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The Origins of the Seder and Haggadah

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Abstract

Emerging methods in the study of rabbinic literature now enable greater precision in dating the individual components of the Passover seder and haggadah. These approaches, both textual and socio-historical, have led to a near consensus among scholars that the Passover seder as described in rabbinic literature did not yet exist during the Second Temple period. Hence, cautious scholars no longer seek to find direct parallels between the last supper as described in the Gospels and the rabbinic seder. Rather, scholarly attention has focused on varying attempts of Jewish parties, notably rabbis and Christians, to provide religious meaning and sanctity to the Passover celebration after the death of Jesus and the destruction of the Temple. Three main forces stimulated the rabbis to develop innovative seder ritual and to generate new, relevant exegeses to the biblical Passover texts: (1) the twin calamities of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the Bar-Kokhba revolt; (2) competition with emerging Christian groups; (3) assimilation of Greco-Roman customs and manners. These forces were, of course, significant contributors to the rise of a much larger array of rabbinic institutions, ideas and texts. Thus surveying scholarship on the seder reviews scholarship on the emergence of rabbinic Judaism.

Introduction

The remarkable phenomenon of contemporary Christians celebrating the Jewish seder (see Senn 1999) and the recent appearance of two collections of articles entitled *Passover and Easter* (Bradshaw and Hoffman 1999a, 1999b) affirm the hold that these respective holidays have over both the faith and scholarly communities. The relationship of the seder to

Jesus' last supper and to developing Christian practice—topics that continue to stand at the centre of scholarly inquiry—hinge on two questions. First, do the Gospels—which place the last supper either on the 14th of the month of Nissan, the eve of the first day of Passover (the synoptics) or on the day before Passover (John; see Bradshaw 2002: 63-65)—present a historically accurate picture of the final events of Jesus' life? Second, can we use rabbinic literature to reconstruct the Passover meal as celebrated at the time of Jesus? This article will explore the second issue only, as the first issue is best left to New Testament scholars.

The central issue that I will discuss in this review is current scholarly opinions on dating the origins of the Passover seder and haggadah (for definitions see below) and the individual elements of which they are composed. Scholars of rabbinic literature have made significant advances on this issue in the past 20 years since Bokser's (1984) monumental work on the seder appeared, and as some important research remains in Hebrew, it is crucial to bring these scholarly achievements to the attention of a wider audience.

As we shall see, current scholars agree that many of the seder customs as described in rabbinic literature were innovations of the post-70 CE period, and nearly all scholars agree that there was no seder or haggadah while the Temple still stood. Since these are important innovations of rabbinic Judaism, we shall also discuss the varying opinions as to the impulses that led to the rabbinic transformation of the earlier Temple-based rituals. Uncovering such impulses can be used as a window to understanding phenomena occurring in rabbinic Judaism on a wider scale. How was the seder created/enriched in order to fill the religious gap left by the destruction of the Temple? What strategies did rabbis employ in their attempt to convince Jews of the continuing validity and vitality of Passover after the destruction? Did rabbinic statements give rise to competing Christian polemics or are the rabbis themselves responding to Christian supersessionist claims? What role did Hellenistic customs, in this case the symposia, play in the shaping of rabbinic literature and customs? Finally, how did the rabbis perceive of their own role in relation to other Jews, either non-rabbis or perhaps even non-rabbinic? While in the past generation a scholarly consensus on the post-Second Temple dating of the earliest strata of the seder has emerged, there remains a plurality of opinions regarding the social and historical factors which led to the ritual's ascension in the mishnaic and talmudic periods.

