THE FATHERS
ACCORDING TO RABBI NATHAN

A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY
ANTHONY J. SALDARRI

[Image]
A
Albeck
Alon, Mehqarim
Alon, Toledot

Abot de Rabbi Nathan, Version A

The Six Orders of the Mishnah (Hebrew text)

Studies in the History of Israel

The History of the Jews in Israel during the Period
of the Mishnah and Talmud

ARNA
ARNB
Aruch
B
Bacher

Abot de Rabbi Nathan, Version A

Abot de Rabbi Nathan, Version B

A. Kohut, Aruch Completum

Abot de Rabbi Nathan, Version B

Die Agada der Tannaiten, followed by volume
and page number

Brown-Driver-Briggs, A Hebrew and English
Lexicon

Ben Yehuda

Dictionary of the Hebrew Language, followed by
volume and page number

BerRab

Bereishit Rabbah

Biblical Hebrew

BH

Reference to his translation of Midrash on Psalms
or Pesikta Rabbati, depending on context

Braude

The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old
Testament

Essai sur l'histoire de la géographie de la Palestine

Derenbourg

Deuteronomy Rabbah, regular edition. Or Debarim
Rabbah, a new version edited from Ms. by
Lieberman

DtRab

Eisenstein

Otzar Midrashim

ExRab

Exodus Rabbah

Finkelstein, JBL 57 (1938)

Introductory Study to Pirke Abot

Finkelstein, Mabo

Introduction to the Treatises Abot and Abot of
Rabbi Nathan

G

Judah Goldin, The Fathers According to Rabbi
Nathan

GeseniusKC

Hebrew Grammar

Goldin, Talmud

The Living Talmud : The Wisdom of the Fathers
(translation of Pirke Abot)

Hyman, Toledot

The History of the Tannaim and Amoraim

Jastrow

A Dictionary of the Targumim

JE

The Jewish Encyclopedia
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<td>Jellinek</td>
<td>The Jerusalem Talmud, followed immediately by the abbreviation for a tractate, the chapter and halakah number and page number of the Venice edition</td>
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<td>PesRab</td>
<td>Pesikta Rabbati, quoted with the page number of the Friedmann Hebrew edition of Mandelbaum and translation of Brande</td>
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ABBREVIATIONS

Soneino

SongRab

Strack

T-A

Tan

TanBub

Taylor

Tos

Weiss, Dor

Wertheimer

Yalkut

The translation of the Babylonian Talmud published by the Soneino Press

Song of Songs Rabbah

Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash

J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck, Bereshit Rabbah

Tanhuma

Tanhuma according to the Buber edition

The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, quoted according to volume and page

Tosefts, followed by the tractate name and numbering according to Zuckermandel's edition

Dor Dor we Dorahw

Butte Midrashim

Yalkut Shimonl
The translation of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*, Version B, presented here will hopefully open up another Tannaitic text to a wide range of readers who do not read Mishnaic Hebrew. For the Hebraist the translation is an interpretation of a text which has been seldom studied in itself and distinctly from the traditional version of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*. The commentary will more often than not, open up matters for further study, rather than settle the many knotty problems connected with *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*. The problem which needs the most intensive study is, of course, the relationship of the two versions of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* to one another and to *Pirke Abot*. Much data and many comments on this problem are offered in the commentary but a synthetic study of the problem requires a separate monograph.

The work presented here was submitted in a slightly altered form to Yale University in candidacy for the PhD degree. I wish to thank first all those at Yale who helped and encouraged me during my years there. My thanks also to the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Bodleian Library and the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma, Italy for providing me promptly with copies of manuscript materials. Professor Jacob Neusner of Brown University, the editor of this series, kindly accepted this work for publication and provided me with practical advice and encouragement. To him and also to Loyola University, the Society of Jesus of New England, The Max Richter Foundation, Providence, Rhode Island and Roger L. Saldarini go thanks for contributing to part of the printing costs of this volume. Finally, I thank Professor Judah Goldin, now of the University of Pennsylvania, who directed my research and consistently provided me with valuable advice and information. He has discussed problems with me, read my manuscript and offered me dozens of suggestions, corrections and references. With his guidance and example I have come to love the study of these texts.

Anthony J. Saldarini, S.J.

New Orleans, Louisiana
September 18, 1973
INTRODUCTION

THE TRANSLATION

Over eighty years ago Solomon Schechter published a second version of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*¹ (The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan). This second version is clearly different from the traditional version of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* in content and in phrasing. Yet similarities in theme and structure show that the two versions are related. Since Schechter’s time no full translation or treatment of the second version of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* (henceforth referred to as ARNB) has been written. This volume provides that translation and commentary.

The translation aims at accurate and idiomatic English. Where an interpretation has been made or a very idiomatic rendering given, it is noted in the commentary. An occasional word or phrase has been added in parentheses. This is usually something clear in the Hebrew idiom or technical language which requires a fuller phrasing in English. If the clarification involves more than what it obvious, a note is provided. In a dialogue or a complex sentence where antecedents or referents of personal pronouns become obscure in English, I have inserted the name of the speaker or referent. I have used the RSV for Scriptural quotes, unless the Rabbi’s understanding of the Hebrew requires a different translation. Since ARNB is a commentary on *Pirke Abot* (henceforth PA), it contains within it a version of PA. Insofar as this version of PA coincides with the version found in the Mishnah, I have used Judah Goldin’s translation of PA with some changes of style or phrasing. Where clauses or whole sayings differ, I have made my own translation.

MANUSCRIPTS

This volume does not include a critical edition of ARNB. Schechter’s edition was the first attempt to critically edit a rabbinic text, but new

¹ *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*, edited from Manuscripts with an Introduction, Notes and Appendices by Solomon Schechter (Vienna, 1887). I have used the 1967 reprint by Philipp Feldheim, Publisher with over 50 printing errors corrected. Schechter has Versions A and B in parallel columns with notes at the bottom of the page.

materials and methods demand that his work be reviewed and corrected. Louis Finkelstein has promised us the much needed critical edition.\(^3\)

I have followed Schechter's text in general, with variations from it noted in the commentary. I have utilized Finkelstein's Maḥo as a rich source of corrections. In difficult places I have consulted copies of manuscripts, sometimes changing Schechter's text and sometimes noting the variants in the commentary. The manuscripts are few and often difficult. I have no doubt that the eye of an expert in modern textual criticism will discern many better readings and offer better emendations of impossible passages than the suggestions found in Schechter.

I will briefly identify all the manuscripts and sources which I consulted. Finkelstein describes them in greater detail in his Maḥo and charts out a stemma for them (p. 211). Schechter also describes them in his Introduction (pp. xxix-xxx).

Ms. R (Romi): This is a Vatican manuscript (Assemani #303, folios 195-221). It formed the basis of Schechter's text.

Ms. P (Parma): This is a manuscript found in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma, Italy (deRossi #327, the eleventh work in the Ms.). Some readings from this manuscript were copied out for Schechter and included by him in Appendix 3.

