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Then and Now: A Summary of Developments in the Field of Talmudic Literature through Contributions to the First and Second Editions of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*

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Abstract
Through the lens of the contributions to the first and second editions of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, this article summarizes the major developments in the field of talmudic literature which took place between the two publications. As the encyclopedia entries in both editions deal almost exclusively with matters pertaining to text, source and redaction criticism, this article, too, primarily discusses developments in these areas.

Keywords
Amoraim, Babylonian Talmud, baraita, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem Talmud, midreshei halakhah, Mishnah, Tosefta

To my students of 'Introduction to Rabbinic Literature'

The publication of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* in 1972 [hereafter, EJ1] was a major endeavor. It resulted in the production of a great compendium of scholarship and, like most encyclopedias, attempted to achieve the careful balance between presenting the best scholarship of its day and being accessible to an audience of non-specialists. I emphasize this duality—academic goals and target audience—in part, as a (very) belated response to Solomon

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Zeitlin's concluding remarks in his bitter review of that encyclopedia, 'the publication of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* was a waste of effort and money' (1972: 28; see also the response in Rabinowitz 1973). It seems that one of Zeitlin's shortcomings was the unrealistic expectation that the encyclopedia not be designed with both a popular audience and public relations in mind. To be sure, Zeitlin's suggested corrections to entries—especially in the fields of rabbinic history and literature—were at times insightful. What Zeitlin missed, however, was that even with its occasional inaccuracies—a fact to be contended with in any research project of such a grand scale—EJ1 still brought to a broad reading public a well-written, concise and generally accurate summary of the Jewish scholarship which had blossomed since the publication of its English language predecessor, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Singer and Adler 1901–1906), at the beginning of the twentieth century.

With the further expansion of Jewish Studies throughout the United States during the decades that followed the publication of EJ1 (Baskin 2011: 325), the encyclopedia became one of the main sources of knowledge for the hundreds of students in American colleges who needed clearly presented summaries of Jewish scholarship, first in its original printed form (1972) and later, as technology developed, in its CD-ROM form (1997).

For the area of talmudic literature, the scholarship of which was at that time published primarily in Hebrew, English summaries of the fundamentals of the field, such as the generations of tannaitic sages or theories of the redaction of specific talmudic works, were in high demand among American college students. It can be stated without equivocation, therefore, that the publication of the encyclopedia was a great contribution to the American Jewish community and to Jewish scholarship (despite Zeitlin's negative estimation), primarily due to its function as a vehicle for the dissemination of otherwise often inaccessible knowledge.

Over three decades later we can safely say that the publication of the encyclopedia's second edition [hereafter, EJ2]—available as it is both in print (2006) and electronically (2007)—is no less significant and even more user-friendly for the new generation of readers. With the same confidence we can state that the new entries in the field of talmudic literature are no less in popular demand and no less scholarly significant than their predecessors. Considering the many important contributions to the field since the publication of EJ1, by the beginning of the new millennium, updated entries were most welcome (and almost long overdue).

My purpose in this article is to summarize the major developments in the field of talmudic literature which took place between the publication of EJ1 and EJ2 and which are highlighted in EJ2. My discussions below are labeled according to the entry titles in the encyclopedias (these have remained the same in both editions) and list the author for each edition's entry in brackets. The entries in EJ2 deal almost exclusively with matters pertaining to text, source and redaction criticism. This article, therefore, primarily discusses developments in these areas. For

a critique of the editorial decision to concentrate on lower and higher critical issues see the recent erudite and informative review by Eliezer Diamond (2011: 194-95). Although admittedly a difficult task, in this article I attempt to minimize the repetition of remarks already made by Diamond. Accordingly, at times, I refer the reader to his article. Furthermore, below I only discuss entries in which significant scholarly developments have been documented in EJ2. For example, the following EJ1 entries were edited and supplemented in EJ2 and are discussed below: 'Amoraim' and 'Baraita, Baraitot'; and the following entries were replaced in EJ2 and are discussed here: 'Midreshei Halakhah', 'Mishnah', 'Talmud, Babylonian', 'Talmud, Jerusalem' and 'Tosefta'. Entries that remained the same in both editions, however, such as 'Tannaim' and 'Midrash', as well as entries for specific midrashic works, are not revisited here. For a discussion of these I refer the reader to Diamond's thorough updates of bibliography and scholarly developments. Lastly, below I update the internet bibliographies for each entry.

