judah Goldin, "Hillel the Elder," *Journal of Religion*, XXVI, 1946, 263-77; David Daube, "Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis," *Festschreibe Hans Lewald* (Basel, 1953), 27f and A. Kaminka, "Hillel's Life and Work," *JQR*, n.s., XXX, 1939, 107-22. I am grateful for permission to use the unpublished manuscript on Hillel's life of Rabbi Ben Zion Gold of Harvard University Hillel Foundation.

Alexandria once, though it may well be that the question was brought to Hillel in Jerusalem as, we know, other legal problems were referred to Palestine.

> It happened that in Alexandria when a couple was about to take the marriage vows, the bride was suddenly taken away by another party. Thus a doubt was formed as to the propriety of the marriage... This question was brought to Hillel...

In the late first century, a question concerning the ritual acceptability of Alexandrian cows was brought to R. Tarfon at Lydda. None has on that basis argued that he was an Alexandrian. As to the occasional reference to Alexandrians as "Babylonians," this proves nothing without specific evidence that the phenomenon applies to Hillel himself, and there is no such evidence.[1] Thus the grounds for such an assertion are at best tenuous, and on such a flimsy basis, one can hardly deny the testimony of every explicit source.

Hillel's education was at an advanced stage by the time he reached Jerusalem, for all accounts of his sudden elevation to the position of *nasi* agree, first, that he was earlier unknown, and second, that he possessed unusual powers of reasoning as well as excellent sources of traditional information. His elevation was due to his triumph in a controversy with the Bne Bathyra. The correctness of his opinion was finally accepted, according to the Yer. Talmud, because, after much ingenious reasoning, he was able to cite earlier and recognized Palestinian teachers of the law. This is all that we may positively conclude on the basis of information on Hillel's education. Indeed, it is rather more than all, since the controversy with the Bne Bathyra looks very much like a "dispute story" to show that even in Hillel's own case, tradition outweighed argument from inference as legal proof. It is certainly impossible to believe that before this, there was no precedent on the issue at hand. In any case, the Sadducean priesthood who controlled the Temple would scarcely have turned for advice to a Babylonian nonentity, who was *tant pis* a Pharisee![2] Hillel's early career indicates that

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[1] For the arguments of Kaminka, see *op. cit.*, pp. 110-11. For Daube, *op. cit.*, and compare Kaminka, pp. 121-22. The relevant beraita is in Bab. Talmud Bava Mezi'a 104a (and Tosefta Kethuvoth 4). As to the question brought to R. Tarfon, see my "A Life of Rabbi Tarfon, ca. 50-120 C.E.," *Judaica*, XVII, 3, 1961, pp. 141-67. On Hillel's early education, the judgment of Glatzer seems to me entirely sound: he was educated in Babylonia and received advanced training in Jerusalem. See also I. Y. Halevi, *Doroth HaRishonim* (Vienna, 1923), I, iii, pp. 92-103.

[2] On Herod's relationship with Hillel, see Schalit, *op. cit.*, p. 234. Schalit accepts the identification of Hillel with the Pollion of Josephus, *Antiquities*, XV, 10.4,

he came and studied, so presumably he had learned enough in Babylonia to want to come and study. To this extent only, may we conclude that the career of Hillel indicates the probability of Jewish schools in Babylonia. Since we have no further information on this subject, there is no value in pursuing it. It is highly unlikely that there were *no* Jewish schools at all in Babylonia. The Greeks and Iranian Magi cultivated their respective traditions in schools, and there is no reason to doubt that the Jews had them also, long before the time about which information is available to us (see below, Chapter Four).

III. Zamaris

We are well informed, on the other hand, about another Babylonian emigrant, Zamaris, who also migrated during the reign of Herod.[1] The Josephus passage is as follows:

> And now [sometime before 6 b.c.e.] it was that Herod, being desirous of securing himself on the side of the Trachonites, resolved to build a village as large as a city for the Jews, in the middle of that country, which might make his own country difficult to be assaulted, and whence he might be at hand to make sallies upon them and do them a mischief. Accordingly when he understood that there was a man that was a Jew come out of Babylonia, who, with five hundred horsemen all of whom could shoot their arrows as they rode on horseback, and with a hundred of his relations, had passed over the Euphrates and now abode at Antioch by Daphne of Syria, where Saturninus who was then president had given them a place for habitation called Valatha, he sent for this man, with the multitude that followed him, and promised to give him land in the toparchy called Batanea, which country is bounded by Trachonitis, as desirous to make that his habitation a guard to himself. He also engaged to let him hold the country free from tribute, and that they should dwell entirely without paying such customs as used to be paid, and gave it to him tax-free.

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as does Kaminka, p. 113, and others cited by him. On Herod's relationship to the Pharisees, see especially Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 445f. on the extent of Pharisaic influence in Palestine and the diaspora, see M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the 1st Century," in *Israel, Its Role in Civilization*, ed. M. Davis (New York, 1956), pp. 67-81, and Erwin Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in Greco-Roman Times* (New York, 1953, *et seq.*), IV, 12, 61. I think that the extent of Pharisaic *authority* in the diaspora was limited, although their *influence* may have been extensive.

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities*, 17.2.1-4 (lines 23-27). See also Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-46; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 240f. See also PW, s.v. "Sentius (Saturninus), IX, col. 1518f; Schalit, *op. cit.*, p. 169. We shall return to the descendants of the Bathyrans below, in connection with Judah b. Bathyra. On Herod's colonization of the northeast marches, see Schalit, *op. cit.*, pp. 168f.

> The Babylonian was induced by these offers to come hither, so he took possession of the land, and built in it fortresses and a village and named it Bathyra. Whereby this man became a safeguard to the inhabitants against the Trachonites, and preserved those Jews who came out of Babylonia to offer their sacrifices at Jerusalem from being hurt by the Trachonite robbers; so that a great number came to him from all those parts where the ancient Jewish laws were observed, and the country became full of people, by reason of their universal freedom from taxes. This continued during the life of Herod; but when Philip who was [tetrach] after him, took the government, he made them pay some small taxes, and that for a little while only; and Agrippa the Great and his son of the same name, although they harassed them greatly, yet would they not take their liberty away... At length Zamaris, the Babylonian to whom Herod had given that country for a possession, died having lived virtuously, and left children of a good character behind him; one of whom was Jacimus, who was famous for his valor, and taught his Babylonians how to ride their horses, and a troop of them were guards to the aforementioned kings. And when Jacimus was dead in his old age he left a son whose name was Philip, one of great strength in his hands, and in other respects also more eminent for his valor than any of his contemporaries; on which account there was a confidence and firm friendship between him and king Agrippa. He had also an army which he maintained as great as that of a king; which he exercised and led wherever he had occasion to march...

Whatever the standard of Jewish letters in Babylonia, there is no question whatever that some Babylonian Jews achieved significant mastery of Parthian military arts. Josephus' description of the famous "Parthian shot," and his emphasis on the fact that the Bathyrans continued to study these arts, leaves no doubt that both the Romans and Herodians admired these drills and enlisted those who had mastered them in their armies. Herod's gift of land to Zamaris (Zimri) was intended to secure his northeastern frontiers, and the trade and travel routes that passed through them, against any incursion. It was certainly to his advantage to have in the area Jews of whose loyalty he could be certain. From Zamaris' large retinue of 500 knights it is clear that he held a place in the Parthian feudal structure, and like other Parthian nobles, must have owned vast estates there. We do not know why he fled, though doubtless he was involved in some political intrigue. (We shall note, Chapter Three, other Jews holding high Parthian government office.)

There are absolutely no grounds to interpret the flight of Zamaris as evidence of Parthian "anti-Semitism" or of the end of an alleged *entente cordiale* between the government and "the Jews." The Jews of

Parthia were scattered over a broad area, and did not, so far as we can tell, constitute a single united ethnic group within Parthia. It was entirely possible, therefore, for some Jews to have a falling out with the government, particularly Jews of noble rank and great power, without all Jews suffering on that account. What probably happened was that a specific feudatory power, ruling limited but substantial territory, was forced to flee from Babylonia on account of an unhappy turn in local politics. The Jews as a group would not have suffered unless, as in the case of Anilai and Asinai, they succeeded in making themselves generally obnoxious to the surrounding Greeks and Semites. At that time a political reaction, or "anti-Semitism," followed the aggressive and aggrandizing policies of Jewish grandees supported by the Jewish population. In the case of Zamaris, on the other hand, a single noble and his retainers had to flee; Josephus does not indicate any widespread anti-Jewish reaction as either cause or consequence of the flight, and we have no reason, therefore, so to interpret it.

We have referred to a contemporary group in Jerusalem called "Bne Bathyra," and it is reasonable to assume, if very tentatively, that the village of Bathyra, founded by Zamaris, produced the Jerusalem Bathyrans.[1] Zamaris' Bathyrans were officers in Herodian armies, and

[1] The identification of the Bathyrans met by Hillel in Jerusalem with those resettled by Herod in Trachonitis is difficult for chronological reasons. Hillel's encounter with the Bathyrans allegedly took place at the outset of his recognition as an authoritative teacher, generally estimated at 30 b.c.e., while the flight of Zamaris took place later in Herod's reign. But these dates are wholly conjectural and particularly that of the beginning of Hillel's prominence, which probably came late in his career. The historical kernel of the story is probably the recollection that Hillel owed his position to his winning over of the Bne Bathyra to his side in the controversy about proper conduct of the Passover sacrifice. It is wholly plausible that Herod appointed one of Zamaris' retainers to high office in Jerusalem almost immediately after the founding of Bathyra, and this would explain why these high officials were ignorant of the Palestinian tradition, and could be won over by Hillel. Otherwise, this would represent a most unlikely state of affairs. At any rate, this is the most likely explanation of the name Bne Bathyra based on origin in the town founded by Zamaris. Further, as we shall see below in connection with R. Judah b. Bathyra, Zamaris and Judah b. Bathyra were engaged in the same task, namely, securing the transfer of goods and money from the Mesopotamian valley to Jerusalem, and particularly, of contributions to the Temple. The chronological problem is not insuperable. Therefore it is more reasonable to identify Zamaris' Bathyrans with the Bne Bathyra who argued with Hillel, although I do so very tentatively. An alternative solution to the problem is proposed by Professor Sidney B. Hoenig, in his *Great Sanhedrin* (cited below), and in a personal communication. Hoenig writes, "It is my view that there is no association at all between the Bathyrans of Zamaris and the Hillel-Bathyrans. The fact that the name of the village is similar to that of these teachers does not bring about any relationship.

it is plausible to conclude that some were quickly given high positions in Jerusalem. Herod's policy of favoring Babylonian Jewry, noted above in connection with the high priesthood, was based on practical political considerations, and the Bathyrans probably benefited from that policy.[1]

IV. BABYLONIAN JEWRY AND JERUSALEM

In this period, there was constant migration, both permanent and temporary, between Palestine and, in particular, Jerusalem, and all parts of the diaspora. Jews and gentiles from all parts of the world made pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and the Palestinian administration, particularly in the time of Herod, took pains to encourage these pilgrimages and to protect the pilgrims' roads to the city. The authorities of Jerusalem, including (according to their traditions) the Pharisaic sages, took care to protect the pilgrims, so far as they could, from high prices caused by shortages of hotel space and sacrificial animals during the festival seasons, and most parties in Palestinian Jewry ascribed the highest religious merit to the act of pilgrimage. Thus Jews came to Jerusalem from all parts of the Roman empire and the Iranian (Parthian) empire as well, including (Acts 2.9-11) Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrenaica, Rome, Crete, and Arabia. Testimony on the popularity of pilgrimage among the diaspora communities is offered *inter alia* by Philo (*De Spec. Leg.* 1.69) and Josephus (*Bell.* 6.9.3), the latter claiming that two million seven hundred thousand Jews were present in Jerusalem for the festival occasions.

Furthermore, before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple's administration took keen interest in the affairs of the diaspora, and letters passed back and forth between Jerusalem and various parts of

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Following the Tosefta, I would spell the name [of Hillel's group] *P*athyra. The term Bne Pathyra is not a family name. It means 'expounders,' from PTR." I am grateful to Professor Hoenig for these comments. On the Bne Bathyra of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai's time, see my *Life of R. Yohanan b. Zakkai*, pp. 156-57. On the Bne Bathyra in the Temple administration from Hillel's time to that of R. Yohanan, see L. Finkelstein, *Pharisees and Men of the Great Assembly* (New York, 1950), pp. 6, 8, 14, 15; S. Hoenig, *The Great Sanhedrin* (New York, 1950), pp. 38, 107, 141, 199. See below p. 44 n. 1.

[1] Professor Morton Smith points out significant parallels between Bnai Bathyra and the story about Anileus and Asineus (see below); both were important military leaders; both provided stability and protection for unruly regions, and hence fulfilled parallel political and economic functions, and both made trouble for the Parthian government.

the world. Thus we know, for example, that Gamaliel I, a "teacher of the law," Pharisee, and member of the council of the Temple (Acts 5.34) sent letters to Jews in other parts of the world, including specifically Babylonia, concerning tithing regulations and intercalation of the calendar, as did R. Yohanan ben Zakkai and R. Simeon ben Gamaliel afterwards. They addressed themselves to "our brethren in the Exile of Babylonia" as well as to those in Media and elsewhere. And the Pharisees were by no means the only group in Jerusalem to correspond with diaspora communities or with groups within diaspora communities. The "sons of the high priests," a priestly court, did likewise, and so did the city's Jewish-Christians. Furthermore, these letters were not infrequent, but were apparently a constant and normal event.[1] Thus through pilgrimages, through correspondence on matters of law and doctrine, and through exerting authority over the designation of the sacred days (intercalation of the calendar), as well as through collections of Temple funds, frequent and normal relations were maintained between Jerusalem and the diaspora, including Babylonia, and the influence of Palestine was exerted throughout the *Golah*.[2]

Even before 70 c.e., the Pharisees had considerable access to these means of communication, in particular through their representatives on the Temple council and through their adherents in other parts of the world. They took considerable interest in the *Golah*, holding that their interpretation of the Torah ought to be authoritative everywhere. Evidences of their traditions dealing specifically with Babylonia are fairly common, perhaps even dating to the time of the Temple itself, although there is no evidence to indicate how widely their authority was accepted in Babylonia during this period, if at all.[3]

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[1] On the correspondence of R. Gamaliel, R. Yohanan ben Zakkai, and R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, see my *Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai*, pp. 40-42; on that of the sons of the high priests, see pp. 45-48; and on that of the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem, note, *inter alia*, Acts 15.22-29. On the apparently commonplace character of such correspondence, see Acts 28.21, "And they said to him, 'We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brethren coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you,'" which would indicate that such letters or personal reports were sufficiently frequent so that a man of bad character would be so labeled in a reasonable time; and note also the statement of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel and R. Yohanan ben Zakkai, that they were not the first to write such letters but that others had written also earlier. See also Hugo Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 28-31, and especially p. 30, n. 175.

[2] See J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain* (Paris, 1914), on pilgrimages, I, pp. 357-58, on the authority of the Temple Court over the calendar, I, pp. 362-63, on collections of Funds for the Temple, I, pp. 377-78.

[3] Note *inter alia* the following sources in the Tannaitic traditions: Mishnah

After the destruction, the most important single source of influence of Tannaim on Babylonia as on the rest of the diaspora was the occasional visitation of Tannaitic apostles of the Palestinian patriarchal court. Little is known of the apostolate, particularly that of the Pharisees, before 70 c.e., but afterward, while Temple gifts and pilgrimages lost importance, the messengers of the patriarch gained some influence in the diaspora. These apostles may have had political missions; but they most certainly had spiritual missions, giving sermons in synagogues, deciding matters of law according to the viewpoint of the Tannaim, representing the authority of the patriarchate wherever they went. They also collected funds for the Palestinian academies, presumably in place (in part) of the former gifts to the Temple, communicated edicts on the intercalation of the calendar, conducted polemics against Christianity, and occasionally worked miracles.[1]

V. Judah ben Bathyra in Nisibis

Without entering the difficult question of the role of the Bathyrans in the Temple administration, we may safely say that Bathyrans *were*

Hallah 4.11, on ben Antigonos who brought up firstlings from Babylonia; Sheqalim 3.4 on the use of Temple funds in behalf of Babylonia, Media, and other faraway places; Yoma 6.4 on the presence of Babylonians at the Temple rites on Yom Kippur; Menahoth 11.7 on the same; and Bab. Talmud Shabbath 26a on the kind of oil for the Sabbath lamp that might be used in Babylonia (a source that must be dated before 110 c.e.).

[1] If Justin's dialogue with Trypho has a historical foundation, it may be that Trypho was an apostle of the patriarch sent out to dispute the new belief; although it must be noted that Trypho is not to be identified with the well-known R. Tarfon (ca. 50-130 c.e.); see my "Life of Rabbi Tarfon," *Judaica*, XVII, pp. 141-67, in particular, p. 141, n. 1. On the relationships between the patriarch and the diaspora, see Juster, *op. cit.*, I, p. 388; and especially the chapter in Mantel, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-254. See also S. Krauss, "Die Jüdischem Apostel," *JQR*, 17, 1905, pp. 370-83; H. Vogelstein, "Die Entstehung und die Entwickelung des Apostolates im Judenthum," in *Monatschrift*, XLIX, 1905, pp. 427-49; and also St. Jerome on Galatians 1.1. On other classical sources relating to the Jewish apostolate, see Juster, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 389-90 and, in particular, nn. 7, 1-3 and 1-2. See also my *Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai*, pp. 153-54; A. Buechler, "Apostoli," *JE*, II, pp. 20-21; and the secondary literature Buechler cites there. Note also Tosefta Sanhedrin 2.6 and Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 11b, where the regulation of the calendar is designated as the exclusive privilege of the patriarch, and is delegated by him to such men as Meir and Akiba, who act for him, either in fact proclaiming the intercalation or merely announcing it, in various Jewish districts. Note also TB Rosh Hashanah 25a. S. Krauss, "Apostle and Apostleship," *JE*, II, pp. 19-20. G. Allon, *Toledot Ha Yehudim b'Erez Yisrael biTekufat HaMishnah VehaTalmud* (Tel Aviv, 1954) discusses the apostolate in the time of Gamaliel II at some length, cf. vol. I, p. 79. See also A. Kaminka, "Rabbi Akiba's Journey to the East," HaDoar, 1949; Adolf Harnack, *The Mission*

high Jerusalem officials.[1] One of them, Judah b. Bathyra, lived in Nisibis, a frontier garrison town frequently disputed by Rome and Parthia before the time of Trajan. The town was the chief transfer point for Temple funds coming from Babylonia. Temple funds were collected at Nehardea, near Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and shipped, via one first-century trade route between the Mesopotamian parallelogram and Syria-Palestine, up the Euphrates to the frontier at Nisibis, and thence southwestward to Jerusalem, via Trachanea. In addition, at Nisibis funds were collected for the Temple from Jews who lived in Adiabene.[2] So Josephus reports:

> The Jews, depending on the natural strength of these places [Nisibis and Nehardea] deposited in them that half-shekel which every one by the custom of our country offers unto God, as well as they did other things devoted to him, for they made use of these cities as a treasury whence at a proper time they were transmitted to Jerusalem (*Antiquities*, XVIII, 9, 1).

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and Expansion of Christianity (repr. New York, 1961), pp. 3, 15, 58f, 327f; and Goodenough, *op. cit.*, I, 12-17.

[1] On the identification of the "Bne Bathyra," see also S. Krauss, "Bne Bathyra," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, I, 598; Y. I. Halevy, *Doroth Rishonim* (Berlin-Vienna, 1923), I, v, 190-99; Hugo Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, 1961), 44, 109, 112, 115, 164, 201, 214, and especially p. 19 and nn. 113-25. I do not believe that my thesis depends upon close identification of the Bne Bathyra vis-à-vis the Temple administration or Hillel. See above, p. 40 n. 1.

[2] On Nisibis, see M. Seligsohn, "Nisibis," *JE*, II, IX, 314; Neubauer, *op. cit.*, p. 370; *Arukh Completum*, *s.v.*; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.9, 1,9; Halevy, *op. cit.*, I, v, 693. Josephus says that the Jews would deposit the half-shekel in Nisibis and Nehardea, whence funds were transmitted to Jerusalem. It seems unlikely that the Nehardean funds were transmitted via Palmyra, which before the destruction of Jerusalem had not fully achieved the importance it later had as a way station on the direct route from Seleucia-Ctesiphon to Syria-Palestine. See M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities* (Oxford, 1932), 30; M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1924), *passim*. Josephus seems to imply, however, that Nisibis was in Babylonia. (*Antiquities* 18.9.1), "There was a city in Babylonia called Nearda... There was also the city Nisibis, situated on the same current of the river..." In 18.9.9, he refers to Nehardea and Nisibis as in "Babylonia." However, Nisibis was not on the Euphrates, but on the Mygdonias River, an affluent of the Khabur, which flowed into the Euphrates, and not in Babylonia but in northern Mesopotamia (sometimes included in Adiabene). Some have assumed that there was a Nisibis in Babylonia, in addition to Nisibis on the Mygdonius. I find it difficult to agree, because there is no evidence whatever that there was a second Nisibis in Babylonia. Rather, Josephus seems to have had the idea that Babylonia included all territories east of the Euphrates. Geographical divisions were by no means clear-cut and the application of "Babylonia" not always precise. Furthermore, he mentions Nisibis in connection with Artabanus' donation to Izates in 36, without indicating that this was a different place from that discussed here. See *Antiquities*, XX. 3.3. See also N. Pigulevskaja, *Les Villes de l'État Iranien aux Époques Parthe et Sassanide*, Paris, 1963, pp. 49-60.

Judah b. Bathyra was in frequent contact with the money-changers of Nisibis, as we learn from the following story:

> Rabbi Yosi said, Once I visited Nisibis, and I saw an old man there, and I said to him, Have you ever been expert in the teachings of R. Judah b. Bathyra, and he said to me, Rabbi, I was a money-changer in my city, and he used to change money at my table... (Yer. Talmud Yevamoth 12:1 and Bab, Talmud Yevamoth 102a).

He was also in communication with the Temple authorities, as attested by the following:

> A certain Syrian used to go up and partake of the Passover sacrifices in Jerusalem, boasting, It is written, No alien shall eat thereof... (Exod. 12:43, 48), and yet I eat of the very best. Said R. Judah b. Bathyra to him, Did they supply you with the fat-tail? No, replied the man. Then when you journey up there, say to them, Give me the fat-tail. When he went up he said to them, Give me the fat-tail. But the fat-tail belongs to the Most High [it was burned on the altar]. Who told you this, they asked. R. Judah b. Bathyra, he replied. What is this matter before us, they wondered. They inquired into his lineage, found that he was a Syrian, and killed him. They sent a message to R. Judah b. Bathyra: Peace be with you, Rabbi Judah b. Bathyra, for you are in Nisibis, and yet your net is spread in Jerusalem! (Bab. Talmud Pesahim 3b).[1]

Finally, while the later Tannaim claimed that some Temple officials adhered to their party, such as "Rabbi" Ishmael b. Phiabi, it can be shown that R. Judah b. Bathyra was certainly a Pharisee. He offered a proof that the water-offering was legitimate, a point of partisan dispute between Sadducees and Pharisees.[2] Later Tannaim preserved extensive traditions about him, and several leading Tannaim of the next generations transmitted his teachings.

These facts show that in the person of Judah b. Bathyra the Pharisees had a powerful and loyal adherent in Nisibis, in easy communication with Nehardea, at the heart of Babylonian Jewry to the southeast, and Jerusalem (and Yavneh) to the southwest. Judah b. Bathyra represents the first known important tannaitic authority resident outside of Palestine. His place in the transmission of tannaitic Judaism to Babylonia was analagous to that of Addai of Edessa in the foundation

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[1] On the right to inflict the death penalty for infractions of Temple rules, see Josephus, *Antiquities*, 15.11.15.

[2] On Ishmael b. Phiabi, see this writer's *Life of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 51-53. Judah b. Bathyra's proofs for the legitimacy of the water-offering are in Bab. Talmud Shabbath 103b, Sifre Numbers 150.

of Christianity in the Iranian empire. Christianity moved eastward in two stages. First, it reached the upper Euphrates, where it was established in Edessa by the apostle Addai, and second, moved eastward and southward from the Edessan base, carried by apostles and traders, the main lines of development following the trade routes which radiated from the upper Euphrates northward to Armenia, southward to Babylonia and the middle Euphrates, and eastward to Khuzistan.[1] The presence of Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis must have been equally important for tannaitic Judaism. With a school there, the Tannaim had a way station for the propagation of the faith. The conversion, during the first century, of the Adiabenian aristocracy, by a Jewish merchant, was likely to have been facilitated by the presence a short distance away of such a center of tannaitic Judaism (as we shall note below, Section viii).

The sources on Judah b. Bathyra pose a peculiar problem, however, for they indicate that two men by that name lived in Nisibis, as was first pointed out by the Tosafists (Bab. Talmud Menahoth 65b-66a). It seems to me that these sources may be understood historically within the postulate that there were, in fact, two Judah b. Bathyras in Nisibis, the first during the decades before and after the destruction of the Temple, and the second from approximately 100 to 160 c.e. All the historically relevant sources may be satisfactorily explained within such a hypothesis.[2]

One source indicates, at the very least, the continuing identification of the name of Judah b. Bathyra (which one we cannot say) with Nisibis at least until the beginning of the third century:

> Righteousness, righteousness, pursue! Go after the sages to the academy, after R. Eliezer to Lud, after R. Yohanan b. Zakkai to Beror Hail, after R. Joshua to Peki'in, after R. Gamaliel to Yavneh, after R. Akiba to Bene Brak, after R. Mattiah to Rome, after R. Hananiah b. Teradion to Sikhnin, after R. Yosi to Sepphoris, after R. Judah b. Bathyra to Nisibis, after R. Hananiah nephew of R. Joshua to the Golah, after Rabbi [Judah the Prince] to Beth She'arim, after the sages to the Hewn-Stone chamber (Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 32b).

The very unusual locations of the sages, R. Yohanan b. Zakkai in Beror Hail for example (where, it is assumed, he died after leaving Yavneh) and the inclusion of the name of R. Hananiah who, as we

[1] On the rise of Christianity, see below, Appendix II.

[2] Compare Halevy, *op. cit.*, I, v, 190-99, 681-88, and see below, Ch. Four, section II.

shall see, did not entirely please the Palestinian sages, as well as the reference to the sages of the Hewn-Stone chamber (obviously at the time of the Temple's reconstruction, in the messianic age) prevent a very close historical reading of the passage; but it is clear, at least, that the name of Judah b. Bathyra was associated with Nisibis for more than a century and a half, from before 70 c.e. to the time of R. Judah the Prince.

In Nisibis, as we have seen, Judah b. Bathyra (I) maintained close connections with the highest authorities of the Temple. He collected and supervised the transfer of Temple funds and, in addition to his correspondence with the Temple authorities, probably visited the city before 70 as well. The following report suggests that he was a witness to an event there:

> R. Judah b. Bathyra said, It once happened that the Trough of Jehu in Jerusalem had a hole in it as big as the spout of a water skin, and all the acts in Jerusalem requiring cleanness were done after immersing the vessels therein. But the School of Shammai sent and broke it down... (Mishnah Miqwaoth 4:5).[1]

He regulated the affairs of at least part of the Jewish community assembled in the synagogue (not merely in his school).[2] He was particularly interested in matters of law relating to the Temple,[3] and was probably well informed about the war that raged around it in 66-70, as the following saying indicates:

> R. Judah b. Bathyra says, How do we know that if the pagans surround the entire court, the priests nonetheless enter into there and eat of the holy offerings, as it is said, In the holy of holies they shall eat it (Num. 18:10) (Bab. Talmud Zevahim 63a).[4]

Although such a saying might apply equally well to the earlier conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey, the question is phrased not as a "tradition," but rather as a living issue, and hence probably applies to the period at hand. He likewise taught:

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[1] Mishnah Miqwaoth 4:5. Compare also the report of Joshua b. Bathyra in Bab. Talmud Menahoth 103b; and Judah b. Bathyra's sayings about the Temple in Bab. Talmud Menahoth 103b, 'Eduyyoth 8:1. See also Y. N. Epstein, *Mevo'oth leSifruth haTannaim* (Jerusalem, 1957), 441.

[2] See Sifra Ahare Moth 13:9, Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 22a, Yer. Talmud Berakhoth 3:4. These incidents clearly took place at Nisibis.

[3] On Temple traditions of R. Judah b. Bathyra, see Bab. Talmud Yoma 28b, Sanhedrin 88a, 'Arakhin 28b.

[4] Compare Mekhilta Shabbath 1:60

> R. Judah b. Bathyra says, Suppose the gentiles surrounded the cities of Israel, and the Israelites in self-defense had to profane the Sabbath. The Israelites should not in any such a case say, Since we had to profane part of the Sabbath, we might as well continue to profane the rest of the day... (Mekhilta Shabbath 1:60).

He shared in the general discussions after 70 on the difference between the age in which the Temple stood and the present time:

> R. Judah b. Bathyra says, When the Temple was standing, the only pleasure was in meat,... but now that the Temple is not standing, the only pleasure is in wine (Bab. Talmud Pesahim 21b).

He discussed with R. Simeon b. Gamaliel the frontiers of Palestine (Bab. Talmud Bekhoroth 55a), which would indicate, if this is Judah b. Bathyra I and Simeon b. Gamaliel I (and not, which is unlikely, Judah b. Bathyra II and Simeon b. Gamaliel II) that when he actually came to Palestine, he visited the Jerusalem academy as well as the Temple. His colleagues in Palestine, in any case, consulted him on matters of law, both before and after the destruction. For example, he corresponded with Yohanan b. Bag Bag (b. Bag Bag was a disciple of Hillel, and hence his son would have lived during the last decades of the Temple and after the destruction):

> And already had Yohanan b. Bag Bag sent to R. Judah b. Bathyra at Nisibis: I have heard of you that you maintain... He sent back: And do you not rule likewise? I am certain of you that you are well versed in the secrets of the Torah, and able to infer a minori... (Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 10b, Yer. Talmud Kethuvoth 5:4).

After the destruction, he may well have attended the Yavneh academy, at least from time to time, and Halevi's suggestion that he was part of the clan of Bathyra who challenged Yohanan b. Zakkai's authority there is by no means far-fetched. He was certainly present once during the time of R. Gamaliel II:

> R. Joshua and R. Judah b. Bathyra testified that the widow of one who belonged to an 'Isah family was eligible for marriage with a priest... R. Gamaliel said, We should accept your testimony, but what shall we do? For R. Yohanan b. Zakkai decreed that courts may not be called into session concerning this matter. The priests would listen to you in what concerns putting away, but not in what concerns bringing near... ('Eduyyoth 8:3).[1]

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[1] Compare also Bab. Talmud Kethuvoth 14a, 26b. His testimony with Joshua is cited also in Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 75a.

(The association with R. Joshua will appear more significant in connection with R. Joshua's nephew Hananiah.)

When R. Yosi visited Nisibis, he found an old man who remembered the teachings of R. Judah b. Bathyra. If the first Judah b. Bathyra, long deceased, was recalled during the first third of the second century only by a very old man, then R. Judah b. Bathyra I probably died before the turn of the second century, certainly before or during 116, when Roman capture of the city unleashed a great slaughter.

VI. Nehemiah of Bet Deli in Nehardea

A second first-century Tanna in Babylonia was Nehemiah of Beth Deli, a student of Rabban Gamaliel I, and possibly one of the "brethren of the Golah" to whom Gamaliel, Simeon b. Gamaliel I, and Yohanan b. Zakkai addressed their letters. On the basis of these letters and the report that follows, we may conclude that there were certainly some Jews in Babylonia who were in contact with Palestinian Tannaim:

> Rabbi Akiba said, When I went down to Nehardea to intercalate the year, Nehemiah of Beth Deli met me, and he said to me, I have heard that in the land of Israel, the sages, excepting R. Judah b. Bava [see 'Eduyyoth 6:1] do not allow a woman to marry again on the evidence of one witness [that her first husband is dead]. I answered, It is so. Tell them in my name, he said, I received a tradition from R. Gamaliel the Elder that they may allow a woman to remarry on the evidence of one witness. And when I came and recounted the matter before R. Gamaliel II, he rejoiced at my words, and said, We have now found a fellow for R. Judah b. Bava (Mishnah Yevamoth 16:7 and Bab Talmud Yevamoth 115a).

Since Nehemiah said that he had heard about contemporary disputes among Palestinian Tannaim at the end of the first century, he must have had at least occasional communication from the new consistory at Yavneh. Since he also said that he had *heard* from Gamaliel I, he probably studied with him in Jerusalem before 50 c.e. (like other diaspora Jews such as Paul), by which time, it is generally assumed, Gamaliel I died. He must have been young at the time, for two reasons: first, we know that students at the Pharisaic schools generally came not long after early adolescence, and second, R. Akiba's trip to Babylonia took place after 80 and before 110 c.e. Moreover, it is not likely that Nehemiah was a disciple of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel or R. Yohanan ben Zakkai between 50 and 68 c.e., for if he had been, the tradition he received from Gamaliel I would have been reported by him

directly to these men and transmitted in his name by them (as it was by R. Judah b. Bava) to the academy at Yavneh.

Hence we may conclude that Nehemiah migrated to Babylonia before 50 c.e. Thus a student of Gamaliel I lived there until ca. 100 c.e. and maintained contact with Palestine. Nehemiah must have had far broader knowledge of tannaitic law and tradition than this one quotation indicates, and he represented one means by which tannaitic teachings reached Babylonia before 70 c.e.[1]

VII. Jewish Self-Government in First-Century Babylonia

While we have considerable information about the Resh Galuta (Exilarchate) during and after the third century, very little information is available on the basis of which to describe its constitution and development in the Arsacid age. I shall present the problem as follows: first, the probable origins of the Exilarchate in the first century, and second, in Chapter Three, sections viii-ix, the evidences on Jewish self-government in second-century Babylonia, and on the relationship between R. Hiyya, the Resh Galuta, R. Huna, and R. Judah the Prince.

If an Exilarch existed before the end of the first century, he left no evidence of his influence and, for all practical purposes, one can hardly say that such an institution existed as an effective force. It has been argued[2] that since we have no affirmative evidence on the political

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[1] Compare the source cited here with 'Eduyyoth 8:5. See also G. Allon, *Toledoth haYehudim b'Erez Yisrael biTekufath haMishnah vehaTalmud* (Tel Aviv, 1954), p. I, 150. Beth Deli was a Galilean village; see A. Neubauer, *La Géographie du Talmud* (Paris, 1868), 263. On the age of students in the Pharisaic academies, see Josephus, *Vita*, 2, and Finkelstein, *Mavo le Massekheth Avoth* (New York, 1950), p. 112. On the letters to Babylonia, see Tosefta Sanhedrin 2:2, Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 11b, Yer. Talmud Sanhedrin 1:2. D. Hoffman, ed., *Midrash Tannaim* (Berlin, 1909), 175-76, and above, p. 42 n. 1.

[2] S. W. Baron, *The Jewish Community* (Philadelphia, 1942), I, pp. 68-69, 145-50, 173-86; III, 12, n. 2. Note that when the Palestinian Pharisees wrote letters to their "brethren in the Exile," they did not address these letters to an Exilarch. If there was an exilarch, he did not matter to the Jerusalem Pharisees; he did not affect events between 20 and 35 in Babylonia; and certainly had no standing with the government, such as it was. Moreover, it is argued that Josephus "does not choose to relate details of interest to Jews alone." But I fail to see why the story about Asineus and Anileus is of greater interest to his Roman audience than details about an Exilarch would have been to them; such a long story about the brigand brothers does not, it seems to me, possess any particular interest to the Roman reader, and furthermore, items of interest to Jews alone are included in Josephus' account elsewhere. See also J. H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve Dorshav* [German title: Zur Geschichte der Jüdischen Tradition] (Vilna, 1904), III, p. 31.

condition of Babylonia Jewry at this time, the preceding statement represents an argument from silence. It is admittedly an argument from silence, but in this case, the silence is practically probative, because we have a story which gives a vivid picture of Jewish relations with the Parthian administration in Babylonia, namely, that of Anileus and Asineus.[1] We may usefully summarize Josephus' account. In Nehardea there were two men, Asineus and Anileus, who were weavers. They were mistreated by the master to whom they had been apprenticed. They fled from him, carrying away weapons in the house, and becoming cattle raisers. They were joined by other young men, whom they armed. They built a citadel and collected "protection" from the surrounding cattlemen. Finally, their strength attracted the interest of the "king of Parthia." The governor of Babylonia marched against the brothers' force with a large group of Parthians and Babylonians. He thought he would attack on the Sabbath, presuming that the Jews would not fight on that day. But Asineus heard the neighing of horses "not such as are feeding, but such as have men on their backs." They sent out scouts, and he was proved right. Thereupon the Jews fell upon their enemies, killing many and putting the rest to flight. When the king of Parthia, Artabanus, heard this, he called the brothers under a flag of truce. Anileus was sent and, seeing that Asineus had not come, the king took an oath that the brothers would be safe at his court and sent Anileus back to fetch him. Now, Josephus tells us, Artabanus did so "because he wanted to curb his own governors of the provinces by the courage of these Jewish brethren, lest they should make a league with them, for they were ready for a revolt and were disposed to rebel, had they been sent on an expedition against them. He was also afraid

[1] *Antiquities*, XVIII, 9, 1-9. As to the credibility of Josephus' narrative, see Eugen Täubler, *Die Parthernachrichten bei Josephus* (Berlin, 1904), pp. 62-63. Täubler holds that the story, unattested elsewhere, was part of some kind of oral tradition among Mesopotamian Jews. Josephus' traditions on Babylonia are generally accurate, when we are able to test them against numismatic evidence. See McDowell, *Coins*, p. 227. See also McDowell, *Coins*, p. 225, on Seleucia in the same period; A. Von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig, 1879), III, 43-55; N. C. Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-56; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-44. Debevoise dates the affair from approximately 20 to 35 c.e., that is, preceding the revolt of Seleucia. This is reasonable, because the flight to Seleucia would have been less likely had that city been in revolt against the government, as it was from 36 to 43. We note, therefore, that the state of Anilai and Asinai coincided with the rise to power of the Jewish king of Adiabene, Izates I, see below, section viii. See also PW s.v. Seleucia (am Tigris) col. 1178-79. On the state of Anileus and Asineus, see Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, lines 310-79; A. von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften*, III, 53-55; N. C. Debevoise, *op. cit.*, p. 155; George Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-45.

lest when he was engaged in a war in order to subdue those governors of provinces that had revolted, the party of Asineus and those in Babylonia should be augmented and make war upon him"... or otherwise do mischief. Artabanus of this story was obviously Artabanus III, a descendant of the female line of the Arsacids, who were closely connected with Hyrcania and reigned over Media Atropatene. He came to the throne in 16, yielded it to Tiridates in 35, was recalled in 36, but fled again, dying in obscurity in 44.[1] Thus the details of Josephus' story are entirely congruent to the setting of a weak and insecure government of a ruler of the cadet line, faced with constant threat of rebellion and anxious to conciliate to his authority any powerful group. At any point, the satraps might revolt, and the creation of a force dependent for its legitimacy on his authority would be significant support for Ardavan. The Jews were an important group at the heart of his empire, and if a segment of them might be won over, it would mark a step toward instituting some kind of loyal feudatory in a strategically important area of the empire, in which Artabanus had few natural allies. Artabanus received the brothers kindly, expressed admiration for Asineus' courage, and forbade his general, Abdagases, from harming him. He then said to Asineus, according to Josephus' account, "I commit to thee the country of Babylonia in trust, that it may, by thy care, be preserved free from robbers and other mischiefs." Syrians, Hellenists, and Iranians in the area could hardly have favored Artabanus' action, yet it would have served his interest to create a dependent authority disliked by sections of the population over which it ruled. When Asineus returned home, he fortified his territory, and "those Parthian governors, also, who were sent that way, paid him great respect, and the honor that was paid him by the Babylonians seemed to them too small and beneath his deserts, although he was in no small dignity and power there; nay indeed, all the affairs of Mesopotamia depended on him, and he more and more flourished in this happy condition of his for fifteen years." These years were likely to have been approximately 20 to 35.

If there was a local Jewish Exilarch, or any kind of ethnarch whatever, he played no role in this account. If Artabanus had wished to strengthen a pre-existent Jewish figure for the political purposes noted above, the story gives no indication whatever that he was able to do so; or that he consulted such an ethnarch; or that such an authority visited

[1] Ghirshman, *Iran* (New York, 1954), p. 348.

the territory and paid respect to the brigand rulers; or that such an authority had earlier been sufficient to keep the peace even among the Jews.

Josephus emphasized that the brothers fell from power because they transgressed Jewish law. A certain Parthian, who was general of an army that came into these parts, had a particularly lovely wife. Anileus became her paramour and when her husband was killed in battle, he married her. She continued to worship her former gods, and this angered the Jews under Anileus, who objected both to the marriage and to the religious practices of their leader's wife (see Gen. 31.19, 30-35). When a close associate protested, Anileus killed him, and the Jews heard about worship of pagan gods by their general's wife. Many complained to Asineus of Anileus' doings, and emphasized that "the marriage of this woman was made without their consent and without a regard to their own laws, and that the worship which this woman paid was a reproach to the God whom they worshipped." Asineus eventually asked Anileus to send the woman away, but hearing about it, Anileus' wife poisoned her brother-in-law, knowing that her husband would not punish her.

Anileus led his army against the "villages of Mithridates, a man of principal authority in Parthia, and married to King Artabanus' daughter," plundering the area of money and supplies. This was his fatal error; Mithridates, who had never interfered with Anileus' activities in his home territory, became his enemy. Mithridates marched against the Jewish general, but, forewarned by a friendly Syrian, Anileus attacked (again, on the Sabbath), and triumphed. He set Mithridates naked on an ass, but would not kill him, because "it was not right to kill a man who was one of the principal families among the Parthians and greatly honored with marrying into the royal family..." If, he thought, he did not kill him, the king would be grateful, while if he did, the Jews as a group would suffer. Mithridates was released, and his wife, the king's daughter, aroused him to avenge the dishonor. Mithridates thereupon gathered a larger force than before and won a partial victory over the Jews, though Anileus escaped. He fled to Nehardea, and the Babylonians sent there to demand him. The Jews were not able to give him up, through they wanted to make peace with the Babylonians. Here again, in Nehardea, there was apparently no local authority able to take charge of affairs, strong enough even in his own village to hand over the fugitive and his defeated remnants. But the Babylonians (that is, not the Parthian general) found out where

Anileus was and killed him, thereupon instituting a great pogrom. The Babylonians attacked the Jews, and "the Jews" fled Nehardea and settled in Seleucia and lived there for five years. But eventually, the Greeks there slew "the Jews, about fifty-thousand of them." The remnants retired to the Parthian city of Ctesiphon. "Now the whole nation of the Jews were in fear both of the Babylonians and of the Seleucian Hellenists, because all the Syrians that lived in these places agreed with the Seleucians in the war against the Jews so that the Jews fled to Nehardea and Nisibis, where they were secure because of the strength of these cities..." Why they were secure in Nehardea now, and not earlier, one cannot say; at any rate, such, Josephus concludes, was the state of the Jews at this time in Babylonia.

If we had no such story as this, we might well have concluded that no evidence is available on the basis of which to consider whether there was a Jewish political force in Babylonia. We do, however, have *this* story, which tells us that there *was* a Jewish feudal lord for a period of fifteen years, that he was not an "Exilarch," or ethnarch, that when the shahanshah wanted to conciliate Jewish settlements in Babylonia, he did not have recourse to an existent, exilarchic institution, and that the only effective Jewish force he found to deal with was, in fact, the robber-barony of the revolted brothers.

These were not the only Jews with whom Artabanus had dealings in these troubled years. At Charax-Spasinu, on the Persian Gulf, a Jewish merchant Hananiah converted a number of women to Judaism, and also Izates, youngest son of the king of Adiabene.[1] When he returned to Adiabene, he found that the queen, his mother, had also been converted to Judaism. Izates eventually became king, sending his brethren as hostages to Rome and Parthia. When Artabanus fled (presumably in 36) from his rebellious subjects, he took refuge with Izates, who gave him every assistance. Cinnamus, then ruling in Parthia, restored Artabanus to this throne, and as a reward to Adiabene, he added some territories including Nisibis, and otherwise honored Izates.

Shortly after the flight of Artabanus, a major revolt took place. Between 36 and 43, Seleucia was apparently independent of Parthian rule, according to Tacitus (Annals, 11.9):

> When Vardanes returned, Seleucia capitulated to him, seven years after its revolt, little to the credit of the Parthians, whom a single city had so long defied.

[1] *Antiquities*, XX, 2-4. See below, section viii.

The revolt of Seleucia was merely a detail in the civil war raging in Parthia at this time.[1] The struggle between Tiridates and Artabanus and, after them, Vardanes I and Gotarzes II, led to a virtual interregnum, in which no Parthian authority actually governed Babylonia. At this time, local coinage was issued without the insignia of Parthian overlordship. Gotarzes re-established control of Seleucia in about 46.

When the Parthians under Vologases (51-79) tried to reorganize the realm, they were entirely aware of the power of the Jewish satrapy to the north and must also have known about Artabanus' experience both with Adiabene and with the Jewish barony only recently overcome at the heart of the empire. Vologases (51-79) was trying to curb the power of the nobles, to establish a secure frontier with Rome and to avoid foreign disasters and re-establish stable government and trade.[2]

Vologases was not immediately successful. There was a general revolt in the eastern satrapies in about 58, and the central government was not effective before the close of 70. Vologases generally supported the Greek aristocratic parties and was opposed by the nobility and by native popular parties. The continued disloyalty of native groups in Seleucia, and the consequent disruption of transit trade, may have resulted directly in the decision to build a new center of trade at Vologasias, through which the royal government could better control and secure international trade. In any case, the central government apparently favored ethnic minorities in preference to native groups, according to McDowell. This conforms to the policy of Artabanus, noted above.

What did the Parthian government know about the Jews? It knew that they were numerous in the area about the capital at Ctesiphon; that they had powerful sympathizers to the north; that to the west, in Palestine, they were sufficiently powerful to engage large Roman forces (and hence to save Armenia from Nero's designs);[3] and that the empire's stability could not be assured if this numerous group was not properly governed, but might greatly be secured and even enhanced through the constitution of a stable feudatory dependent upon the throne and loyal to its interests. The government must therefore have given considerable attention to the affairs of this ethnic group. From

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[1] McDowell, *Coins*, pp. 225-30.

[2] On his commercial policy, zee A. Maricq, "Vologesias, l'emporium de Ctesiphon," *Syria*, XXXVI, 1959, 264-67. See also McDowell, *op. cit.*, p. 229. On his religious reforms, see Denkart 4.24, and Duchesne-Guillemin, *op. cit.*, p. 224f.

[3] A. Schalit, "Roman Policy in the East," *Tarbiz*, VII, 1935, 159-80.

the events of 20 to 36 it was clear that suitable, stable government was essential for the Jews, and from the record of Artabanus' deposition from and restoration to power, Vologases must have known that securing the loyalty of the Jews could have beneficial consequences for his own throne, perhaps securing the loyalty also of the Adiabenian converts. Further, since the Jews included traders and merchants who traveled far and wide, they might prove a means of further developing trade at his new emporium at Vologasias.

We know, moreover, that in the next century, the Jews were among the most powerful and loyal supporters of the Parthian cause against Trajan; that in Palestine, circles of Jewish messianic nationalists were prepared to cooperate with the Parthians against Rome; that the former unrest in Jewish Babylonia was (so far as we know) not repeated; and that some kind of Jewish civil authority existed there in the time of R. Ḥananiah the nephew of R. Joshua, R. Nathan, and R. Ḥiyya (evidences of which we shall consider below in Chapter Three). All of these facts point to a successful reorganization of Jewish affairs in Parthia.

What choices were open to the Arsacid authorities at the time of the reorganization of the empire by Vologases I? They could, of course, ignore the Jewish problem entirely and allow events to take their course in Jewish territories and settlements. This was manifestly unsatisfactory and ran entirely contrary to Vologases' need to restore stable government throughout Parthia. They could, secondly, attempt to include the government of Jewish ethnic groups within the territorial authority consituted in the areas in which they lived. Thus the Jews about Seleucia-Ctesiphon (where they were most numerous) could have been placed under the civil authorities of that city. But this was not a policy that the Arsacids could have followed, for three reasons. First of all, the Jews there as elsewhere possessed numerous traditions of law and religion, and, in many matters, these traditions were of no consequence whatever to the government, though of enormous interest to the Jews. Hence, as in the Roman diaspora, it was clear that the Jews would require some internal authority to deal with religious, social, legal, and cultural matters of no consequence to the government. It would thus not be sufficient to leave their government in the hands of territorial authorities. Second, Greek Seleucia was not then among the most loyal adherents of the throne, and the Jews and Greeks got on no better in Babylonia, according to Josephus' narrative, than they did in Alexandria. Hence the possibility of including both, and

Semites, under one all-embracing territorial authority was impractical and impolitic. So long as all paid taxes and kept the peace, the imperial government could not care less about Semite, Greek, Jew, or Iranian, but it did need to placate all groups. The poor relationships existing among them necessitated separated authority for the Jews, at least. This much is clear from the story of Anileus and Asineus, that Greek or Semitic authority was inimical to the Jews, and vice versa. Third, the Jewish settlements were not geographically compact or isolated, but existed alongside settlements of other ethnic groups. Therefore, the government could not set up a separate, unitary territorial authority.