Ms. H (Halberstam): This manuscript is found in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It is Neubauer 2635 (Ms. Heb. c. 24), folios 1-334. The whole work is the Mogen Abot, a commentary on Version A of Abot de Rabbi Nathan by Yom Tov ben Moses Shahalon (17th century). In it he quotes extensively from ARNB, using mostly the introductory phrase ms'yf mish'ar'it (I found another text). Ms. H does not contain the whole of ARNB, but it does include many extensive citations.

Ms. N (Neve Shalom): This work has been printed from cod. Heb. Munich 222 in Neveh Shalom I by Solomon Taussig (Munich, 1872). Long sections from ARNB are included among the selections in this book.

Ms. G-1 (Geniza): This is one page of manuscript from the Geniza materials-Neubauer-Cowley 22, 2674 (Ms. Heb. d. 45), folio 70. It covers part of Schechter, pp. 19-20 (Chs. 6 and 7).

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\(^3\) Louis Finkelstein, Maḥo le-Masechet Abot ve-Abot d'Rabbi Nathan (Introduction to the Treatises Abot and Abot of Rabbi Nathan) (New York, 1950), English summary, p. xxvi. He has gathered many materials and worked out the relations of the Ms. to
Ms. G-2 (Geniza) : Neubauer-Cowley 9, 2634 (Ms. Heb. C. 18), folios 23-27. It goes from p. 120 to p. 128 with a large gap (probably a page containing Chs. 43-46 has been lost).

MhM (Menorat Ha-Maor) : Schechter quoted from the manuscript of this extensive collection of thematically arranged quotes. I use the edition of H. G. Enelow in four volumes (New York, 1930-32).

MhM quotes from both Version A and Version B of Abot de Rabbi Nathan (henceforth ARN). These citations are indexed in Enelow's edition.

Other authors have cited ARNB, but not as extensively as Ms. N and MhM. I used the Sheiltot in Ch. 19 of ARNB. For other citations of ARNB and references to ARNB, see Schechter's Introduction, pp. viii-xvi.

As noted above, Schechter followed Ms. R. He includes in brackets in his text readings from either Ms. H or Ms. N (mostly these readings are commented on in the notes). In Appendix 3 he has readings from Ms. P and corrections. He also refers occasionally to MhM in his notes. I have always taken his comments into account when adjudicating a difficult text.

When I compare the Hebrew of the Mishnaic Tractate Pirke Abot to ARNB, I use the edition of Albeck-Yalon.

THE COMMENTARY

The commentary is in the form of notes to the translation, chapter by chapter. Notes sometimes refer to individual words or phrases or to whole paragraphs. ARNB is referred to by chapter and by page in Schechter's edition. In the translation, the beginning of each page in Schechter's edition is noted in the margin.

The commentary aims primarily to explain difficulties in ARNB itself. Comparative materials from ARNA and from many other sources are noted and often utilized to explain difficulties. The structure of ARNB and the relationships of parts to one another is pointed out. Louis Finkelstein's theories about the original form and structure of PA and ARN in both versions are constantly consulted.

I am acutely aware that detailed studies of individual sections of

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4 Henoeh Albeck and Henoeh Yalon, Sīḥa Sīḥa Ha-miḏnah, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1958.
ARNB and especially comparisons with ARNA are imperative. A beginning has been made by Finkelstein in his *Mabo* and by Judah Goldin in a series of articles often referred to in the commentary. This commentary contains further material useful for such a study and makes some comments which contribute to this task. But the bulk of the work remains to be done. The composite nature of ARNB makes overall conclusions about the work’s character, composition, tendencies and themes very difficult. Hopefully a basis has been laid for further work in this area.

**The Overall Character of ARNB**

ARN is a unique literary work. It does not fit precisely into traditional categories of Jewish Literature. As a further complication, ARNB itself is a composite of several parts which differ one from the other. As a consequence no one term or category can characterize the whole work.* ARNB has been categorized with the minor tractates of the Talmud because it usually precedes them in the Talmud. Yet, in structure and content it is very different from them. Scholars who have written about ARN have disagreed on the name by which they characterized it.†

I divide ARNB into three sections and categorize each. (This tripartite division is not my final division of it. See below under "Mode of Composition".) I will first use descriptive terms to characterize each of the three parts and then compare each of the parts with the nearest categories of traditional Jewish literature.

Chs. 1-30 of ARNB are mostly a commentary on PA 1-2. Each saying or part of a saying is followed by one or several fairly brief comments, interpretations of Scripture, parables, or stories. These comments center around the theme of the saying or some difficulty connected with understanding the saying. Many of the chapters have either brief

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* See the different names Schechter gives to the four parts which he distinguishes (pp. xvi-xvii).
† Zunz (Fortschr., p. 198) calls ARN a Baraita. Several scholars characterize it as a Tossefta; Weiss, *Nov.* II, p. 224; Strack, p. 73; D. Hoffmann, "Die erste Mischna und die Controversen der Tannaïm," Jahres-Berichte der Rabbiner-Seminare zu Berlin, 181-82, p. 27. Schechter (pp. xvi-xvii) calls Chs. 1-30 a midrash, Chs. 31-35 a mishnah, and Chs. 36-48 a mishnah and tosefta. Goldin develops the idea that ARN is a midrash to PA (pp. xviii-xix). But in that it includes a different version of PA and has a different organization, ARN may be looked on as a tosefta "for in style and composition if often supplements the material of PA" as the Tosefta supplements the Mishnah (p. xvi).
or substantial digressions based upon the Scriptural verse being used in commentary or based upon the sage being quoted or upon some related theme.

Since Chs. 1-30 are mainly a commentary, either Midrash or Talmud spring to mind as fit categories for them. I prefer to characterize Chs. 1-30 overall as a midrash. True, the commentary is on a mishnah and therefore similar to the Talmud. But it lacks the close and extensive argumentation (usually halakic) of the Talmud. It is more brief than the Talmud and closer to the original text being commented on and to the theme brought up by that text. Furthermore, in contrast to the Talmud ARNB is written in Hebrew, not Aramaic and the materials contained in it are Tannaitic, not Amoraite.

ARN is like a Midrash in that it makes mostly brief comments on the text and uses Scriptural verses extensively in its explanations and proofs. It is organized in a way similar to the expositional midrashim, Bereshit Rabbah and Lamentations Rabbah, rather than according to theme, as in the homiletical midrashim. In addition, it contains only three comments in the names of Amoraim.  

ARNB in Chs. 1-30 (and in the following chapters, too) does not manifest a consciousness different from that of PA, on which it comments. That is to say, the authors or compilers of ARN show no consciousness that they are commenting on an earlier, canonical text, as do the authors of the Talmud in respect to the Mishnah or the authors of the Midrash in respect to Scripture. They do not reconcile the seemingly contradictory statements of sages, as the Talmud does nor show extraordinary reverence for the text as does the Midrash for scripture.