A Definition of Terms

There are two terms which require more precision than they sometimes receive in scholarly literature: seder and haggadah (Stewart-Sykes [1998: 32] deftly handles the distinction between the two). By 'seder', which literally means 'order', I refer to a meal with rules governing the presentation and consumption of wine, appetizers, main course and dessert. The 'order' would include hand-washing and dipping. In addition, any rabbinically-guided meal would mandate the recitation of benedictions over food and drink. All of these elements are included in the frequently cited passage in *Tosefta Berakhot* 4.8 (see Friedman 2002: 423-24; for a comprehensive description of Greco-Roman eating customs see Leyerle 1999). By 'haggadah' I mean either a ritual retelling of the story of the exodus from Egypt or a redacted, written work containing the text of that which is recited on Passover eve. To distinguish between the two, the former is not capitalized while the latter is.

Once the Haggadah was compiled as a written text, it continuously expanded, accruing midrashim, benedictions and songs (see Hoffman 1999a: 19-22). Some of the most famous elements of the current seder—recitations such as the *dayyenu* ('it is enough for us'; Glatzer 1989: 52-57) and the *ha lachma anya* ('this is the bread of affliction'; Glatzer 1989: 24-25)—were not part of the evening's ritual until the post-Talmudic period. As interesting as these expansions may be, they tell us little about the origins of the seder and therefore will not be discussed here.

The Mishnaic Seder

For clarity's sake, I shall outline the description of the seder as contained in *m. Pesahim*, ch. 10, the main source for our knowledge of the tannaitic seder. These customs will be the main focus of our discussion. A good English translation can be found in Bokser (1984: 29-32). When quoting from this chapter, scholars should be careful to use a version found in the better manuscripts of the Mishnah—the Kaufmann, Parma and Loewe manuscripts (the Kaufmann manuscript is available online at http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/talmud/) and not those in the printed editions of the Haggadah or Mishnah (as does Yuval 1999: 101), as there are significant discrepancies between the versions. Neusner's recent translation of the Mishnah (1988) is based on the printed edition.

The seder's structure is based on the drinking of four cups of wine (*m. Pesahim* 10.1). Each cup is accompanied by a benediction. The first

cup accompanies *kiddush*, the sanctification of God's name with which every festive meal begins (10.2). Afterwards, an appetizer of lettuce is brought before the participant, as perhaps are other appetizers. Subsequently *matzah* (unleavened bread), more lettuce (bitter herbs) and *haroset* (a mixture of fruits, nuts, spices and wine) are brought in front of the participant (10.3). The second cup is poured and the telling of the story begins. This includes a question from the son, a story which begins with the mentioning of disgrace and culminates with praise, and a midrash on Deut. 26.5-9 (10.4). Rabban Gamaliel (early second century CE) mandates an explanation of the symbolic significance of the Passover offering, the bitter herbs and the *matzah* (10.5). There are some statements of thanksgiving and praise, including the recitation of a set of psalms (called 'Hallel', Psalms 113–18) and a benediction, coupled with the drinking of the second cup (10.6). After the meal is eaten, a third cup is drunk with the benediction over the meal. A fourth cup is drunk with the completion of Hallel and a final benediction (10.7). The Mishnah states 'after the *pesah* they do not conclude with an *afiqoman*', the meaning of which we will discuss below (10.8).

The Second Temple Passover Celebration

Nearly all rabbinics scholars (Bokser 1984: 14-28; Safrai and Safrai 1998: 13-18; Tabory 1999: 63; Hauptman 2001: 11; Friedman 2002: 430-32) agree that most of the elements known from the seder as described in the Mishnah are missing from descriptions in Second Temple literature, including Jubilees, Josephus, Philo, the Gospels, and the sections of the Mishnah and the Tosefta which deal with the Passover as offered in the Temple (*m. Pesahim* 5–9). This includes the absence of a seder or a haggadah. The primal element that did exist in the Second Temple was the sacrifice of the lamb. Unlike other sacrifices, this sacrifice was slaughtered by non-priests (Safrai and Safrai 1998: 13-14). This difference is highlighted by Philo, *The Special Laws*, 2:145-46 (Bokser 1990: 3). Hence, already in this period, the Passover ritual was more participatory than were other sacrificial rituals. The lamb was eaten within the precincts of the city of Jerusalem, as described in both the Gospels and in the Mishnah. The eating of the lamb, done in the company of a *havurah*, was accompanied by the singing of psalms of praise, as described in Jubilees, Philo, the Gospels, Josephus and rabbinic literature. The meal of lamb was supplemented by the eating of *matzah* and bitter herbs and might also have been supplemented by the drinking of wine,