Yet, as we have seen, provision of a powerful, able authority among the Jews might render them an important political and military support for the throne, just as the absence of such a force might leave them a source of instability. If an ethnic authority could be developed and win the loyalty of the Jews, then the Arsacid regime could accomplish several useful purposes. First, it would insure effective government in those villages and towns that were wholly populated by Jews, and secure protection for the Jewish minorities in the Greek, Semitic, and Babylonian areas. Second, it would win the loyalty of strategically vital territories. Third, in time it might make use of the authority so constituted for the purposes of Parthian foreign policy by exploiting the Jews' political and economic connections with Roman Palestine. Finally, the policies of Jewish Adiabene must have interested the Arsacids, and any effort to conciliate Jewish opinion in Babylonia could not ignore the pro-Jewish sympathies of part of the ruling classes there; an ethnarch for the Jews in Babylonia might establish ties with the Adiabenian throne, and if both were loyal to the Arsacids, the Parthian imperial interest would greatly benefit.

These are reasons, therefore, for Parthian efforts to constitute a Jewish ethnarch. The form of such an ethnarchy was determined by Parthian political institutions: Parthia was a highly feudalized state, with many kinds of authorities bearing fealty to the throne. For the Jews, likewise, a feudal ruler was required, one who would hold office by the grace of the shahanshah to rule over carefully delineated areas or groups. We have no evidence on the basis of which to date the institution of the exilarchate. It is likely to have begun during Vologases' reorganization of the empire. By the first third of the second century, at the latest, such a Jewish local self-government did exist. We shall consider that evidence below. Here we note the evidence on

the first century in the *Seder Olam Zuta*. The relevant passage is as follows:[1]

> And Shekeniah died, and Hezekiah his son arose after him, and the Sages were his spokesmen, and Hezekiah died, and was buried in the land of Israel in the Valley of Arabel, which belongs to Joshua b. Sharaf the Priest, eastward of the city, and Akov his son arose after him, and the sages were his spokesmen, and Akov died, and his son Nahum arose after him, and the sages were his spokesmen, Rav Huna and Rav Mattenah, and Rav Hinena, and Rav Hananel were his sages. And Nahum died and Yohanan his brother the son of Akov arose, and the sages were his spokesmen, Rav Hananel was his spokesman, and Yohanan died, and Shefet his son arose after him, and the sages were his spokesmen, Rav Hananel was his sage. And Shafat died, and arose after him Anan his son, and the sages were his spokesmen, and when he died, Nathan Ukban remained in his mother's womb, and the sages were his spokesmen—his is Nathan of Zuzita. In the year 166 of the destruction of the Temple [236] the Persians came upon the Romans, and Nathan died, and Huna his son arose after him, and the sages were his spokesmen, Rav and Samuel were his sages...

For the period before the destruction of Jerusalem, the *Seder Olam Zuta* has no reliable traditions whatever, but preserves only a series of names which is self-evidently an exegesis of I Chronicles 3.22-24. However, beginning with the destruction, the *SOZ* traditions are not mere exegesis, but historically relevant, and, as we shall see, preserve vague memories of actual historical figures.[2] We shall return to this question below (in Chapter Three, sections viii-ix).

VIII. The Conversion of Adiabene

We have already noted the conversion of the royal family of Adiabene to Judaism.[3] We may usefully consider the matter at greater length. Adiabene occupied part of the territories of ancient Assyria; when Trajan established the province of Assyria, he included Adiabene

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[1] Felix Lazarus, "Die Häupter der Vertriebenen," *Jahrbücher für Jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* (Frankfurt, 1890), X, 1-183. See also the excellent study of Moshe Ber, "The Exilarchate in Talmudic Times," *Ziyyon* 28, 1963, 1-33.

[2] See Lazarus, *op. cit.*, 66. See also W. Bacher, "Exilarch," *JE*, V, 288-93, who holds that only with the destruction of Jerusalem does the *Seder Olam Zuta* begin to provide historically reliable information. Ber holds that the Talmudic exilarchs' authority applied only to Babylonia. While we do not know the extent of their authority in Parthian times, Ber's view is most reasonable.

[3] See above, p. 54-55. See Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.9.9. See also Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12.

in it.[1] Nisibis, which was placed under Adiabenian rule by Artabanus, contained a Jewish population, as we have already noted, and was a center for the collection of Temple funds from the surrounding area. A Temple official, Judah b. Bathyra, lived there.[2] The neighboring lands, particularly Armenia, also had Jewish populations. In the first century, Armenia was ruled by a Jewish dynasty descended frgm Herod, as were Chalcis, Cappadocia, Iturea, and Abilene.[3] Further to the south, in Babylonia, large numbers of Jews lived, and at the time of the conversion of the nobility of Adiabene, they maintained an autonomous state under Anileus and Asineus.[4]

Before the first century, however, we have very little information about Adiabene. We know that it was taken by Tigranes the Great, but regained as a Parthian satrapy by Phraates in 64 b.c.e. It maintained a feudal relationship, under its own rulers, with the Parthian government. According to later tradition, Arsacid monarchs were buried in Arbela, capital of Adiabene.[5]

Josephus reported that Helene, the queen of Adiabene, and her son Izates embraced the Jewish faith.[6] Helene had married her brother, Monobazus, king of Adiabene, and in time, Izates was born. To safeguard the new heir from the envy of his half-brothers, Izates was sent

[1] See Dilleman, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-13, 289. Adiabene was principally east of the Tigris; the river was its western border according to Pliny, 6.10.28 and Tacitus, *Annals*, 12.13. But it increased westward and gained by the cession of Nisibis. See also Joachim Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung* (Leipzig, 1881), I, 435-48. Pliny, *Natural History*, VI, xvi, 42, reports that Nisibis and Alexandria were chief cities of Adiabene. On the other hand, Strabo, *Geography*, XVI, 1.1, line C. 737, implies that Nisibis was separate politically from Adiabene. On the remnants of the Ten Tribes of Northern Israel in the Khabur area, see above, p. 13-14. See also Abraham Ben-Yaakov, *Jewish Communities of Kurdistan* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem 1961) pp. 11-13. Kurdish Jews believe themselves descended from the Ten Tribes. See also J. Marquardt, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge*, 1903, p. 228f, and Pigulevskaja, *Villes*, pp. 52-7, 64-78, 94, 113-115, etc.

[2] See above section v. Note also that both Latin and Jewish writers identified Adiabene with ancient Assyria. Thus Ammianus Marcellinus (trans. J. C. Rolfe [New York, 1937]), 23.6.20, "...Adiabene, called Assyria in ancient times," and see Pliny V, 66. This is paralleled by the Targum, which identified Adiabene with the ancient northern Mesopotamian settlements referred to by Ezekiel. See Targum on Jer. 51.27, Ezekiel 27.23, Gen. 10.11. The identification of Khabur with Adiabene is made in Bab. Talmud Yevamoth 16b, Qiddushin 72a. See especially N. Brüll, "Adiabene," in *Jahrbücher f'r Jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* I, 1874, 58-60.

[3] See Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, i, 456f, I, ii, 10-42, 325-44; Reville, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[4] See above, section vii.

[5] See Fraenkel, "Adiabene," PW s.v. Compare Pliny, V, 66; Strabo, XI, 503, 530; XVI, 736, 745; Debevoise, *op. cit.*, 51, 71, 75; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, 87, 140, 145.

[6] *Antiquities*, XX, 17-37, 54.

to Charax Spasinu, on the Persian Gulf. Upon his father's death in 36, Izates was affirmed as his successor by a council of the nobles and grandees of Adiabene, in the Iranian manner. During his stay in Charax Spasinu, Izates was converted to Judaism by a Jewish merchant there, while, in the meantime, another merchant, Hananiah, had converted his mother. The royal family maintained close ties with Jerusalem and made every effort to impress the Palestinians, particularly the Pharisees, both with their loyalty to Judaism and with their benevolent attitude toward the Jews. That they succeeded is indicated by numerous Talmudic stories about the piety and generosity of both converts, as well as of Monobazes II, Izates' brother.[1]

Izates supported Artabanus III when he was deposed by the Parthian nobility in favor of Cinnamus,[2] and, after the restoration, was rewarded with the gift of Nisibis and the surrounding lands, which had been held by Armenia. The Adiabenians doubtless regarded the territories as legitimately their own in any case. Artabanus was succeeded by a Roman ally, Mithridates. When his rival, Vardanes, appealed to Izates II for assistance, the latter refused, because he was not convinced that the prospects for such a campaign were favorable. Vardanes thereupon invaded Adiabene, but the invasion of his brother Gotarzes prevented a vigorous campaign. The brothers struggled for several years, until the death of Vardanes, ca. 47-8. During the complicated dynastic struggle of the next few years, Izates pretended to favor Mithridates, who was assisted by a strong army to invade Armenia; but he actually favored Gotarzes and abandoned the former's cause as soon as he could. About 50, Gotarzes won undisputed possession of the throne, but died a year later. His successor, Vologases, invaded Armenia, at the same time threatening Izates. The threat to the Armenian highlands was met by a

[1] See J. Hamburger, *Real-Encyclopaedie*, II, s.v. Helene, 373-74, Izates, pp. 556-57, and Monobaz, p. 802. An excellent summary of these stories is in Brüll, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77. Helene built a very tall Sukkah in Lydda (Tosefta Sukkah 1); she made lavish donations to the Temple (Yoma 3.10), Monobaz was credited (Tosefta Peah 4, Pal. Talmud Peah 1,1; Bavli Baba Bathra 11a) with using all his resources to support the poor in a year of famine, etc. The debates on the circumcision of Izates and Monobaz are not relevant to our discussion. What is clear from both Talmudic literature and Josephus' account (which, surprisingly, contain substantial parallels) is that the Adiabenians made a tremendous impression on the Jews of Palestine, that their piety and generosity were long remembered, and that they became the foundation for a rich tradition of legends about a "Jewish kingdom" across the Euphrates. For a tradition on the later history of the house of Monobases, see my "Jews in Pagan Armenia", *JAOS* LXXXIV, and compare Xorenazi, II, Ch. 57.

[2] See Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-78. Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, III, 45-47.

Roman invasion under Corbulo in 57-8. He took Armenia by 60, and the Roman appointee, Tigranes V, proceeded to ravage Adiabene. Thereupon Vologases hastened to the Adiabenian front, where Izates' successor, Monobazes II, was greatly in need of Parthian assistance. After an indecisive campaign, Corbulo accepted a peace agreement with the Parthians and their Adiabenian allies at Rhandeia in 63 c.e. The Romans agreed to withdraw from Armenia and to negotiate the entire Armenian question at Rome. The agreement, consummated in 66 c.e., resulted in a Roman-Parthian condominium in Armenia.

There is considerable reason to believe that the Romans planned a new invasion of Armenia and Parthia in 66-7. A new legion was created for the purpose, and another was sent eastward. But the Jewish war in Palestine diverted considerable numbers of troops, and the invasion was abandoned.[1] The Adiabenians took an active part in the Jewish war against Rome. While Parthia did not openly intervene in the conflict, the government did not prevent Adiabenian Jews from participating in the revolution, and it is entirely probable that though prevented by treaty from intervening themselves, the Parthians had no objection whatever to the assistance rendered by their satrapy, as we shall see below. They had an excellent intelligence service in Rome, and doubtless knew of Roman plans to invade the east once again. They must, therefore, have found it expedient to permit the Adiabenians to do what the central government either could not, or would not, do itself. The result was substantial and important help for the Jewish rebels in Palestine, the only important support received by them from the diaspora.[2] After the war, Josephus specifically addressed himself to Adiabene, to see that the Roman view of the war was known there.

In the subsequent Roman invasions of Parthia, in 114-117, 161-165, and 193-195, Adiabene was always involved and consistently supported the Parthian cause until the fall of the Arsacids. We may summarize with the following chronology:[3]

Ca. 5 c.e.	Birth of Izates
36	Izates ascends the throne, receives Nisibis.
38	Deposition of Artabanus, struggle of Gotarzes and Vardanes

[1] Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-97. See also A. Schalit, *op. cit.*

[2] See Josephus, *War*, I, 6; ii, 388, 520; iv, 567; v, 147, 252, 474; vi, 342. It was clear that the Jerusalem rebels hoped for support from the diaspora (see II, 388), and the presence of high Adiabenian nobles doubtless encouraged this hope. A third, Nabataeus of Adiabene, is known as well. See V, 474. See below, p. 64 n. 3.

[3] See Brüll, *op. cit.*, p. 71, and compare Graetz, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-55.

43	Taking of Seleucia
44	War of Vardanes against Izates
45	War of Gotarzes and Vardanes
46	Vardanes murdered, war ends with Gotarzes as unopposed ruler
47	Mithridates versus Gotarzes
48	Izates goes over to Gotarzes against Mithridates
49/50	Gotarzes dies; Vonones to the throne
50/51	Vologases succeeds Vonones
56/7	Outbreak of war between Vologases and Izates. Hyrcanians invade, and Vologases abandons the project
60	Death of Izates; rise of Monobazes II.

As a general rule, the conversion of a ruling dynasty, as in the case of Constantine, must be regarded as politically, as well as religiously, significant. This is clear in Josephus' account of the conversion itself, for he makes it clear that the royal family feared a negative reaction on the part of the Adiabenian nobility to their conversion, and it may well be that such a reaction explains the support of some of the nobility for Izates' enemies. What political advantage, then, could have accrued to the house of Monobases by the conversion of his son and wife to Judaism?

We may well reconsider the position of the Jews at this period. First of all, in Babylonia itself, a powerful Jewish barony had established itself alongside the free city of Seleucia. Secondly, in surrounding territories, Jewish dynasts held power, and one of these territories, Armenia, was immediately adjacent to Adiabene. Third, Jews in Adiabene, including the newly-acquired Nisibis, though a minority, could not have been inconsequential. We know that Jews participated at this period in the rich international trade, and that the conversion of the monarchy itself was effected by Jewish merchants. Moreover, the Jews had a military tradition, and could influence movement of goods. Fourth, the Jews in Palestine were a powerful and militarily significant community. The effort of Agrippa[1] to assemble the petty kings of the Roman orient in Tiberias, and the immediate prohibition of the Roman legate in Syria, suggest that it was by no means out of the question for

[1] See Albert Réville, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-47. Note also the relationship of Abgar VII of Edessa with the Adiabenians. He was allegedly son of Izates II; see von Gutschmid, *Geschichte*, p. 140. If so, the conversion of Edessa to Christianity in the second century was probably preceded by some Jewish influence, accounting also for the easy access of Edessan Jews to the throne, and for the speedy conversion of the monarchy.

the Palestinians, in concert with some of their neighbors and co-religionists, to unite to oppose Rome throughout the Near East. Fifth, we know that like Agrippa, the Adiabenians went to great lengths to win over the Jews of Palestine. Thus, like Agrippa himself, they made every effort to cultivate the friendship of the Pharisees, and their success is attested in Pharisaic literature. At the same time, like Herod, they sought by munificent building projects to impress the Jerusalemites with the strength and magnanimity of the Jewish converts across the Khabour River.[1] And finally, as we shall note, the Adiabenians encouraged the Jewish revolution of 66-73, and two of the noble family actually took part in the opening action of the war, against Cestius.

In order to understand the meaning of these facts, we may refer again to the unachieved dream of Herod, who had, half a century earlier, made great efforts to ingratiate himself to the diaspora Jewries and to Hellenistic cities throughout the Near East. His policy of loyalty and support of Rome did not preclude activities aimed at winning the support of other Roman dependencies, as well as of groups outside of the empire. Likewise, the Adiabenian royal family may have had parallel ambitions, though geographically somewhat different in focus. From the perspective of the palace at Arbela, Adiabene, no less than Armenia, might well win an important place, with Parthian support, in Near Eastern politics, if it could gain the support of powerful and loyal allies. It was strategically located on the frontiers of Parthia to the south and east, and of Armenia to the north and west. At the time of the conversion, Parthia itself was in a state of weakness and dynastic struggle. No solidly established government existed throughout the Mesopotamian valley. Seleucia and the Jews around Nehardea were both autonomous. To the west, the Adiabenians saw the co-religionists of their Jewish minority impatiently enduring the government of incompetent Roman administrators of the lower class, and occasionally revolting when it seemed that matters were unbearable, or success, based on divine or human support, possible. Adiabene itself might be the capstone of a Jewish alliance, based on Palestine to the west and

[1] See Josephus, *War*, v, 147; vi, 366; iv, 567. The royal family adorned Jerusalem with buildings, including a palace (v. 253), tombs of enormous size (*Antiquities*, 20.95, *War*, v. 55, 119, 147), and, like Paul and Barnabas, Helene brought famine relief to Jerusalem under Claudius (*Antiquities*, 20.51f), and see above, p. 60 n. 1. On this last point, see also H. Graetz, "Zur der Anwesenheit der adiabenischen königin in Jerusalem und des Apostel Paulus," *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 26, 1877, pp. 241-55, 289-306.

Babylonia to the east, and dominated by Adiabene itself at the north. At this time, it was common for the royal families of Near Eastern principalities to lay great emphasis on religious rites. Thus the Armenian house of the Arsacids avoided traveling on, and hence contaminating, the oceans in their long and arduous land-voyage to Rome in 63-66. The Parthian Arsacids tried to retain the loyalty of their Iranian subjects by fostering Iranian religious traditions. The Adiabenians acted no differently therefore in cultivating the religion of a powerful minority in the Mesopotamian valley. They thus enhanced their possibilities of winning the alliance of other Jewish dynasties in the Near East and Asia Minor, and of the Palestinian Jews to the west.[1] As we shall see, the policy of the Adiabenians in Jerusalem at the outbreak of the war of 66-73 supports the hypothesis that their conversion had political as well as religious implications.

IX. Babylonian Jewry and the War of 66-73

Babylonian Jewry did not participate in the war of 66-73. There is no reference in Josephus' account of the war to Babylonian Jews' fighting in Palestine. Silas the Babylonian, whom he does mention, was probably descended from the settlers of Bathyra, for it was Palestinian practice to refer to them as "Babylonians."[2] The only support the rebels received was from Adiabene.

The Adiabenians had suffered greatly in the campaign of Corbulo and had no reason to accept the treaty of Rhandeia. When the war in Palestine broke out, therefore, the Adiabenian nobles Monobazes and Cenedaeus took part in the earliest engagement, the rout of Cestius, and played a leading role in subsequent fighting.[3] The Palestinians had

[1] On Adiabene and its conversion to Judaism, see also Neubauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 374-75; Aurel Stein, *Travels in Western Iran* (London) pp. 319f; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, II, ii, pp. 308-11; B. J. Bamberger, *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period* (Cincinnati, 1939), pp. 225-28; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, on Mithridates' campaign, p. 257; on the threat of Vologases I, p. 265; on the attack of Tigranes II, p. 271; on the conversion, pp. 246-53. On Trajan's war in Adiabene, see Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-33; Rawlinson, pp. 310-16; on the campaign of Septimius Severus there, Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-57; Rawlinson, pp. 336-38. There is no reason to assume that the Adiabenians would have acted differently toward Rome if they had not been converted to Judaism, however. They would have had to oppose Trajan and Septimius Severus, whatever their religion.

[2] Josephus, *Vita*, 47, 54, 177, 183, consistently refers to Philip, grandson of Zamaris, as a Babylonian. See especially 54, "...the 'Babylonian Jews' as they are called in Ecbatana [Batanea]."

[3] See *War*, II, 520, "among the Jewish Ranks the most distinguished were

sent embassies across the Euphrates. They had allegedly been warned to expect no help from Adiabene:

> What allies do you expect?... for in the habitable world, all are Romans, unless maybe the hopes of some of you soar beyond the Euphrates, and you count on obtaining aid from your kinsmen in Adiabene. But they will not for any frivolous pretext let themselves be embroiled in so serious a war, and if they did contemplate such folly, the Parthian would not permit it; for he is careful to maintain the truce with the Romans, and would regard it as a violation of the treaty if any of his tributaries were to march against them.[1]

In fact, the Parthians did not prevent the Adiabenians from joining in the fighting, and the Adiabenians sent the king's kinsmen to participate. In the light of our earlier discussion, however, they had a pretext which was not at all frivolous.

The Parthians, for their part, were aware of Roman troop movements threatening renewed hostilities in Armenia, as we have noted,[2] and while they kept the peace, they were surely not adverse to diverting Roman troops from the northern front. The Adiabenians, on the other hand, were anxious to win over their Palestinian co-religionists. They did not know at the outset that the Palestinian Jews would be defeated. They could not have foreseen the internecine strife which sapped Jewish strength, nor did they have reason to anticipate the inability of the Jews to meet the Romans in the open field. On the other hand, if the Palestinian Jews had won the war, the Adiabenians may well have hoped to be rewarded for their zealous participation in the fighting. The Herodians were discredited at the outset of the revolt. There was no chance that a victorious Jewish government would accept a Herodian monarch. While some Jews may have expected to be ruled after victory by the king-messiah, and at his side may have hoped to see a legitimate high priest, the Adiabenians probably saw themselves as likely candidates for the reconstituted monarchy. They were, after all, zealous and loyal converts and had made a deep impression on

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Monobazus and Cenedaeus, kinsmen of Monobazus king of Adiabene, next came Niger of Peraea, and Silas the Babylonian, a deserter to the Jews from the army of King Agrippa." We know that Zamaris' family provided troops for the Herodian royal army, and hence have no reason to assume that Silas actually came from Babylonia. If he did, however, he is the only Babylonian Jew whom we know about in the war of 66-73. See also III, 11, and VI, 356, "The Expedition was led by three men of first rate prowess and ability, Niger of Peraea, Silas the Babylonian, and John the Essene."

[1] *War*, II, 388.

[2] See Schalit, *op. cit.*

the Jews of Palestine. They knew, also, that the Jews had happily accepted the rule of Agrippa I, even though he was the descendant of an Idumaean convert, and had no reason to believe that their rule would have been rejected at the hour of a victory they helped to achieve. Furthermore, the Parthians could probably be relied upon to support an Adiabenian dynasty in Jerusalem, as they had earlier intervened in behalf of Antigonus. The Arsacids did not aspire to rule in the west, but only to establish there pro-Parthian dependencies. Thus the immediate interests of the Parthian government would be well served by Adiabenian intervention, and the long-term policy of both Arsacids and Adiabenians may well have been achieved by such intervention.

One cannot, on the other hand, so easily explain the apparent indifference of Babylonian Jewry to the war in Palestine. They would certainly not have been prevented by the Arsacids from sending assistance and men to Jerusalem, since the Adiabenians were permitted to do so. They received an embassy from Palestine asking for aid.[1] Yet so far as we can tell, before 70 c.e. they did nothing at all. The reason is probably that Babylonian Jewry simply could not have foreseen the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and, having no other immediate interest in the war, remained quiescent. The rebels in Palestine had no particular appeal to them. They did not represent a messianic cause. Though the Palestinians may have been motivated by messianic dreams, the Babylonian Jews shared neither their dreams nor the wordly distress that brought on the rebellion. When, on the other hand, the Temple was destroyed, Babylonian Jewry must have been deeply distraught. As we know, Josephus had to make every effort to explain the unhappy event in a manner favorable to Roman interests, and to show that it was not the malevolence of Rome but the foolishness of the Jewish rebels that led to the tragedy. Thus Josephus refers again and again to the benevolence of Vespasian and Titus, and to their efforts to protect the sanctuary. In this he was successful, for no Jewish revolts troubled the Euphrates frontier between 70 and the invasion of Trajan in 114-117, and the only fighting in the Roman diaspora was caused by Palestinian refugees.[2] We may conclude, there-

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[1] *War*, VI, 343. Titus accused the Jews of sending embassies to "your friends beyond the Euphrates, fostering revolt."

[2] Juster, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 183-84. On the importance of the Jews on the frontiers, see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, II, ii, p. 223. We should also note that there are numerous references in apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literature to "the east," such as

fore, that Babylonian Jewry would have fought to prevent the destruction of the Temple, but, not anticipating it, saw no reason to participate in the Palestinian rebellion. Perhaps it was for just this reason that the Romans left to the very end the destruction of Jerusalem, and claimed, even afterward, to be free of responsibility for the burning of the Temple. In any event, Babylonian Jewry, like the rest of the diaspora, was deeply grieved by the destruction, and when an appropriate moment came, fought vigorously against Rome, partly at least to avenge the sanctuary and make possible its restoration.

Baruch 4.36-37, etc. But these signify nothing more than messianic images; there is no trace after 70 that a hope remained for Parthian intervention, and there is nothing political in the messianic statements about the impending return of the Babylonian exiles to Jerusalem, *pace* Ibn-Shmuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-49. Compare Y. Liver, *op. cit.*, p. 44, and my *Life of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai*, p. 173.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM PACORUS II TO ARTABANUS V
Ca. 80-227 c.e.

1. Babylonian Jewry and Parthian Foreign Policy

The attitude of the Parthian government toward the Jews of Babylonia and Mesopotamia was nowhere articulated. Nonetheless, it is certainly reasonable to conclude that the Parthians and Jews achieved a mutually satisfactory relationship, on the basis of three evidences. First, nowhere in contemporary sayings do we find complaints against "the Persians," or descriptions of trials of Israel under their rule. On the contrary, the Babylonian Tanna R. Ḥiyya taught:

> What is meant by the verse, "God understandeth the way thereof, and knoweth the place thereof" (Job 28.23)? The Holy One blessed be He knows that Israel is unable to endure the cruel decrees of Edom (Rome), therefore he exiled them to Babylonia.[1]

Furthermore, Rav lamented the fall of Ardavan.[2] Second, "the Persians" were associated throughout the second century with the hope for national redemption,[3] and some Jews regarded Parthian victory over Rome as fortunate for Israel. Third, at three crucial moments in the period under study, some Jews did fight against Rome at a time advantageous to Parthian interests in 114-117, 160-165, and 193-199. It is not likely that Parthia would have been related to Jewish nationalist messianism, or that Jews would have fought against Rome and co-incidentally assist Parthia if the Parthian government had not favorably treated the Jews in its dominions. In fact, a community of interest existed between the Arsacids and the Jews, including some in Syria and Palestine, and the realities of international politics and trade

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[1] Bab. Talmud Pesahim 87b. See also Gittin 17a, and note the favorable attitude toward the Arsacids, by contrast to that toward the Sassanids, expressed there. See also Yalkut Shi'moni II, para. 529 and 916. Here R. Judah is cited also as saying that the prosperity of Babylonia would enable the Jews there to study the Torah. Compare the opinion of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai, Tosefta Bava Qamma 3.3-7.

[2] Bab. Talmud Avodah Zarah 10b.

[3] Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 98a/b, Lamentations Rabbah 1.13, Cant. Rabbah 8.10, etc. See above p. 30 and below p. 79.

encouraged the Arsacids to try to win the loyalty of their Jewish subjects. The Parthian government must have recognized the potential usefulness of Babylonian and Palestinian Jews in forwarding its interests in the Roman orient during this period.

The grounds for such a community of interest were substantial. On the Jewish side, some Jews in Palestine certainly refused to acquiesce to continued Roman suzerainty. The destruction of Jewish Jerusalem in 70 and the Romans' generally successful effort to pacify the country by creating a loyalist Jewish authority under the Patriarchate did not wholly wipe out anti-Roman sentiment. Opposition to Rome took two forms: first, opposition to the Patriarchate,[1] and second, guerilla activity. The Parthian hope to conquer and hold Armenia, in the north, and to reach the Mediterranean had never been abandoned. From the time of Pacorus' conquests in the first century b.c.e., Parthia continued to make sporadic, though ineffectual, efforts to capitalize on unrest in Syria and Palestine. If she could hold Syria, Parthia would control much of the profitable trade between Rome on the west and India and China on the east. If she could take Armenia, she might outflank Roman power throughout the fertile crescent and in Asia Minor. She could, at the very least, prevent the Romans from outflanking her in Mesopotamia. Antony, Trajan, and Heraclius all began their trans-Euphrates campaigns by taking the north. This was an important consideration. When the Persians invaded the west, by contrast, they did so via northern Syria and Antioch, not Armenia, as in the case of Pacorus, Shahpuhr I, Shahpuhr II, and Chosroes. Moreover, Jewish zealots and messianists recognized the important consequences that Parthian success in these projects might hold for their cause. Rome could not hold Palestine if it did not retain Syria. Furthermore, if a northern front were opened against Rome in Armenia, a Palestinian southern front might well be manned by fewer legions. This was the lesson of the war of 66-73, when the Romans had to cancel plans for an

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[1] But not all opposition to the Patriarchate was politically motivated. On grounds for political opposition to the patriarchate, note first of all the efforts of R. Judah the Prince to abrogate the observance of the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av, doubtless because these days of mourning tended to renew Jewish irredentism and hatred of Rome. See G. Allon, *Toldoth HaYehudim BeEreẓ Yisrael beTekufath HaMishnah veHa Talmud* (Tel Aviv, 1955), p. 117, and on R. Judah's efforts to cooperate with Rome, pp. 120-21. On opposition to Rabbi Judah, see pp. 145f. See also A. Kaminka, "Spiritual Currents in Palestine after the Bar Kokhba Rebellion" (in Hebrew), *Bizaron*, IX, 1943, pp. 21-30. See also M. Avi-Yonah, *BiYeme Roma u-Vizantion* (Jerusalem, 1956), pp. 1-50, esp. pp. 22-23, 31-32, 38-44.

Armenian invasion on account of the Jewish rebellion.[1] Thus Palestinian Jewish zealots and Parthia shared a similar purpose: the exclusion of Rome from Near and Middle Eastern affairs. That neither group had the remotest chance of achieving such a goal must not obscure its importance to both. Parthian political and military instability in the second century, and the relatively limited Jewish participation in anti-Roman projects after 140 c.e., prevented any threat to Roman hegemony. Rome was at the height of its power. The threat of Jewish militants in Palestine was minimal. The growing power of the pro-Roman loyalist patriarchs R. Simeon b. Gamaliel and, especially, R. Judah the Prince, supported not only by most of the Tannaim but also by Roman troops,[2] effectively pacified the country. After almost a century and a half of experimentation, following the death of Herod, the Romans finally had succeeded in finding a way of governing Jewish Palestine, and the failure of most of the Jews there to fight against Rome after 140, even during the imperial crisis of the third century, attests to that success. In the first century b.c.e., the Roman foothold in the Near East was threatened by civil war at home, successful resurgence of powerful nationalist forces in Jewish Palestine led by the Hasmoneans, and Parthian military prowess. All factors were absent at in the second century, and what remained was only the memory that Parthia had once come to Jerusalem and the hope of some that she might once again.[3]

II. The Revolt Against Trajan. Babylonian Jewry and Bar Kokhba's War

During the last years of his life, Trajan undertook a major campaign in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Babylonia.[4] Without entering the

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[1] A. Schalit, *op. cit.*

[2] See Pal. Talmud Horayoth 3.1.

[3] See, for example, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 2, and Hugo Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 185-86.

[4] See L. Dillemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-89; Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-46; Justi, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-74; Schuerer, *op cit.*, I, ii, pp. 280-87; Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-39; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-318. See especially, F. A. Lepper, *Trajan's Parthian War* (London, 1948); J. Guey, "Essai sur la guerre parthique de Trajan (114-117)," *Bibliotheque d'Istros*, ii (Bucharest, 1937); R. P. Longden, "Notes on the Parthian Campaigns of Trajan," *Journal of Roman Studies*, XXI, 1931, pp. 1f. Lepper cites extensive bibliography, and should be consulted for further discussion of the matter, along with Dillemann's criticism of his views. In general, Dillemann holds that Trajan's motive was glory (following Dio Cassius), Guey thinks that he

difficult questions of the chronology of the Parthian campaign or Trajan's motives, we may note that coincidental Jewish uprisings inconvenienced the Romans greatly and helped to save Parthia from further disaster.

Apparently, the first Jewish uprisings were in Cyprus, Egypt, and Cyrenaica in 115, though the chronology of the Jewish rebellion is as difficult to ascertain as that of Trajan's campaign itself. It is clear, however, that in 116, shortly after Trajan reached Ctesiphon, the Mesopotamian Jews to his rear revolted. Lucius Quietus was sent to pacify the area and to restore order. Quietus was successful and as a reward was appointed governor of Palestine. It is not entirely clear whether Palestinian Jews joined the insurrection; Hadrian's biographer says they did, though the well-known Talmudic sources on the "war of Quitus" may refer to Mesopotamian action.[1]

The motives of the Jewish rebels require explanation. Lepper points out that one may describe the Jewish revolts alternatively as the result of pogroms after earthquakes at Antioch and elsewhere; of pent-up anti-Roman feeling; or of economic interests. He points out that financial losses brought about by Roman occupation may have brought about immediate revolt, or it may have been part of the Parthian counteroffensive. The matter is obscure, and the dates of the outbreaks and their relation to events in Mesopotamia are so unclear that no final answer is possible.[2]

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wanted to capture the trade routes to India, and Lepper (p. 206) that Trajan wanted to improve the frontier position of Rome in the east, as he had in Dacia earlier. For a summary of problems in connection with Trajan's Parthian compaign, see Lepper, *passim*. Note also A. Maricq, "La Province d'Assyrie crée par Trajan," *Syria*, XXXVI, 1959, pp. 254f. See also Victor Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks, *CPJ*, I (Cambridge, 1957), p. 90, on the revolt of 115-117, and II (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 225f, for Egyptian sources.

[1] On Jewish rebellions at the time of Trajan's campaign, see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, ii, pp. 280-87. Schuerer does not think that the Palestinians joined in the rebellion. He cites the primary sources. See also Juster, *op. cit.*, II, 182-89; Derenbourg, *op. cit.*, p. 405; Debevoise, *op. cit.*, p. 236; Reinach, *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 197. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 2, says merely that Trajan suspected that the Jews in Mesopotamia would also make an attack upon the gentiles there, and ordered Lucius Quietus to clear the province of them. But Dio Cassius (68.32, see also 65.4, lines 4-5) makes it clear that the Mesopotamian Jews actually fought the Romans, and on that account Lucius Quietus was sent against them. See also S. Yeivin, *Milhemet Bar Kokhba* (Jerusalem, 1952), p. 43, p. 210, nn. 111-13. See also D. Spiegel, *Die Kaiser Titus und Hadrian im Talmud und Midrasch* (Vienna, 1906), pp. 28-29, on Lucius Quietus.

[2] Lepper, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Lepper cites various views of the Jewish revolts of 114-117, see p. 92, nn. 1-4. In his summary, however, p. 211, he concludes that it

It is by no means certain, for one thing, whether the Jewish rebellions were actually coordinated, though one may suppose they were. The Parthian international intelligence was excellent, and from the first century b.c.e. onward the court at Ctesiphon was extremely well informed about Roman plans. Since Trajan's invasion was well prepared and moved along precise (though to us, obscure) lines, one may assume that the Parthians made preparations to meet the invasion by arousing Jewish rebellion in Alexandria, Cyrenaica, and Cyprus. For this, they found the situation favorable. The Jews were greatly grieved by the destruction of Jerusalem, and the hope for a re-establishment of a Jewish messianic state had by no means been abandoned. Roman involvement in a Parthian war could be represented as the ideal time to strike again. This explains why the protracted engagement of Trajan in Dacia was not accompanied by any Jewish rebellion anywhere, while that in Parthia was.[1]

A second cause is by no means excluded by the first. The Jews in Babylonia, as well as those in Mesopotamia, along with the great caravan cities of the Near East, stood to lose greatly by Trajan's revision of economic policy. If, as has been alleged, Trajan was intending to rearrange Rome's international trading routes, and to cut off Babylonia from the eastern trade by diverting commerce through Armenia via the northern routes, then the Jews there, some of whom were in international trade, would have an additional motive to oppose Trajan's invasion. They, along with the caravan-cities to the west and Seleucia on the Tigris, would have been impoverished by diversion of the Chinese and Indian trade. It is nor surprising, therefore, to find Seleucia prominent in the revolt; Dura-Europos may have risen, and likewise the Jews in Mesopotamia and Adiabene joined the pro-Parthian reaction.[2] Akin to this economic motive was the political consideration that the Jews, as a strong minority group in the Near East, found it most advantageous to live in a region divided between two major powers. This gave them the chance to keep one foot in each

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was mainly the anti-Roman sentiments of the Jews that caused their opposition, "The Jews were especially dismayed to find themselves here too at the mercy of the hated destroyers of Jerusalem."

[1] On Messianism as cause of the war against Trajan, see e specially Schalit *op. cit.*, *Tarbiz*, VII, pp. 178-80. Schalit concludes that the Jews had no intention merely of saving Parthia, but hoped in fact to re-establish the Jewish state.

[2] Geo Widengren holds that the wars were not only coordinated but in fact arranged by negotiation; see below, p. 80 n. 1. See also M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 32f, 107.

camp, to play each off against the other, and when necessary, to flee from one side to the other. Trajan's threat to annex Mesopotamia would have brought most of Jewry within the Roman empire, and ended their semi-independence. It would also, by bringing the whole valley under Roman rule, have ended the insecurity of transport in the frontier zone between the two empires, which had formerly been a source of military importance and income to Jews who provided protection for, or acted as entrepreneurs in, the risky trade.

At the time of Bar Kokhba's war, on the other hand, Babylonian Jewry was entirely peaceful, so far as we can tell, and did not send assistance to Palestine. It was not in Parthia's short-term interest for them to do so, for Hadrian had made great efforts to pacify the Euphrates frontier and to conciliate the Arsacid chancery. About 123 Hadrian went to the east to settle difficulties that threatened war. In 129 he returned to Chosroes the daughter captured in Ctesiphon by Trajan and promised to restore the golden throne that had been carted off to Antioch. By these measures he secured Parthian acquiescence to a peaceful settlement of the frontier and removed remaining irritants. When, therefore, Hadrian was confronted with the great rebellion in Palestine three years later, he did not have to worry about Parthian intervention,[1] either directly or through Jewish support of the insurgents.

III. Rabbi Nathan and Preparations for the Invasion of Vologases III

Some time between 145 and 160 c.e., Rabbi Nathan, the son of the Babylonian exilarch, returned to Palestine from Babylonia and assumed a high position in the Patriarchal court. Shortly after his return, he entered into a conspiracy with Rabbi Meir, a Palestinian, to depose the patriarch, Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel II.

Was there any relationship between the conspiracy of R. Nathan and R. Meir against R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, presumably some time between 145 and 160 c.e., and connections with high officials of the Parthian government that R. Nathan's father allegedly enjoyed? The source on the conspiracy (Bab. Talmud Horayoth 13b) is as follows:

[1] On Bar Kokhba's War, see Yeivin, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, I, ii, pp. 287-321. There is no evidence of Babylonian Jewish participation. On Hadrian's policy toward Parthia, see Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-42; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-21.

Our rabbis taught, when the Nasi enters, all the people rise and do not resume their seats until he requests them to sit. When the Av Bet Din enters one row rises on one side and another row on the other, until he has sat down in his place. When the Hakham enters, every one (whom he passes) rises and sits down (as soon as he has passed) until the sage has sat down in his place.

R. Yohanan said: That instruction was issued in the days of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, when R. Simeon b. Gamaliel was the Nasi, R. Meir the Hakham, and R. Nathan the Av Bet Din. Whenever R. Simeon b. Gamaliel entered all the people stood up for him; and when R. Meir and R. Nathan entered all the people stood up for them also. Said R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, Should there be no distinction between my office and theirs? And so he issued that ordinance. R. Meir and R. Nathan were not present on that day. Coming on the following day and seeing that the people did not rise for them as usual, they inquired as to what had happened. On being told that R. Simeon b. Gamaliel had issued that ordinance, R. Meir said to R. Nathan, I am the Hakham and you are the Av Bet Din, let us retaliate. Now how are we to proceed against him? Let us request him to discourse upon the tractate of Ukzin (stems) with which he is unfamiliar, and he will be unable to discourse upon it, and we shall tell him, "Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, make all his praise to be heard..." (Ps. 106.2). For whom is it becoming to express the mighty acts of the Lord? For him who can make *all* his praise to be heard. We shall then depose him, and I shall become Av Bet Din and you the Nasi... R. Jacob b. Korshai, on hearing this conversation, said, The matter might, God forbid, lead to disgrace. So he went and sat down behind R. Simeon b. Gamaliel's study, expounding and repeating the tractate. He said, What can this mean? Did anything, God forbid, happen at the academy? He concentrated his attention and familiarized himself with it. On the following day when they said to him, Will the Master come and discourse on Ukzin, he began and discoursed upon it. After he had finished he said to them, Had I not familiarized myself with it, you would have disgraced me! He gave the order, and they were removed from the college. Thereupon they wrote down scholastic difficulties on slips of paper which they threw into the college. That which he solved was disposed of, and as to those which he did not solve they wrote down the answers and threw them in. Said R. Yosi to them (the students), The Torah is without and we are within. Said R. Simeon b. Gamaliel to them, We shall readmit them, but impose upon them this penalty, that no traditional statement shall be reported in their names. As a result R. Meir was designated "others" and R. Nathan "Some say." In their dreams they received a message to go and pacify R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. R. Nathan went, and R. Meir did not, for he said, Dreams are of no consequence. When R. Nathan came, R. Simeon b. Gamaliel remarked to him, The sash of office (*kamara*) of your father has indeed helped you to become Av Bet Din, shall we therefore make you also Nasi?

Now the report as it stands is totally unattested in any other source, and it is highly developed. Hence we shall have to treat it with considerable caution, despite the reference to *kamara*, which might itself be an anachronism by the later Babylonian teller of the story. However, we may conclude that R. Nathan did indeed occupy a position of importance in the college of Usha, and that he did indeed do what he could to undermine the authority of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel there. It is possible to suggest a motive for such an action, outside of the rather formal and external dispute presented. This suggestion assumes that the forms of the dispute may hide motives otherwise left inarticulate. To deny this assumption would entail the converse assumption that the rabbis would have set out to overthrow their government merely on the basis of a matter of personal honor.

A convergence of facts permits the conjecture that R. Nathan's action was not entirely non-political, but may have represented an effort to carry forward Parthian foreign policy which seemed to some Jews to conform to Jewish self-interest.

What are these facts? Let us first consider the significance of the reference to R. Nathan's father's position.

In the *Ka'ab-i Zaradusht*, 1.4, the priest Kartir says that "Ohrmazd the king of kings conferred upon him the right to wear the tiara and sash":

'wxrmzd-y MLK'n MLK'kwl 'p-y W kml-y YXBWNt

Commenting on the passage, M. L. Chaumont notes[1] that the *kulaf* and *kamar* seem to have been specific ensigns of the office of *magupat* of Ohrmazd and that the investiture of these ecclesiastical prerogatives marked the chief of the clergy and the cult.

That the word KMR' in the passage means some kind of ceremonial sash or girdle has long been known.

What is striking is the possible consequence of Chaumont's contention that the KMR was an insignia specifically reserved by the Iranian government to its highest priestly-judicial figure, in this instance, Kartir. If this is so, then the position of R. Nathan's father (or, at the

[1] See M. L. Chaumont, "L'Inscription de Kartir àl la 'ka'bah de Zoroastre,' Texte, Traduction, Commentaire," *JA* CCXLVIII (1960), pp. 339-73. See also M. Sprengling, "Kartir, Founder of Sasanian Zoroastrianism," *AJSL*, LVII, 1940, pp. 197-228, in particular, p. 214. See also *AJSL*, LVIII, pp. 169-76; M. Sprengling, *Sapor and Kartir: Third Century Iran*, Chicago, 1953; "Zur Parsik-Inschrift an der Kaaba des Zoroaster," *ZDMG*, XCI, n. f. 16, 1937, pp. 652-73; and "A New Pahlavi Inscription," *AJSL*, LIII, 1936, pp. 124-44, as well as the literature Chaumont cites.

very least, the position ascribed to R. Nathan's father by the editor of the *beraita*) was apparently that of a high and honored religious official. This was, of course, the position of the Resh Galuta in later years, under the Sasanids, but that a second-century figure should have held a government appointment of this kind is not attested, to my knowledge, by any other source.[1] A Jewish official wearing the KMR' (and, from R. Simeon b. Gamaliel's reference to it, one must assume that it was a mark of rank and not merely, as the word is used elsewhere, an ordinary garment), would likely also have been a chief of the Jewish community, a head of its judiciary, and of noble rank within the empire.

If it is correct to say that R. Nathan's father was therefore a Parthian government official, then additional light may be shed on the course of Jewish history during this period. The passage cited above tells about the effort of R. Nathan and R. Meir to undermine the prestige of the Patriarchate under R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II. The institution was being reconstituted, at this period, after the Bar Kokhba rebellion. As G. Allon and M. Avi-Yonah have suggested, the Roman government did not prohibit the efforts of certain Tannaim, including the descendants of the Hillelite house, to reconstitute a central Jewish authority in Palestine, because they intended to enlist the authority so reconstituted in the task of pacifying Palestine, and, in a larger sense, they hoped to build a strong authority among Jewish loyalists in Palestine.[2] This

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[1] Note also L. Ginzberg, *Geonica*, I, p. 2: "The Exilarchate, which could count on the support of the non-Jewish Government, was a political power and nothing more." If, however, KMR' meant, in the mind of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel what it meant to Kartir, then the office of R. Nathan's father must have had a religious as well as a political character at that time, though it changed later.

[2] On the Roman measures against Jewish self-government after Bar Kokhba see Allon, II, pp. 43f-5. On the economic decline that followed, see pp. 52-53, and the emigration, pp. 66-69. On the revolt against Antoninus Pius, see p. 63. On the rabbis' efforts in behalf of Rome, see pp. 65-66 (note also the efforts of R. Ishmael b. R. Yosi and R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon in 193, and see my "Life of R. Ishmael b. R. Yosi," *Judaica*, XVI, pp. 1-23). On Simeon b. Gamaliel and his colleagues, see pp. 69-78. See also on the conspiracy, Weiss, *Dor*, *ad loc.*; S. Zeitlin, "The Opposition to Spiritual Leaders appointed by the Government," *JQR*, 31, 1940-41, pp. 287-300. On the reconstitution of the patriarchate by Simeon b. Gamaliel, see also Mantel, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-49. On the conspiracy against Simeon, p. 37, n. 213, and p. 129; Buechler, "The Conspiracy, etc.," in *Studies in Jewish History* (London, 1956). Mantel regards the Horayoth beraita as historically quite valuable, because he does not think it would have been invented by later generations. But I think it remains to be shown what was, and what was not, invented, suppressed, altered, etc., in later generations, and the rather naive assumption that the Tannaim and Amoraim did not tell nasty stories about each other is not substantiated by much

had been their policy after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, and had led to the creation of a Jewish authority at Yavneh under R. Yohanan b. Zakkai. It was probably their policy after the defeat of Bar Kokhba as well. Furthermore, as Avi-Yonah points out, the Patriarchate was indeed prepared to recognize the *status quo*, and to encourage if not loyalty to Rome, at least acceptance of Roman rule; indeed, the Hillelite dynasty was always among the chief pacifists, if not loyalists, and the subsequent good relationships between R. Judah the Prince and the Roman authorities only exemplified this continuing policy.

At approximately the same period, it is known[1] that Vologases III was preparing to go to war with Rome; from Vologases III's accession, in 148, to 161 these preparations apparently went forward. One consistent Parthian policy was to foment rebellion against Rome in the frontier territories, whose populations had close relationships with Parthia's subject peoples. Thus for example Vologases fomented rebellion in Osrhoene and Adiabene in 193, before his siege of Nisibis. Furthermore, when the war did break out, or perhaps shortly beforehand, a brief revolt did indeed break out in Palestine; it was followed by the Parthian invasion of Armenia and Syria.[2]

One genuinely useful way to carry forward the preparations for war between 148 and 161 would have been to send to the Jews in Palestine a Babylonian Jew who was qualified to participate in the affairs of their autonomous political institutions, and who, at the same time, may have been willing to carry out the policies of the Parthian government. R. Nathan would have been such a man.[3] He was educated at the Tannaitic academy in Huzal by students of the late R. Ishmael, in particular R. Josiah and R. Jonathan, and he may also have studied in Palestine before the Bar Kokhba war. The story about his encounter

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of the literature. Mantel regards the affair as a matter of etiquette. Allon, II, pp. 72-73, holds that there was a rebellion against the Nasi after the Bar Kokhba period, with the object of abolishing the office and undermining the Nasi's prestige. He thinks that the ruling of special honors to the Nasi was an effort to "counteract revolutionary attempts against his office." Mantel claims there is no evidence of this. I share Allon's view.

[1] See Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-58.

[2] See below, Section iv.

[3] This is not to imply that R. Nathan was in any way implicated in the revolt of 161; it is quite obvious, from his later and highly influential career at R. Judah's court, that he was not. But it is quite possible that his motive in challenging R. Simeon b. Gamaliel's leadership was, nonetheless, anti-Roman and pro-Parthian. See Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-50, for an analysis of Jewish public opinion concerning Rome at this time.

with R. Simeon b. Gamaliel indicates that he was fully qualified to engage in the enterprise of the academy.