Chs. 31-35 contain a good part of the sayings from PA 3-4 along with a number of other sayings by the same sages and their contemporaries or sayings similar in theme. The collection itself as it exists in Chs. 31-35 has its own structure and organization, as do the collections in Chs. 3-4 of PA. This collection does not distinguish between those sayings which belong to PA and those which do not. Consequently, Chs. 31-35 are not really a commentary on PA but more like a Tosefta containing additional material parallel to or at variance with the Mishnah. Unlike the Tosefta, however, Chs. 31-35 contain the Mishnah itself as an integral and equal part of the collection. If we did not have PA as a separate

* Only three Amoraim are cited in ARNB: Abba in Ch. 25 (p. 52); Rabbi Jannai in Ch. 33 (p. 73) = PA 4:15; and Rabbi Jeremiah in Ch. 38 (p. 91).
source, we could not distinguish its sayings from the other sayings in Chs. 1-35. This phenomenon probably occurs because ARNB was begun and at least roughly in shape before the Mishnah of Rabbi Judah the Prince was formulated and promulgated (c. C.E. 200). Or perhaps it reflects the feeling that, while the normative and non-normative halaka had to be clearly distinguished (in Mishnah and Tosefta), haggadic materials need not be so carefully set apart and orchestrated.

Chs. 36-48 contain most of the material from PA 5. Almost all the sayings are "Numerical Sayings", that is, groups of things introduced by a formula which gives the number of items to be contained in the list or group. The sayings in this section are organized by number and by theme and show evidence of various collections having been brought together. As in the previous part of ARNB, the material from PA is not distinguished. This third section also contains some commentary similar to that found in Chs. 1-30.

Can ARN as a whole be given one name or put in one category of literature. I think we are more accurate in characterizing each of its three parts, as was done above. But, if we must give it one name from the categories of traditional Jewish literature, then the best name is midrash. In contemporary terminology, commentary is perhaps the most adequate descriptive term. ARN attempts to elucidate the meaning of the sayings contained in PA. In order to accomplish this purpose, it adds and collects other sayings which are similar to the materials already there. The commentary maintains its general purpose throughout, but it contains many digressions, identifiable units of material, and interpretations of Scripture which are peripheral and cannot be brought under any one category.

**AUTHOR**

Who is Rabbi Nathan in the title "The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan" (*Abot de Rabbi Nathan*)? Did he actually write "The Fathers"? Schechter begins his introduction with a quotation from a twelfth century French scholar, 10 who wonders why ARN is named after Rabbi Nathan. Sometimes a work is named for the first sage mentioned in it. But in Version A Rabbi Nathan is only the third cited. 11 In Version B Rabbi Nathan is first quoted in Ch. 34 (p. 76).

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9 See the section on "Date".
10 Rabbi Jacob bar Simeon on p. vi of Schechter's introduction.
Modern scholars have generally doubted Rabbi Nathan’s authorship and have recognized that ARN is composed of several discrete parts with many more additions made at different stages. Consequently, the concept of one author of a unified whole has been rejected, though Rabbi Nathan may have a place in some stage of the formation of ARN.

Zunz holds that Rabbi Nathan probably authored the Baraita of Rabbi Nathan and the Treatise of the 49 Middot, the two basic collections in ARN.\(^{12}\) Weiss doubts that Rabbi Nathan authored ARN. He quotes the Mechila to Ex. 18:27 (Lauterbach, II, p. 186) that Rabbi Nathan’s teaching was lost; he further cites Zunz and also argues that ARN is of later date than Rabbi Nathan.\(^{13}\) Frankel suggests that Rabbi Nathan, whose name is associated with numbered lists, probably wrote PA 5 and also the Treatise of the 49 Middot.\(^{14}\) Schechter speculates that the form of PA found in ARN (as distinct from that found in the Mishnah of Rabbi Judah the Prince) may have been written by Rabbi Nathan.\(^{15}\)

Finkelstein sees ARN as made up of a number of collections, some from the first century and some later. Since he sees a Shammaite tendency in the work, especially in the first collection (Chs. 1-27 of ARNB), he allows that Rabbi Nathan, a member of the School of Ishmael, which had a Shammaite tendency, might have had a hand in forming ARN.\(^{16}\) Goldin says succinctly, “Nothing can be said with certainty about the identity of the ‘Nathan’ in the title of ARN or about the exact nature of his relation to this work.” Nathan might be the Babylonian, Judah the Prince’s contemporary, or he might be some unknown sage.\(^{17}\)

In the end we are driven to consider how and when ARN was composed. If, as seems likely from modern research, it is compiled of several collections with many additions, then we must trace the deve-

\(^{13}\) Weiss, *Dor,* II, p. 225.
\(^{15}\) Schechter, p. xxvi.
\(^{16}\) See Finkelstein, *JBL* 57 (1938), p. 16 and for the late Shammaite tendencies, Akiba, p. 297.
lopment of the tradition and any possible interventions of individuals or schools of thought. And yet, we are left with the title "The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan." We do not know whether this name was given to the work at a late date, or at a time close to when it was composed. And we are not sure whether there is perhaps some real significance to the title which escapes us.

MODE OF COMPOSITION

Because we have two versions of ARN (and three of PA) we are able to trace at least some of the stages of ARN’s development relative to each other. Both versions of ARN are a commentary on a text which we call PA. The texts of PA found in the two versions of ARN and in the mishnaic PA differ in many striking ways and yet are still the same work. The forms of PA found in the two versions of ARN are very similar to each other, but differ in several respects from the mishnaic tractate PA. The mishnaic PA has additions and a structure which suggest that it is later than the text of PA found in ARN.

Both similarities and differences between the two versions of ARN and the three of PA are extensive and strong. They suggest that all versions began as a unified whole which gave a structure and basic content to the work. This agreement in structure and content (see below) argues strongly for this early, unified (oral?) stage. Then, ARNA, ARNB and PA broke away from each other and developed further with additions, subtractions and reshaping.

The wording of PA, found in all three versions of PA, is substantially identical. It must have been stabilized early, before the versions were each able to take a course of their own. The mishnaic PA could be added to and rearranged, but the elements common to all three remained almost identical. As with the other halakot which were compiled to form the Mishnah, the sayings of PA were transmitted exactly.¹⁹

Not so the two versions of ARN. Even when they have the same

¹⁸ PA is used in two senses, according to context. In its specific sense it refers to the mishnaic tractate as we have it in Rabbi Judah the Prince’s Mishnah. In its wider sense it refers both to that version and to two other closely related versions of the same tractate, found respectively in ARNA and ARNB. L. Finkelstein has thoroughly analyzed the relations of many passages in these three versions in his Mabo (pp. 4-5 and passim).

¹⁹ See Henoch Albeck, Mabo le-Mishnah. Jerusalem, 1959, Ch. 6, pp. 99ff. for the idea that previous collections of mishnatayot were used in Rabbi’s Mishnah and taken
interpretation or story in the same relative place, the two versions seldom achieve verbal identity. This argues to the conclusion that the themes and items were established but that the exact wording was not. Consequently, ARNA and ARNB broke away from one another and developed, while the commentary was still being transmitted (and formed) orally. This conclusion agrees with the evidence that the Mishnah was long transmitted orally because writing down anything but Scripture was considered inappropriate.

Further evidence for this oral mode of composition of ARN can be gleaned from its structure. Following Finkelstein, I distinguish five major sections in ARN and PA:

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<td>Cha. 1-13</td>
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<td>Cha. 31-32</td>
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<td>Cha. 33-35</td>
<td>Cha. 23-30</td>
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<td>5. Ch. 5</td>
<td>Cha. 38-48</td>
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These divisions occur in all three works, even though different forces caused many changes in internal structure and in transitions. If they had begun as written works, then much more verbal similarity would have been preserved. However, the oral transmission of a gradually diverging tradition allows for a common structure with which they all began and for changes in the wording of the common material, addition of further material and rearrangement of contents. Yet, with all the variety in the two versions of ARN, both versions, all the way through, have many of the same interpretations in the same relative place.

