sophical premises and the clash in the French Revolution. The political and ideological currents since 1800 are seen as variations of these types. Modern revolutionary movements including Marxism and its offshoots are thus presented as expressions of political messianism which still dominates a large part of the world. In another work, *Romanticism and Revolt* (1967), Talmon portrays the age of Romanticism. He delineates the movement of the forces released by the revolution of 1789 toward the tragic clash and denouement of 1848. *The Unique and the Universal* (1965) is a collection of essays designed to bring out the significantly modern tensions between those developments – technological, social, and ideological – which lead to universal uniformity on the one hand and the self-assertion of racial and national peculiarities on the other. In these essays the Jewish phenomenon is highlighted as the outstanding sample of this dilemma, "ultimately a sample of the great human condition."

In his books as well as in numerous essays, articles, and public debates, Talmon proved himself an outstanding interpreter of Zionism in a changing world context. His exchange with Toynbee attracted the attention of the intellectual world. Talmon took an active and determined stand on topical questions of Jewish life such as the Arab-Israel conflict, religion and state, Jewish and Israel identity, continuity and innovation, and Jews and revolution. He showed himself a confirmed believer in the principles of political liberty, freedom of conscience, religious toleration, self-determination, and mutual respect among nations.

After the *Six-Day War (1967) Talmon resolutely advocated a compromise solution of the conflict based on territorial concessions and primarily on the mutual recognition of the Jewish and Palestinian-Arab right of self-determination. Talmon received the Israel Prize for social sciences and law in 1956. He was a member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

TALMON (Zalmonovitch), SHEMARYAHU (1920–), Bible scholar. Born in Skierniwice, Poland, Talmon received his primary and high school education at the Jüdisches Reform-Real Gymnasium in Breslau, Germany. He immigrated to Palestine in 1939, after being interned for three months in Buchenwald concentration camp.

Talmon obtained his doctorate from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1946, focusing in his doctoral thesis on the text and versions of the Hebrew Bible and in particular on "double meanings" in biblical texts. He refined and supplemented these studies over the years, contributing to many areas of biblical study, applying text-critical procedures to the cultural and literary history of ancient Israel.

His sociological approach to text history advanced the understanding of various aspects of the biblical text, especially with regard to the Qumran scrolls found in the Judean Desert. His interests in the texts found in Qumran and in sociological research were combined in the study of the nature and history of the Qumran monastery.

Talmon was active in the field of biblical education both in Israel and elsewhere. He held the position of director for educational institutions in the "Illegal" Immigration Camps in Cyprus (1947–48). He taught at the major Israeli universities and served as a visiting professor at many institutions throughout the world. He was the dean at Haifa University and of the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University and rector of the Institute of Judaic Studies in Heidelberg.

Talmon was also involved in forging cultural and intellectual links with the World Council of Churches and the Vatican and was prominent in international Jewish-Christian dialogue.

He held various editorial positions, published hundreds of articles, and edited numerous books, including *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (1975). His books include *King, Cult, and Calendar* (1986), *Gesellschaft und Literatur in der Hebräischen Bibel* (1988), and *The World of Qumran from Within* (1989). A Festschrift written in his honor, *Sha'arei Talmon*, appeared in 1990.

[Elaine Hoter]

TALMON, ZVI (1922–), *ḥazzan*, composer, conductor. Born in Jerusalem, Talmon obtained his basic cantorial education in the *Shirat Israel* choir there with Cantor Solomon Zalman *Rivlin. He studied at the Eẓ Ḥayyim yeshivah and at the Mizrachi teachers' seminar, both in Jerusalem. He learned composition and conducting at the Jerusalem Institute of Music and at the Academy of Music. He set to music scores of selections from the prayers, biblical passages, Hebrew songs and also arranged the music for the Yad Vashem memorial services for *Yom ha-Shoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day). He led synagogue choirs, including that of the Hekhal Shelomo synagogue in Jerusalem. His melodies for Sabbath prayers appeared in the *Rinat ha-Heikhal* anthology published by the Cantors Assembly in America. These works are based on traditional chants for prayers and cantillations for Torah reading interwoven with original Israeli tunes. Among his publications are *La-Menaẓeiah Mizmor,* biblical songs, and *Mizmorei Shem ve-Yefet*, Israeli, Jewish, and Italian songs for choirs, and an additional volume of his works for the Sabbath and the Festivals. He has written linguistic studies on the Hebrew and Aramaic languages for which he received his academic degree. Talmon served as an instructor in cantorial music and texts of the prayers at the cantorial school affiliated to the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem.

[Akiva Zimmerman]

TALMUD (Heb. תַּלְמוּד). The word "Talmud" means primarily "study" or "learning" and is employed in various senses. One refers to the opinions and teachings which disciples acquire from their predecessors in order to expound and explain them (*Seder Tanna'im ve-Amora'im*; cf. Rashi to Suk. 28b; BM 32a–b, et al.). Another sense comprises the whole body of one's learning; e.g., "He from whom one has acquired the greater part of his Talmud is to be regarded as one's teacher" (BM 33a). A third meaning is in the technical phrase *talmud lomar*, which

is used to indicate a teaching derived from the exegesis of a biblical text. A fourth meaning is the analytical aspect of the commandment of Torah study (cf. Maim., Yad, The Laws of Torah Study 1:11). The word "Talmud" is most commonly used, however, to denote the bodies of teaching consisting largely of the traditions and discussions of the *amoraim* organized around the text of the *Mishnah of R. *Judah ha-Nasi (see *Talmud, Babylonian, and *Talmud, Jerusalem).

In popular parlance two other phrases are used as alternative names for the Talmud. The first is **Shas*, an abbreviation consisting of the initial letters of *Shishah Sidrei* (Mishnah), i.e., the "Six Orders" (of the Mishnah) which serve as the literary foundation for the *talmudim*. The second is **Gemara* (for a full discussion see Albeck, *Mevo ha-Talmud* (1969), ch. 1).

[Eliezer Berkovits / Stephen G. Wald (2nd ed.)]

TALMUD, BABYLONIAN (Heb. תַּלְמוּד בַּבְלִי), a literary work of monumental proportions (5,894 folio pages in the standard printed editions), which draws upon the totality of the spiritual, intellectual, ethical, historical, and legal traditions produced in rabbinic circles from the time of the destruction of the Second Temple in the first century until the Muslim conquest at the beginning of the seventh century. The Babylonian Talmud (Bavli) is often described as being a commentary to the *Mishnah of Rabbi *Judah ha-Nasi, but the actual relationship between these two works is far more complex. The external form of the Bavli is indeed organized in the shape of a vast literary superstructure which rests on the firm foundation of the Mishnah (see *Mishnah, The Mishnah as a Literary Work) – or more precisely on four of the six orders of the Mishnah: *Moʾed*, *Nashim*, *Nezikin*, and *Kodashim*, there being no Talmud Bavli to the first order of the Mishnah, *Zeraim* (with the exception of *Berakhot*), or to the sixth order of the Mishnah, *Tohorot* (with the exception of *Niddah*). Moreover, the long dialectical arguments called *sugyot*, which make up much of the literature of the Bavli, often take the text of the Mishnah as their starting point. On the other hand, the Bavli includes and discusses two additional bodies of rabbinic sources: (1) *baraitot* – tannaitic sources which were not incorporated in the Mishnah of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, deriving for the most part from the same tannaitic period as the sources of the Mishnah (1st–2nd centuries), and almost equal to them in authority (see **Baraita*); (2) the teachings of all the generations of the **amoraim* (3rd–5th centuries), both Babylonian and Palestinian. The Bavli cites and discusses these sources for their own sake, and not merely insofar as they enlighten some obscure point in the Mishnah. The inclusion of these different strata of authoritative religious sources in the Bavli, together with the anonymous and largely post-amoraic editorial literary level of the Bavli – the so called *setam ha-talmud* – make the Bavli into an autonomous and comprehensive work of *halakhah* and *aggadah* (see: Mishnah, *Halakhah* in the Mishnah, *Aggadah* in the Mishnah). In effect, the Bavli incorporates both of the fundamental levels of rabbinic tradition which are represented in the two similar works of talmudic literature which were redacted in Ereẓ Israel – the *Tosefta and the *Jerusalem Talmud (Yerushalmi) – and in so doing both comprehends and transcends these earlier works.

