

The Jewish Cultural Nature of Galilee in the First Century

by Shmuel Safrai

There is a great deal of literature describing the Jewish cultural nature of Galilee in the first century C.E. Several scholarly fields are involved.

The issue is discussed by scholars of Jewish history and of the history of the Oral Torah for subsequently, during the second to fourth centuries and even later, Galilee was the living center of the Jewish people and its leadership, and the place in which the Oral Torah was collected and in large degree created. It also is extensively dealt with by scholars of the beginnings of Christianity, since Jesus grew up in Nazareth in Lower Galilee, and his activity was centered mainly within the bounds of Galilee. Conversely, Jewish scholars of the history of the Halakhah or of talmudic literature in general, when discussing the cultural image of Galilee, refer in some degree to the history of Christianity or to the background of the beginnings of Christianity.

Furthermore, the issue has been discussed in the general literature of Jewish history and of the history of the Land of Israel. Similarly, many scholars, especially Christians, deal with it extensively both in general works on the life of Jesus and in studies devoted to Galilee and its Jewish cultural image.¹

According to the opinion that was prevalent from the middle of the nineteenth century on, Galilee, which was annexed by the Hasmoneans to the Jewish state only during a later stage of their rule, was far removed from Jewish

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1. Recently published books that bear directly upon the subject of this article include: F. Malinowski, *Galilean Judaism in the Writings of Flavius Josephus* (Ann Arbor, 1973); G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London, 1977); E.M. Meyeres and J.F. Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis and Early Christianity* (Nashville, 1981); S. Fregne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1987); R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer* (Tübingen, 1987); M. Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee A.D. 132-212* (Totowa, New Jersey, 1983); W. Bosen, *Galiläa als Lebensraum und Wirkungsfeld Jesu* (Basel and Vienna, 1985).

cultural life, as well as from the Torah and the observance of Jewish law. Although Jewish settlement, which was sparse in Galilee before the period of Hasmonean rule, subsequently expanded, scholars insist that the expansion did not contribute to a growth and deepening of Jewish life. According to this school of thought, the world of the Pharisees (meaning the world of the sages and their teachings) was limited to Judea. Galilee stayed far removed from the world of Torah and observance of the commandments, both before the destruction of the Temple and during the Yavneh period, until the Sanhedrin and its sages moved to Galilee after the Bar Kokhba war.

This opinion, which has been formulated in various ways with differing emphases, leads to the drawing of major basic conclusions in many areas of Jewish history: the political sphere, the spiritual-cultural sphere and the theoretical sphere of the history of the Halakhah. On this basis, some scholars view the Christianity of Galilee as a manifestation of ignorance of Judaism, and Jesus and his disciples as the representatives of the ignorant in their war with the sages of the Torah and the Pharisees, who were meticulous in their observance of the commandments. Only in a Galilee having that character, they suppose, could incipient Christianity have found its expression.

It is on such hypotheses that these scholars base their interpretations of major episodes in the history of the Halakhah, such as the struggles of the sages in the post-Bar Kokhba period to inculcate the laws of ritual cleanness and uncleanness and their practical applications among the Jews of Galilee. They likewise seek to understand the zealot movements in Galilee, seeing them as manifestations of a nationalist rural ideology based on ignorance and directed against the urban sages of the Torah.

In the last generation, especially under the influence of studies by Gedalyahu Alon,² those hypotheses about Galilee have been extensively undermined and refuted. Nevertheless, several of his arguments have not been understood in their entirety. Alon dealt mainly with an investigation of life in Galilee during the period between the destruction of the Second Temple and the Bar Kokhba revolt. Many of the scholars dealing with this issue did not read his studies or those studies which followed him, especially since most of them were written in Hebrew. We keep hearing that the achievements of the Pharisees in Galilee were meagre, and that in general there were no Galileans among the Pharisees and the sages. Scholars even claim that only one sage — Rabbi Jose ha-Galili — came from Galilee; those living in Galilee were Jews, but

2. G. Alon, *Toledot ha-Yehudim be-Eretz Yisrael bi-Tekufat ha-Mishnah ve-ha-Talmud* ("The History of the Jews in the Land of Israel During the Period of the Mishnah and the Talmud"; Tel Aviv, 1953), vol. 1, pp. 318–323. Regarding the Torah sages in Galilee before the revolt, see also A. Büchler, *Am ha-Aretz ha-Galili* ("The Galilean *am ha-aretz*"; Jerusalem, 1964), pp. 193–240 (the pagination is according to the Hebrew translation; I did not have access to the German original during the writing of this article). See also A. Oppenheimer, *The Am ha-Aretz* (Leiden, 1977) pp. 2–7, 200–217; and "Ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi ba-Galil bi-Tekufat Yavneh u-Mered Bar Kokhba" ("The Jewish Community in Galilee During the Period of Yavneh and the Bar Kokhba Revolt"), *Katedra* 4 (1977), 53–66; Z. Safrai, *Pirquei Galil* ("Chapters on Galilee"; Ma'alot, 1972), pp. 19–26.

not rabbinic; Galilee was a focal point of Hellenistic cities and centers of Hellenistic culture, and the Jewish content of Galilee was extremely sparse.

In this essay we shall briefly review the arguments of Alon and others, adding proofs and arguments, mainly from the period preceding the destruction of the Temple. We must also re-examine the alleged positive proofs of the dearth of Torah and observance of the commandments in Galilee during the Second Temple and Yavneh periods.

Some of the proofs from the tannaitic tradition refer to the Yavneh period. It may be assumed, however, that on the whole they reflect the general reality of the cultural life in Galilee during the period prior to the destruction as well. This is the picture we also receive from Josephus and the New Testament. There are many proofs, however, from both halakhic and aggadic literature about Jewish life in Galilee during the Second Temple period itself. They will show that, contrary to the views outlined above, Galilee was a place where Jewish cultural life and a firm attachment to Judaism flourished well before the destruction of the Second Temple. Apart from Jerusalem, it even excelled the other parts of the Land of Israel in these respects.

Sages in Galilee

We shall begin with the talmudic traditions about the presence of sages in Galilee during the Second Temple and Yavneh periods, referring chiefly to those sages who were active during the first century, and not listing those about whom we have information mainly from the end of the Yavneh period.

Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai

The earliest tradition, apparently dating to the first half of the first century, is about Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai who lived and taught Torah in Arav in Lower Galilee. He is mentioned twice in Mishnah Shabbat with the formula: "An occurrence came before Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai in Arav, and he said..."³

The talmudic traditions about Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai link him to one of four groups by location: Arav, Jerusalem, Yavneh and Beror Hayil. It seems, as is assumed by Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai's biographers, that during his youth, he lived in Arav, where he taught Torah; afterwards he came to Jerusalem where he stayed until close to the destruction of the Temple; from there he went to Yavneh (which is mentioned in many sources); and toward the end of his life he came to Beror Hayil after he had left or had been forced to leave Yavneh.⁴

3. mShabbat 16:7; 22:3.

4. See Alon, loc. cit., pp. 53–71, and his articles "Halikhato shel Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai le-Yavneh" ("Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai's Going to Yavneh"); "Nesiuto shel Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai" ("Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai's Term as Nasi"), in *Mehkarim be-Toledot Yisrael* ("Studies in Jewish History"; Tel Aviv, 1957), vol. 1, pp. 219–273.

When he lived in Arav, Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, who was also a resident of that city, “sat before him” (i.e., learned from him).⁵ Furthermore, the Babylonian Talmud relates: “It once happened that Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa went to learn Torah from Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, and his son fell ill” (Berakhot 34b). This report, too, suggests that Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai was a young man at the time, the father of a sick child.

There is no hint in the sources of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai having come to Arav from another place, such as Jerusalem, or that he was sent there as the New Testament relates regarding certain scribes⁶ who arrived in Galilee from Jerusalem. He may have been a native of Arav, as was his disciple Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa. In either case, we have a clear tradition of the permanent residence during the course of years⁷ of a sage, one of the pillars of the Oral Torah, who lived and taught in one of the cities of Galilee during a period for which we have almost no reports of sages living and teaching outside the city of Jerusalem.

We must also add that the rulings which were determined before Rabban Johanan — whether it is permitted to invert a dish over a scorpion on the Sabbath, with this not being considered an instance of the prohibited work of “trapping,” and secondly whether it is permitted to put wax on the hole in a jug on the Sabbath — are not trivial self-explanatory questions that could be addressed to any novice. Opinions were divided,⁸ and even Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai did not give an unequivocal answer; regarding each of them he said, “I fear for him from a *batat*.” That is, he feared lest he would err and be liable to bring a *batat* (sin-offering). Incidentally, we learn that the Second Temple was still in existence, and a person who sinned would bring a *batat* sacrifice to atone for his sin.⁹

The Jerusalem Talmud cites the Amora Ulla on these two traditions:

Rabbi Ulla said that he resided in Arav for eighteen years, and they asked him only these two questions. He said: “Galilee, Galilee, you hated the Torah; you will eventually be forced by the officers.”¹⁰

This saying by Ulla is regarded by all the scholarly works as unequivocal proof of Galilee’s distance from, and hatred of, the Torah. It is not, however, a direct tradition of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai. The Mishnah cites only the two cases which were brought before Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai in Arav, not saying anything about a comment by him. It is Ulla, who lived in the second half of the third century, who possessed a tradition that Rabban Johanan, in con-

5. See especially Genesis Rabbah 6:84.

6. Mt. 15:1; Mk. 3:22, 7:1; Lk. 5:17.

7. The 18 years stated by the Amora Ulla (see below) is not necessary an exact number.

8. See the mishnaic references in note 3. It becomes clear in bShabbat 121b that the sages who permitted this, and the pietists who were not pleased by it, disagreed on this issue. See below.

9. When, during the period following the destruction of the Second Temple, a person wished to say that he had sinned, he would write on his board: “Ishmael ben Elisha trimmed the lamp on the Sabbath, when the Temple shall be rebuilt he shall bring a *batat* (sin-offering)” (tShabbat 1:13, and the parallels in the Talmuds).

10. jShabbat 16:15d.

trast with the many cases brought before his contemporary Rabban Gamaliel, was consulted in only two cases during the eighteen years he lived in Arav, and that he prophesied that Galilee, for not studying Torah, would eventually be oppressed by the government officials.

It should not be forgotten that Galilee resembled Judea, and the Land of Israel in general, in being oppressed by government officials.¹¹ Thus this vague rebuke cannot cancel or even lessen the generality of the proofs of the presence of the sages and their teaching of Torah, in great measure in Galilee as we shall see below.

But even if we accept Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai's authorship of this statement, we can draw no definite conclusions from its blunt language which was employed under specific circumstances. It may be simply an unobjective denigration of the kind we find elsewhere directed against the residents of other geographical areas. An example is another tradition in the Jerusalem Talmud:

Rabbi Simlai came before Rabbi Johanan. He said to him: "Teach me Aggadah." He said to him: "I possess a tradition from my fathers not to teach Aggadah, neither to a Babylonian nor to a Southerner, because they are haughty and possess little Torah, and you are a Nehardean and live in the South." ¹²

The same charges are raised against Lod in another context. The Jerusalem Talmud asks why the determination of the new month is not made in Lod; Rabbi Zeira, Rabbi Johanan's disciple, replies, "because they are haughty and possess little Torah."¹³

These denigrations certainly cannot be taken at face value. During the period of Rabbi Johanan, the middle of the third century, neither the Babylonians — and certainly not the Nehardeans — nor the Southerners (i.e., those from Lod) were either "possessing little Torah" or "haughty." Nehardea had been a place of Torah since early times and was the first, or possibly the second, center of Torah in Babylonia. The South was the second most important center of Torah during that period. It contained the academy of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, and many sages of the first order were from Lod where they taught Torah. "The rabbis of the South," "our rabbis in the South," and similar expressions appear frequently in talmudic literature.¹⁴

In several places the tradition adds the opinion of the people of the South to that of the people of the North, Sepphoris or Tiberias, or it compares the position of the Southerners with that of the sages from Sepphoris and Tiberias, just as it brings *baraitot* and traditions from the South.¹⁵ Rabbi Hanina, the teacher of Rabbi Johanan, who lived in Sepphoris, said, "Southerners have soft

11. See especially Sifrei Deuteronomy 357:425–427.

12. jPesahim 5:32a. A similar passage also appears in bPesahim 62b.

13. jSanhedrin 1:18c.

14. See, e.g., jEruvin 6:23c; bHullin 132b; Pesiqta Rabbati 29 (138b); and many other passages.

15. jTa'anit 4:69b; jMoed Katan 3:82d; jShevi'it 5:35d; and many other passages. See S. Lieberman, *Sifrei Zuta* (New York, 1968), especially pp. 92–94.

hearts; they hear a word of Torah and they are persuaded”¹⁶ This harsh comment directed against the Southerners apparently was formulated in Galilee, Sepphoris or Tiberias; it declares that the people of Galilee are superior in both their Torah and personal attributes to the Southerners. It is quite doubtful, however, whether this is objectively accurate. Likewise, the statement attributed by Ulla to Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai indicates the intent to denigrate the people of Galilee, and no real conclusions can be drawn from it.

Furthermore, the two laws about which Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai was asked are from the realm of Sabbath law. Regarding one of them, whether it is permitted to harm a potentially dangerous animal, the sages and the *hasidim* (pietists) disagreed. A *baraita* states: “The *hasidim* are displeased with the person who kills snakes and scorpions on the Sabbath.” Rava bar Rav Huna adds: “And the sages are displeased with these *hasidim*.”¹⁷ It is possible that the thrust of this comment against the people of Galilee regarding this law is directed against the *hasidim* who were in Galilee and who were criticized, beginning with Hillel and continuing through Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, for not being sufficiently occupied with Torah because they explicitly stressed the superiority of the “deed” over study.¹⁸

Rabbi Halafta

Rabbi Halafta (or Abba Halafta), who came from Sepphoris, was a younger contemporary of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai. He was the father of the well-known Tanna Rabbi Jose ben Halafta, who was one of the disciples of Rabbi Akiva. The Tosefta relates that Rabbi Halafta introduced the rules for communal fast-days in Sepphoris, together with his colleague Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradyon in Sikhnin. When the sages learned of this, they said that this was practiced only at the Eastern Gates (Ta’anit, end of ch. 1, and parallels).¹⁹ It is logical to date this event after the destruction of the Temple but before the Bar Kokhba revolt, for Rabbi Halafta, who cites teachings from the time of the Temple, from the period of Rabban Gamaliel the Elder (as will be shown below), certainly did not live until after the Bar Kokhba revolt. He was born many years before the destruction of the Temple, for his son, Rabbi Jose, relates about him:

It once happened that Rabbi Halafta went to Rabban Gamaliel, to Tiberias, and he found him sitting at the table of Johanan ben Nezif, with the Targum of the Book of Job in his hand. Rabbi Halafta said to him: “I remember that Rabban Gamaliel the Elder, your father’s father, would sit

16. jTa’anit 3:66c.