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20 Schechter (pp. xxii) held that there was one original written text which scribes and copyists changed and added to. But the changes seem too extensive for the development of a written text. For the thesis that two versions developed orally, see Finkelstein, JBL 57 (1938), pp. 16-17.

21 Lieberman (Hellenism, pp. 83-90) summarizes the evidence for the Mishnah. See Finkelstein, JBL 57 (1938), p. 17, n. 9 for the late writing down of the Tannaitic midrashim.

22 See Finkelstein, Ma’o, n. 3 and the whole organization of his book. In JBL 57 (1938) he dealt only with four of these original collections and just mentioned the fifth and several others in a note. Schechter combines four and five (they are similar in form). See p. xvi.

23 Finkelstein (Ma’o, pp. 111-12) speculates, with some degree of probability, that the haggadic nature of PA stimulated many to form popular interpretations and stories
Because Version A and Version B are different in many sections, they must have developed for a significant period of time separately. We could increase our comprehension of ARN if we were able to isolate clear stages in its growth. However, I see no consistent phenomena throughout ARNB which allow use to separate out two or more different groups of matter which can be assigned to different stages. In other words, I do not find one kind of interpretation (of an early date) running through the whole and then another kind of saying from a later stage inserted alongside the first. I distinguish here the idea of strata which extend throughout the whole work from the collections of material isolated by Finkelstein. The latter are limited to one section of ARN. The former would be common to all sections and aid in dating and analyzing the work as a whole.

When I consider the process of ARNB’s formation, I do find evidence for a time when it began to exist as a commentary to PA with its basic structure and then a time when it was substantially complete (minus a few passages, possibly). These two stages are related to the similarities and differences between the two versions of ARN, as described above, and will be further elucidated below in the section on “Date”. Even so, these two “moments” can only be approximately defined and imprecisely dated. They do not give an adequately detailed picture of ARN’s development.

Let us now turn to the opinions of other scholars. Schechter suggests that ARN originally arose as a commentary to PA in an earlier form. ARN collected haggadic comments on the popular sayings contained in PA.\footnote{Schechter, pp. xxy-xxvi. Finkelstein, Mebo, pp. 111-12 agrees that this dynamic was at work producing interpretations.} He holds that there was an original (written) ARN, which we no longer have. From it, two other forms of ARN were composed, first ARNA and then ARNB. The two versions we have now have been added to and changed extensively. ARNA, since it was more current, was changed more. Consequently, ARNB is closer to the original ARNB than ARNA is to the original ARNA.\footnote{Schechter, pp. xx and xxiv. Evidence is presented to prove only that B, as we have it, is less corrupt than A. That is, B is closer to its original form than A is to its own original form. No proof is presented for Schechter’s other contention (on p. xx) that ARNA is earlier than ARNB. Presumably this meant that ARNA was composed (using the lost ARN, a written document that was the origin of our two documents) before
L. Finkelstein holds that PA and both versions of ARN developed orally and he links their growth and form closely to one another. ARNB has more often, but not in every case, preserved the more original form of the tradition. PA-ARN is made of individual collections, according to Finkelstein, some original to the structure and some added. Using these collections as a framework, Finkelstein is able to analyse a variety of phenomena and to establish an approximate relative chronology for the different collections.

**Language**

The Hebrew of ARN, both A and B, reads like standard Mishnaic Hebrew of the Tannaitic period. It contains a few Aramaic sentences and is studded with Greek terms, common to Tannaitic midrashim.

In the commentary I explain odd expressions, technical terms and unusual idioms. Greek and Latin words are traced, usually with the help of Krauss or Lieberman. I do not, however, make a thorough linguistic study of ARNB. Such a study awaits, first, a thorough critical edition of the text. Then, a careful study of vocabulary, morphology, and syntax must be carried out, in comparison with other texts. Such a study is treacherous, since fine points of style and nuances of usage are hard to isolate rigidly. What may be a characteristic expression or a study is treacherous, since fine points of style and nuances of usage are hard to isolate rigidly. What may be a characteristic expression or form of one period in Hebrew literature may still occur in others. J. N. Epstein has studied the terminology of the Mishnah and midrashim, but even there the criteria are complex and often unclear.

The manuscripts themselves impede us further. Many are poorly the traditional version and underwent greater development and textual corruption. He may imply, in other words, that ARNA had a head start.

Note, incidentally, that Finkelstein (JBL 57 [1938], p. 17, n. 9) states incorrectly that Scheecchter considered ARNB to be the "more original" version.  


27 *JBL* 57 (1938), p. 15, n. 5. He analyzes these collections in the article and in *Mebo*.  


25 Krauss wrote *Lokaxioter* and Lieberman wrote *Greek and Hellenism*, plus numerous articles.

copied with many errors. Furthermore, the style and forms of the Hebrew have been evened out in many cases so that characteristics of the Hebrew of a certain place or period are lost to what is more familiar to the copyist. E. Y. Kutscher has taught us that we can only precisely describe, locate and date Hebrew forms and syntax when we work from reliable manuscripts which have undergone little corruption.

The language, then, cannot at present precisely locate ARN in time and place. ARNB is not rife with expressions found in the later midrashic collections. The bulk of ARNB's language and style is standard Mishnaic Hebrew which neither proves nor denies an early or late date for it.

**Date**

In dating ARN we must attend to the stages that it went through, as outlined in the section on "Mode of Composition". ARN probably developed orally toward its written form over a significant period of time. Parts of ARN probably joined the main text at different times, and so if any individual comment is to be dated, it must be studied in itself, in relation to ARN and in comparison to parallels in other rabbinic literature. Even then, absolute dates are few and evidence for relative dating unsure.

Because ARN is a unique class of commentary (see the section on its "Character" above), it cannot be connected closely to any other type of rabbinic literature and dated as a whole by comparison with it. For example, we know when the Mishnah received its final form (substantially) and we also know approximately when the Talmuds were completed. The halakot of the Tannaitic Midrashim are quoted in such a way in the Talmuds that they were most probably completed around the time of the formation of the Mishnah. Bereshit Rabbah and Lamentations Rabbah have much common material with other midrashim and by a series of close comparisons can be shown to be relatively earlier than them. None of these methods of relative dating work with ARN.

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83 Weiss lists only a few late expressions in A (Dor, II, p. 225, n. 1) and they could have come midrash.

Since ARN precedes the minor, non-canonical tractates in the Talmud, it has often been classified with them and also dated with them roughly to the seventh through ninth centuries. However, such a classification does not do justice to ARN and does not prove its date.

ARNB, Ch. 19, contains three stories, two of which also occur in the Sheiltot of Rab Ahai Gaon who flourished in the middle of the eight century. The Sheiltot has the stories as recounted in ARNB, and not as recounted in Shab 127b where variants of the three stories occur in the same order as in ARNB. From this we can conclude that the Sheiltot probably quotes ARNB. This provides us with an upper limit for the existence of ARNB.