If such an agent were sent, it would be likely that he would emphasize, first of all, the power of Parthia, and second, the continuing messianic hope of Palestine (which was associated with Parthian military prowess by R. Simeon b. Yohai among others). We find that R. Nathan did just this (Sanhedrin 97b):

> R. Nathan said, This verse pierces and descends to the very abyss: (Hab. 2.3): For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; through he tarry, wait for him, because he will surely come, he will not tarry.

Furthermore, R. Nathan described the distinguishing characteristics of the nations in Abot de Rabbi Nathan, Ch. 28, Goldin, p. 116:

> There is no love like the love of Torah, no wisdom like that of the land of Israel, no beauty like that of Jerusalem, no riches like the riches of Rome, no might like the might of Persia, no harlotry like that of the Arabs, no arrogance like that of Elam, no hypocrisy like that of Babylonia, and no witchcraft like that of Egypt.

It may seem strange to the historian, aware of the repeated defeats of Parthia at the hands of Rome throughout the first and second centuries, to see reference to the might of Persia, contrasted to the mere riches of Rome, but R. Nathan may well have had his reasons to extol the might of his home government.

One teaching of R. Nathan may well date from the period before his migration to Palestine (during the time of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel at Usha), Mekhilta Bahodesh 6.134-144:

> "Of them that love me and keep my commandments," R. Nathan says, "Of them that love me and keep my commandments" refers to those who dwell in the land of Israel and risk their lives for the sake of the commandments. "Why are you being led out to be decapitated?" "Because I circumcized my son to be an Israelite." "Why are you being led out to be burned?" "Because I read the Torah." "Why are you being led out to be crucified?" "Because I ate the unleavened bread." "Why are you getting a hundred lashes?" "Because I performed the ceremony of the lulav." And it says, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13.6)—these wounds caused me to be beloved of my father in heaven.

The language "those who dwell in the land of Israel" may well be spoken by one who did not; and the detailed description of the punishments for specific actions may well date from the time when these

punishments were in fact inflicted; both indications that the passage may have been spoken in Babylonia during the Hadrianic persecutions. Thus Rabbi Nathan shared Babylonian Jewish hatred of Rome.

At the same time, if our understanding of the technical significance of KMR is correct, he would have been in contact with the highest levels of the Parthian government and may have been entirely aware of the projected policies of that government. That some Jews of this period were entirely sympathetic with Parthia is indicated by numerous references, including the following:

> R. Simeon b. Yohai said, If you see a Persian horse tethered (to a grave) in the land of Israel, look for the footsteps of Messiah [Lam. Rabba 1.13, Cant. Rabba 8.10, and compare the sayings of Yosi b. Kisma, TB Sanhedrin 98a/b].

That they were prepared to hasten the advent of the Messiah by rebellion against Rome at a time when Parthian interests would benefit from such a rebellion may likewise emerge from a comparison of coincident Roman-Jewish and Roman-Parthian struggles throughout the second century. It seems to me, therefore, that there may well have been a political dimension to R. Nathan's part in the conspiracy against R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, and that the appearance and meaning of KMR in the *Ka'ab-i Zaradušt* substantiates such an interpretation of the conspiracy.[1]

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[1] See also G. Rawlinson, pp. 321f; M. Rostovtzeff, "The Sarmatae and the Parthians," in S. A. Cook, *et al.*, ed., *Cambridge Ancient History* (New York, 1936), XI, pp. 104-12; and W. Weber, "The Antonines," pp. 346-49, *ibid.* See also F. M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine* (Paris, 1952), II, p. 108; and M. Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, p. 24. The Romans were extremely sensitive about the relationships between peoples within their empire and segments of the same peoples outside of it, which is why they had to conquer Britain after taking Gaul, and probably also why they had to hold on to much of Mesopotamia, in order to preserve their position in Armenia. They therefore tried to keep the peace in Palestine through some internationally effective instrumentality, a policy which failed up to 140 and succeeded afterward. They wanted mainly to keep the peace and therefore, after 140, returned freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom from obligations to participate in pagan rites. On the pro-Parthian views of R. Simeon b. Yohai, see p. 39. Avi-Yonah also notes (pp. 40-42) that the Hillelite family was always among the chief pacifists (but note the role of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel I in the first war against Rome (66-68 c.e.). In practical affairs, the patriarch was expected to keep the peace and preserve the *status quo*. Note also Mantel, *op. cit.*, p. 37, n. 213, and p. 39, n. 248. Allon also notes (II, pp. 60f) that the persecutions continued intermittently even after the decrees were rescinded. Allon holds that a council of three, including a representative of Babylonian Jewry, R. Nathan, a second, of the disciples of R. Akiba, R. Meir, and a third, of the Hillelite house, R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, probably headed the reconstituted consistory of Usha at the outset. It should be emphasized that R. Nathan's motives were not necessarily

IV. The Third and Fourth "Jewish Wars Against Rome," ca. 161-165 and 193-197

Parthia fought two wars with Rome between 160 and 200, specifically, in 161-165, after the death of Antoninus Pius, and in 193-199, after the death of Marcus Aurelius. In both instances, her purpose was to exploit unsettled conditions in the Roman Orient following the change in government, and in both instances there is evidence of some unrest in Syria and Palestine.[1] This unrest preceded the actual Parthian invasions, and was fomented by Parthia as part of its strategy to draw off some Roman forces by necessitating their use against civilians or guerillas. On the other hand, there is absolutely no evidence whatever of a widespread and general "Third Jewish War against Rome" in 161, or "Fourth Jewish War" in 193-200.[2] In both instances, *some* Jews, though certainly not a large part of the Jewish populations of Palestine and Syria, did engage in acts of brigandage. The Jewish sources tell us only that sometime long after the Bar Kokhba war and subsequent repressions, presumably in the reign of Antoninus Pius, the Romans did institute some repressive measures in Palestine.[3] There is an equally equivocal reference in the Augustan History to a rebellion of Jews against Antoninus to supplement this evidence:

> Germanos et Davos et multas gentes atque Iudaeos rebellantes contudit per praesides ac legates.[4]

If Antoninus put down a Jewish rebellion and at the same time or shortly thereafter instituted some kind of repressive measure, one may

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the same as R. Meir's, and it is not my intention to propose that R. Meir was also acting in behalf of Parthian international interests. The question of R. Meir's motive, while interesting, does not concern us here.

[1] On Jewish opposition to Trajan. Antoninus Pius, and Septimius Severus, see Juster, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-201. See also Geo Widengren, "Quelques Rapports entre Juifs et Iraniens à l'Epoque des Parthes,"*Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* IV *Volume du Congres International pour l'Etude de l'Ancien Testament, Strasbourg*, 1956 (Leiden, 1957), pp. 202-203, and the same author's "Status of the Jews in the Sassanian Empire," *Iranica Antiqua*, I, 1961, p. 124. Widengren holds that various coordinated wars must have involved communal interest *and negotiation.* See also I. Y. HaLevi, *op. cit.*, I, v, pp. 812-15. See also F. Rosenthal, "Das Sikarikon-Gesetz," *MGWJ*, XLII, 1892, pp. 1-6, 57-63, 105-10.

[2] Contra S. Krauss, *Antoninus and Rabbi* (Vienna, 1910), pp. 108-22.

[3] G. Allon, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 63-65, 120-21, considers this evidence.

[4] Cited by T. Reinach, *Textes d'Auteurs Grècs et Romains Rélqtifs au Judaisme* (Paris, 1895), p. 343. Also M. Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27, and G. Allon, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 96-101.

assume that some time in his reign, long after he had relieved Palestine of the Hadrianic decrees, he found it necessary to repacify parts of the country. We do not know when, but it is certainly reasonable to consider that such measures came toward the end of his reign. That Vologases III (148-192) and his representatives encouraged Jewish anti-Roman activity with limited success cannot be demonstrated, but that such efforts were made by Parthia in preparation for Roman wars is well known, and the Jewish unrest toward the end of Antoninus' reign and shortly before the Parthian invasion of Armenia and Syria may not represent mere coincidence (as above, Section III).

Similarly, in and after 193, there is some evidence that members of the Patriarchate were engaged in handing Jewish brigands into Roman custody and were criticized for these actions by "the prophet Elijah."[1] We know that the Roman Orient was in a state of great unrest in the year of the three emperors (193), and that some Jews seized the opportunity to rebel against Rome, though precisely who did so and when is not known with any precision.[2] Without entering into the complicated chronologies of Allon and Avi-Yonah, or attempting to decide who fought whom (Samaritans, Jews, Romans under Niger, Romans under Severus), we may safely conclude that some Jews did fight against some Romans, that these anti-Roman actions coincided with Parthian interests, and, from the Jewish triumph of Caracalla, that there were probably some Jews who fought against Severus:

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[1] See Yer. Talmud 'Eruvin 8.8, Bab. Bava Mezi'a 83b. See also my "Rabbi Ishmael the son of R. Yosi," *Judaica*, XVI, 1960, pp. 17-18; H. Graetz, in *MGWJ* XXXIII, 1884, pp. 481-96; S. Lieberman, "Palestine in the Third and Fourth Centuries c.e.," *JQR*, n.s., XXXVI, 4, pp. 329-70, and XXXVII, i, 31-54; and J. Juster, *op. cit.*, II, p. 195. See also p. 87 n. 2.

[2] On Jewish fighting against Rome in 193f, see Reinach, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-46, and for further discussion of these sources, M. Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-27, and G. Allon, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 96-101. Both Avi-Yonah and Allon attempt to harmonize chronologically all of the sources on events from 193 to 202, including Samaritan-Jewish-Roman battles, Severus' repression because the "Palestinians" espoused Niger's cause, the triumph of Severus' son Caracalla because of the "Jewish victories," the affair of Claudius in Syria, etc. Since my purpose is merely to note that there *was* some Jewish military activity at the time of the unrest from 193-202, when Parthia likewise invaded Syria, I need not enter this difficult question. However, only by assuming that "the Jews" were relatively few in number can one harmonize these sources with the loyalist activities of the patriarchate. Certainly not all "the Jews" favored one side or the other, and when the classical historians speak of "Jews" we cannot forthwith assume that all of Jewish Palestine is meant. I believe the complexity of the reconstructions of both Allon and Avi-Yonah is due to their assumption that "the Jews" were by and large of one mind. If so, this decade was unique.

> Inde in Syriam redit victor, et Parthicum deferentibus sibi patribus triumphum idcirco recusavit, quod consistere in curru adfectus articulari morbo non posset. Filio sane concessit ut triumpharet; cui senatus Iudaicum triumphum decreverat, idcirco quod et in Syria res bene gestae fuerant a Severo.

More than this one cannot say: since the Parthian war was fought in 197-198, some time between that year and Severus' return to Rome in 203, some Jewish subversive action may have taken place, and the reference of Dio Cassius to war by "Claudius" in Judah and Syria suggests anti-Roman activity unrelated to earlier Jewish-Samaritan-Roman fighting.

In both instances, however, it must be emphasized that not all and probably not most Jews were involved in the fighting. These were limited wars fought by a few zealots and were not, as earlier, massive ethnic actions of the great majority of Jews in the affected areas. There were by now many Jews in Palestine who were willing to accept Roman hegemony in exchange for limited, but to them significant, privileges of self-government. These included the patriarchs Simeon b. Gamaliel and his son Judah the Prince. The influence of R. Judah must have been substantially valuable to Severus Alexander, particularly in quelling unrest after the campaign against Niger, and the "friendship of Antoninus and Rabbi" was doubtless based upon practical as well as sentimental considerations, whichever Antonine was involved.

v. Rabbi Judah the Prince and Ardavan V, Ca. 215-216

There is reason to suggest that at one point R. Judah the Prince or his son[1] may have taken some small part in Caracalla's foreign political adventures. The following source is the basis:[2]

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[1] I see no reason to reject A. Gutman's date of 217 for the death of R. Judah the Prince. See his "The Patriarch Judah I—His Birth and His Death, A Glimpse into the Chronology of the Talmudic Period," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XXV, 1954, p. 261. Hence the following incident concerns R. Judah the Prince.

[2] Yer. Talmud Pe'ah 1.1. See also Yalkut to Joshua, 31, and Proverbs, 934. And Genesis Rabba cur. ed. XXV, 3. Text cites Gen. R. trans. of H. Freedman (London, 1961), I, p. 286, n. 3. There are no substantial variants in the Yer. Text. See also S. Krauss, *op. cit.*, p. 95, who holds that Ardavan wanted to win Jewish friendship and therefore sent a gift to R. Judah the Prince. Allon likewise holds that this was on R. Judah's part a "mere act of friendship." But Krauss and Allon do not explain why R. Judah would have participated in such an exchange, as the text indicates. This would surely be the only instance in R. Judah's career of such trafficking with the enemies of Rome, and in a matter of international significance, it is hardly thinkable that Rome would either not have known, or permitted, had

> Ardavan sent our teacher a priceless gem, with the request, let me have in return an article as valuable as this. So he sent him a mezuzah. He sent back word, I gave you a priceless object, and you returned me something worth but a *folar*. My desirable things and thy desirable things are not to be compared to her, he retorted. Moreover, you sent me something which I must guard, while I sent you something which guards you while you sleep, as it says, When thou walkest it shall lead thee (Prov. 6.22)—in this world, and When thou liest down it shall watch over thee—in the hour of death, and When thou wakest it shall talk with thee—in the world to come.

At first glance, one might be inclined to doubt the historicity of such a story, for its homilectical purpose is self-evident, while its historical foundation is not entirely obvious. Why, for example, would Ardavan, one of the contenders for the Parthian throne from 213-227 (the other being Vologases V, 207-222/3, but the Jewish sources never mention him) have sent a gift to the Palestinian patriarch? If, as Krauss contended, he wanted to secure the loyalty of Jewish Babylonia in his struggle with Vologases V, who actually held the territories around Seleucia, he would have been better advised to honor Rav Huna, the exilarch, or otherwise to cultivate the friendship of Jews in his brother's lands. It would have been a highly indirect means of impressing Jewish Babylonia with his philo-Semitism by sending a gem to R. Judah, for Judah's authority in Babylonia, if any, was openly defied when his wishes were actually made known (see below, section IX). Nonetheless, there are three reasons for reckoning with the *agadah*. First, the *midrash* on Prov. 6.22, which is attached to the story, is highly original, and I suggest that it was the invention of R. Judah himself. The earlier midrashic tradition on the verse, represented by the sayings of R. Yosi b. Kisma, R. Menahem b. Yosi, and the anonymous statement in the Sifre Deut. all emphasize that not fulfillment of the commandments (here, the mezuzah), but rather study of the Torah gave the assurances that Rabbi attached to the mezuzah itself. R. Yosi b. Menahem's exegesis is as follows:

> The following did R. Menahem son of R. Yosi expound: "For the commandment is a lamp, and Torah is light" (Prov. 6.23)—the verse identifies commandments with a lamp, and Torah with light, the

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she known, an exchange of gifts between her leading Palestinian Jewish advocate, on the one side, and her most bitter international foe on the other. Moreover, it is unlikely that R. Judah would have endangered his Palestinian authority, which depended on retaining Roman confidence, by unofficial and clandestine dealings with the head of the Parthian government. On this basis, I reject Krauss' thesis and propose that given in the text.

> commandments with a lamp to tell you that as a lamp only protects temporarily, so fulfillment of the commandments only protects temporarily; and the Torah with light to tell you that as light protects permanently, so Torah protects permanently, as it states, "When thou walkest it shall lead thee"—in this world; "when thou sleepest it shall watch over thee""—in death; "and when thou wakest it shall talk with thee"—in the world to come...[1]

Thus if R. Judah expounds the verse by reference to keeping the commandments rather than study of the Torah, he has drastically revised the earlier and continuing exegetical tradition on the verse. Such drastic revision was not necessary for his homiletical purpose; other verses were available. We know that exegesis was disciplined, and not random; and that where exegesis is revised, one may profitably look for an explanation in historical or other circumstances. This was shown, for example, by G. Vermes in his study on the word "Lebanon."[2]

Only in this instance, to my knowledge, is the fulfillment of the commandment so described with reference to Prov. 6.22. Now why should the midrashic tradition have been so drastically revised for mere homiletical purposes? It seems to me that the actual purposes for which the narrator of the story about R. Judah needed the verse, namely, communication with a pagan ruler, made it necessary for him to ascribe to the mezuzah blessings in this world, at the hour of death, and in the world to come, which the earlier midrashic tradition on this verse attached to the study of the Torah. Ardavan would not likely study the Torah, but having a mezuzah, he might secure the benefits that earlier exegesis had attached to Prov. 6.22. Hence the revision of the earlier midrashic tradition is explicable by the specific setting

[1] See other midrashim on this verse in Sotah 21a, where a similar explanation of the verse is given by R. Menahem b. R. Yosi. Since R. Yosi was also R. Judah's teacher, we may conclude that he learned the midrash from him and applied it to the gift to Ardavan. But R. Menahem taught that not the commandment, but the study of the Torah, has the protective powers ascribed by Rabbi to the mezuzah. Hence R. Judah altered the midrash for the purposes of his message to the pagan king. Note also Avoth 6.9, R. Yosi b. Kisma, a contemporary of R. Yosi, gives the same midrash as R. Menahem. See also Sifre Deut., para. 34, where the Yosi-Menahem midrash is given anonynously. See also Exodus Rabbah 33.6, "The Torah guards those that possess it..." Since the parallel midrashim on the verse of R. Menahem, R. Yosi b. Kisma, and the anonymous Sifre Deut. all teach that the study of the Torah possesses the powers ascribed by R. Judah to the mezuzah, we may conclude that the verse was reinterpreted by Rabbi Judah himself, since he could obviously not propose that Ardavan become a student of the Torah, while he could, by sending him the mezuzah, give him another kind of protection.

[2] *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, (Leiden, 1961), 26-39.

described in the above *agadah*, which suggests that an actual historical, and not merely homiletical, purpose was being served. The homiletical developments of rabbinic literature were usually in praise of moral training (study of the Torah), rather than magical efficacy of talismans (use of a mezuzah by a pagan). Second, the recensions of the story consistently refer to Ardavan, and not to Vologases or any other "Persian king." This is sound, because Ardavan did have contact with the west, while Vologases did not. The Iranian traditions also remember Ardavan, and not Vologases, as the last Arsacid monarch (as in the Kar Namak-i Ardashir-i Babakan), and the Jewish sources, following the same convention, are congruent to the Iranian historiographical tradition. Third, the Jewish sources consistently refer to 'RDBN or 'RTBN (Ardavan), and not to Artabanos (Hebrew would be 'RTBNS) which was the Greek, and presumably, therefore, Palestinian equivalent.[1]

While Krauss and Allon accept the obvious identification of "Our Teacher" with the patriarch, Kohut does not. He says that Rav was friendly with Ardavan (as we noted above, 'Avodah Zara 10b), and therefore the exchange of gifts took place between Ardavan and Rav, not "our Holy Teacher," that is, R. Judah the Prince.

However, while Kohut's opinion must be taken into consideration, we may propose a historical setting for the *agadah* that conforms to the more obvious and well-attested identification with the patriarch himself.

Since this *is* a highly agadic account, we must make a simple statement of its historical kernel, if any, as follows: at some point, an exchange of gifts of varying value took place between the Palestinian patriarch, presumably, but not necessarily, Judah the Prince, and Shahanshah Ardavan of Parthia. Second, if such an exchange took place, it must have been in conformity with Roman policy, and not against it. Third, it must have involved Ardavan, and no other Parthian authority, and there was only one Ardavan in authority at this time, namely, Ardavan V. I do not see much merit in the tendency of some historians to treat cavalierly references to "Ardavan," and to

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[1] See *Arukh*, s.v. I, p. 280. The Talmud knows, obviously, the Syriac form, and not the Greek. But Kohut holds that this was to Rav, not to R. Judah the Prince, even though the Yer. Talmud refers to "our holy Rabbi" and the Ber. R, to "our Rabbi," terms which normally mean R. Judah the Prince. See s.v. Atimeton, I, 63. See also Rapoport, *Erekh Milin* (Warsaw, 1914), s.v., Vol. II. p. 16 .*Arukh*, I, p. 63, s.v. Atineton.

suggest that the name may have been that of a "high official we no longer can identify," rather than the well-known contender to the throne.[1] These sources are extremely consistent in claiming that Rabbi, Ardavan, and "Antoninus" died in the same year, and obviously refer to the respective heads of Jews, Persians, and Romans, and not to some subordinate, who were believed to have died at the same time. The Jewish sources may not be entirely suitable witnesses to historical events, but, I do think, obviously historical references in *agadot* should be treated with respectful caution.

These three conditions, first, an exchange of gifts, second, under Roman approval, and third, between the patriarch and the shahanshah, then, were met at one point only, namely, in 215-216. At that time, Caracalla tried to achieve through diplomacy what war had failed to accomplish. At the end of the Severine invasion of 197-198, Rome held no more Parthian territory than she had at the outset. Caracalla considered a new campaign, and before 215 he did send a unit into Armenia. But he decided, in the winter of 215-216, to pacify the Euphrates frontier (to Rome's benefit) by a dynastic marriage between himself and Ardavan's daughter. At that time, Ardavan's brother Vologases held the lower Euphrates, while Ardavan himself held Media and Ecbatana. Thus Caracalla's offer was very shrewd: Ardavan might hope, with Roman help, to win the heart of the empire and undisputed possession of the throne by calling against his brother, who actually stood against Rome on part of the Euphrates frontier, a powerful Roman force. Ardavan therefore agreed, and proceeded to the Roman court. But Caracalla (allegedly) prepared a treacherous welcome, slaying all the wedding guests except for Ardavan himself, who fled. Caracalla was assassinated in 217, and Macrinus, his successor, sued for peace, having unsuccessfully invaded Mesopotamia in the spring of the same year and been defeated by Ardavan before Nisibis. Macrinus gave Ardavan and other leading Parthian nobles expensive gifts and reported to the Senate (in 218) that the ensuing peace was a Roman victory.

Thus at one of two points an exchange of gifts between the Palestinian patriarch and the Parthian contender would have made sense, either as a part of the large donation of Caracalla to Ardavan that accompanied the marriage proposal; or as part of the "donation" of Macrinus. Since we know that R. Judah enjoyed warm relations with

[1] See Gutman, *op. cit.*, p, 257

one of the Antonines, and that, most reasonably, Caracalla's name has been most widely accepted,[1] it is certainly congruent to other information we have about R. Judah's policies to suggest that he associated himself with Caracalla's original donation. If he did, however, he may have included something more impressive than a *midrash* and a mezuzah; and there is no reason to believe that R. Judah was present at the slaughter of Antioch in 216, or knew about it. Whether Ardavan returned the gift is not known; the same source tells us that Ardavan initiated the exchange. If, therefore, this *agadah* has a historical referent, it was most likely in the gift of Caracalla of 215/6, or, somewhat less likely, that of Macrinus in 217, when such a gift would have suited Roman policy.[2]

We may note, moreover, that later tradition preserved a vague memory that Ardavan's daughter was somehow associated with the exchange of a pearl for a mezuzah. The "memory" was cast, again, into highly folkloristic forms and does not prove that the Jews had reliable historical information about the affair. It does indicate, however, that as late as the ninth century, the daughter of Ardavan was remembered as having played a role in the "exchange of gifts":

> [after the exchange of pearl for mezuzah]... "What I desire and what you desire are not to be compared to her" [Prov. 3.15]. Forthwith, an

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[1] See M. Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-31, who holds that the evidence which is historically available for analysis, among the many "Antoninus and Rabbi" agadot, points to Caracalla. Krauss provides the best summary of opinion until 1910, and see also Luitpold Wallach, "Colloquy of Marcus Aurelius with the Patriarch Judah I," *JQR*, n.s. XXXI, 1940, pp. 259-86. Whether the "holy teacher" was, in fact, R. Judah the Prince, or was his son or grandson, it is perfectly clear that the Antonines did favor the Hillelite Patriarchate, and hence the exact identity of Rabbi Judah's friend "Antoninus" does not affect the historical identification proposed here.

[2] Further discussion of international politics will be found in the following: George Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-71; N. C. Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-69. Rawlinson points out (p. 348) that Artabanus beyond all doubt acquired the sole rule in the western portions of the Empire from 216 to 226, because he was the only monarch known to the Romans, and Caracalla's negotiations were only with him. See also Ferdinand Justi, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-76; Alfred von Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-72; Ferdinand Justi, "Geschichte Irans von den aeltesten Zeiten bis zum Ausgang der Sasaniden," in W. Geiger and E. Kuhn, ed., *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie* (Strasbourg, 1896-1904), II, 509-11; on unrest at the time of the Severine-Niger war, see also M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1936), p. 363. See also the judgment of E. S. Bouchier, in *Syria as a Roman Province* (Oxford, 1916), pp. 93-94, "A Jewish revolt, perhaps in sympathy with the Parthians, in whose empire a great number of Jews had settled, was suppressed by Severus."

> evil spirit entered the daughter of Ardavan—and he only had one daughter. All the physicians came, but were unable to heal her. When Artaban took the mezuzah and placed it on her door, however, the shade forthwith fled from her, and our holy rabbi took the pearl for himself.[1]

Thus the Talmudic story was created out of three elements: first, the memory that a gift passed between R. Judah the Prince and Ardavan; second, a distant recollection that the daughter of Ardavan was somehow involved in the incident; and third, revision of previous exegetical tradition to conform to the historical setting. This is not to argue that the story as we have it conforms to the event as it happened. We know that historical events were preserved in the Talmudic process of tradition only when they interested the rabbis of the Talmud, as in the case of the meeting of Alexander Jannaeus with a Parthian embassy referred to above. The forms into which these stories were cast were determined by the purposes for which the rabbis chose to remember events. These purposes were different from ours. If we want to know what happened, we must try to penetrate the legendary, frequently tendentious forms into which events were cast for transmission. In this instance, I believe we have a historical basis for a Talmudic story.

VI. Babylonian Jews in International Commerce

The Jewish sources on the economic background of Babylonian-Palestinian Tannaitic relationships are not numerous, but because the information they provide comes *en passant*, we may accept it without question as evidence that some Babylonian and Palestinian Tannaim participated in the international silk trade. The sources are as follows:

> Once R. Ḥiyya the Elder, R. Simeon the son of R. and R. Simeon b. Gamaliel were trading in silks at Tyre. After they had left the town...
> (Genesis Rabba 77.2, ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 910 1.6)

> R. Hiyya the Elder and R. Simeon b. Halafta forgot the translation of several words, so they repaired to the Arab's market (Theodor-Albeck, to Hegra in Northern Arabia) to relearn them.
> (Genesis Rabba 79.7, Theodor-Albeck, p. 946 1.3)

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[1] See Sheiltoth, Parashath 'Ekev, para. 145. I am grateful to Professor Seymour Siegel of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America for this reference. For a medieval reference to this incident, see Adolf Altmann, *Geschichte der Juden in Stadt und Land Salzburg* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 117-18.

> Abba the Father of Samuel b. Abba was a silk merchant, and he sent (some silk) to R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis.
> (Midrash Samuel 10.3, ed. S. Buber, p. 35.)

These sources tell us unequivocally that two Babylonians who frequented Palestinian Tannaitic academies in this period, R. Ḥiyya and Abba, Father of Samuel, as well as Judah b. Bathyra II of Nisibis were engaged in the silk trade; and that trips were made also to a market in northern Arabia. We know also (Bab. Talmud Shabbath 130a) that Levi b. Sisi, one of the patriarch's apostles, visited Nisibis, in this period. We know also that Rav made a number of trips to Babylonia during his years in Palestine. Of Hiyya and Abba, Father of Samuel, we know for certain that part of their travels concerned trade in silks. We know, moreover, from the Doctrine of Addaeus the Apostle, that the conversion of Edessa involved Jewish silk merchants:

> Even Jews skilled in the law and the prophets, who traded in silks, they too were convinced and became disciples, and confessed Christ that he is the son of the living God.[1]

Cureton comments[2] that "these seem to have been Jews residing at Edessa for the purpose of carrying out traffic with the countries of the east." Further, in the Doctrine of the Apostles we read:[3]

> The whole of Persia of the Assyrians and Armenians and Medians and of the countries around about Babylon... even to the borders of the Indians and even to the country of Gog and Magog... received the apostles' hand from Aggaeus a maker of golden chains, disciple of Addaeus the Apostle.

The "maker of golden chains" should, Cureton says,[4] be more correctly rendered "silks or muslins."

Finally, we recall that the conversion of Adiabene began in Charax Spasinu, at the head of the Persian Gulf, where a Jewish merchant, Ananiah, reached Izates and persuaded him to accept Judaism,[5] while back home in Adiabene, Helene the queen was instructed by a certain other Jew.[6] Charax Spasinu was one western depot of the India-trade, and a merchant there doubtless would have had valuable connections to the north, at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and possibly also in Palestine.

For the Jews, participation in international trade, particularly in

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[1] William Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents* (London, 1864), p. 14, line 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 156, *ad loc.*
[3] Cureton ed., p. 34, lines 17-27.
[4] P. 157.
[5] Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX, ii, 3.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

silks, was greatly facilitated by three facts. First of all, the synagogues in various places served as hospices for traveling co-religionists. We know that various cult-associations did provide place for their travelers, and at Dura, residential quarters in the synagogue complex were, in Kraeling's opinion, provided for this purpose.[1] Second, throughout the Mesopotamian parallelogram and beyond, there were substantial Jewish communities, and many of the ruling families of the north married into the Herodian family, incidentally accepting Jewish rites.[2] The Jewish traveling merchant would have found protection among putatively powerful co-religionists. Third, and most important, Galilee was part of the hinterland of the Syrian ports, from which silk fabrics were exported to Rome, and the entire backcountry of Tyre and Berytus was dotted with silk-weaving enterprises. There was a large wool industry in Syria and a silk industry in Phoenicea, which worked up Arabian imports, from Hellenistic times.[3] Silk-weaving was carried on in private shops, not only in Berytus and Tyre,[4] but elsewhere in northern Palestine and southern Syria, including Usha.[5] Jews in both Babylonia and northern Palestine were active in textile manufacture, as well as export, and the trades of weaving and tailoring were approved by the Tannaim as well.[6] Thus the Jewish traders had a ready and familiar market for their wares and might import goods from as far away as Afghanisan and India, where Jews were settled,[7] (Afghanistan being a way-station on the route to China), to the central Babylonian emporium of Vologasias (near Ctesiphon-Seleucia and Nehardea),[8] and thence re-export goods to agents resident in northern Palestine. The international dispersion, therefore, provided particularly valuable opportunities for conduct of trade and, in the great expansion

[1] C. Kraeling, *The Synagogue* (New Haven, 1956), p. 10. See also Bab. Talmud Pesahim 101a. On extensive travels of Jewish merchants, note also S. W. Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1952), I, 173.

[2] Kraeling, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

[3] W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization* (repr. Cleveland, 1961), pp. 256-57.

[4] See Bouchier, *op. cit.*, on Berytus, 112-20, on Tyre, 136-39.

[5] F. M. Heichelheim, "Roman Syria," in Tenny Frank, ed., *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, 1938), IV, pp. 121-258. E. H. Warmington, *Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 131, 306. See also H. G. Rawlinson, *India and the Western World* (Cambridge, 1916), pp. 101-55.

[6] See Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.9.1 on Nehardea as a center of weaving linen and woolens, also Nehar Abba and Dura were textile centers. On the attitude to needle trades, see Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 82a-b.

[7] Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[8] A. Maricq, "Vologesias, l'emporium de Ctesiphon," *Syria*, XXXVI, 1959, 264-67.

of Parthian-Roman trade in the second century, some Jews were in a particularly favorable position to profit. These were, specifically, those who maintained connections with both the Palestinian market and the Babylonian emporium, and among these, some Tannaim in the age of R. Judah the Prince were certainly numbered, as the sources cited above indicate.[1] Since Ḥiyya, in particular, was probably part of the exilarchate (as I shall try to demonstrate below, Section ix), he was doubtless particularly fortunate, as the exilarchate would have found in him an ideal representative for its Palestinian operations. Hence his trip to sell silk in Tyre, and possibly that to northern Arabia, place him into the context of international trade, particularly in silk. He would have been able to supervise imports of raw materials from Babylonia, their manufacture in Galilee, and transhipment to the Syrian ports, and thence to the Roman market.

We know, moreover, that Ḥiyya (among other Babylonian Tannaim resident in Palestine) was a very wealthy man and owned large tracts of land in the Galilee, particularly around Tiberias, These facts also conform to what is known about silk-merchants in the Roman Empire, who, if they did not suffer disaster, were "pretty substantial people"[2] and aspired to retire from trade and to settle on estates to enjoy a more secure living.

One question that interests the student of Babylonian Jewry in this period is why Babylonian Jews came to Palestine at all. We know that several did, including Ḥiyya, Jonathan b. Eliezer, Rav, Rabba b. Ḥana, Ḥanina b. Ḥama, and others; and that in addition to Ḥiyya and his sons and nephews (Rav and Rabba b. Ḥana), others of the Babylonian Tannaim were in trade, one in wine, another in honey; and were also wealthy men. But this was a period of general agricultural and economic decline in Palestine. The Tannaim had to make great efforts to discourage Jewish emigration. It is difficult to believe that in a period of emigration, Jews came from Babylonia to Palestine without some means of support, and it is entirely probable that the generally favor-

[1] Parallels to the story about R. Hiyya and R. Simeon b. R.'s trip will be found also in the Yalkut, #132; on taxation of the silk trade, see Genesis R. 40.5. See also S. Krauss, *Kadmoniot HaTalmud* (Tel Aviv, 1945), II, ii, pp. 71-75. on Jewish participation in the silk trade. Note also the word MTKSA is used in the source on Abba also, rather than MŠY. Parallels to the story on Abba b. Abba are in the Yalkut to Samuel #100, with no variations. On Rav's trips back and forth, see Zuri, *Rav*, p. 51, and on the silk trade, pp. 66-69 and 99. On a Jewish silk worker in Berytus, see Bouchier, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

[2] M. P. Charlesworth, *Five Men* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 161.

able circumstances of the Babylonian Tannaim in Palestine were based upon trade, except insofar as they engaged in absentee-landholding.

Keeping in mind the fact that much missionary activity was carried on by commercial travelers, we cannot assume that Babylonian Tannaim came to Palestine solely for purposes of trade, or that the frequent trips to Babylonia in this period were for commercial purposes alone. We know on the contrary that Tannaim who came to Babylonia during this period preached and taught, and otherwise engaged in religious pursuits. Other Jewish merchants of the time carried ideas as well as merchandise in their travels. Among other such merchants, some Tannaim bought silk in the east, brought it to Palestine for weaving, and sold it in Tyre for export to Rome. Since we know also that Jews, among other Levantines, were active in the silk trade with Italy, an international Jewish commercial pattern is clearly discernible, with imports from China being received in Babylonia, transhipped to Palestine for manufacture, and thence to the Italian market.

The silk trade was closely supervised by the Parthian government, which did everything possible to prevent Rome from making direct contact with the east, and to tax and regulate the enormously profitable exchange. While not all silk exported to Rome came through Parthia (some was shipped down the Indus to Barygaza and thence to Rome via Pelusium or Alexandria, and the Romans favored the Red Sea route), that which did pass through Seleucia-Ctesiphon, or Vologasia, certainly did so with the knowledge and encouragement of the government. That government must have found the Jews a particularly useful group through whom to trans-ship goods, particularly silk, to the West, and the traces of Parthian influence on Jewish-Roman relationships traced above suggest that in addition to economic interests, political factors occasionally affected relationships between Jewish Palestine and Jewish Babylonia. We know that foreign merchants were not welcomed in Parthia itself and that all dealings were strictly supervised.[1] Yet we also know that Jewish merchants came and went freely from Babylonia (sometimes via Nisibis) to Palestine. It is entirely reasonable to regard such enterprises as one means by which Parthia controlled commercial relationships between China and Rome.

That patriarch's son and the Davidide Ḥiyya, very likely a part of the exilarchate in this period, engaged in trade must thus be seen against

[1] See B. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

the background of international commerce in silk. Five of the known Babylonians at the patriarchal court of R. Judah the Prince—Ḥiyya, Rav, Rabba b. Ḥana, Ḥiyya's two sons—were part of one family. Only three or four others are known at all. The great influence of Babylonian Jewry at the court of Rabbi Judah the Prince was therefore in all probability due to the trading conditions of the day, or, at the very lest, greatly facilitated by them.[1] R. Simeon the son of R. and Ḥiyya, going together to Tyre on silk business, were probably agents of the common enterprise between the "two houses in Israel" that is, the Palestinian and Babylonian centers. Thus, as in later ages, the Jews' dispersion greatly facilitated the economic enterprise of those who were politically able to take advantage of widespread and stable representation in various economic regions,[2] such as Rabbi Judah and his family, the favored agents of Rome in Palestine, and R. Ḥiyya and his family, possibly part of the Exilarchate in Babylonia.

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[1] On economic conditions, see especially M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, trans. D. & T. Talbot Rice (Oxford, 1932). There were several trade routes; that through northern Arabia was led from India to Rome. Palmyra was a neutral center of the caravan trade, the Parthians preferring not to admit Roman merchants to trade in Seleucia-Ctesiphon itself. It is worth noting in this connection that the Jewish participation in the great Mesopotamian uprising against Trajan could not have been caused by motives very different from those held by other revolted ethnic groups and petty states of the region. Palmyra and Dura certainly would have lost as much as the Jews if Trajan succeeded in reversing the Augustan policy of using neutral states as buffer-centers between east and west. But I do not understand the relationship between the great Mesopotamian Jewish uprising of 115-117 and that in Egypt, Cyrenaica, and Cyprus. See also Tenney Frank, *An Economic History of Rome* (2nd rev. ed.; Baltimore, 1927), pp. 442-76; on trade with India, Mortimer Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers* (London, 1954), pp. 115-30; M. Rostovtzeff, *History of the Ancient World* (trans. J. D. Duff) (Oxford, 1927), II, pp. 242-305; F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient, Researches into Their Ancient and Medieval Relations as Represented in Old Chinese Records* (Leipzig and Munich, Shanghai and Hongkong, 1885). It was in this period, in 166, that Chinese-Roman contact was made directly. Earlier, in 97, a Chinese ambassador to Rome was warned by Parthian sailors that the sea was vast, and the voyage long and dangerous. The Parthians (Hirth, p. 42) prevented direct communication between China and Rome so far as they were able. See also N. C. Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-13; M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 35-113. E. H. Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 131, holds that the decline of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the second century accelerated the tendency of Jews to settle in India. Silk, he points out, also reached Palestine via the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf via Petra or Palmyra, as well as through the northern route, on which I base my suggestion that the trip to northern Arabia was similar in commercial interest to that of Tyre.

[2] On the beginnings of Jewish settlement in China in this period, see especially T. de la Cauperie, "On the Entrance of Jews into China during the First Centuries of our Era," *BOR* 5, 1891, 131-3.

VII. Babylonian Jews and Parthian Culture

Some Jews in second-century Babylonia, like those in earlier periods,[1] assimilated some aspects of Parthian culture, specifically, adopting Parthian names and manner of dress, and mastering Parthian military tactics. These were, from the evidence of this period, mainly Jews of the upper classes and close to the government, as one might expect. The main evidence of such cultural assimilation in this period derives from the following stories relating to men of this period:

> R. Ahai the son of R. Josiah had a silver cup in Nehardea. He said to R. Dosethai b. R. Yannai and to R. Yosi b. Kefar [who were going there], When you come back from there, bring it with you. They went and got it [from the people who held it]. They said to them, Give us a quittance [relieving us of all further responsibility]. They said, No. Then give it back. R. Dosethai the son of R. Yannai was willing, but R. Yosi b. Kefar refused. They gave him a thrashing, and said to R. Dosethai, See what your friend is doing. He replied, Thrash him well! When they returned to R. Ahai, R. Yosi said, Look sir, not only did he not assist me, but he said to them, Thrash him well. He said to R. Dosethai, Why did you do so? He replied: The hats of those people are as long as themselves. Their voice comes from their boots, and their names are outlandish—Arda, and Arta, and Pili-Barish. If they give the order to arrest, you are arrested, to kill, you are killed. If they had killed Dosethai, who would have given Yannai my father a son like me? Have these men, he asked, influence with the government? Yes, he replied. Have they a retinue of horses and mules? Yes If that is so, you acted rightly.[2]
>
> It happens that R. Dosethai b. R. Yannai and R. Yosi b. Kefar went down there to collect (funds) for the rabbis [Aramaic = HBRYA]. A bad report was said concerning them, that they would not give [surety for the funds, that the money would be delivered to Palestine]. They came and wanted to retrive [the funds] from them. They [the rabbis] said to them [the donors], We have already made legal acquisition of the funds. They said, We want you to guard them as necessary [and to make recompense if they are lost]. They replied, We are unpaid guardians [and hence freed of such an obligation]. They came to R. Dosethai and he said, Behold he has all the money. They came and took R. Yosi b. Kefar and bound him and took the funds from him. When they came up here, he came to his father. He said, See what your son did to me. He said to him, And what did he do to you? He said, If he had helped me, they would not have taken anything from us. He

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[1] See S. Daiches, *Jews in Babylonia* (London, 1910) and A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 461f. See above, Chapter Two, Section iii, on Zamaris.

[2] Bab. Talmud Gittin 14a-b.

said to him, Why did you do so? He said to him, I saw them, that they are a court of unanimous opinion [Bet Din Shave], and their hats are an amah high, and they speak from their middle, and Yosi my brother was bound, and a strap was rising and falling, and I said, Perhaps father has another Dosethai?[1]

The information on Babylonian Jewry to be drived from the above stories concerns three elements of their culture—names, clothing, and military rank. (We shall note the importance of the reference to a court below, Section viii and Chapter four, Section vi.)

As to the names, Arda meant "Righteous," and was the Parthian equivalent of Zadok. Pili-Barish meant elephant-rider.[2] We find a man bearing the name Arta in the Pahlavi graffitti in the Dura synagogue also, though it is not clear whether he was Jewish or Iranian:

'MT 'rt'w dpyr YTWNt
Kad Artav dipir amat
When Artav the scribe came...

We find, moreover, the name of Arsaces along with Abram in the Dura synagogue (and very commonly, as earlier, Hiyya). Arsaces, and the names cited in the Talmudic account were certainly borne by Jews, and Artav at Dura may likewise have been Jewish. Hence it is clear that some Jews bore Parthian names.[3]

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[1] Yer. Talmud Qiddishin 3.4. See also Gittin 1.5.

[2] My discussion of these names, in JQR LIII, 4, 1963, 297-305, has been criticized by Professor Ilya Gershevitch. There I suggested that Arta may have been a different name from Arda, and erred in so suggesting. The names were one and the same. Further, I erred in discussion of the idāfat, which was not a Parthian form. My explanation of pyl-y bryš is therefore impossible. Professor Gershevitch offers the following: "Among the proper names occurring in the Parthian ostraca from Nisa one finds *denic*, spelled dynys and dyns. Hence *pylybrys* could be an -ic (= diminutive) extension of **pīlēbar* or **pīlēbār*, *ē* being a compound vowel as in Parth. *kdybr* = NPers. *kadēvar* "householder", lit., one who looks after the house, *kad*. For the representation of Ir.c, by Aram. *š* cf. Henning apud Driver, *Aramaic Documents*, abridged ed., 81 n., and Mittelir., p. 39 n. 4. The meaning might therefore be "elephant-keeper", but more likely, *-bār* belongs to *bar-* "to ride", cf. OPers. *asa-bāra-*, hence, "elephant-rider." I am grateful for Professor Gershevitch's willingness to point out and correct my errors.

[3] See Kraeling, *op. cit.*, p. 278, plate XXV, "Abram and Arsaces, and Silas and Salames assisted." Geiger, "Middle Iranian Texts" (Kraeling, p. 311), holds that 'rt'w was clearly Artav and not Artak. The transcription in the text is Geiger's. Kraeling notes (Aramaic text XII, p. 272) that Hiyya was a very common name at Dura, occurring several times in the synagogue graffitti. See also Daiches, *op. cit.*, p. 12, for the name AHYVW Ahiahu. Daiches holds that a number of names in the Nippur documents were those of Jews, despite their Persian and Babylonian origin; see pp. 21, 24, 27, 29, 31. Professor Richard Frye notes that the OP *artava* yields in Sogdian, *artav*, brave, virtuous, elect. But in OP Artavan means "blessed,"

The description of Jews wearing very high hats ("as tall as themselves" or "an *amah* high") calls to mind the tall pointed cap, or hood *bashlyk* brought by the Iranians from the Siberian steppes. The *bashlyk* occurs with great frequency among the Median and Persian tribes. The Parthians wore the headgear called *XOD*, a word widespread in the Near East, a hat like the Phrygian cap, high and pointed. We know, moreover, that the nobles shown in the Shapuhr inscription were dressed in the cone-shaped cap we know as the KLP (kulaf) from the Kartir inscription. Further, we have noted that Nathan's father wore the kamara (KMR'), a signification of authority in both the Talmudic account and in the Kartir inscription. Finally, the evidence of the Dura synagogue is that the high priest wore on his head a reddish-brown, bell-shaped cap, which covered the back of his neck and fell on his shoulder. On this Kraeling comments, "It recalls in its shape as in its ornament the bell-shaped headdress sometimes appearing on Parthian coins and Sassanian bas-reliefs... and that worn by the followers of Shahpur I in the Naksh-i-Rajab relief." That the high priest was envisioned as wearing such a cap indicates that the Jews of Dura would expect the ancient Jewish authority to dress somewhat as the modern, Jewish authorities probably did, namely, in the habit of the Parthian nobility. The context of the stories does indeed suggest that the Jews who dressed so outlandishly from the perspective of the Palestinian Tannaim were, in fact, Jewish officials of the Parthian government, enjoying the usual perquisites of a retinue and empowered to decree imprisonment and death upon the Jews who were in their charge. This conforms to what we know of the position of the exilarchate in later times, and from the dress and carriage of Arta, Arda, and Pili-Barish, it seems most likely that they filled a similar function at this time.[1] That Babylonian Jews dressed differently

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and hence would be the equivalent of Barukh. See R. G. Kent, *Old Persian* (New Haven, 1953), s.v., pp. 170-71.

[1] On clothing at Dura, see Kraeling, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 92, 129, 161; on the mitre of Aaron, p. 127. Kraeling cites also the headdress on a coin of Mithridates III, in Pope, *Survey of Persian Art*, IV, pl. 152b. On the KMR' of Nathan's father, see *PAAJR*, XXX, pp. 106-108; Geo Widengren, "Status of the Jews," *Iranica Antiqua*, I, 1961, p. 141. See also Widengren's "Some Remarks on Riding Costume and Articles of Dress among Iranian Peoples in Antiquity," *Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia*, XI, Upsala, 1956, pp. 260, 231; on the bashlyk, pp. 234, 240-41; on the xod, p. 254; on the distinctive dress of nobles, p. 261. See also C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, repr. Berlin, 1961, col. 440. Literature on the Kartir inscription will be found listed in *PAAJR*, XXX, p. 107. See also Roman Ghirshman, *Iran: Parthians and Sassanians* (London, 1962), pp. 47, 48, 56-57, 66-67, 69, 87,

from the Palestinians is clear from R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama, who continued to wear Babylonian garments in Palestine.[1]

The warlike character of the Jews in question, in the context of their military names and equestrian dress, suggests that these Jews carried on the Babylonian-Jewish tradition of mastering the difficult Parthian military techniques which were learned earlier by Zamaris, Anileus and Asineus, and others.[2] Only after intensive training, beginning from the age of ten years, did the Parthian nobility acquire the arts of riding, polo, shooting astride, and so forth, culminating in the famed, difficult Parthian shot. The acquisition of equestrian skills was greatly emphasized. That Jews had such skills, as we know from Josephus and find again indicated in the accounts cited above, suggests considerable investment of time and energy into their acquisition.

VIII. Jewish Self-Government in Second-Century Babylonia: To the time of Rabbi Judah the Prince

We have already suggested (Chapter Two, Section vii) that the origins of the exilarchate as it was later known in the Amoraic period are to be located in the late first century c.e., when the Arsacids undertook the reorganization of the empire. Here we shall consider information on Jewish autonomous government in Babylonia until the time of Rabbi Judah the Prince, and reconsider the list of exilarchs cited in the *Seder Olam Zuta* above. Three items of information are available.

First, the reference to the KMR' of R. Nathan's father, interpreted by R. Simeon b. Gamaliel as an indication that Nathan's father held high office in the Parthian administration, suggests the existence of a civil authority among the Jews of Babylonia, which maintained contact with Palestinian Jewry.[3]

Second, at approximately the same time, a Babylonian Jewish authority supported the actions of R. Hananiah the nephew of R. Jo-

89, 90, 105. The high hats were worn by officials, as in pl. 104-105. It was an insignia of nobility. See also Henri Seyrig, "Armes et costumes Iraniens," *Syria*, XVIII, pp. 4-31.

[1] Y. S. Zuri, *Rav* (Paris, 1925), p. 81.

[2] See *Antiquities*, XVII, 23f, War II, 520, III, 2, Vita, 54, on Zamaris and Babylonian Jewish military prowess in Palestine. The brothers Anileus and Asineus and their forces defeated several Parthian armies. They must therefore have been well-trained in Parthian tactics.