17. bShabbat 121b; see S. Safrai, “Teaching of Pietistics in Mishnaic Literature,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 16 (1965), 15–33.

18. mAvot 2:5. See S. Safrai, “Hasidim we-Anshei Ma’aseh” (“Pietists and Miracle-Workers”), *Zion* 50 (1985), 152–154. Regarding Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, see Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, A:12 (28b), B:27 (40b). See Safrai, *ibid.*, pp. 132–136.

19. mTa’anit 2:5; see also tTa’anit 2:13; bTa’anit 16b; bRosh Ha-Shanah 27a.

on a stair of the Temple Mount. They brought before him the Targum of the Book of Job, and he said to the builder, 'Bury it under the rubble.'"²⁰

Here Rabbi Halafta meets Rabban Gamaliel II who has come to Tiberias for a visit, where he finds a Targum of Job. Abba Halafta, who lives in Sepphoris, comes to visit him, and tells him of Rabban Gamaliel the Elder's attitude toward the Targum of Job. Rabban Gamaliel's visit to Tiberias took place c. 100, for it cannot be assumed that Rabban Gamaliel could have headed the leadership in Yavneh before the decline of the Flavian emperors in the year 96. The incident involving Rabban Gamaliel the Elder occurred c. 50–60. The Galilean sage therefore tells of an incident involving the Targum of Job in Jerusalem during this same period; we may assume that he saw this when he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in his youth.

We do not know from whom he learned Torah or where he studied, nor do we find him in Yavneh. Rabbi Halafta does not cite teachings in the name of the sages of Yavneh. It is possible that he went to Jerusalem to study in his youth; it is also possible that he received his knowledge in Galilee. At any rate, he had an academy, or something approaching an academy, in Galilee. Johanan ben Nuri, who also was one of the sages of Galilee in the post-destruction generation, would go to Rabbi Halafta and ask him questions on points of law; several times he adds that this is his opinion, while Rabbi Akiva holds a different opinion.²¹ We do not find Rabbi Halafta in Yavneh, possibly because of his advanced age, while Rabbi Johanan ben Nuri, who was younger and who was still alive after the Bar Kokhba war,²² was the one who went to Yavneh and reported the opinions of the Yavneh sages to Rabbi Halafta.

Rabbi Halafta lived until the time of the revolt against Trajan in the years 115–116. His son Rabbi Jose relates:

It once happened that four elders were sitting silently [in the store]²³ of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah in Sepphoris, [the other three were] Rabbi Huzpit [ha-Meturgeman],²⁴ Rabbi Yeshevav and Rabbi Halafta [Abba],²⁵ and they brought before them the top of a post which had been removed with a chisel.²⁶

We should accept the opinion of the scholars²⁷ who state that the "silent" nature of their meeting indicates that this was a clandestine gathering in a time of persecution. It cannot have been the period of persecution during the Bar

20. tShabbat 13:2; bShabbat 115a. jShabbat 16:15c brings the event involving Rabban Gamaliel the Elder at the Temple Mount without the narrative regarding Rabbi Halafta's visit to Tiberias.

21. tMa'aser Sheni 1:13; tBava Batra 2:6 (= bBava Batra 56b), tAhihot 5:7; tKelim Bava Metzia 1:5.

22. He lived until the time of Rabbi Judah the Nasi, all of the traditions regarding whom are after the time of the revolt. See tSukkah 2:2; jSanhedrin 7:24b.

23. Thus the Commentary by Rabbi Simeon of Sens on the Mishnah 22:9 and in *Yehusei Tannaim ue-Amoraim*, s.v. Haggai (Maimon ed., p. 234) and Hutzpit (ibid., p. 441).

24. Thus in Rabbi Simeon of Sens, loc. cit.

25. Thus in Rabbi Simeon of Sens, loc. cit.

26. tKelim Bava Batra 2:2.

27. See Alon, op. cit., p. 262.

Kokhba war, for it is difficult to assume that Rabbi Halafta and Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah were still alive at that time. It is more reasonable to date this event during the period of the revolt against Trajan, even though these two sages were already then extremely advanced in years.

In general it can be stated that Abba Halafta was a native of the city of Sepphoris, and was born in the fourth or fifth decade of the first century. He was in Jerusalem during the time of Rabban Gamaliel; he had an academy in Sepphoris during the time of the Second Temple, or shortly after its destruction, and he was still alive during the revolt against Trajan.

Rabbi Hananiah (Hanina) ben Teradyon

Rabbi Hananiah (or Hanina) ben Teradyon must be mentioned together with Abba Halafta. He was a contemporary of Abba Halafta, but apparently younger, as will be shown below. The tradition that tells of the rules for communal fast-days introduced by Rabbi Halafta in Sepphoris states that they were also introduced by Rabbi Hanina in Sikhnin.²⁸ A *baraita* listing all the courts in Israel from the time of the Chamber of Hewn Stone to the time of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi states: "Justice, justice shall you pursue' [Deut. 16:20] — follow a proper court...said Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon to Sikhni."²⁹ We find that questions are directed to him regarding the ritual cleanness of the *mikveh* of Beit Anat in Lower Galilee.³⁰

Particular to Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon are the traditions regarding the great scholarship of his daughter Beruriah.³¹ She acquired her knowledge in Galilee before the Bar Kokhba war.³²

Various traditions link Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon and his family with events before the Bar Kokhba revolt and during the period of persecutions that followed the revolt. He was one of the Ten Martyrs, and their act of martyrdom took place after the revolt.³³

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah

The *baraita* describing the sages' silent meeting in Sepphoris mentions that they sat in the shop of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah. Many scholars in the field of Jewish history and culture have erred in establishing the period of this sage. In the well-known tradition of the deposition of Rabban Gamaliel from the post of Nasi, which is taught in both Talmuds,³⁴ it is stated that Rabbi

28. See note 19 above.

29. bSanhedrin 32b.

30. tMiqwaot 6:3.

31. tKelim Bava Metzia 1:6 and Bava Qamma 4:17; bPesahim 62b.

32. According to the traditions in the Babylonian Talmud, Beruriah was the wife of Rabbi Meir; however, there is no allusion to this in the Jerusalem Talmud. Beruriah was years older than Rabbi Meir, who was active mainly after the revolt. See S. Safrai, *Eretz Yisrael we-Hakbameha* ("The Land of Israel and Its Sages"; Tel Aviv, 1984), p. 179.

33. See Lamentations Rabbah 13:10; Semahot 12:13, 199–200; see also Alon, op. cit., vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1955), pp. 1–2.

34. jBerakhot 4:7d; bBerakhot 27b–28a.

Eleazar ben Azariah, who was appointed instead of Rabban Gamaliel, was sixteen or eighteen years old at the time.³⁵ These scholars accepted the tradition as a historical fact. Since the deposition occurred shortly after the year 100, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah would then have been born a number of years after the destruction of the Temple.

It is not at all reasonable, however, that the sages would decide to appoint a man so young in place of Rabban Gamaliel, relying upon eighteen rows of his hair miraculously to turn white. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah's "youth" is not a tradition, but rather a quasi-"exposition" of his statement in the Mishnah: "Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah said: 'Behold, I am as a seventy-year-old, and I have not merited'" (Berakhot 1:5). The Gemara interprets this: "I am as a seventy-year-old," and not an actual seventy-year-old," because he was appointed when young, and his hair turned white in order to give him the distinguished appearance of age. But such a statement was also made by Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah without his being the beneficiary of a miracle turning his hair white.³⁶ Furthermore, the passage in the Jerusalem Talmud on the same mishnaic statement³⁷ understands that Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah actually was seventy years old, and comments on his statement, "Even though he attained a high position, he lived a long life."

It can be learned from various sources that he was already an elderly man during the time of the Temple. In Tractate Shabbat, Rabbi Judah states in the name of Rav that each year Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah would set aside as *ma'aser* (tithe) 12,000 calves from his herd. According to the Halakhah, *ma'aser* from animals is not in effect after the destruction of the Temple; it may therefore be assumed that this is a tradition from the Temple period.³⁸ Rabbi Judah relates that Rabbi Eleazar (ben Azariah) purchased a synagogue from Tarsians in Jerusalem, "and he used it for his own purposes" (bMegillah 26a).³⁹ He therefore was an adult who set aside *ma'aser* and purchased a synagogue in Jerusalem. It is related in midrashim of the Land of Israel and in

35. Sixteen according to the Jerusalem Talmud, and eighteen according to the Babylonian Talmud.

36. Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, tract. 1 of *pasha*, sect. 16:59.

37. jBerakhot 1:3d.

38. See bBekhorot 53b; bShabbat 54b. Rabbenu Tam discussed this contradiction in bShabbat 54b, capt. *Hayab Ma'aseb*. The "contradiction" came into existence only because Rabbenu Tam interpreted literally the statement that Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah was eighteen years old at the time of his appointment in place of Rabban Gamaliel.

39. bMegillah 26a. The wording "Rav Eleazar ben Azariah" appears in all the MSS; in the commentary of Rabbenu Hananel in Ravayah, part 2, para. 590, 316; in *Or Zaro'a*, part 2, para. 385 (79c); in Meiri, ad. loc.; in *Teshuvot Maharam mi-Roten burg*, Crimona, para. 165; in tMegillah 2(3):17. In jMegillah 3:71d Rabbi Judah transmits that Rabbi Eleazar ben Rabbi Zadok purchased a synagogue of Alexandrians in Jerusalem. It is possible that this is a different version of the same tradition, or perhaps two different traditions. The same difficulty which was perceived by Rabbenu Tam was also perceived by Lieberman, who proposed a forced answer (*Tosefta Ki-Fsutab: Moed*, p. 1162). He also was forced into this difficulty only because he accepted as historical fact the legend that Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah was appointed at the age of sixteen or eighteen.

jKetuvot⁴⁰ that Rabbi Jose ha-Galili suffered from his wife but could not divorce her because her *get* (writ of divorce) was for a large sum. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, who was visiting in his house and saw this, gave him the money he needed. (This event undoubtedly took place in Galilee.)

To sum up: Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah was a well-to-do, even wealthy, man. He served as an example of a wise and wealthy person,⁴¹ a priest of distinguished lineage⁴² and one of the greatest sages both of his generation and of all times.⁴³ He was present in Jerusalem, like other Galilean families, some of whom we shall mention below. After the destruction of the Temple, he was present in Yavneh; he served at one point as head of the Sanhedrin there, and afterwards as Rabban Gamaliel's deputy. He participated in the delegation of Rabban Gamaliel and other sages that went to Rome;⁴⁴ with them he visited the ruins of Jerusalem.⁴⁵ He originated, however, from Sepphoris in Galilee, where he had a "shop." Like Rabbi Halafta, he also lived a long life, being still alive during the revolt against Trajan. There is no information about him dating from after that revolt.

If we determine that he was born in the fifth decade C.E., then it is possible to arrange all the traditions in chronological order. At the age of twenty-five he stayed in Jerusalem and purchased a synagogue in the city. About the year 100 Rabban Gamaliel was deposed as Nasi and Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah was appointed in his place; he was about 60 years old at the time. He visited Rome and Jerusalem, and lived until the time of the revolt against Trajan, or shortly after it, being then about 70 years old. It should be added that his father, Azariah, also was one of the sages. For when a delegation of sages, which included Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, came to the aged Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas, the latter asked, referring to Eleazar: "And does our colleague Azariah have a son?"⁴⁶

Rabbi Zadok and Elisha ben Avuyah

Similar things can be said about Rabbi Zadok, who was one of the outstanding personalities among the Pharisaic sages in the generation before the destruction of the Temple, in which he served as a priest. While standing on the stairs of the *ulam* in the Temple, he raised his voice against those priests for whom "the ritual uncleanness of a knife for Israel was more severe than

40. Genesis Rabbah 17:152–154; Leviticus Rabbah 34:802–806; jKetuvot 11:34b. The narrative in the Jerusalem Talmud is related concisely, while Genesis Rabbah contains two versions, one long and the other short. This narrative is alluded to by the author of Seder Eliyahu Rabbah 25 (Friedmann ed., p. 139, as the editor saw, n. 30 there).

41. mSotah 9:15; tSotah 15:3; bBerakhot 57b; bKiddushin 49b; bShabbat 54b.

42. jYevamot 1:3b. The tradition regarding his appointment in place of the deposed Rabban Gamaliel stresses that he attained this because of his lineage (Jerusalem Talmud) and his wisdom and his wealth (Babylonian Talmud).

43. tSotah 7:10 (and parallels); Avot de-Rabbi Nathan A:18 (33b); et al.

44. mM'a'aser Shenit 5:9; bSukkah 41b; tBetzah 2:12; Sifrei Numbers 43:94; et al. See also S. Safrai, "Biqqureihem shel Hakhmei Yavneh be-Roma," *Studies in the History of the Jews of Italy in Memory of U.S. Nabon* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 151–167.

45. Sifrei, *ibid.*, 75; bMakkot 24a; Lamentations Rabbah 5:159.

46. bYevamot 16a.

murder.”⁴⁷ He frequently fasted so that Jerusalem would not be destroyed, and he was saved upon the request of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai who greatly honored him.⁴⁸ He served as head of the court when Rabban Gamaliel was the Nasi,⁴⁹ or according to other traditions concerning Rabban Gamaliel.⁵⁰

It may logically be assumed that he was born in Galilee. He sent his son to study under Rabbi Johanan ben ha-Horanit⁵¹ and, it may be assumed, to his place of residence in Transjordan. Rabbi Zadok, who was well-to-do, sent his son olives during years of drought. From Tivon in Lower Galilee he sent questions on matters of ritual cleanness to Yavneh. The wording of the *baraita* implies that these questions had first been brought before Rabbi Zadok:

Rabbi Eleazar the son of Rabbi Zadok said: “Father brought two cases from Tivon to Yavneh...a case involving a certain woman...and they came and asked Rabbi Zadok, and Rabbi Zadok went and asked the sages...once again, a case involving a certain woman and they asked Rabbi Zadok, and Rabbi Zadok went and asked the sages.”⁵²

Tivon was a center of Torah even before Rabbi Zadok, as well as for generations after him. The Mishnah relates: “Rabbi Joshua said, in the name of Abba Jose Holi-Kofri of Tivon.”⁵³ Rabbi Joshua belonged to the generation of the destruction of the Temple. He served in the Temple, and his teachings were heard during the time the Temple was still in existence.⁵⁴ Afterwards he was

47. tYoma 1:12, also 1:4; Sifrei Numbers 141:222; jYoma 2:39d; bYoma 23a.