Amoraim [EJ1: Safrai 1972; EJ2: Gray 2007]

The EJ2 entry correctly highlights two major developments in the study of the Amoraim, sages in both Palestine and Babylonia who lived between the third and late fifth centuries: (a) changes in approach regarding the historicity of amoraic attributions and biography and (b) new findings about the organization of amoraic Torah study and teaching. Scholarship leading up to the publication of EJ1 generally affirmed the historical reliability of both talmudic statements attributed to Amoraim and elements of biographical information about Amoraim found in talmudic collections. A radical change in perspective was pioneered by Jacob Neusner. Neusner argued for the historical unreliability of amoraic statements and the impossibility of reconstructing amoraic biography (1965–1970 and 1980). His overarching thesis was that the final date of a collection's completion is the final date of the present form of all the materials in that collection. Accordingly, talmudic collections do not preserve reliable materials which precede their final redaction. With regards to attributions, Nuesner's approach has been refuted in a substantive study by Richard Kalmin (1994). Kalmin shows the presence of patterns in the statements of specific Amoraim and their schools across both Talmuds, correctly concluding that the patterns prove the existence of reliable historical distinctions between Amoraim of specific generations. David Kraemer's observation (1990: 50-78) of an increase in the argumentative activity of middle-generation Amoraim and their successors is also significant in this regard. On the reconstruction of amoraic biography, Neusner's approach has been meaningfully updated. The recent recognition of the literary creativity and goals of rabbinic narrative (Kalmin 1994, 1999; Rubenstein 1999; Friedman 2004a) nuances Neusner's primarily skeptical approach to the biography of sages. While not historical, rabbinic narrative is but one product of the sages'

highly developed literary creativity. As mentioned, another major development in the field addresses the organization and teaching of Torah among the Amoraim. While for many years scholars assumed that amoraic Torah study was organized around academies (Gafni 1978, 1981), the current accepted scholarly view is that, in fact, amoraic Torah study was not organized around academies, but rather small disciple circles (Goodblatt 1975, 1981).

Baraita, Baraitot [EJ1: DeVries 1972; EJ2: Wald 2007a]

The term *baraita* (pl. *baraitot*) refers to tannaitic traditions not included in the Mishnah. In the study of *baraitot*, perhaps the most important scholarly development since the publication of EJ1, elaborated upon in EJ2, is the different way in which the relationship between parallel *baraitot* cited both in tannaitic collections and the Talmuds is analyzed. *Baraitot*, when fixed in two separate literary collections such as the Tosefta and the Babylonian Talmud, are considered parallel because their content, order, language and overall structure are the same. Often, however, there are significant differences in formulation or even legal outcome between parallel *baraitot*. An analysis of the data brought Hanokh Albeck to the conclusion that parallel *baraitot* must have originated in different—even if parallel—schools of Tannaim (1923, 1944). The recent scholarship by Shamma Friedman on parallel *baraitot* (2000a, 2002b, 2004b) has turned Albeck's assumptions and conclusions on their head. Friedman argues that the existence of parallel *baraitot* shows the degree to which *baraitot* were transformed during the process of transmission from their original tannaitic literary contexts to their later amoraic and post-amoraic contexts. That is to say, a *baraita* found in the Tosefta and in the Babylonian Talmud, although slightly different in formulation within each collection, is actually the same *baraita* at two different stages of transmission. Friedman contends that for the tradents/transmitters of the *baraitot*, part of the transmission process included editorial alteration (whether conscious or not). The editorial activity could take place at any and every stage of transmission, whether late tannaitic, amoraic or redactorial (for a different reading of Friedman's conclusions, emphasizing the editorial hand of the redactors, see Diamond 2011: 179; see also my comments below under the heading 'Talmud, Babylonian').