[3] See above, Section iii.

shua at Nehar Pekod, at the time (ca. 145 c.e.) when he intercalated the calendar outside of Palestine and without permission of the Palestinian patriarchate.[1] The backer of R. Hananiah in this action is named, variously, as Ahiah:

> ...let them go up to the mountain, Ahiah will build an altar, and Hananiah will play on the stringed instrument...[2]

and as Nehunyon, as follows:

> If you do not accept upon you [our authority], go out to the thorny wilderness, and there be the slaughterer, with Nehunian the sprinkler...[3]

It should be noted, however, that Nathan (with R. Isaac) was one of the messengers sent from Palestine to order R. Hananiah to desist.[4] If so, the patriarch was attempting to enlist the support of the exilarchate in reasserting his suzerainty over matters pertaining to regulation of the calendar, and R. Hananiah could not have been associated with the exilarchate (Ahiah, Nehunyon) at all. At any rate, one must conclude that the incident does reflect the development of an independence of judgment in Babylonia on a central religious matter.

Third, when the apostles Yosi b. Kefar and R. Dosetai b. R. Yannai went to Babylonia, one would estimate some time after 150-155 c.e., they reported difficulties with Babylonian Jewish authorities who enjoyed a retinue of horses, possessed influence with the government so that they might issue sentences of imprisonment and death, and who bore Parthian military names, and wore Parthian equestrian dress. If so, these particular Jews must have been consequential authorities, recognized by the government and endowed by it with the prerogatives of the nobility, and they were ruling the Jewish areas which were visited by the aspostles, particularly Nehardea.[5]

The likelihood that R. Nathan's father and the Jews met by R. Yosi b. Kefar and R. Dosetai b. R. Yannai were civil authorities among the Jews, and the possibility that R. Hananiah was supported by such

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[1] See below, Chapter Four, section i, for further discussion of Hananiah's activities in Babylonia.

[2] Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 63a. Hananiah was a Levite, hence the reference to his playing on a stringed instrument. In the Yer. Talmud Sanhedrin 1.2, parallel, the colleague Nehunyon takes the part of the priest, and here, too, a priestly function is implied.

[3] Yer. Talmud Sanhedrin 1.2. Also Yer. Talmud Nedarim 6.8.

[4] In the Yer. passages cited. In the Bab. Talmud passage, the messengers were R. Yosi b. Kifar and The Grandson of Zechariah b. Kevutal (former high priest in the Jerusalem Temple).

[5] Bab. Talmud Gittin 14a-b. See above, section vii.

authorities, supports the contention that the *Seder Olam Zuta* is substantially correct in holding that there was a "Resh Galuta," or, at the very least, an ethnarch among Babylonian Jewry after the destruction of Jerusalem. Bacher's judgment is that the first historically viable statement in the *Seder Olam Zuta* is the reference to Nahum, whom he identifies with Nehunyan-Ahiah at the time of Hananiah.[1] The following table will assist in comparing the information of the *Seder Olam Zuta* with that available from Talmudic sources:

SOZ	Talmud
1. Shekeniah	
2. Hezekiah	
3. Akov	3. Nathan's Father (KMR')
4. Nahum	4. Ahiah—Nehunyon
5. Yohanan	
6. Shefet	
7. Anan	7. Huna (contemporary of R. Hiyya and R. Judah the Prince)
8. Nathan Ukban (Nathan of Zuzita, according to Bab. Talmud Shabbath 56b and Sanhedrin 31b)	8. Mar Ukban (contemporary of Rav and Samuel)
9. Huna	

We shall consider below the references to the Exilarch R. Huna, a contemporary of R. Judah the Prince. Here it suffices to note that he is not identical with Huna the successor (according to SOZ) of Nathan Ukban, for Nathan Ukban was a contemporary of Rav and Samuel and known to the Bab. Talmud as Mar Ukban. If the Exilarch family maintained the patriarchal practice of repeating names through various generations (Gamaliel, Simeon b. Gamaliel, Hillel), then it is noteworthy that the name Nathan appears in the SOZ list, and, if our contention on R. Hiyya's relationship to the exilarchate is correct (below), Hezekiah and Ahiah-Hiyya, in the stories about the incident at Nehar Pekod.

But one may only conclude that both the SOZ list and the Talmudic traditions are hopelessly garbled. If, as Bacher maintains, one may identify Anan with Huna of Talmudic tradition, no philological evidence supports such an identification; and all one may conclude with any certainty is that some Jewish authority did exist in Babylonia in the second century, at least from the time of R. Nathan, if not earlier. This authority was recognized by the government, which gave de jure

[1] "Exilarch," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, V, pp. 288-93.

authority over the Jews, as well as high rank in the empire, as proven by the reference to R. Nathan's KMR', and to the noble dress and perquisites of the rank of Parthian nobility. The tendentious quality of the SOZ is highlighted by the repeated claim that the "sages" directed the Exilarchate; the precise meaning of *Dabruhu* cannot be stated; but its sense is clear, is not proven by any positive information available to us and is contradicted by the treatment of R. Yosi b. Kefar.[1] That the section of the SOZ on the period before the destruction of the Temple is a *midrash* on I. Chronicles 3.22-24 has long been recognized. Bacher's judgment[2] that Nahum-Nehunyon-Ahiah is the first "known-exilarch" is difficult to accept in the light of the problem of his place and role in the Nehar-Pekod incident noted above; and the basis of Lazarus' chronology[3] is not firm:

Nahum, Nehemia, Yohanan, Shafat, 140-170
Huna I, Anan 170-210.[4]

Therefore, while we do not know what, if any, success was attained in founding a Jewish ethnarchy in the first century,[5] we do have evidences of its development from the time of the Bar Kokhba war and afterward, specifically in the story about Hananiah's "court" at Nehar Pekod, the reference to Nathan's father KMR', and the character of the Jewish knights who met R. Yosi b. Kefar and R. Dosetai.[6]

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[1] Lazarus, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[3] Ibid., pp. 63-69, 69-74, 130.

[4] See Halevi, II, pp. 246-52. SOZ text is given also in Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles* (Repr. New York: 195), II, 68f. See also S. Funk, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-41, also II, n. 2, pp. X-XIV. I am grateful to Professor Gerson Cohen of Columbia University for bibliographical assistance on the problem fo the Resh Galuta. Note that the citations of sages in the SOZ are unsupported by Talmudic sources; see Lazarus, *op. cit.*, p. 66. On Anan/Huna/Hananiah, see p. 69, n. 1. On R. Huna, see pp. 69-74.

[5] Tabari calls Ras al Galut a dignitary whose name he gives and who was a contemporary of Jesus. See de Leyde ed. I, p. 741.

[6] We noted above the religious role of Ahiah-Nehunyon. If the KMR' conferred religious, as well as civil, authority, then such a role is entirely comprehensible, supporting Bacher's and Lazarus' view of the identity of Nahum with Nehunyon. While religious functions may later have been appropriated by others, at this period it is difficult to believe that a Jewish authority with civil but not religious prerogatives could have held so much influence among Babylonian Jews as is ascribed to the exilarch, for the foundation of political authority at this period was, first of all, religious, as evidenced inter alia by the (messianic) claim to Davidic origin, and by the character of Tannaitic authority itself. The distinction between civil and religious authority is difficult to establish in this period.

IX. Exilarch and Patriarch at the End of the Second Century

What is beyond doubt is that in the time of R. Judah the Prince an exilarch in Babylonia did function, and his name was R. Huna (according to the Talmud), or Anan (according to the *Seder Olam Zuta*).[1] All information on the exilarch R. Huna is related in connection with R. Hiyya and R. Judah the Prince. We shall, therefore, consider the relationship of the Exilarch to R. Hiyya, and then both his and Hiyya's relationships to R. Judah the Prince. Finally, we shall consider the problem of R. Judah's authority in Babylonia.

My hypothesis is that R. Hiyya knew, was probably related to, and possibly functioned as part of the court of, the Exilarch. Precisely what his relationship to the Exilarch was we cannot say. Perhaps his high position at R. Judah's court depended on such a relationship in part, as had R. Nathan's at R. Simeon b. Gamaliel's. Hiyya's position in relationship to the exilarchate may have been analogous to that of the later "rabbanan deve Resh Galuta," rabbis of the exilarchate. At any rate, it is clear that Hiyya knew and honored the Resh Galuta, that he came from the same town, that he claimed the same ancestry, namely, Davidic, and that in Palestine Hiyya and his sons repeatedly taxed R. Judah with the existence of his rival in Babylonia, who had a stronger Davidic claim than R. Judah himself. All this points to the hypothesis stated above.

The evidence is as follows:

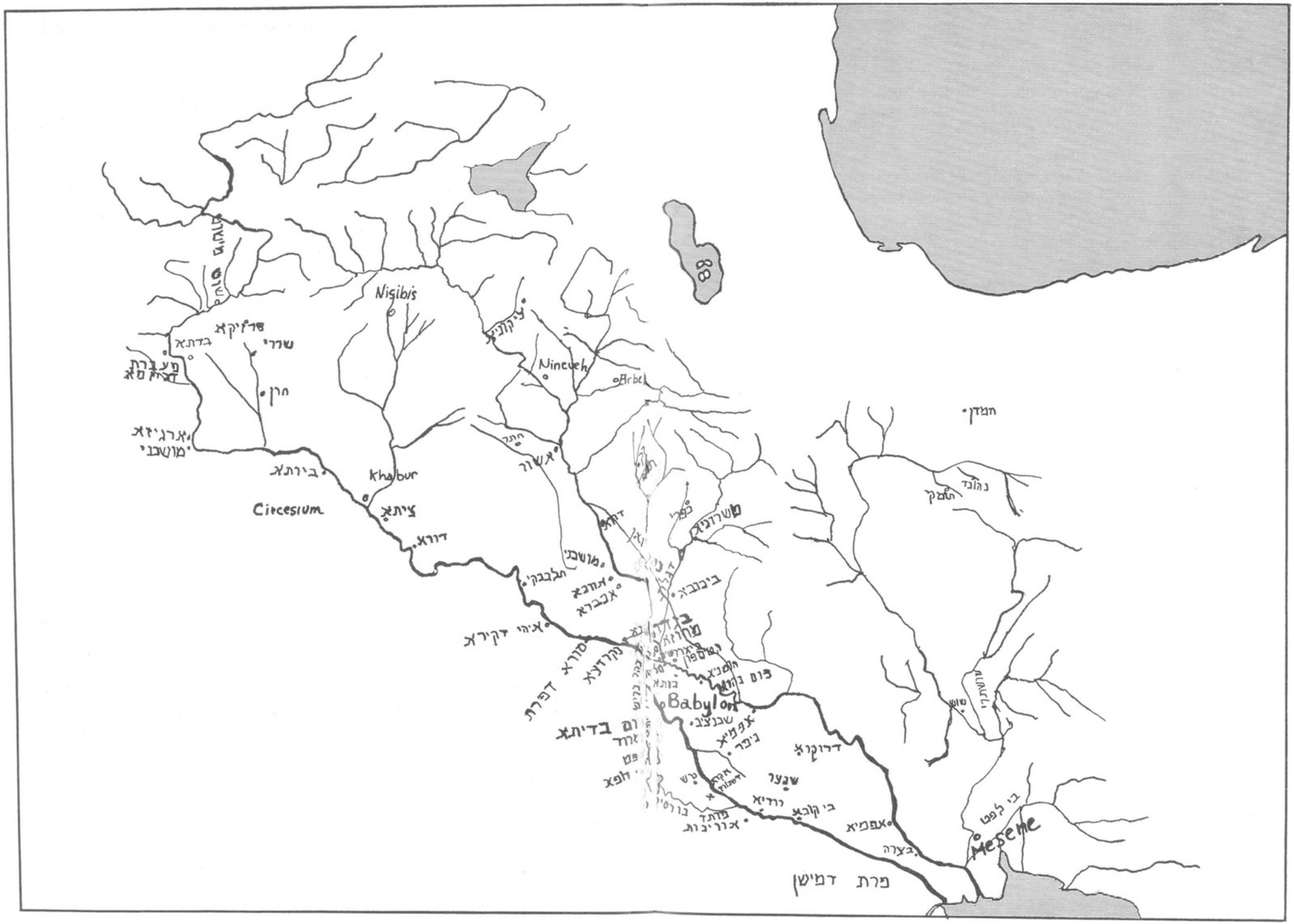
First, Hiyya and the exilarchate came from the same town. Hiyya came from Kifri, which was the residence of the Resh Galuta in the time of Mar Ukban (the next exilarch), and there is no reason whatever to assume that Mar Ukban changed his place of residence from that of his precursor.[2]

Second, Hiyya claimed descent from David, as did the Exilarch. Coming from the same town, the two men must have known about one another's claim, and likely would have regarded one another as in the same genealogical line. Whether the claim of either was historically valid or not is not important. What is important is that both believed

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[1] Debevoise, *op. cit.*, xxxviii. Further discussion of the exilarchate before 200 is in Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VII, Motze Davar; Bacher, *Agadot HaTannaim* (Tel Aviv, 1927), IV, 82, n. 5; see also Y. Ibn-Shmuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-49, and *Rabban Yohanan*, p. 173, n. 2. Ibn Shmuel's hypothesis is totally unfounded; see also Y. Liver, *Toldot Bet David* (Jerusalem, 1959) pp. 37-42.

[2] Bab. Sanhedrin 5a. See Bab, Talmud Qiddushin 44b, Moed Qatan 16b. See Zuri, *Rav.* pp. 21-23; Berliner, *op. cit.*, p, 37; Obermeyer, pp. 39, 315-18.



III. Jewish Sites in Babylonia and Mesopotamian source: S. Funk, Bibel und Babel, I, Vienna, 1910

themselves to be Davidides. It is impossible to conclude that there was no family relationship whatever among men who lived in the same place and claimed the same forefather.[1] Babylonian genealogies were regarded as particularly sound, and founded on evidence regarded at that time as highly credible.[2]

Third, Hiyya at one time was perplexed on who sees the shahanshah first, the exilarch or the *arkapat*, indicating that at one moment he was with the exilarch when a high Parthian official was present. This story indicates direct contact with the exilarch when the latter was at the Parthian court on business.[3]

Fourth, R. Hiyya called his nephew Rav "son of PHTY." The title PHT' was used in the Parthian documents from Nisa for satrap, and if Rav was the son of a Jewish PHT, then his father must have held very high rank within the Parthian feudal structure. It is difficult for us to determine the exact rank associated with given titles; but as we noted in connection with the *arkapat*, it was equally confusing for Hiyya himself to know who takes precedence, the *arkapat* or the exilarch, who, presumably, held the rank of PHT. What is beyond doubt is that Hiyya's nephew was son of a Jewish PHT. If Frye is correct in deriving *batesa* from PHT', and in proposing an analogy to bitahs in Georgian and Armenian, then the title refers to representatives of the shahanshah living at the courts of sub-kings or vassal-kings. Applied to a Jewish noble, the title would then indicate that the holder was a direct representative of the shahanshah among the Jews. Hiyya was thus directly related to a Jewish satrap, who would have been exilarch.

Fifth, in his relationships with R. Judah, Hiyya and his sons repeatedly reminded Rabbi Judah about the existence of a rival in Babylonia. The sources on the relationships between R. Hiyya, R.

[1] See Section ix for discussion of sources on the Davidic claims of Rabbi Judah, Hiyya, and the Exilarch. See especially Liver, *op. cit.*

[2] Bab. Talmud Kethuvoth 111a, Qiddushin 69b, 71a, etc.; Halevi, *op. cit.*, I, iii, 102f.

[3] See Yer. Talmud Berakhoth 2.4. See Lazarus, *op. cit.*, p. 135. For arkapat-argabed, see also Shavuoth 6b, Yer. Talmud Shavuoth 1.2. Compare Levi, s.v. Kohut Arukh, I, 303, s.v. See also Geo Widengren, "The Status of the Jews in the Sassanian Empire," *Iranica Antiqua*, I, 1961, p. 141, n. 3, who cites also Telegdi, *Journal Asiatique*, 1935, p. 228. See also Jastrow, s.v. Alkafta. That the "arkafta" was a high dignitary in Iran is generally agreed; see Widengren, Jastrow, etc. See also Funk, p. 33, who cites Noeldeke, *Tabari*, 111. See also Richard N. Frye, *Heritage*, pp. 185, 269, n. 56, and in *Oriens* 15, 1962. On PHT, see p. 105 n. 3. See also M.-L. Chaumont, "Le Titre et la Fonction d'Argapat et de Dispat," *JA* 250, 1, 1962, pp. 11-12. Further, Rav's sons married the exilarch's daughters later on, which would suggest they were at the same social status.

Judah, and the Exilarch, and the Davidic claim of all three, are as follows:

> R. Levi said, A Genealogical Scroll was found in Jerusalem, and in it was written... R. Hiyya the Great from the sons of Shefetiah b. Avital.[1]
>
> Rabbi was engaged in the arrangements for the marriage of his son into the family of R. Hiyya [Rashi: Hiyya's daughter was to marry Rabbi's son]. But when the kethuvah was about to be written the bride died. Is there, God forbid, said Rabbi, any taint [in the proposed union]? An inquiry was instituted, into [the genealogy of the two] families, [and it turned out that] Rabbi was descended from Shefetiah [II Samuel 3.4, David's son] while R. Hiyya was descended from Shimei, a brother of David.[2]

In the light of the second source, it is difficult to understand the ascription of ancestry to Shefetiah in the Yer. Talmud reference. S. Klein's contention is that the original scroll did not mention R. Hiyya at all. But there can be no doubt that Hiyya's Davidic origins were accepted as fact[3] and widely believed, as were those of R. Judah and the Exilarch.

R. Hiyya and his sons' relationships to Rabbi, on the matter of Rav Huna, are described in the following sources:

> The sons of R. Hiyya sat before Rabbi and uttered not a word. Thereupon he said, Give the young men plenty of strong wine, whereupon when the wine took effect, they began by saying, "The Son of David cannot appear before the two ruling houses in Israel shall come an end, that is the exilarchate in Babylonia and the Patriarchate in to Palestine, for it is written (Is. 8.14), 'and he shall be for a sanctuary, for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both houses of Israel.' Thereupon he exclaimed, You throw thorns in my eyes, my sons! At this, R. Hiyya remarked, Master, be not angry, for the numerical value of the letters YYN is 70, and likewise, the letters of SWD: when wine goes in, secrets come out.[4]

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[1] Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 4.2. See below for further discussion. Note the mention of an exilarch by the name of Shefet in the SOZ, above. See also Gen. R. 98.8.

[2] Bab. Talmud Kethuvoth 62b.

[3] See S. Klein, "A Genealogical Scroll Found in Jerusalem," *Zion*, IV, 1939, pp. 30-50, 177-78. See Appendix V for further discussion.

[4] Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 38a. The midrash on Is. 8.14 sounds like an anti-patriarchal midrash repeated on this occasion, rather than an ad hoc invention. Hiyya, we note, did not in fact apologize for his sons' opinion, but merely explained that they would not have insulted the patriarch by telling him their inner feelings if they were not drunk—but who made them drunk?" No change in the Yalkut parallel, II, 412, except that there R. Hiyya, and not R. Judah, orders more wine for the boys.

> Rabbi inquired of R. Hiyya, Is one like myself to bring a hegoat [as a sin-offering of a ruler, according to Lev. 4.23]? You have your rival in Babylonia, he replied. The kings of Israel and the kings of the house of David, he objected, bring sacrifices independently of one another. There, Hiyya replied, they were not subordinate to one another. Here [in Palestine] we are subordinate to them [in Babylonia]. R. Safra taught thus, Rabbi inquired of R. Hiyya, Is one like me to bring a hegoat? There is the sceptre, here is only the law giver, as it was taught, The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, refers to the exilarch in Babylonia who rules Israel with the sceptre, nor the rulers' staff between his feet (Gen. 49.10) refers to the grandchildren of Hillel who teach the Torah to Israel in public.[1]

(We shall consider below the question of why, if Hiyya says that the patriarch was subordinated to the exilarch, he asked for R. Judah's ordination for his nephews Rav and Rabba b. Hana, when they migrated to Babylonia.) It should be noted, however, that Rabbi Judah also had a retinue of Gothic soldiers, and to some measure, "ruled by force" as did the exilarch. A measure of sarcasm seems present therefore: the patriarch, who rules by public education, is preferable to the exilarch, who rules by force of arms; yet, we know, the patriarch forbade Hiyya to teach publicly, and also enjoyed the services of Gothic soldiers. Either R. Safra did not know this, or did not care.[2]

> Rabbi issued an order not to teach disciples in the open market place. R. Hiyya went out and taught the sons of his two brothers in the open market place, Rav and Rabba b. Hana. Rabbi heard and was angry. When R. Hiyya presented himself before him, Rabbi said to him, 'Iyya, who is calling to you from outside? He realized that he had taken the matter to heart, and submitted himself to the disability of reproof for 30 days. On the thirtieth day, Rabbi sent a message to him saying, Come. Later he sent a message not to come. In the end he came. Rabbi

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[1] Bab. Talmud Horayoth 11b. But, note below, Hiyya was punished by R. Judah for teaching in public without his approval! That the exilarch ruled by force is proven by the Gittin 14a-b story cited above, p. 93-4. For the same midrash, see Sanhedrin 5a; Yer. Talmud Sheqalim 6.1, Sotah 8.3, Horayoth 3.2, Gen. R. 98.8, 99.8. But here the verse is interpreted to allude to the Sanhedrin, which punished and kept in order, and to the two clerks of the judges. If this is an older midrash, as the reference to the Sanhedrin may indicate, then it was reinterpreted in the time of R. Judah to imply an anti-patriarchal sentiment not originally present. In 99.8 it refers to the "throne of kingship." See Numbers Rabbah 3.12. See also Allon, *op. cit.*, II, p. 147. At any rate, if our contention on the relationship of the exilarchic house and R. Hiyya is correct, Hiyya's sons did not indicate a particular bias in favor of their Babylonian relatives.

[2] Note also that R. Judah ridiculed R. Hiyya on account of his Babylonian (and not, contra Zuri, *Rav*, p. 17, Galilean accent) accent, Bab. Talmud Megillah 24b. On Gothic troops, see p. 69 n. 2 and Baron, *History*, II p. 191-2.

said to him, Why have you come? R. Hiyya replied, Because you, sir, sent for me to come. But then I sent to you not to come. He replied, the one messenger I saw, the other messenger I have not seen. Thereupon he cited as the text [Prov. 16.7], "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Wherefore sir do you act thus contrary? Because, R. Hiyya replied, it is written [Prov. 1.20-21], "Wisdom crieth aloud in the street." Said Rabbi to him, If you read Holy Writ once, you have not studied it a second time, and if so, not for a third, and if for a third, then it has not been properly explained to you [compare Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 18a]. The text "Wisdom crieth aloud in the streets" is to be taken [in the sense in which Raba explained it, for Raba said] If one studied the Torah indoors, the Torah proclaims his merit abroad.[1]

This is clearly a late recension of the incident, as the reference to Raba indicates.

We may usefully contrast the following sayings, the first a late tradition of Rabina and R. Ashi, the latter, contemporary to Rabbi Judah himself:

> But did not R. Hiyya learn... The other replied, Since Rabbi has not taught this ruling, whence could R. Hiyya know it?[2]
>
> Rav asked Rabbi... Said R. Hiyya to Rav, Son of a satrap, have I not told you that when Rabbi is engaged on one tractate, you must not question him about another, lest he not be conversant with it! For if Rabbi were not a great man, you would have put him to shame, for he might have answered you incorrectly. Still, he has not answered you correctly, for it has been taught...[3]

Whatever the subsequent assessment of Hiyya's learning may have been, it is clear from his statement to Rav that Hiyya's opinion of Rabbi

[1] Mo'ed Qatan 16b. On Prov. 16.7, see also Yer. Talmud Terumoth 8.3, Gen. R. 54.1, neither parallels this midrash. On Prov. 1.20-21, see Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 57a, Sifre Deut. 87, "Words of the Torah ought only to be said publicly, as it is said..." I know of no parallel to the Mo'ed Qatan story.

[2] Bab. Talmud 'Eruvin 92a.

[3] Bab. Talmud Shabbath 3b. The expression "Bar paḥate" is translated here "son of a satrap." The word PHT occurs in Aramaic (see Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford, 1955], s.v. PHH, p. 1108, and compare Ezra 5.14, 6.6, 7, 13, and Daniel 3.2, 3, 27, and 6.8), and originates in Akkadian. However, among the hierarchy of titles in Nisa, we find the ideogram PHT' = hstrp (xšatrab), meaning satrap. The titles, in ascending order of importance, are QRYT' = BYRT', ideogram for DYZ; PHT'; and MRZWPN, that is marzeban. Thus the title PHT' was applied to a Parthian office. Hiyya called Rav "son of the PHTY," referring to an office held by his nephew's family. Compare p. 101 n. 3. I am grateful to Professor Frye for pointing out the Nisa report *Documents from Nisa* (in Russian [Moscow, 1960]), and translating the relevant section for me. See Frye's *Heritage*, p. 269, n. 57, and his "Some Early Iranian Titles," *Oriens* 15, 1962, 352-59.

Judah was that he had a one-track mind. Certainly he did not regard R. Judah as any better educated than R. Meir and R. Nathan the Babylonian found R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II.[1] We may note also considerable tension between R. Hiyya and R. Ishmael b. R. Yosi, as well as R. Simeon b. R.[2]

By far the greatest source of enmity between R. Hiyya and R. Judah was, however, the figure of the exilarch, as indicated by the following stories:

> Rabbi said, "If Rav Huna came, I should give him precedence as he is descended from Judah, and I from Benjamin, he from the male line and I from the female line. One time R. Hiyya the Great came to him and said, R. Huna has come. Rabbi's face blanched. He said to him, His bier has come.[3]
>
> Our teacher was very modest, and he used to say, I am prepared to do whatever any person tells me, except what the Family of Bathyra did for my ancestor [Hillel] for they relinquished their high office and promoted him. And if Rav Huna the Exilarch were to come up here, I would rise up before him, for he is descended from Judah and I from Benjamin, he on the male line, and I on the female line. Said R. Hiyya the elder to him, Behold he has come. At this Rabbi's face turned pale. His coffin has come, he added. Go and see who wants you outside, he ordered. He went and found no one, whereupon he treated himself as under excommunication for thirty days. R. Yosi remarked, During those thirty days of his excommunication he taught Rav his sister's son all the exegetical principles of the Torah, while Rav taught him the laws of the Babylonians. At the end of thirty days, Elijah of blessed memory came before Rabbi disguised as R. Hiyya the elder, laid his hand upon his teeth, and cured him. R. Hiyya visited Rabbi, and asked him, How is your tooth? Since you laid your hand upon it, it is cured, he answered. I know nothing about it. Upon hearing this, Rabbi showed him in, and set him on the inner bench.[4]

But it should be emphasized, R. Hiyya had the greatest respect for R. Judah,[5] even calling him "The breath of our nostrils, the Lord's annointed, was taken in their pits" (Lam. 4.20), when R. Judah injured himself.[6]

As to Rav Huna, we have no more information than that contained

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[1] See Bab. Talmud Horayoth 13b-14a.

[2] See Bab. Talmud Kethuvoth 103 b.

[3] Yer. Talmud Kethuvoth 12.3. Compare Kil'ayim 9.3.

[4] Ber. R. 33.3, Theodor-Albeck Ed., p. 306, lines 3-7. This is an elaboration of the Yer. Talmud recension.

[5] Bab. Talmud Hagigah 5b.

[6] Yer. Talmud Shabbath 16.1.

in the stories above, supported by R. Sherira's traditions about him.[1]

Thus the sources preserve quite conflicting accounts of R. Hiyya's relationships to Rabbi. In one instance we are told that "everything Hiyya knew he learned from Rabbi," which is simply not true; in the other, Hiyya warned his sons not to embarrass the patriarch by asking him difficult questions. In a second case, the sources praise the patriarch for teaching the Torah in public and not ruling by force, while R. Hiyya was excommunicated for a time because he taught the Torah to his disciples in public, and we know that R. Judah also had armed force placed at his disposal by the Romans. Thirdly, R. Hiyya and his sons reminded R. Judah about his Babylonian rival, while he wanted Rabbi Judah's ordination for his nephews. Finally, R. Hiyya spoke sarcastically about R. Judah's learning; on the other hand, he described him by a messianic verse, and revered both the honor and the prestige of the patriarch.

Returning to our original hypothesis, we may be able to shed some light on the above contradictions. We suggested above that R. Hiyya had some formal, possibly familial relationship with the Exilarch, and that his commercial activities in Palestine were in part as an agency of his eastern compatriot. With reference to the first contradiction, R. Hiyya's alleged contempt for Rabbi Judah's learning has no apparent connection with the exilarchic relationship at all. With reference to the second contradiction, Hiyya's public disobedience of Rabbi's edict had to be punished if Rabbi Judah was to maintain his control over the patriarchate in the face of the opposition of one who enjoyed such powerful prestige and backing, as R. Hiyya. The saying about the exilarch's ruling by force was a statement of fact. The Exilarchate had a higher position in the Parthian empire than the Patriarchate did in the Roman empire. According to the bits of evidence available to us, the

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[1] B. Levin, ed., *Igeret R. Sherira* (Haifa, 1922), p. 76, lines 3-15. See also p. 34, line 9 through p. 35, line 7, on whether R. Hiyya died before R. Judah or not. Sherira was not certain. On Huna, see also Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VII, excursus 3, p. 23, n. 1. He cites Me'ilah 9a and Gittin 5a to indicate that Rav Huna the Exilarch was also a learned Tanna, in the former instance, R. Huna and Samuel's Father argue, in the latter, Samuel asks Huna a question, and since the only known Talmudic Huna of this generation was a student of Rav, Yavetz argues, quite plausibly in my opinion, that the Huna in conversation with Samuel's Father and Samuel was probably an older contemporary of the former and teacher of the latter, hence the Huna known from the sources on the exilarch We know, of course, that Nathan was a very learned Tanna, and have no reason to assume that others of the exilarchic family were ignorant of Jewish law and learning at *this* time But this remains highly conjectural.

exilarch enjoyed the privilege of wearing a *kamara*; as PHT', he was received at the court of the shahanshah along with the *arkapat*, a high government official and hence had direct access to the throne. He, or his officials, wore Parthian insignia of nobility. He controlled military force to execute his edicts. The patriarch, on the other hand, was subordinate to the Roman officials in Palestine, and ruled entirely at their pleasure. His troops were not Jewish, but Gothic. He had to obtain permission from the Roman legate in Syria to take possession of his office. His authority depended, as the source tells us, just as much on persuasion as on military force. Thus when R. Hiyya and his sons repeatedly referred to the presence of R. Huna in Babylonia, they reminded him that another major Jewish political authority possessed far greater power than did he. Yet at the same time, R. Hiyya's respect for the patriarch, and his concern for gaining patriarchal ordination for his nephews, indicate his high regard for R. Judah as Israel's central and legitimate authority. His partnership with R. Judah's son indicates considerable cooperation between the patriarch and Hiyya.

We turn for a closer examination, then, of R. Judah's relationship to Babylonia, particularly with reference to his legal authority, if any, there.

The primary source is as follows:

> Said Rav, Whoever wishes to decide monetary cases by himself and be free from liability in case of an erroneous decision should obtain sanction from the Resh Galuta, and so said Samuel.
>
> It is clear that an authorization held from the Resh Galuta here [in Babylonia] helds good here. And one from the Palestinian authority there [in Palestine] holds good there. Likewise, the authorization received here [in Babylonia] is valid there, because the authority in Babylonia is designated 'sceptre' but that of Palestine [merely] 'lawgiver', as it has been taught, The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah (Gen. 49.10)—this refers to the Exilarchs of Babylon, who rule over Israel with sceptres, and a lawgiver—this refers to the descendants of Hillel [in Palestine] who teach the Torah in public. Is, however, a permission given there [Palestine] valid here? Come and hear: Rabbah b. Hana gave an erroneous judgment [in Babylonia]. He then came before R. Hiyya who said to him, If both parties accepted you as judge, you are not liable to make restitution, otherwise, you must indemnify them. Now Rabba b. Hana did hold permission [from Palestine]. Hence we infer that the Palestinian authorization does not apply to Babylonia... What is the content of an authorization? When Rabba b. Hana was about to go to Babylonia, R. Hiyya said to Rabbi, My brother's son is going to Babylonia. May he decide matters of ritual law? Rabbi answered, He may. May he decide monetary cases? He may. May he

> declare firstborn animals permissible [for slaughter]? He may. When Rav went there, R. Hiyya said to Rabbi, My sister's son is going to Babylonia. May he decide matters of ritual law? He may. May he decide monetary cases? He may. May he declare firstborn animals permissible for slaughter? He may not...

Further, we are told that the reason that the learned nephews of R. Hiyya required authorization from R. Judah was that, on account of an earlier incident, R. Judah had decreed that a disciple must not teach the law unless granted permission by his teacher.[1]

While this was the first instance in Talmudic times in which we are informed that the patriarch specifically authorized his disciples to decide legal cases abroad, we may assume that R. Akiba, R. Meir, and other aspostles were similarly authorized. It may well be asked, however, what value a Palestinian authorization would have had in a Jewish community that had its own legal authority? We note, for instance, that while the ritual and religious laws (ritual law, first-born animals) may not have interested a local Jewish official whose power rested on a political, not merely religious basis, still, monetary cases would have had practical consequences, and the right to decide them would have implied substantial *civil*, not merely religious, authority in Babylonia, an authority that, one may assume, the Babylonian exilarch would not have willingly allowed another to grant. We know, moreover, that later on, Palestinian ordination was not valid in Babylonia, even according to Palestinian authorities, unless validated by the exilarch, while the exilarchic authority was recognized in Palestine.[2] Hence, two questions should be considered: first, what in fact was R. Judah's authority in Babylonia? and second, if it was not substantial, why did the disciples Rav and Rabbah b. Hana trouble to obtain his authorization at all?

We consider the following sources to assess R. Judah's influence in Babylonia, the first criterion by which the above authorization needs to be measured:

> It was recorded in Levi's notebook: I spoke to my teacher, that is, Our Holy Master [R. Judah] about those who mix shatitha in Babylonia, and [he] protested against the practice of mixing shatitha, but

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[1] Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 5a. Compare Yer. Talmud Nedarim 10.8.

[2] *Ibid.* On the effectiveness of Palestinian laws in Babylonia in later periods, see Pesahim 51a, Hullin 18b. To this period, one can hardly apply the extensive acceptance of Babylonian authority in Palestine characteristic of the later age.

> none heeded him, and he lacked the power to forbid it, on account of R. Yosi b. Judah [who permits it].[1]

R. Yosi b. Judah was an important colleague of Rabbi Judah, and hence the patriarch apparently did not feel that his opinion was sufficiently authoritative to forbid the practice in Babylonia. But we do not from this story know whether the Babylonian Jews would have accepted his authority or not. The following story suggests they might not:

> When Rabbi was dying he said... There is Birtha di Satya in Babylonia: today they have turned away from the Almighty, for a fishpond overflowed on the Sabbath, and they went and caught fish on the Sabbath, whereat R. Ahai son of R. Josiah pronounced a ban against them, and they renounced Judaism...[2]

(We may note, finally, that R. Judah supported the genealogical purity claimed by Babylonian Jewry, because his own origins from Hillel would have been impugned if he had not; but this indicates nothing about his authority in Babylonia.)[3]

This information is certainly not extensive. We know only that Rabbi Judah was ignored when he protested a certain Babylonian custom, but that he was unable to resort to the ban to enforce his opinion perhaps because of contrary opinion in Palestine; and we know, also, that the inhabitants of a certain village utterly ignored a ruling about the Sabbath of a Tannaitic contemporary of R. Judah. These evidences point to slight authority, if any, of Tannaim in Babylonia. On the other hand, the evidence also tells us that a relative of the exilarch requested that R. Judah issue decrees of ordination for his Babylonian students when they returned to Babylonia, and R. Judah did so.

Now, it is entirely possible that the ordination of Rav and Rabba b. Hana was merely a formality, which the Palestinian patriarchate consistently accorded to some of its students, in accordance with an *ad hoc* decision on whether disciples might teach, even those for whom such ordination might, in point of fact, have been meaningless. Hence it is possible that R. Hiyya's interest in R. Judah's ordination was on ac-

[1] Bab. Talmud Shabbath 156a, For other indication of R. Judah's interest in Babylonia, see Shabbath 119a, Why do the wealthy men of Babylonia merit their wealth?

[2] Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 72a.

[3] Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 71a, Hanina b. Hama, a Babylonian sage, cited a tradition from R. Ishmael son of R. Yosi, that Babylonia had the purest lineage. Hence they could not *declare* what was contrary to "historical fact." Compare Qiddushin 69b, Kethuvoth 111a.

count of the Palestinian, and not the Babylonian, situation. But, one notes, the detailed attention given to specific aspects of the ordination indicates that it was not merely pro-forma at all, but a serious bestowal of authority. It was important to R. Hiyya and his nephews that they have this authority, just as we know it was important to the bishop of Edessa, Palut, to travel south to Antioch to gain ordination from Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, in this same period (190-212).[1]

Four factors explain the concern of the Babylonians to gain R. Judah's permission.

First, such permission would give them a measure of freedom from sole dependence upon the exilarch for judicial authorization.

Second, the prestige of the Palestinian patriarchate must have been considerable, even though practically, the authorization may have meant nothing in Babylonian Jewish courts. The memory of R. Hananiah's fiasco at Nehar Pekod was kept alive, and is part of the Tannaitic collection of beraitot (see Chapter Four, Section i). If Rav and Rabba b. Hana were intending to engage in any kind of legal activities in Babylonia, as the authorization specifically indicates they were, they would want to avoid the disastrous results of R. Hananiah's efforts two generations earlier. Gaining R. Judah's permission would eliminate the possibility that their judgments would be disavowed by their master and teacher. (Concomitantly, since the story is told as an *example* of ordination, we may assume that R. Ahai and other Babylonian Tannaim had requested similar authorization; at least the stories of R. Hananiah, and that of R. Ahai, told by Rabbi Judah, indicate that the patriarchate was aware of the activities of Tannaim in Babylonia.)[2]

Third, for the same reason, it must have been important to R. Judah himself to strengthen the influence of the patriarchate in Babylonia, in the face of the growing importance of the exilarchate, by seeing that his students and disciples there were recognized as fully qualified and authorized effectively to perform Jewish legal and ritual functions. If the earlier patriarchs had similar concerns to assure the presence in Babylonia of fully qualified Tannaitic-rabbis, we have no evidence of that fact. But R. Judah, who was keenly aware of his rival in Babylonia, was likely to have been anxious to assure that in the domain of his rival were loyal and able disciples of the patriarchate, who, whatever authorization the exilarch was to give them, received their

[1] See below, Appendix II.

[2] See also H. Mantel, ..Ordination and Appointment in Temple Times", HTR, Oct. 1964.

primary ordination in Palestine. Thus *giving* of the ordination on R. Judah's part must be regarded as no less important than R. Hiyya's nephews' receiving it. For both sides, it was an action of consequence.

Further, the exilarchate would benefit by having at its disposal men trained in the Palestinian academies. Whatever the state of the equivalent academies in Babylonia (and there were centers of legal and exegetical study there for more than eighty years [see Chapter Four]), the Palestinian academies were still older, more advanced, and possessed more elaborate and authoritative traditions. It must have been fortunate, therefore, that able and well-educated Babylonians returned from Palestine, with the formal authorization of their Palestinian teachers to decide specified types of cases in Babylonia. This authorization had no discernible legal standing at this point. It is not relevant that afterward the ordination was given far greater significance than it seems to have had when it was given. What was relevant was, to R. R. Judah, the presence of authorized disciples in Babylonia; to the disciples, their independent source of authority, whatever additional rights they might obtain from the exilarch; and to the exilarch, the services of well-educated and well-qualified judges for Babylonian Jewish courts. The ordination of Rabba b. Hana and Rav by R. Judah the Prince has been much discussed from the viewpoint of the history of Jewish law. That history, while interesting, does not greatly affect the practical consequences of their ordination, which we may discern, if only by conjecture, in the above arguments.[1]

Thus the Babylonians at the patriarchal court were representatives of important trading interests and of sources of lucrative contributions to the patriarchal budget. On the other hand, for the Babylonians, Rome was the most important market, and the patriarch was (through his son) their most important official representative in the Roman empire. Both patriarch and exilarch were strengthened *vis à vis* their respective governments by their ability to act as representatives of important groups abroad, who might be useful or dangerous as influences on the neighboring powers. If the exilarchate developed somewhat earlier than the patriarchate, or at about the same time (namely, after the destruction of the Temple), each represented at first the Jewish legal tradition of its own area and (in the case of Palestine) party, and both were responses to the radically changed political situation of the Jewish people after 70.

[1] My second argument is based on R. Sherira's judgment of the importance of Rav's return to Babylonia. See below, Appendix IV.

CHAPTER FOUR

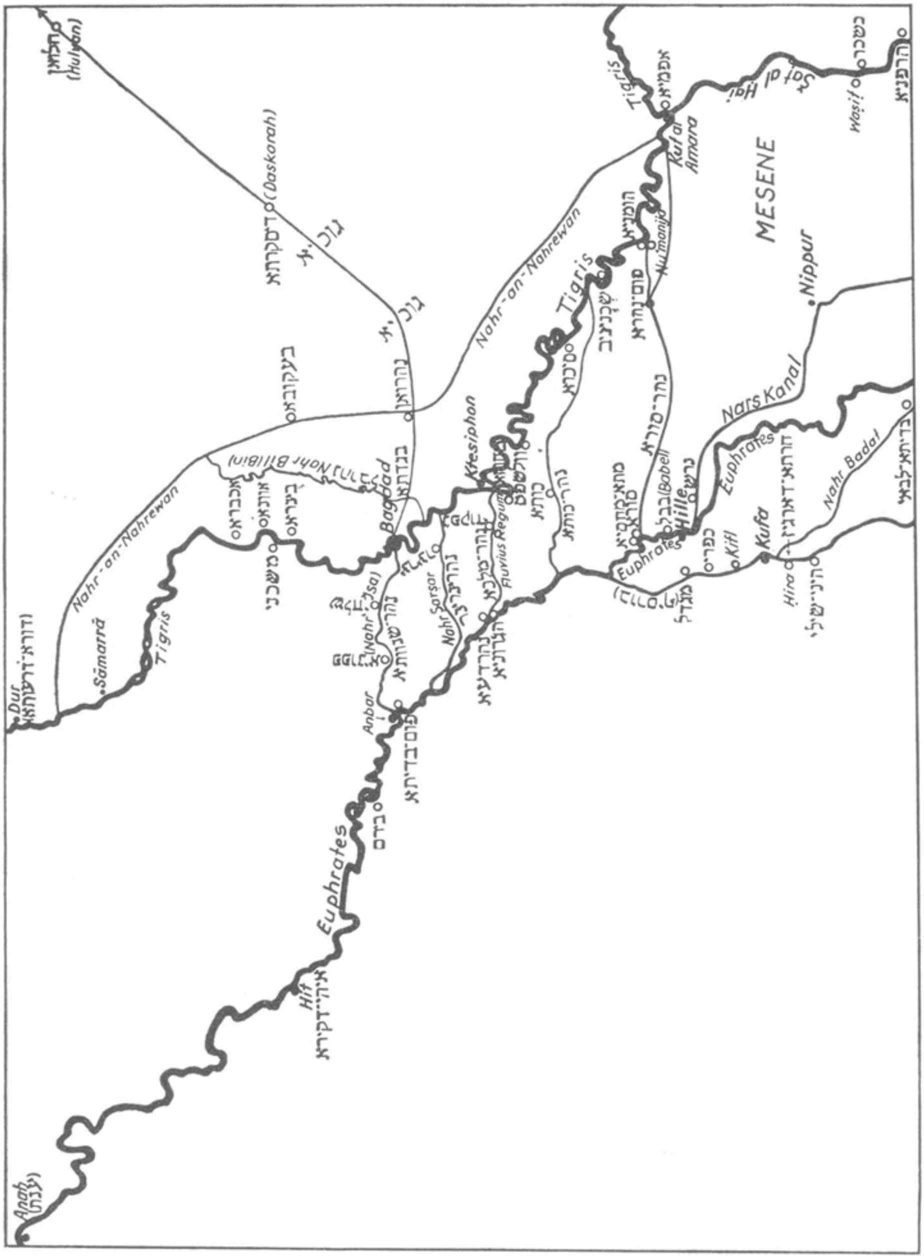
THE TANNAITIC MOVEMENT IN BABYLONIA 70-226 c.e.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 c.e., Babylonian Jewry may have had academies and learned men, but to our knowledge, contemporary Tannaitic Judaism in Palestine was represented in the east only by Judah b. Bathyra (I) in Nisibis and Nehemiah of Bet Deli in Nehardea. It is entirely possible that Palestinian Tannaim such as Hillel and Nahum the Mede[1] came from Parthia, but, as has been noted, we have no information about any education they may have received before migrating to Jerusalem. Between 70 and the Bar Kokhba war, Hananiah the nephew of Rabbi Joshua and Judah ben Bathyra (II) were the only Tannaim in Babylonia who are known to us. The real beginnings of the movement, therefore, date from the Bar Kokhba war, when numerous Palestinian Tannaim were forced to flee the country because of the war and consequent danger to their lives. Two groups fled to Parthia. The students of Rabbi Akiba went to Nisibis, where they remained for a time with R. Judah b. Bathyra (II) before returning to Palestine after the cessation of the war and subsequent pacification of the country. The students of Rabbi Ishmael went to Huẓal, where they settled permanently. During the time of Rabbi Judah the Prince, several Tannaim came to Palestine from Babylonia, having already received part of their education at home, and by the end of the Tannaitic period, as we shall see, Babylonia contained several resident Tannaitic teachers and at least one permanent academy.

1. Ḥananiah the Nephew of Rabbi Joshua in Nehar Pekod

R. Hananiah, nephew of R. Joshua, was a Palestinian who was

[1] Nahum the Mede lived before the destruction of the Second Temple, and his name may reflect an eastern venue. But we have no evidence that he was in fact a Medean, for his name may indicate only that his family originated there, nor is there evidence that he was educated outside of Palestine. While in the period after the Bar Kokhba war, a Babylonian authority was always included in the Patriarchal Court (R. Nathan at the time of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, R. Ḥiyya at the time of R. Judah the Prince), one cannot conclude that Nahum the Mede held his officie in the municipal court of Jerusalem for that reason. See Mishnah Nazir 5:4, Shabbath 2:1, Bab. Talmud Bava Bathra 42a, 'Avodah Zarah 7b; But see Baron, *History* II 205.



IV. Jewish Sites in Babylonia (detailed map)

rusticated to Babylonia for protection against the "sorcery of the *minim* of Capernaum." He maintained his ties to Palestine, however, and probably made at least one trip back. In Babylonia he engaged in the study and the teaching of the "Torah," even taking to himself authority of which the Palestinian patriarchate clearly disapproved. He may be dated, conjecturally, at ca. 80/90-160 c.e., his migration to Babylonia, some time before 130 c.e.,[1] and his dispute with the Palestinian patriarchate, at 145 c.e.[2]

Son of R. Joshua's brother and namesake of his father, Hananiah studied at the Yavneh academy toward the end of the first century, was associated with R. Eleazar b. Azariah (Bab. Talmud Shevuoth 25b), also a young man at that time, and cited R. Eleazar the Modite. R. Gamaliel was affronted by one of his opinions and instructed R. Joshua to correct his nephew. R. Joshua explained that Hananiah was repeating an opinion he himself held. Hananiah studied first and foremost with his uncle. He cited his uncle's action as precedent (Bab. Talmud 'Eruvin 43a). R. Joshua's concern for his nephew was apparently aroused by the attraction of a sectarian group at Capernaum, the incident being reported as follows (Qoheleth Rabbah 1:8, compare 7:26):

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[1] Since the migration took place during the lifetime of R. Joshua, it must have been before 130 and probably was much earlier, when Ḥananiah was still young and under his uncle's tutelage.

[2] On the incident at Nehar Pekod, see the following: A. Geiger, *HaMikra ve-Targumav* (Jerusalem, 1949), 99-100; H. Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1949), II, 443-44; Halevy, *op. cit.*, II, 193-95. Halevy holds that Hananiah's intercalation was necessitated by the Roman prohibition of such activities in Palestine, presumably before the consistory of Usha, ca. 140-150 c.e. See also Allon, *op. cit.*, I, 149, and Mantel, *op. cit.*, 114. Mantel (p. 194, n. 131) offers a solution to the problem of the names of the messengers. On the date of the incident, see Halevy, *op. cit.*, II, 190-205; Allon, *op. cit.*, I, 149. Allon also suggests an explanation for R. Akiba's intercalation abroad. Other discussions of the incident include the following: J. H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve Doreshav* (Vilna, 1904), II, 226; Z. Yavetz, *Sefer Toledoth Israel* (Berlin, 1909), IX, 226-27; A. M. Hyman, *Toledoth Tannaim veAmoraim* (London, 1910), II, 502-505; Halevi, *op. cit.*, I, v, 698-704. We note, finally, the following tradition, which indicates that R. Josiah probably criticized the action of R. Hananiah:

> "It shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exod. 12:2). This means that no second Nisan shall be declared. R. Josiah says, Whence can you prove that the year can be intercalated only by the Great Court of Jerusalem? From the passage, "It shall be the first unto you, speak ye unto the congregation of Israel..."