We do not have much further hard data which allow us to date ARN. We may compare various materials in ARN with their parallels in other literature and attempt to see if one version preceded another. This method can sometimes give us an approximate date for a saying or story. But many of these materials probably existed orally as independent units and an earlier version of a story may be preserved by a work that is on the whole later. Thus, the data culled do not allow us to attribute ARN, as a whole, to a specific period. All arguments based on internal data and comparisons (especially when many of the comparative materials themselves have no absolute date) are only possible or probable. Factors unknown to us may have caused the formation of a work such as ARN, or part of it, especially since our knowledge of the first few centuries of our era is so scanty.

Keeping these warnings in mind, I would like to argue that ARN, in an early form, existed as a commentary to PA before the formation of the Mishnah in C.E. 200. Both versions of ARN, as we have them, have as a core a form of PA different from that adopted by Rabbi Judah the Prince in C.E. 200 when he promulgated his one, official Mishnah. If a commentary to PA had been begun after Rabbi Judah the Prince had promulgated his official Mishnah, then surely the commentary would have been built around this authoritative tractate. But we can see clearly that ARN, in both its versions, is a commentary on an earlier and less extensive form of PA. And further, this early form of PA survived alongside the official, later version of PA, some-
thing which happened with no other Mishnaic tractate. The commentary already had its overall structure, based on the earlier form of PA, and so could not be changed. And it in turn protected its version of PA from suppression in the face of the official form of PA. These arguments only pertain to ARN as probably existing with approximately the same structure as it has now. It may have been in a much earlier and less extensive form. The argument does not automatically allow us to prove that any individual passage of ARN is from the Tannaitic period.

This kind of argument is extremely dangerous because it is based on logic and the few facts available. Often factors which we do not take into consideration or about which we have no knowledge could have existed and been of crucial importance. Yet, in view of the phenomena and the evidence before us, this argument seems to me at least possible and reasonable.

One objection to this argument is that PA, since it was a haggadic rather than halakic tractate of the Mishnah (the only such one), might have been allowed to exist in another form after the formation of the Mishnah. If this is the case, ARN might have been begun after C.E. 200 and might have been structured around a non-official (and perhaps more familiar or popular) version of PA. We know that the Rabbis were much more careful with halakic material than haggadic; they preserved its wording more carefully, recorded accurately the sages to whom it was attributed, and distinguished clearly authoritative and dissident teachings. Rabbi Judah the Prince’s official Mishnah drew upon and replaced many mishnah collections, which then were lost. A haggadic tractate like PA might have survived because it was not as crucial as the halakic tractates. Yet, it would still be odd if a commentary, and not just one, but two, were written on a non-canonical form of PA after the official one was accepted.

What is the earliest date that ARN could have existed with the structure outlined in the section on “Mode of Composition”. Since

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25 For research which shows that earlier collections of mishnayot were made and then assimilated into later ones and lost, see Henoch Albeck, Moab le-Mishnah (Jerusalem, 1969), especially chapters 4-6; and J. N. Epstein, Moab le-Nasah Ha-Mishnah and Moab’ot le-Sifrei Ha-Tanaim. Epstein studies variations in versions and texts, terminology and other minutiae which allow him to see the stages in composition of the Mishnah and Tosefta.

26 Both Schechter, pp. xxv-xxvi and Finkelstein, Moab, pp. 111-12 see ARN beginning as a group of comments on the popular haggadot contained in PA. Its non-halakic
Rabbi Akiba and the generation after him play a large part in the comments on various sayings, approximately C.E. 160 is probably the earliest possible date for the existence of ARN as an organized (though incomplete) whole. But we can by no means prove that ARN did come into existence at this time.

Finkelstein dates the five documents underlying PA to the first or second century by a meticulous examination of details of the three versions of PA. Occasional materials in ARNA or B are shown to be early (see Mabo, pp. 21-24), but such evidence is not plentiful. Finkelstein further speculates, using the title of ARN, that Rabbi Nathan, who had been Ab Beth Din under Simeon ben Gamaliel II, might have composed ARN in reaction against Rabbi Judah the Prince because Rabbi ignored the office of Ab Beth Din and Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, who had been Ab Beth Din (JBL 57 (1938), p. 28).

Older authors dated ARNA as a whole to a fairly late date. They were seeking the date when ARN was finally completed and were not distinguishing stages in its formation. Zunz put its final compilation after Talmudic times, noting several late passages.\textsuperscript{37}

Weiss refers to Zunz and agrees with him. He lists some expressions and comments that he judges come from Amoraic times.\textsuperscript{38} Weiss further classifies ARN with the Tosefta, which he also considers to be very late.

Even if we admit that certain passages and comments were added as late as the sixth or seventh century, ARN could have been substantially completed and known by name much earlier. The work cannot be simply dated as a whole by a few passages.\textsuperscript{39} If an overall tendency could be discovered running through it, then that would suggest a date for at least one of its stages of development.

Schechter feels that ARN arose as a popular haggadic commentary on an early version of PA and finds that it probably had more influence than PA or Rabbi Judah the Prince. He finds thirty passages in A (some of which are in B) which occur in the Babylonian Talmud and in no Tannaitic sources. He speculates that ARN may have been the Tannaitic source of these passages. On the other hand, Schechter does

\textsuperscript{37} Zunz, Fortlage, p. 109 and note d.
\textsuperscript{38} Weiss, Dor, II, p. 225, especially nn. 1 and 2.
\textsuperscript{39} Zunz's data from ARNA, repeated by Weiss, is very meagre and cannot date the substantial completion of ARNA. Furthermore, Schechter (p. xxxv, n. 6) refutes one of Zunz's late passages. Dating a passage early or late often devolves into a very subjective problem.
not conclude to this firmly because any or all of the passages could have been added to ARN later from the Talmud or both may have found them in a common source.\textsuperscript{40} Schechter concludes that we cannot date the text (he seems to mean the text as we have it), though he does put its origin early, in the late Tannaitic or early Amoraic period.

Two modern commentators date ARN soon after the Tannaitic period. S. Lieberman mentions in passing that ARN was compiled in the middle of the third century.\textsuperscript{41} J. Goldin writes that the contents and language demand a date not later than the third or fourth century or at the utmost shortly thereafter.\textsuperscript{42} Either of these opinions fit well with the picture of ARN’s development given above.

\textbf{Place}

Since both versions of ARN cite only Tannaim and Tannaitic stories (with few exceptions), the setting for these stories and incidents is necessarily the land of Israel. If ARN, as was argued in the previous section, was begun during the Tannaitic period, then it must almost certainly have originated in Palestine. Even if it came into existence later, it contains so little about Babylon that we must suspect Palestine as its source.

As we look at the sayings, stories and interpretations more closely, we find that much of the material is incorporated into either the Babylonian Talmud or the Palestinian Talmud or both. That is to say, ARN does not contain a fund of material unique to either Palestine or Babylonia. On the other hand, the parables and some stories reflect a Hellenistic-Roman setting, rather than a Parthian-Persian one. This argues for Palestine.