The Talmud Bavli represents the crowning literary achievement of this entire period of Jewish history – which is in fact often simply referred to as the "talmudic period." It was ultimately accepted as the uniquely authoritative canonical work of post-biblical Jewish religion (see: *Talmud, Jerusalem – Acceptance of the two Talmuds), providing the foundation for all subsequent developments in the fields of *halakhah* and *aggadah*, up to the time of the Shulḥan Arukh (16th century) and beyond. Despite manifest difficulties of language and content, the study of the Bavli has also achieved an unparalleled place in the popular religious culture of the Jewish people. It has served as the primary vehicle for the education of countless Jews over the centuries, professional scholars and laypeople alike. Recently it has even filled sports arenas both in the United States and in Israel with devotees, celebrating the conclusion of the 7-year cycle in which the study of the entire Bavli is regularly completed.

The Bavli as a Literary Work

The literary form which is most characteristic of the Bavli as it stands before us today is the *sugya*. The *sugya* is a kind of free-wheeling dialectical argument, conducted in a dialect of Eastern Aramaic, in which various tannaitic and amoraic sources are brought and analyzed, and other similar sources are cited in order to prove some point which came up in the course of the discussion. The Aramaic language of the *sugya* is often long-winded and repetitive. It weaves its way in-between these various well defined literary sources, joining them together into an interconnected series of questions, objections, answers and justifications. The resulting literary structure is a continuous dialectical chain of reasoning in which the distinct literary components imbedded within it often lose their individual identities. The anonymous literary level of the Bavli – the *stam ha-talmud* – favors discursive language and even abstract conceptual formulations. The *sugya* often engages in far-reaching comparisons and analogies between issues and concepts drawn from widely disparate and often apparently unrelated areas of *halakhah*. As they stand, the *sugyot* of the Bavli represent the absolute antithesis of the Mishnah in virtually every respect. The *halakhot* and *aggadot* of the Mishnah are expressed in succinct and concrete language. They are arranged as a series of discrete statements, and organized neatly by topic into chapters and tractates. The *sugya* in its final form, on the other hand, is discursive and abstract, continuous and associative, jumping from topic to topic, as the flow of the argument dictates. As antithetical as these two literary forms may seem, the roots of the full-blown Babylonian *sugya* lie deep within earlier forms of rabbinic discourse, and the transition from the one to the other was in all likelihood a gradual one.

The *Sugya* as a Literary Construct

The *sugyot* of the Bavli are often described as records of discussions and debates between the *amoraim* which took place

in the Babylonian and Palestinian rabbinic academies during the talmudic period. This description is, however, not entirely accurate. The many extended halakhic and aggadic *sugyot* which fill the Bavli are not transcriptions or protocols of amoraic debates as they actually occurred in the Babylonian or Palestinian academies. Rather, they are carefully crafted literary creations, idealized reconstructions of these debates as remembered, redacted, and reformulated in the process of integrating them into the official curriculum of one or many of the amoraic and post-amoraic academies, both in Babylonia and in Ereẓ Israel. Moreover, the almost universally dialectical character of the Babylonian *sugya*, as described above, is often a literary façade, superimposed by later secondary redactors upon earlier quite different forms of talmudic discourse, which did not always possess a dialectical character. In order to understand this phenomenon more fully it is necessary to distinguish between several distinct literary levels which are found in the talmudic *sugya*, which probably also represent distinct historical stages in the evolution of the literature of the Babylonian Talmud.

The Elements of the *Sugya* (1): Tannaitic Sources

The most fundamental building blocks of Babylonian talmudic literature are the extra-mishnaic tannaitic sources – the *baraitot* – which may be associated in one way or another with some particular *mishnah*. That *baraitot* were already collected and arranged in the order of the Mishnah at a very early period – as a sort of proto-Talmud to the Mishnah of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi – is clearly demonstrated by the example of the Tosefta. Like the Tosefta, the *baraitot* of the Bavli can relate to text of the Mishnah in a number of different ways. In the Bavli a given *baraita* may be literarily dependent on the *mishnah* with which it is associated, presupposing the specific language of the *mishnah* and expanding or commenting upon it. Alternatively, it may represent an independent but parallel tradition, addressing or formulating the *halakhah* of the *mishnah* in a different language, or reporting alternative or even contradictory opinions on the same halakhic or aggadic issue. It can even contain an earlier and more original version of the very same tradition which has been included in the Mishnah in an abbreviated or revised form (Friedman, *Tosefta Atiqta*). Unlike the Tosefta, *baraitot* in the Bavli regularly transmit **midrashei halakhah*, which derive the *halakhah* of the *mishnah* (or an alternative but related *halakhah*) from the text of the Torah by means of one of the traditional hermeneutical rules. Again like the Tosefta, a *baraita* in the Bavli need not relate directly to the specific halakhic or aggadic content of the *mishnah* at all, but rather may transmit some other tannaitic tradition, which may be intimately related to the issue discussed in the *mishnah*, or alternatively loosely connected to this particular *mishnah* in an associative fashion.

Taken by themselves, the *baraitot* of the Babylonian Talmud are not arranged in a question and answer format, and do not constitute a *sugya*. This is not to say that individual tannaitic sources do not possess any explicit dialectical character. In fact *mishnayot* and *baraitot* sometimes report brief or extended discussions and debates between the *tannaim*, in which objections to particular positions are raised and justifications are offered in their defense. *Midrashei halakhah*, especially those which parallel the *midrashim* of the *Sifra, often contain extended dialectical analyses of both actual and hypothetical halakhic positions. A group of *baraitot* may build one upon the other, representing an extended examination of a single unified issue or set of issues.

All of these phenomena anticipate different aspects of the talmudic *sugya*. Nevertheless, the familiar technical terms which serve to define the role of a *baraita* within the talmudic *sugya* – e.g., *hatanya* (= objection), *detanya* (= proof), etc. – all belong to the amoraic and post-amoraic editorial framework of the talmudic text. Taken by themselves, the *baraitot* which are imbedded within a particular talmudic *sugya* have no more dialectical structure than the parallel group of *baraitot* included in the Tosefta. For the historical relation between the *baraitot* of the Bavli and the Tosefta, see below.

The Elements of the *Sugya* (2): Amoraic Sources

The second major family of constitutive elements which make up the talmudic *sugya* is composed of those sources which report the teachings of the post-tannaitic *Amoraim*. These teachings are transmitted in the Bavli in a number of different literary forms, each of which represents an outgrowth of elements which already existed within tannaitic literature. We can group these literary forms under four headings: (1) *memrot* – the direct statements of the *amoraim* in *halakhah* and *aggadah*; (2) *ba'yot* – formal questions posed in the amoraic academies; (3) *'uvdot* – stories or precedents which report (in the third person, and usually in Aramaic) the actions or decisions of the *amoraim*; (4) amoraic *sugyot* – brief debates between the *amoraim*.

The first literary category – the *memrot* of the *amoraim* – shows the highest degree of continuity with the earlier tannaitic halakhic and aggadic literature. These *memrot* are relatively succinct, discrete statements, usually expressed in a characteristic dialect of mishnaic Hebrew. In many cases these *memrot* are virtually indistinguishable in form and content from similar tannaitic statements included in the Tosefta and in the talmudic *baraitot*. In fact we often find a statement transmitted in the Yerushalmi as a *memra*, while in the Bavli the same statement appears as a *baraita*. Alternatively we find tannaitic statements which are included in the Tosefta, but which are cited in the Bavli as amoraic *memrot*. (For these and similar phenomena see **Baraita*, The *Baraita* as a Literary Source within the Talmudic Sugya; *Baraitot* and *Memrot*.) Like talmudic *baraitot*, *memrot* also can be categorized as either directly dependent on an earlier (usually tannaitic) literary source, or as independent *memrot*, which introduce new halakhic or aggadic topics.

