

Dictionary Early Judaism

Edited by

John J. Collins *and* Daniel C. Harlow

WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN / CAMBRIDGE, U.K.

cried, "My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower all day, and I am stationed at my post all night." Because *lion* and *the watcher* in the Hebrew language are graphically similar, a copyist likely made a simple error when he copied this word onto his new scroll.

Another example noted in *Tanakh* is located in Isa. 33:8, where the MT reads *cities* (*rym*) versus 1QIsaiah^a's *pact* (*dym*), again an example of graphic similarity. The reading of 1QIsaiah^a corresponds well with the parallelism, "A covenant has been renounced, a pact rejected." Isaiah 14:4 sets forth a third example, one accepted by a number of modern translations, including *Tanakh*, the New International Version, and the New English Bible. In this verse 1QIsaiah^a reads *mrhbh*, meaning "oppression." This fits the parallel structure, "How is oppression ended! How is the taskmaster vanished." *Tanakh* notes at the bottom of the page, "The traditional reading [of MT] *madhebah* is of unknown meaning."

The Isaiah scrolls are important texts for both academic and popular audiences because they provide many insights into the scribal and orthographic conventions that existed at the turn of the era. They also enable a fuller understanding of the textual history of the Bible, at least for the book of Isaiah.

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DONALD W. PARRY

Ishmael ben Elisha

Rabbinic literature provides little secure biographical information concerning the tanna Rabbi Ishmael son of Elisha (flourished first third of the second century C.E.). Rabbinic texts almost always refer to this figure simply as Rabbi Ishmael, without his patronymic. Virtually nothing is known about his education, though a later Babylonian tradition asserts that he was the disciple of Rabbi Nehunya ben ha-Qanah (*b. Šebi'it* 26a). Rabbinic sources present Rabbi Ishmael as advocating a hermeneutical approach to Scripture that was diametrically opposed to the more context-free exegetical wordplay championed by Rabbi Aqiba. This stance is reflected in his dictum that "the Torah speaks in the language of human beings" (*Sifre Numbers* §112 [Horovitz 121]). Rabbi Ishmael is thus likewise associated with a canonical set of thirteen hermeneutical principles (*middôt*) by which he is said to have interpreted Scripture (*Midr. ha-Gadol* Exod. 21:1; *Midr. ha-Gadol* Lev. 1:2).

In addition to these traditions, a number of rab-

binic narratives present him as the scion of a high-priestly family (*b. Ketubbot* 105b; *b. Giṭṭin* 58a; *b. Hullin* 49a). A statement attributed to Rabbi Ishmael in the Tosefta (*t. Ḥal.* 1:10) even suggests that his father may have served as high priest when the Jerusalem Temple still stood. These biographical details would have robust afterlife in later rabbinic and postrabbinic sources, in which Rabbi Ishmael emerges as one of the central heroes of rabbinic and postrabbinic martyrology and the early Jewish "mystical" traditions of the Hekhalot literature (Boustan 2005: 51-148).

Scholars, however, diverge fundamentally in their assessments of the historical value of these testimonies. In his comprehensive study of Rabbi Ishmael traditions, Gary Porton raises doubts about each aspect of Rabbi Ishmael's biography, concluding that the traditions regarding both his consistent hermeneutical philosophy and his priestly status are creations of later rabbinic writers (Porton 1976-1982: 4:160-214). By contrast, Marc Hirshman has argued that Rabbi Ishmael was not only himself from a priestly family, but was also heir to Second Temple priestly traditions that came to form a coherent "universalistic" current within early rabbinic thought advocating the dissemination of the Torah among the Gentiles (Hirshman 1999, 2000).

Whether or not the narratives concerning Rabbi Ishmael and the statements attributed to him in rabbinic sources can be used to reconstruct the biography of a historical individual, the figure of Rabbi Ishmael has left a powerful mark on the formal organization of early rabbinic literature, especially the tannaitic (or halakic) midrashim. More than a century ago, David Tsvi Hoffmann demonstrated that these early midrashic compilations could be divided into two distinct groups on both formal and hermeneutical grounds, assigning one group to the "school of Rabbi Akiba" and the other to the "school of Rabbi Ishmael" (Kahana 2006: 4-5). Some scholars have periodically questioned whether these midrashic collections did in fact originate in two separate branches of the rabbinic movement and have instead suggested that they reflect the tendency among later amoraic redactors to harmonize content and attribution (Harris 1995: 51-72). Nonetheless, the formal categorization proposed by Hoffmann remains the consensus among most scholars, even if the complexities of the redactional process as well as various inconsistencies in the evidence caution against overly facile generalization about the teachings and activities of Rabbi Ishmael and his peers in the earliest generations of the rabbinic movement (Kahana 2006: 17-39).