Midreshei Halakhah [EJ1: Herr 1972a, 1972b; EJ2: Kahana 2007]

The great strides made in the field of *midreshei halakhah*, or tannaitic midrashim, during the period between the publication of EJ1 and EJ2 are due, in many ways, to the great scholarly accomplishments of Menahem Kahana. It is he who, in his extensive research, sharpens and nuances the well-documented hermeneutic differences between the ancient schools of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael (see, for example, Kahana 1999), first described by David Zvi Hoffmann (1887) and later

elaborated by several scholars, the most prominent among them, J.N. Epstein (1957: 499-544). Worthy of note is Kahana's convincing refutation (2006: 18, n. 67) of Jay Harris's attempt (1995: 25-72) to undermine the original theory, which distinguishes between the two ancient schools of halakhic midrashic exegesis. In addition, Michael Chernick's two books on tannaitic hermeneutic principles (1984 and 1994), deserve mention in this context (cf. Diamond 2011: 174). Kahana's scholarly endeavors have also led him to be on the forefront of the classification, description and publication of medieval manuscripts and Geniza fragments of *midreshei halakhah* (1995, 2005) as well as the recovery and interpretation of long lost midrashic works. The most striking example of the latter is his edition and commentary to *Sifre Zuta Deuteronomy* (2002), the text of which was reconstructed by Kahana from citations quoted in a medieval Karaite work. His recent publication of a three-volume critical edition with commentary to the first half of *Sifre on Numbers* (2011) is unparalleled among editions of *midreshei halakhah*. Regarding a final area of study, reference should be made to the important work of Steven Fraade (1987, 1991: 1-23, 1998), which has contributed greatly to our understanding of the similarities and differences between the interpretive methods found in *midreshei halakha* and those known from Dead Sea documents. Transcriptions of medieval manuscripts and early printed editions of *midreshei halakhah* may be found at the following website, sponsored by Bar Ilan University, http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/Tannaim/. Select genizah fragment transcriptions and digital photographs are available at http://www.genizah.org.

Mishnah [EJ1: Urbach 1972; EJ2: Wald 2007b]

The entry on Mishnah in EJ2 highlights the work of Albeck in his important monograph, *Untersuchungen über die Redaktion der Mischna* (1923), where Albeck argued that the Mishnah's final redactor preserved contradictory material within the corpus of the Mishnah without attempting to revise and reorganize his source material into a unified and consistent whole. Albeck's colleague (and rival), Epstein (1948), held the opposing view: traditions were, in fact, reworked, added to and subtracted from. Although strictly speaking a discussion of Albeck's and Epstein's conclusions does not constitute a development in the field, nevertheless, the detailed summary of Albeck's views here—originally published in German and never translated in their entirety—is a welcome new development for both specialists and interested non-specialists alike. This is especially true since EJ1's entry on Mishnah exclusively highlighted Epstein's method and conclusions (cf. Diamond 2011: 176).

The significant work of Abraham Goldberg brings an additional dimension to contemporary analysis of the Mishnah's text. Goldberg suggests that individual textual units (*mishnayot*, pl. of *mishnah*) can be divided into four separate literary/historical layers. Although his view can be critiqued (see Wald 2007b: 325),

Goldberg's contribution shows the degree to which the final redacted Mishnah, when viewed in its entirety, consistently presents itself as a compendium of laws collected over several generations. Among Goldberg's most important scholarly contributions are his critical editions with commentary to the following three tractates, two of which were published after EJ1: Ohalot (1955), Shabbat (1976) and Eruvin (1986). Krupp published a critical edition of Arakhin (1977). Online digital photographs of medieval Mishnah manuscripts may be seen at http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/talmud/intro_eng.htm and transcriptions and digital photographs of select Geniza fragments at http://www.genizah.org.