In ARNB four passages mention Babylon, but no significant tendency emerges. Ch. 48 (p. 132) connects foolishness with Babylon. The remark is part of a series of characteristics connected with peoples and places. Probably the remark reflects a Palestinian folk opinion about Babylonians. Ch. 27 (pp. 55-56) has a story in which a donkey

\textsuperscript{40} Schechter, pp. xxv-xxvi. Even detailed analysis can delude us. First we need critical texts which show us that chance odd variant which may explain all the others (see Finkelstein in his Mabo and other work for this method). Secondly, we may lack an essential collection or source from which all drew and which we cannot reconstruct.

driver considers himself lucky not to have come up from Babylon to Jerusalem the way scholars (in this case Hillel) do. But Hillel is able to answer him. The attack is not very sharp, anyway; the preeminence of Palestine over Babylonia for authoritative learning was freely admitted in Hillel’s time. Even if the story was created later, it does not reflect a sharp polemic over this issue.\(^{43}\) The story about Hillel’s patience (Ch. 29; p. 60) mentions incidentally that Babylonians have long heads. This seems to be a stereotype, and it comes in a series of stereotypes. It does not seem to have pejorative intent. Finally, Ch. 43 (p. 119) has a passage about the rivers and the scholars’ academy which continue for five hundred years. This passage may obliquely refer to Babylonia, but no tendency is clear.\(^{44}\)

The overall impression given by both versions is a setting in Palestine and Palestine was probably the place of origin of all the traditions. The development of two different oral traditions, resulting in written versions, does imply two places or two circles where each of the versions could develop separately. But no distinct contrast between the two suggests two different places (Judea-Galilee; Palestine-Babylon) or schools (Shammai-Hillel; pro or anti-patriarch).

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\(^{43}\) Many sages came from Babylon to Israel to study, such as Abba Arika. There has been a long dispute about whether Babylonian sages were given full ordination by Judah the Prince and just what different kinds of ordination and appointment included. See Rabbi Joshua ben Levi’s statement in Sanh 14 a: “There is no semikhah outside the Land of Israel.” Hugo Mantel discusses this complex question and all the texts in “Ordination and Appointment in the Period of the Temple,” _HTR_ 57 (1964), 325-46.

ARNA Ch. 28 (p. 85; G p. 116) has a sharp attack on Babylon. It says that scholars deteriorate when they leave the Land of Israel. It may be a polemical statement set at a time (the third or fourth centuries?) when scholars were deserting Israel for Babylon and Israel’s influence was waning.

\(^{44}\) ARNA Ch. 26 (p. 82; G p. 111) has a striking passage where burial in Babylon is equivalent to burial in Israel and burial in Israel is equivalent to burial under the altar. The overall effect is to raise the esteem of Babylon, but not at the expense of Israel. Perhaps this passage could be Babylonian.

Weiss ( _DiR_ II, p. 225) says that ARNA was probably written by a Palestinian in Babylon. He fits this into his scheme of dating, but offers no detailed proof.
SIMEON THE RIGHTEOUS WAS AMONG THE LAST OF THE GREAT ASSEMBLY.¹ HE USED TO SAY: ON THREE THINGS THE WORLD STANDS—ON THE TORAH, ON THE TEMPLE SERVICE, AND ON ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS.²

And so, you find that the ten tribes were exiled precisely because of the sin of neglect of Torah,³ as Scripture says: "Therefore my people go into exile for want of knowledge... Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,

¹ For the identity and dating of Simeon the Righteous see George F. Moore, "Simon the Righteous," in Jerus. Studies in Memory of Israel Abrahams (1927), pp. 348-64. He was Simeon II, high priest about B.C. 200.

² For a summary of views on the nature of the Great Assembly and a good attempt at solving this vexing problem, see Hugo Mantel, "The Nature of the Great Synagogue," HTR 60 (1967), 69-91. Opinions range from that of a continuous body similar to the later Sanhedrin to a couple of meetings of officials and leaders at critical junctures in the nation's history.

PA and ARNA read: "The last of the men of the Great Assembly" while B has only: "The last of the Great Assembly". Cf. PA 1:2; A p. 18 (G p. 32). Since Simeon is of the Great Assembly and the Torah has already been handed to them, Simeon is not said to have received it.

³ For the original meaning of this saying, before it was reinterpreted by Johanan ben Zakkai, see Goldin, "Three Pillars." Goldin shows that in his saying Simeon meant the books of the Torah, the Temple Service and acts of piety (that is, the commandments governing men's relation to one another). And he probably referred to them as the things on which this age (οίκων in its Biblical meaning) stood.

The saying recurs later in B (Ch. 30, p. 67, l. 30) in the name of Rabbi Judah. Rabbi Judah was just quoted at the end of the previous chapter concerning a trio of things on which the world stands. Perhaps this type of saying became connected with his name and so Simeon's saying would then be attributed to him. Even if this were so, it would be odd that a famous saying such as Simeon's would be substituted. Finkelstein (Mabo, p. 72) notes this strange mix-up and suggests that Ch. 30 originally contained the saying of Rabbi Judah which is found at the end of Ch. 4. Because this saying was so strange, someone substituted Rabbi Simeon's saying there.

³ First the author interprets the word Torah; later in this chapter he will interpret the Temple Service; and in Ch. 8 he interprets the third phrase of the saying, acts of loving kindness.

As an example of how all depends on the Torah, we see what happened to Israel when it forsook the Torah. First, the northern kingdom of Israel, which was exiled in B.C. 721, is dealt with in this paragraph; then the southern kingdom, which was exiled in B.C. 586. After them, Jerusalem and the land are said to go into exile.
so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust; for they have rejected the Torah of the Lord of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel (Is. 5:13 & 24)."

And so you find that the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were exiled precisely because of the sin of neglect of Torah, as Scripture says: "Thus says the Lord, 'For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,' Why! Because they have rejected the Torah of the Lord, and have not kept his statutes... (Amos 2:4)." It says further: "So I will send fire upon Judah and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem (Amos 2:5)."

And so you find that Jerusalem was destroyed precisely because of the sin of neglect of Torah, as Scripture says: "Who gave up Jacob to the spoiler, and Israel to the robbers?" Why! "Was it not the Lord against whom we have sinned, in whose ways they would not walk, and whose Torah they would not obey (Is. 42:24)?" Consequently, "he poured upon him the heat of his anger... (Is. 42:25)."

And so you find that the land (of Israel) went into exile precisely because of the sin of neglect of Torah, as Scripture says: "Therefore, hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them... behold, I am bringing evil upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not given heed to my words; and as for my Torah, they have rejected it (Jer. 6:18-19)."

And in addition, Scripture says: "Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of the Lord spoken,

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4 Is. 5:13 mentions exile and knowledge. Verse 24 adds the notion of rejecting the Torah. What does neglect of Torah mean? Both neglect of study and of practice seems to be implied by the Scriptural expression "lism'as tōrāt YHWH," as found in context in this verse and those following. No clear emphasis is placed on either study or practice. In A [p. 18; G p. 32], on the contrary, study of Torah replaces the burnt offerings (which can no longer be offered since the Temple was destroyed). Naturally, A does not imply a devaluation of obedience; nevertheless, study is emphasized. This may fit the thematic tendency of A to emphasize Torah and B to stress practice (see Goldin, "Two Versions").

Version A uses Hos. 6:6 to interpret "the Torah". Version B uses it to interpret "acts of loving-kindness" in Ch. 8, p. 22.