Since R. Josiah was very likely living in Babylonia in the years after the Bar Kokhba war, a criticism would seem to have been intended, namely, while the year may be intercalated only by the Great Court [and, presumably, heirs of its authority then at Usha], it may not be intercalated elsewhere or by others.

> Hananiah, the nephew of R. Joshua, came to Capernaum, and the *minim* worked a spell on him, and set him riding on an ass on the Sabbath. He went to his uncle Joshua, who annointed him with oil, and he recovered [from the spell]. R. Joshua said, Hananiah, Since the ass of that wicked person has roused itself against you, you are not able to reside in the land of Israel. So he went down from there to Babylonia, where he died in peace.

In the *Golah*, Hananiah engaged in teaching and probably also in applying the law. He reported opinions from the Golah (Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 1:1); and left behind him traditions which were transmitted to Samuel, who decreed that the law follows R. Hananiah's opinions.[1] He returned to Palestine at least once (Bab. Talmud Yoma 37a = Sukkah 20b):

> R. Hananiah said, When I went to the Golah, I found a certain old man there who said to me... And when I came to R. Joshua my uncle, he agreed with his opinion...

The best known incident in R. Hananiah's Babylonian sojourn was his intercalation of the year in Babylonia. Since control over the calendar was regarded as the prerogative of the Palestinian patriarchate, and since that prerogative represented a source of potential authority and power over the conduct of Judaism throughout the world, the patriarch, probably R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, disapproved rather strongly of Hananiah's action. The incident is reported in the following sources:

> I. Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 63a:
> When R. Hanina the son of R. Joshua's brother went down to the Golah, he would intercalate years and determine the months abroad. They sent after him two sages, R. Yosi b. Kefar and the grandson of Zechariah b. Kevutal. When he saw them, he said to them, Why did you come? They said to him, To study the Torah we have come. He proclaimed concerning them, These men are the great men of the generation, and their fathers served in the sanctuary... He began. What he declared unclean, they declared clean, what he forbade, they permitted. He proclaimed concerning them. These men are worthless, are void. They said to him, You have already built and you cannot destroy, you have already fenced in and you cannot break down! He said to them, On what account do I declare unclean and you clean, I forbid and you permit? They said to him, Because you intercalate the years and determine the months outside of Palestine. He said to them, And

[1] See Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 1:1, Yevamoth 7:1, 'Eruvin 1:1. Thus Samuel's education was based in part on traditions handed down by R. Judah b. Bathyra at Nisibis and R. Hananiah at Nehar Pekod.

did not Akiba ben Joseph do so abroad? They said to him, Omit R. Akiba ben Joseph, who did not leave his like in Palestine! He said to them, So too, I, I did not leave my like in Palestine. They said to him, The lambs that you left behind you have become rams – with horns! And they sent us to you, and so they said to us, Go, and say to him in our name, if you hearken, well and good, and if not, be excommunicated. And they said, Concerning our brethren in the Golah, If they hearken, good and well, and if not, Let them go up to the mountain, Ahiah will build an altar, and Hananiah will play on the stringed instrument, and let them all do atonement and say, They have no part in the God of Israel. Forthwith all the people broke out in weeping, and they said, God forbid! We have a portion in the God of Israel. And all this why? For it is written, For from Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of God from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3).

II. Yer. Talmud, Sanhedrin 1:2:

The year may be intercalated only in Judah, but if it was intercalated in the Galilee, it is regarded as intercalated. Hanina of Ono testified that if it cannot be intercalated in Judah, then it is intercalated in the Galilee. It may not be done abroad, and if it is done, it is not regarded as intercalated... In the Galilee, intercalation is thus not done, but if it is done, it is acceptable; while abroad, intercalation is not done, and is ineffective if it is done. When the year can be intercalated in Palestine, it should only be done there; but when it cannot be intercalated in Palestine, then it may be intercalated abroad. Jeremiah intercalated abroad. Ezekiel did so likewise. Baruch b. Neriah intercalated abroad. Hananiah, the nephew of R. Joshua, intercalated abroad. Rabbi sent him three letters, with R. Isaac and R. Nathan. In one he wrote, To his holiness Hananiah, and in one he wrote, The lambs that you left behind have become rams, and in one he wrote, If you do not accept upon you [our authority], Go out to the thorny wilderness [or, desert of Atad], and there be the slaughterer, with Nehunion the sprinkler [of blood upon the altar]. He read the first and did obeisance, the second, and did likewise, the third, and wanted to dishonor them [and thus reject their authority; see Jastrow, s.v., for variant reading]. They said to him, You cannot, for you have already honored us. R. Isaac stood up and read in the Torah: "These are the festivals of Hananiah the nephew of R. Joshua." He said, "These are the festivals of the Lord." He replied, "With us." [i.e. Your calendar is not legitimate.] R. Nathan arose and read in the prophets, "For from Babylonia will the Torah go forth, and the word of the Lord from Nehar Pekod." They said to him, "For from Zion will the Torah go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." He said to them, "With us." [i.e. Your decrees are not authoritative.] He (R. Hananiah) went and complained concerning them to R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis. He said to him, After them, after them. He said to him, Do I not know what is there? What tells me that they are masters of calculation like me? Since they are not well informed like me in calculation, let them hearken to me. [He replied] And since they are masters of intercalation like him

[direct address], let him listen to them. He rose up and rode his horse. Where he reached, he reached, and where he did not reach, they observed in error.[1]

III. Yer. Talmud Nedarim 6:8:

Identical with the above source, with the exception of the following detail. In the conversation with R. Judah, R. Hananiah says, "Do I not know what *I left behind* me there?" Since he [direct address] says, they are not masters like me, should they hearken to him? [No, but rather] since they are masters of reckoning like me, let him hearken to them! He rose and saddled his horse, etc.[2]

Different names of messengers are mentioned, the Bab. Talmud naming Yosi b. Kefar and the grandson of Zechariah b. Kevutal, both of the period after 140 c.e.[3] (Yosi was known as a frequent traveler between Babylonia and Palestine), the Yer. Talmud mentioning R. Isaac and R. Nathan, who lived in Babylonia somewhat before 150. The discrepancy may be harmonized, as Hyman and Halevi suggest, by suggesting that R. Yosi and the grandson of Zechariah carried letters to R. Nathan and R. Isaac who then lived in Babylonia.

Analyzing the sources, we note the following segments: first, the brief quotations from letters from Palestine; second, the actions of R. Hananiah in response to the letters; third, the public rebuke, either during the synagogue service of reading the Torah, or at a public argument; and finally, the mission of R. Hananiah to R. Judah b. Bathyra. Comparing the two recensions we see the following:

Bab. Talmud	*Yer. Talmud*
1. Hananiah intercalated in Babylonia.	1. Hananiah intercalated in Babylonia.
2. Two sages sent with letters	2. Two sages sent with letters

[1] The reply of R. Judah b. Bathyra is explained *ad loc.* by the Yerushalmi Commentary *Pnei Moshe* as follows: Since you say that they are uninformed, shall we think that they should hearken to you? On the contrary, since they say that they *do* know to reckon like you, you should hearken to them, for one ought not to reckon or determine [the calendar] abroad unless one knows that there is *certainly* none so able to do it in Palestine. R. Hananiah thereupon rode circuit to inform the *Golah* about the proper calendar as determined by the Palestinians. Where he was able to reach, he corrected the calendar, but where he was unable to reach, the people observed the holiday in error.

[2] Here the *Pnei Moshe* holds that it was R. Judah who informed the communities about the change in the calendar, while in the Yer. Talmud Sanhedrin passage he holds that either R. Hananiah or R. Judah did so. We note also the apparent change in the person of direct address, "Since he... masters like me..." etc. Here apparently the entire phrase beginning "Since..." is that of R. Judah.

[3] On R, Yosi b. Kefar, See Bab. Talmud Gittin 14b, Yer. Talmud Gittin 1:5, Qiddushin 3:4

R. Yosi b. Kefar The grandson of Zechariah	R. Isaac R. Nathan
3. Sages are honored publicly.	3. Sages are honored publicly.
4. Make a public display of Palestinian objection to R. Hananiah's actions, either at the court or at the academy he conducted.	4. Make a public display, in the synagogue on the Sabbath.
5. Hananiah defends himself as the only competent person in his generation.	5. Hananiah complains to R. Judah b. Bathyra that he is the most competent person of all.
6. They reply, the lambs are rams.	6. Judah replies, Since they have some competence you must listen to them.
7. They threaten excommunication and ridicule Hananiah, playing on public opinion.	7. No equivalent.
8. "All this why"	8. No equivalent.
9. No equivalent.	9. Hananiah is told by R. Judah in Nisibis to conform to Palestinian rulings.

The Palestinian version is probably older, because, first, passages in the Yer. Talmud which are brief, such as the citations from letters, are developed in the Bab. Talmud into dramatic narratives; second, the scriptural quotation of the Yer. Talmud becomes a homily for the Bab. Talmud; third, the Babylonian report is more clearly literary, formulated in good Hebrew, while the Yer. Talmud sources seem more like notes on the incident, the additional mention of R. Akiba b. Joseph and the phrase "with horns" representing an elaboration of the simpler statement of the latter, "The lambs you left behind are now rams." The respective interpretations of the incident, finally, may suggest why the Babylonian account omits reference to R. Hananiah's trip to Nisibis. For the Bab. Talmud, the point of the story is that just as it is unthinkable to build an altar and conduct a cult outside of Jerusalem, so it is unthinkable that Jews who want a portion in the God of Israel would look elsewhere than to Palestine for "the Torah and the word of God." Such sentiments would, indeed, have been held by Babylonian Jews, who were willing to affirm ideas taught, after all, by prophecy. But the incident with R. Judah b. Bathyra represents more than an ideological affirmation, but also a very concrete admission that not only in theory, but also in practice, the decision of the Palestinian Tannaim and of their patriarch was binding even in Babylonia, and even where his decision may have been based upon less competence than that available in Babylonia. Such a detail would

most certainly have been preserved by a Palestinian, and suppressed by a Babylonian, editor. Hence we do not regard its omission in the Bab. Talmud as evidence that it has no basis in the events themselves.

As to the date of R. Hananiah's intercalation abroad, the Babylonian tradition is quite clearly to be dated at about 145 c.e., when the memory of the late R. Akiba was still very much alive; when, moreover, one of his contemporaries may have regarded his younger students with some disdain; when, also, the difficulty of intercalating the year in Palestine may have made Ḥananiah's action acceptable for a time, later leading him to oppose an order to desist; when, finally, the reconstitution of the consistory at Usha, under R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, would have made it important to the Palestinians to recover authority that had slipped away from them during the troubled years. The Yer. Talmud tradition is not entirely consistent with such a date, for it says that "Rabbi" sent the messages; otherwise, however, it is congruent to 145 c.e. At that time, R. Judah b. Bathyra II was probably in Nisibis; R. Nathan and R. Isaac, living in Babylonia, may well have had relations with the new consistory at Usha; and R. Hananiah's opinion that none in the new consistory equalled his mastery of intercalation may have had some foundation. Since all details in both accounts are congruent to a date of about 145 c.e., and the discrepancy that "Rabbi" (which may represent merely a failure to write out R. Simeon b. Gamaliel's name) sent the letters is entirely tangential, we conclude that the event took place in ca. 145.

Thus, R. Hananiah the nephew of R. Joshua migrated to Babylonia in his early years, perhaps about 100 c.e. He maintained some contact with a R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis, possibly Judah II, his uncle having also known R. Judah b. Bathyra of Nisibis, probably Judah I. In the course of time, he doubtless taught and attempted with some success to apply the law. He returned to Palestine on occasion. He certainly engaged in intercalation of the year when he thought it necessary, probably during the time of Bar Kokhba's rebellion or immediately afterward.[1] He did so without the approval of the Palestinian authorities, but empowered only by his own learning and personal influence, which must, therefore, have been great. At the time of the re-establishment of Palestinian Jewish autonomous government under R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II at Usha[2], he was forced to desist, probably by an appeal to Babylonian Jewish public opinion made by agents of the Palestinian

[1] See Allon, *op. cit.*, I, 149.

[2] On contemporaneous Palestinian intercalation, see Allon, *op. cit.*, pp. 69f, 75-77.

patriarch supported by the Babylonians R. Nathan, R. Isaac, and R. Judah b. Bathyra II in Nisibis. Toward the end of his life, he was regarded by the Babylonian Jews, including R. Nathan, as a leading authority, and one may assume that R. Nathan probably acquired part of his education from R. Ḥananiah,[1] as the following story indicates (Bab. Talmud Hullin 47b):

> Once when R. Ḥananiah was ill R. Nathan and all the great men of that age came to visit him. There was then brought in to him (R. Ḥaniah) a lung whose substance had decayed and was tossing about within as water in a tub, and he declared it to be permitted.

II. Rabbi Judah ben Bathyra (II) in Nisibis

If there was a second Judah b. Bathyra, probably also in Nisibis, at the time of Hadrian, then he was probably born ca. 90-100 c.e., and was a student of R. Eliezer and a colleague of R. Akiba, R. Judah b. Bava, and R. Pappas (See Bab. Talmud Bezah 29b). His studies with R. Eliezer are well attested, and the sources preserve the picture of a Judah b. Bathyra who sat quite humbly as a student before Eliezer b. Hyrcanus. This would not have been Judah b. Bathyra I, who was doubtless at least as old as R. Eliezer, if not much older. The sources are as follows:

> [A question was asked of R. Eliezer and R. Eliezer replied that he had no tradition on the matter.] R. Judah b. Bathyra said to him, I will expound it [or, may I expound it?] He said to him, If it be to confirm the words of the sages, be it so... [After the exposition R. Eliezer said to him] Thou art a great sage in that thou hast confirmed the words of the sages.
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> Mishnah Nega'im 9:3 [See also Nega'im 11:7, compare Sifra Tazria Nega'im 6:7, 16:9.]

There are two possibilities: first, that a younger Judah b. Bathyra had come to study with R. Eliezer probably after 90-100 c.e., or that R. Eliezer, teaching in the presence of R. Judah b. Bathyra I, treated the latter like a student, even though he was in fact "a great sage." The same possibilities occur with reference to R. Akiba and R. Judah b. Bathyra:

> The Gatherer – that is Zelophahad – and so it says that Akiba makes the identification between the Gatherer of wood on the Sabbath in

[1] Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VI, 142-43, holds that this source refers to R. Hananiah the nephew of R. Joshua. Since R. Nathan probably left Babylonia for Palestine by ca. 150, this would indicate that R. Hananiah's old age may be dated at ca. 150.

> Numbers (15:32-5) and the death of Zelophahad (Num. 27:1-11). R. Judah b. Bathyra said to him, Whether or not it is so, you are destined to give recompense, for if it is according to your opinion, the Torah concealed it and you reveal it, and if not, you speak slander against that righteous man!
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> (Bab. Talmud Shabbath 96b-97a; see also Sheqalim 2:4, Yoma 8:7, Sanhedrin 109b, 108a, Ta'anith 2b.)

Here again, the two may have been together either in Palestine or in Nisibis before 115/16 c.e., or there may in fact have been a second Judah b. Bathyra who lived mainly in Nisibis but who came also to the Palestinian academies. One source may make the likelihood that there was a Judah b. Bathyra II far more reasonable. During the imprisonment of R. Akiba, before his martyrdom, a question was raised:

> They asked R. Akiba in prison and he forbade, R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis and he forbade (Bab. Talmud Yevamoth 108b).

If the source is contemporary, then R. Judah b. Bathyra must have been other than the one who lived more than four score of years earlier in the Euphrates valley. The source, however, includes the opinions of much later authorities, such as R. Ishmael the son of R. Yosi, and hence does not necessarily juxtapose the two men in time, but only in opinion. The language "they asked X here... they asked Y there..." explains why the opinion of a presumably much earlier figure was included with R. Akiba's. Judah b. Bathyra had relationships with R. Pappas and R. Judah b. Bava ('Eruvin 73a, Hullin 41a, 'Avodah Zarah 59b), but here again they may have met in Palestine before 115; may never have met but may have had their quite separate positions on various legal questions juxtaposed in a later age; or Judah b. Bathyra II may in fact be dated at ca. 140 c.e.[1]

[1] Note also Sifre Deuteronomy 80:

> The story is told about R. Judah b. Bathyra, R. Mattiah b. Heresh, R. Hananiah nephew of R. Joshua, and R. Jonathan, that they were going abroad, and when they reached Palatom [Puteoli] they recalled the land of Israel. Their eyes filled up with tears, and tears ran down their cheeks, and they tore their clothes, and said this [verse of the] Scripture, "And you will inherit it and dwell therein" (Deut. 11:31). They went and returned to their homes, saying, Dwelling in the land of Israel is considered equivalent to all the commandments of Torah.

The difficulty here is that, first of all, the four men mentioned went to different places, probably at different times, Mattiah to Rome, Hananiah to Nehar Pekod, Jonathan and Judah to Nisibis (but Jonathan came to Nisibis to study with Judah, who was already there). I think that the story is told to list all the major Tannaim with whose names emigration was associated, and then to indicate their regret at leaving the country (a common motif in later second-century tannaitic teachings, when emigration was quite common), and to emphasize the importance of staying in the country. The detail about their returning to Palestine is incongruous, for

There is a report, however, on a Judah b. Bathyra who was born at the time that R. Joshua and R. Eliezer traveled to Rome (before 100 c.e.). The two Tannaim allegedly stopped in a town in Asia Minor and there dispelled the sorcery that had prevented the birth of a child to a local pious Jew, and the resultant child was "Judah ben Bathyra" (Yer. Talmud Sanhedrin 7:13). Nisibis was not on the road to Rome from Palestine, and it is possible that the association of *a* Tanna born and bred abroad might have brought to mind the name of Judah b. Bathyra.

There is sounder reason for suggesting a Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis during the middle of the second century. First, several students of R. Akiba and R. Ishmael studied after 135 with R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis, including R. Yohanan the Sandler and R. Eliezer b. Shmu'a. Second, Hananiah the nephew of R. Joshua consulted with R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis at the time of the intercalation in Nehar Pekod, probably at 145 c.e. The messengers of the Palestinian court were, moreover, men who were identified with the generation of Usha and no earlier. Furthermore, one story suggests that a Judah b. Bathyra was in Nisibis after the time of R. Judah b. Ila'i:

> R. Zera said, Though R. Judah b. Bathyra sent a message from Nisibis saying, Observe the respect due to a scholar who has forgotten his learning through a misfortune, and be careful to cut the jugular veins in accordance with R. Judah's ruling; and be heedful of the honor due to the children of the ignorant, for from them proceedeth the Torah... (Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 96a. See also Sanhedrin 92b.).

Hence it appears very likely indeed that there was, in fact, a second Judah b. Bathyra, who lived mainly at Nisibis but also part of the time in Palestine between approximately 100 and 160 c.e. We may note that the opinions of R. Judah b. Bathyra were cited by Mar Samuel. While it is not likely that Mar Samuel studied with R. Judah b. Bathyra II, he probably did receive traditions in his name from intermediaries.[1] (The evidence, on Simeon b. Bathyra and Joshua b. Bathyra is not ex-

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each is known actually to have emigrated. Furthermore, the same story is told about R. Eleazar b. Shamu'a and R. Yohanan the Sandlar, in the same passage of Sifre. We have before us, therefore, a formal narrative applied first to four men, and then to two, the occasions of whose migrations from Palestine were remembered. But it does not seem to me to contain historically relevant information.

[1] Samuel says that the law follows R. Judah b. Bathyra in Bab. Talmud Megillah 18b, Mo'ed Qatan 26b, Yevamoth 18b, 108b. Note that he also decides according to the opinions of Levi ben Sisi and R. Hananiah, nephew of R. Joshua, see below. See D. Hoffman, *Mar Samuel* (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 70-74.

tensive, and provides no grounds to associate either one with Judah b. Bathyra of Nisibis.[1])

Thus we may conclude that here were probably two Judah b. Bathyra's in Nisibis. The first lived there during the middle of the first century, possibly between 20/30 and 90 c.e., the second, possibly from 100 to 160 c.e. Both men were very well informed about tannaitic laws and traditions, and the wide selection of sources on various points of law indicates that each would have been able to transmit at Nisibis a very wide range of tannaitic traditions. R. Judah b. Bathyra II lived at Nisibis, but he returned (from time to time) to Palestine. He was a student of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, probably during the time that R. Akiba was also at the academy, and numbered among his colleagues R. Judah b. Bava and R. Pappas. If he was in Palestine long before the Bar Kokhba war, he probably returned to Nisibis by 130, for at the outbreak of the war and during the subsequent pacification of Palestine, he was well established in Nisibis, where he received a number of R. Akiba's students, who fled to him. At about 145 c.e. he was consulted by R. Hananiah the nephew of R. Joshua concerning the right of the Palestinian patriarchate to exert sole authority over the reckoning of the calendar and upheld the exclusive right of the Palestinians, mainly students of Akiba, to do so. In later years, probably after his death, his rulings were still regarded as valid in Nisibis, even though the points of law at issue were decided differently by the court of R. Judah the Prince; and he very likely applied laws in Nisibis which he had learned from R. Yosi the Galilean many years earlier. But the extent of his authority in Nisibis Jewry is by no means clear.[2] He left behind him both students and traditions, the former including R. Eliezer b. Shamu'a and R. Yohanan the Sandler, and the latter being transmitted to Mar Samuel, a half century later.[3]

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[1] The evidence on Simeon b. Bathyra and Joshua b. Bathyra is not extensive. See Bab. Talmud Shabbath 104b, 106a, Ta'anith 3a, Yevamoth 79b, Hagigah 23b, etc.

[2] See the story about Judah b. Bathyra's relationship with the *archisynagogus* of Nisibis in Lam. Rabbah 3:17. If he was the regnant Jewish authority in the city, he still had to conform to the wishes of the head of the synagogue.

[3] Note also the opinion of S. Krauss, based on Tosefta Yevamoth 12:11, Bab. Talmud Yevamoth 102a, Tosefta Kethuvoth 5:1, etc., that R. Judah b. Bathyra did not keep pace with the *halakhah* as it was formulated in Palestine, but presented rather outdated or earlier viewpoints. *Vide* S. Krauss, "Bathyra," *JE*, II, 598, and note Z. Frankel, *Darkhe haMishnah* (repr. Tel Aviv, 1959), 98-102. See Bab. Talmud Hullin 54a, 116a, and Shabbath 130a.

III. The Students of Rabbi Akiba in Nisibis

The Hadrianic persecutions marked a significant turning point in the development of Tannaitic Judaism in Babylonia. Before 130-140 c.e., a few individuals carried on the traditions of the Tannaim in Babylonia and Mesopotamia. After the migration of numbers of Palestinian Tannaim as a direct result of the persecutions of these years, Tannaitic Judaism was far better represented, and doubtless, academies of some kind developed there to transmit their teachings (as the early education of R. Nathan would suggest), although until the turn of the third century and beyond, the Tannaim of Babylonia continued to migrate to Palestine for the major part of their education (e.g., Rav, R. Hiyya, etc.). Nevertheless, within less than a generation, Babylonian Jewry began to produce Tannaim in substantial numbers, who give evidence that the earlier Tannaim had success in transmitting their ideas and traditions in Babylonia.

The students of R. Akiba who fled abroad had to do so because of their illegal ordination by R. Judah b. Bava[1] (a colleague of R. Judah b. Bathyra II). R. Yosi b. Halafta fled to Cappadocia, R. Meir to "Asia" ("Asia" probably meaning Asia Minor but possibly Ezion Gever in the south). R. Eleazar b. Shammua and R. Yohanan the Sandler went to Nisibis, and R. Nehemiah possibly to Babylonia. (At the same time, students of R. Ishmael, in particular R. Jonathan and R. Joshia, went to Huẓal; and it is probable that R. Isaac went with them also.) The students of R. Akiba eventually returned and reassembled at Usha to continue their work, spending the next decades organizing their traditions, so that R. Meir and, after him, R. Judah the Prince, eventually succeeded in producing the authoritative and operative law book, based on R. Akiba's work, while the students of R. Ishmael apparently did not reorganize themselves in Palestine, probably not even attending

[1] On the ordination of R. Akiba's students, see Weiss, *Dor*, II, 119f, Halevi, I, v, pp. 664-704, II, pp. 162-252. Halevi says that the main students of R. Akiba went to Babylonia, including Meir, Judah, Yosi, Simeon, Nehemiah, and Eleazar b. Shammua, while Simeon b. Yohai hid in a cave; but there is no evidence that Meir, Judah, Yosi, and Simeon were in Babylonia during these years. He also holds (see below appendix VI) that "the rabbis of the south" were in Nisibis together for a time. See pp. 674-75. Halevi also holds that practically any conversation including R. Josiah took place in Babylonia at R. Josiah's academy in Huẓal, including, *inter alia*, that of R. Judah, Nehemiah, and Josiah on the ten things created on the evening of the first Sabbath, cf. Bab. Talmud Pesahim 54a. On the prohibition of ordination, see Sanhedrin 13b; compare also 'Avodah Zarah 8b. Weiss, *Dor*, II, p. 129, holds that Yohanan the Sandler and Eleazar b. Shammua remained in Nisibis during the consistory at Usha. See Halevi, especially I, v, pp. 672f.

(in significant numbers at least) the consistory at Usha, but remained in Huẓal, in Babylonia, and pursued their work there. Hence we know a great deal more about the Ishmaelite Tannaim in Babylonia than about the sojourn there of the students of Akiba. The sources such as the Mishnah and Tosefta, which were edited in Palestine, however, contain very few references to the Ishmaelites, while certain specific texts, in addition to the *beraitot* which cite them with some frequency, contain a very disproportionate number of references to them, specifically certain parts of the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael and the Sifre on Numbers. (We shall consider this matter below, Sections iv-v and Appendix vii.)

R. Judah b. Bava ordained the following students of R. Akiba: Meir, Judah b. Ilai, Yosi b. Halafta, Simeon b. Yohai, Eleazar b. Shammua, and Nehemiah. The story is told (Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 13b):

> Did not R. Judah say in Rav's name: May this man indeed be remembered for a blessing, and his name is R. Judah b. Bava. Were it not for him, the laws of *kenas* [fines] would have been forgotten in Israel... Because of the wicked government, because once the wicked government decreed that whoever performed an ordination should be put to death, and whoever received ordination should be put to death, and the city in which the ordination took place should be demolished, and the boundaries wherein it had been performed should be uprooted. What did R. Judah b. Bava do? He went and sat between two great mountains, that lay between two large cities, between the Sabbath boundaries of Usha and Shefaram, and there he ordained five elders, R.Meir, R. Judah, R. Simeon, R. Yosi, and R. Eleazar b. Shammua (R. Awia adds also R. Nehemiah to the list). As soon as their enemies discovered them he urged them, My sons, flee! They said to him, Master, what will become of thee? I lie before you like a stone which none can overturn, he replied. It was said: the enemy did not stir from the spot until they had driven three hundred iron spearheads into his body, making it like a sieve.

R. Yohanan the Sandler allegedly studied with Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis; since he had communication with R. Akiba during the latter's imprisonment, he may have left the country shortly after R. Akiba's martyrdom. He returned for the assembly of intercalation in the valley of Rimon, in the company of Meir, Judah, Yosi, Simeon, Nehemiah, and Eleazar b. Yaakov; the only source linking him with Nisibis is Sifre Deut. 80.[1]

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[1] On R. Yohanan the Sandler, see Weiss, *Dor*, ii, p. 166; Brull, *Mavo*, p. 198; Frankel, *Mavo*, pp. 184-85; Bacher, *op. cit.*, II, ii, pp. 67-68; Braunschweiger, *Die*

R. Nehemiah fled, but we do not know where he went. He does not reappear in the sources dealing with Usha or with the period of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, and may have died abroad.

R. Eleazar b. Shammua[1] taught a number of Babylonians, including R. Nathan, and did not return to Usha, though he did teach in Palestine later. Hence we may assume that he spent a considerable period in Babylonia, perhaps even a decade or two. He was a priest, and rich; an important figure among R. Akiba's disciples. He had frequent discussions with R. Judah b. Ilai, R. Yosi, and R. Simeon b. Yohai. In later times, he cited R. Judah b. Bathyra, and was cited by Joseph the Babylonian and Yosi ben Kefar, but Yosi. like Joseph, may have studied with him in Palestine. One of his sayings may indicate that general economic conditions in Palestine deteriorated during his lifetime. R. Eleazar b. Shamua was listed as one of the "men of the south" or "our rabbis in the south," who were R. Meir, Judah, Yosi, Simon, and Eleazar.[2]

Lehrer, pp. 137-38; Hyman, s.v. Frankel holds that he did not flee southward at the time of the persecution, but went to Nisibis instead.

[1] On the evidence of economic decline at this period, see Avoth deRabbi Nathan, chap. 27, Goldin, p. 115, and p. 201, n. 25. Goldin says the passage that follows may reflect general economic deterioration, or also it may be intended as a comment on R. Eleazar b. Shammua's statement, that is, because the sages did not honor their students and characterized them by disrespectful terms such as straw and chaff, in the end there remained not even chaff, and in Transjordan, there ceased to be students there altogether.

> R. Eleazar b. Shammua says, Let the honor of thy disciple etc. Since at first they used to say, There is grain in Judah and straw in Galilee and chaff in Transjordan, they later had to say, there is no grain in Judah only straw; and no straw in Galilee, only chaff; and in Transjordan there is neither the one nor the other.

Note also that he lived a very long time, being ordained by Judah b. Baba (ca. 135) and living to instruct R. Judah the Prince (ca. 170 c.e.); and his students in fact asked him (Bab. Talmud Megillah 27b) why he had lived so long. For other references to R. Judah the Prince's studies with him, see Yoma 79b, Yevamoth 84a (Judah says the students were so numerous there he could not get close to hear the lesson).

R. Eleazar had a controversy with R. Meir, cf. Tosefta Nazir 6.1; and frequent discussions with R. Judah b. Ilai, R. Yosi, and R. Simeon b. Yohai. He had a great influence, though he is not cited very often; see Rav's opinion in Kethuvoth 40a, Gittin 26b, and 'Eruvin 53a. Note also his teaching, Sanhedrin 98b:

> What will save a man from the tribulations of the Messianic epoch, Engage in study of the Torah and deeds of benevolence.

And also, the world rests on a single pillar, and its name is righteousness (TB Hagigah 12b). On Eleazar b. Shammua, see Weiss, *op. cit.*, II, p. 164; Brull, *op. cit.*, pp. 156, 195-97; Braunschweiger, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34; Frankel, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-83; Hyman, I, 205-10; Bacher, II, ii, pp. 1-8.

The story about his teaching R. Joseph the Babylonian is on Menahoth 18a.

[2] On the problem of "our rabbis of the south," see Appendix VI. For further

Finally, we may propose the following tentative chronology:

c.e. circa 10	Death of Hillel.
c.e. circa 20/ 30	Birth of R. Judah b. Bathyra I of Nisibis.
c.e. circa 50	Migration of Nehemiah to Nehardea.
c.e. circa 50/ 60	R. Judah b. Bathyra I visits Palestine.
c.e. circa 80/ 90	Birth of R. Hananiah nephew of R. Joshua.
c.e. circa 80/100	R. Hananiah studies with R. Joshua, R. Gamaliel, etc. at Yavneh.
c.e. circa 90	Death of R. Judah b. Bathyra I in Nisibis.
c.e. circa 90/100	Birth of R. Judah b. Bathyra II in Nisibis.
c.e. circa 100	R. Hananiah migrates to Babylonia, settling in Nehar Pekod.
c.e. circa 116	Lucius Quietus takes Nisibis.
c.e. circa 120	R. Hananiah visits Palestine.
c.e. circa 135	R. Eleazar b. Shamu'a and R. Yohanan the Sandler flee to Nisibis to the academy of R. Judah b. Bathyra II.
c.e. circa 145	R. Hananiah intercalates the calendar at Nehar Pekod. The patriarch R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, supported by the Babylonian Tannaim R. Nathan, R. Josiah, R. Isaac, and R. Judah b. Bathyra II, reasserts the hegemony of the Palestinian patriarchate.
c.e. circa 155	Conspiracy of R. Nathan and Meir against R. Simeon b. Gamaliel.
c.e. circa 150/160	Death of R. Hananiah nephew of R. Joshua.
c.e. circa 160	Death of R. Judah b. Bathyra II.

IV. R. Josiah and R. Jonathan, Students of R. Ishmael, and R. Nathan, in Huẓal

R. Josiah and R. Jonathan are the best known students of R. Ishmael, and both were probably refugees in Babylonia at the time of the Bar Kokhba war. About Josiah's origins, nothing is known; but since he was called "a man of Huẓal," he may have been born there. Once he gives a law in his father's name (Bab. Talmud Pesahim 54a), which may indicate that his father, perhaps a Babylonian, was part of the earlier, lesser known generation of Babylonian Tannaim. In any case,

discussion of the students of R. Akiba in "Babylonia," see Halevi, *op. cit.*, I, v, 672-77; on the students of R. Ishmael, pp. 678-80, and II, 181-90, 205-10.

most of R. Josiah's education was received in Palestine at the school of R. Ishmael.[1] He also studied with R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis, according to Sifre Deut. 31:

> Three things Zeira told me in the name of the men of Jerusalem, and when I came and reported them to R. Judah b. Bathyra, he agreed with two, etc.

But according to other sources, the report was given to the colleagues of the south. His conversations with the men of the south or R. Judah b. Bathyra are cited in Bab. Talmud Sotah 25a, [= Sanhedrin 88a-b]:

> R. Josiah said, Three things Zeira told me in the name of the men of Jerusalem, and when I came to my colleagues of/in the south, they agreed with two and did not agree on one.

The Yer. Talmud source (cited incompletely in Sotah 4.2 and completely in Sanhedrin 8.6) is as follows:

> Zeira told me three things (etc...) and when I came to R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis, on two he agreed and one he did not agree.[2]

He argued also with R. Nathan, Isaac, and Zutra, the first of whom was certainly a Babylonian for part of his life, and the latter two of whom may also have had Babylonian connections; and was also associated (one may assume during his Palestinian years) with R. Mattiah b. Heresh.[3] He settled finally in Huẓal and died before the time of R. Judah the Prince (ca. 170 c.e.). His son, R. Ahai b. R. Josiah, carried on his teachings. While he was the most eminent student of R. Ishmael, he was never cited in the Mishnah, possibly on that account; Frankel and Brüll think that his residence in the south, with R. Ishmael, made it less likely for R. Judah to be familiar with his teachings. The frequent trips of R. Judah's consistory, including on occasion the patriarch himself, make this an unlikely explanation. It seems to me rather that two facts explain his omission from the Mishnah. First, he was an Ishmaelite, and R. Judah a disciple of R. Akiba's disciples. Second, he lived in Babylonia after the Bar Kokhba war, and his traditions were, like those of other Babylonian Tannaim, not readily available in Palestine.

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[1] According to R. Sherira, he was a Babylonian and R. Jonathan a Palestinian, and hence citing his father does indeed indicate another pre-Bar Kokhba Tanna in Babylonia.

[2] See Appendix VI.

[3] See Avoth deRabbi Nathan, Chap, 1, Goldin trans., p. 3.

He certainly supported the Palestinian consistory, however, in its opposition to R. Hananiah's actions in Nehar Pekod (Mekhilta Pisha 2.82-6) as we have noted:

> R. Josiah says, whence can you prove that the year can be intercalated only by the Great Court at Jerusalem [or, presumably, its successors in Palestine?] From the passage (Exod. 12.2-3), It shall be the first unto you, Speak ye unto the congregation of Israel...

His opposition, together with that of the students of R. Akiba or their disciples whose names are associated with the story, would indicate that neither group approved Ḥananiah's action.

R. Josiah also gives evidence of his knowledge of the Syriac language (in Mekhilta Pisḥa 3.78):

> "Ye shall make your count [takossu]": R. Josiah says, this *takossu* is a Syriac expression, as e.g., when one says to his neighbor, Slaughter for me this lamb.

He and his colleague R. Jonathan differed on the value of astrology, recalling the early concern of Babylonian Jewry with the highly advanced astrological science of the land, as seen from Mekhilta Pisḥa 2.45f:

> R. Josiah says, If the planets are eclipsed in the east, it is a bad omen for the inhabitants of the east, if in the west, it is a bad omen for the inhabitants of the west. R. Jonathan says, All these signs may be left to the gentiles, for thus it is said, Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heavens, etc. (Jer. 10.2).

He had arguments with R. Nathan, but the report does not necessarily assume direct address, and, of course, many times with R. Jonathan.[1] His name was associated after his death with Huẓal, as the following story in TB Gittin 61a indicates:

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[1] For arguments with R. Jonathan, see, *inter alia*, Bab. Talmud Hagigah 18a, Yoma 3b, Qiddushin 10a, Sotah 24a, Nazir 6b, Bava Mezi'a 54a, Bava Bathra 117a, Sanhedrin 52b, 66a, Menahoth 90b, 91a, Hullin 78a, etc. The collections of beraitot were certainly quite rich in such traditions. Nedarim 72b contains a reference to the "school of R. Josiah." He has an argument with Abba Hanin (who may also have been a Babylonian) in the Bava Bathra 119b. He is named explicitly as a student of R. Ishmael in Menahoth 57b; but many other places contain the parallel of "the school of R. Ishmael" and "R. Josiah." Most of the Yer. Talmud references to R. Josiah are to the (later) Amora. But note Pesahim 5.3, he explains the language of Exod. 12 as "Sursi" language. He discusses a matter with Zeira in Shekalim 3.2. Huẓal was a locality near Shear Yashuv, see Neubauer, pp. 152 and 350; but there was also a village near Jerusalem by that name. See below, Section vii. On his relationship with Judah b. Bathyra, see also Sifre Num. (Hukat) 123.

> R. Kahana was once going to Huẓal when he saw a man throwing sticks at a tree and bringing dates down, so he went and picked some up and ate them. He said to him, See, sir, that I have thrown them down with my own hands. He said to him, You are from the same place as R. Josiah, and he applied to him the verse, "The righteous man is the foundation of the world" (Prov. 10.25).[1]

Thus the course of R. Josiah's life was as follows: he was born in Babylonia, where he studied with his father, migrated toward the years preceding the Bar Kokhba war to study with R. Ishmael, possibly in Edom; returned either during or immediately after the war to Nisibis, where he studied with R. Judah b. Bathyra; and finally settled in Huẓal, where he became the authority of the place (at least among the Tannaim) with his colleague R. Jonathan. His son R. Aḥai (Hiyya, a popular name in Babylonia) grew up there; and possessed, and used, the right of excommunication. He spent part of his life in Palestine, but before his death, and during the time of R. Judah, returned to Babylonia.[2]

He argues with R. Isaac in Bab. Talmud Nazir 45a, Sifre Deut. 14, Mekhilta Bo 16, with R. Zutra in Berakhoth 13b. See Hyman, s.v.; Bacher, II, ii, pp. 58-67; J. Z. Lauterbach, s.v., *JE*, VII, 296; on R. Ahai, his son, note Gittin 14a cited above, p. 94-96. See also Halevi, I, v, pp. 675-679. Lauterbach repeats the theory of Frankel and Brull, but suggests that R. Josiah was omitted from the Mishnah by R. Judah the Prince because he was a follower of R. Ishmael. He cites also D. Hoffman in Berliner's *Magazin*, 1884, pp. 20f. See also Weiss, *Dor*, II, p. 114, Frankel, p. 151, notes that more than 110 sayings in the name of "the school of R. Ishmael" are extant; and p. 154 notes that Jonathan certainly studied in person with R. Ishmael. Weiss also repeats the theory that the men in the south were not cited, "R. Judah was in the north and did not have access to the opinions of the south, but the students of Rav (in the Sifre, presumably) did receive these traditions." But this argument, if it is valid, which it is not, would be more impressive if applied to Rav's students ***not*** in the south but in *Babylonia*! See appendix VI. See also Brüll, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-56; Bacher, II, ii, pp. 58-66; Hyman, *op. cit.*, s.v., II, pp. 529-31. Hyman holds that Josiah never even knew the Palestinians, but studied with Jonathan and R. Ishmael only at the very end of R. Ishmael's life in Edom. This explains, he says, why R. Josiah is not mentioned in Avoth (4.9) while R. Jonathan is mentioned. That he lived in Huẓal is attested by Bab. Talmud Gittin 61a, cited above; Bab Talmud Sanhedrin 19a; and that he died before R. Judah the Prince in Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 72a.

[1] Note the midrash of R. Eleazar b. Shammua on the same verse. It is possible that some kind of midrashic tradition on this verse may be associated with the village of Huẓal itself. See below pp. 148-9.

[2] On R. Aḥai, the son of R. Josiah, see S. Mendelsohn, s.v., *JE*, I, p. 282. He was buried in Babylonia, and probably lived much of his life there. He excommunicated Sabbath-violators in Birta de Satia in Babylonia, see Qiddushin 72a, had personal property in Babylonia while he was in Palestine (as in Gittin 14a, cited above), and was buried in Babylonia. He is not mentioned in the Yer. Talmud or Palestinian midrashim, but in the Bab. Talmud and in the halakhic midrashim compiled by the disciples of Rav. See also Bacher, *op. cit.*, II, ii, p. 86, who notes that

R. Jonathan, his colleague, went abroad with R. Judah b. Bathyra and R. Mattiah to Rome, according to Sifre Deut. 80, but there is no other source that attests to this. He was also a student of Ishmael (Bab. Talmud Menahot 57b), and conversed with Ben Azzai (hence he may have been somewhat older than R. Josiah). Allegedly, both he and Josiah eventually adopted the principles of R. Akiba's midrash. He and R. Josiah are cited (see below, Appendix VII) more than 30 times in the Mekhilta, 40 times in the Sifre to Numbers, but only he is cited, and then once (in *Avot*) in the Mishnah. He is not cited in the Tosefta or in the Sifra either. The evidence of his sojourn in Babylonia is only circumstantial; first, his relationship with Josiah; second, his citation with reference to R. Judah b. Bathyra; and third, his frequent appearance in the company of (other) Babylonians in the Mekhilta and Sifre Numbers. Hence, while he may well have lived in Huẓal with R. Josiah, the evidence specifically referring to this period is very slender, unless we adopt Halevi's principle that most recorded conversations between him and R. Josiah took place in Bablyonia. The sources would lead us to accept such a hypothesis, however, for the preservation of R. Josiah's words (and, presumably, most of R. Jonathan's as well) is very clearly the work of Babylonians, drawing on the traditions of their own schools.[1]

Possibly from 135 to 150, R. Nathan son of the exilarch, studied with (or was a colleague of) R. Josiah and R. Jonathan in Huẓal.[2] While references to R. Nathan are relatively numerous, he apparently did not leave behind a complete selection of his sayings, according to the following (Mekhilta Amalek 4.113-14):

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the midrashim of R. Aḥai are similar in method to those of R. Ishmael; and Hyman, s.v., I, p. 136. He probably taught Rav before Rav's migration to the academy of R. Judah the Prince, see Yer. Talmud Ma'aseroth 4.4, Sukkah 4.2, Qiddushin 1.7, and 'Avodah Zarah 4.1; so that if Rav rejected the Ishmaelite traditions, he had at least the opportunity to study them. Ahai argued with R. Judah b. Bathyra, with Josiah his father, and with Hanina b. Idi (see Shabbath 152b), which supports the theory of a Judah b. Bathyra II in the third quarter of the second century to, presumably, ca. 160 c.e.

[1] On R. Jonathan: see Bacher, *op. cit.*, II, ii, pp. 58-67; S. Mendelsohn, s.v., *JE*, VII, pp. 233-34; Weiss, *Dor*, II, p. 126; Brull, *op. cit.*, p. 153; Frankel, pp. 151-57; Hyman, s.v., II, pp. 697-701. Note also the argument of R. Zutra with Josiah in Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 13b, the only time he is mentioned; R. Hamnuna, called "Safra deBavel" in Qoheleth Rabba 7.7; and R. Hanina bar Idi (Bab. Talmud Shevu' oth 45b) who argues with R. Ahai, son of R. Josiah; see also Hyman, *op. cit.*, II, p. 479; R. Hanina bar Hama, a contemporary of Judah the Prince, all Babylonian Tannaim of the later age, after 170 c.e.

[2] See Bab. Talmud Horayoth 13b, cited above Chap. Three, Section iii.

> As long as the wise man is alive his wisdom is kept alive with him. As soon as the wise man dies, his wisdom is lost with him. Thus we find that when R. Nathan died, his wisdom is lost with him.

R. Nathan frequently cited, or appeared informed about, opinions of Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai. He could not, of course, have lived to study either with Hillel or Shammai, or their disciples, or their disciples' disciples down to the end of the first century. Nonetheless, in the light of the fact that R. Joshua and R. Eliezer were occasionally cited as Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai, one may conclude either that he studied in Palestine before the Bar Kokhba war, or that in Babylonia, these names were still preserved in the transmission of the traditions. It is apparent that he was made *Av Bet Din* at Usha very shortly after his arrival from Babylonia (he was addressed by R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II as a parvenu); while we cannot assess his education in Babylonia, we may note that he was superbly equipped for the give and take of the Palestinian academy. He must, therefore, have learned in Babylonia what was being taught in Palestine at approximately the same time. Indeed, the questions and issues raised to challenge R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II would suggest that R. Nathan either depended on the learning of R. Meir entirely, which the text does not indicate, or came with an advanced training. In any case, he cited R. Ishmael, R. Eliezer, R. Yosi the Galilean, Abba Yosi the Mehozian (presumably a Babylonian), R. Tarfon, and others; indicating that he was generally abreast of the teachings of the preceding generation. At the same time, he knew a great deal about the stars (see Bab. Talmud Pesahim 94a) and, like Samuel afterward, about medicine, both fields of study pursued with particular success in Babylonia. His language was regarded by later generations (Rava) as characteristically Babylonian, by contrast to that of the late second-century tanna Symmachus (Bab. Tamud Bava Bathra 73a). We may conclude, then, that while R. Nathan's education before his migration to Palestine cannot be positively assessed, the indications are that he had received there and also in Babylonia a rather full and advanced training.[1]

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[4] On the life of R. Nathan, see A. S. Waldstein, s.v., *JE*, IX, pp. 176-77; Halevi, *Dorot*, II, p. 185; Frankel, *op. cit.*, Graetz, *Gesch.* (1893 ed.), Leipzig, IV, pp. 173-85, 187; he was one of the main colleagues of R. Judah the Prince, see Bab. Talmud Bava Meẓi'a' 86a and Bava Bathra 131a; Brüll, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-23; note also the opinion/tradition of R. Sherira that Babylonian Mishnahs were called "The Mishnah of R. Nathan," and *vide* Epstein. See Frankel, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-201. Frankel holds that Nathan was relatively young when he migrated, because there are no arguments recorded with students of R. Akiba. See also Bacher, II, ii, pp. 116-27. See also

The history of the Ishmaelite school after Betar may be further illuminated. The juxtaposition of the names of the leading known Ishmaelites, Jonathan and Josiah, with the Babylonian Nathan, cannot be entirely accidental (see Appendix VII); nor can we assume that the three were together in Palestine for any length of time if at all (and, I think, they were never *together* in Palestine at all, but only in Babylonia). While R. Nathan certainly returned to Palestine by 155 c.e., R. Josiah and R. Jonathan are never noted as part of the consistory of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. Neither Tanna is included in the lists of participants in the

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Hyman, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 949-53; Hyman holds that he studied in Palestine (with R. Ishmael, R. Eliezer, R. Yosi the Galilean, etc.), and returned to Babylonia during the war and afterward, and later came back to Palestine. Note also that R. Nathan carried out missions in behalf of the curia. Hyman says that he was made Av Bet Din because he knew so much more than anyone else, in particular (like Samuel) about commercial law.

From Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 47b it is clear that his father's name was not Joseph. Note his discussion with Josiah, Shabbath 108a, with Simeon b. Gamaliel, Shabbath 128a; his trip to "the cities of the sea" and either another time or the same time specifically to Cappadocia, Shabbath 123a; his citations of Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel, Yevamoth 62b; the reference to the Mishnah of R. Nathan in Kethuvoth 93a; citations of Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai in Qiddushin 43a, Nedarim 69a, 71a; the saying that he and R. Judah the Prince are the end of the mishnah, Bava Mezi'a' 86a (and *vide* Kaplan's discussion and summary of other scholarly discussions on this point); note also his discussion on pagan festivals in 'Avodah Zarah 13a, but the customs he describes are probably Greek and not "Persian," though of course they are so generalized that they could well have been witnessed among the Greeks of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (they wear wreaths and put wreaths on the heads of the animals in honor of the idol); he is cited in Menahoth 83b along with R. Akiba, and in Niddah 43b as quoting R. Ishmael. The story of the circumcision in Asia Minor is repeated in Hullin 47b, Yer. Talmud Yevamoth 6.6 ("and they called the child Nathan in my name"; Bab. Talmud has "Nathan the Babylonian"). Note the parallel to Judah b. Bathyra II, above, Section ii. He apparently outlived R. Judah the Prince, cf. Yer. Talmud Kethuvoth 12.3. He cites Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel in Beẓah 4.2, Nedarim 10.1, etc. He gives a midrash in the manner of R. Akiba in Shevu'oth 8.1 See also H. Mantel, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-39; Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 20.