Talmud, Babylonian [EJ1: Berkovits 1972; EJ2: Wald 2007c]

The study of the Babylonian Talmud—in the areas of text criticism, source criticism and redaction criticism—has witnessed a revolution in the generation between the publication of EJ1 and EJ2, much of it the result of the work of two scholars, Shamma Friedman and David Weiss Halivni. Among the greatest achievements in the field since the publication of EJ1 is Halivni's impressive running commentary to over half of the Babylonian Talmud (1968, 1982a, 1982b, 1993, 2003, 2007, 2009). In his commentary, Halivni presents a stimulating model of source criticism which has reshaped the way many scholars think about the development and transmission of traditions in the Babylonian Talmud. Halivni's focus has consistently been separating the tannaitic and amoraic sources cited in the Babylonian Talmud from their literary framework, authored by the Talmud's latest authorities, the *Stammaim*, literally, 'anonymous ones' (the term used to distinguish this final literary layer of the Babylonian Talmud authored by unnamed sages from earlier amoraic named sections). His approach emphasizes the universal lateness of this final anonymous Aramaic layer of the Talmud and the 'errors' and 'misunderstandings' which occur when these later authorities explain and comment on the positions of earlier authorities (the *Tannaim* and *Amoraim*).

Friedman's scholarship is primarily a study of the talmudic material through an internal comparative approach contrasting literary forms, language and concepts found throughout talmudic literature. Friedman authored a systematic statement of fourteen principles for a clear division between what is Amoraic and what is later in the talmudic sugya (1977). He emphasizes the *almost* universal lateness (Friedman 2011: 115-19) of the Aramaic 'give and take' in the sugya (see also Friedman 1977 and cf. Halivni 1986: 76-92). Robert Brody (2008, 2010) has recently challenged the scholarly emphasis on the general lateness of the anonymous material (cf. Diamond 2011: 184).

Friedman, building on observations by earlier scholars about the literary aspects of the Babylonian Talmud's argumentation and possible non-tannaitic *baraitot*, stresses the creative literary productivity of the transmitters of talmudic texts. Accordingly, what for Halivni is an 'error' or 'transmissional mishap'

(primarily) of the redactors (see, for example, Halivni 2003: 18 and 20) is defined by Friedman as the lens of 'creative literary intervention' (2004a: 57; for examples see 2000a and 2002b: 35-60), represented in all of the historical layers of the Talmud and reaching its greatest expression in the Babylonian Talmud (Friedman 2011: 103; see also my comments in the entry 'Baraita, Baraitot'). The methods developed by Friedman and Halivni continue to inform much of the work in the field. In the realm of the theological see Elman (1991); on conceptualization, Moscovitz (2002); on talmudic aggada, Rubenstein (1999); on the general accuracy in transmission of traditions in the Babylonian Talmud, Kalmin (1994; see also above the entry 'Amoraim').

Regarding the evidence in medieval manuscripts for the transmission of the Talmud text in ancient Babylonia: in contrast to an earlier model of two independent versions of the Babylonian Talmud extant in textual witnesses espoused by Eliezer Shimshon Rosenthal (1984), Friedman identified two voices among the textual witnesses of Bava Mezia chapter VI, one close to the original and the other an edited reworked version (1983; 1991; 1996: 12-13). This conception has been challenged by Brody (1990: 298-301; see Friedman's response, 1991: 92-101, and the discussion in Diamond 2011: 183).

The recent computerization of medieval manuscripts, Geniza fragments and first printed editions of the Babylonian Talmud as well as a new series of critical commentaries to select chapters with synoptic (=line-by-line) editions of these texts make consulting medieval versions of the Babylonian Talmud's text and historical-critical commentaries easily accessible to the general public. The Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmudic Research of the Jewish Theological Seminary currently markets a CD-ROM of computerized Talmud texts with search engine containing links to select digital photographs of the original medieval manuscripts, Geniza fragments and first printed editions. In addition, the package is available to internet users at http://www.lieberman-institute.com. The Lieberman Institute's website, http://liebermaninstitute.org regularly updates its collection of digitized photographs of medieval Talmud manuscripts, Geniza fragments and early printed editions and contains several links to additional websites of interest. These computer tools effectively replace the Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud's ongoing, and still unfinished, project of publishing critical editions to the Babylonian Talmud (Herschler 1972–). Digitized photographs of medieval manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud are available at http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/talmud/intro_eng.htm. As for other genres of rabbinic literature, transcriptions and digitized photographs of Geniza fragments may be viewed at http://www.genizah.org.