The second literary category – the amoraic *ba'ya* – is rooted in the logical structure of the tannaitic *halakhah* it-

Orders and Tractates of the Mishnah and Talmud

		Mishnah	Babylonian Talmud[1]		Jerusalem Talmud[2]	
		No. of Chapters	No. of Folios	Folios Munich Ed.	No. of Folios	Subject matter
ORDER ZERA'IM	Berakhot	9	64	19	14	Benedictions
	Pe'ah	8	–	3	7	Gleanings (Lev. 19:9–10)
	Demai	7	–	3	6	Doubtfully tithed produce
	Kilayim	9	–	4	7	Diverse kinds (Deut. 22:9–11)
	Shevi'it	10	–	4	7	The Sabbatical Year (Ex. 23:10–11)
	Terumot	11	–	4	9	Heave offering (Lev. 22:10–14)
	Ma'aserot	5	–	2	5	Tithes (Num. 18:21)
	Ma'aser Sheni	5	–	3	5	Second tithe (Deut. 14:22ff.)
	Ḥallah	4	–	2	4	Dough offering (Num. 15:17–21)
	Orlah	3	–	2	4	The fruit of young trees (Lev. 19:23–25)
	Bikkurim	3	–	3	3	First fruits (Lev. 26:1–11)
ORDER MO'ED	Shabbat	24	157	28	18	The Sabbath
	Eruvin	10	105	17	9	The fusion of Sabbath limits
	Pesaḥim	10	121	18	11	Passover
	Shekalim	8	–	6	7	The Shekel dues (Ex. 30:11–16)
	Yoma	8	88	16	8	The Day of Atonement
	Sukkah	5	56	9	5	The Feast of Tabernacles
	Beẓah	5	40	11	5	Festival laws
	Rosh ha-Shanah	4	35	7	4	Various new years, particularly Rosh Ha-Shanah
	Ta'anit	4	31	8	7	Fast days
	Megilah	4	32	9	7	Purim
	Mo'ed Katan	3	29	7	4	The intermediate days of festivals
	Ḥagigah	3	27	6	5	The festival offering (Deut. 16:16–17)
ORDER NASHIM	Yevamot	16	122	24	16	Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5–10)
	Ketubbot	13	112	20	12	Marriage contracts
	Nedarim	11	91	10	7	Vows (Num. 30)
	Nazir	9	66	8	8	The Nazirite (Num. 6)
	Sotah	9	49	11	9	The suspected adulteress (Num. 5:11 ff.)
	Gittin	9	90	16	7	Divorce
	Kiddushin	4	82	14	9	Marriage
ORDER NEZIKIN	Bava Kamma	10	119	22	7	Torts
	Bava Meẓia	10	119	20	6	Civil law
	Bava Batra	10	176	21	6	Property law
	Sanhedrin	11	113	24	14	Judges
	Makkot	3	24	5	3	Flagellation (Deut. 25:2)
	Shevu'ot	8	49	9	7	Oaths
	Eduyyot	8	–	4	–	Traditional testimonies
	Avodah Zarah	5	76	13	7	Idolatry
	Avot[3]	5	–	2	–	Ethical maxims
	Horayot	3	14	4	4	Erroneous ruling of the court (Lev. 4:22 ff.)

		Mishnah	Babylonian Talmud[1]		Jerusalem Talmud[2]	
		No. of Chapters	No. of Folios	Folios Munich Ed.	No. of Folios	Subject matter
ORDER KODASHIM	Zevaḥim	14	120	21	–	Animal offerings
	Menaḥot	13	110	21	–	Meal offering
	Hullin	12	142	25	–	Animals slaughtered for food
	Behorot	9	61	13	–	Firstlings (Deut. 15:19 ff.)
	Arakhin	9	34	9	–	Vows of valuation (Lev. 27:1–8)
	Temurah	7	39	8	–	The substituted offering (Lev. 27:10)
	Keritot	6	28	9	–	Extripation (Lev. 18:29)
	Me'ilah	6	22	4	–	Sacrileges (Lev. 5:15–16)
	Tamid[3]	7	9	4	–	The daily sacrifice (Num. 28:3–4)
	Middot[3]	5	–	3	–	Measurements of the Temple
	Kinnim[3]	3	–	2	–	The Bird offering (Lev. 5:7 ff.)
ORDER TOHOROT	Kelim[3]	30	–	11	–	Uncleanness of articles
	Oholot (Ahilot)	18	–	7	–	Uncleanness through overshadowing (No. 19:14–15)
	Nega'im	14	–	7	–	Leprosy (Lev. 13, 14)
	Parah	12	–	5	–	The Red Heifer (Num. 19)
	Tohorot	10	–	5	–	Ritual cleanness
	Mikva'ot	10	–	5	–	Ritual ablution
	Niddah	10	73	14	4	The menstruant
	Makhshirin	6	–	3	–	Liquid that predisposes food to become ritually unclean (Lev. 11:37–38)
	Zavim	5	–	2	–	Fluxes (Lev. 15)
	Tevul Yom	4	–	2	–	Ritual uncleanness between immersion and sunset (Lev. 22:6–7)
	Yadayim	4	–	3	–	The ritual uncleanness of the hands
	Uḳẓin[4]	3	–	2	–	"Stalks"; parts of plants susceptible to uncleanness

1 The number given is the last page number. The pagination, however, always begins with page 2; one page should therefore be deducted.
2 The number of pages is given in accordance with the Krotoschin edition.
3 There is Tosefta to all the tractates with the exception of *Avot*, *Tamid*, *Middot*, *Kinnim*, *Kelim*. In the Tosefta, *Kelim* is divided into three sections, respectively called *Bava Kamma*, *Bava Meẓia* and *Bava Batra*.
4 As will be seen, the tractates are generally arranged in the orders according to the descending numbers of chapters. For departures from this rule see the articles on the individual tractates concerned.

self. Tannaitic *halakhot*, while formulated in terms of specific and concrete cases, almost always involve an implicit judgment concerning some conceptual distinction which underlies its specific rulings (see: Mishnah, The Structure of Tannaitic *Halakhah*). During the amoraic period, the analysis of these tannaitic *halakhot* was often expressed in the form of explicit questions – *ba'yot* – which examine the way in which these conceptual distinctions would apply in closely related but nevertheless slightly different cases. In its simplest form the *ba'ya* merely states the new case to be considered and posits the bare question: *mahu?* – i.e. what should the ruling be in such a case? In a slightly more developed format, the *iba'ya lehu* also explicitly states the different alternative rulings which could apply to this case. In the most developed and elaborate form it also examines in detail the alternative conceptual principles which could be used to decide the issue in one direction or another. These *iba'ya lehu* passages can be quite lengthy, representing highly ramified conceptual analyses of entire areas of *halakhah* (e.g., Ket. 5b–6a). At the same time they almost always remain within the concrete framework of specific cases and rulings, and rarely engage in abstract generalization. Despite the intimate interconnection between the three elements of the talmudic *iba'ya lehu* – (1) the question itself; (2) the statement of alternative possible answers; (3) the reasoning involved in adjudicating the question – only the first element, usually formulated in mishnaic Hebrew, should be counted among the amoraic sources of the Bavli. The second and third levels, which are almost always expressed in Ara-

maic, probably belong to the anonymous literary level of the Bavli, the *stam ha-talmud* (see below).

The third literary category, the *'uvda*, is in many ways parallel to the tannaitic *ma'aseh* – a story which serves as a legal precedent, either supporting or contradicting a formal halakhic statement quoted earlier. This phenomenon is more highly developed in the Bavli, which often brings an individual *'uvda*, or a series of *'uvdot* – almost always in Aramaic – in order to examine how the abstract halakhic content of a *memra* or *baraita* can be translated into practical terms in the context of specific cases (e.g., Pes. 49a). Since the black and white distinctions of the formal *halakhah* often must give way to a variety of shades of gray (or other brighter colors) when applied in practice, these *'uvdot* often break out of the limited framework of halakhic precedents, growing and expanding into a full-blown aggadic exposition of the ethical and spiritual principles which underlie the *halakhah* (e.g., Ket. 61b–63a, and see: Mishnah, *Aggadah* in the Mishnah).