Still another Tanna of this period was R. Isaac, who allegedly took part in the efforts to curb R. Ḥananiah's independence of the Palestinian patriarch. He was a disciple of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus and R. Ishmael, mainly associated with R. Akiba's school, however. He was friendly with R. Jonathan, and the frequency with which he is cited in the Mekhilta and Sifre Numbers suggests that he did in fact live part of his life, presumably after 130-135, in Babylonia. See S. Ochser, s.v., *JE*, XII, p. 613. See also Bacher, II, ii, p. 90, who notes that he is mentioned mainly in the Mekhilta and Sifre; and Hyman, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 781-82. He does say that the law follows Judah b. Bathyra once (Bab. Talmud Pesahim 48a). But the only direct evidence of his connection with Babylonia is that and the story about his trip to, or receiving letters from, Palestine in, Nehar Pekod; and the suggestive fact that he is mentioned mainly in the Ishmaelite traditions in the Mekhilta and Sifre Num. (See Appendix VII.)

deliberations at Usha or elsewhere; and after their migration to Babylonia they probably did not return to Palestine. We may suggest that just as the destruction of Jerusalem destroyed the power of the Sadducees, so the Bar Kokhba war ended the power in Palestine of the Ishmaelites. The consequences of destruction of Jerusalem were thus to the Pharisees (under R. Yoḥanan b. Zakkai) what the consequences of the Bar Kokhba war were to the Akibans under R. Simeon b. Gamaliel and his colleagues. The students of R. Ishmael never returned to Palestine, possibly because they were not encouraged to do so; they may have been excluded from the reconstituted academy at Usha as the Sadducees were probably systematically excluded, along with the priests and other earlier opposition groups, from participation in the decisions of the academy of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai; but, most likely, they were perfectly contented to remain in Babylonia. The power of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel together with the more numerous and perhaps more vocal character of R. Akiba's surviving disciples made it preferable for the Ishmaelites to pursue their work in Babylonia. The irony is, of course, that the Ishmaelites and their Babylonian colleagues taught men such as R. Nathan, R. Aḥai, and others of the next generation, and left behind them traditions such as those referred to by R. Ḥiyya and Rav from Issi b. Judah, which were eventually extremely influential on such pivotal figures as Rav and Samuel. The direct connections between them, and in particular Samuel, are few in our sources, but they do suggest that in the person of Samuel the emigres of 130-140 found much later a new and powerful protagonist. Furthermore, if R. Nathan was some kind of agent for the Parthian government, it is clear that he was no partisan of his teachers, but, both before and after the Bar Kokhba war, acquired and transmitted Akiban teachings and methods as well. I think it is more likely that he was related to the Ishmaelite school by the sheer accident of history; his main teachers in Babylonia were men who, for one reason or another, could not or did not go back to Palestine after the Bar Kokhba war, and remained an oppositionist group among the Tannaim.

v. Babylonian Tannaitic Contemporaries of Rabbi Judah the Prince

With the establishment of the academy at Huẓal by R. Josiah and R. Jonathan at the time of the Bar Kokhba war, it became increasingly possible for Babylonian Jews to enter into the Tannaitic movement, to

acquire the traditions being cultivated in Palestine, and to participate, eventually, in the Palestinian academies also. Whatever independent traditions existed in Babylonian Judaism in this period, the Babylonian community produced a number of emigrés to the Palestinian academies, who had studied in their homeland before their migration, while in the later years some Palestinians migrated to Babylonia and took up permanent residence there.

We shall consider, first, the Huẓal group, specifically R. Ahai, son of R. Josiah the founder of the academy, Issi b. Judah. and his contemporaries, Yosi b. Kefar and Dosethai b. R. Yannai; then the somewhat later group from Kifri, Hiyya, Rav, Rabba b. Hana (with brief reference to Hezekiah and Judah, whose Tannaitic careers were almost exclusively Palestinian); and finally, the later figures, Ḥanina b. Ḥama, Jonathan b. Eliezer, and the Nehardeans Abba b. Abba, the Father of Samuel, and Levi b. Sisi.

R. Josiah's son Aḥai (= Aḥiah) was probably born and educated at Huẓal. He spent a considerable part of his life in Palestine, but was in Babylonia at the time of R. Judah's death and exerted some influence there in his behalf. While in Palestine, he was well informed about Babylonian conditions. He asked two of the patriarchal apostles R. Dosethai b. R. Yannai and R. Yosi b. Kefar to retrieve personal property that he had left in Nehardea. When he returned, he tried to enforce an interpretation of Sabbath law in Birta diSatya, but the men of that place thereupon renounced Judaism. The enforcement of Sabbath law adds special interest to his teachings on the Sabbath in the Mekhilta, forbidding work both on Friday night as well as on Saturday. Apparently some kind of local midrash may have asserted that work was forbidden on Saturday only, but not on the preceding night. There is some evidence that he was in touch with R. Judah b. Bathyra II of Nisibis, and this would likely have been en route to or from Palestine. We know, finally, that he died in Babylonia, for he was buried there. Many of R. Aḥai's midrashim are similar to those of the Ishmaelite school, which, in the light of his father's place in the school, is to be expected.[1]

[1] See above, p. 131 n. 2. On Birta deSatya, see Jacob Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 73. It was in the Seleucia-Ctesiphon region, hence not far from Huẓal itself. See also A. Neubauer, *op. cit.*, p. 399, n. 4. On Aḥai's contact with R. Judah b. Bathyra, see Mekilta Shabbata ch. 1, line 59, Lauterbach ed. III, p. 200. On his Sabbath teachings, see Mekilta Bahodesh ch. 7, line 88, Lauterbach, II, p. 254, and above. His burial in Babylonia is noted in Bab. Talmud Shabbath 152b. Rav's studies with him are indicated in Yer. Talmud Maaseroth 4.4, Sukkah 4.2, Qiddushin 1.7, 'Avodah Zara

R. Dosetai, one of R. Aḥai's messengers to Babylonia, was a student of R. Meir and a contemporary of R. Judah the Prince. On the issue of whether Palestinian Jewish courts might retry the fugitives form diaspora courts, he supported the stand that the diaspora judgments were valid. So far as is known, his only contact with Babylonia was the trip alluded to above. Whether he made other such journeys is not known, but it is not farfetched to assume that he did.[1] R. Ahai's other messenger, R. Yosi b. Kefar, clearly made several such trips to Babylonia. He was one of the messengers sent by R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, ca. 145 c.e., to order R. Ḥananiah to desist from intercalating the year abroad, along with the Grandson of R. Zekhariah b. Kevutal.[2] While R. Yosi cited R. Simeon Shezuri, he was a student of the later teacher, R. Eleazar b. Shamua, and the former citations may have been traditions he received from him. However, it is entirely possible that the same man studied with R. Simeon as well as with R. Eleazar before 145 c.e. R. Yosi was sent again to collect funds for the patriarchate, presumably ca. 170-180. Thus he made at least two, and most likely three, trips to Babylonia over a period of several decades, the earliest being in ca. 145 c.e., and the latest, thirty or forty years later, the first trip in the company of the grandson of one of the last high priests in

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4.1, where Rav cites him. R. Aḥai could not have been born long after 145 c.e., since his father was in his mature years then, and R. Aḥai was probably middle-aged between approximately 160 and 180 c.e. If Rav studied with R. Aḥai in Babylonia, it would have been then and not after his return from Palestine in the early third century, when R. Aḥai was probably no longer alive.

[1] On R. Dosetai, see J.S. Zuri, *R. Judah the Prince*, p. 97. He cites R. Meir in Talmud Bab. Eruvin 351. His support of the diaspora courts is in Yer. Talmud Makkoth 1.8. He says that it is a commandment for every tribe to judge its own tribe; this is followed by the saying of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel on the right of the Palestinian court to retry the fugitives of diaspora courts. This was probably at the time that R. Ḥananiah established his court at Nehar Pekod, but no direct reference is necessarily discernible. See also Umanski, s.v.; Hyman, *op. cit.*, I, 326; Bacher, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 81. He conducted an academy, probably in Palestine. See Bab. Talmud Niddah 31b. His discussions with the patriarch are cited in Yer. Talmud Demai 7.7, with R. Simeon b. R. Eleazar in Yer. Talmud Gittin 9.7. His trip with R. Yosi is noted in Bab. Talmud Gittin 14a-b, see above. Hyman holds that his father was the R. Yannai mentioned in Avoth 4.15, but this would not alter our conclusion that he was not a Babylonian by birth, as there is no evidence that R. Yannai came from Babylonia. See also the story about R. Dosethai and R. Micaiah (or Zechariah), who were sent by the "king of Babylonia" to teach the Torah to the Samaritans, in Pirke de R. Eliezer ch. 38. There seems to be no historical relationship intended between that R. Dosethai and R. Dosethai b. R. Yannai. See Gerald Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (London, 1916), pp. 299-300, and compare Zuri, *op. cit.*, p. 97, n. 121.

[2] Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 63a. On the incident, see above, Section i.

the Temple, and last with a contemporary of R. Judah.[1] He was, therefore, likely to have been a regular messenger to the diaspora.[2]

A contemporary of R. Aḥai, Dosethai, and Yosi, Issi b. Judah of Huẓal was a student of Eliezer b. Shamua and Yosi b. Ḥalafta. While he certainly studied with the latter in Palestine, his studies with Eliezer may have been in Nisibis. Though one might argue[3] that there were several individuals carrying names later associated with a single person (see below), the tradition insists that all such names apply in fact to one man, and there is no reason to discuss Issi outside the hypothesis of the main references to him. Issi was identified as follows:

> It was taught, Joseph of Huẓal, Joseph the Babylonian, Issi b. Gur Arye, Issi b. Judah, Issi b. Gamaliel, Issi b. Mehallel, Issi ben Akavya – are all one and the same man.[4]

Issi was a diminutive of Yosi, itself a diminutive of Yosef, and hence

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[1] See Hyman, *op. cit.*, II, 732. Hyman holds that there were two R. Yosi b. Kefars, the first, a student of R. Simeon Shezuri (see Bab. Talmud Rosh Hashanah 13b, Menahoth 30b), the second, of R. Eleazar. In the first instance, Hyman says that the word Kefar should be spelled Qefar (kuf). The second was R. Yosi b. Kefar (kaf), a student of Eleazar b. Shamua, as in Yer. Talmud Shevi'it 2.3, Bab. Talmud Yebamoth 11a, Niddah 47b, etc. He argues that a colleague of R. Judah the Prince would not have been sent to R. Hananiah approximately 30 to 40 years earlier. But this is by no means obvious to me. One may, on the contrary, project the following chronology: born ca. 120, sent to Nehar Pekod ca. 145, died ca. 180-190. Since R. Judah was alive at the latter date, there is no reason to doubt that the same man who was sent as a youth was sent again as an older man. There are no grounds for identifying Kefar and Kafri, from which village R. Hiyya came.

[2] On the appointment of sages to a regular apostolate, see Hugo Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 190-95, and the extensive bibliography and notes there, particularly nn. 111-41. But compare E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1953), I, pp. 10-17. The existence of the apostolate as a regular office of the Palestinian consistory cannot be doubted, but with Goodenough, one must assess its influence in the diaspora with considerable caution. The slight evidences we have concerning this period suggest that R. Judah's influence, if any, was limited. See above, chapter II, section iv.

[3] See Appendix VIII.

[4] For discussion of the various names and their meanings, see Zuri, *op. cit.*, p. 62, n. 2, and p. 100; Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 198-99, 322-23. The *beraita* is in Bab. Talmud Pesahim 113b, 52b, Niddah 36b. See also Bacher, *op. cit.*, II, ii, 72; Hyman, *op. cit.*, p. 151; J. Derenbourg, *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine* (Paris, 1867), p. 483; Mantel, *op. cit.*, p. 107f. See also Mordecai HaKohen, "History of the Tanna, Issi b. Judah" (in Hebrew), *Sinai*, 1954. HaKohen's conjecture that the profusion of names was on account of Issi's position as a guerilla leader, necessitating several *noms de guerre*, has no foundation whatever, and his monomanic reading of all sources pertaining to Issi from such a hypothesis is absolutely groundless. The reference to Yosi Katnuta is in Yer. Talmud Bava Qama 3.7. See appendix VIII for further discussion.

the first names in question pose no particular difficulties, nor does the reference to a Huẓalite (= Babylonian). But the strange patronymic Gur Arye, Judah, Gamaliel, Mehallel, and Akavya may be identified with one another only by clever exegesis. Nothing more is known about Issi b. Gur Arye and Issi b. Gamaliel and Issi b. Mehallel beyond the brief *beraita* cited here, and one further reference adds the name of Yosi b. Judah and Yosi Katnuta to those identified with Yosi the Babylonian. But the sources are clear that "Joseph the Babylonian" studied with Eleazar b. Shamua, while Issi b. Judah studied with R. Simeon b. Yohai also. In any event, Issi's traditions were preserved in the school of R. Ḥiyya, for Rav reported that he found a "secret scroll" as follows:

Issi b. Judah said, There are thirty-nine principal labors...

Such "secret scrolls" contained unofficial notes of teachings in the academy and were made by the students for their own convenience.[1] That Rav reported finding such a scroll in R. Hiyya's school, presumably while in Palestine at Tiberias, suggests that Issi also taught in Palestine, or that his teachings in Huẓal were brought to Palestine by Ḥiyya and Rav, as both men cited Issi's teachings. But like Ḥiyya and Rav, much of Issi's education must have been obtained in Palestine, in Sepphoris, with R. Yosi b. Ḥalafta, as the following story indicates:

> Issi b. Judah did not come for three days to the college of R. Yosi. Vardimus, son of R. Yosi met him, and asked, why have you not been for these three days at my father's school? He replied, seeing that I do not know the grounds for your father's rulings, why should I attend? Please repeat, sir what he told you, he urged, perhaps I may know the reason.[2]

The same story is told elsewhere about R. Judah of Huẓal.[3] It seems most likely, also, that Issi's studies with Eleazar b. Shamua were in Palestine, according to the following story:[4]

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[1] See Bab. Talmud Shabbath 6b, 96b. See also Bava Mezi'a 92a. These "secret scrolls" did not, *pace* HaKohen, contain military secrets! See Levi, *Wörterbuch*, s.v., J. H. Weiss, *Dor Dor veDorshav* (Vilna, 1904), II, p. 189; L. Ginzberg, *Geonica* (New York, 1909), I, pp. 74, 168; and especially, S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950), p. 87, "It is well known that the rabbis possessed written halakhoth and comments. These halakhoth were written in 'megilot setarim' (secret, i.e., private rolls), or on *pinakes*, writing tablets... since all those writings had the character of private notes, they had very little legal authority." For Rav and R. Hiyya's citations of Issi, see, Pesahim 113b, Bava Mezi'ah 92a.

[2] Bab. Talmud Nedarim 81a.

[3] Yer. Talmud Shevi'it 8.5, Nederim 11.1.

[4] Bab. Talmud Menahoth 18a.

> Rabbi said, When I went to Eliezar b. Shamua, I found Joseph the Babylonian sitting before him...

Issi is mentioned frequently in the Mekhilta, a document edited in Babylonia and in many beraitot, but never in the Mishnah.

Thus Issi and Joseph were one and the same person. He studied in Huẓal, possibly before 150 c.e., and in Palestine between then and approximately 170 c.e. at the academies of Yosi b. Ḥalafta, Simeon b. Gamaliel, and Eliezer b. Shamua. He knew R. Judah as a student, but probably returned in approximately 170 c.e. to Babylonia, where he taught at Huẓal and had as students Hiyya and Rav. Since he praised Tannaim of the generation of R. Akiba and R. Ishmael, particularly Meir, Judah b. Ilai, Ishmael, Yohanan b. Nuri, Eleazar b. Azariah, and others, he may have studied in Palestine before the Bar Kokhba war also, though it is probable that he learned about the great Palestinian Tannaim from his teachers at Huẓal, R. Josiah and Jonathan, who were Ishmael's students and doubtless told him about their teacher's colleagues as well.[1]

Thus several older contemporaries of R. Judah the Prince, R. Issi b. Judah, Yosi b. Kefar (possibly also Dosetai b. R. Yannai), and Ahai b. R. Josiah, were all associated with the Huẓal academy, one assumes before ca. 170 c.e. In the following years, other Tannaim were trained there and migrated to Palestine. These included R. Hiyya and his sons, Judah and Hezekiah, and nephews, Rav and Rabba b. Ḥana.

R. Hiyya was the most important Tanna from Babylonia and a leading figure at R. Judah's patriarchal court.[2] He was from Kifri, as we know from the following:

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[1] He was also well informed about kinds of unclean birds in the east, see Bab. Talmud Hullin 63b. For his teachings about the generation of Akiba and Ishmael, see Avot de R. Natan, ch. 18, trans. J. Goldin, pp. 92-93, and compare to Bab. Talmud Gittin 27a, 67a. Note also that Issi shared the concern of other Tannaim from Babylonia with the question, how do we know that meat in milk is forbidden. See Bab. Talmud Ḥullin 115b. Compare with Rav's early experiences in Babylonia, Levi b. Sisi's discovery of pheasant with milk in Nisibis (see below, p. 143 n. 3), and R. Judah's obvious concern with this problem. On Issi, see also D. Hoffman, *Zur Einleitung in die Halachischen Midraschim* (Berlin, 1887), p. 38; Umanski, s.v., Hyman, s.v.; see also the Tosafists on Yoma 52b, s.v., "He is Joseph the Babylonian." If this is the same as Yosi Katnuta, then note Mishnah Sotah 9.15, "when Yosi Katnuta died, men of piety ceased." In the light of our discussion above on the presence of a mystical tradition in Babylonia, it would seem likely that Issi/Yosi was engaged in such studies at Huzal. On the relationship of R. Judah to the students of Eleazar b. Shamua, Issi b. Judah, Isaac, and Yosi b. Kefar, see Zuri, *R. Judah*, p. 100. See also his *Rav* (Paris, 1925), p. 64, on the influence of Issi and Eleazar b. Shamua upon Rav and Hiyya.

[2] On Hiyya, see Chapter Three, Section vi, where Hiyya's participation in the

> Aibu [Rav's father], and Hana [Rabbah's father], Shila, and Marta, and R. Hiyya were the sons of Abba b. Aḥa Karsela of Kifri.[1]

We have suggested that Ḥiyya was probably related to the exilarch R. Huna. Ḥiyya was probably educated at Huẓal, for his association with that place cannot be explained by birth, and the knowledge that an academy was there suggests that he lived in the town in order to attend it.[2] If so, he may not have studied with R. Josiah and Jonathan, however, for he survived R. Judah, hence died some time after 220 c.e., and was probably born ca. 140-150 c.e., when the latter would have been old men. Huẓal was also a center of Benjaminites, and since Hiyya claimed Benjaminitic (Davidic) descent, he may have had relatives in the town. As a young man, he may have had some contact with R. Judah b. Bathyra (II), and may have studied in Nisibis or passed through the town in a journey to Palestine. By the time he reached Palestine, he was a learned man and was a master of Babylonian traditions of law and exegesis. In Babylonia he also learned some medical traditions a subject studied by other Tannaim from there, specifically Ḥanina b. Ḥama, Hamnuna, and Issi b. Judah.[3] His academy in Palestine transmitted

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silk trade and also his relationships to the exilarch and to R. Judah the Prince are discussed at length. See Section vi for discussion of his exegesis. See also S. Baer, "Leben und Wirken des Tannaiten Chija," *MWJ*, XVII, 1890, 28-49, 119-35; Hyman, *op. cit.*, II, 424-34; Zuri, *op. cit.*, 69-71; I. Broyde, s.v., *JE*, VI, 430-31; Bacher, *op. cit.*, IV, 177-83; Halevi, *op. cit.*, II, 197; Mantel, *op. cit.*, p. 126; Weiss, *op. cit.*, II, 159-73.

[1] Bab. Talmud Sanhedrin 5a. See R. Rabbinovicz, *Dikduke Sofrim* (repr. New York 1960), XI, 5, *ad loc.*, n. 10. Shila: rather read Shilat. In place of Karsela, read Bar Sela. See also Arukh, s.v., IV, 336-37, and Megillah 20a. On the location of Kafri, see Neubauer, *op. cit.*, p. 361. Obermeyer does not list the town. See also Eruvin, 62b, Qiddushin 44b, S. Funk, *op. cit.*, p. 293, nn. 191-93, who identifies the city with Tel Mugair-Kuppru in southern Babylonia. But Funk's own map shows a KFRY on the Upper Tigris, well to the north of Ctesiphon, as well. His reference to Bab. Talmud Shabbath 60b, that R. Hiyya traveled from Pumbeditha to Sura *on his way from Kifri to Palestine*, is an unwarranted interpretation of the text, which merely says, "By the time he [R. Hiyya] travelled from Pumbeditha to Sura, two (nails) were missing from his sandals..." No specific trip is implied. Hence the Talmud contains no helpful geographical information on the location of Kifri.

[2] On Huẓal, see below, p. 147 n. 2; note that the nearby synagogue of Shaf veYatib contained an ANDARTA, or image (andrias, antos) of which the rabbis disapproved without effect. See Targ. Esther 3.2-5, Rosh Hashanah 24b, Sanhedrin 62b, Avodah Zarah 40b, See Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 299f, Funk, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 292. Also Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 7, on the Benjaminite settlements near Huẓal. See also Bab. Talmud Kethuvot 11a. Note also, with reference to Ishmaelites in Huẓal, below, Section VI, Appendix VII, and Yavetz, VII, 16, n. 5. See also S. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertumer* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 214-15. For R. Hiyya's sayings about Huzal, see Bab. Talmud Shabbath 92a.

[3] For his contact with Judah b. Bathyra, see Shabbath 20a; note that he follows

teachings of Issi b. Judah,[1] and a second Babylonian, R. Nathan, spoke well of it. He lived in Tiberias, perhaps also in Sepphoris, at first as a student of R. Judah and later as the master of an academy. He continued to have communications with Babylonia during his Palestinian stay, and received news of his family from there.[2] His sons, Judah and Hezekiah, may have been educated in Babylonia before their migration, but we have no concrete details about their training. His chief associates in Palestine were Ishmael b. R. Yosi, Simeon b. Ḥalafta, Ḥanina b. Ḥama, and Jonathan b. Eliezer, as well as Simeon the son of R. Judah, Hoshaiah, Bar Kappara, Yannai (R. Judah's father-in-law), and others in the court of R. Judah. He knew Levi b. Sisi and probably also Yosi b. Ḥalafta, R. Judah's teacher, which points to a migration before approximately 180 c.e. Ḥiyya was frequently cited by R. Yohanan and died after R. Judah's death, though we have no precise information on the basis of which to propose a date.[3]

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his practice in a matter of *halizah*, Yevamoth 102a. On his medical traditions, see Gittin 70a. On Issi's, see Yavetz, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-52. On Hanina, see below. On his Ishmaelite traditions, note Hullin 36a, Shabbath 151b, etc. On his Babylonian traditions in general, see also Bereshith Rabbah 42, 3, Megillah 5b, etc. See Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 24. On Babylonian laws, see below, section vi, Kilaim 9.4, Sukkah 20a. Note also that Mar Samuel cited his traditions, Shabbath 45b, and acceded to Rav when Rav cited his uncle, Eruvin 12b, Sukkah 11a, Pesahim 20b, compare Yoma 78b, Hullin 113a.

[1] Issi at Hiyya's academy, Bab. Talmud Shabbath 6b, 92b, Bava Mezi'ah 92a; Nathan's praise of the academy of Hiyya, Menahoth 44a. If so, this must have been early in Hiyya's Palestinian sojourn, as R. Nathan died before R. Judah, and R. Hiyya afterward; R. Nathan, who was a grown man by the time of the Bar Kokhba war, probably died well before 200.

[2] For Hiyya as a student of R. Judah, see Eruvin 73a. R. Judah ridiculed his Babylonian accent, see Megillah 24b, Moed Qatan 16b, Keritoth 8a. For communications with his family in Babylonia, see Bereshith Rabbah 92.5, Theodor-Albeck, p. 1142, line 2. See also Pesaḥim 4a, When Rav went to Palestine, Ḥiyya inquired about his family. See also Moed Qatan 20a, and compare Rav's leave-taking in Yevamoth 63a. Note also his unfavorable opinion of Rome, Tanḥuma Vayesheb, para. 3, and his favorable opinion of Parthia, Pesaḥim 87b, Gittin 17b. (On the HBRYM see below, p. 150 n. 3).

[3] On the education of Hezekiah and Judah, see expecially Bacher ,*op. cit.*, IV, pp. 49-57. On his relationship to Yosi b. Ḥalafta, see Yer. Talmud Eruvin 7.10. His relationships with Simeon b. R. Judah are discussed by J. S. Zuri, *Shilton HaNesiut vehaBaad* (London, 1933), III, I, pp. 69-73, with R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama, *ibid.*, pp. 105-11, see also Bava Qama 85b. For Ḥiyya as a student of R. Judah, see Bab. Talmud Shabbath 66b. He talked about rebuilding the Temple and the coming of the Messiah, see Yer. Talmud 3.2, Bereshith Rabbah 1.2.5, Theodor-Albeck, p. 18, 1.2-6. He taught Zeiri, Shabbath 156a. Some of his teachings reflect knowledge of Babylonian traditions, see in particular Eruvin 78a, Pesaḥim 8a. His coming to Palestine was believed to have had miraculously beneficial consequences, see Ḥullin 86a. On his relationship to Yonatan b. Eliezer, see especially Yer. Talmud

Rabba b. Ḥana studied in Palestine with his uncle R. Ḥiyya and was associated there with other Babylonians, particularly Rav and Ḥanina b. Ḥama.[1] But we know that he returned to Babylonia during the lifetime of R. Judah the Prince, and probably subsequently returned at least once to Palestine. [2]He was a wine merchant.[3] The following story suggests that his authority in Babylonia, if any, was limited:

> Rabba b. Hana gave money to Rav, and instructed him, Buy such-and-such land for me, but he [Rav] went and bought it for himself. But did we not learn, What he did is done, yet he has behaved toward him as a cheat? It was a territory of lawless men, for Rav they showed respect, but they would not show respect to Rabba b. Hana.[4]

Further, in Babylonia he did give a judgment, but his opinion was in error; his uncle, R. Ḥiyya, informed him that nonetheless he did not have to pay restitution.[5] Likewise, his cousin Rav moved back and for from Palestine to Babylonia a number of times. We shall discuss Rav's early training in Babylonia in Section vi[6] and his later career will be the subject of further, more extensive discussion.[7]

Another Palestinian associate of R. Hiyya was R. Jonathan b. Eliezer. His education was, so far as we can tell, mainly in Palestine, with R. Simeon b. Yosi b. Lakonia. But his main associates in Palestine were Ḥiyya and Ḥanina. He was a rich man and traveled widely, for he reported about customs in "Arabia." His Babylonian origin and training are implied in the saying of R. Yoḥanan:

> ...the rabbis repeated this explanation before R. Yoḥanan as having been given by R. Jonathan. He thereupon remarked, Do our colleagues in Babylonia also know how to give this explanation? It has been taught (in a beraita) to the same effect...

Yoma 2.3; Yannai, Bab. Talmud Eruvin 17b, Yer. Talmud Demai 7.1; R. Hoshaiah, Bab. Talmud Eruvin 80a, Peah 5.2; with Zeira, Bab. Talmud Shabbath 156a.

[1] Moed Qatan 21a. See also Hyman, *op. cit.*, III, 1075.

[2] Sanhedrin 5a.

[3] Bava Mezi'ah 83.

[4] Qiddushin 59a.

[5] See n. 1 above.

[6] See Zuri, *Rav*, p. 114, also *R. Judah*, p. 79, and I. Halevi, "Le Retour de Rab en Babylonia," *Revue des Etudes Juives*, XLIV, 45-61. For his early Babylonian training, see Pesahim 113b. See especially J. S. Zuri, *Rab. Sein Leben* (Zurich, 1918), and his Hebrew volume on Rav., *cit. pass.* On his early training, see especially, pp. 63-65. On his relationship to Ardavan, see Avodah Zarah 10b.

[7] Rav is more appropriately studied in the context of the early Sassanid period, and in connection with Samuel. For brief bibliography, see above, n. 6.

He also gave the same exegesis ascribed elsewhere to the "Babylonian exile." Many of his teachings are related to Scriptural exegesis, and we note that of the extant teachings of Hiyya, Rabba b. Hana, as well as Jonathan b. Eliezer, a very high proportion consists of Scriptural interpretations.[1]

Ḥanina b. Ḥama was a student of R. Hamnuna the Scribe of Babylonia Like other Babylonians, particularly Nathan, Hiyya, and Jonathan b. Eliezer, he seemed to have received some medical traditions. In Palestine, like others noted above, he was frequently associated with other Babylonians. When R. Judah died, he gave Ḥanina an important post in the successor regime, just as Nathan and Hiyya before him had held significant positions in the patriarchate. Moreover, he represented the patriarchate when someone cast aspersions on the purity of Babylonian lineage. He probably continued to maintain relations with Babylonia throughout his life; he helped secure the ransom of Samuel's daughters when they were brought as captives to Palestine. He referred once to his arrival in Palestine, along with a son, and hence he was probably in his mature years before he migrated. He was also very rich, and traded in honey. In some ways, therefore, he was a typical "Babylonian Tanna," that is to say, he engaged in commerce, was rich, trained in medicine, educated in some measure in Babylonia, but mainly in

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[1] On his report on Arabian customs, see Yer. Talmud Kethuvoth 10.3. For R. Yohanan's saying, see Bab. Talmud Gittin 78b, see also Hullin 45a his exegesis, ascribed to the Babylonian exile, is in Bab. Talmud Megillah 10b. He cites R. Judah in Yer. Talmud Hagigah 3.2, is associated with Ḥanina in Kethuvoth 1.2, Hezekiah in Kethuvoth 5.1, and R. Yannai in Kiddushin 1.7. He inquired, Sanhedrin 3.9, whether anyone knew a tradition to support an opinion of R. Nathan. See also S. Mendelsohn, s.v., *JE*, VII, 234-35; Bacher, *op. cit.*, V, 58-91, Halevi, *op. cit.*, II, 149a; Weiss, *op. cit.*, III, 52; Hyman, *op. cit.*, II,698-700. That he was rich is indicated by Yer. Talmud Shabbath 1.5, Avodah Zarah 2.8. He lived in Tiberias, see Koheleth Rabbah 3.14.

Note the story about Ḥiyya and Jonathan together, Bab. Talmud Berahoth 18a-b, Yer. Berahoth 2.3. In Berahoth 25a, Rav Hamnuna and R. Jonathan give the same midrash, but it is by no means clear that this is Rav Hamnuna the Scribe of Babylonia. Even his halakhic statements are generally in the context of exegeses, see for example Bava Qama 67a. See also Sanhedrin 99b, Rav, Levi, and Jonathan all give an opinion on the meaning of a word. In his day, there was a synagogue of Babylonians in Sepphoris (Berahoth 5.1) which suggests the existence of separate liturgical traditions or customs. A good example of the Scripture-centered character of Babylonian studies is the saying of R. Aḥa in the name of R. Jonathan (this may be R. Aḥai b. R. Josiah, and R. Jonathan, Josiah's colleague): "When they permitted it, they depended on a Scripture, and when they forbade it, they likewise depended on a Scripture" (Shevi'it 1.1). He was also informed about medical matters, see Yer. Talmud Shabbath 14.3.

Palestine, and remained in contact with Babylonia throughout his life.[1]

While we have no way of ascertaining Levi b. Sisi's origins, it is clear that much of his career was associated with Babylonian Jews. He frequently went back and forth, like Yosi b. Kefar, as the agent of the Palestinian consistory, and, after the death of R. Judah, of Rav, he finally settled in Nehardea.[2] He studied at Rabbi Judah's academy, but must have been one of the younger students, for he discussed many issues with Rav and Samuel, and probably lived to ca. 230-240. At one point, R. Judah appointed him as a provincial judge in Palestine, but he did not succeed in the position. Like Hiyya, he was greatly disaffected after the death of R. Judah, though I cannot say why. He traveled also with Samuel's Father and, like him, may have been in the silk business. He visited Nisibis, according to the following story:

> Levi visited the home of Joseph the fowler, and was offered the head of a peacock in milk, which he did not eat. When he came before Rabbi, he asked him, Why did you not place them under the ban? It was the locality of R. Judah b. Bathyra, he replied, and I thought, Perhaps he has lectured to them in accordance with [the opinion of] R. Yosi the Galilean...[3]

While in Babylonia, he gave legal opinions to the citizens of Bashkar in Mesene,[4] but the extent of his authority in Babylonia, like that of the

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[1] In the story about Hanina's correcting R. Judah, the source says that "Hanina knew that Rabbi would not ordain him all his life," but, on the other hand, when R. Judah died, he ordered that Hanina be given an honorable position in the academy. On Hanina's appointment, see Allon, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 77-78. See also Bacher, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 3-35. On his associates in Palestine, particularly Jonathan b. Eliezer and Ishmael b. R. Yosi, see Bab. Talmud Shabbath 49a-b; with Bar Kappara and R. Hiyya, as well as R. Ishmael, Yoma 87b; Rabbi Judah's last testament, Kethuvoth 103b, Qiddushin 71a. See also Avodah Zarah 10b, R. Hanina, R. Judah, and Antoninus together. The story about his correcting R. Judah's Bible reading is in Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 4.2. See also Hyman, *op. cit.*, II, p. 484. The reference to "When I came up here..." (to Palestine) is in Yer. Talmud Peah 7.3. On the effort to declare Palestinian lineage superior to Babylonian, see Bab. Talmud Kethuvoth 17a and below, p. 148. On his position in R. Judah's academy, see Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1896), II, 486, and for a complete discussion, Mantel, *op. cit.*, pp. 127f, and n. 183. His ransoming Samuel's daughters is reported in Bab. Talmud Kethuvoth 23a. See also S. Mendelsohn, s.v., *JE*, VI, pp. 216-17; Halevi, *op. cit.*, II, 192b et seq.; Weiss, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 44f. See also Hyman, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 484-92. His medical information is given in Yer. Talmud Shabbath 14.3. As to his Babylonian teacher, Hamnuna, see above and especially Hyman, I, p. 376. The only positive evidences about him are the two stories about R. Hanina and R., in Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 4.2 and Koheleth Rabbah 7.7.

[2] For the record of his sermon there, see Section vi.

[3] Bab. Talmud Shabbath 130a. Hullin 116a.

[4] Bab. Talmud Shabbath 139a. See H. Graetz, *Das Königreich Mesene und seine jüdische Bevölkerung* (Breslau, 1879).

other Tannaim, ought not to be exaggerated.[1] We shall consider his probable knowledge of esoteric, mystical traditons in Section vi. He was one of the teachers of Mar Samuel.[2] Like others of his generation, he drew up a collection of external traditions and probably was one of the means by which such extra-Mishnaic traditions reached Babylonia.[3] In Babylonia he also knew an Iranian sage, Ablat (see below, Section vi)[4]. He was credited, like Hiyya, with miraculous powers.[5]

Abba b. Abba, Samuel's Father, was born and educated in Babylonia, although he visited Palestine for some period of his life while R. Judah was patriarch. He was in the silk business[6] and visited and traded with R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis, presumably before ca. 160/170 c.e. Since he was in Babylonia when Levi came after 220, and doubtless lived some time after that date until, one may estimate, ca. 225-230, he was probably born about ca. 140 c.e. Hence he may have been one of the younger students of R. Judah b. Bathyra for a time, or of R. Josiah and R. Jonathan in Huẓal. He was frequently associated with Levi and, as we noted, traveled with him. He lived in Nehardea and although he arranged the *eruv* for the entire town, his authority was not sufficient

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[1] Bab. Talmud Shabbath 156a. Compare Rosh Hashanah 21a, on his regulation of the calendar.

[2] Bab. Talmud Gittin 13b, Qiddushin 39a, Sukkah 7a, Eruvin 10a, Yer. Talmud Kethuvoth 2.6, Terumoth 10.2.

[3] Bava Bathra 52b. Yer. Talmud Bava Bathra 10.5, Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 76b. See also Halevi, *op. cit.*, II, 59a.

[4] Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 3.8. On Levi b. Sisi, see Zuri, *R. Judah*, pp. 135-39. His travels with the father of Samuel are mentioned in Bab. Talmud Berakhoth 30b. On his arrival in Babylonia, after Rav was established there (hence, ca. 220 c.e.), see Shabbath 59b, Kethuvoth 103b, compare Zuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-39. Zuri holds that Levi was probably born in Babylonia. On the location of Bashkar, see Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-93; it was on the bank of the Tigris in the Mesene region. He was with Samuel's Father in the synagogue of Shav veYathib, see Megillah 29b; and note the Andarta there, Rosh Hashanah 24b, Sanhedrin 43b. For his appointment by R. Judah to be authority in Simonia, see Yevamoth 105a, Yer. Talmud Yevamoth 12.6, Bereshith Rabbah 81.2 (Theodor-Albeck, p. 969 1.5). On the question of whether the agricultural laws on Orla and Kilayim applied in the diaspora, see Qiddushin 39a-b. Levi held that they did not. Note that he died before Samuel's Father, yet after 220, hence ca. 230 c.e., see Yer. Talmud Berakhoth 2.8. On his Merkavah-type sermon in Nehardea, see Vayikra Rabbah 18.3, Margolioth ed., p. 537, and Jer. Sukkah 4.3. See also S. Mendelsohn, s.v., *JE*, VIII, 36; Halevi *op. cit.*, II, 60a; Z. Frankel, *Darkhe HaMishnah* (repr. Tel Aviv, 1955), p. 110b; Weiss, *op. cit.*, II, p. 192; Bacher, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 189-90. Hyman, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 859-62. See also Zuri, *R. Judah*, pp. 78, 105f; on the relationship of Levi's sermons to those of Bar Kappara, pp. 142-43.

[5] Pesikta deRav Kahana, para. Shuvah, ed. B. Mandelbaum (New York, 1962), II, p. 377. Parallel cited above, Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 3.8.

[6] See Yalkut to Samuel, para. 100, and Midrash Samuel 10.3, ed. S. Buber, p. 35.

to cause the removal of the image in the Nehardean synagogue, as we shall see (Section vi). Several messages on legal matters reached him from Palestine, and he corresponded with the patriarchate very regularly.[1] He probably went to Palestine for both religious and commercial purposes. In Babylonia he issued divorces; tried to discourage Jews from entering into business relationships with pagans, with what success we do not know, but permitted them to purchase eggs from them. He traveled to the "provinces of the sea" (Cilicia). According to one source, he studied with Rav Huna, Resh Galuta. He held high community office as guardian of orphans, and was a rich man.[2]

Another student of R. Judah the Prince was Abdan, which was a good Parthian name,[3] but the actual name probably was Abba Yudan, and there is no evidence that he was a Babylonian.[4]

Given the substantial number of Babylonian Jews at the court of R. Judah, the frequent communications received from Abba b. Abba the Father of Samuel, the connections of Hiyya and his nephews, and the agency of Levi b. Sisi, one ought not be surprised that the Palestinian court had considerable, detailed information on the Babylonian *Golah*, as evidenced in the following saying:[5]

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[1] For example, Bab. Talmud Pesahim 103a. Rosh Hashanah 27b, 28a, Yevamoth 104b, 105a, 115a (letter to R. Judah Nesiah), Bava Mesi'ah 90a, Bava Bathra 90b, Hullin 17a.

[2] Samuel's Father had several daughters, see Shabbath 65a. On this passage see Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 45, n. 2. On his travels see Eruvin 65a. Note also Eruvin 97a, Zevahim 111b, "Father of Samuel son of R. Isaac," which may mean that Abba b. Abba was the son (or grandson) of R. Isaac, known as a Babylonian from the earlier period. On his setting the Erub for the whole of Nehardea, see Bezah 9a, 16b. On his authority in Nehardea, see Bava Bathra 36a. On his prohibition of business partnerships with pagans, see Sanhedrin 63b, Bekhoroth 2b. On his contact with Rav Huna, see Meilah 9a. On purchase of eggs from gentiles, see Hullin 63b. See also Hyman, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 11-14. The Tosafists in Qiddushin 73a bring a story about a trip of Abba b. Abba to Medinath HaYam, citing Hilkhot Gedolot for Gittin. It is certainly not unreasonable to assume that a commercial traveler would have gone to the Cilician ports on business. He taught his son "mishnah," see Yer. Talmud Shabbath 6.6. He met R. Judah the Prince according to Yer. Talmud Rosh Hashanah 3.6. Note the praise of R. Levi b. Sisi spoken by Abba b. Abba when the former died, in Yer. Talmud Berakhoth 2.8. See also Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 23, n. 1.

[3] Abdan was a short form of Abdagases. See Herzfeld, *Archaeological History of Iran* (London, 1935), p. 74, also Acts of St. Thomas. He is cited in an incident with R. Ishmael the son of R. Yosi.

[4] See Hyman, *op. cit.*, I, p. 62. He is mentioned in Bereshith Rabbah 10.8, see Arukh s.v. *Abdn*, Berakhoth 27b, Yer. Berakhoth 4.1, Yebamoth 108b, etc.

[5] On R. Judah's relationship with Babylonia, see especially Allon, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 75-80, and above, Chapter Three, Section ix. Passage cited in text is in Qiddushin 72a. See also Shabbath 119a, 156a, Yevamoth 63b.

> When Rabbi was dying, he said, There is Humania in Babylonia, which consists entirely of Amonites; there is Misgaria in Babylonia, consisting entirely of *mamzerim*; there is Birka in Babylonia, which contains two brothers who trade wives; there is Birtha diSatya in Babylonia, today they have turned away from the Almighty; a fishpond overflowed on the Sabbath, and they went and caught the fish on the Sabbath, whereupon R. Ahai the son of R. Josiah declared the ban against them, and they renounced Judaism. There is Fort Agama in Babylonia, wherein dwells Adda b. Ahabah: today he sits in Abraham's lap; today R. Judah was born in Babylonia...

From the evidence we have considered here it is clear that R. Judah himself regarded the ban of excommunication as his chief means of exerting his authority in Babylonia, for he expected that R. Ahai b. R. Josiah and Levi b. Sisi would employ the ban of excommunication, the former in Birtha diSatya, the latter in Nisibis. At the same time, he specifically granted ordination to his students Rav and Rabba b. Hana. But in no sense could his authority in Babylonia have been equivalent to that of Rav Huna, the Exilarch. R. Judah's own presumptive Babylonian origin, through his great-great-grandfather Hillel, made him especially interested in Babylonian genealogies, as we note in connection with Ḥanina b. Ḥama:

> In the days of Rabbi it was desired to render Babylonia as dough *vis à vis* Palestine [that is, Palestinian families have purer birth]. Said he to them, You are putting thorns between my eyes. If you wish, R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama will take issue with you. So R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama took issue with them, and said, "I have this tradition from R. Ishmael b. R. Yosi, who stated on his father's authority: All countries are as dough in comparison with Palestine, and Palestine is as dough in comparison to Babylonia."[1]

vi. Babylonian Judaism at the End of the Tannaitic Period: Schools, Courts, Curriculum

As we have seen, at the time of the Bar Kokhba war a number of Tannaim fled to Nisibis and Huẓal, students of R. Akiba going to the former city, and R. Ishmael to the latter. While the Akibans returned to Palestine after the pacification of the country, the Ishmaelites probably did not. The evidence points to the continued existence of an academy at Huẓal long after the Bar Kokhba war. Furthermore several noted Tannaim of the generation of R. Judah the Prince studied there, particularly R. Ḥiyya, Rav, R. Aḥai b. R. Josiah, and Issi b. Judah

[1] Bab. Talmud Qiddushin 72a.

[= Yosef the Babylonian, Yosef of Huẓal].[1] Further, the academy of R. Judah b. Bathyra II at Nisibis was frequented by Levi b. Sisi, Abba b. Abba [called the Father of Samuel, but for this period such a title is anachronistic], and possibly also Samuel himself. Hence it is entirely clear that Tannaitic academies did exist in Babylonia long after the Bar Kokhba period, and that the famous schools of the early third century, Sura and Pumbeditha, had antecedents at least a century old.

Huẓal was an ancient Jewish settlement, not from Nehardea, in the vicinity of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. It was a venerated place, for Abaye held that the *shekhinah* was present in the synagogue at Huẓal and Shaf-ve-Yatib in Nehardea.[2] In addition to R. Aḥai, the son of R. Josiah, the founder, and R. Yosef, R. Ḥiyya was associated with the town, as the following source indicates:

> Rav said on R. Ḥiyya's authority, if one carries out a burden on his head on the Sabbath, he is liable to a sin offering, because the people of Huẓal do thus. Are then the people of Huẓal the world's authority? Rather, if stated, thus it was stated, Rav said on R. Hiyya's authority, If a Huẓalite carries out a burden on his head on the sabbath...[3]

The school of R. Ḥiyya, presumably in Palestine, contained informal notes made by Issi b. Judah of Ḥuẓal.[4] Further, Rav studied with R. Aḥai, son of the founder of the Huẓal academy, and while we do not

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[1] R. Ḥiyya does not seem to have returned from Palestine, at any rate for any substantial period of time, after migrating there. Rav, who may have returned several times before his final resettlement in Sura, likewise does not seem to have stayed long. It is most reasonable, therefore, to conclude that these stories took form during their earlier years at Huzal, before their migration to Palestine.

[2] On Huẓal, see Bab. Talmud Megillah 5b, 17a, 29a, Shabbath 92a. See also S. Funk, *Bibel und Babel* (Vienna, 1913), pp. 31, 32, 44, 291; Adolph Berliner, *Beiträge zur Geographie und Ethnographie Babyloniens im Talmud und Midrasch* (Berlin, pp. 32-33; A. Neubauer, *La geographie du Talmud* (Paris, 1868), pp. 152, 350, and Jacob Obermeyer, *Die Landschaft Babylonien im Zeitalter des Talmuds und des Gaonats* (Frankfurt am Main, 1929), pp. 299-301.

[3] Shabbath 92a. Note also Yer. Talmud Ma'aser Sheni 1.1, where R. Hiyya cites R. Yonatan. While this may be R. Yonatan b. Eliezer, who was a colleague of R. Hiyya from Babylonia in Palestine, it is more likely that it was R. Jonathan the Huẓalite, for, first, Yonatan b. Eliezer was R. Hiyya's colleague, not his master and, more important, in the context of the argument, R. Yosi (b. Halafta) and R. Hiyya both cite conflicting sayings of "R. Jonathan." Since R. Yosi probably would not have cited R. Jonathan b. Eliezer, who was a very young man when R. Yosi was alive (whether Yosi knew him at all cannot be shown), the issue must be about the opinion of R. Jonathan of Huẓal. Hence, R. Ḥiyya must certainly have acquired the traditions of one of the two masters of the Huẓal academy.

[4] Baba Mezi'a 92a. See also Shabbath 6a, 92a. In Bab. Pesahim 113b, Rav cites Yosi of Huẓal.

know whether these studies were at Huẓal or in Palestine, where both lived for a while, we do know that in Palestine Rav was mainly associated with R. Judah the Prince and R. Hiyya, and it is more likely that R. Ahai's traditions were acquired by Rav at Huẓal.[1] Finally, both Rav and R. Hiyya were acquainted with Ishmaelite methods of midrash and traditions, and took them into account.[2] Since in their day it was in Huẓal, and not in Palestine, that these traditions were carried on, it is reasonable to suppose that they learned the Ishmaelite traditions from R. Josiah, R. Jonathan, and R. Josiah's son R. Ahai, whose exegesis reflects Ishmaelite characteristics.[3]

That Ishmaelite exegetical traditions were passed on in the Huẓal academy is indicated by the following evidence relating to a *midrash* on Deut. 15.10:

> R. Judah b. Signa said in the name of R. Aḥa, If in connection with one who is to give though he has not received in return it is stated, Thou shalt surely give him (Deut. 15.10), how much more so must it be in connection with one who receives and does not give...[4]
>
> To what is this world like? To a wheel in a garden. The earthenware vessels attached to it ascend full from below, and descend empty from above. Similarly, not every one who is rich today is rich tomorrow, and he who is poor today need not be poor tomorrow. Why is this? Because there is a rotating wheel in the world, as it says, "Because that for (bigelal) this thing..." (Deut. 15.10). R. Aḥa said, There is a wheel that rotates in this world, Because it says, "A wise king sifteth the wicked, and turneth the wheel over them..." (Prov. 20.26).[5]
>
> The school of R. Ishmael taught, There is a wheel (galgal) that revolved in this world... R. Hiyya said to his wife, When a poor man comes, be quick to offer him bread, so that others may be quick to offer it to your children. You curse them she exclaimed. A verse is written, he replied, "because that for (begelal) this thing," whereon the school of R. Ishmael taught, There is a wheel that revolves in the world...[6] R.

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[1] See Yer. Talmud Maaseroth 4.4, Sukkah 4.2, Qiddushin 1.7, Avodah Zara 4.1, where Rav cites R. Ahai.

[2] See, for example, Shabbath 151b, Ḥullin 36a, where Ḥiyya reflects knowledge of Ishmaelite traditions and respect for them. See also Keritoth 21a – Rav asks Ḥiyya a question and challenges his answer by reference to Ishmaelite teachings.