48. bGittin 56b; Lamentations Rabbah 1:68. According to the Babylonian Talmud, he fasted for forty years so that Jerusalem would not be destroyed. It is stated in Lamentations Rabbah, according to the printed versions, that Vespasian asked Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai why he arose before “this shrivelled old man.” This is the source of the prevalent opinion that Rabbi Zadok was very advanced in years at the time of the destruction of the Temple. In order to match this fact with the other traditions regarding Rabbi Zadok, two “Rabbi Zadoks” were created, a grandfather and a grandson. But there is not necessarily a chronological difficulty. Even if we were to receive as historical the tradition which transmits that Rabbi Zadok fasted for forty years, there is no justification to our accepting as fact that he actually fasted for forty years, for “forty years” is a round number which appears in many places — that is, if he had fasted for only five years or less, the tradition would have related that he had fasted for forty years. Regarding the “shrivelled old man (*sabba tzurata*),” the word *sabba* (old man) does not appear in the Buber edition, nor in He-Arukh, s.v. *Tzaitor* (vol. 3, p. 15). Lamentations Rabbah does not state that he fasted for forty years, only that he was shrivelled from the fasts.

49. tSanhedrin 8:1; jSanhedrin 1:19c.

50. Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, *Yitro*, tractate of Amalek, 1:195; Sifrei Deuteronomy 38:24; bKiddushin 32b. See also bPesahim 37a and 49a.

51. tSukkah 2:3; tEduyot 2:2; bYevamot 15b.

52. tNiddah 4:3–4. See mEduyot 8:4; tEduyot 3:3; tArakhin 11:2.

53. mMakhshirin 1:3, and the interpretation of *halikopri*: a metal merchant (χαλκωπῶλης).

54. See mEduyot 8:4; tEduyot 3:3; tArakhin 11:2.

active in Yavneh.⁵⁵ It may be assumed that Abba Jose Holi-Kofri, in whose name Rabbi Joshua cites a teaching, lived in the generation before Rabbi Joshua, i.e., during the Temple period.

Rabbi Zadok's son, Rabbi Eliezer ben Zadok, who frequently speaks about his father, also was a sage. One tradition states that he and Abba Saul ben Batnit were shopkeepers in Jerusalem, selling oil.⁵⁶ He speaks of Jerusalem before the destruction of the Temple.⁵⁷ His coming from Galilee did not prevent him from living for a certain amount of time in Jerusalem, where he built a synagogue⁵⁸ like other important Galilean families, some of whose sons lived for a period of time in Jerusalem. At any rate, we find him after the destruction of the Temple in Acre.⁵⁹ It is almost certain that he lived where his father had lived, in Tivon.

Next to Rabbi Zadok we must mention Elisha ben Avuyah, the sage who left Judaism for the non-Jewish world and even participated, according to some versions, in persecutions of Israel and its religion, during the time of the Hadrianic persecutions.⁶⁰ A tradition relates that he was born in Jerusalem, the son of one of the leading residents of the city; major sages attended his circumcision, which took place during the Temple period. The traditions of his public teaching of the Torah, before he abandoned Judaism, and his teachings are connected with Galilee: "He would sit and review in Ginnosar."⁶¹

One of the versions in the Midrash reads: "Since he was speaking and expounding in the Chamber of Hewn Stone or in the academy in Tiberias...."⁶² A *baraita* in the Babylonian Talmud, a portion of which is also found in Tractate Semahot, states:

It happened that the father of Rabbi Zadok died in Ginzaq. They informed him three years later. He came and asked Elisha ben Avuyah and the elders with him, and they said: "Observe [the mourning periods of] seven [days] and thirty [days]."⁶³

55. Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai also was in Galilee on his missions. See Avot de-Rabbi Nathan A:12 (28b) and B:13 (ibid.).

56. tBetzah 3:8; jBetzah 3:62b.

57. tMegillah 3(4):15; Semahot 12:5; bSukkah 41a; bPesahim 116a; bBava Batra 14a; bMenahot 40a. He is the sage who spoke most extensively about Jerusalem and the Temple.

58. tMegillah 2(3):17; jMegillah 3:1d.

59. tKetuvot 5:10; jKetuvot 5:30c; bKetuvot 67a; Lamentations Rabbah 1 (43b); Pesiqta Rabbati 29 (140a). The city of Acre is not mentioned in all the parallels.

60. tHagigah 2:3; jHagigah 2:77b-c; bHagigah 15a-b; Ruth Rabbah 6; Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7.

61. Thus in the Jerusalem Talmud and in Ruth Rabbah, Kohelet Zuta 135 and Yalqut Makhiri on Psalms 90:84.

62. In MS Oxford 164. See the edition by M.B. Lerner (dissertation, Hebrew University, 1971), vol. 2, p. 174, and the notes, vol. 3, p. 61.

63. bMoed Katan 20a; bNazir 44a; Semahot 12, 2:194.

We also find “and four elders who were with him.”⁶⁴ That is, he was the colleague of five people, a number that is recurrently cited to denote a limited number of sages. Since Rabbi Zadok lived in Galilee and Elisha ben Avuyah was active as a sage in Galilee, it may be assumed that Rabbi Zadok’s inquiry to Elisha ben Avuyah took place in Galilee. We learn from this that during the time of the Temple, or shortly thereafter (for Rabbi Zadok’s father certainly did not die many years after the destruction of the Temple), he lived in a city in Galilee, apparently Tiberias, was a colleague of sages and taught Torah.

It is certainly possible to construct a chronology for Rabbi Zadok and Elisha ben Avuyah that permits us to include the various traditions about these two figures without having to invent two people by the name of “Rabbi Zadok” as is accepted practice among several scholars.⁶⁵ Rabbi Zadok was born during the years 20–30 C.E. As an adult, between thirty and forty years of age, he totally opposed distorted religious conduct in the Temple, and he also fasted in order to prevent the destruction of the Temple. In the sixties, his son was also present in Jerusalem, selling oil and purchasing a synagogue. They returned to Galilee after the destruction of the Temple. During these years (approximately 80–85), when he was fifty-five to sixty years old, his father died. Elisha ben Avuyah, who was already an outstanding sage by this time,⁶⁶ was sitting with a group of sages in Galilee when Rabbi Zadok came to ask him to rule on a point of practical law. During this period Rabbi Zadok went to Yavneh, and when Rabban Gamaliel became head of the Sanhedrin, he sat next to him; he was not older than seventy at the time.

During the later years of Rabban Gamaliel’s activity, about the year 100, we hear no more of Rabbi Zadok. The tradition reporting the deposition of Rabban Gamaliel⁶⁷ speaks of Rabbi Zadok; however, he is mentioned in connection with an event that had occurred in the past, and he himself was not present. Similarly, he is not mentioned in any of the many meetings of the sages that took place during the time of Rabban Gamaliel or after his death.

Rabbi Jose ben Kisma

Rabbi Jose ben Kisma is another sage who is connected with Tiberias. As we see from the traditions about him and his relations with his contemporaries, he was one of the well-known sages in his generation, although very few of his teachings are extant. All the traditions about him which are related to a

64. Thus in the *baraita* in bNazir.

65. This interpretation was already offered by Rabbi Jacob Emden in his annotations on bMoed Katan 20a, and by many scholars after him. They raised this only because they followed the version in Babylonian Talmud, understanding it literally. According to this it follows that he already was very old during the time of the Temple. As we have clarified, however, there is no basis for this determination. See note 48 above.

66. We can learn of Elisha ben Avuyah’s uniqueness from his aggadic dicta (Avot 4:20; Avot de-Rabbi Nathan A:24 and B:34), and from the fact that one of the outstanding sages, Rabbi Meir, a central figure in the Mishnah, remained loyal to Elisha ben Avuyah even after he “went forth from his world.” See the sources listed in note 60.

67. jBerakhot 4:7c–d; bBerakhot 27b–28a; see also bBekhorot 36a.

specific place or which explicitly mention a place name are connected with Galilee, especially with Tiberias and its environs.

When the teaching of Torah was prohibited and he disagreed with Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon's defiance of the edict, it seems he was the sage asked by Rabbi Hanina: "How do I stand with respect to the World to Come?" Rabbi Jose ben Kisma died during that period of persecutions, and all the leaders of Rome came to his grave.⁶⁸ It is safe to assume that this dispute between Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon (of the city of Sakhnin) and Rabbi Jose ben Kisma was conducted in Galilee, and "the leaders of Rome" refers to the rulers of Tiberias or Sepphoris. Other traditions which we shall cite explicitly mention places in Galilee.

The Mishnah speaks of a problem of Sabbath law concerning which the sages disagreed, relating that "It once happened in the synagogue in Tiberias that they treated it as permitted, until Rabban Gamaliel came and the Elders prohibited them," or the opposite according to the opinion of one sage (mEruvin 10:10). The sources relate about this event⁶⁹ that the disagreement was so sharp it led to physical violence until they tore (in another version: was torn)⁷⁰ a Torah Scroll in their anger. Rabbi Jose ben Kisma, who was present, said: "I should wonder if this synagogue will not become a place of idolatry." There was a synagogue in Tiberias which was visited by Rabban Gamaliel and the Elders. It seems that after this visit the dispute erupted on this question, and Rabbi Jose ben Kisma was present at the time.

It is possible that he merely happened to be in Tiberias on that occasion. However, in the chapter "Acquisition of the Torah" which is appended to Tractate Avot, Rabbi Jose ben Kisma relates:

Once I was walking along the way, when a man met me and greeted me, and I returned his greeting. He said to me, "My master, where do you come from?" I said to him, "I come from a great city of sages and scholars." He said to me, "My master, do you wish to dwell with us in our place? I will give you a million golden dinars and precious stones and pearls." I said to him, "My son, if you were to give me all the silver and gold and precious stones and pearls in the world, I would not dwell anywhere except in a place of Torah." (Avot 6:9)

It may be assumed that his "great city" was Tiberias, where there was a synagogue. This is a proof that it was a city of Torah before the Bar Kokhba revolt.

68. bAvodah Zarah 18a.

69. bYevamot 96b; jSheqalim 2:47a. The Jerusalem Talmud does not mention Tiberias, but rather the synagogue of the Tarsians. This refers, however, to the mishnaic statement in Eruvin, in which Tiberias is mentioned. We may possibly conclude that this refers to a synagogue of Tarsians (after the name of the city Tarsus, or after the profession — artistic weavers) in Tiberias. The passage in the Jerusalem Talmud does not mention the name of the city Tiberias because the incident in which the tradition is placed took place in Tiberias in a conversation among Rabbi Elhanan, Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedat, Rabbi Ammi and Rabbi Assi, all of whom were Tiberian sages in the second half of the third century. They therefore mentioned only that this occurred in the synagogue of the Tarsians. The Jerusalem Talmud version is also found in Yalqut Makhiri on Psalm 61:3 (156a).

70. Thus according to the emendation of the text in the two Talmuds.

Even if we disregard the rhetoric of “a great city of sages and scholars,” we are still left with testimony that Tiberias was the residence of sages.

A tradition in Midrash Tanhuma reads:

It once happened that Rabbi Jose ben Kisma and Rabbi Ilai and their disciples were walking about in Tiberias. He said to Rabbi Jose: “When will the son of David come?”...“I say to you, at the time when Tiberias falls and is rebuilt”...“From where do we know this?” He said to them: “Behold, the cave of Pameas [Panaes] turns from side to side, in accordance with his words.”⁷¹

Rabbi Ilai, too, belonged to the generation before the Bar Kokhba revolt, but he came from Usha in Galilee, as we shall see below. In this account he has gone to Rabbi Jose ben Kisma in Tiberias where they walk with their disciples and talk about the coming of the son of David, bringing examples from geographic features of the area.

Infrequently Mentioned Sages

We just saw Rabbi Ilai walking about in Tiberias. The sources do not state where he resided, but from the fact that his son Rabbi Judah, one of the most frequently mentioned sages in tannaitic literature, was from the city Usha,⁷² it may be assumed that the father came from the same city. Rabbi Ilai came at times to Yavneh, and tells of his meetings with the sages of Yavneh.⁷³ He was the outstanding disciple of Rabbi Eliezer (ben Hyrcanus) ha-Shammuti,⁷⁴ and once when he came to his teacher on the festival of Sukkot, the latter was not pleased and chastized him for leaving his home on the holiday.⁷⁵ He accompanied Rabban Gamaliel on his visits to Galilee.⁷⁶

We know more details about Rabbi Johanan ben Nuri, who is mentioned in many traditions about the Yavneh generation; he even played a role in the leadership of the Sanhedrin in Yavneh.⁷⁷ He, too, was a disciple of Rabbi Eliezer ha-Shammuti and cites teachings in his name.⁷⁸ It appears from many traditions that he was from Galilee, going back and forth between Galilee and Yavneh.⁷⁹ We can also establish that he resided in Beit Shearim.⁸⁰

71. Tanhuma, *wa-yishalah* 8 (Buber ed., 83b). This tradition is to be found also in bSanhedrin 98a, but the latter source does not explicitly mention the name of the city Tiberias. We copy from the more complete version in Yalqut Makhiri on Obadiah, published by M. Gaster in *Revue des Etudes Juives* 25 (1892), 63–64. We find in the MSS that the passage is taken from Tanhuma. It was reprinted in Yalqut Makhiri, published by A.W. Greenup (London, 1909), p. 4.

72. Song of Songs Rabbah 2; Semahot 11, 4:188; tMegillah 2:8; et al.

73. tPeah 3:2; bPesahim 38b; et al.

74. tZevahim 2:16–17; bMenahot 18a.

75. tSukkah 2:1 and parallels in the Talmuds.

76. tPesahim 2 (1):15; jAvodah Zarah 1:40a; bEruvin 64b.

77. Sifrei Deuteronomy 16:26 (see note by Finkelstein, *ibid.*); bEruvin 41a; Sifrei Deuteronomy 1:4; et al.

78. tOrlah 3:8; bKiddushin 39a; tKelim Bava Qamma 6:3; et al.