mentioned by Philo and Jubilees. According to Safrai and Safrai (1998: 16), *haroset* too would have been eaten. However, this assumption is based on a later talmudic source, which, as Friedman (2002: 426-30) points out, is contradicted by an earlier tannaitic source. According to Friedman, the *haroset* was a later innovation.

In summary, pre-rabbinic descriptions of the Passover ritual emphasize the sacrificial aspect of the meal and lack the major features of the seder as described in rabbinic literature (Bokser 1990: 2-4). While we may find hints in Second Temple literature at practices that will later become part of the Mishnah's ritual, such as the drinking of wine and the recitation of Hallel, the full-born seder did not yet exist. These earlier practices may have paved the way for later expansions, but the parts are not to be seen as equal to the later whole (Bokser 1984: 76-77).

These historical findings are supported by the philological analysis of the Mishnah and Tosefta by Friedman and Hauptman, evidence which shall be discussed below. The only rabbinics scholar who continues to use the Mishnah as a source for a seder conducted during the Second Temple period is Tabory (1999). Nevertheless, even Tabory agrees that many elements of the seder as described in the Mishnah were not customary in the Second Temple period.

This overwhelming trend among historians and rabbinic text critics leads to the conclusion that Jesus' last supper, even if it did occur on the eve of Passover, was not a 'seder', for there was no 'seder' in the Second Temple period (Bokser 1987; Hilton 1994: 33-34; Klawans 2001). Scholars (Carmichael 1997; Stewart-Sykes 1998: 32-54; Brumberg-Kraus 1999: 166; Routledge 2002) who persist in accepting the Mishnah (or even worse, later rabbinic literature) as depictions of Second Temple practice, and hence as containing practices that may have been observed by Jesus and his disciples, are not sufficiently familiar with the research conclusions of nearly a generation of scholars of rabbinic literature (as noted by Bradshaw 2002: 23-24). Klawans (2001: 29) points out that even scholars who are willing to accept the use of rabbinic literature in reconstructing earlier history do not accept the Mishnah as a description of Second Temple practice in this case. Scholars will certainly continue to debate the interrelation between developing Christian and Jewish ritual for Passover eve, and the veracity of the different accounts of Jesus' last meal. Still, there is virtually no ground to assume that Jesus would have practised the rituals described in later rabbinic literature (Bokser 1987: 32; Bradshaw 2002: 63-65).

A Second Temple Mishnah

Despite this aforementioned trend, we must deal with Tabory's cautious use of the Mishnah to reconstruct the Second Temple seder ritual. As a composition, the Mishnah in its current form did not exist until the early part of the third century. Whether one may use tannaitic texts to reconstruct the status of Jewry, the Pharisees or a rabbinic movement in the pre-Bar Kokhba period has been an issue of great scholarly debate for well over a century. Tabory's work on the Passover seder, which was completed as a doctorate in 1977, published in Hebrew as a book in 1996 and has come out in several English articles (1991; 1999), assumes that the Mishnah can cautiously be used to reconstruct the Passover ritual as celebrated by Jews before 70 CE.