Azzan Yadin has helpfully suggested that scholars uncouple the issues of literary form and historical origins; despite persistent uncertainties regarding the dating and identities of the redactors of these early midrashic compilations, they have still left us with two groups of texts that exhibit distinct sets of exegetical terminology and distinct inventories of named sages (Yadin 2004). Moreover, Yadin argues that the legal hermeneutics characteristic of the "Rabbi Ishmael" compendia, which treat Scripture itself as the sole legit-

imate source of law and seek to marginalize extra-scriptural traditions, have strong affinities with earlier priestly exegetical practices, as reflected in halakic texts from Qumran such as 4QMMT. This reconstruction remains to be further tested and refined. Still, Yadin's work not only suggests that the early rabbinic movement and its exegetical practices were more variegated than heretofore assumed, but also raises the possibility of discursive continuities between Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism, without relying on the strict historicity of rabbinic biographical traditions like those concerning Rabbi Ishmael.

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RA'ANAN BOUSTAN

Iturea

Iturea is a region of the Beqa' Valley in southern Lebanon that emerged on the stage of Jewish history in the late Hellenistic period. A power vacuum emerged in the Near East with the breakup of the Seleucid kingdom, before Rome had entered the arena. The Itureans began to establish a principality in the Beqa' Valley with Chalcis as the capital (Strabo, *Geographica* 16.2.10, 18, 20; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.126; *J.W.* 1.185 and an inscription from the first century C.E. that links their citadel [*castellum*] with Lebanon).

Political and Military History

Three rulers of Iturea are known both from literary and numismatic evidence, mainly because of their involvement with Roman expansion in the East. Ptolemy the son of Mennaenus ruled Iturea from ca. 80 to 40 B.C.E., with the titles *ethnarchus* and *archiereus* on his coins. He was involved in expanding the territory, threatening even Damascus, on the eve of Pompey's arrival in the East in the mid-first century B.C.E. Pompey restricted Ptolemy's advances and destroyed some of his fortresses, imposing a heavy war indemnity of 1,000 talents, according to Strabo (*Ant.* 14.39; cf. 13.392, 418). Still Ptolemy continued his engagement in international politics, supporting the ousted Hasmonean Aristobulus II and later his son Antigonos in the civil war with Herod the Great that resulted in the Parthian invasion of Palestine (*Ant.* 14.123-26).

Ptolemy's son Lysanias took over the ethnarchy on his father's death in ca. 40 B.C.E. and is given the title "king" on some coins. However, he ran afoul of Antony and Cleopatra, had to cede part at least of his territory to Cleopatra, and later was executed on the pretext of being involved in bringing about the incursion of Parthians into Palestine (*Ant.* 14.330-32; 15.92). The last known member of what in all probability was a dynasty is Zenodorus, whose territories in Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis were transferred to Herod the Great by Augustus in 24/3 B.C.E., ostensibly because of his failure to root out the brigands. A few years later, on Zenodorus' death in 20 B.C.E., the territories of Baniyas and Ulatha (Huleh), south of Hermon (*Ant.* 15.342-53, 359-60), were also bequeathed to Herod by Augustus.

This evidence strongly suggests that Iturea was of considerable importance to the larger Roman policies in the region. Presumably this had to do with their strategic geographical location in the hinterland of Damascus, providing a bridge between the Mediterranean coast and the interior. Client kingdoms in both Judea and Nabatea in the south served Rome well in this regard, but the Itureans had leanings toward the Parthians and paid the price for this decision. The repeated mention of brigandage in the pro-Roman sources must be judged against this background.

The division of these territories in the first century C.E. suggests that Rome first adopted a policy of divide and conquer, before ultimately incorporating the whole region into the provincial system. Four seemingly separate subregions are mentioned in relation to various interventions and concessions to later Herodians. In addition to Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, mentioned earlier, Baniyas and Ulatha also passed to Herod on the death of Zenodorus — at least suggesting different administrative districts. Furthermore, the original territory of the Itureans seems to have been divided also in the Roman period (cf. Luke 3:1).

The Iturean People

There is virtual unanimity among modern scholars that the Itureans were an Arabian tribe, who only in the late Hellenistic period became sedentary. Prior to that, we are to think of them as seminomads who wandered around steppe lands on the borders of the Arabian Desert and later practiced brigandage on the trading caravans from the East. But there are inherent improbabilities with the profile of a seminomadic tribe coming into possession of a fertile territory such as the Beqa' Valley and undergoing Hellenization, at least as far as nomenclature is concerned, in a relatively short space of time. The name Ptolemy points to the immediate post-Alexander era when the Ptolemies, not the Seleucids, were in control of this contested region of Coele-Syria.

The earliest appearance of the Greek name *Itou-raioi* is the LXX translation of 1 Chron. 5:19. Here it is used to render Hebr. *yētur*, whereas earlier the same name is merely transliterated from Hebrew to Greek lettering (Gen. 25:15; 1 Chron. 1:31). This linking of the Itureans with the sons of Ishmael has further influ-