79. See above and note 21.

Rabbi Eleazar ben Parta is mentioned a number of times in tannaitic literature together with the sages of Yavneh, but especially with those of Galilee.⁸¹ He was seized by the authorities together with Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon, but released.⁸² His residence was apparently in Sepphoris, for it was stated⁸³ that when “evil decrees arrived from the authorities [on the Sabbath] for the great ones of Sepphoris,” they came to Rabbi Eleazar ben Parta for advice.⁸⁴

Rabbi Eleazar ben Teradyon is mentioned once, in a question he asked of the sages.⁸⁵ Since the name “Teradyon” otherwise appears only in reference to Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon, scholars assume that they were brothers.⁸⁶ In the parallel to this question in the Jerusalem Talmud and the Tosefta, the name “Rabbi Eleazar ben Tadaï”⁸⁷ occurs; this sage is mentioned several times in Halakhah and Aggadah, together with sages of the Yavneh generation.⁸⁸

Another sage, “Rabbi Jose ben Tadaï of Tiberias,” is mentioned only once. In a question he asked of Rabban Gamaliel, he attempted to ridicule the *qal wa-homer* form of proof: “And Rabban Gamaliel excommunicated him.”⁸⁹

We must add Rabbi Zakkai of Kavul to the list of Galilee sages who were active during or shortly before the Yavneh generation. He is mentioned only a few times. Genealogists of the Tannaim and Amoraim usually list him much later among the sages in the first generation of Amoraim, for Tractate Semahot relates that Judah and Hillel, sons of Rabban Gamaliel, went to Rabbi Zakkai in Kavul (Semahot 8:4). Talmudic literature mentions a number of stories connected with the visit to Galilee of those two brothers.⁹⁰ Since they are commonly assumed to have been sons of the Rabban Gamaliel who was the son of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi and followed him as Nasi around the year 220–225, their visit to Rabbi Zakkai in Kavul would have occurred during the first generation of Amoraim. Elsewhere,⁹¹ however, we have shown that they are sons of Rab-

80. tTerumah 7:14; tSukkah 2:2. Regarding the formulation, see S. Safrai, “Beit Shearim ba-Sifrut ha-Talmudit” (“Beit Shearim in the Talmudic Literature”), *Eretz Yisrael* 5 (1959), 208 and n. 17.

81. Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, *ba-bodesh* 2:210; Avot de-Rabbi Nathan A:32 (47a); et al.

82. bAvodah Zarah 17b.

83. Tanhuma, *masei* 1 (Buber ed., 81a).

84. Thus in the printed editions. This is also what may be assumed from the issue itself, for the question is when may a person who is persecuted by the non-Jews desecrate the Sabbath: the answer is that he may flee, and mention is made of the narrative regarding Rabbi Eleazar ben Parta, who hinted to them to flee.

85. jGittin 7:48d.

86. See Büchler, p. 200.

87. jSotah 1:16c; tGittin 5(7):4.

88. jShabbat 1:5d; bShabbat 123a; bEruvin 71b; Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, *shirab* 1:119.

89. Tractate Derekh Eretz 1. In the Higger edition of the Tosefta, Derekh Eretz 3:267. Büchler, *ibid.*, erroneously joined this to Rabbi Eliezer ben Tadaï. Regarding the exchange Teradyon–Tadion–Taddai, see Y. M. Epstein, “Perurim Talmudiyim” (“Talmudic Crumbs”), *Tarbiz* 3 (1932), 111.

90. See below.

91. See Shmuel and Ze'ev Safrai, “Beit Anat,” *Sinai* 40 (1976), 18–34, especially pp. 21–22.

ban Gamaliel of Yavneh, who came from Judea to Galilee to visit several places such as Beit Anat, Biri and Kavul.

They encounter the strict practice of the inhabitants of Galilee. Out of respect and politeness, however, they do not tell them that the things the Galileans forbid are permitted, but rather accept upon themselves the strict Galilean practice. During their visit they are received in Kavul by Rabbi Zakkai, who is known to us from one law that is transmitted in his name and from a sermon he delivered at the funeral of the son of one of "the great ones of Kavul" who died during a wedding feast.⁹²

Rabbi Jose ha-Galili

The last on our list is Rabbi Jose ha-Galili, whom scholars commonly assume to have been the only sage to come from Galilee and who was therefore called "ha-Galili," meaning "of Galilee." As we have seen, however, he was far from being the only one. His appellation "ha-Galili" may instead be understood to mean that he came from the city of Galil. This was a settlement in Upper Galilee which is mentioned in the list of the markers of the boundaries of the Land of Israel in a *baraita*, where it appears in its Aramaic form as "the fort of Galila."⁹³ Its name in Arabic is Jalil. It is located about eight miles to the northeast of the village of al-Kabri, which is mentioned before it in the list. This was an especially large settlement during the later Roman period.⁹⁴

He is, however, the Galilean sage from the Yavneh period who is mentioned the most often in tannaitic literature, and is frequently mentioned in the meetings of the "premier speakers" during the Yavneh period, whether in Yavneh or in Lod. He is also mentioned extensively regarding his teaching in Galilee and his meetings with people in Galilee, just as he cites teachings by sages from Galilee and vice versa.⁹⁵ From the extensive and fine literary material on Rabbi Jose ha-Galili's first appearance in Yavneh, it is clear that by

92. Leviticus Rabbah 2:451.

93. tShevi'it 4:11 (and parallels). The name "Katzra de-Galila" is found in all the parallels in the literature, including in the mosaic floor found in the Beit Shean valley near Tel Rehov. See Y. Sussman, "Ketovet Hilkhait me-Emek Beit-Shean" ("A Halakhic Inscription from the Beit Shean Valley"), *Tarbiz* 43 (1973-4), 158.

94. An archaeological report of relatively broad scope is to be found in V. Guerin, *Description de la Palestine, Galilée* (Paris, 1880), vol. 7, part 3, t. 2, p. 157. The main thrust of his comments are cited almost verbatim in the British *Survey of Western Palestine*, vol. 1 (1981), p. 154. A short report on the site was also written by Tzvi Gitzov, in M. Yedayah ed., *Ma'aravo shel Galil* ("The West of Galilee"; 1961), p. 53. A more comprehensive description was written by Tzvi Ilan: "Hurvav Galil — Zihuyah u-Mimtz'a'eha" ("The Ruins of Galil — Its Identification and Finds"), in M. Yedayah ed., *Kadmoniyot ha-Galil ha-Ma'aravi* ("Antiquities of Western Galilee"; Haifa, 1986), pp. 516-520. Even during later periods when Galilee was the center of Judaism and of Torah study, there were sages who were named after the city of Galil. See jShabbat 3:6a; bShabbat 46a; jBerakhot 3:6a; et al.

95. mAvodah Zarah 3:5; tGittin 7 (9):1; tMiqwaot 7:11; tOrlah 1:8; bMoed Qatan 28b; et al.

then he was already an outstanding sage who astounded the sages of Yavneh with his knowledge and sharpness.⁹⁶

The Mishnah discusses whether poultry is prohibited with milk (Hullin 8:1,4). Beit Shammai are among the lenient and allow that poultry may be brought to the table together with cheese. Rabbi Jose ha-Galili is still more lenient, holding that it may even be eaten together with cheese.⁹⁷ The Babylonian Talmud, commenting on this issue,⁹⁸ relates that in Rabbi Jose ha-Galili's home they would "eat the meat of poultry in milk." It adds that Levi, the disciple of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, stated that in Babylonia he came to the home of a well-known person where he was served poultry in milk. When asked by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi why he had not excommunicated them for this disregard of the law, Levi explained that this was the home of Rabbi Judah ben Batyra, whom he assumed to be following the opinion of Rabbi Jose ha-Galili.

We may draw several conclusions from this story. Rabbi Jose ha-Galili had influence and standing, for in his home they ruled and practiced in accordance with his opinion. The well-known Babylonian sage Rabbi Judah ben Batyra apparently also instituted Rabbi Jose ha-Galili's practices in his home. We also learn that "ha-Galili" indeed does not mean a Galilean, but rather is a reference to a specific location as suggested above. If it had been the general practice in Galilee to eat poultry with milk, Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi would not have wondered at Levi's not having excommunicated them for such a practice, especially since Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi was born and was active in Galilee. "Ha-Galili" therefore refers to a specific place in Galilee; it is possible that during the time of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (approximately 100 years after Rabbi Jose ha-Galili), this local practice had already vanished.

Had the eating of poultry with milk been a general Galilean practice, it would have been reflected more extensively in the literature, and it need not have vanished by the time of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi. But the local practice of the city of Galil, lying at the end of the northern boundary of Upper Galilee, could have more quickly been forgotten or almost forgotten with the spread of the law in accordance with Beit Hillel at the end of the Yavneh period.⁹⁹ Beit Hillel held that poultry may not even be brought to the table together with cheese.¹⁰⁰

Nor should sweeping conclusions be drawn from the expression "foolish Galilean" which Beruriah applied to Rabbi Jose ha-Galili when he spoke excessively in her presence.¹⁰¹ Even if this expression is a denigration applied to

96. Sifrei Numbers 118:141. In his commentary on Is. 8:14, Jerome includes Rabbi Jose ha-Galili in his short list of the greatest Tannaim. See A. Geiger, "Über Judentum und Christentum," *Jüdische Zeitschrift* 5 (1867), 273.

97. Regarding this issue, see bHullin 116a. Rabbi Jose ha-Galili's opinion is also held by a sage named Apikulos in tHullin 8:2 (he is not mentioned elsewhere in our literature).

98. bHullin 116a; Yevamot 14a.

99. See S. Safrai, "Ha-Hakhra'ah ke-Veit Hillel" ("The Decision in Accordance with Beit Hillel"), in *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 27-44.

100. mHullin 5:1; mEduyot 5:2.

101. bEruvin 53b.

Galilee as a whole,¹⁰² we cannot draw conclusions regarding the Jewish cultural reality of Galilee. First, it must be stated that Beruriah herself was a Galilean. Second, even if we infer that this was an idiomatic expression, it is not of great significance, for in all cultures and among all peoples the inhabitants of certain regions show habitual scorn for the inhabitants of others. We cannot learn from such appellations about the real characteristics of their targets, and certainly not when all the historical facts prove the opposite.

Rabbi Jose ha-Galili's contemporaries, including central figures of the Oral Torah such as Rabbi Akiva, speak extensively of and are impressed by his sharpness and wisdom. He is also to be found in the most important gatherings of the sages of Yavneh in which basic elements of tannaitic thought were formulated.¹⁰³ Thus he was certainly no "fool," even if the question he put to Beruriah could, in her opinion, have been stated in a more concise manner.

Summary

The above list of sages is not complete. Others could be added, either with complete certainty or as a reasonable possibility. When we compiled¹⁰⁴ a list of the sages known to us from the first century until the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt, noting alongside each one his place of origin or activity (when there is mention of it in the sources), it became clear that if Jerusalem is excluded, most of the sages about whom there is evidence of their origin and activity either were Galileans or were especially active in Galilee.

Torah Study in Galilee

We shall now turn to the evidence of Torah study in Galilee, whether in small groups of pupils or among the public at large. In the talmudic tradition there are very few references from the Second Temple period to public Torah study outside Jerusalem, apart from the context of the reading of the Torah in the synagogue. Yet there undoubtedly was study by groups of pupils, and teachers and pupils, throughout the Land of Israel. Evidence of this is found in an early saying by one of the first Pairs of Sages: "Let your house be a meeting place for the sages, and sit amidst the dust of their feet" (Avot 1:4).

102. In the same passage in bEruvin 53b. It should be mentioned once again that the expression "foolish Galilean," in its Aramaic form, was applied to a merchant who came to sell his wares in Judea and said "*amar* to someone." It was not clear whether he meant *bamar* (for in the Galilean accent there was no distinction between the letter *bet* and the letter *ayin*) for drinking (wine), or *bamar* (wool) for riding; or *amar* (with the initial letter *ayin*, wool). It is possible that the later passage used Beruriah's expression, but it is also possible that this was an expression in general use. We can learn nothing from this, because the lack of differentiation between the letters *alef*, *ayin* and *bet* is not enough to prove a poor cultural state (see below). See Y.N. Epstein, *Mavo le-Nusah ha-Mishnah* ("Introduction to the Text of the Mishnah"; Jerusalem, 1948), part 1, pp. 183–185.

103. Sifrei Deuteronomy 41:85. See notes 90–91 above.

104. With the assistance of my son Ze'ev.

Permanent Academies

There are very few hints to the existence of a permanent academy outside Jerusalem during the Temple period. One hint comes in a portion of Sifrei Zuta from the Genizah, which mentions "Edomite pupils from Beit Shammai," i.e., ones who resided in the South.¹⁰⁵ That group of pupils outside of Jerusalem may be assumed to date from the time of the disagreements between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel, that is from before the destruction of the Temple. There is evidence of a gathering of sages in Jericho,¹⁰⁶ but not of the permanent residence of a sage outside Jerusalem.

In fact, the sole definite evidence of a permanent academy is the statement cited above about the residence of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai in Arav, in Lower Galilee. According to the statement by the Amora Ulla, he lived there for eighteen years and complained that not many people came to him to ask regarding the law. Even if we do not accept as fact the figure of eighteen years, we nevertheless have here a tradition of a prolonged residence in Arav. As we have seen, Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, a sage who was already active during the time of the Temple, having brought a gift to the Temple with the miraculous aid of angels,¹⁰⁷ sat before him.

Teachers and Pupils

There are numerous testimonies regarding the teaching of Torah in all parts of Galilee in the generation after the destruction of the Temple. At least a portion of these testimonies is undoubtedly a continuation of the reality preceding the destruction, and only testimonies of that kind will be mentioned here.

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was one of the sages with numerous ties to Galilee. Although he came from the South where his property was located,¹⁰⁸ we find him several times in Galilee where he had disciples. When he was suspected of being a Christian, arrested by the authorities and released, he acknowledged the rightness of the judgment, for he remembered that once he had been walking in the public road of Sepphoris and began to talk with Jacob of Kefar Siklirin, who transmitted to him a teaching in the name of "Jeshua Panteri," that is, Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁰⁹ This incident may date from the time of the Temple, for he speaks as of something done many years previously when tension with the Jewish Christians was not great and a sage could have stopped to hear a teaching in the name of Jesus. Almost certainly the main purpose of his walking in the public road of Sepphoris was to teach Torah, as is witnessed by the traditions we shall cite below.

105. A portion from the Genizah published by Y.N. Epstein in *Tarbiz* 1 (1930), 70. See *ibid.*, n. 17, and the introduction, pp. 52–53.