The fourth literary category – the amoraic *sugya* – also has clear precedents in tannaitic sources. The Mishnah and Tosefta transmit scores of brief formal debates, usually presented as face-to-face discussions between the parties to a dispute which was presented earlier. In these debates, one side attempts to convince the other of the correctness of its opinion, either by force of reason, or by relying upon some accepted and authoritative *halakhah*. After each side has taken its turn in the debate, one side may concede defeat, in whole or in part, or the two sides may remain unconvinced and continue to maintain their respective positions. Starting from the 2nd–3rd generations of *amoraim*, this "*memra* plus debate" format becomes an increasingly prominent form of amoraic literature. After citing a *memra*, which either reports a halakhic dispute between two *amoraim*, or the opinion of an individual *amora* which is then attacked by a colleague, the Bavli will often analyze the dispute by means of a formal debate presented as a face-to-face discussion between the disputing parties. Each side brings proofs for its own positions and objections against the opposing side, defends itself and responds with counterattacks. Unlike their tannaitic counterparts, the *amoraim* had at their disposal an almost unlimited body of authoritative sources which could be exploited in order to attack the positions of their opponents – the entire corpus of *mishnayot* and *baraitot*. According to the accepted canons of talmudic jurisprudence, *amoraim* may not in principle disagree with *mishnayot* and *baraitot*. This formal legal principle no doubt encouraged the *amoraim* to search far and wide for any tannaitic source which could serve – either directly, or indirectly by analogy – to support their own positions or to refute the positions of their opponents. In this way the amoraic *sugya* introduces a second set of tannaitic sources (both *mishnayot* and *baraitot*) into the discussion of a given *mishnah* which were not originally associated with it in the pre-amoraic tannaitic stratum of the Talmud. Whether these debates actually took place in fact, or are themselves literary constructs of the amoraic academies, this kind of discussion provided the impetus for a more abstract form of conceptual analysis – one which looks for common principles of law underlying radically different spheres of *halakhah*.

Despite the importance of the *sugya* for the later development of talmudic literature as a whole, it must be emphasized that at this stage the amoraic *sugya* is still relatively limited in length, and it is only one among a number of different forms of literary sources which are found in the amoraic stratum of the Bavli. Individual *memrot*, or groups of *memrot* organized by topic, standing either by themselves or attached to *mishnayot* or *baraitot*; collections of *memrot* associated with the name of a particular *amora*, often appearing in groups of three, seven, or even ten; *'uvdot* and *ba'yot* – all these literary forms continue to exist *beside* the amoraic *sugya*, not as part of it.

The Framework of the *Sugya*: Stam ha-Talmud

These tannaitic and amoraic literary sources are the building blocks out of which the literature of the Talmud is constructed. No less important, however, to an understanding of the Talmud is an appreciation of the highly creative and pervasive activity of the generations of redactors who combined these elements into more and more complex, lengthy, and continuous dialectical literary structures. As noted above, an amoraic *memra* may often contain an interpretation of a tannaitic source, to which it is immediately appended. The anonymous talmudic editor (*stam ha-talmud*) will interpose a question (in Aramaic) between the *memra* and the tannaitic source (both in Hebrew). This practice serves to highlight a problem in the text of the tannaitic source which may have prompted the amoraic comment. It also turns a non-dialectic structure (text plus comment) into an explicitly dialectical one (question plus answer). Sometimes it affords the *stam ha-talmud* an opportunity to redefine the issue of the *sugya* in line with an agenda which may not have been shared by the amora who authored the original *memra* (cf. Wald, Pesaḥim III, 215–221). The *stam ha-talmud* also introduces editorial comments and technical terms which explicitly define the function of individual sources within the *sugya* (e.g., as questions, objections, proofs, or additional supports), thus creating a continuous line of discussion out of what were originally discrete and unconnected *baraitot, memrot, ba'yot, 'uvdot*, etc.

The *stam ha-talmud* augments the relatively brief amoraic *sugyot* by appending additional objections, justifications, counter-objections, etc. to the original discussion. These additions may not be ascribed directly to the original amoraic disputants, but rather obliquely (e.g., "R. Johanan could have said in response" etc.) or anonymously ("they objected" etc.). Another common way in which the *stam ha-talmud* augments a *sugya* is by transferring existing blocks of talmudic dialogue – either amoraic or "stammaitic" – from place to place in a given chapter, tractate, or even from tractate to tractate (e.g., Wald, Shabbat VII, *sugyot* 3, 7, 10). Certain textual difficulties (*kushiyot*) are often caused as a by-product of the moving of entire passages from place to place, since the language

of a passage may be in certain respects context-specific, being more appropriate in the original context, and less appropriate in the new context into which it was introduced secondarily. Other techniques characteristic of the *stam ha-talmud* include the addition of editorial links between a number of originally distinct *sugyot*, thus transforming them into a "super-*sugya*" (Friedman, BM VI, Text, 101–159), or alternatively combining a number of distinct amoraic *sugyot*, which originally dealt with a family of related halakhic issues, thus giving the impression of a single extended amoraic debate on a unified topic (Wald, Pesaḥim III, 137–168).

One of the most prominent tendencies of the *stam ha-talmud* is to employ isolated technical terms – e.g., *gererah* (Shabbat 70b–71b), *ho'il* (Pes. 46a–48a) – as explanations for the concrete *halakhot* of the tannaim and the amoraim. These terms – which have little meaning on their own (*gererah* = dragging; *ho'il* = since) – serve as names for abstract principles which tend to replace the more concrete and implicit form of case-oriented conceptualization characteristic of the earlier *halakhah* (see: Mishnah, The Structure of Tannaitic *Halakhah*). This striking intellectual trend of the *stam ha-talmud* has been singled out for extensive analysis, both for its own sake, and as a possible historical precedent for much of the later brilliant intellectual achievements of post-talmudic halakhic scholarship (Moscovitz). All the same, it should be noted that this use of isolated abstract phrases by the *stam ha-talmud* can also lead to the extension of specific halakhic notions beyond the concrete contexts in which they were originally formulated and originally made sense. In this way the *stam ha-talmud* sometimes introduces conceptual problems into the halakhic framework of the talmudic discussion (Wald, Pesaḥim III, 168–72).

The Place of the Bavli in Rabbinic Literature

An examination of the Bavli reveals that it contains at least two distinct strata of defined literary sources – tannaitic and amoraic – as well clear evidence of multiple layers of redactional activity. This literary analysis, important in its own right, also has important consequences for our understanding of the place of the Bavli in the history of rabbinic literature as a whole. Prior comparisons of the Bavli to the other extant works of ancient talmudic literature, especially the Yerushalmi, have tended to emphasize the striking differences between them, concentrating on the dialectical, discursive and conceptual character of the Bavli, as opposed to the more discrete, concise, concrete, and reserved character of these parallel talmudic texts. Once it is made clear that most of these dialectical, discursive, and conceptual elements belong primarily to the latest literary stratum of the Bavli – the *stam ha-talmud* – it becomes essential to reexamine the historical relationship between the earlier literary strata of the Bavli and these parallel works of Palestinian rabbinic literature.

THE BAVLI AND THE EXTANT TANNAITIC WORKS. It has often been noted (see above) that the *baraitot* of the Bavli bear a striking resemblance to the parallel sources found in the ancient tannaitic collections – the Tosefta and the *Midrashei Halakhah*. On the other hand, there are also significant differences between the language and content of the talmudic *baraitot* and the parallel texts found in our tannaitic collections. The question has naturally arisen whether these extant tannaitic collections served as the sources for the *baraitot* of the Babylonian Talmud, or whether the Bavli used other collections of tannaitic sources otherwise unknown to us. Scholars have offered very different answers to this question, and their disagreement is ultimately rooted in a single issue: whether later talmudic scholars intentionally modified the original text of ancient tannaitic sources. Some scholars have rejected this notion out of hand, and seem to view its rejection almost as an article of faith (see: Mishnah, The Redaction of the Mishnah). Others scholars have brought considerable evidence in support of this notion.