The Jewish Theological Seminary published three critical commentaries with synoptic editions for three chapters of the Babylonian Talmud (Friedman 1990, 1996; Wald 2000; Benovitz 2003). Since the publication of these volumes the Society for the Interpretation of the Talmud continues to publish critical commentaries. To

date, five volumes have appeared: Friedman (2002a), Benovitz (2006), Wald (2007d), Stollman (2008) and Amit (2009). Finally, the recent publication of a new dictionary of Babylonian Aramaic by Michael Sokoloff (2002) has set a new standard for the study of the Babylonian Talmud's language and terminology.

Talmud, Jerusalem [EJ1: Rabinowitz 1972; EJ2: Wald 2007e]

The decades between the publication of EJ1 and EJ2 have witnessed significant developments in the study of the Jerusalem Talmud in multiple areas of research including lower and higher criticism, scholarly commentary and lexicography. Remaining among the most significant contributions in the areas of lower criticism and scholarly commentary is the publication of a manuscript of the Jerusalem Talmud to (almost all of) order *Nezikin*, discovered by Rosenthal in the margins of the Escorial manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud, accompanied by Saul Lieberman's erudite commentary (1983). Another major development in the study of the text of the Jerusalem Talmud and its reception—surprisingly excluded from the EJ2 entry, as correctly pointed out by Diamond (2011: 180)—is Jacob Sussman's discovery of sections of the Jerusalem Talmud with annotations in the bindings of Latin books found in what is known as the 'European', or 'Italian Geniza'. Sussman has identified these fragments as part of an Ashkenazi work mentioned by medieval authorities and called 'Sefer Ha-Yerushalmi' (1994). For the study of the Jerusalem Talmud's text, noteworthy is the recent publication of the annotated/corrected transcription of ms. Leiden—the only complete medieval manuscript of the Jerusalem Talmud—by the Academy of Hebrew Language (2001) with an introduction by Sussman.

In the realm of the higher critical, the question of the relationship between the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds has preoccupied scholars since the early beginnings of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the nineteenth century. EJ2 highlights recent scholarly contributions which describe the two Talmuds not as two separate interpretive traditions of tannaitic traditions, as previously thought, but rather as evidence for two different stages in the development of a *single* shared talmudic tradition, the earlier in Palestine and the later in Babylonia. Parallels between the content embedded within the Babylonian Talmud's final redactorial layer and (earlier) Jerusalem Talmud traditions have been documented, providing the possibility that some Palestinian traditions preserved in the Jerusalem Talmud served as source material for the Babylonian redactors (Friedman 1996: 17, see also Brody 2011). Alyssa Gray (2005) goes even further, arguing that the redactors of Babylonian Talmud tractate *Avodah Zarah* were actually familiar with the Jerusalem Talmud's parallel tractate and drew from it when redacting the Babylonian Talmud (however, see the critique in Brody 2011: 30).

Regarding the provenance of order *Nezikin* to the Jerusalem Talmud, much has been written since Lieberman's original thesis (1931), intensely argued, that

Nezikin was compiled in Caesarea before the compilation of the rest of the Jerusalem Talmud. Moshe Assis (1987) contends that Lieberman's thesis that Nezikin was compiled in Caesaria is inconclusive, while Sussman (1990: 123-124; cf. Moscovitz 2006: 668) disputes Lieberman's chronology as well, emphasizing that the latest Amoraim mentioned in Nezikin are identical to those mentioned elsewhere in the Jerusalem Talmud.