106. tSotah 3:3; jSotah 9:24b; bSotah 48b.

107. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1; Song of Songs Rabbah 1.

108. bSanhedrin 32b; tSukkah 2:1; Midrash on Psalms 25:13 (107b); et al. Regarding his property in the region, see tMa'aser Sheni 5:16.

109. tHullin 2:24; bAvodah Zarah 16b.

The Tosefta states: "It once happened that Rabbi Eliezer was reclining in the *sukkah* of [Rabbi]¹¹⁰ Johanan ben Ilai in Caesaria"¹¹¹ (tSukkah 2:9).¹¹² A tradition of similar content, ascribed to "the rabbis," relates:

It once happened that Rabbi Eliezer, who resided in Upper Galilee, was asked thirty laws of the laws of the *sukkah*. Regarding twelve of them he told them, "I heard," and regarding eighteen he said, "I did not hear." Rabbi Jose the son of Rabbi Judah says the opposite. Regarding eighteen things he said to them, "I heard," regarding twelve things he said to them, "I did not hear." (bSukkah 28a)

Here are a group of pupils in Upper Galilee who ask many questions, some of which Rabbi Eliezer was not capable of answering. Although it not stated, almost certainly the discussion took place on or close to the festival of Sukkot, and they asked him topical questions.

Elsewhere in the Tosefta (tKelim Bava Metzia 2:1, and in the parallel passage in bShabbat 52b) we read: "One of the pupils from the pupils of Upper Galilee said in the presence of Rabbi Eliezer...." Further (ibid., 2:2): "One of the pupils from the pupils of Upper Galilee also said...." and Rabbi Eliezer corrects the teaching they had heard. While these may be traditions from a visit of Rabbi Eliezer's pupils to their teacher in Lod, they could come from his previously mentioned visit, or another one, to Upper Galilee when his pupils discussed laws in his presence.

In either event, clear evidence of a concentration of a large number of knowledgeable pupils in Galilee occurs in a tradition found only in the Babylonian Talmud.¹¹³ The administrator of King Agrippa inquired of Rabbi Eliezer the details of the laws of dwelling in the *sukkah*, including the question: "I have two wives, one in Tiberias and one in Sepphoris, and I have two *sukkot*, one in Tiberias and one in Sepphoris...." The reference is certainly to Agrippa II who ruled in Galilee and whose administrator lived in Tiberias and in Sepphoris, the two leading Jewish cities in Galilee. Almost certainly, too, those questions about the laws of the *sukkah* were posed during Rabbi Eliezer's visit in Galilee on or close to the Festival of Sukkot. The questions asked by the administrator are not those of an uneducated person. The reply of Rabbi Eliezer expresses his own strict opinion on the issues, whereas the majority of the sages did not obligate the eating of fourteen meals in the *sukkah*, nor did they obligate the eating of all the meals in one *sukkah*.¹¹⁴

Several legal traditions are connected with Rabbi Eliezer's going to Ovelin in Lower Galilee. In the Tosefta, at the beginning of Eruvin: "It once happened that Rabbi Eliezer went to Joseph ben Perida, to Ovelin"; and: "It once happened that Rabbi Eliezer went to his pupil Rabbi Jose ben Perida, to Ovelin"

110. Thus in MS London and in the Rishonim. At any rate it seems that he was a sage, and the deed he performed of spreading a sheet over the *sukkah* against the sun corresponds to the statement in mSukkah 1:3; see also Tosafot 10a, *Pires alav sadin*.

111. In bSukkah 27b: "In Upper Galilee, in the *sukkah* of Johanan ben Rabbi Ilai, in Kesari, or as some say, in Kesarion."

112. And in the parallel in bSukkah 27b.

113. bSukkah 27a.

114. See ibid., 27b. Regarding his identification, see below.

(bEruvin 11b and jEruvin 1:19a). Here, too, he is stringent, in keeping with his opinion. In Tractate Tefillin (Higger ed., p. 48): “It once happened that Rabbi Eliezer went to Ovelif[n] to one householder. He was accustomed to immerse in a cave.... He said to him: ‘My master, the water in this cave is better than that of this one.’” In Ovelin, accordingly, there was not only a pupil of Rabbi Eliezer, but even an ordinary householder who practiced ritual purity and immersed in a cave.

We have already discussed whether Elisha ben Avuyah taught Torah in the academy in Tiberias, citing the tradition that he sat and taught in the valley of Ginosar.¹¹⁵ It reflects the prevalent reality in the world of the sages during the Temple period and following its destruction, with them sitting and teaching Torah in every possible place — in the academy or outside, in the garden, on the road, “under the fig tree” or “under the olive tree,” and in the marketplace.¹¹⁶ A sage came from this same Ginosar and asked a legal question of the sages in Yavneh: “Rabbi Jose said: ‘Jonathan ben Harsha of Ginosar asked in the presence of the Elders in Yavneh regarding the case of two tufts of hemp....’”¹¹⁷ In the continuation of this same *baraita*, Jonathan of Ginosar asks about additional details, all on the subject of ritual purity and impurity. Another source mentions a law concerning *ma’aserot*, where once again Rabbi Jose of Sepphoris testifies: “Jonathan ben Harsha of Ginosar asked Rabban Gamaliel and the sages in Yavneh.” These two questions are asked by an outstanding sage from Galilee of the sages during the period of Rabban Gamaliel in Yavneh.¹¹⁸

It is noted in several places in the Babylonian Talmud that Amoraim are proud to be “like Ben Azzai in the marketplace of Tiberias,” that is like his teaching of Torah in that place.¹¹⁹ Ben Azzai was one of the sages of Yavneh, but the marketplace of Tiberias provided a broad venue for his activity. It can be assumed that this was part of the ongoing reality of a place in which Torah was taught.

We also find, regarding Rabbi Jose ha-Galili, that “One time Rabbi Jose ha-Galili was sitting and expounding on the [red] heifer in Tiberias, and Rabbi Simeon ben Hanina was sitting with him.”¹²⁰ The continuation makes it clear that this was not an exposition of trite, well-known matters, but rather novel interpretations and a scriptural exposition of the laws of the red heifer.

Rabbinic Courts

Twice there is mention in the tannaitic tradition of courts of sages — which were also academies — in Galilee during or before the Yavneh generation. We

115. See above and notes 61–62. Regarding his identification, see below.

116. bMoed Qatan 16a–b; see A. Büchler, “Learning and Teaching in Open Air in Palestine,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 4 (1914), 485–491.

117. tKelim Bava Batra 3:6.

118. jMa’aserot 1:48d.

119. bEruvin 29a; bSotah 48a; bKiddushin 20a; bArakhin 30b. Cf. jBikkurim 2:65a.

120. Sifrei Zuta 302. Ibid., p. 305, there is an additional reference to the group of sages, and “Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob sits and expounds regarding the [red] heifer in Tiberias.” This latter incident, however, occurred after the Bar Kokhba Revolt.

mentioned above the court of Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon in Sakhnin, and of Elisha ben Avuyah. To these reports we must add the testimony of Rabbi Simeon Shezori.¹²¹ “Rabbi [Simeon Shezori]¹²² said, ‘Father’s household was one of the households in [Upper]¹²³ Galilee. And why were they destroyed? Because they grazed in forests and judged monetary lawsuits before a single judge.’”

Although Rabbi Simeon Shezori here seeks to list the faults or sins of his father’s household that led to its destruction, those “sins” did not exceed the normative behavior of the sages. There were sages who judged monetary lawsuits with only a single judge,¹²⁴ and there were sages in the Yavneh generation who made light of the prohibition against raising “small cattle” (sheep and goats) in the Land of Israel. Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, whom we have found in Galilee where he had pupils, evaded answering the question whether it is prohibited to raise small cattle.¹²⁵ Rabbi Simeon Shezori’s ascription of supposed sins to his father’s household does not diminish the fact of the existence of a court in Upper Galilee, which was a place of teaching and study.

Rabbi Simeon Shezori may be included among the generation of the sages of Usha in Galilee, for we have found him disagreeing with the sages of the Usha generation¹²⁶ although he was older than them. He says of an incident that happened to him, “and I asked Rabbi Tarfon,”¹²⁷ and Rabbi Jose ben Kippar transmits in his name.¹²⁸ The story about his father’s household may refer to the period of destruction in Galilee during the Bar Kokhba revolt.¹²⁹ But it may instead have an earlier reference, for he speaks of an event belonging to the past, and the “householders” had been destroyed mainly during the war that accompanied the destruction of the Temple.

121. tBava Qamma 8:17; bBava Qamma 80a; jSotah 9:24a.

122. Thus as correct in MS Vienna, in first ed. of the Tosefta, and in MS Hamburg of the Babylonian Talmud and in Maharshal, citing other books; and similarly in the Jerusalem Talmud.

123. Thus in the printed editions of the Babylonian Talmud, and MS Vatican and Maharshal, citing other books. Similarly, it seems that Shezor is on the boundary between Lower and Upper Galilee; Rabbi Simeon Shezori speaks of his family’s properties which were in Upper Galilee.

124. See the passage in bSanhedrin 4b–5a and jSanhedrin 1:18b.

125. tYevamot 3:1. See G. Alon, *Toledot ha-Yehudim be-Eretz Yisrael bi Tokufat ha Mishnah ve-ha-Talmud* (“History of the Jews in the Land of Israel During the Period of the Mishnah and the Talmud”; Tel Aviv, 1967), vol. 1, p. 174.

126. mKelim 18:1; mTaharot 3:2, et al.

127. jDemai 5:24d.

128. tShevi’it 2:5; bRosh Ha-Shanah 13b. Rabbi Jose ben Kippar was sent, shortly after the Bar Kokhba revolt, to persuade Hananiah, the nephew of Rabbi Joshua, to stop independently intercalating years and proclaiming new months in Babylonia, but instead to rely upon the sages in the Land of Israel (bBerakhot 63a). By that time he already was a sage whose opinion was heeded.

129. See Alon, *Toledot ha-Yehudim*, p. 19.

Summary

Whether or not there were many permanent academies of Torah study in Galilee before the destruction of the Second Temple, we have seen that there was undoubtedly widespread and serious interest in clarifying issues of Halakhah. Rabbis visiting from elsewhere would find an audience in public places, as well as being engaged in discussions by the local sages and groups of pupils.

Galilean Attachment to Judaism

Now we shall consider the question of the attachment of Galileans to observance of the commandments of Judaism and to Jewish cultural life. In this category fall also the connections between Galilee and the Temple worship and the similarities in halakhic practice between Galilee and Jerusalem. We shall see that in all those respects the attachment to Judaism in Galilee, far from being uncultured and ignorant, was marked and exemplary.

Galilee, Jerusalem and the Temple

We may start with the halakhic similarities that linked Galilee with Jerusalem. Scholars¹³⁰ have already noted that regarding marriage practices and the degree of obligation of the husband, the Galileans adopted fine and praiseworthy customs, like those of the men of Jerusalem in contrast with those of the men of Judea. Special note should be taken of the practice of Jerusalemites and Galileans alike to promise in the *ketubbah* (marriage contract) that the widow was to be maintained and could live in her husband's house for as long as she wished, in contrast to the practice of the men of Judea who gave the heirs the right to free themselves from their obligation by the payment of the money of the *ketubbah*. The Jerusalem Talmud adds regarding this practice: "The Galileans [and with them the men of Jerusalem] had consideration for their honor and did not have consideration for their money; the men of Judea had consideration for their money and did not have consideration for their honor."¹³¹

A similar statement regarding funeral practices is quoted from Rabbi Judah:

In Jerusalem they would say, "Do [good] before your bier," and in Judea they would say, "Do [good] after your bier." But in Jerusalem they would recite only the actual deeds of the deceased before his bier, while in Judea they would state things that applied to him, and things that did not apply to him.¹³²

In other words, in Jerusalem they would say that if a person wanted others to praise him at his funeral, he should perform good deeds before he died, for in Jerusalem they were particular to praise the dead person only regarding things he had actually done. In this as well, the Galileans acted as the people of

130. Alon, *ibid.*, p. 321, et al.

131. mKetuvot 4:12; jKetuvot 29b. Regarding other wedding practices in which the Galileans followed the practices of the Jerusalemites, see tKetuvot 1:4; jKetuvot 1:29a; bKetuvot 12a. All the practices of Galilee are more refined and better than those in Judea.

132. Semahot 3:6 111–112.

Jerusalem: "Galileans say, 'Do things before your bier,' the men of Judea say, 'Do things after your bier.'"133

It goes without saying that when the talmudic traditions speak of the practices of Jerusalem, they refer to the time prior to the destruction of the Temple. The adoption by the Galileans of those practices testifies not only to the level of Jewish cultural life in this region during the first century, but also to the strong ties between Galilee and Jerusalem, of which we learn from many sources. Those ties indeed expressed themselves in many spheres. Since the facts concerned have been stated in the scholarly literature,¹³⁴ we shall restrict ourselves to a short listing of the sources, adding comments as required.

Talmudic tradition mentions only two instances in which someone replaced the High Priest for the Yom Kippur service because the latter had become ritually unclean. Rabbi Jose relates: "It once happened that Joseph ben Ilim of Sepphoris served as High Priest for a short time."¹³⁵ This is also mentioned by Josephus,¹³⁶ from whose statement we learn that the High Priest at the time was Mattathias ben Theophilus, who served during the years 5–4 B.C.E., at the end of the reign of Herod the Great. Josephus further relates that this Joseph ben Ilim (Ἰώσηπος ὁ τοῦ Ἑλλήνου) was a relative of the High Priest. Important for our discussion is the Galilean connection of the person who substituted in that important function.

The Mishnah further relates, regarding the leading of the goat for Azazel:¹³⁷

All are fit to lead it, but the High Priests would make a fixed [practice], and they would not let an Israelite lead it. Rabbi Jose said: "It once happened that Arsela [of Sepphoris] led it, and he was an Israelite."¹³⁸

The High Priests, viewing this as an important part of the Yom Kippur service, made a fixed practice of reserving it for the priests. Previously, however, there was an occurrence in which an Israelite from Sepphoris was permitted to perform this work. There was also an occurrence in which a priest acted improperly in the distribution of the showbread: "It once happened that one priest from Sepphoris took his portion and the portion of his fellow."¹³⁹

Various traditions from the Land of Israel in the Jerusalem Talmud and in Lamentations Rabbah¹⁴⁰ teach of the special ties of three cities in Lower Galilee — Kavul, Sikhnin and Migdal Zevaya — which would contribute large quantities of gifts to the Temple. Similarly the people of Arav would "make votive offerings and free-will offerings." Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, who saw

133. bShabbat 153a; see the commentary by Rashi, loc. cit.