Those who assert that later sages did not allow themselves to interfere in any way with the internal composition of their authoritative tannaitic sources explain the differences between the talmudic *baraitot* and the parallel tannaitic texts by positing that the Bavli drew upon alternative collections of *baraitot* – both *halakhot* and midrashim – which are not to be identified with the extant collections which we possess today. A corollary of this position drawn by many of these scholars is that the extant tannaitic collections – the Tosefta and the extant *Midrashei Halakhah* – were unknown to the redactors of the Bavli. This view asserts, in effect, that our extant collections of tannaitic literature, which were apparently all copied and studied in the geonic Babylonian academies during the period following the final redaction of the Babylonian Talmud, were for some reason unavailable to these same Babylonian redactors. At the same time it asserts that the alternative collections of tannaitic *halakhah* which were actually used (according to this theory) to the very end in the talmudic Babylonian academies were all, for some equally unexplained reason, totally lost, leaving no tangible trace behind among the Babylonian *geonim* who immediately succeeded the final redactors of the Bavli.

The alternative position holds that the final versions of the *baraitot* in the Bavli are the end-product of a long process of study and interpretation, emendation, and reformulation, evidence for which can usually be found within talmudic literature itself. As a result, the scholars who hold this position find no compelling reason to posit the wholesale existence of entire collections of ancient tannaitic sources which have not survived in our hands today. Rather they consider that the extant collections, or other very closely related versions of the same, are the actual sources for the *baraitot* of the Bavli, and that the explanation of the differences between the existing versions of a given tradition is more likely to depend on an analysis of the history of talmudic *halakhah* and *aggadah*, rather than on the chance rediscovery of some hypothetical long-lost work.

One cannot overestimate the depth of this scholarly dispute. The first approach leads to a profoundly pessimistic

attitude toward the entire history of talmudic literature. According to this view the vast majority of the ancient tannaitic sources which once existed, and which were actually studied in the academies of the *amoraim*, are almost certainly irretrievably lost. It also leads to a highly skeptical attitude toward higher critical talmudic methodology, since this methodology involves a comparison of the tannaitic traditions preserved in amoraic works with the supposedly more original parallel traditions preserved in the ancient tannaitic collections, in order to understand the ways in which the *amoraim* interpreted and reworked their sources. Since, according to this first view, the tannaitic collections which we possess today were not in fact used by the *amoraim*, they are quite useless in this regard. In any case this view is convinced that the *amoraim* never actually reworked or reformulated any of their ancient and authoritative sources.

According to the second view, the overwhelming majority of the tannaitic sources which were redacted by the central rabbinic yeshivot at the end of the tannaitic period are still in our possession and have been preserved more or less in their original tannaitic form. Moreover these extant collections provide fairly reliable evidence for the form and content of authoritative tannaitic sources which were studied in the amoraic academies. Against this background, it then becomes possible to identify and to analyze the later amoraic and post-amoraic developments of each tradition, as documented in the Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud) and the Bavli.

Finally, it should be noted that the collections of *baraitot* which are embedded in a given *sugya* in the Bavli frequently closely resemble – in number, in order, in form, and in content – the parallel groups of *baraitot* associated with the same *mishnah* in the Tosefta (e.g., Wald, Pesaḥim III, 97–99). This phenomenon gives further credence to the historical hypothesis that at the root of the *sugyot* of the Bavli lies a tannaitic literary stratum which is intimately connected to the tannaitic traditions preserved in our Tosefta. For an authoritative and exhaustive treatment of this issue, see: Friedman, Baraitot; *Tosefta Atiqta*.

THE BAVLI AND THE YERUSHALMI. It has also long been noted that there is a considerable overlap between the amoraic traditions preserved in the Talmud Bavli and those preserved in the Talmud Yerushalmi. These parallel traditions were pointed out for every page of the Bavli by R. Aryeh Leib Yellin in his commentary, *Yefeh Enayim*, which is printed in the Romm edition of the Bavli (see below). When, however, the tannaitic and amoraic literary strata of the Bavli are isolated from the anonymous literary level of the *stam ha-talmud*, this striking and fundamental similarity between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi becomes even more pronounced (Friedman, Yevamot X, 283–321). Detailed analyses of extended portions of the Bavli have revealed that at the root of virtually every *sugya* of the Bavli lies some earlier, more primitive amoraic *sugya* which is documented somewhere in the Yerushalmi (see: Wald, Pesaḥim III). Sometimes this literary dependence extends to an entire chapter, where *sugya* after *sugya* in the Bavli is built on the foundation of an identical series of earlier and simpler parallel *sugyot* found in the same chapter in the Yerushalmi (see: Wald, Shabbat VII). These earlier and simpler *sugyot*, however, do not consist of the *memrot* and discussions of Palestinian *amoraim* only, but rather as often as not include alternative versions of the *memrot* and discussions of early Babylonian *amoraim* as well. The relation between these two Talmuds is not, therefore, one of a later Babylonian tradition building on an earlier Palestinian tradition. Rather, the Yerushalmi regularly provides clear evidence for the earlier and more primitive state of a *common Babylonian-Palestinian talmudic tradition* shared by both of these major centers of rabbinic culture – one which preceded the pervasive additions and revisions of the anonymous redactors of the Bavli.

Moreover, the Yerushalmi itself preserves an even earlier redactional level of this shared talmudic tradition – in the three tractates (BK, BM, BB) commonly referred to as Yerushalmi *Nezikin* (see: *Talmud, Jerusalem – Yerushalmi *Nezikin*). Yerushalmi *Nezikin* not only is free of the discursive and conceptual discussions characteristic of the *stam ha-talmud* in the Bavli; it also lacks much of the extended amoraic *sugya* structure common to both the Bavli and the rest of the Yerushalmi. Instead Yerushalmi *Nezikin* consists mostly of *baraitot*, *memrot*, and other brief amoraic literary sources. Formerly, the explanation of the difference between Yerushalmi *Nezikin* and the rest of the Yerushalmi was sought in a different *place* of redaction. More recently, it has been sought in a different *time* of redaction – reflecting an earlier stage in the development of the shared talmudic tradition, prior to the combination of the isolated amoraic sources (see above) into larger, more involved and elaborate *sugya* structures. At the same time, even the radically different redactional form of Yerushalmi *Nezikin* cannot obscure the common elements of tradition which it shares with the fully elaborated parallel versions of the Bavli (Sussmann).

The relationship between the parallel traditions held in common by both the Bavli and the Yerushalmi is somewhat more complex than that which holds between the *baraitot* in the Bavli and in the Tosefta. On the one hand, the literary evolution of the Bavli and that of the Yerushalmi overlap to a very large extent. So it is to be expected that the Bavli preserved versions of amoraic traditions that are not found in the Yerushalmi as it stands today. On the other hand, later Babylonian *amoraim* (and anonymous redactors) are unlikely to have treated the words of their amoraic predecessors with the same respect that they accorded to ancient tannaitic traditions, and so are more likely to have revised and reformulated them. Therefore, while the Yerushalmi's version of a shared tradition is usually more original than the parallel version found in the Bavli – and so can be used to reconstruct the internal development of amoraic talmudic tradition – this is by no means a hard and fast rule. The Bavli sometimes preserves the more ancient and original version of an amoraic

tradition, or of a *sugya*, while the version in the Yerushalmi reflects later developments of the tradition, which were not incorporated into the Bavli.