The publication of two new terminological dictionaries to the Jerusalem Talmud, Moscovitz (2009) and Assis (2010), represents a major step forward in the study of the Jerusalem Talmud's distinct terminology. So too, the study of Palestinian Aramaic, the language in which much of the Jerusalem Talmud is composed, has been enriched significantly by the publication of Moshe Sokoloff's dictionary (1990). Several websites related to the study of the Jerusalem Talmud have appeared in recent years. The site http://talmud-yerushalmi-redaction.blogspot.com is continuously updated with short comments pertaining to the redaction of the Jerusalem Talmud; https://sites.google.com/site/jtalacad/home is a constantly evolving site containing research on the topic of the redaction and composition of the Jerusalem Talmud, while http://hatalmudhayerushalmi.org is an ongoing project creating a semi-critical commentary to the Jerusalem Talmud; http://webapp2.netanya.ac.il/talmud/ is a database that includes citations in medieval works and bibliographic references for the Jerusalem Talmud and http://yerushalmionline.org includes links to classical as well as contemporary commentaries and articles on the Jerusalem Talmud and a link to digital photographs of ms. Leiden. See also http://www.genizah.org for transcriptions and digital photographs of some Geniza fragments.

Tosefta [EJ1: Herr 1972c; EJ2: Wald 2007f]

The Tosefta is a tannaitic work redacted in Palestine in the third century CE shortly after the redaction of the Mishnah. It is a collection of tannaitic traditions with a complex relationship to the Mishnah. While the order of traditions in the Tosefta is based primarily on the order of traditions in the Mishnah, the Tosefta is about three to four times longer and its traditions supplement and complement mishnaic traditions in several different ways. Some have used the term 'proto-Talmud' to describe the Tosefta's relationship to the Mishna since, often, Tosefta traditions comment directly on a Mishnah and interpret its contents. In addition, the Tosefta, at times, preserves a different version of the same tradition included in the Mishnah. The other version may present the same ideas formulated differently or even contradictory views on the matter under discussion in the Mishnah. The primary advance in recent years in the study of the Tosefta is the examination of an additional aspect of the relationship between it and the Mishnah: the preservation of *earlier* material in the Tosefta which was later developed in the Mishnah. In recent years this line of investigation has been spearheaded by Friedman (1993, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2002b) and Judith Hauptman (2000, 2001, 2005a, 2005b) in

their detailed analyses of Mishnah and Tosefta parallels. In a series of articles and one book Friedman has shown that for specific examples the Tosefta version of a tradition is earlier than its later reworked Mishnah parallel. According to this thesis select Tosefta traditions may preserve the 'raw' material from which later Mishnah traditions were fashioned. The work of Hauptman (2000, 2001, 2005a, 2005b), to some degree, corroborates this thesis. Employing a different set of methodological assumptions than Friedman, Hauptman adds that the Tosefta is a commentary to an Ur-Mishnah. Abraham Walfish (2005–2006) and Günter Stemberger (2007: 160-61) critique some of the methodological assumptions of this new approach. Since the publication of EJ1, additional volumes of Lieberman's exceptional critical edition (based on the Vienna manuscript) with detailed commentary, covering over half of the Tosefta, have appeared in print. Subsequently, the Tosefta remains—with Lieberman's unparalleled text apparatus and scholarly commentary—the most thoroughly examined work of classical rabbinic literature. In total, Lieberman's *Tosefta* and *Tosefta Ki-feshuta* (all published by the Jewish Theological Seminary) include: *Zera'im*, 1955; *Mo'ed*, 1961–62; *Nashim*, 1967, 1973; and the first half of *Nezikin*, 1988 (published posthumously). Another recent contribution to the field of Tosefta studies is Goldberg (2001). An additional recent and significant advance for the study of the text of the Tosefta can be found on Bar Ilan University's website. It includes complete transcriptions of all manuscripts and Genizah fragments of the Tosefta: http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/Tannaim/tosefta/ (note that the web address has changed since the publication of EJ2). See also http://www.genizah.org for digitized photographs and transcriptions of some Geniza fragments. Also noteworthy is the website http://toseftaonline.org which includes downloadable files of both traditional and academic commentaries as well as scholarly articles on the Tosefta.

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