134. See S. Klein, *Eretz ha-Galil* ("The Land of Galilee"; Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 169–176; S. Safrai, *Ha-Aliyab la-Rogol bi-Yomoi ha-Bayit ha-Sboni* ("Pilgrimage in the Days of the Second Temple"; Tel Aviv, 1965), pp. 50–53.

135. tYoma 1:4; jYoma 1:38c; bYoma 12b and in the parallel 9b.

136. *Antiquities* 17:165. See S. Lieberman in *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah: Moed*, pp. 723–726.

id B, Naples

138. Thus in the Mishnah of the Jerusalem Talmud, MS Cambridge, printing, et al.

139. tSotah 13:8; jYoma 6:3c; bYoma 39a; bKiddushin 53a.

140. jLamentations Rabbah 4:60a; Lamentations Rabbah 2:10a.

them, also wanted to bring a gift to the Temple.¹⁴¹ It should be emphasized that the talmudic tradition speaks of various men and women¹⁴² who brought gifts, but there is otherwise no mention of whole localities that offered gifts with great ceremoniousness.

To their eagerness in offering gifts we must add the many reports of pilgrimages and the presence of Galileans in Jerusalem. The reports are found in the talmudic tradition, in Josephus and in the New Testament.¹⁴³ Moreover, there are instructive traditions about the miracles connected with the pilgrimages to Jerusalem of individuals and of a group of women from Sepphoris, not necessarily during the days of the festivals but as a fixed practice on every Sabbath eve, in which they spent the Sabbath in the Temple and then returned to their homes, beginning their work before others at the start of the new week.¹⁴⁴ However we judge the historicity of the miraculous element, such stories attest to the continuous ties of Galilee with Jerusalem, especially when added to the evidence of literary sources and archaeological inscriptions.¹⁴⁵

The tannaitic tradition includes long passages about the sources of supply for the Temple.¹⁴⁶ Most of the places enumerated are, of course, in Judea, whether because of its geographical proximity or because of the fact that earlier the Jewish settlement was mainly in Judea. Nevertheless, the listing includes "Tekoa is the best for oil" and, in one tradition, "Gush Halav in Galilee was third to it."¹⁴⁷ Also, when a Gaon was asked the reason for the establishment of the eight days of Hanukkah, he replied:

Because the oils come from the portion of Asher, as it is written, "May he dip his foot in oil" [Deut. 33:24], and he had a place which was called Tekoa, as they said, "Tekoa is the best for oil"...and from there to Jerusalem was a round-trip journey of eight days.¹⁴⁸

Regarding the sources of the wine supply, the Mishnah states: "And from where would they bring the wine? Kerutim and Hatulim are the best for wine. Second to them is Beit Rimah and Beit Lavan on the mountain, and Kefar Sig-

141. See above and note 107.

142. See mYoma 3:4; tYoma 2:2-4.

143. See Safrai, loc. cit. (note 134).

144. jMa'aser Sheni 5:56a; Lamentations Rabbah 3:63a-b.

145. Regarding the inscriptions, see Safrai, loc. cit., p. 53.

146. bMenahot ch. 8, tMenahot ch. 9.

147. mMenahot ch. 8, and tMenahot 8:5. This is undoubtedly the Tekoa in Galilee and not the one in Judea, for it also was listed among the places in which olives were grown in Galilee regarding the matter of *shemittah* (the Sabbatical year: tShevi'it 7:15; bPesahim 23a). The Judean Tekoa, which borders the Judean Desert, was not known for its oil. The Babylonian Talmud (bMenahot 85b) understood from the statement of Rabbi Johanan that this was the Galilean Tekoa. The Jerusalem Talmud, on the other hand (Hagigah 3:79b), understood that this was the Judean Tekoa: see S. Lieberman, *Tarbiz* 2 (1931), 110.

148. *Teshuvat ha-Geonim* (Leck), sec. 104. The responsum was printed in *Otzar ha-Geonim* on Shabbat, the section of responsa, p. 23; see addenda on p. 163. Several of the Rishonim cite this tradition in the name of the Jerusalem Talmud. This does not appear in our editions of the latter, and it seems that it appears chiefly in a midrash that is not extant. See G. Alon, *Mebkarim*, section 2, p. 24, n. 16.

nah in the valley" (Menahot 8:6). "Kefar Signah" is undoubtedly Sogane (Σωγανά), which Josephus fortified. It may be assumed that this is identical with Sikhnin, which is called by this name in the later tannaitic sources, and which was the central settlement in the Sikhnin Valley in Lower Galilee. The phonetic difference between "Signah" and "Sikhnin" is not great, and Josephus' description of the location of Sogane suits Sikhnin. Even the Mishnah places "Signah in the valley."¹⁴⁹

The supply of the Temple's needs of oil and wine was critically dependent upon the reliability of the workers' and suppliers' ritual cleanness. There are traditions regarding Galileans selling ritually clean foodstuffs for the needs of pilgrims going to Jerusalem. In the group of traditions about ties between cities in Galilee and Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Talmud quotes from Rabbi Hiyya bar Ba the statement that "there were eighty shops of sellers of ritually clean items in Kefar Imra." Lamentations Rabbah quotes from Rabbi Huna that "there were three hundred shops of sellers of ritually clean items in Migdal Zevaya, and there were three hundred shops of curtain weavers in Kefar Nimrah."¹⁵⁰ It seems that the former version is to be preferred, for the weaving of the curtains was done within the precincts of the Temple and was entrusted to ritually clean maidens.¹⁵¹ The version of Lamentations Rabbah, however, furnishes the correct name of the place, which is Kefar Nimrah or Nimrin near Tiberias.

The reference is not to sellers of foodstuffs and similar items to those eating non-sanctified food in a state of ritual cleanness, but rather to sellers of ritually clean items to those making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, as additions to the sacrifices such as wine and oil for the libations. These traditions were taught together with the traditions about the cedars on Har ha-Mishhah (i.e., the Mount of Olives), from which the fledglings were taken to nest and underneath which there were "four shops of pure things." This entire topic concerns the bringing of sacrifices and gifts to the Temple.

Also in the Jerusalem Talmud, instead of "the weavers of curtains" we have "the weavers of *palgas*." As *palgas* has no meaning, it should rather be read *palmas*, as scholars have suggested, which is φαίλωνης.¹⁵² It may reasonably be assumed that these were the weavers of garments as gifts for the apparel of the priests.

The general picture in the sources¹⁵³ is as follows: the traditions attest not only to close ties between Galilee and Jerusalem, but also to the preparation by

149. *Life* 188. See also S. Klein, *Eretz ha-Galil* ("The Land of Galilee"; Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 39 ff. He was preceded by A. Schlatter, *Die hebräischen Namen bei Josephus* (photocopy ed., Darmstadt, 1970), pp. 82–83; see below.

150. See note 139.

151. These things are not explicitly stated in a halakhic ruling, but they can almost certainly be learned from talmudic literature, with assistance being provided by the Christian tradition and the Apocalypse of Baruch. See mSheqalim 8:5 and the exposition of S. Lieberman in *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950), p. 167; S. Safrai, *Ha-Aliyah la-Regel*, p. 28, n. 94.

152. See Klein, loc. cit., p. 52.

153. tYoma 1:23; 1 Mac. 3:49. See Safrai, op. cit., p. 78, n. 96.

Galileans, in a state of ritual cleanness, of garments and items required for the Temple sacrifices.¹⁵⁴

Strictness of Galilean Observance

The degree of the close ties with Jerusalem matches the picture that emerges from many tannaitic sources regarding the scrupulous observance of the commandments in Galilee. Most of the testimonies are from the Yavneh period, but several date from before the destruction of the Temple. "Observance" is not restricted to the commandments enumerated explicitly in the Torah; it also includes the observance of the commandments as they were transmitted, understood and formulated in the tradition of the Oral Torah, including the laws of ritual cleanness, which even the Oral Torah did not make incumbent upon all Israel but only upon those who assumed these laws and the practice of the setting aside of the *ma'aserot* (tithes). They were not observed in their entirety by many people who were termed *amei ba-aretz*, "the ignorant," by the tradition.

Here as well we shall not list all the testimonies, especially not those which are almost certainly from the second generation of the Yavneh period, that is from the beginning of the second century until the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt. We shall mainly discuss the testimonies from the period of the Temple and from the first generation of the Yavneh period.

Chronologically the best testimonies are the questions, cited above, that Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai was asked when he resided in Arav. We do not know how many years before the destruction of the Temple Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai came from Arav to Jerusalem, but it may be assumed that he spent a considerable number of years in Jerusalem. At any rate he was already in Jerusalem during the time of Hanan ben Hanan (63 C.E.), according to the Pharisees.¹⁵⁵ The time of his residence in Arav was approximately the fifties or perhaps even earlier. The two questions regarding Sabbath laws testify, in practice, to a scrupulous observance in Galilee of the Sabbath with all its stringencies, and even Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai could not say whether these two cases were actually prohibited.

154. It would seem that this contradicts the statement of the Mishnah (Hagigah 3:4), which states that the people of Judea, both *baverim* (who maintained the ritual cleanness of the *terumah*) and *amei ba-aretz*, were regarded as reliable concerning the cleanness of the wine and the oil used in the sacrifices in the Temple all the days of the year, while the Galileans were not regarded as reliable. The two Talmuds offer a reason for the unreliability of the Galileans: because "a strip of the Cutheans separates," and sacrifices were not brought through the Land of the Cutheans (Samaria). In another place (*Ha-Aliyab la-Regel*, pp. 44-46, and nn. on p. 25) I have shown that this is not in accordance with the Halakhah and the reality of the Temple period, in which sacrifices were brought from Galilee. Rather, those who prepared the wine and oil in Judea were more aware of the possibility that their wine and oil would go to the Temple, and therefore there were many people who were particular to maintain their cleanness, while the Galileans ordinarily were not aware of this, and therefore whoever was not a *baver* was not regarded as reliable for this matter. But there were people who prepared these items for the Temple as well, and brought them to Jerusalem through the Land of the Cutheans.

155. See H. Graetz, vol. 2, n. 19, pp. 749-752.

The Midrash relates about Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, who was from the same city and generation as Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, that "some ass-drivers came from Arav to Sepphoris and stated that Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa had already begun the Sabbath in his town."¹⁵⁶ This testifies not only to the Sabbath observance of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa who would begin his Sabbath prayers before the beginning of the Sabbath, but also to the atmosphere of Sabbath observance in the two cities of Arav and Sepphoris.

A clearer testimony of general significance is the narrative about the fire or fires in Kefar Signah. The Mishnah teaches a disagreement between Rabbi Eliezer and the sages: Rabbi Eliezer holds that *terumah* may be given from the clean for the unclean, while the sages hold that this is prohibited (Terumot 2:1).¹⁵⁷ In the Tosefta (3:18), Rabbi Eliezer brings support for his opinion: "It once happened that a fire erupted in the threshing-floors of Kefar Signah,¹⁵⁸ and they gave *terumah* from the clean for the unclean." The threshing-floors in Kefar Signah were in a state of cleanness, and when the fire erupted both people who were particular regarding cleanness and others who were not particular came to extinguish the fire; it was no longer possible to set aside *terumah* in a state of cleanness from those threshing-floors, for they might have become unclean. In order to be sure of having ritually clean *terumah*, they turned to the guarded ritually clean produce and separated from it *terumah* also for these threshing-floors which had been saved from the fire. This presents us with the highest ideal of cleanness that the Pharisee sages could describe. The threshing-floors were kept in a state of cleanness, and only as a result of the fire which many people extinguished was there a fear of contact with *amei ba-aretz* who had not taken upon themselves the observance of the laws of cleanness. This is just like the situation presented by the Mishnah regarding the Temple vessels which were put on public display during the festivals in the Temple Courtyard.¹⁵⁹

The Tosefta also explains why the sages disagree with Rabbi Eliezer; they hold that the occurrence in Kefar Signah does not constitute a proof, because they "set aside *terumah* from them for them," in other words they set aside for themselves *terumah* from the threshing-floors which had possibly become unclean. This disagreement about the facts of the case indicates that the event had taken place a number of years previously. Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was born during the time of the Temple and died at the beginning of the second century. Thus the event goes back to the early Yavneh period, or possibly even earlier to when the Temple still stood.

A similar event is related in Tractate Kelim:

156. Genesis Rabbah 10:84.

157. Rabbi Eliezer repeats his opinion in mHallah 2:8. Similarly, Rabbi Ilai cites in his name that they would give *terumah* from the clean for the unclean, even from wet produce (tTerumah 3:18).

158. Thus in MS Vienna; this was distorted in MS Erfurt. It refers to "threshing-floors" in the plural, and similarly in *Melekbet Shelomo* on mTerumah 2:1: In the threshing-floors of Kefar Signah.

159. See mHagigah 3:8.

If an oven is heated from outside, or was heated not with his intent, or was heated in the house of the craftsman, it is unclean. It once happened that a fire took place in the ovens of Kefar Signah, and the event came to Yavneh, and Rabban Gamaliel declared them unclean. (mKelim 5:4, as tKelim 4:4)¹⁶⁰

It seems that in Kefar Signah there was a workshop containing ovens that had not yet been heated, and therefore had not acquired uncleanness, but then they were heated unintentionally. There was a fear that the *amei ba-aretz* had touched them, the ovens thereby becoming unclean, and once again the question arose: were they prepared and therefore capable of acquiring uncleanness? This question was brought before Rabban Gamaliel in Yavneh. As we have already learned, there were people in Signah who observed the laws of ritual cleanness. Accordingly, they were particular that the ovens would not be prepared and capable of acquiring uncleanness until they had been handed over to their owners. It was only when the fire erupted that they were touched also by other people who did not observe the rules of cleanness.

Possibly the two occurrences took place during one large conflagration which reached both the threshing-floors and the workshop containing ovens, as has been assumed by one scholar.¹⁶¹ Threshing-floors, however, were made in the fields, while a workshop for ovens would be located within or close to the city. Thus they may indeed be two separate traditions, each of them reflecting the same attitude to matters of ritual cleanness in Kefar Signah.

Practices regarding cleanness in Galilee can be learnt, too, from a question that came before Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradyon who was asked whether the *mikveh* (ritual bath) in the heights of Beit Anath was clean.¹⁶²

Rabbi Jose ben Halafta testifies that the people of Sepphoris took care in the gathering of vegetables from the field and in the treatment of legumes not to wet them with water so that they would not be capable of acquiring uncleanness.¹⁶³ He speaks of those practices "at first," possibly referring merely to the time immediately before him during the last days of Yavneh, yet possibly referring to an earlier tradition.