5 This third entry on the list of those things harmed by neglect of Torah, Jerusalem, is suggested by the last half of the final verse quoted in the previous paragraph: "...and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem (Amos 2:5b)." The verse (Is. 42:24) adduced
that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through?" And following this it is written: "Because they have forsaken my Torah ... (Jer. 9:11-12)."

AND ON THE SERVICE. This is the temple service.7 And so you find that while the temple service existed, the world was blessed, low prices were prevalent and grain and wine were plentiful; people ate until satisfied and domestic animals ate until satisfied,8 as Scripture says: "And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle... (Dt. 11:15)."9 But once the Temple was destroyed, blessing left the world, as Scripture says: "Take heed lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, and the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and he shut up the heavens so that there be no rain and the land yield no fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which the Lord gives you. (Dt. 11:16-17)."10

And in addition Scripture says: "And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hills... (Hag. 1:11)." And in addition Scripture says: "Since they were...11 when one came to a heap of twenty mean-

7 "'Abodah" (work, service) also means worship in MH and especially the Temple worship.

8 In actual fact, after the Temple was destroyed in C. E. 70, the Jews in Palestine did endure hard times. This was repeated in the Revolt of Bar Cochba (C.E. 135) when the southern part of the country was definitively devastated and economic hardship became a constant factor in life (see M. Avi-Yonah, Geschichte der Juden in Zeiten der Talmud, Berlin, 1962). The loss of the Temple was seen as the cause of many losses in Israel, social, spiritual and economic.

9 The verse quoted, Dt. 11:15, substantiates the last claim made: that the domestic animals have plenty to eat. The previous verse (14), implies support of the claim to abundance of food since it speaks of the rains: "He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil".

Version A says that the blessing to be realized from the temple is rain and then quotes Dt. 11:13-15, which is an exact support for his claim.

10 Dt. 11:16-17 implies that rain is the source of all blessing on the land and that, with its cessation, blessing leaves the land. Note that these verses continue Dt. 11:15 used above. This section of Deuteronomy seems to have been an early element in the interpretation of "the Temple service."

11 The Hebrew "malkevam" is difficult. The RSV gives "How did you fare?" (Greek version) and the Jewish Publication Society version has "Through all that time" (Targum and Syriac). See Hinckley G. Mitchell, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai
sures, there were but ten; when one came to the winevat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty (Hag. 2:16).”

“No one,” it does not say here; rather (it says): “There were but twenty.”

Why is the wine more blighted than the grain? Because it is a type of curse. Rabbi says: Not for this reason but rather because they tread it in uncleanness.

In addition Scripture says: “You have sown much and harvested little (Hag. 1:6),” since the omer was no more. “You eat, but you never have enough (Hag. 1:6),” since the bread of the presence was no more. “You drink, but you never have your fill (Hag. 1:6),” since the libations were no more. “You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm (Hag. 1:6),” since the priestly vestments were no more. “And he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes (Hag. 1:6),” since the shekel tax was no more.

And Scripture says further: “The fig will not blossom (Hab. 3:17),” since the institution of the first fruits was no more. “And there is no fruit on the vines (Hab. 3:17),” since libations were no more. “The produce of the olive has failed (Hab. 3:17),” since the oil for the lamps and the oil for anointing were no more. “And the fields yielded no fruit (Hab. 3:17),” since the swinging of the offerings was no more. “And the flock has been cut off from the fold (Hab. 3:17),” since the 19 daily burnt offerings and additional sacrifices were no more. “And

12 Hag. 2:15: “Before a stone was placed upon a stone in the Temple of the Lord. . . .” (which is quoted in A) gives the context of this verse. Without the Temple agricultural productivity drops. The following clarifications of Hag. 2:16 are not immediately relevant to the main theme of the section. See G Ch. 4, n. 16. Ms. N omits them.

13 This sentence does not make sense in context. Ms. P has: “It does not say: ‘And there were twenty-one.’ Rather, (it says): ‘There were but twenty.’” ARNA (p. 20; G pp. 33-34) and JerSot 9:15 have a clearer version where the contrast is between 25 (1/2 of 50) and 20, not 1 and 20, or 21 and 20 (see Schechter, B, p. 18, n. 7 and A, p. 20, n. 21).

14 Two explanations are offered for why the wine is diminished by more than a half: a special type of curse that affects the wine more than the wheat and failure to observe the rules of cleanness when treading it. Uncleanness while treading the grapes probably refers to the personal state of uncleanness of the people involved. Uncleanness which can come upon the treading vat is detailed in Toh 10:5 & 8 (see also Kel 15:5; Ohel 18:1; Toh 8:2).
there is no herd in the stalls (Hab. 3:17)," since the sacrifices of peace offering were no more.  

In the future when the Temple is rebuilt, what does Scripture say: "The city shall be rebuilt upon its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be. Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving and the voices of those who make merry (Jer. 30:18-19)." "Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength (Hab. 3:18-19)."

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18 This paragraph is a midrash on Hab. 3:17, similar to the previous one on Hag. 1:6. In it libations, already mentioned in the previous paragraph are repeated (as it is in TanBubh, Ex., p. 103); probably both lists were independent at one time. Hab. 3:17 is interpreted elsewhere in relation to Gen 21:1 and Sarah's barrenness. See BerRab 52:3 (T-A, p. 556); TanBubh, Gna., pp. 104-05; and a different version in PesRab 42:5 (Friedmann, 177b, Brander, pp. 746-47).

17 As a conclusion the author turns to the future and ends on a note of comfort. The passage lacks clear eschatological features when speaking of the new Temple, so the author probably envisions a rebuilding of the Temple in the foreseeable future. Note that Hab. 3:18-19 is used in B (Hab. 3:17 was used above) and Hag. 2:18-19 is used in A (with Hag. 2:15-16 used previously).
CHAPTER SIX

Now, when Vespasian came and besieged Jerusalem,¹ he took up a position against the wall of Jerusalem and said to the citizens of Jerusalem: Send² from Jerusalem one bow and arrow and I will leave you in peace.³ He said this to them once and then a second time, but

¹ In the previous chapter the Temple Service was interpreted and conditions before and after its destruction discussed. This leads to a fuller discussion of the Temple's destruction in this and the next chapter.

² ARNA (Ch. 4) interprets all three phrases of Simeon the Righteous' saying in order, dealing with the loss of the temple under the heading of the third phrase and following that with the stories of the destruction.

³ Titus, not Vespasian, besieged Jerusalem. Vespasian had already begun his trip to Rome to become emperor before Titus invested Jerusalem (Josephus, War, end of Bk. 4—beginning Bk. 5).

Johanan seems to have left when the zealots were still allowing people to bury the dead, that is, before the siege. Josephus records that in Spring 68 A.D. Vespasian postponed marching on Jerusalem because the Zealot parties were fighting with one another (War, IV, 366ff.). Deserters were killed and the dead went unburied; people were killed for burying a relative (War, IV: 380-83). (The probable reason is that mourners had to leave the city walls to bury the dead, since burial was not allowed within; consequently, they could escape.) Thus Johanan may have left at this time or just before it.