THE FOUR STAGES OF TALMUDIC TRADITION. Beneath the discursive and conceptual surface structure of the *stam ha-talmud*, one can distinguish three cumulative literary levels within the text of the Bavli: (1) the *baraitot*; (2) the *baraitot* plus the isolated amoraic sources; (3) the *baraitot*, the amoraic sources, plus the expansion and combination of these elements into more or less continuous *sugyot*. To these three literary levels correspond three earlier bodies of talmudic tradition. To the first level in the Bavli, consisting of *baraitot* alone, correspond (more or less) the extant collections of tannaitic sources – Tosefta and the *Midrashei Halakhah*. To the second level, consisting of *baraitot* plus the isolated amoraic sources, corresponds (more or less) the redactional level represented by Yerushalmi *Nezkin*. To the third level of the Bavli, consisting of *baraitot*, the amoraic sources, plus the expansion and combination of these elements into more or less continuous *sugyot* – without extensive additions and explanations by the anonymous redactor – corresponds (more or less) the redactional level represented by the rest of the Yerushalmi. The fourth and final stage in the development of the Bavli is, of course, represented by the editorial and literary activity of the anonymous redactors of the Bavli in its final form – the *stam ha-talmud*.

However one wishes to explain the differences between these three earlier redactional levels and the parallel bodies of tradition, the most striking feature is the surprising degree of uniformity between them. The overall impression made by the Tosefta, the Yerushalmi, and the Bavli is one of successive stages in the literary development of a single common talmudic tradition, rather than independent and distinct traditions. This impression of relative uniformity stands in sharp contrast to the radical multiplicity of master-disciple circles and competing academic centers which are described in the talmudic texts themselves, and testifies to a large degree of centralization in the preservation and distribution of the talmudic traditions which were produced by the many different personalities and centers described in the sources.

The Textual Transmission of the Bavli

Unlike the Tosefta and the Yerushalmi, which during most of the Middle Ages were studied only by professional scholars, the Bavli was widely studied by countless Jews throughout the centuries. It is therefore not surprising to find that the text of the Bavli is preserved in scores of medieval manuscripts, whereas the medieval manuscripts of the Tosefta and the Yerushalmi taken together can almost be counted on the fingers of a single hand. Aside from the relatively large number of extant manuscripts in which the Bavli is preserved (many of which include a single tractate, some more than one, and only one manuscript – Munich 95 – the entire Bavli), the text of the Bavli is characterized by the large number of significant variant readings which are preserved in these manuscripts. For years it was tacitly assumed – apparently under the influence of European classical scholarship – that these variant readings were caused by the errors of ignorant or careless scribes, and that they entered into the textual tradition of the Bavli during the process of copying and distributing the Talmud, especially in medieval Europe. While no manuscript of the Bavli is free from scribal errors, the phenomenon of progressive accumulation of shared scribal errors (so important in the methodology of classical philology) is almost totally absent in manuscripts of the Bavli. Unlike their gentile counterparts, the scribes who copied the Bavli seem to have been familiar with both the language and the content of the Bavli. This situation gave rise to certain very striking and unexpected forms of "scribal errors," such as copying (part of) a sentence which occurs in another tractate from memory, in place of the similar sentence which actually stood before the scribe in the text from which he was copying. Alternatively we find the annoying scribal practice of "serial abbreviations" which the scribe assumes that the reader will easily be able to decipher on the basis of his familiarity with the terminology and content of the Talmud. In any case, simple scribal errors, which usually yield a corrupt and unintelligible text, are regularly corrected (more or less successfully) by attentive scribes, and rarely are they passed on to the next generation of talmudic copies. Today these isolated scribal errors can easily be identified by means of a simple comparison to other manuscript traditions.

Far more important for an understanding of the Bavli is another totally different category of variant readings, one which does not reflect isolated errors in the transmission of a fixed and final text, but rather fundamentally divergent versions, i.e., different parallel formulations of extended passages within the text as a whole. The first scholar who addressed this issue seriously was E.S. Rosenthal, who correctly concluded that the text of the Bavli must have retained a certain element of fluidity well into the 6th–7th centuries (and perhaps even beyond), in order to explain the presence of such divergent readings in the medieval manuscripts of the Bavli. One of the most striking features of these extended "alternative versions" is that they often reflect the same or similar content, expressed in significantly different language. They seem to reflect an attitude of relative freedom and independence toward the talmudic text, one which allows itself to rephrase or reformulate the language of the tradition. These important and extensive textual variants therefore in all likelihood derive from a relatively early period in the history of the transmission of the Talmud, before the exact wording of the Talmud became sanctified in the eyes of the scholars and the students. It is therefore also highly likely that these variants do not derive from careless scribes who operated on the periphery of the talmudic world, but rather represent authentic alternative traditions which were originally propagated at the very center of talmudic authority – the Babylonian yeshivot themselves. This suggestion has been confirmed somewhat by the surprising discovery that "eastern" (Yemenite) manuscripts and *ge-*

onic traditions, rather than representing the earlier and more original talmudic texts, often reflect the latest and most "up to date" traditions, while isolated medieval manuscripts from the periphery of the talmudic world, in Spain or France, often preserve the more original and "unrevised" talmudic textual tradition (Wald, Pesaḥim III, 319, 336–46).

Rosenthal held that these extended alternative textual variants must have derived from an early period, before the text of the Bavli was formulated in exact language, and almost certainly while its transmission was still oral – and not by the medium of fixed written documents. However, Shamma Friedman's comprehensive studies in this field have shown conclusively that even these extended alternative textual variants are universally limited in extent – they are always localized modifications which have been introduced at a specific point into an otherwise fully formed and stable textual tradition. Since these changes in all likelihood represent a conscious process of intentional editorial revision of a fixed text, the much bandied question of "oral" vs. "written" tradition in the transmission of talmudic literature is relatively insignificant in explaining this phenomenon. (For an examination of the broader cultural significance of the tension between written and oral transmission of rabbinic texts, see: Friedman, Printing the Talmud.)

The systematic recording of the variant readings of the Babylonian Talmud began in the 19th century, with the *Diqduqei Soferim* of R. Rabbinovicz, continued in the second half of the 20th century with the ongoing *Diqduqei Soferim Hashalem* of the Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud (Yad Harav Herzog), and has culminated today in the complete computerized databank of all extant manuscripts and early editions of the Babylonian Talmud, produced and regularly updated by the Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmudic Research of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Facsimile editions of many talmudic manuscripts, which are still of value in confirming the transcriptions in these various works, are available, as are digital images of many manuscripts, on the web-site of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem.

The Redaction of the Bavli

The Bavli states, in its characteristically laconic style (BM 86a): "R. Nathan and R. Judah ha-Nasi are the end of Mishnah; Rav Ashi and Ravina are the end of instruction (הוראה)." Whatever the exact meaning of this rather obscure statement may be, the parallelism between its two halves has led various scholars to ascribe to Rav Ashi and Ravina a role in redacting the Bavli analogous to the role which R. Judah ha-Nasi played in the redaction of the Mishnah. From the preceding discussions it should be clear, however, that there is very little basis for this analogy – for the simple reason that the Bavli never was subjected to a single authoritative, comprehensive, and decisive revision comparable to R. Judah ha-Nasi's redaction of the Mishnah. As noted above, the tannaitic and most of the amoraic literary strata of the Bavli had probably already been formulated to a large degree and accepted as authoritative by many yeshivot in Bavel and Ereẓ Israel long before the time of Rav Ashi. Similarly, many *amoraim* are mentioned in the Bavli whose activity must have extended into the period after Rav Ashi. Moreover, most of the literary activity of the *stam ha-talmud ha-bavli* took place in all likelihood long after Rav Ashi's time. To this we must add the evidence mentioned above which indicates that extensive editorial revision of the text of the Talmud was still going on into the 6th–7th centuries at least. In line with all this evidence we must understand the literary formation of the Babylonian talmudic tradition as an ongoing process which took place over many centuries and in many yeshivot, both prior to and subsequent to the time of Rav Ashi. As such, the impact of any individual scholar – even one of the stature of Rav Ashi – on this process as a whole should not be seen as amounting to a "redaction" of the Bavli in the sense in which we ascribe this term to R. Judah ha-Nasi and his Mishnah.