The beginning of Tosefta Kelim¹⁶⁴ cites two traditions about legal rulings, one delivered by a student in the district of Ariah adjoining Tiberias, and the second delivered by a pupil who taught in the marketplaces (or the thickets) of Sepphoris,¹⁶⁵ that is within the area of the irrigated fields of Sepphoris. These two questions deal with the laws of *kilayim* — the forbidden junction of plants or animals. As they seemed to be stringent rulings to the inhabitants of each place, they addressed queries to Yavneh. In the first case the sages in Yavneh agreed with the ruling of the pupil, but in the second they termed it a stringent ruling of Beit Shammai. At any rate, the growers of produce in those different localities in Galilee were particular regarding the details of the laws of *kilayim*.

160. MS Erfurt has in the Tosefta *tanur* (sing.), but MS Vienna has *tanurim* (pl.).

161. F. Rosenthal, in *Sefer Yovel le-David Tzvi Hoffmann* (Berlin, 1914), p. 367.

162. tMiqwaot 6:2.

163. tMakhshirin 2:5.

164. tKilayim 1:4; jKilayim 1:24d.

165. See Y.N. Epstein, "Mi-Dikdukei Yerushalmi," *Tarbiz* 5 (1934), 269–270.

In Tosefta Eruvin, Rabbi Judah relates:

It once happened in the house of Mammal and the house of Gurion in Ruma that they were distributing dried figs to the poor people who were there during a drought, and they were the poor of Shihin.¹⁶⁶ They would go out and make an *eruv* [i.e., a Sabbath station] with their feet, and they would enter and eat when night fell.¹⁶⁷

The geographical location may be clarified. Ruma is ροῦμα, which is mentioned by Josephus;¹⁶⁸ it was in the southwest of the Beit Netofah Valley. Two wealthy families lived there, Mammal and Gurion, and they distributed dried figs on the Sabbath during two drought years. The poor of Shihin,¹⁶⁹ which was located nearby, not more than twice the distance of the Sabbath bounds (4,000 *amot*, about 2 kilometers) from Ruma, would go forth from their houses on the Sabbath eve and establish their “home,” as it were, in the middle of the way, so that they would be permitted to walk on the Sabbath the distance of the Sabbath bounds (2,000 *amot*) in either direction from this point, both to Ruma and to Shihin. We learn from this tradition about the observance of the giving of charity by these two families, but also about the care taken by the poor of the village of Shihin to observe scrupulously the laws of the Sabbath bounds, pursuant with the rulings of the sages.

It is possible that Rabbi Judah relates an event from the previous generation of the Yavneh period, but it is more likely to be a tradition from the time of the Temple, for we hear about the wealthy Gurion family from the end of the Temple period.¹⁷⁰ Another tradition regarding Rabbi Judah¹⁷¹ is close to this one:

It once happened that the maidservant of an oppressor in Damin¹⁷² threw her prematurely-born child into a pit, and a priest came and looked to see what she had thrown down, and the case came before the sages, and they declared him clean.

Here as well, the question arose due to scrupulous observance of the laws of cleanness. This, however, is apparently a tradition from the period after the

166. The Babylonian Talmud also includes the poor of Kefar Hananiah; this was written only as a slip of the tongue from other places in which Kefar Hananiah is mentioned together with Kefar Shihin (bShabbat 120b; bBava Metzia 74a), for Kefar Hananiah is much farther than the distance of two “Sabbath bounds” from Rumah, and it was not possible to go from Kefar Hananiah to Rumah on the Sabbath: see S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah: Moed*, p. 361.

167. tEruvin 3 (4):17; jEruvin 4:22a; bEruvin 50b.

168. *War*, 3:233.

169. Regarding the identification of Shihin, see Lieberman, loc. cit., pp. 360–361, following those who preceded him; see also the critical comments by Ze'ev Safrai, *Pirqei Galil*, pp. 69–71.

170. See S. Klein, *Eretz ha-Galil*, p. 32.

171. tAhilot 16:13; jPesahim 1:26c; bPesahim 9a; bAvodah Zarah 42a.

172. Thus in the version of MS Vienna and in the Rishonim, and not Rimon, as in our text. It is in the bounds of Tiberias; see the narrative also in tMiqwaot 6:2.

destruction of the Temple when there were many “oppressors,” those who possessed the lands of Jews who had lost them in the war of the destruction.¹⁷³

The Tosefta, Talmuds and Midrash¹⁷⁴ relate how the Sabbath was observed in Shihin beyond the strict requirements of the law. According to the Halakhah: “If a non-Jew comes to extinguish [a fire on the Sabbath], they do not tell him to extinguish and [they do not tell him] not to extinguish.” Jews are prohibited to tell the gentile to extinguish, but not obliged to tell him not to extinguish, and allowed to let him extinguish the fire. The *baraita* adds:

It once happened that a fire erupted in the courtyard of Joseph ben Simai of Shihin, and the [gentile] people of the fort of Sepphoris came to extinguish it, but he did not allow them. A cloud descended and extinguished. The sages said: “It was not necessary.” Nevertheless, when the Sabbath went out, he sent a *sela* to each one of them, and to the commander among them he sent fifty *dinarim*.

The Babylonian Talmud adds “because he was the administrator of the king.” The latter can be assumed to have been Agrippa II, who died in the year 92, when all of his property passed over to the government. It is thus almost certain that the tradition predates 92 and that Joseph ben Simai was the same “administrator of the king,” mentioned above, who asked legal questions of Rabbi Eliezer.

From the combination of the traditions regarding the visits by Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh and by his two sons Judah and Hillel to various cities in Galilee, we receive a broad picture of commandments being observed more scrupulously and strictly there than in Judea and in the academy of the sages in Yavneh.¹⁷⁵ The first of the following five traditions is about Rabban Gamaliel, the other four are about his sons:

And it once happened that Rabban Gamaliel was sitting on a bench¹⁷⁶ of the non-Jews on the Sabbath in Acre. They said to him, that they were not accustomed to sit on a bench of the non-Jews on the Sabbath. And he did not want to say, “You are permitted,” rather he stood and went away.¹⁷⁷

It once happened that Judah and Hillel, the sons of Rabban Gamaliel, went in to bathe in Kavul. They said to them that they were not accustomed to have two brothers go in together to bathe. They did not want to say to them, “You are permitted,” rather they went in and bathed one after the other.¹⁷⁸

Once again, it happened that Judah and Hillel, the sons of Rabban Gamaliel, were going forth in gilt slippers on the Sabbath in Biri. They said to them that they were not accustomed to go forth in gilt slippers on the

173. See Sifrei Deuteronomy 327:425–426.

174. tShabbat 13 (14):9; jShabbat 16:15d; bYoma 8:5b; jNedarim 4:38d; bShabbat 121a; Deuteronomy Rabbah, Lieberman ed., p. 20.

175. Judah and Hillel were the sons of Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh. See above and note 91.

176. A bench upon which merchandise is sold.

177. tMoed Katan 2:15; jPesahim 4:30d; bPesahim 51a.

178. See note 177.

Sabbath. They did not want to tell them, "You are permitted," rather they sent them by the hand of their servants.¹⁷⁹

They lead wine and oil through pipes before grooms and brides, and this is not considered to be the ways of the Amorite. It once happened that Judah and Hillel, the sons of Rabban Gamaliel, went in [to Rabbi Zakkai] in Kavul, and the people of the town drew wine and oil in pipes before them.¹⁸⁰

It once happened that Judah and his brother Hillel, the sons of Rabban Gamaliel, were walking along in the district of Oni.¹⁸¹ They found one man whose tomb had opened within his field. Thy said to him, "Collect each bone, and everything is clean."¹⁸²

The first three of these five narratives appear in the Tosefta (and in the parallels) as one unit; their purpose is to relate to us that people in different cities in Galilee — Acre, Kavul and Beri — were stringent in matters in which the sages of Yavneh were lenient.¹⁸³ Rabban Gamaliel and his sons did not, however, wish to tell them that they were being more stringent than necessary. Thus the three narratives jointly testify to the scrupulous observance of the laws pertaining to the Sabbath and modesty in various places in Galilee. The latter two narratives about Rabban Gamaliel's sons testify that Galileans observed the commandments concerned in accordance with the rulings of the sages, for the Mishnah and the Tosefta teach that the practices in question are permitted.

All five narratives date from the period around the end of the first century during which Rabban Gamaliel was active. It is reasonable to assume, however, that they describe strict practices of the Galileans that had established themselves earlier, before the destruction of the Temple.

From this or another journey by Rabban Gamaliel to Galilee come three more narratives connected with the route of his trip from Acre via Keziv to the Ladder of Tyre promontory. Two are connected with his companion Rabbi Ilai, while one has been transmitted by Rabbi Judah, Rabbi Ilai's son. The first two are to be found in Tosefta Pesahim and parallels,¹⁸⁴ the third in Tosefta Terumot.¹⁸⁵ One concerns *gluskin*, a fine type of bread; in the second a person wants to be released from his vow; the third tells of Segavyon, the head of the synagogue, who purchased a vineyard from a non-Jew and asked what action was to be taken regarding the produce.

We shall end our discussion of this topic by citing the well-known mishnaic statement (mPesahim 4:1) that "[in] a place in which they were accustomed to

179. See note 177.

180. tShabbat 7(8):17; Semahot 8:4, 150. The addition appears only in Semahot. See Maimon ed., *Sefer Yibusei Tannaim wa-Amoraim* (Jerusalem, 1963), p. 153 and n. 172a.

181. This is Beit Anat. See the article mentioned in note 91 above.

182. tAhihot 16:13.

183. Regarding sitting on benches on the Sabbath, it was stated explicitly (tMoed Katan 2:14) that they were accustomed to be stringent until Rabbi Akiva came and taught that it was permitted.

184. tPesahim 2(1):15; jAvodah Zarah 1:40a; bEruvin 64b.

185. tTerumot 2:13.

do work on the Eve of Passover until midday, they may do; [in] a place in which they were accustomed not to do, they may not do.” The Mishnah adds (ibid., 4:5): “And the sages say: ‘In Judea they would do work on the Eve of Passover until midday, and in Galilee they would not do so at all.’” In the Babylonian Talmud (Pesahim 55a), however, Rabbi Johanan explains that those two statements express the opposed views of Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Judah respectively. Rabbi Judah is undoubtedly referring to the time of the Second Temple, for the Mishnah immediately notes that Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai disagreed over the details: In Galilee, is work already prohibited from the preceding night, like every festival that begins at night, or is it prohibited only from sunrise on? The disagreements between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel belong to the Temple period. Also the language (“they would do work”) indicates a tradition about practices in Galilee and Judea during the past.

Summary

We have examined testimonies anchored in the tannaitic tradition about the practices of individuals, of cities and of Galilee as a whole during the Second Temple period. They provide ample evidence both that Galilee had close ties with Jerusalem, including the ritual needs of the Temple, and that its religious and social life was rooted in a tradition of the Oral Torah which was indeed superior to the tradition of Judea.

Galilean Pietism and Jesus of Nazareth

Now we shall return to an issue which we have clarified elsewhere,¹⁸⁶ that of the pietist movement or trend known as *hasidim*. We found that Jesus was extremely close to this trend, or to the mood reflected in the intellectual foundations of the pietist movement.

We showed in those previous studies that regarding all the pietists and their teachers from the Second Temple period, whatever evidence we possess of their origin and activity concerns Galilee. Such are Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa from Arav; Abba Hilkiah, the grandson of Honi ha-Me’aggel, who is the pietist from Kefar Imi, also known as Kefar Yama (Yavniel in Lower Galilee); and the pietist priest from Ramat Beit Anat. To this list we may add Jesus of Nazareth, whose teachings and miraculous acts exemplify several of the characteristic lines that we have found in the teachings and acts of the pietists. Their pietism is not to be viewed as springing from a world empty of Torah, despite the impression suggested at times by the arguments of their opponents, but rather from within a creative Jewish culture, innovative in both thought and conduct, as in the personalities of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, Abba Hilkiah and Jesus of Nazareth.

This same picture emerges from the books of the New Testament, both from the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John. It is common knowledge that scholars are not always unanimous about the location of individual events in which Jesus was involved. The question, of course, is not simply whether the

186. See my articles cited in notes 17 and 18 above.

Gospels place an event within the context of Jesus' stay in Jerusalem or of his wanderings in the cities of Galilee and around the shores of the Sea of Galilee, but rather where the episode was placed in the earlier levels of the tradition.

It can be established with certainty, however, regarding several traditions that the geographical context of the event is Galilee, whether because the rule of Herod Antipas is in the background of the narrative (for he did not rule in Judea), or because the event is connected with specific places in Galilee: the Sea of Galilee, Kanah, Kefar Nahum (Capernaum), Korazim (Chorazin), Bethsaida and similar places, or places in which the Sea of Galilee is in the background. Those traditions with a clear Galilean background, however, accord with the tannaitic evidence already presented in testifying that Jewish life in Galilee was conducted in accordance with the formulation of Judaism during the Second Temple under the influence of and pursuant to the teachings of the Pharisaic sages. This picture is common to all the Gospels, but is especially clear in the narrative of Luke, which contains more of the everyday reality than do the others.

Synagogues in Galilee

The most prominent fact from this daily life is the existence of synagogues in the cities of Galilee. Tannaitic literature mainly emphasizes the reading of the Torah and study in the synagogue.¹⁸⁷ The context in which synagogue matters are mentioned is the laws not of prayer but of the reading of the Torah. The same appears clearly in all four Gospels: Jesus comes several times to a synagogue, yet his visit is always connected with the reading of the Torah and Prophets and with public teaching.¹⁸⁸ Synagogues are to be found in Nazareth, Capernaum and in all the cities of Galilee.¹⁸⁹

The synagogue was one of the great innovations of Second Temple Judaism. It was fashioned totally in accordance with the spirit and content of the tradition of the Oral Torah and the Pharisaic sages. Indeed, the oldest testimony regarding the existence of synagogues in every settlement is the narratives about Jesus' actions in Galilee. The practice of reading in the Torah, followed by the reading in the Prophets, is mentioned for the first time in the narrative about Jesus' visit to the synagogue in Nazareth.¹⁹⁰

A reading of the Gospels reveals that the synagogues function normally, and that they are filled with men and women coming to serve the Lord. Whereas the Gospels address severe charges against the practices and leadership of the Temple, no criticism of the synagogues or of the synagogue leadership is to be found in them. This is exactly the reality of tannaitic literature.