[3] On R. Aḥai's Ishmaelite exegeses, see W. Bacher, *Agadot HaTannaim ve Ha-Amorain* (Berlin, 1922), II, ii, p. 86. See also Bab. Talmud Gittin 45a, and the midrash of R. Josiah and R. Aḥai on Deut. 23.16. Aḥai is scarcely mentioned in Yer. Talmud or in the Palestinian midrashim, but mainly in the Bab. Talmud and in the halakhic midrashim compiled by disciples of Rav. See also A. Hyman, *Toldot Tannaim ve Amoraim* (London, 1910), I, p. 136.

[4] Lamentations Rabbati, I, 10-11, 39.

[5] Shemoth Rabbah 31.14.

[6] Shabbath 151b.

> Nahman said, "Because that for this thing..." "Bigelal" implies that this world is like a pumping wheel (galgela) through which the full is emptied and the empty filled.[1]

Here is clear evidence of a continuing exegetical tradition, ascribed to the school of R. Ishmael, R. Aha[i], R. Hiyya, and R. Nahman, a student of Samuel. Since R. Ahai's father R. Josiah was, as we have noted, one of the two known Ishmaelites, there can be no doubt that R. Ahai learned the midrash on Deut. 15.10 from him and transmitted it to R. Hiyya; at the same time, the recurrence of the midrash in the name of a student of Samuel's re-enforces the contention that Samuel acquired Ishmaelite traditions, presumably in his earlier years, possibly at Huẓal, and transmitted them.[2] A Huẓalite tradition may, as we have noted, be associated with Prov. 10.25.[3]

Thus we know that at least four contemporaries of R. Judah the Prince were associated with Huẓal, R. Aḥai b. R. Josiah, Issi b. Judah, R. Ḥiyya, and Rav. Since R. Ḥiyya's family came from Kifri, his information on Huẓal did not come because of upbringing in the town, but rather because he went there for part of his education. While Abba b. Abba, Samuel's father, lived at nearby Nehardea, we have no evidence that he also studied in Huẓal.

Since a number of Babylonians studied with R. Eliezer b. Shamua, including R. Aḥai b. R. Josiah, Issi b. Judah, and Yosi b. Kefar, there may have been an additional academy early in this period at Nisibis, where Eleazar fled during the Bar Kokhba war, and was associated with R. Judah b. Bathyra. But since R. Eliezer returned to Palestine and taught there, the Babylonians who studied with him may have done so in Palestine, and nothing proves the existence in this period of an established Nisibis academy, though we have no reason to suppose that the academy conducted by R. Judah b. Bathyra II ceased to exist in the time of R. Judah the Prince. On the contrary, it probably continued to flourish, though we have no direct evidence concerning it.[4]

In addition to the specific information on Huẓal, there are a number of general references to Babylonian scholars, courts, and laws, all stated by or in connection with Tannaim of this period. While in the absence of other evidence one would be inclined to doubt that these references

[1] Vayikra Rabbah 34.9.

[2] See S. Funk, *Die Juden in Babylonien* (Berlin, 1902), p. II, n. 2, to p. X.

[3] Gittin 61a. Compare R. Eleazar B. Shamua, Bab. Talmud Hagigah 12b. See p. 131.

[4] See Zuri, *Rav* (Jerusalem, 1925), 18, 62n. 1; G. Allon, *Toldot HaYehudim beErez Yisrael B'Tekufat HaMishnah veha Talmud* (Tel Aviv, 1957), II, pp. 76-77; Z. Yavetz, *Sefer Toldot Yisrael* (Berlin, 1909), VI, p. 318.

prove the existence of such scholars, courts, and laws, in the light of the above information and the content of some of the legal and judicial references, it is entirely reasonable to suppose that Babylonian Jewry in the time of R. Judah the Prince had not only a well-developed form of self-government, the exilarchate,[1] but also institutions for the study and application of its autonomous law.

Upon the return of Levi b. Sisi from one of his trips to Babylonia, R. Judah the Prince asked him as follows:[2]

> Show me the Persians. They are like the armies of the house of David, he replied. Show me the HBRYM.[3] They are like the destroying angels. Show me the Ishmaelites. They are like the demons of the privy. Show me the scholars of Babylonia. They are like the ministering angels.

R. Judah's reference to scholars in Babylonia and Levi's affirmative metaphor indicate the presence in the *Golah* of considerable numbers of students and teachers of the Oral Tradition beyond the specific figures we have discussed.

Likewise, there is some evidence of Babylonian Jewish courts in this period, as well as knowledge of the intricacies of civil law. For example,[4] when R. Dosetai b. R. Yannai and R. Yosi b. Kefar returned to Palestine, they reported that they had been confronted by powerful Jewish-Parthian officials who possessed the right to imprison and inflict the death penalty, and R. Dosetai b. R. Yannai explained that he had submitted to the will of the Babylonians because he saw that they were a

BYT DYN ŠWH

that is to say, a court ready at hand, or possibly a court of one mind, a unanimous court.[5]

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[1] For a survey of traditions on R. Huna, exilarch in R. Judah's time, see Chapter Three, Section ix.

[2] Qiddushin 72a.

[3] See Gittin 17a, Kethuvoth 63b, Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 262, and Bava Qama 17a. M. Simon (Soncino ed. *Nashim*, IV, p. 63, n. 2) holds that the HBRYM were the Sassanians, whose original home was Haber, near Shiraz, and hence were called Hivrim. Since, however, it is highly unlikely that R. Judah the Prince knew such a detail about the early Sassanians, having died, all authorities agree, some time before 226 c.e., this explanation is not acceptable. See rather Geo Widengren, "The Status of the Jews in the Sassanian Empire," *Iranica Antiqua*, I, 1961, p. 159. The reference of HBR is to the Mobads, and earlier, Magians, the meaning of HBR here is "sorcerer," not especially Magi. See also Pesahim 113b, Shabbath 11a, 45a, and Yebamoth 63a. See also S. Krauss in *JE*, II, 406.

[4] Yer. Talmud Qiddushin 3.4. See also Gittin 1.1. Note also R. Dosetai's opinion in Yer. Talmud Makkoth 1.8, that diaspora court decisions were valid and should be enforced in Palestine.

[5] Compare Mishnah Bava Bathra 9.10, where ŠVH is used as the antonym for

Furthermore, the knowledge of this court was considerable, for the issue at hand[1] involved whether a quittance had to be given for the legal liability of the property that had been handed over to the Tannaim, either (in the Babylonian Talmud recension) a silver cup or (Yer. Talmud) funds collected for the Palestinian academies. When the rabbi was unwilling to accept legal responsibility for the property in transit, the Babylonian Jews applied physical force to recover the goods, as they were unwilling to give them up without being relieved of liability to make recompense if the goods were lost. Such a legal principle indicates impressive knowledge of the law indeed, and implies considerable legal training. There is, in addition, evidence that specific Babylonian-Jewish customs, as well as laws, existed. First, we note the existence in Palestine of Babylonian synagogues in Sepphoris and Tiberias in this period. The necessity to establish such synagogues suggests that the Babylonians followed a liturgy somewhat different from that prevailing in Palestine;[2] and this is also the case in the Grace after Meals, if the fragment found at Dura[3] *is* a Grace, and if it was widely used.

HLK. I am grateful to Dr. Baruch Levine for this reference. See also S. Lieberman, *Yevanit ViYevanut Berez Yisrael* (*Greek and Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, in Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1962), pp. 135-36. The translation is "immediate, ready"; hence in the context of this story, they were a court right at hand, that is, ready to act immediately. I am indebted to Rabbi Alexander Goldstein for pointing out the second explanation. See the commentary Qorban 'Edah *ad loc.*, who explains that the courts were able to do whatever they proposed, but provides no explanation for the expression under consideration. Adjectives such as hashuv (important) are applied in a non-technical sense to Beth Din, as in Bab. Talmud Nedarim 27b. Shaveh in such a context is probably adjectival, not a terminus technicus, and signifies either "of one mind," or, less likely, "worthwhile, valid," see Arukh s.v. ŠW, VIII, 38-39. The expression "bet din shaveh" is not, to my knowledge, used elsewhere.

[1] Bab. Talmud Gittin 14a-b.

[2] See S. Klein, *Sefer HaYishuv* (Tel Aviv, 1939), pp. 51, 61, and J. S. Zuri, *R. Judah* (Paris, 1931, *Toldot HaMishpat HaZiburi HaIvri*, I, ii), p. 34.

[3] C. Kraeling, *The Synagogue* (New Haven, 1956), p. 259; C. B. Welles, et al., *Parchments and Papyri* (New Haven, 1959), p. 74, item XI. See also C. C. Torrey, *Preliminary Report*, VI, pp. 417-19, pl. xxxvi, i; R. Du Mesnil du Boisson, *Syria*, 1939, pp. 23-28,

"Blessed is our God the eternal king...
A portion of food he appointed...
The children of men. Cattle...
He created man to eat of...
Carcasses innumerable of...
blessing them all, cattle..."

That this may be an anti-Mithraistic polemical "blessing," condemning the taurobolium, is a possibility that has not yet been explored.

But one must seriously question, following Dr. J. L. Teicher ["Ancient Jewish

There is more convincing evidence, however, of the existence of "Babylonian" laws than this, specifically two references to such bodies of law (we shall note references to a Babylonian exegetical tradition below). First, in one of R. Hiyya's periods of excommunication, it was reported,

> he taught Rav, his sister's son, all the exegetical principles of the Torah, while Rav taught him the laws of the Babylonians.[1]

Second, there are several references to the existence in Babylonia of a legal tradition and to the citation of such traditions by R. Nathan during his Palestinian stay.[2] Third, R. Sherira Gaon likewise specifies that the Babylonian scholars of the Tannaitic age had a collection of *mishnayoth* and possessed considerable knowledge of the Torah which was taught in academies there called, in the time of R. Judah, and after him in Palestine, by the title "The Mishnah of R. Nathan." There is absolutely no ground to reject R. Sherira's tradition, in the light of the substantial evidence of the correctness of his contention that there were both laws and academies in Babylonia before 226.[3] However, the definition of the content of Babylonian Tanniatic tradition depends upon close legal and literary analysis of the conflicting Mishnaic interpretations of Rav and Samuel, which might indicate, on Samuel's side, an independent, non-Palestinian body of interpretation. That task must be postponed until a thorough study of the careers of Rav and Samuel is undertaken.[4]

Eucharistic Prayers in Hebrew", *JQR* n.s. LIV, 2, 99-109] whether it was a "Grace after Meals" at all. Teicher points out an interesting parallel to the Didache 10.3-4. However, I cannot by any means accept his reconstruction of the Dura fragment on the basis of the Didache. What Teicher calls "the almost perfect verbal identity of the first three lines" of the Dura parchment and the Didache passage in fact is Teicher's own invention, for, as he himself admits, "the conformity between the Hebrew and the Greek text has been obtained by the way in which the Hebrew text has been reconstructed" which was by reference to the Didache not only for letters, but for whole words and phrases. The rest of his reasoning is circular, and his conclusions on the basis of his "reconstruction" highly improbable. He has, however, made a significant discovery in the Didache-Dura parallel, and one must offer an alternative explanation of the phenomenon which Teicher has pointed out. I for one cannot, and the possibility noted above is merely a suggestion of a path of inquiry.

[1] Bereshith Rabbah 33.3, Theodor-Albeck ed., p. 306, lines 3-7. However, the parallels do not refer to such instruction in "Babylonian laws."

[2] See Bab. Talmud Kethuvoth 93a, Temurah 16a, and Bava Metzi'ah 86a. See also S. Funk, *op. cit.*, note to p. X. Z. Yavetz, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 16, VI, p. 174. Note also R. Simeon b. Gamaliel's complaint about the Babylonians, Shabbath 35b.

[3] See the *Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon*, ed. B. Levin, Haifa, 1922, p. 40, lines 6-19, p. 41, lines 1-3.

[4] See also *PAAJR*, XXX, p. 127, n. 38, for a statement on this question by

That the Sabbath was widely observed by Babylonian Jewry is clear, moreover, from the account of Josephus on the fighting against the Jewish bandits Asineus and Anileus. The Babylonian, Parthian, and Greek units assumed that the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath, and hence they doubtless were aware of the strict sabbatarian attitude of the Jews in their territories.[1] We know, moreover, that the synagogue at Dura included a passageway or doorway at the entrance of an alley, which transformed the adjoining house into a single piece of private domain, by agreements of the owner. Hence we can be sure that the laws of 'Eruvin were observed by this supposedly heterodox community.[2] Here again, we may reason, as in the case of the quittance noted above, that if such laws as those concerning carrying on the Sabbath were meticulously observed in an out-of-the-way and allegedly not wholly orthodox Jewish community, then it is highly likely indeed that in the centers of Jewish settlement and learning, such laws and other, weightier ones were very strictly observed indeed. We know, moreover, that R. Hiyya was more stringent in applying the laws of the Eruv than the Palestinian academies approved, and was rebuked by R. Ishmael b. R. Yosi, "Babylonian, are you so strict about the laws of Eruv? Thus said my father, Whenever you see an opportunity of relaxing the laws of eruv, seize it!"[3] We know that the reputation of the Babylonian tannaim was toward excessive leniency in other matters, for Hiyya complained, "But that I would be called a Babylonian who permits forbidden things, I would permit more..."[4] In such a context,

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Dr. A. Goldberg of the Hebrew University. On Mishnaic traditions in Babylonia, see especially Y. N. Epstein, *Mavo leNusaḥ HaMishnah* [In Hebrew: Introduction to the Text of the Mishnah] (Jerusalem, 1948), I, pp. 171-77. Epstein holds that Babylonian Jews had a "Mishnah" before the return of Rav, which included tractates Yoma, Sukkah, and Sheqalim (all of which were early tractates and could have reached Babylonia with the emigres of 130-140). Note also that "Mishnayot of the Babylonian Rabbis" are mentioned in Midrash Tehillim 104.22. Further, some of the Babylonian citations to external traditions are not parallel to the Tosefta, Epstein points out, and must therefore be regarded as of Babylonian origin; normally, such citations in the Palestinian Talmud are, in fact, from the Tosefta.

[1] *Antiquities* XX, 1-9.

[2] Kraeling, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-30. Since the Dura paintings were made in the middle century, there is no need to discuss them here. Note that Samuel's Father was responsible to see that the Eruv was properly set for the town of Nehardea, see above, p. 145 n. 2.

[3] Bab. Talmud Eruvin 80a.

[4] Shabbath 60b. Note also 92b. On Hiyya's saying "They will say I am a Babylonian and permit forbidden things," note that the Babylonian Jews did, in fact, permit agricultural products without attention to the laws of Orlah and Kilayim. Babylonian legal study was based strictly on biblical exegesis (see p. 144 n. 1 for

the tendency toward stringency suggests a greater emphasis on eruvin-laws in Babylonia than in Palestine. On the basis of this external evidence, which will doubtless be extended by internal exegesis of the laws, one must conclude that in Babylonian Jewry there were not only an autonomous institution, the exilarchate, related to the Parthian government, but also academies, only two of which we know about, students of the law, independent courts applying the law, and an autonomous, Babylonian-Jewish legal tradition.

If this was the case, then it is reasonable to propose the existence, likewise, of an independent exegetical tradition as well, because in this period most legislation and theology were based on Scriptural exegesis and not upon consistorial decision (takkanah). Again, we shall concentrate on *references* to the existence of such a tradition, rather, for the most part, than internal exegesis pointing to the content of such a tradition.[1]

The most direct evidence of an Exilic exegetical tradition is in the following:

> R. Tanḥuma in the name of R. Ḥiyya Rabbah, and R. Berekiah in the name of R. Eliezer said: The following exposition has been transmitted to us from the Exile, Wherever it is said wayyehi (and it came to pass) it denotes trouble. R. Ḥiyya Rabbah said, Wherever it is said, And it came to pass, it may denote either trouble or joy; if trouble, then unprecedented trouble, and if joy, then unprecedented joy.[2] R. Tanḥuma, R. Berekiah, and R. Ḥiyya Rabbah in the name of R. Eleazar explained, This rule of Exegesis has been transmitted to us from the captivity, that wherever Scripture uses the expression *wayyehi*, it presages trouble. R. Samuel B. Naḥman however in the name of R. Jonathan stated, This rule of exegesis has been transmitted to us from the captivity, that wherever Scripture uses the expression, And it came to pass in the days of, it presages trouble.[3]

Elsewhere, the saying is given by R. Tanḥuma in the name of R. Ḥiyya, and R. Berekiah in the name of R. Eleazar of Modin.[4] Moreover,

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an example) rather than on abstract legal dicta in the manner of Akiba and his successors.

[1] That tractates Pisḥa and Nezekin of the Mekhilta were based upon notes compiled in Hutzal between 135 and 150 is proposed in Appendix VII. Here we consider evidences on 160-220.

[2] Ruth Rabbah Proem 7.

[3] Esther Rabbah Proem 11. See also Gen. R. 42.3, Bab. Talmud Megillah 10b. See also Pesikta Rabbah 103b.

[4] Leviticus Rabbah 11.7. See also W. Bacher, *Tradition und Tradenten* (Leipzig, 1914), pp. 6f. Compare also Bereshith Rabbah, Theodor-Albeck ed., pp. 399-400, and compare Pesikta Rabbati ch. 5, R. Hiyya b. Abba in the name of R. Yohanan. This is also stated in the name of R. Nathan by R. Ishmael b. R. Nahman.

this midrash was believed to be very ancient, and ascribed to the Men of the Great Assembly, according to the following:[1]

> And it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (Est. 1.1). R. Levi, or some say, R. Jonathan said, The following remark is a tradition handed down to us from the Men of the Great Assembly: wherever in the Scripture we find the term *wayehi* (and it was), it indicates trouble.

Since the Men of the Great Assembly were believed to be the successors of Ezra and his court through Simeon the Righteous, and the book of Esther was believed to have been composed by them, it is clear that the antiquity of Babylonian exegesis was an axiom for those discussing this verse, who included R. Nathan, R. Hiyya, and other Babylonians.

We know, moreover, that at least one Babylonian Jew was a specialist in biblical exegesis, R. Hamnuna Safra diBavel (scribe of Babylonia), and there is also reason to suggest that R. Hamnuna conversed with the Exilarch of his day, according to the following evidences:

> Rabbi [Judah the Prince] was sitting and teaching... R. Ḥanina (b. Ḥama) corrected his reading. Rabbi asked him, Where did you study? Before Rav Hamnuna of Babylonia, he replied. When you go there, tell him to appoint you Hakham. And R. Ḥanina knew that Rabbi would not ordain him all his life.[2]

(When R. Judah died, his son wanted to appoint Hanina hakham, but he declined in favor of R. Efes.) That Rav Hamnuna knew the Exilarch may be indicated by the following, though it is difficult to be certain because there were several better known Hamnunas in later times:

> The Exilarch asked R. Hamnuna, What is meant by the verse, "and thou shalt call... the holy of the Lord honorable" (Is. 58.13)? This refers to the Day of Atonement, he replied, in which there is neither eating nor drinking, hence the Torah instructed, Honor it with clean garments.[3]

The verse on which R. Ḥanina corrected R. Judah's reading was Ezekiel 7.16, "But they that shall at all escape from them shall be on the

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[1] Megillah 10b. Compare Rav's saying in 11a.

[2] Yer. Talmud Ta'anith 4.2. See also Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7.7. We shall consider the specific verse, Ezekiel 7.16, below.

[3] Shabbath 119a.

mountains, like doves of the valley, all of them moaning." (R. Judah read "moaning" as "homiyot," and R. Hanina corrected him, the word is "homoth."[1]) This verse was interpreted as having eschatological significance, Just as he scattered them like doves, so shall he bring them back like doves (comp. Isaiah 60.8). We know, moreover, that in Babylonia, the visions of Ezekiel were contemplated with considerable interest, for when Levi b. Sisi preached there, he preached on Ezekiel, and when R. Hiyya was in Palestine, he pursued esoteric lore based on Ezekiel ch. 1. This evidence points to particular interest in Ezekiel. Further evidence suggests that mysticism, in all its Tannaitic forms, was cultivated in Babylonian academies.

The story about Levi b. Sisi's visit to Babylonia and sermon there is as follows:

> R. Berekiah and R. Jeremiah b. R. Hiyya b. Abba said: R. Levi b. Sisi gave the following expositions at Nehardea, "It says, And they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet the like of a brick-work of sapphire stone (Ex. 24.10). This was the case before they had been redeemed, but when they had been redeemed, the brickwork was placed where the brick was generally kept."[2]
>
> R. Levi b. Sisi expounded the text, "Thou hast also played the harlot with the Egyptians, thy neighbors, great of flesh" (Ezek. 16.26) What is meant by 'great of flesh'? etc.[3]
>
> R. Berekiah, R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Hiyya b. Ba, Levi b. Sisi preached in Nehardea... [as above] R. Miasha said, Concerning Babylonia it was written [Ezekiel 1.26, "And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne in appearance like sapphire (RSV, Hebrew = lapis lazuli), and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form..."] "in appearance like lapis lazuli," and concerning Egypt it was written, "like a sapphire stone," to teach you that just as the stone is harder than brick, so the subjugation to Babylonia was more oppressive than that to Egypt."[4]

In the light of R. Miasha's comment, we conclude that Levi's comment on Ex. 24.10 related to the Ezekiel vision.[5] Two further sources on Levi's mysticism require consideration; first, the following echo

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[1] Mekhilta Beshallaḥ ch. 6, Lauterbach ed. I, p. 240, line 110. Compare Tanḥuma Beshallaḥ para. 23. See also Yalkut I, para. 235.

[2] Vayikra Rabbah 23.8, cf. ed. M. Margoliot (New York, 1960), p. 537. Parallels Yer. Talmud Sukkah 4.3, Song R. 4.8.1, 25.7.

[3] Lev. R. 25.7.

[4] Yer. Talmud Sukkah 4.3.

[5] This is the opinion of W. Bacher, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 189-90.

of Ezekiel's vision (1.24, "And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the thunder of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of a host..."):

> The Father of Samuel and Levi were sitting in the synagogue 'which moved and settled' in Nehardea. The Shekhinah came, and they heard a sound of tumult and went out...[1]

Second, the following saying indicates Levi's knowledge of Shiur-Komah mysticism:

> As Levi said, From the earth to the firmament is a distance of 500 years, and from one firmament to the next, 500 years, and the thickness of a firmament is 500 years, and so for every firmament...[2]

That this saying is part of a *shiur koma* formula is clear from the saying of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai, "But the distance from the earth to the firmament is a journey of five hundred years...," etc.[3] We know that an esoteric tradition existed in Babylonia earlier, and is represented by the sayings of Hillel,[4] as well as by the following saying of R. Haninah, nephew of R. Joshua:

> There are rivers of fire which pass before the Shekhinah like streams of water mingled with fire...[5]

Since R. Ḥaninah lived most of his life in Babylonia, it is not at all unlikely that Levi's mystical sayings were part of a mystical tradition cultivated there from his times and transmitted to the generation of R.

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[1] Bab. Talmud Megillah 29a. See also Rosh Hashanah 24b and parallels,

[2] Yer. Berakhoth 9.1. Bacher, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 190-91, n. 14, says that this passage describes the dimensions of the world, but in fact, it is part of the Shiur-koma formula. But I am not entirely sure that this is Levi b. Sisi, since the text reads only 'Levi'. However, Levi b. Sisi is so designated not infrequently. See TB Moed Katan 26b, Bava Batra 54a, and Midrash Tehillim 18:24 for examples.

[3] Bab. Talmud Hagigah 13a, see also Pesahim 94a-b, Ber. R. 25, etc. See my *Life of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 98-100.

[4] Gershom G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York, 1960), p. 80. Note also that it was in Hillel's Jerusalem academy that the other known first-century mystics, Jonathan b. Uzziel and Yohanan ben Zakkai, studied, and that the later mystic, R. Akiba, studied with R. Yoḥanan's students. Note the identification of Yosi of Huzal/Issi b. Judah, etc. with Yosi Katnuta in Yer. Talmud Bava Qama 3.7, and the statement in Mishnah Sotah 9.15, "When Yosi Katnuta died, men of piety (Hasidim) ceased." But compare Tosefta ad loc. See H. Albeck, *Seder Nashim* (Tel Aviv, 1954), p. 394.

[5] Cited by Scholem, p. 56. Ḥananiah had had contact in Palestine with *minim* (Jewish gnostics) in Kapernaum, and may have continued to study their doctrines in Babylonia as well. See Qoheleth Rabbah 1.8, 7.26. See above, Section i.

Judah the Prince,[1] specifically to R. Ḥiyya (below), Rav,[2] and Levi b. Sisi. However, it is not necessary to postulate that Rav, who was an exponent of Jewish mystical traditions, "brought them over from Palestine" (as Bacher says, cited by Scholem with approval[3]), because of the evidence, cited above, of considerable interest in the book of Ezekiel, in Shi'ur-Qoma mysticism, evidenced by Levi, and in Merkavah mysticism shown by Hiyya.

Rav and R. Hiyya's interest in mysticism is indicated in the following traditions:

> Mishnah: The "work of Creation" may not be expounded in the presence of two, nor the Chariot in the presence of one, unless he is a sage and understands of his own knowledge.
> Gemara: Rav Judah said that Rav said, The first man [extended] from one end of the world to the other...
> Rav Judah further said that Rav said, Ten things were created the first day...
> Rav Zuta b. Toabiah said that Rav said, By ten things was the world created...
> R. Hiyya taught, But the headings of chapters may be transmitted to him.[4]

There are also a number of miracle-stories which indicate that R. Ḥiyya was believed to possess practical, esoteric powers, for example:

> Elijah used to frequent Rabbi's academy. One day – it was New Moon – he was waiting for him, but he failed to come. The next day he asked, Why did you delay? He replied, [I had to tarry] until I woke Abraham, washed his hands, and he prayed, and I put him to rest again, and likewise to Isaac and Jacob. Why not awaken them together? I feared that they would wax strong in prayer [if they prayed simultane-

[1] Scholem, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5, citing Eric Peterson, *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XXVII, 1928, pp. 90-91. See also Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (repr. New York, 1961), pp. 40-79. My purpose here is only to indicate the existence of the mystical tradition, without further analyzing its content in Babylonian Jewry at the end of the Tannaitic age. Peterson emphasized that the pre-Christian gnostic status in Judaism did not exist in Palestine alone, but in Babylonia as well, and that Christian Gnosticism in Babylonia too seems to have been preceded by a form of Jewish gnosticism, one which in this case assimilated Jewish and Persian elements and intertwined one with the other. In the light of Levi and Samuel's conversations with Ablat, we may conclude that in this period, at least, contacts with Iranian sages did exist, although the content of conversations is not available, for the most part, for analysis.

[2] That Rav was involved in the esoteric tradition is well known, see especially Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, etc., p. 27.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[4] Bab. Talmud Hagigah 11b-13a *passim*. I plan to discuss Rav's mysticism in a subsequent volume.

> ously] and bring the Messiah before his time. And is their like to be found in this world, he asked? There is R. Ḥiyya and his sons, he replied. Thereupon R. Ḥiyya proclaimed a fast, and R. Ḥiyya and his sons were asked to descend [to read the prayers]. As [Ḥiyya] exclaimed, 'He causes the wind to blow,' a wind blew; 'he causes the rain to descend,' a rain descended. When he was about to say, 'He quickens the dead,' the universe trembled, and in heaven it was asked, who has revealed our secret to the world? Elijah, they replied. Elijah was therefore brought and smitten with sixty flaming lashes, so he went, disguised himself as a fiery bear, entered among them and scattered them.[1]

This is only one story of several[2] which indicate that R. Ḥiyya was credited with extraordinary, supernatural powers in the tradition of such mystics as Hanina b. Dosa. While we do not know more about the content of his mystical lore than this, it is perfectly evident that he as well as Levi b. Sisi both preached and practiced some form of mysticism.

Thus we have seen that just as Babylonian Jewry possessed an independent exegetical tradition, as well as autonomous legal traditions, so it possessed a mystical tradition centering in some measure on the vision of the Babylonian prophet, Ezekiel, and containing significant elements of contemporary Jewish mysticism. Specifically, these dealt with the vision of the Chariot, of Creation (in the case of Rav, though this may have been acquired mainly in Palestine), and with the Shiur Komah tradition. We know at the very least that R. Hanina b. Hama was instructed in the book of Ezekiel by R. Hamnuna Scribe of Babylonia, which shows beyond question that a native Babylonian Jewish tradition on Ezekiel existed in this period; and furthermore, that the verse on which he corrected R. Judah's reading had eschatological significance revealed precisely by the Babylonian Tannaitic collection, the Mekhilta. We have seen, furthermore, that when Levi b. Sisi preached in Babylonia, he preached on a verse in Exodus which was specifically related to the vision of Ezekiel Ch. 1, that Levi probably knew about the Shiur Komah speculations, and that an additional saying of Levi concerned still another verse in Ezekiel. We have evidence also that the experience of the Shekhinah of the Father of Samuel and Levi, in the synagogue in Nehardea, was described in the

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[1] Bab. Talmud Bava Mezi'ah 85b.

[2] See, for example, the following: miracles relating to the grave of R. Ḥiyya, Mo'ed Qatan 25b, Bava Mezi'ah 85b; his presence in Palestine protected the country from natural disasters, Hullin 86a; the angel of death could not gain access to him, Mo'ed Qatan 28a. On Levi's extraordinary powers, see p. 146 n. 5.

terms used by Ezekiel. While Ḥiyya and Rav were interested in the Merkavah tradition (and in the case of Rav, in Maaseh Bereshith as well), their studies in mysticism may have been pursued in Palestine; likewise Ḥiyya's and Levi's extraordinary magic powers were not necessarily acquired in Babylonia. Nonetheless, this much is certain: in the light of the findings of Scholem and others on the existence of a mystical tradition as evidenced by Hillel and, more immediately in the second century, by Ḥananiah the nephew of R. Joshua and also possibly by Yosi of Huẓal (if the Mishnaic reading is accepted), Jewish mysticism was studied in Babylonian Jewish academies at the time of R. Judah the Prince, and specifically, speculation on Ezekiel's vision was carried on. That a whole wall in the Dura synagogue was apparently devoted to the prophet Ezekiel further strengthens my conviction that Babylonian Jewry did cultivate the traditions of its own prophet in indigenous academies.[1]

There is evidence that Levi b. Sisi, as well as Samuel, somewhat later, were in contact with a Magus, Ablat, who was regarded as a sage and astrologer. We do not know what, if any, influence Ablat had on Levi or Samuel or, specifically, on Levi's mysticism, but we do know that Samuel and Ablat discussed the merits of astrology, as follows:

> From Samuel too, we learn that Israel is immune from planetary influence, for Samuel and Ablat were sitting, while certain people were going to a lake. Said Ablat to Samuel, that man is going, but will not return, for a snake will bite him, and he will die. If he is an Israelite, replied Samuel, he will go and return. While they were sitting, he went and returned. Ablat arose, and threw off his knapsack, and found a snake in it, cut up in two pieces. Samuel said to him (the man), What did you do? Every day we pooled our bread and ate it, but today one of us had no bread and he was ashamed. Said I to them, I will go and collect (the bread). When I came to him, I pretended to take from him so that he should not be ashamed. You have done a good deed, he said. Then Samuel went out and lectured, But charity delivers from death (Prov. 10.2)...[2]

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[1] See E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (N.Y. 1964) vols. IX-XI, and my "Judaism at Dura Europos" *History of Religions* IV, 1, 1964, 81-102.

[2] Shabbath 156b. Avodah Zarah 30a. For Ablat's conversations with Levi see Yer. Talmud Shabbath 3.3, Bezah 2.5. See also Hamburger, *Realencylopedie*, II, 14, s.v. Ablat, and L. Ginzberg, "Ablat," *JE*, I, 68. In Shabbath 129a, and in the conversations with Levi, Ablat is represented as being familiar with Jewish law, and his Jewish friends respected his knowledge of it. Levi's discussions are on astrological issues, when is it proper to bleed a patient, etc.

There is reason to believe that astrology was taken seriously, however, by some Jews in Babylonia,[1] and may have been transmitted, perhaps in a modified form, in the Jewish academies there. But astrological knowledge was criticized by Issi of Huẓal[2] in disagreement with Josiah of Huẓal; among many other Babylonian and Palestinian Tannaim and throughout the Amoraic period, the validity of astrology was debated, but more in terms of its applicability to Israel than its operative value generally, which Jews recognized. The interest in astrology (as well as evidences of medical training of some Babylonian Tannaitic contemporaries of R. Judah[3]) suggests, moreover, that these two ancient branches of Babylonian learning were mastered by some Babylonian Jews in this age. These are signs of the cultural assimilation of Babylonian Jewry into Babylonian-Hellenistic culture.

We may conclude, therefore, that R. Sherira's tradition is absolutely sound when he states that "here" in Babylonia there were academies, and the Torah was taught, even though the Palestinians held a monopoly of qualified heads of academies before the coming of Rav.[4]

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[1] See Shabbath 156a-b on whether Israel is subject to planetary influence. R. Hanina, R. Nahman b. Yiẓhak, R. Ashi, Rabbah held that planetary influence was real, while Rav, Samuel, R. Yoḥanan, R. Akiba, R. Naḥman b. Isaac held that it was not effective so far as Israel was concerned. R. Josiah (of Huẓal) held that astrology was valid, R. Jonathan disagreed. Another Babylonian, R. Nathan, gives evidence of considerable astronomical education, in Bab. Talmud Pesahim 94a. Note also R. Judah the Prince's interest in astronomy, *ad loc.* See Ludwig Blau, "Astrology," *JE*, III, 241-43.

[2] Pesaḥim 113b.

[3] For example, Samuel allegedly knew and treated R. Judah the Prince, and Ḥiyya and Jonathan b. Eliezer both evidenced medical "training."

[4] Ed. B. Levin, p. 73, line 11 through p. 74, line 6. See also Halevi, *op. cit.*, II, p. 406.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

SELEUCID, PARTHIAN, AND ROMAN RULERS[1]

Parthian Kings

	B.C.E.
Arsaces	ca. 250-248
Tiridates I	ca. 248-211
Artabanus I	ca. 211-191
Priapatius	ca. 191-176
Phraates I	ca. 176-171
Mithridates I	ca. 171-138/37
Phraates II	138/37-ca. 128
Artabanus II	ca. 128-124/23
Mithridates II	ca. 123-88/87
Gotarzes I	91-81/80
Orodes I	80-76/75
Sinatruces	76/75-70 or 69
Phraates III	70 or 69-58/57
Mithridates III	58/57-55
Orodes II	ca. 57-37/36
Pacorus I	died in 38
Phraates IV	ca. 38-2
Tiridates II	ca. 30/25
Phraataces (Phraates V)	2 B.C.E. - C.E. 4
	C.E.
Orodes III	4-ca. 6/7
Vonones I	7/8-12
Artabanus III	12-ca. 38
Tiridates III	ca. 36
Cinnamus	ca. 37
Gotarzes II	ca. 38-51
Vardanes	ca. 39-47/48
Vonones II	ca. 51
Vologases I	51/52-79/80
Pacorus II	78-115/16?
Artabanus IV	80-81
Osroes	ca. 109/10-128/29
Parthamaspates	ca. 117
Vologases II	105/6?-147
Mithridates IV	128/29?-147?
Vologases III	148-192
Vologases IV	191-207/8
Vologases V	207/8-222/23
Artabanus V	ca. 213-227
Artavasdes	ca. 227-228/29?

Seleucid Kings

	B.C.E.
Seleucus I Nicator	311-280
Antiochus I Soter	280-262/61
Antiochus II Theos	261-247
Seleucus II Callinicus	247-226
Seleucus III Soter	226-223
Antiochus III (the Great)	223-187
Seleucus IV Philopator	187-175
Antiochus IV Epiphanes	175-163
Antiochus V Eupator	163-162
Demetrius I Soter	162-150
Alexander I Balas	150-145
Demetrius II Nicator	145-139/38
	129-125
Antiochus VI Epiphanes	145-142/4
Antiochus VII Sidetes	139/38-129
[Alexander II Zabinas	128-123]
Antiochus VIII Grypus and Cleopatra Thea	125-121
Seleucus V	125
Antiochus VIII Grypus	121-96
Antiochus IX Cyzicenus	115-95
Seleucus VI Epiphanes Nicator	96-95
Antiochus X Eusebes Philopator	95-83
Demetrius III Eucaerus Philopator Soter	95-88
Antiochus XI Philadelphus	92

[1] Debevoise, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-71.

Philippus I Philadelphus	92-83
Antiochus XII Dionysus	87-84
[Tigranes of Armenia	83-69]
Antiochus XIII Asiaticus	69-64
Philippus II	65-64

Roman Emperors

Augustus	27 B.C.E.-C.E. 14
Tiberius	14-37
Caligula	37-41
Claudius	41-54
Nero	54-68
Galba, Otho, Vitellius	68-69
Vespasian	69-79
Titus	79-81
Domitian	81-96
Nerva	96-98
Trajan	98-117
Hadrian	117-138
Antoninus Pius	138-161
Marcus Aurelius	161-180
Lucius Verus	161-169
Commodus	180-192
Julianus and Pertinax	193
Septimius Severus	193-211
Caracalla	211-217
Geta	211-212
Macrinus	217-218
Heliogabalus	218-222
Severus Alexander	222-235

APPENDIX TWO

CHRISTIANITY EAST OF THE EUPHRATES

Between the middle of the first century c.e. and the rise of the Sassanid Empire in 226, the minority populations on the frontier territories of Mesopotamia and Babylonia, both Semites and Jews, were subjected to intensive proselytizing efforts from Palestine. Palestinian Tannaim and Christians competed among the Jews, and possibly also among the Semite gentiles. The Pharisees had the advantage of a large and putatively receptive body of co-religionists. Christianity built its base at Edessa, and Tannaitic Judaism at Nisibis; and both were represented by the outset at least by men actively engaged in spreading their respective doctrines. Thus what Edessa was to Christianity, Nisibis was to Tannaitic Judaism.

For Christianity, the importance of propagating the faith beyond the Euphrates frontier cannot be overestimated. If the new faith was to reach the pagan, Semitic peoples of the Near East, who did not participate in the Hellenized culture of the great cities, it had to establish itself outside of both Jewish Palestine and the Hellenistic cities. The gospel was brought to the pagan Semites at first (allegedly) by the apostle Addai, and was phrased in their language and in their idiom of thought. However Christian the city masses might become, Christianity would have remained only an idiosyncratic, urban mystery doctrine, from the viewpoint of the native agrarian populace, were it not for the efforts of the Church at Edessa to speak in terms intelligible to the Syriac-speaking peoples.

Between 116 and 216, Christianity established itself at Edessa, building there a center in a Syriac-speaking area, with a native Semitic dynasty favorably disposed to its message so that through Edessa, Syriac became a language available to Christianity. Edessa was the capital of a small principality east of the Euphrates (= Urfa in modern Turkey), lying astride the great trade route which passed between Syria and the Armenian mountains to the north. It was part of the fluctuating frontier between Rome and Parthia until August, 116, when it was stormed and sacked by Lucius Quietus. The Romans fortified the nearby town of Nisibis as well, subduing all subsequent efforts of the Edessans to regain their complete independence, and in 216 the city was fully incorporated into the empire. Perhaps Roman possession of the city facilitated the arrival of Christian missionaries, and on this account it was in closer contact with Palestine and Antioch, but no evidence points to such a conclusion.

Eusebius relates a legend on the establishment of Christianity at Edessa, telling about the evangelization of the city by one of the 72 disciples, Addai, as a direct result of correspondence between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus himself. Jesus having promised that Edessa would be blessed and remain forever independent (a detail leading some to believe that the legend is dated before 116 and certainly before 216), Addai took up the cross, went to

Edessa, healed and preached, "so that all were amazed." Abgar called Addai to court, heard his doctrines, and accepted them. One detail (in addition to that noted above) suggests that this is a very early legend. Eusebius knew that at that time Edessa was outside of the Roman frontier. Otherwise most historians regard the tale as part of the rich, fabulous tradition of the early Church. Nonetheless the tale is repeated by the author of the *Doctrine of Addai* with somewhat different details. In the *Doctrine*, part of the merchant community of Jews in the city was converted at the same public meeting at which the king became a Christian. There is thus some evidence that a Jewish community existed there, one member of which, Tobias b. Tobias, allegedly introduced the apostle to the king. If so, some Jews at least had access to the court. The Jews there also were apparently not unfriendly toward the new teaching, as, possibly, was the case in Adiabene.

The subsequent history of the Church at Edessa is not entirely clear. In the *Doctrine*, Addai is represented as having died in peace, succeeded by Aggai. Aggai was martyred by Abgar's son Manu, and succeeded by Palut. Palut was not ordained and had to travel south to Antioch for ordination, which he received from Serapion, bishop of Antioch. But Serapion was bishop of Antioch from about 190 to 212, and hence Palut would not likely have been a convert of one of the 72 disciples at all, certainly not of a disciple contemporary to Jesus himself a century and a half earlier. Hence the *Doctrine of Addai* apparently contains contradictory traditions on the foundation of Christianity in Edessa, the first holding that it was founded there in the middle of the first century, the other, in the later second century. From the *Edessene Chronicle*, it is certain that a church did exist there in 201, because among the buildings damaged by a great flood in that year was "the church of the Christians," destroyed by the Daisan river that spring. One may conclude, therefore, that Christianity began among the Jews of Edessa and was first preached there by a Palestinian Jew before the middle of the second century (allegedly long before then, but surely no later). It was favorably received by some of the upper class pagans, as Judaism had been by part of the Adiabenian aristocracy a short distance eastward a century earlier, and after the end of the second century became the state religion. The adherence, for a time, of Bardaisan (154-222) proves that Christianity held considerable attraction for the well-educated pagans as well. After 216, Edessa became a part of the hegemony of the bishop of Antioch.

Beyond Edessa, Christianity made considerable progress; and there were bishops and sees from Kurdistan to the Persian Gulf by 216, though none at all in Seleucia-Ctesiphon or Nisibis until much later. From Edessa the gospel went out to all of Mesopotamia and Adiabene, to part of Armenia (though missionaries came to Armenia from Cappadocia as well). Since one could not go from Antioch to Mesopotamia without passing through Edessa, the town must have been the earliest important eastern center of the faith; the early traditions certainly thought so, for Addai's disciple Mari supposedly went out from Edessa to Persia itself (Fars), and Addai allegedly ordained his disciple Pqida as first bishop of Adiabene and Assyria (as early as 104!). Mari was allegedly also the evangelist of Khuzistan and Seleucia, and on his way to India, Thomas supposedly stopped there, as well as at Seleucia

(without success at the capital). At Arbela (Adiabene) also there were Christians, including a bishop later martyred, as early as 123. Adiabene was regarded, possibly because of its Judaising aristocracy, as particularly fertile mission territory. Under the episcopate of Abd-Mshikha (190-225) the church in Adiabene expanded rapidly. According to Mshikha Zca, there were 20 bishops in 81 sees in the western satrapies of Iran by 225, but we know that there were few Christians in Seleucia-Ctesiphon as late as 270, and Christianity apparently made very little progress among the Babylonian Jews at any time up to 226 (note, for instance, the alleged rustification of Hananiah nephew of R. Joshua to Babylonia to keep him safe from the sorcery of the "minim." Note also the necessity of Aphraates, two centuries later, to argue most vigorously against Jewish criticism of Christianity, a criticism apparently acceptable even to some within the church). Furthermore, the see of Nisibis was founded only in 300, over a century after the conversion of nearby Edessa.

One may conclude, therefore, that Christianity moved out of Palestine slowly and irregularly, succeeding in some places, ignored in others; attracting (one may say only very tentatively) the interest of some Jews and part of the upper classes, at least in Edessa and Adiabene. Its movement may be traced through Antioch and Edessa and thence across the nearby frontier into Adiabene, parts of Armenia, Khuzistan, and even Fars, and to the Caucasus as well. Edessa was thus a main way-station of religion as of trade, between Palestine and the Iranian empire.[1]

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[1] On the history of Christianity in the Iranian empire and in the Euphrates, Armenian, and Caucasian territories during the first centuries of the common era, see the following: J. Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'Empire Perse sous la dynastie Sassanide, 225-632* (Paris, 1904), pp. 1-18, and the bibliography and sources cited on pp. xv-xix; F. C. Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity* (London, 1904), pp. 1-39, 155-92; W. A. Wigram, *The Assyrian Church, 100-640 A.D.* (London, 1910), pp. 31-40; Frank Gavin, *Aphraates and the Jews, A Study of the Controversial Homilies of the Persian Sage in their Relation to Jewish Thought* (Toronto, 1923, *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*, VII, pp. 95-166); F. C. Burkitt, *Early Christianity outside the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1899); Geo Widengren, "Synkretistische Religionen," pp. 43-83, and Bertold Spuler, "Die Nestorianische Kirche," pp. 120-22, "Die Westsyrische Kirche," pp. 170-74, and "Die Armenische Kirche," pp. 240-66 in B. Spuler, ed., *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I, viii, 2 (Leiden, 1961); Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, chap. 13, trans. C. F. Cruse (London, 1858), pp. 31-35; S. Vailhe, articles in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1909) on Edessa, V, p. 282, Nisibis, XI, pp. 84-85; John Chapman, "Doctrine of Addai," *CE*, pp. 88-89; J. P. Arendzen, "Bardesanes and Bardesanites," *CE*, II, pp. 293-94; Martin, "Les Origines de l'Eglise d'Edesse," *Revue des Sc. Eccl.* 1889 (*non vidi*); Tixeront, *Les Origines de l'Eglise d'Edesse* (Paris, 1888) (*non vidi*); Rubens Duval, "Histoire politique, religieuse et literaire d'Edesse," *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, vols. 17-18, pp. 87-133, 202-79, 381-440; Cyril Toumanoff, "Christian Caucasia, Between Byzantium and Iran: New Light from Old Sources," *Traditio*, XV, 1959, pp. 1-106 [I am grateful to Professor James Brundage of the University of Wiscons in,Milwaukee, for pointing out Toumanoff's articles to me].

See also Hans Lietzmann, *The Foundation of the Church Universal* (New York, 1958, vol. II of *The History of the Early Church*, trans. B. L. Woolf), pp. 258-75. Lietzmann notes that the Dura Church is dated from 230 and that the Christian bishoprics as

It is striking that the two earliest centers of Christianity in the Euphrates valley were Edessa and Arbela, both cities containing Jewish communities but neither under Tannaite influence according to the sources available to us. On the other hand, Nisibis, which was near Edessa, and central Babylonia (Seleucia-Ctesiphon) were among the last places where Christianity was established. The church in Nisibis was dated from 300, and of Seleucia-Ctesiphon slightly earlier, as we have noted, thus in both cases more than a century after the successful evangelization of Edessa and Arbela (Adiabene). And Adiabenian Judaism was relatively new. One must infer therefore that wherever Tannaite influence was strong among the local Jewish community, as in Nisibis and Nehardea, there Christianity made slight progress, if any, for a very long period of time. Since the earliest converts in the east (as in the west) were Jews, it stands to reason that the Tannaim were able to oppose the Christian interpretation of Scriptures with great success, and to provide their own instead, wherever they possessed influence over local Jewry. (One recalls, also, that Dura Judaism was probably quite different from that of contemporary Palestine, according to Erwin Goodenough, but rather more like that we should expect to find among Hellenized, or, in the case of Dura, Hellenized *and* Iranized, Jews. Dura Jews also do not seem to have been under Tannaitic influence.) On the other hand, wherever Tannaite influence was weak among local Jewry, there Christianity made substantial progress.

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of ca. 225 included cities from the mountains to the Persian gulf, not including Nisibis or Seleucia-Ctesiphon, however, according to the Chronicle of Arbela. He holds, therefore, that there were Christians in Parthia, Media, Persia proper, and Bactria, as well as in Susiana and Babylonia. One may note also that Mani, who was born in Southern Babylonia about 226, was informed about Christianity, and his father may have been a Christian heretic. See H. C. Puech, *Le Manichéisme*, (Paris, 1949).

See also N. Zernov, *Eastern Christendom* (London, 1961), pp. 19-39.

On the relationship between the royal house of Adiabene and Abgar of Edessa, see above, chapter II, Section VIII. See also Felix Haase, *Altchristliche Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig 1925) pp. 10-11, 61-2, 70-111.