The *Aggadah* of the Bavli

It has been observed that most of the aggadic material in the Babylonian Talmud is predominantly of Palestinian origin. The contribution of the Bavli in the field of *aggadah* consists largely of the extensive reworking of these earlier Palestinian aggadic themes, often achieving new levels of imagination and originality, which are frequently striking, engaging, and earthy. Sometimes a "mere" linguistic clarification can be the occasion for developing and elaborating a fragmentary tradition in new and unexpected directions (see: Friedman, BT Bava Meẓi'a VI, Commentary, 148). In the area of rabbinic cosmology, the Bavli constructs, out of fragmentary traditions preserved in earlier Palestinian sources, a continuous description of the world order, starting from the lowest levels underlying the earth, proceeding through the seven celestial spheres, and culminating with the highest heaven and the Throne of Glory, including a description of the various populations which inhabit each sphere, and the activities with which they occupy themselves (Ḥag. 12a–b). In the area of historical *aggadah*, the Bavli takes the earlier and rather brief traditions concerning a dispute between R. *Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and the sages over a matter of ritual purity, combines them with the merest suggestion that the sages once considered excommunicating R. Eliezer (TJ MK 3:1, 81c–d), and transforms these story-fragments into an elaborate and continuous narrative: the justly famous drama concerning the "oven of Akhnai" (BM 59b), in which R. Eliezer calls upon supernatural forces in order to decide the *halakhah* in his own favor, while R. Joshua boldly defends the autonomy and integrity of the earthly halakhic process in the face of such heavenly intimidation, and finally, almost against their wills, the sages are forced to excommunicate Eliezer, the resultant affront to Eliezer's honor almost resulting in R. Gamaliel's death at sea, and in fact finally leading to the death of R. Gamaliel, who according to the Bavli is also Eliezer's brother-in-law. Similarly, out of two laconic and fragmentary Palestinian traditions concerning R. *Meir

(TJ Bik. 3:3, 65c, MK 3:1, 81c), the Bavli constructs an elaborate, continuous narrative concerning a plot concocted by Meir and *Nathan to depose the *nasi*, Rabban *Simeon ben Gamaliel, because of the latter's desire to enhance his own honor and status at the expense of the honor of these two sages. The *aggadah* of the Bavli is capable of constructing colorful narratives concerning individuals whose very existence is hardly attested in earlier Palestinian sources. For example, a women named *Beruryah is mentioned in Tosefta *Kelim* (BM 1:6) as having expressed a halakhic position – which was approved by R. *Joshua (!) – in response to the opinion of R. *Tarfon. A similar story is told, also in Tosefta *Kelim* (BK 4:17), concerning a daughter of R. *Hananiah ben Teradyon, who clearly lived two generations after the previously mentioned Beruryah, and who, according to another tannaitic tradition (Sifre Deut. 307), was apparently also taken captive at the time of her father's martyrdom. A third, later midrashic tradition makes mention of the profound wisdom of R. Meir's (unnamed) wife (Midrash Proverbs 31). Out of these three apparently unconnected learned women the Bavli forges a single figure, the famous woman-scholar, Beruryah, who was also the daughter of Hananiah ben Teradyon, and also the wife of Meir. At the same time, the Bavli does not identify Beruryah with the daughter of Hananiah ben Teradyon who was taken captive at the time of her father's martyrdom, and so posits that he also had another daughter, and identifies this second daughter as Beruryah's sister (AZ 18a–18b). The creative and synthetic force of the Babylonian *aggadah* is felt even with respect to characters which have already undergone significant literary development in the earlier Palestinian aggadic tradition. Thus the figure of the arch-heretic *Elisha ben Avuya – whose historical existence is highly questionable – is developed by the Palestinian aggadic tradition in two contradictory directions. According to one tradition (TJ Ḥag. 2:1 77b, and cf. Song R. 1) he is described as an arch-villain who intentionally forces Jews to desecrate the Sabbath and prevents Jewish children from learning Torah, or even – according to an extreme version of this tradition – kills children who learned Torah. This figure is so evil that it is even forbidden to mention his name, and so he is called *aḥer*, "the other." According to a second tradition (TJ Ḥag. 2:1 77b–c; Ruth R. 6; Eccles. R. 7), Elisha was a tragic figure, a great scholar and the teacher of Meir, who lost his faith, and so himself stopped observing the Sabbath and stopped learning Torah. This latter figure – who is still called by his proper name, Elisha – is the focus of a debate whether a sage who has abandoned the Torah can repent (cf. Tosef. Dem. 2:9). According to this tradition, R. Meir continues to maintain a relationship with his former master in the hope of convincing him to repent. In the Bavli these two traditions are fused together, such that the evil arch-villain whose name is not mentioned is the very same figure with whom Meir maintains a relationship and from whom he continues to learn. This paradoxical (or contradictory) figure is obviously far more complex than either of the two distinct figures described in the Palestinian tradition, and the theological and dramatic issues which the Babylonian version of the story raises are far richer than those which emerge from the separate Palestinian traditions out of which the Bavli built its narrative. One who is already familiar with the literary character of the Bavli as a whole and its place in the development of rabbinic tradition (as described above) should have no difficulty in recognizing the nature of the *aggadot* of the Babylonian Talmud: on the one hand they are clearly dependent literarily on the earlier and simpler parallel Palestinian traditions; on the other hand the creative and synthetic editorial techniques which their Babylonian redactors used in revising and reformulating them yield, as often as not, what could easily be seen as new and original creations. This double insight offers a challenge to the literary critic, on the one hand, and should serve, on the other hand, as a warning to the historian not to assume that these Babylonian *aggadot* represent reliable sources for the history of the 1st–3rd centuries in Erez Israel, or for the biographies of the tannaitic and early amoraic figures mentioned in these *aggadot*, unless their contents can first be corroborated by a comparison to earlier, independent Palestinian traditions.

The History of Interpretation

From the time when the *halakhah* and the *aggadah* of the Bavli first took on the final literary form in which we recognize it today, there has never been a generation in which it was not studied and interpreted, and the history of its interpretation would in many respects coincide with much of the history of post-talmudic *halakhah*, *musar* (ethics), Jewish philosophy, *Kabbalah*, and so on. Nevertheless, an overview of the main tendencies of post-talmudic Talmud interpretation would not be totally out of place here. Post-talmudic Talmud interpretation is usually divided into three periods: *geonim* (up to about the 10th century); **rishonim* (11th–15th centuries); **aḥaronim* (16th–20th centuries), to which we add a fourth category: the *ḥokerim* – the modern historical interpreters of the Talmud who have been active since the end of the 19th century.

GEONIM. The activity of the *geonim* was concentrated in the old Babylonian yeshivot, which, despite changes in organization and location, continued to exist. The *geonim* who stood at the head of these academies claimed to have inherited the mantle of religious authority from their amoraic predecessors. From this center they exercised a significant degree of influence over the rapidly developing Jewish communities in Christian Europe, Moslem Spain, North Africa, and the Levant. The *geonim* did not publish (and apparently did not compose) any comprehensive commentaries to the Talmud, but rather kept their tradition of interpretation primarily within the institutional framework of their own academies. Nevertheless many of their individual responsa containing explanations of specific passages and difficult phrases in the Talmud have been preserved, and these, together with certain fragmentary *geonic* commentaries and explanations to the Talmud, have been collected and organized in the order of the text of the Bavli

by B.M. Lewin in his *Oẓar ha-Ge'onim*, and by others in similar works which have been published since his death. Prior to these relatively recent publications, the writings of the *geonim* were largely known indirectly, through the citations and discussions of their views in the writings of the *rishonim*.