187. See tMegillah 2(3):18 and parallels. Matters connected with the synagogue are not mentioned in the first chapters of Tractate Berakhot, which deal with matters relating to prayer, but rather in the last two chapters of Tractate Megillah, which deal with the reading of the Torah. See S. Safrai, "Gathering in the Synagogues on Festivals, Sabbaths and Weekdays in Ancient Synagogues in Israel," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, International Series 499 (1988), pp. 7-15.

188. Mt. 4:23 and 9:35; Mk. 1:21, 1:39 and 6:1; Lk. 4:15, 4:16, 4:31, 6:6 and 13:10; Jn. 6:59.

189. Mk. 1:21 and 6:1; Lk. 4:21; Jn. 6:59. See the references in the preceding note.

190. Lk. 4:16-17.

The tradition contains harsh criticism directed against the High Priests and their underlings, the *amarkalim*, the *gizbarim* and the other officials, but no criticism of the synagogue leadership or procedures.

Galilean Observance of Halakhah

One of the major spheres of religious activity during the Second Temple period was that of ritual cleanness or uncleanness. Many laws on this subject were innovations of the Pharisees and were not practiced by the Sadducees or the Essenes. One of the outstanding laws in this sphere is *netilat yadayim*, the washing of hands; not only was it not practiced by the Sadducees and the Essenes, it was even unknown to the author of the Book of Judith.¹⁹¹ In the Halakhah of the Oral Torah it is discussed extensively; however, we also find an instance of a person who “made light of” it.¹⁹²

In the New Testament, the washing of hands serves as the occasion for one of Jesus’ famous sayings, that it is not what goes into the body of a man that makes unclean, but rather what comes forth from it.¹⁹³ For the purposes of our discussion we shall merely indicate that we learn from Jesus’ dispute regarding the washing of hands (which apparently took place in Galilee, for he argues with Pharisees and “Scribes who came from Jerusalem”¹⁹⁴) that “the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat without the washing of hands, holding to the tradition of the Elders.” Mark’s statements about the practices of all Israel in matters of ritual cleanness appear to be exaggerated.¹⁹⁵ At any rate, the picture that emerges from all three Synoptic Gospels is that the washing of hands was a widespread practice in Galilee just as in Judea.

Important testimony regarding the observance in Galilee of the practices of ritual cleanness is provided by the narrative in John 2 about the miracle of the jars of wine. Verse 6 states that there were six stone water jars in the place where a wedding was held in Cana, in accordance with the practices of ritual cleanness of the Jews. Indeed, according to the law taught in many places in tannaitic and amoraitic literature, stone vessels do not acquire ritual uncleanness. This law is not stated explicitly in the Torah, but is understood in the tannaitic tradition and serves as the basis for many laws.¹⁹⁶ At the wedding they could prepare stone jugs for the water, with no fear about their being touched by *amei ba-aretz* and by all the many people coming to the wedding.

The Jewish practice of naming a newborn boy at the circumcision ceremony, which is in force to this day, is mentioned only in later Jewish sources. We learn from Luke’s Gospel, however, that this practice was already observed in Judea when John the Baptist and Jesus were named.¹⁹⁷

191. The earliest testimony is found in the *Letter of Aristeas*, 304–306. Yehudit goes forth and immerses. See *ibid.*, 14:11–15.

192. *mEduyot* 5:6.

193. *Mk.* 7:15–20; *Mt.* 15:17–20.

194. *Mk.* 7:1; cf. *Mt.* 9:1; *Lk.* 11:37.

195. *Mk.* 7:20.

196. *mBetzah* 2:3; *mAhilot* 5:5; et al.

197. *Lk.* 1:59 and 2:21.

It should be noted that in most of the narratives of Jesus' acts of healing when the act was done on the Sabbath, it is stated that the Pharisees or the head of the synagogue opposed him for breaking the Sabbath.¹⁹⁸ Yet none of the cases mentioned are instances of the desecration of the Sabbath according to the Halakhah of talmudic literature. It is possible that the Galileans inclined to strictness regarding the Sabbath, just as we have seen them to have been strict regarding other laws. At any rate, we receive a picture of scrupulous Sabbath observance in various places in Galilee.¹⁹⁹ The fact that Friday is called "the day of preparation" (τὴν παρασκευήν) in the Gospels²⁰⁰ also testifies to the standing of the Sabbath in terms of the preparations made on its eve.²⁰¹

The nativity story in Luke adds that the circumcision took place on the eighth day, as was indeed the custom, and that the days of cleanness were completed, and mentions the redemption of the male child (1:21–22). Only Luke (2:41–48) preserves the tradition that Jesus disappeared at the end of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Festival of Passover; his parents found him among those studying Torah in the Temple, listening to their teaching and asking questions that amazed them. As we saw above, he could have studied Torah at his leisure in his city, Nazareth, or nearby.

Pharisees in Galilee

We learn from the narratives in the Gospels, especially from Luke, that Pharisees were also present in Galilee. It is stressed, however, that the Pharisees were native to the region, while the Scribes came from Jerusalem. Regarding the dispute about the washing of hands, Matthew 15:1 states that "the Scribes and the Pharisees who came from Jerusalem" came to him. In Mark 7:1, however, it is stated that the Pharisees and some Scribes who had come from Jerusalem came to him. In Luke 11:37–38 a Pharisee invites Jesus to dine with him, and during the meal he is surprised because Jesus does not wash his hands. Similarly it is stated in Mark 3:22 that the Scribes who came from Jerusalem said that Jesus was driving out demons by the power of Baal-Zebub, but in Matthew 12:24 mention is made merely of "Pharisees." It is stated in Luke 5:17 that when Jesus taught Torah, those sitting before him were Pharisees and teachers of the Torah who came from all the villages of Galilee, from Judea and from Jerusalem; these details are lacking in the parallels (Mt. 9:1–8; Mk. 2:1–12). In the sequel, it is stated in all three of the parallel passages that the Scribes and the Pharisees complained when Jesus and his disciples sat down to a meal with tax collectors and sinners;²⁰² there is no suggestion that

198. Mt. 12:1; Lk. 14:2–6 and 13:11–16; Jn. 7:23.

199. A general survey is provided by Y.N. Epstein, *Mevo'ot le-Sifrut ha-Tanna'im* ("Introductions to the Literature of the Tannaim"; Jerusalem, 1957), pp. 280–281; S. Safrai, *Religion in Everyday Life in the Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen, 1976), pp. 804–807.

200. Mt. 27:62; Mk. 15:42; Lk. 23:54; Jn. 19:31. The name is connected to the narrative of the crucifixion, and it is possible that the appellation existed only in Jerusalem.

201. The name is also to be found in Josephus, *Antiquities* 16:163.

202. Lk. 5:27–32; Mk. 2:13–17; Mt. 9:9–13.

they came from Jerusalem, rather the impression is that they were native to Galilee.

Similarly in the narrative about the parched ears on the Sabbath, it is stated that the Pharisees, or some of them, asked why the disciples of Jesus were doing something that was not permitted. Here as well, there is no suggestion in the three parallel texts that these Pharisees were not native to the region.²⁰³

Luke 7:35–50 relates the episode of the woman who wept at Jesus' feet and anointed his feet with oil. This occurrence has parallels in the other Gospels;²⁰⁴ in Luke, however, it is stated that he was in the house of a Pharisee who had invited him to a meal.²⁰⁵ Luke 14:1–24 again tells of Jesus going to a meal in the home of a leading Pharisee: he turns to "the masters of Torah and the Pharisees." Finally, it is related in Luke 13:31 that the Pharisees came to Jesus and warned him that Herod wanted to kill him.

We have not exhausted all the testimonies regarding the Pharisees in Galilee, but it is clear that we can learn about their presence there from the traditions in the New Testament. Emissaries also come to Galilee from Jerusalem, just as in many testimonies regarding the sages, mainly in the Yavneh generation, but Pharisees and masters of the Torah also reside in Galilee.

In John 7 there are denigratory expressions regarding Galilee. The question of verse 41, "Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee?", is not an actual denigration of Galilee, but just an inference from the tradition that "the Messiah will come from the seed of David and from Bethlehem, where David was" (verse 42). At the end of the chapter, however, the Pharisees say to Nicodemus: "Are you also from Galilee? Search [i.e., expound the Scriptures] and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."²⁰⁶ This is indeed a denigratory remark about Galilee, but no more so than the statements we have found in talmudic literature making light of Galilee and other places, but which could not be taken seriously.

Josephus on Galilee

Josephus was appointed to head the army in Galilee, where he remained until it fell. His autobiographical book deals mainly with the course of historical events in Galilee, but also contains some information about the cultural and social life in various cities, and in Galilee as a whole. There is no doubt that the picture given in all those writings is one in which Galileans follow a Jewish religious life and observe the commandments according to their interpretation and formulation in the Oral Torah.

203. Lk. 6:1–5; Mt. 12:1–8; Mk. 2:23–28. However, in his book *Josus in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1968), p. 44, David Flusser argues that these Pharisees followed a stricter Halakhah on this point than the Galilean practice of the disciples of Jesus.

204. Mk. 14:3–9; Mt. 26:6–13; Jn. 12:1–8.

205. In the parallels, the entire narrative is inserted in a different context.

206. In contrast with this statement, Rabbi Eliezer emphasizes in bSukkah 27b that there is no tribe in Israel that has not produced a judge; in Seder Olam Rabbah 21 (Katner ed., 46a), that you have no city in the Land of Israel in which there were no prophets.

It should come as no surprise to find in Tiberias a large synagogue in which people gathered on the Sabbath, also to discuss current issues.²⁰⁷ Chapter 12 of Josephus' *Life*, moreover, contains a specific detail testifying to the lifestyle found also in the Jerusalem Talmud. He tells of a stormy assembly that was stopped "with the arrival of the sixth hour, in which it is our custom to eat the morning meal on the Sabbath." While the people did not eat in the morning before the time of prayer, it was prohibited to fast "until the sixth hour" on the Sabbath, as the Amora Rabbi Jose bar Haninah teaches.²⁰⁸

Sabbath observance exceeding the demands of the talmudic Halakhah is mentioned a number of times during the course of the war in Galilee. Josephus relates in chapter 32 of his *Life* that he did not want to leave his soldiers in Migdal on the Sabbath, so that they would not constitute a burden upon the residents of the city. Once he has dismissed them on Sabbath eve, he can no longer assemble them, because the weekday has already passed, and on the following Sabbath day they cannot bear arms, because "our laws" prohibit this even in a time of distress. In another place he relates that Johanan persuaded Titus to stop the fighting on the Sabbath, because the Jews not merely could not go forth to fight on the Sabbath, but were forbidden even to conduct peace negotiations on the Sabbath.²⁰⁹

In chapter 12 of the *Life*, Josephus relates that he was about to destroy the palace of the tetrarch Herod in Tiberias because of the presence of depictions of animals, but Joshua ben Sapphias, who headed the group of sailors, acted before him.²¹⁰ He adds that the delegates who were sent with him from Jerusalem collected great riches from the tithes that were given them. There were *ma'aserot* that the *amei ha-aretz* did not set aside; what Josephus states thus accords with what we have found in tannaitic literature, that the tithes (*ma'aserot*) were given to the priests and not to the Levites as is stated in the

207. *Life* 54. bShabbat 150a states: "Rabbi Johanan said: 'It is permitted to supervise matters of life and death and matters of communal urgency on the Sabbath, and it is permitted to go to synagogues to deal with communal affairs on the Sabbath.'"

208. jTa'anit 3:67a; jNedarim 8:40d.

209. *War*, 4:87–102. M.D. Herr, in his article "Le-Va'ayat Hilkhoh Milhamah ba-Shabbat bi-Yemei Bayit Sheni u-vi-Tekufat ha-Mishnah we-ha-Talmud" ("Regarding the Problem of the Laws of War on the Sabbath in the Days of the Second Temple and in the Period of the Mishnah and the Talmud"), *Tarbiz* 30 (1961), 255–256, holds that this statement by Johanan was only a ploy in order to escape, and that it was not an actual halakhic ruling. It is true that in the period under discussion the ruling had already been issued that it is permitted to engage in a defensive war on the Sabbath, and that a war which has been begun three days prior to the Sabbath is to be continued on the Sabbath; and wars were indeed waged on the Sabbath. Johanan as well fought on the Sabbath, and Josephus himself also fought on the Sabbath. Thus there is no justification for saying that it was not an actual halakhic ruling; some were lenient in the matter, while others were stringent. Johanan, however, indeed said this to Titus as a ploy in order to escape, as he did in fact do, but there was a basis for his statement. See the statements by Y.N. Epstein and A.D. Melamed, which are cited by Herr, p. 256 and n. 62.

210. Josephus, of course, accuses them of a desire to rob.

Torah.²¹¹ In section 56 Josephus describes the proclamation of a fast day and the assembly in the synagogue, matching the description of such a proclamation in the later books of the Scriptures²¹² and in Mishnah Ta'anit 2.

Josephus' *Life* and *Jewish War* admittedly contain only meagre material about the daily religious life in Galilee. Nevertheless, it certainly corresponds to the Halakhah and practice that we have found in the Oral Torah and in the religious and cultural life of the Jews in the first century.

Summary

An anonymous teaching in Avot de-Rabbi Nathan (27:43a) relates:

Because at first they would say, "Breadstuff in Judea, straw in Galilee, and chaff in Transjordan," they later said, "There is no grain in Judea, but rather stubble; and there is no straw in Galilee, but rather chaff, and neither one nor the other in Transjordan."

This *baraita* intends to teach us that Judea is better than Galilee and Galilee is better than Transjordan, and that even when a decline occurred (the time of this decline is not stated), Judea was still on a higher level than Galilee. As used in the literature of the time, the term "Judea" sometimes includes Jerusalem and sometimes means the land of Judea outside Jerusalem. Only in the former sense of "Judea" can the teaching of the *baraita* reflect historical and cultural reality. The many facts cited in this article show that, apart from Jerusalem, Galilee was in all respects equal to or excelled all other areas of the Land of Israel where Jews dwelled.

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211. See also Josephus' comments at the beginning of ch. 16, *ibid.* Regarding the law and practice of giving *ma'aser* to the priests, see mYevamot 6:1-2; bKetuvot 26a; bBava Batra 61b; bHullin 131b; tPeah 4:5, et al.

212. Joel 1:14; Is. 58:3.