⁴ Gittin 56a and LamRab 1:5 (31) record that Johanan left after the wheat stores were burned, that is, just before the siege began in April 70 (Josephus, War, V, 24-25). By that time, however, leaving would have been more difficult and Vespasian was no longer in Palestine.

Version A sets the scene with: “Now, when Vespasian came to destroy Jerusalem...” (p. 22; G 35); this is a more general statement of his hostile intentions and could mean that Vespasian had not yet actually besieged Jerusalem (the situation in Spring 68).

In all of this we must remember that the Rabbis did not carefully record dates or distinguish various campaigns and strategies; they concentrated on the central fact that Vespasian/Titus destroyed the Temple and the city. For an extended discussion of all the sources (ARNA ch. 4; ARNB ch. 6; Gittin 56; Lam. Rab. 1:5(31) and MidProv 15 [Buber, pp. 79-80]; the last is identical to ARNB), see Alon, Midbarim, I, 219-251; a summary and critique in J. Neusner, A Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai: Ca. 1-80 C.E. (2 ed.; Leiden : Brill, 1970) pp. 152-166; and J. Neusner Development of a Legend: Studies on the Traditions Concerning Yohanan ben Zakkai (Leiden : Brill, 1970) which studies each text and the texts in parallel.

² Ms. R, P, and H read ḫov (break?). ARNA (p. 22) reads ḥere (send) and this sense seems required by the context. (Cf. Schechter, B p. 19, n. 2.) Ms. N reads ḥere, but the editor suggests ḥere.

³ The sending out of a bow and arrows seems to have been a sign of submission and of laying down arms. (See Goldin, Ch. 4, n. 23).
they did not accept. 4 Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai said to the men of Jerusalem: You will be the cause of this city being destroyed and this Temple being burned. They said to him: As we sallied forth against the previous commanders and slaughtered them, so will we sally forth against this one and kill him. 5 Everything that Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai said to the men of Jerusalem, they (Roman agents) 6 wrote into documents; these they attached to arrows and shot outside the wall, 7 reporting: Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai is a friend of the emperor. When Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai saw that the people were not willing to listen to him, he said to his disciples: Comrades, get me out of here at once. 8 They put him in a wooden coffin. Rabbi Eliezer took

4 Josephus records the patience of Titus in dealing with Jerusalem and his desire that it surrender; Titus shows constant compassion on the people and reverence for the city (Josephus, War, V, 114; 261; 319-20; 325; 333-34; 348ff.; 362-419; 455-56; 519ff.; 541; VI, 94-112; 124-28; 214-19). Titus also desired that the Temple not be burned and made efforts to save it (Josephus, War, V, 362; VI, 238-43; 258-59; 262-66). The zealots, however, were intransigent and fought wildly against the Romans.

6 ARNA p. 22 (G p. 35) twice refers to two previous commanders who were defeated by the Jews. They were Florus, the last procurator of Palestine, and Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria (Schürer, pp. 245-253; G Ch. 4, n. 24). Both were defeated by the revolutionaries at the beginning of the war. In response to these defeats, Nero sent Vespasian to Palestine.

On the prowess of the zealots during the siege of Jerusalem see Josephus, War, V, 54 ff., 73 ff., 100 ff., 280 ff., 469 ff. For their continuing optimism, note their elation after a temporary victory at the second wall of Jerusalem (Jos. War, V, 342-43).

8 Miss. N identifies these people as ἄγγελων κυρίων, thus showing approval of them.

7 Access Tacticius (De obsidione Jerusalem commentarius, 31:25-27) relates shooting messages over walls on arrows as a technique. He also relates how a misdirected arrow which hit a guard led to a message and plot being discovered.

8 ""imědi mpēdēλ anē." The force of ""imēdē"" (rise) is to do something at once.

When Johanan left Jerusalem is a problem. Titus, not Vespasian, actually besieged Jerusalem in the winter of C.E. 69-70 and the spring of 70. Vespasian went to Rome to become emperor in spring 68. Therefore Johanan either left Jerusalem and travelled to Vespasian's lines before he besieged Jerusalem, or surrendered to Titus during the siege. Neusner points out the difficulties facing anyone wishing to surrender in 70 (Life, pp. 165-66). The exact history of the escape is obscure and cannot be related accurately to events recounted in Josephus. We shall, however, note similarities.

Johanan's defection from Jerusalem is told with no hint of rebuke or apology. The Rabban who recorded this story seem to have implicitly agreed with Johanan's action. Why else do we hear him in the Amidah (the Shabbat ben 192c, 193a, 229b, 230a).
the head and Rabbi Joshua the foot. They kept making their way until they reached the city’s gateway. When they reached the city’s gateway, they said (to the guards): Open up for us at once so that we can go out and bury him. (The gate keepers) said to them: We will not open (the gate) without first stabbing the body with a sword. The disciples replied: You will be responsible for the spreading of an evil report about your city; tomorrow people will say: They even stabbed Rabban Johanan. Finally the guards got up and opened the gates for them. As soon as Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai got outside the gate of Jerusalem, he went and greeted Vespasian the way a sovereign is greeted. He said to him: Long live (my) lord, the emperor.

and many foreseeing the impending disasters, made open lamentation.” (War, II, 651; Finkelstein, Akîba, pp. 52-53). The Zealots killed those who proposed peace and constantly guarded against people deserting the city. People, however, kept escaping from the city (Josephus, War, IV, 377 ff.; 460; V, 27ff.; 265-345; 420-25; 432 ff.; 548 ff.; VI, 113 ff.)

Many rabbis probably supported the war, as they did in the Bar Koseiba Rebellion (see Alon, Toledot, II, pp. 41-42 and for a slightly different opinion, Schurer, p. 300) but they were generally not among the fanatics. When the situation was hopeless, they sought to alleviate the suffering of the people. Since Johanan had done all that he could to rectify the situation before leaving Jerusalem, later Rabbis did not blush to connect this incident with the founding of the first post-destruction academy. Gittin 56a and LamRab 1:5 (31) record that Johanan left only after the stores of wheat were burned and so they imply that he was more committed to the war than ARN indicates. But in neither case was he a fanatic. (For the love of peace in Rabbinic literature, see Moore, II, pp. 195-97 and the references there.)

9 “מְכַסְמוּם וָאִדְרֵחָם,” literally, “serving and going.” The phrase seems to mean that they just kept proceeding in their plan until they met their main obstacle, the gate keepers. Ms. G-1 adds that Akiha preceded them nāpāy (crying out?).

10 Schechter misreads Ms. R which has ‘wm’. Ms. G-1 & H complete the abbreviation with ’wmrya.

11 Alon (Mekorim, I, p. 249, n. 77) notes that the zealots are here presumed to be humane and concerned with public opinion. Josephus presents a completely different picture.

12 The Ms. are garbled here because the greeting is transliterated Latin: Víte domine, imperator. Ms. R skips this phrase; Ms. P has ‘yn dydw wary; Ms. N has garby rwmny nkt; Ms. G-1 an equally confused ‘br(h)dy dwawy. Ms. He we will see below. The phrase is more clearly preserved in LamRab 1:5 (31) and in the Aruch under the word dwawy. See Schechter, p. 19, n. 12; Alon, Mekorim, p. 242; Lieberman, “Qs