RISHONIM. Following the decline of the centers of Babylonian scholarship in the 10th century, new centers of Talmud scholarship began to form in Western Europe and in North Africa, and afterwards in Moslem Spain – the academies of the *rishonim*. The most prominent names of the European school are Rabbenu *Gershom b. Judah of Mainz in the tenth century, *Rashi in France in the 11th century, and the *ba'alei ha-tosefot* – "the men of the additions" (**tosafot*) – in the 12th and 13th centuries, the most famous of whom were Rashi's grandsons, Samuel b. Meir (Rashbam), and Jacob *Tam, and his great-grandson, R. Isaac the Elder (the Ri Hazaken). The most prominent names of the North African-Spanish school are Rabbenu *Hananel b. Ḥushi'el and Rabbenu Nissim ben Jacob in Tunisia at the beginning of the 11th century, R. Isaac Alfasi in Algeria and afterwards in Spain who was active during almost all of the 11th century and into the very beginning of the 12th century, and Moses Maimonides at first in Spain and then finally in Egypt during the 12th century. While drawing on common *geonic* traditions, these two schools developed independently and in relative isolation from each other over a period of some 200 years. As a result they formed significantly different approaches to the interpretation of the Bavli.

The major literary works of the European school – the comprehensive commentary of Rashi and the additional localized comments of the *tosafot* – have been printed on the page of the Talmud itself ever since the first complete edition of the Talmud was published in Venice in 1520–23, and have therefore had an extraordinary impact on the basic assumptions of generations of students. The most striking tendency of this school is the assumption that the Bavli is a complete, thoroughly edited, self-contained and self-consistent work of law and literature. This school does not distinguish between different literary levels within the text of the Bavli, nor does it engage in any systematic comparison of the Bavli to the parallel traditions in the Tosefta, the Yerushalmi, or the midrashic collections. On the other hand it seeks out every single real or supposed parallel within the Bavli itself in order to "resolve" – by means of ingenious interpretations and subtle distinctions – any contradictions which might be found to exist between these parallel texts. The result of this school of interpretation is a comprehensive and close analysis of even the smallest details of each and every passage in the Talmud, with the aim of demonstrating an essential unity of thought within the Bavli as a whole. This unity is often left unexpressed in the actual text of the Talmud, but this school is convinced that it does exist implicitly, remaining hidden beneath the semblance of a chaotic collection of disparate opinions which the Talmud presents to the superficial reader, and waiting to be revealed to the eye of reason, after exhaustive analysis and comparison of the relevant parallel texts in the Bavli.

The North African-Spanish school adopted from the very beginning a totally different approach to the interpretation of the Talmud. From its inception this school engaged in a systematic comparison of the sources and *sugyot* of the Bavli to the parallel *sugyot* in the Yerushalmi and to the parallel sources in the ancient tannaitic collections (Rabbenu Ḥananel and Rabbenu Nissim). This tendency toward critical comparison of alternative traditions was carried forward by Alfasi and Maimonides, who not only refrained from harmonizing alternative traditions, but even sought to clarify and to highlight both explicit and implicit contradictions. Their purpose in this endeavor was mostly halakhic, and not literary. They sought to construct a consistent body of Jewish law based on the most convincing interpretations of the most reliable opinions. To this end they needed to unravel the web of contradictory views preserved in the totality of talmudic literature (primarily but not only the Bavli), to single out these most reliable traditions (*ṣaḥaiḥ* in Arabic), and to reject the others, whether they expressly contradicted the views explicitly contained in these select traditions, or whether they tacitly assumed some abstract legal principle which stood in contradiction to one of the legal principles presupposed by one of these accepted *ṣaḥaiḥ* traditions. Alfasi and Maimonides also seem to have regularly distinguished between the various literary levels within the text of the Bavli itself, interpreting tannaitic and amoraic sources by themselves, without necessarily accepting the interpretation of the *stam ha-talmud*, or even tannaitic sources by themselves, without necessarily accepting the interpretation of some particular *amora*. The result is often a remarkably critical and philologically accurate interpretation of *a portion* of the talmudic traditions contained in the Bavli, an achievement unfortunately gained at the cost of the elimination of the rest of the competing and contradictory views from the field of vision.

A third school of Talmud interpretation developed during the latter period of the *rishonim* (13th–14th centuries). This school is associated with the name of Moses Naḥmanides in Christian Spain, who synthesized the achievements of these two earlier schools, combining the detailed and comprehensive literary analysis of Rashi and Tosefot, with the source-comparison and philological criticism of Rabbenu Ḥananel and Alfasi. This school is responsible for some of the most insightful and brilliant interpretations of the Talmud ever produced.

AHARONIM. The transition from the period of the *rishonim* to that of the *aḥaronim* is marked by the publication of the Shulḥan Arukh (1565) of Joseph *Caro. From this point on the development of the normative halakhic tradition was no longer centered on the independent interpretation of the Talmud itself, but rather focused its attention on the determination of the consensus of the halakhic views of the *rishonim*,

as expressed in the Shulḥan Arukh and the literature which developed around it. One the one hand, this new situation led to a devaluation of the independent study of the Talmud text itself, which only rarely would be brought to bear in a normative halakhic debate. On the other hand, it freed the study of the Talmud from the artificial limitations of practically oriented normative halakhic interpretation. The Talmud interpretation of the *aḥaronim* moved in various directions. Super-commentaries were composed to the commentaries of Rashi and Tosefot. Works of abstract conceptual jurisprudence were composed, usually as super-commentaries to some highly regarded systematic halakhic work from the period of the *rishonim* (such as Maimonides' Code), or even to the Shulḥan Arukh itself. At the same time the liberation of talmudic scholarship from the narrow restraints of normative halakhic discourse gave impetus to a broadening of the range of talmudic studies, which now included Tosefta, Yerushalmi, *Midrashei Halakhah* and *Midrashei Aggadah* – not merely the Bavli itself.

ḤOKERIM. At first these new directions did not directly influence the interpretation of the Bavli. Starting, however, at the end of the 19th century the increased interest in and familiarity with these earlier documents of talmudic tradition began to arouse a new interest in their possible significance for the understanding of the Bavli itself. The *Yefeh Enayim* of Aryeh Leib Yellin, published in the Romm edition of the Bavli, made available for the first time an easily accessible listing of parallel traditions in the Yerushalmi and Tosefta, the *Midrashei Halakhah,* and *Midrashei Aggadah*. The *novellae* of R. Joseph Ẓvi Dünner attempted an integrated reconstruction of the historical evolution of the parallel versions of talmudic *sugyot*, and together these works can be seen to mark the beginning the period of the *ḥokerim.* Building on the achievements of such giants as Ḥanokh *Albeck, J.N. *Epstein, and Saul *Lieberman, the historical interpretation of the Bavli has been carried forward since the 1970s by the two great *ḥokerim* of the Bavli, David Weiss *Halivni and Shamma Friedman. The work of Halivni and Friedman was of course preceded by the critical literary and historical research of scholars like Julius Kaplan, Hyman Klein, and most especially by the monumental studies of Abraham Weiss. In their critical commentaries both Halivni and Friedman at first emphasized the same central point: the necessity of separating the tannaitic and amoraic sources of the Bavli from the literary framework of the *stam ha-talmud* in which they are imbedded, in order to interpret each level of the Bavli in its own right. While Halivni has remained largely within the framework of this original insight, applying this method over the years to a wide range of talmudic texts (extending over half of the Bavli), Friedman has expanded the critical field of Bavli study to include the lower-critical problems of textual criticism, the higher-critical problems of the synoptic relations between parallel versions of the same tradition, issues of talmudic lexicography, Babylonian Aramaic grammar, and so on. In the early 1990s, Friedman established the Society for the Interpretation of the Talmud, a collaborative venture in which a group of scholars has undertaken the preparation of an edition of the Babylonian Talmud with commentary based on modern scholarly standards and aimed to a wide reading audience.

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[Stephen G. Wald (2nd ed.)]

TALMUD, BURNING OF. Despite the mass of restrictions imposed on the Jews by the Church in the political, social, and economic spheres, and the attacks on the Oral Law by Christian theologians, the campaign to proscribe Jewish literature was not launched until the 13th century. An attempt had been made to prevent teaching of the "second tradition" (δευτέρωσις) by Emperor *Justinian in 553 (novella 146), and in 712 the *Visigoths in Spain forbade converts to Christianity to read Hebrew books. The first condemnation of the Talmud to burning was preceded by a period in which new forces of rationalism had made their appearance in Western Europe as well as an upsurge of sectarian movements such as the Cathari