APPENDIX THREE

CLASSICAL VIEWS OF TANNAITIC JUDAISM IN BABYLONIA

Both classical and scholarly opinions on the nature and extent of Tannaitic Judaism in Babylonia throughout the period before Rav's migration in the third century have been divided. One group, represented by Rashi among the classical authorities, and by Weiss, Rapaport, and Dubnow among more recent scholars, has held that Rav himself was the originator and generator of the great revolution in Babylonian Jewry which transformed what was a "wasteland" from the viewpoint of Pharisaism into a great and fertile field for the advance and realization of rabbinic teaching. Before Rav, this school has held, the ideas and institutions of the "Oral Torah," held mainly by the Tannaim, were neither systematically taught nor effectively applied among the Babylonian Jews. The other school of thought, represented by the Tosafists and such recent scholars as Halevi, Yavetz, and others, has held that the "Oral Torah" and its Babylonian adherents were of extremely ancient lineage, dating from the time of the first temple, or of Ezra, or, most certainly, of the generations before Hillel the Babylonian, and that Babylonia was always a center of the development and application of *the* oral tradition represented in Palestine by the Pharisees-Tannaim. I have shown that the weight of evidence is on the side of the latter group, although with significant qualifications. First, even though one must agree that there ought certainly to have been developed in Babylonia *an* oral tradition to explicate and extend biblical legislation, and even though one believes that such an oral tradition may have been developed even in the most ancient period of the Babylonian golah (and most certainly by the time of such an obviously well-educated man as Hillel in the first century b.c.e.), nonetheless that cannot imply the presence of *the* oral tradition which was then developing in Palestinian Pharisaism. Neither the evidence, meagre as it is, nor common sense suggests this. Second, the extravagance of the claim of the latter group, that Babylonia, as much as Palestine, was a center of *the* "Oral Torah" must become self-evident when the sources are closely examined. If, as, e.g., Halevi and Yavetz argue so heatedly, such men as Samuel, Simlai, Shila, Karna, Zeiri, Kahana I, and others must have had Babylonian teachers, and their teachers must also have had teachers *backward to the time of Ezra*, then why is the evidence about these teachers even in the later literature written in Babylonia so meagre? One must agree with Halevi's argument that the absence of the names of Babylonian Tannaim cannot prove *eo ipse* that there were *no* Tannaim in Babylonia. But the converse is also true: a few names, specifically R. Judah b. Bathyra, R. Hananiah nephew of R. Joshua, R. Nathan, R. Josiah, and others are very well known indeed, which should suggest that arguments *e silencio* cannot be entirely convincing to support either proposition.[1] Third, neither viewpoint is substantiable by proof from

[1] Compare also the midrash on II Kings 24.14 in Gittin 88a, *et al.*, that the cap-

the life of Hillel, for the sources on his life exhibit internal contradictions, and in any event were edited long after he died. One source holds that he received "the Torah" in Palestine, receiving much of his education there, while another holds that he was educated entirely in Babylonia, achieving immediate recognition as an authority in the law as soon as he came to Jerusalem.[1] I have suggested that in the light of later events, such a contention *becomes* entirely plausible; but, standing by itself, it cannot offer substantial evidence about the antiquity of *the* "Oral Torah" in Babylonia.

We turn to the discussion of Rashi and the Tosafists.

Rashi specifically says that after Rav came to Babylonia and founded an academy, Samuel being in Nehardea at that time, then Babylonia achieved equivalent status to Palestine with reference to documents of divorce (but not before then), and holds that Rav came and taught Babylonian Jews laws that they had not previously known. The Tosafists on the other hand hold that the teaching and application of the Oral Law began with the destruction of the First Temple, or at least at the time of Ezra, and that the expression "When Rav came to Babylonia" means "rabbis and masters of the Torah" in general.[2] Weiss holds that there may have been a very gradual migration of Palestinian-trained scholars to Babylonia, and also there were probably ancient traditions there held by groups of scribes, Levites, and sages, Ezra being only one of a series of important figures. But, he says, in any case,

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tivity of Zedekiah included masters of the law; and this midrash thus assumes that the academies in Babylonia were founded at the time of the destruction of the First Temple by academicians active during the preceding years. But such an assumption, even if it could be substantiated, and even if *its* presupposition on the presence of an "Oral Torah" substantially like that of the Pharisees during the most ancient times could be substantiated (and it is groundless), does not imply that these specific academies survived; or that if they survived, taught the precise traditions being presented in Palestine in the time of the Pharisees; in any case, no evidence whatever supports such an assumption. See *Encyclopedia Talmudit* II, 323-25. Note also Y. I. Halevi, *Dorot HaRishonim* (Berlin, 1923), II, pp. 206-208. Halevi argues that Rashi reversed himself on Ketuvot 25a (and compare also Tosefta Kethuvoth 3.1), but there neither the text nor Rashi refers specifically to the period before the arrival of Rav himself in Babylonia, and in any case, Rashi refers to an established Jewish court and not to academies. Having committed himself so explicitly, Rashi would not likely have reversed himself by mere implication; and, in any case, the Tosafists must also have noted the fact and commented on it, which they do not.

See also J. H. Weiss, *Dor Dor veDorshav* (Vilna, 1904), III, p. 29, and, in general, pp. 30-40. See also S. Y. Rappaport, *Erekh Millin*, s.v. Amora, Av Bet Din, etc. Halevi cites Rappaport *in extenso*. See also Yavetz, *Toldoth Yisrael* (Cracow, 1904), IV, pp. 266-82; and Y. I. Halevi, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 672-704, and II, pp. 162-252, especially II, pp. 205-10 and 167-68. Halevi's argument is generally convincing, so far as it goes, to prove that there were numerous relationships between Palestinian Tannaim and Babylonia, but he does not thereby prove the antiquity of the "Oral Torah" in Babylonia, at least beyond the rather limited period with which our evidence deals.

[1] See above, Chapter Two, Section ii.

[2] See Rashi s.v. "After Rav came...", Bab. Talmud Gittin 6a, and compare Tosafists ad loc.; see also Bab. Talmud 'Eruvin 28a, Bava Qama 80a.

Palestine was the birthplace of the oral law, and Babylonians had no part whatsoever in its development. Even Hillel, he says, had to migrate to Palestine, having received no education whatever in Babylonia, and therefore Rav was indeed the man "who brought the Torah" to Babylonia. Note also the view of S. Dubnow, *Divre Yemei Am Olam* (Tel Aviv, 1958), III, p. 94, "In Babylonia at the time of Rav and Samuel there were neither great sages nor academies..." Weiss and Dubnow simply have not considered the sources in detail, while Yavetz and Halevi have.

APPENDIX FOUR

ON RAV'S ORDINATION

For further discussion on the institution of ordination, see J. Newman, *Semikhah (Ordination)*, (Manchester, 1950). In particular, see his discussion on p. 131, n. 2. The Palestinian rabbis' policy toward Babylon in later times, summarized above, was that Palestinian ordination was invalid if not also sanctioned by the exilarch, that the exilarchate's authorization was recognized as valid in Palestine, and that certain matters were held as a monopoly by the Palestinian sanhedrin. My discussion of the earlier policy is consistent with these points. See also J. Z. Lauterbach, "Ordination," *JE*, IX, 428-30. W. Bacher, "Zur Geschichte der Ordination," *MGWJ*, XXXVIII, 122-27. D. Daube, *New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 206-47. Also, A. Epstein, "Le Rétour de Rab en Babylonie d'après M. Isaac Halévy," *REJ*, XLIV, 1902, 45-62; A. Epstein, "Ordination et Autorisation," *REJ*, XLVIII, 1906, 197-211. Halevi, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 210f. See also Rapoport, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Nasi*, *Resh Galuta*, *Vehakham*, p. 225. See also J. S. *Zuri*, *Toldoth HaMishpat HaZiburi HaIvri*, *I*, *Shilton HaNesiut veHaVaad*, *III*, *i*, *Tekufat Rabban Gamaliel b. Rabbi ; Tekufat R. Judah HaNasi II* (London, 1933), pp. 178-93. Zuri sees two conflicting viewpoints in the sources. First, Zuri suggests that by getting permission from Palestine, the Babylonian authorities freed themselves from the authority of the Resh Galuta. Zuri's suggestion that the Palestinian ordination was intended, perhaps, also to improve and strengthen the religious authority of the Resh Galuta seems to me to be sound and is the basis for my fourth argument. Zuri distinguishes between judicial and pedagogical permission, holding that the former was available in Babylonia only from the exilarch, while the latter of course could have been given by the master to the disciple in Palestine, even though the disciple was going to settle elsewhere. Thus he claims that the permission of Rabbi Judah was valid only for teaching, but not for legal action. However, the content of that permission includes entirely practical, legal authority. Zuri is forced to distinguish the various sources presented in Sanhedrin 5a-b, and to conclude that they refer to entirely separate incidents or traditions. On the matter of family purity in Babylonia, see also Weiss, *op. cit.*, II, p. 171. See also Zuri, *R. Judah HaNasi*, pp. 111-24. On R. Judah's interest in Babylonia, see also Allon, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-80, 145-50. See also Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-38. The discussion of this problem between A. Epstein and I. Y. HaLevi is summarized here. The issue is the effectiveness of R. Judah's authorization in Babylonia, Epstein holding that it was, Halevi that it was not effective. Zuri's conclusion is that R. Judah's authorization was valid, but only from a "religious point of view," but for civil matters (e.g., to be free of paying restitution in case of a mistaken judgment), exilarchic permisssion was required. But even if this were a valid distinction, then why, one wonders, was a civil-judicial permission specifically included in the form of R. Judah's

ordination of Rav and Rabba b. Hana? Newman concludes that the power of the exilarch was feared by the patriarch, and R. Judah "accepted the authority of the exilarch quite officially, even in Palestine itself. For this privilege the exilarch in turn was expected to respect a number of limitations in the field of jurisdiction, set by the Palestinian authorities," that (a) Palestinian ordination was invalid in Babylonia without exilarchic sanction, (b) the exilarch's authorization was valid in Palestine, but (c) certain matters were left to the Palestinian sanhedrin (such as intercalation, as in Yer. Talmud Megillah 1.4, Bab. Talmud Rosh Hashanah 19b). This may have been some later agreement, but at this time we have no evidence that in practice, the exilarch's decisions were respected in Palestine; we do not even know whether such decisions, if any, were even known in Palestine; and while R. Judah may indeed have felt apprehensive about the growth of the exilarchate in Babylonia, this was, the sources tell us, on account of the exilarch's reputed lineage and not because he feared that the authority of a Babylonian Jewish authority would become accepted by Palestinian courts.

See also H. Mantel, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-17. Mantel thinks that Rav wanted the privilege of judging cases involving fines, which required Palestinian authorization. He rightly points out (p. 217) that Rav never had such a right. Yet, when he turned to a later patriarch for additional authorization, this was not at issue. Hence I find it difficult to conclude that the distinction between fines and damages was at issue here; or that it was recognized as a limitation on the power of the Exilarchate or the rabbinical judges in Babylonia *at this period.* No evidence suggests that such a distinction applied to Babylonia in the late second century. See also Mantel's "Ordination and Appointment in Temple Times" (In Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, XXXII, 1963, pp. 120-35.

APPENDIX FIVE

TANNAIM AND THE DAVIDIC LINE

On the Genealogical Scroll, see S. Klein, "A Genealogical Scroll Found in Jerusalem," *Zion*, IV, 1939, pp. 30-50, 177-78 [in Hebrew]. Klein holds (p. 44) that only "Hillel from David" was written in the scroll. Then the words, "from Shefetiah son of Avital," and finally, the name of R. Hiyya, were added. But, he says, this was a groundless addition to the scroll. On the Davidic claim of R. Judah, R. Hiyya, and the Resh Galuta, see the following: I. Levi, "L'Origine Davidique de Hillel," *Revue des Etudes Juives*, XXXI, pp. 202-11, 33, 113-14. Levi notes that from Hillel through R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II, there is not one reference to the Davidic origin of the Hillelite patriarchs, either by the patriarchs, or by their contemporaries. He holds that the Davidic claim was advanced in Rabbi Judah's time on account of R. Hiyya and that "Rabbi accepted the glorious investiture." Levi thinks that perhaps the marriage between Rabbi's son and Hiyya's daughter was to give Rabbi the same merit as Hiyya, but this is manifestly contrary to the sense of the story, which says that Hiyya did not have equivalent genealogical heritage. See also A. Buechler, *Priester und Cultus* (Vienna, 1895), pp. 42f. Note also that Hiyya was educated in Huẓal, where Benjaminites were settled; on this see Berliner, *op. cit.*, p. 32. See also B. Levin, ed., *Iggeret Rav Sherira* (Haifa, 1922), *Additional Note XV, to p. 77*, on Rabbi's Davidic ancestry. The most important recent discussion of the question is in J. Liver, *op. cit.*, English summary, pp. vi-vii; Hebrew section, pp. 141-47, 28-46. Liver's conclusion, which I fully accept, is that "although it is not impossible that the exilarchs were somehow genealogically related to the Davidic family, such a relationship is unproven. On the other hand, it is likely that the rule of the exilarchic family over the Jews of Babylonia preceded their attempts to trace their line back to David." I should add, however, that if the genealogical records in Babylonia were as excellent as the sources indicate, then the acceptance of the exilarchic claim must indicate widespread agreement that such a claim was founded on accurate records. Liver concludes, "It was about the time of Bar Kokhba when we find well-established in Israel the reawakened consciousness of the Davidic descent of the expected future king, that the patriarchs in Palestine and the exilarchs in Babylonia were considered to be descended from the house of David, and in position and influence were like royal princes, basing their prerogatives on Royal descent." It should be added, also, that descent from glorious, eponymous ancestors was a convention in both Israel and Parthia, as the claim of the Arsacids to Achemenid ancestry indicates.[1]

In Israel, at least six Davidic claims were advanced in behalf of (1) the Has-

[1] On this, see Liver, *ad loc.*, and my "Parthian Political Ideology", *Iranica Antiqua* III, i, 40-59.

moneans, (2) the Herodians (through their Hasmonean mother), (3) Jesus of Nazareth, (4) Hillel-R, Judah the Prince, (5) Hiyya, (6) the Babylonian exilarch. We may note, also, in reference to Klein's discussion of the Genealogical Scroll, that the Yer. Talmud and Ber. R. versions agree on the ascription of R. Hiyya to Shefetaiah. Hence, if the reading was changed, it must have been very early in the history of the scroll. On the scroll, see also A. Epstein, *MGWJ*, XL, 1896, p. 141. On R. Judah's Davidic origin, see Yer. Talmud Kilayim 9.3, Kethuvoth 12.3, and Ber. R. 33.3 See also A. Kaminka, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 1939, p. 109: "The Davidic claim of Judah the Prince was to give him as high a status as Hiyya and the Resh Galuta." Liver concludes that the Davidic claim legitimized the civil and political position of the Exilarchate and Patriarchate... and did not originate it." Be that as it may, the important point is that people apparently *believed* in this claim, including those who made it, and that is what is significant in evaluating R. Hiyya's relationships to both R. Judah and to the Exilarch R. Huna.

APPENDIX SIX

THE PROBLEM OF "OUR RABBIS IN THE SOUTH"

On the problem of "our rabbis in the south," see Bab. Talmud Yevamoth 62b, "R. Akiba taught 'our rabbis in the south' and they are Meir, Judah, Yosi, Simeon, and Eleazar b. Shammua." Now R. Josiah reports that he related certain teachings of Zeira in the name of the "men of Jerusalem" to R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis, as Yer. Talmud Sanhedrin 8.6, but in Bab. Talmud Sotah 28a the same report was given "to my colleagues in the south," and see also Sanhedrin 88a. Halevi (p. 675) holds that the group of the "men of the south" to whom Josiah reported the story is one and the same; that at that time they had taken residence in Nisibis on account of the persecutions; that Zeira fled to Babylonia and there Josiah heard his tradition and reported it to "our colleagues in the south" who were at that point in Nisibis. (See also Sanhedrin 84a.) But there is no evidence that the five who are called "the colleagues of the south" were in fact in Nisibis or, indeed, together at all during the persecutions; and quite to the contrary, we know for sure that R. Yosi was in Cappadocia and R. Meir in "Asia" during this period; further, Simeon (b. Yohai) was in a cave in the Galilee. Hence, we had best consider the reports on the event(s) regarding Josiah's report in the name of Zeira. I should point out one harmonizing possibility, that Josiah heard a report from Zeira, which on one occasion (presumably while he was still in Palestine) he reported to R. Akiba's students who were called "our rabbis in the south," and on another, to R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis. That is a possibility, if a bit simple, to explain the apparent contradiction within the record.

On the "rabbis of the south" see also Yavetz, *Toledoth Yisrael*, VII, p. 146.

A larger question is why R. Josiah would report to "my colleagues in the south" who were all of the School of R. Akiba. while he was of the school of R. Ishmael. If, as Halevi suggests, this is a way of referring to the Akibans in Nisibis, specifically R. Eleazar b. Shamua, one may explain his action as a reasonable effort to share traditions with others concerned with them in the eastern Golah, and, of course, the report that he related the traditions to R. Judah b. Bathyra (II) in Nisibis is entirely coherent. But the possibility that he heard a report from Zeira, reported it on one occasion to the "rabbis in the south" and on a second to R. Judah in Nisibis would be more difficult to accept, unless we could find other instances in which students of R. Ishmael went out of their way to report traditions to students of R. Akiba in Palestine before the Bar Kokhba war. I know of no parallel reports.

The similarity of the language "agree on two and not agree on one" represented, I should think, a kind of formula; and hence makes it impossible to suggest that he reported Zeira's teachings two different times, for the agreement of the "men of the south" and later on R. Judah b. Bathyra on precisely the same laws, the former being disciples of R. Akiba, and the latter

not, is not sufficiently likely. Halevi's suggestion, that the men of the south were then in Nisibis with R. Judah, is equally unacceptable, because of the objections cited above. We must conclude that there are two separate traditions on the report of the sayings of the men of Jerusalem through Zeira to R. Josiah, and from him either to the students of R. Akiba called "southerners" *or* to R. Judah b. Bathyra; one tradition, in the Bab. Talmud (Sotah, Sanhedrin) relating him to the south; the other (Yer. Talmud and Sifre Deut. 31, and 218) to Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis. Which is more reasonable from the viewpoint of other facts known about his life? I think the latter is self-evidently more reasonable. Then how is R. Josiah confused with "men of the south"? Perhaps his studies with R. Ishmael, toward the end of R. Ishmael's life, when, it is reported, he settled in Edom, left behind a tradition associating him with "the men of the south" or "the rabbis" (etc.) of the south. But these rabbis were not Ishmaelites.

APPENDIX SEVEN

LITERARY REMNANTS OF HUẒAL, CA. 135-150 C.E.

Considering that Babylonian Jewry included a number of distinguished Tannaim after the Bar Kokhba war, one would expect that the literature of the Tannaim would give evidence of this fact. Outstanding students of Rabbi Ishmael in particular were settled there. While these Babylonian Ishmaelites were mentioned infrequently, if at all, in the Mishnah or in the Akiban midrashim (Sifra and Sifré Deut.), they were often cited in the Ishmaelite midrashim, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, and the Sifre Numbers. Specifically, Josiah, Jonathan, Nathan, Isaac, Abba Hanin, Ahai the son of Josiah, Issi ben Judah, and others were frequently mentioned in the Ishmaelite collections. Strikingly, some of these, such as Nathan and Isaac, were *not* Ishmaelites. Furthermore, Rabbis Jonathan and Josiah were not cited in the beraitot dealing with post-Bar Kokhba consistories and decisions, and we have suggested on that basis that they were not present at Usha and afterward, but remained in Babylonia. It seems highly probable, therefore, that the students of R. Ishmael in Babylonia produced traditions that eventually became the foundation of certain sections of the Mekhilta and possibly of the Sifre Numbers as well. The sections of the Mekhilta we shall consider contain, in addition, numerous references to R. Nathan. Since we have evidence that Nathan did migrate to Palestine some time after 150 c.e., we may conclude that the Mekhilta sections in question were *orginally* compiled on the basis of discussions between 135 and 150 c.e., when R. Nathan was in Babylonia, and probably at Huẓal.

That certain sections of the Mekhilta were probably originally compiled in Babylonia and transmitted in the first instance to students there was pointed out by Halevi, Hoffman, and Epstein. All note the fact that the Mekhilta and Sifre Numbers contain a disproportionately high number of references to or sayings of Ishmaelites who had Babylonian connections. Here we shall try to isolate those sections.[1]

For the Mekhilta, the following probability table proves that the sections edited in Huẓal between 135 and 150 c.e. were Pisḥa and Nezikin:

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[1] Halevi, *op. cit.*, I, v, p. 679, "The Mekhilta in particular was edited in Babylonia, and therefore includes the teachings of many Babylonian Tannaim, such as R. Josiah and Jonathan, Isaac and Nathan, Ahai, etc." We cannot conclude that Halevi's contention is wholly correct, for there is no evidence that the Mekhilta as a *whole* was *edited* in Babylonia. See also David Hoffman, *Zur Einleitung in die halachischen Midraschim* (Berlin, 1886-87), pp. 38-40, and Y. N. Epstein, *Mevo'ot leSifrut HaTannaim* (Jerusalem, 1955), pp. 545-624, in particular, pp. 570-72, 588f.

Mekhilta	Josiah	Jonathan	Nathan
Pisḥa	22	21	22
Beshallaḥ	1	—	6
Bahodesh	—	1	9
Vayassa	2	—	1
Amalek	1	1	4
Nezikin	15	14	9
Kaspa	5	4	7
Shabbata	5	2	4

Of the 28 references to R. Isaac in the Mekhilta, 13 are in Pisha and 8 in Nezikin. Names of the Tannaim in Pisḥa and Nezikin are as follows:

Pisḥa: R. Ishmael, 29; R. Akiba, 14; R. Eliezer, 12; R. Joshua, 1; Simeon b. Azai, 2; Yosi the Galilean, 12; Eleazar b. Azariah, 2; Ben Zoma, 1; Eleazar b. Zadok, 1; Judah b. Bathyra, 20; Yosi, 1; Nehorai, 1; Eleazar, 1; Nehemiah, 1; Judah, 6; Eliezer b. Jacob, 1; Hanina, nephew of R. Joshua, 1; Simeon b. Yohai, 7; Nathan, 9; Jonathan, 18; Josiah, 15; Aha, son of R. Josiah, 2; Issi b. Akiba, 1; Isaac, 11; Jeremiah, 1; Abba Hanin, 1; R. Judah the Prince, 8; Eliezer Hakapar b. Ribi, 1; Abba Yosi, 1; Our Rabbis in Lud, 1; R. Mattiah b. Heresh, 1; R. Azariah, 1; Sages say, 3; Some say, 2; Hiyya b. Nahmani in the name of R. Ishmael, 1.

Nezikin: Ishmael, 25; Akiba, 17; Eliezer, 10; Simeon b. Azai, 1; Yosi the Galilean, 7; Eleazar b. Azariah, 2; Judah b. Bathyra, 3; Yosi, 3; Eleazar, 1; Judah, 4; Eleazar b. Jacob, 2; R. Simeon b. Yohai, 6; Nathan, 9; Jonathan, 9; Josiah, 10; Ahai, 2; Issi b. Akiba, 2; Isaac, 7; Abba Hanin, 3; R. Judah the Prince, 9; Sages say, 1; in addition Simeon b. Eleazar in the name of R. Meir, 1; Hanina b. Idi, 1; Gamaliel, 1; Hanina b. Gamaliel, Yohanan b. Zakkai, 3; Jonathan b. Autelmos, 1; Simeon b. Gamaliel I, 1; Simeon b. Menasia, 1; one of R. Ishmael's students, 2.

What is striking here is that most of the names mentioned more frequently than twice lived before or up to the time of R. Ishmael, and those of a later date, except for R. Judah the Prince, are mentioned only once or twice.

(On the Babylonian origin of the Mekhilta, see also the references of R. Hai Gaon cited in Ginzberg, *Geonica*, I, p. 79.)

Epstein (p. 572) and Hoffman (p. 39) both note that the editor of the Mekhilta edited the text from various sources. The systematic exclusion of the names of Ishmaelites in the Sifra and Sifre Deut. indicates that the editors of these documents did not have, or did not choose to use sources from the Ishmaelite school. Likewise, it seems to me, the fairly systematic use of sources of a very few men, and of sources relating to men who antedated them, would indicate the existence, in fact, of some kind of collections of traditions, probably developed among the disciples of men all of whom were associated with Babylonia, and none of whom was associated with the Patriarchate of Simeon b. Yohai. Epstein (p. 580) notes that sections Pisḥa, BaḤodesh, and Nezikin are all very close to one another in regard to the names mentioned in them; but as we noted above, this is not the case of the three figures who concern us, who are not mentioned in BaḤodesh with any frequency, in

particular, R. Josiah and R. Jonathan. If, therefore, such is the case, one may suggest that BaḤodesh was begun among men to whom the traditions of R. Jonathan and Josiah were either not available or not regarded as important, but those of R. Nathan, were. It would be suggestive if these names were, in general, later, or included Tannaim who did not by and large live in Babylonia, and hence it might be concluded that *BaHodesh* in its earliest formulation was not a Babylonian document but was edited later in Palestine. Is such a conclusion possible? We shall consider the names in that section.

R. Ishmael, 9; R. Akiba, 8; R. Eliezer, 7; R. Yosi, the Galilean, 1; R. Judah b. Bathyra, 1; R. Yosi, 6; R. Eleazar in the name of Abba Yosi, the Damaskan, 1; R. Nehemiah, 1; R. Judah b. R. Ilai, 4; R. Eliezer b. Jacob, 2; R. Simeon b. Yohai, 4; R. Nathan, 7; R. Jonathan, 1; R. Ahai, 1; R. Issi b. Akiba, 1; R. Isaac, 3; R. Judah the Prince, 12; R. Mattiah b. Heresh, 1; Sages say, 2; Others say, 2; R. Meir, 1; R. Gamaliel, 1; R. Hanina b. Gamaliel, 1; R. Simeon b. Judah of Kefar Akko, 1; R. Abba Yosi b. Durmaskit, 1; R. Simeon b. Eleazar, 2; Abba Saul, 1; Joshua b. Korba, 1; and the following once or twice (all of the later period): Eleazar b. R. Yosi the Galilean, Judah b. Lakish, Eleazar b. Parta, Hanina b. Antigonos, Eleazar HaKafar, 1; Eleazar b. Hananiah b. Hezekiah, Yosi b. R. Judah, Yohanan b. Zakkai.

Except for the striking number of quotations of R. Judah the Prince, the evidence does not support the conclusion I suggested above; and R. Judah the Prince is mentioned almost as many times in the earlier passage. It does not seem to me, therefore, that any substantial conjecture is possible concerning BaḤodesh, except the obvious one that the relative absence of the names of Jonathan and Josiah must strike one as significant, and the possibility that this section's editor did not have, or excluded, their teachings must remain.

Epstein (p. 581) notes that the "tractates" of the Mekhilta are independent beraitot, standing by themselves, with no particular connection to one another except their position in a single collection and a single book of midrashim about the book of Exodus; but otherwise, there are numerous contradictions and changes among them. But Epstein does not note any differences of substance between the tractates of Pisḥa and Nezikin.

We may note, finally, that Judah b. Bathyra is mentioned 28 times in the Mekhilta, 15 of them in Shabbata I, and 5 in Pisha, 3 in Nezikin, 4 in Kaspa, 2 in Beshallaḥ. Hence if his traditions were preserved in Huẓal, only slight evidence is available to prove it; and Eleazar b. Shammua, also associated with R. Judah b. Bathyra in Nisibis, is mentioned only once, in Amalek. We may suggest, therefore, that while other Babylonian traditions persist in sections of the Mekhilta, the unique character of the Huẓal sections is supported by the *infrequency* with which the Nisibis school is cited in them.

R. Ḥananiah of Nehar Pekod is mentioned only once, in Pisḥa.

Thus we may conclude that the striking number of times the men under consideration were mentioned in Pisḥa and Nezikin, and, by comparison, omitted in other documents, proves the substantial likelihood that the designated tractates, Pisḥa and Nezikin, were probably based on material taught and transmitted in the first instance at Huẓal between 135 and 150 c.e.

Further to emphasize the striking parallel we have noted in the Mekhilta

passages, we may consider the following tables, which indicate a similar parallel for other contemporary Tannaim. We include the names of an Akiban who went to Nisibis, and another Huẓalite Babylonian of the later period (after 150), in the former instance Eleazar b. Shamua, in the latter Aḥai. The former does not reveal the phenomenon we noted above; the latter does.

Mekhilta	Eleazar ben Shamua	Aḥai
Pisḥa	—	2
Beshallaḥ	—	—
Baḥodesh	—	1
Vayassa	—	—
Amalek	1	—
Nezikin	—	2
Kaspa	—	—
Shabbata	—	—

Thus four of the five sayings of Ahai are in the same sections; nonetheless, one can hardly conclude on that quantitative basis any close relationship of the two tractates to Huẓal, though this does indeed support our earlier contention.

We may consider several Tannaim who are frequently mentioned in the Mekhilta. We shall see that the frequency of references to them is unrelated to the tractates Pisḥa and Nezikin, but distributed in other tractates:

	Eleazar of Modi'im	Ishmael	Rabbi Judah the Prince
Pisḥa	—	34	8
Beshallaḥ	1	1	7
Shirata	—	1	5
Baḥodesh	1	12	5
Vayassa	27	—	2
Amalek	30	1	1
Nezikin	—	41	5
Kaspa	—	8	2
Shabbata	—	3	—

We should certainly have expected a greatly disproportionate number of references to Ishmael in the Huẓal sections of Pisḥa and Nezikin, and indeed we see them clearly. On the other hand, our earlier probability table did not contain significant references to Josiah and Jonathan in Baḥodesh, and the reason for Ishmael's references there must be that some other, anonymous student(s) of Ishmael preserved his sayings in that section.

Our final table will concern Palestinian Akibans of the generation of Usha, specifically, Yosi b. Halafta (I), Yosi the Galilean (II), Meir, and Simeon b. Yoḥai:

	Yosi (I)	Yosi (II)	Meir	Simeon
Pisḥa	2	14	1	13
Beshallaḥ	1	3	6	7
Shirata	2	4	1	—
Baḥodesh	9	1	1	4
Vayassa	3	3	—	4
Amalek	2	1	—	1
Nezikin	3	8	11	9
Kaspa	1	2	3	3
Shabbata	—	1	—	—

Yosi the Galilean and Simeon b. Yohai are disproportionately represented in Pisḥa and Nezikin, though we cannot give an adequate explanation for the phenomenon. (But see below on Sifre Num. for Simeon.) What is clear from the above tables is that the distribution of references to various Tannaim is by no means uniform, but on the contrary, some tractates reveal disproportionate references to one or another of the second-century teachers. We have no doubt that these phenomena are susceptible of historical explanation, for they are not fully explained by reference merely to accident or to random citations of a given man in a given tractate. Several explanations are possible: one is that the teachings of a given figure were more common on one subject than on another; a second is that the students of a given Tanna learned his teachings more assiduously in connection with one or another subject, and hence transmitted them in greater abundance on that subject; a third is that the circumstances surrounding the preliminary redaction of a given document tended to render disproportionate the citations to a given man or school. It is the third which, in our opinion, applies to the tractates of the Mekhilta we have considered, though we do not thereby argue that this explanation is uniformly applicable elsewhere, or, indeed, that the statistical phenomena relating to the two tractates under discussion have therefore been fully explained.

The Sifre on Numbers poses a more difficult problem, for, as we shall see in the following probability table, it is not at first glance possible to isolate similarly striking occurrences of the three Tannaim in question:

Sifre Num.	Josiah	Jonathan	Nathan
Sects. 1-10	3	2	4
11-30	7	6	1
31-40	3	3	1
41-50	1	1	5
51-60	1	1	2
61-70	2	1	2
71-80	1	2	2
81-90	1	—	—
91-100	—	—	1
100-110	4	5	3
110-130	12	9	8
130-140	2	1	4
140-150	1	1	1
151f	8	8	5

What emerges is a fairly general distribution throughout the Sifre Num. of the names of all three men. Here, again, Hoffman was the first to point out that Sifre Num. is an Ishmaelite text (Frankel having noted a substantial difference between the Sifre on Numbers and on Deuteronomy, but having been unable to explain it). Many elements of its midrashic terminology are associated with the school of R. Ishmael (Epstein, p. 588); as well as the names of the Tannaim, R. Ishmael, Josiah, Jonathan, Nathan, Eliezer, Abba Hanin, Issi b. Akavya, Ahai b. R. Josiah, Simeon b. Yohai, numerous times. I do not know how to explain the frequency with which R. Simeon b. Yohai is mentioned; but one may suggest that they are either later additions, if the text was edited substantially in Babylonia and sent on to Palestine, or that Simeon b. Yoḥai may not have spent all 14 years in a Palestinian cave, but perhaps part of them in a Babylonian academy (on this, see above). Epstein notes in particular that the section on "Beha'alotekha" is quite different in terminology and names and treatment of certain subjects from the rest of the Sifre Num. (sects. 78-106, and also Balak, 131, and Pinhas, 134-41) and concludes that it is a separate section; but according to our table above, the mentions of the three men we have considered are not more frequent or less so in these sections than elsewhere, and I find it difficult to conclude on the basis of the evidence above that these sections are related to the Babylonian students of R. Ishmael. Nonetheless, Epstein (p. 601) does prove that the section is in many ways to be set apart from the rest of the Sifre Num., and he holds that the Sifre on Num. is put together from two sources, only one of the Ishmaelite school, the other of the Akiban school. Since he is so certain, we must reconsider our statistical survey, this time dividing it into two parts, the Ishmaelite sections (according to Epstein), and the other sections:

	Josiah	Jonathan	Nathan
Ishmaelite sections:			
78-106, 131, 134-141	4	—	4
All other sections	43	40	36

My earlier comment remains valid, that the special sections Epstein designates exhibit no particular connections with the Babylonian Tannaim we have considered. If the section Epstein designates is indeed Ishmaelite, then we must conclude that the Akibans chose to preserve a large number of comments of R. Josiah and R. Jonathan in their own documents, and therefore had them available in Palestine for study and use. Further, we know from the rich corpus of beraitot that the Palestinians, or some of them, did preserve many teachings about both men and their *logia*.

Given Rabbi Nathan's career in Palestine, on the other hand, one should not expect a very uneven distribution of citations to him. The correlation of the other sections, especially sections 1-10, 11-30, 31-40, and 100-130, is quite striking. The natural divisions of Sifre Numbers have been ignored for the purposes of preliminary analysis. We may profitably reconsider the analysis, therefore, for if Sifre Numbers was made up of distinct sources, one would not expect them to end evenly at the decades. Thus our original

division may obscure the distinctions between them. We reconsider the question, basing our analysis on the tractates of the Sifre Numbers in their natural divisions.

Sifre Numbers	Josiah	Jonathan	Nathan
Parashath Naso, 1-58	15	13	12
Beha'alotekha, 59-106	4	3	7
Sh'laḥ, 107-115	6	6	6
Koraḥ, 116-122	6	5	3
Ḥukat, 123-130	4	3	1
Balak, 131	—	—	—
Pinḥas, 132-152	3	2	6
Matot, 153-158	4	5	3
Mas'ei, 159-161	3	3	3

The number of references to the three men in Parashath Naso is at first glance quite striking. When, however, we note that the section is considerably longer than any other, it is less so; and when we compare sections of similar length, that is, from 59-116, we find no substantial variant, that is to say, for Josiah, 15 to 10, for Jonathan, 13 to 9, and for Nathan, 12 to 13. On that basis, one can hardly come to any statistically significant conclusion about Parashath Naso. On the other hand, if we divide the section into constituents, do we find a substantial number of references to the three men in any small group within the fifty-nine sections? A quick reference to our earlier table suggests that we do, and that the first forty of the fifty-eight sections contain most of the references to Josiah and Jonathan, 13 of Josiah's 15, 11 of Jonathan's 13, though no substantial section of Nathan's, that is, 6 of his 12. Are there natural divisions in Parashath Naso that will permit further analysis within the first forty sections? Restricting our analysis to the names of Josiah and Jonathan, we find that Josiah is mentioned in 1, 2, 3, 12 (twice), 20 (twice), 25 (twice), 28, 35, 38, and 39, and Jonathan in 1, 2, 12 (?), 20 (twice), 25 (twice), 28, 38, 39 (twice). Our interest is drawn to sections 20, 25, 38, and 39. In these, the men are disproportionately represented. But of the four, Nathan is mentioned only in 39. The sections 1, 2, and 39 contain references to all three men. Can we conclude that they were connected with Huẓal? First, it is obvious that the three men are not *frequently* cited together, and hence any one section which contains references to all three is bound to attract our interest. Second, we may consider the *content* of these sections. Can we find that the three men were cited in a single exegesis, dispute, or other cogent context in sections 1, 2, or 39? We find in section 39 that all three men discuss the verse "Thus thou shalt bless the children of Israel," R. Nathan arguing that the exegesis of the verse is not necessarily limited to proving that the priestly blessing must be said standing, for another verse indicates this, while R. Josiah and Jonathan arguing on whether the priestly benediction is said with the divine name's (tetrogrammeton) being pronounced or not outside of the Temple. The dispute of the two Ishmaelites would, of course, have obvious relevance to Babylonia, while the comment

of R. Nathan has nothing to do with their focus of interest. We find, therefore, that with the possible exception of section 39, no part of Parashath Naso definitely gives evidence of originating in Huẓal at the time R. Nathan, Josiah, and Jonathan were at the academy there; but sections 1, 2, 12, 20, 25, 28, 38, and 39 may originate there at a period when Nathan was not present.

Thus, in connection with the Sifre on Numbers, we can go no further than the conclusions of Epstein (p. 588) that the Tannaitic midrash on Numbers is the product of the Ishmaelite school, and that the Ishmaelites were Ishmael himself (60 references), Josiah (46), Jonathan (40); and Nathan (40), Eliezer (19), Abba Hanan in the name of Eliezer (18), Issi ben Akaviah (10), Ahai b. R. Josiah (3), Simeon b. Yohai (21), Simeon (6), etc. We have been unable to prove that any specific section originated in Huẓal between 135 and 150. All that we may conclude, therefore, is that most of the document was certainly Ishmaelite, and based on our conclusions on the Mekhilta, very likely Babylonian in origin, though we cannot say for certain when the Sifre on Numbers began to take shape.

We have not argued that the *final* redaction of the relevant sections of the Mekhilta or Sifre Numbers took place in Babylonia. There is no question, according to B. De Fries,[1] that the language of the Mekhilta is Palestinian, and hence the final redaction of the document took place there. Without disputing the issue, we have emphasized that the striking coincidence of the Tannaim who were in Babylonia together from ca. 135 to ca. 150 indicates that specific sections were likely to have been based on material which originated in that period at Huẓal. We have seen, first of all, that the sections Pisḥa and Nezikin exhibit a phenomenon which requires explanation, namely, that the great number of references to the three Tannaim we have considered is contained in a small part of the Mekhilta. We have noted that no other sections which can be isolated exhibit a similar correlation. We have reasoned, therefore, that the given sections were likely to have originated, though in what form we cannot say, in post-Bar Kokhba Huẓal, when the three were likely to have been in Huẓal together. The question of language, content, and legal orientation is not relevant to this conclusion; so far as language is concerned, the final redaction could not have taken place in Huẓal and may not have been in Babylonia at all. Hence later linguistic conventions may have been applied anachronistically to the sections in question. We cannot, moreover, isolate significant subject matter, for all we can see is that the Ishmaelites pursued Ishmaelite exegeses, and this was clear to us before our inquiry began. As to law, here again we cannot move further to consider the content of Huẓalite legal discussions, for we do not have a sufficiently broad selection of the discussions of Huẓal to come to significant conclusions, apart from the tentative point made in connection with Sifre Num. 39. Furthermore, the question of the content of Babylonian legal studies must be postponed, as we noted above, until the disputes of Rav and Samuel are analyzed from such a perspective, for there we have sufficient grounds for tracing legal disputes to differing traditions, Palestinian in the case of Rav, Babylonian in the case of Samuel, while here we do not.

[1] In a private communication.

It is self-evident that the Babylonian Tannaim were interested in more sections of scripture and more areas of law and theology than this rather limited representation of their viewpoints indicates. The sheer body of information on the Oral Torah that was available to the Babylonians must have been far greater than that we have received in their names. We may conclude that in Babylinia, certainly by the middle of the second century, Tannaitic Judaism was represented by able men, and taught to other able men; represented by such men as Judah b. Bathyra, R. Josiah, R. Jonathan, R. Nathan, and R. Ahai b. R. Josiah. Further, the fact that these men are well represented in the Sifre Numbers, and not at all in the Sifra and Sifre Deuteronomy and Mishnah, can imply no derogation whatever of their learning or of the traditions available to them, but only of the inadequate state of our knowledge about these traditions.

APPENDIX EIGHT

THE PROBLEM OF JOSEPH THE BABYLONIAN

Joseph the Babylonian is identified by several other names, including Joseph of Huẓal (therefore, a student of R. Josiah), Isi ben Gur Arye, Isi ben Gamaliel, Isi ben Mehallel, and Isi ben Akavya, according to Bab. Talmud Pesaḥim 113b [= Yoma 52b, Niddah 36b]:

> It was taught: Joseph of Huzal, Joseph the Babylonian, Isi ben Gur Arye, Isi ben Judah, Isi ben Gamaliel, Isi ben Mehallel, Isi ben Akavya – are one and the same.

Considering the sources on each name separately, we find that Joseph the Babylonian was a student of R. Eleazar b. Shamua in Palestine, at the time that R. Judah the Prince was at Eleazar's academy (Bab. Talmud Menaḥoth 18a) Isi b. Judah, on the other hand, studied with R. Simeon b. Yohai, and may not have lived beyond the time of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II, for in listing the virtues of various sages, he included none beyond the generation of R. Simeon, omitting reference to such notables of the following generation as R. Judah the Prince:

> Isi ben Judah (too) used to coin phrases to describe the Sages: R. Meir, a sage and a scribe. R. Judah, profound when he wishes to be so. R. Eliezer b. Jacob, little but spotless. R. Yosi, carries his learning with him. R. Yohanan b. Nuri, a basket of halakhot. R. Yosi the Galilean, a very discriminating gatherer, free from arrogance. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, a shopful of precious purple. R. Simeon (b. Yohai), studies much and forgets little...
> (Avot de R. Natan, ch. 18, trans. J. Goldin pp. 92-3. Compare Gittin 27a, 67a).

Nothing whatever is known apart from the brief beraita cited above concerning Isi ben Gur Arye, Isi ben Gamaliel, and Isi ben Mehallel. In Yer. Talmud Bava Qama 3.7, Yosi the Babylonian is identified with Yosi b. Judah and Yosi Katnuta.

Traditions of Isi ben Judah were preserved in the academy of Huẓal, certainly by the Tannaim associated with R. Ḥiyya and Rav, for 'secret scroll' was preserved there concerning Sabbath law (see Bab. Talmud Shabbath 6d, 96b), and Rav knew about it.

Isi was certainly a Babylonian. This is attested by his saying about various kinds of unclean birds in the east (Bab. Talmud Ḥullin 63b), and by his name. He studied with R. Yosi b. Halafta in Sepphoris, and the story told about him there is told also about Judah of Huzal (compare Bab. Talmud Nedarim 81a with Pal. Talmud Shevi'it 8.5, Nedarim 11.1).

Were Joseph the Babylonian and Isi b. Judah one and the same man? It seems to me quite probable that they were. A disciple might certainly study with more than one Tanna, and in more than one academy. Hence Isi-Judah could have studied with both Yosi b. Halafta and, presumably somewhat

later, with R. Eleazar b. Shamua, at the time of R. Judah's youth. As to the omission of contemporaries of R. Judah from Isi's "praises", one may conclude that he was making a retrospective statement about the passing generation. Since, of that generation, R. Eleazar b. Shamua was still actively teaching, Isi may have found it wiser to omit his judgment.

If Isi an Judah were one and the same, then how do we account for the several names assigned to one man? Bacher[1] holds that Isi b. Akavya and Isi b. Judah were doubtless separate Tannaim, the former being the brother of Hananiah b. Akavya. As to the name Isi b. Gur Arye, however, Bacher refers to Gen. 49.9. In any case, the reference to Isi b. Akavya in Yer. Talmud Kela'im 8.2 is given in Tosefta Kela'im 5.6 in the name of Isi the Babylonian; in place of Isi b. Akavya in Sifre Numbers 15 is Isi b. Judah in Bab. Talmud Keritoth 7b, the parallel. Isi the Babylonian in Tosefta Bava Qama 2.11 is Isi b. Judah in the parallel passage in Bab. Talmud Bava Qama 32a. Hence it seems highly probable that the several Isi's were one man, variously titled. Isi was a diminutive of Joseph, and that poses no problem whatever. Huzal was in Babylonia, and a Huzalite, in Palestine, would have been known as Babylonian; that too poses no difficulty. I fail to see an adequate explanation of the difference between Gamaliel, Mehallel, Judah, and Akavya, however; this seems a confusion of men, not names. Since our information concerns mainly Isi ben Judah and Joseph the Babylonian, however, we may reserve judgment on the other names in the beraita.[2]

By the hypothesis that Joseph and Isi were the same man, we may conclude that he was a Babylonian, who studied first at Huzal, and later on, perhaps ca. 160, in Palestine, first with Simeon b. Gamaliel and Yosi b. Ḥalafta, and, finally, with Eleazar b. Shamua. We may conjecture that he returned to Babylonia to teach, for R. Ḥiyya and Rav were informed of his opinions[3],

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[1] W. Bacher, *Agadot HaTannaim*, II, ii, 71, n. 3.

[2] See also D. Hoffman, *Zur Einleitung*, p. 38; A. M. Hyman, *Toldot Tannaim* I, 151; J. Derenbourg, *Essai* p. 483, on Mehallel. The Tosafists discuss the question, see Yoma 52b, s.v. "He is Joseph the Babylonian." Of greatest importance is Mantel's discussion, in *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* pp. 107f., on the date of the Akavya incident. I do not agree with Mantel's dating of Isi b. Akavya = Isi of Huzal etc. in the period of Yavneh, because the sources quite obviously relate to a middle-second-century Tanna. See also J. S. Zuri, *Tekufat R. Yehudah HaNasi* (Paris 1931) p. 62 n. 2, on the relationship between the Babylonians Isi, Yosi b. Kifar, and Yosi b. Dosetai; and his *Rav*, p. 64, on Rav's studies with Isi b. Judah in Huzal. Rav studied with Eleazar b. Shamua also, and one may suppose that this was in Palestine, to which Eleazar returned after the post-Bar Kokhba repressions, rather than in Nisibis. If so, then Babylonians coming to Palestine in the later years of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel went to the academy of a teacher well known to them in Babylonia.

[3] On Rav's studies with Isi-Yosi, see Bab. Talmud Pesaḥim 113b. In Bab. Talmud Bava Meziah 92a, Rav comments on one of Isi's teachings. Note also Bab. Talmud Ḥullin 115b, "How do we know that meat in milk is forbidden", a problem that apparently interested Babylonian Tannaim, as we know from Rav's early experiences in Babylonia, Levi b. Sisi's discovery of pheasant with milk in Nisibis, and R. Judah the Prince's obvious concern with the problem. See also Bab. Talmud

and his return would possibly have been ca. 170-180, before the migration of the latter to Palestine.[1]

Niddah 36b, which indicates that long after Isi's death, some kind of tradition preserved the play of names Yosef, Yosi, Assi, etc.

[1] A very full discussion of sources on Isi b. Judah etc. will be found in Mordecai HaKohen, "On the Life of the Tanna Isi b. Judah", *Sinai* XXXIV, 1954, 231-40, 325-34, 407-23. After a thorough examination of all sources, Hakohen concludes that the several names do indeed refer to a single Tanna; he shows that sayings in the name of one frequently are repeated precisely in the name of another of the several names listed in the original beraita. But Hakohen goes on to hypothesize that Isi had several names "because he was a guerilla fighter against Rome", and from here concludes that each of the names signified military prowess. (Tangentially, he identifies "Isi" with "Hassid", and then cites the military achievements of the Hassidim in Maccabean times!) He interprets many of Isi's legal teachings by reference to the needs of guerilla fighters. One example will suffice: Isi taught that the law on Sabbath punishment covers any and all violations of the Sabbath on that particular day. Hakoken says that "this made it easier for the guerillas to violate the Sabbath". Hakohen likewise interprets numerous agadic sayings by reference to Isi's alleged revolutionary activities. For example (p. 328) he says that Isi's praise of R. Judah as "wise when he wants to be" meant that he was vacillating in his opinion on rebellion against Rome. Since this was probably Judah b. Ilai, who was either a very old man or dead by the time of Isi's sojourn in Palestine, I find Hakahen's "explanation" rather difficult. Hakohen supposes that Isi ben Judah was a leader of "one of the rebellions against Rome", though he does not tell us which one!

There is very little evidence that after the Bar Kokhba war, Tannaim supported anti-Roman military undertakings. I have suggested that a *political* motive may have been operative in R. Nathan's participation in the conspiracy against R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. But this is a far cry from actually engaging in guerilla activities. I do not for one instant believe that R. Nathan did. But since Hakohen makes no effort to reconstruct the history of the period, and makes no reference to the standard works, such as those of G. Allon and S. Krauss, I do not understand quite how he views the course of events. Indeed, one cannot attempt to 'refute' a proposition which ignores the canons of historical inquiry. In reconstructing the history of the Talmudic age, as of any other, one needs to reason as openly and simply as possible, in three stages. First, one must interpret sources to be certain we understand them; second, he must evaluate them to ascertain their historical usefulness if any; and finally, he must reconstruct events, based on those traditions which seem to contain relatively valuable information, and also on a wide range of historical data from all sources, not only the Jewish ones. Hakohen skips the first two steps, and only partly takes the third. While his discussion of Isi's alleged political opinions is very clever, and while he may have happened upon a valuable insight into Isi's life, he has failed to offer propositions which, in their present form, may be critically evaluated. I cannot propose a more adequate solution to the problem, but I believe that unsupported harmonization of all sayings and traditions by means of a single 'exegetical principle' is not, in the end, likely to yield credible and useful results.

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