Virtually alone among current scholars, Tabory maintains an assumption that dominated the field until the appearance of Bokser's work in 1984, that a more pristine version of the tenth chapter of *m. Pesahim* existed towards the end of the Second Temple period and describes the Passover ritual as celebrated at that time (1999: 64). By removing what he claims are later accretions, Tabory comes to what he believes to be a description of the Second Temple seder. According to his reconstruction the elements of the Passover seder which were customary during this period include the framework of four cups and their accompanying benedictions, the eating of the paschal lamb, the telling of the story, the midrash on Deuteronomy, and the recitation of the Hallel (1996a: 70-78; 1999: 64-65). Tabory conjectures that the lamb, *matzah* and bitter herbs were originally eaten before the meal, a theory originally put forth by mediaeval Jewish exegetes. Tabory adds that the change to recitation of the haggadah before the meal parallels developments in Greek symposia (1999: 65-67). In contrast, Safrai and Safrai (1998: 24) point out that the idea that the meal was originally eaten before the telling of the story does not match the description of the meal in the Tosefta.

An earlier generation of scholars (references in Tabory 1996: 74 n. 161; Friedman 2002: 430-32) noted that both the Tosefta and the Mishnah state 'in the Temple they bring in front of him the carcass of the Passover' (*m. Pesahim* 10.3; *t. Pesahim* 10.10). The present tense, preserved in manuscripts but corrupted in the printed edition of the Mishnah, was understood by these scholars as a sign of the text's having been composed while the Temple still stood. The words 'in the Temple' strike a contrast between practice performed in Jerusalem, and practice outside of the city.

In contrast, Friedman (2002: 430-32) rejects this proposal on both logical and philological grounds. It would not make sense for a mishnah composed while the Temple still stood to first describe the rituals as performed outside of the Temple and then, in an aside, mention what is done in the Temple itself. Furthermore, tannaitic halakhah continues in many instances to describe the Temple as if it is still standing (Friedman 2002: 403-32; Safrai and Safrai 1998: 25-26). The Mishnah's use of the present participial form is not proof of its Second Temple composition. Bokser (1984: 39) proposes that this syntax expresses continuity with the Second Temple sacrificial meal.

In general, Tabory's thesis is predicated upon certain historical and textual assumptions. Historically, Tabory would need to assume a large degree of continuity between Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism. Textually, he must assume that portions of the Mishnah were edited at an early period, and that the Mishnah as a text retained these earlier sources while simultaneously expanding throughout the first and second centuries. Later editors did not recompose the Mishnah, an editorial activity which would have ruled out the possibility of our uncovering earlier versions, but rather preserved the earlier form and added on to it.

Tabory's historical and text-critical assumptions are less accepted today than they were in previous generations. The same is true for Hoffman's (1987 and 1999b) acceptance of late texts and practices such as the *ha lachma anya* ('this is the bread of my affliction') as being reflective of much earlier periods. Scholars of rabbinic texts such as Neusner (for a recent summary of his approach see Neusner 1994: 19-29, 651-79) and Boyarin (for an example of his extreme skepticism see 2001) radically doubt whether we can use tannaitic, let alone amoraic, texts to reconstruct Second Temple history (for a comprehensive, recent summary of the use of rabbinic texts to reconstruct history see Hayes 1997: 8-24). As we shall see below, current rabbinics scholars such as Friedman and Hauptman tend to agree that it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to separate the Mishnah into early and later strata. Even for schools of thought which do accept cautious use of rabbinic material to reconstruct earlier historical periods, Tabory's thesis is problematic considering that the textual evidence from the period itself does not match the descriptions contained in rabbinic literature. Tabory claims that although Second Temple descriptions of Passover do not mention the retelling of the story of the Exodus, Jews would naturally have used such an occasion to do so (1981: 37; see also Bokser 1984: 71; Hoffman 1987: 87; Stewart-Sykes 1998: 35-36). Of

course, the silence of Second Temple sources on a seder or haggadah cannot decisively preclude their existence. It does, however, make such conjectures highly speculative. We certainly cannot, as Stewart-Sykes (1998: 45) is, be 'assured of the basic trustworthiness of the Mishnah as a means of gaining an outline of the Passover rite of the first century'.

Transformation and Continuity

As stated, nearly all scholars locate the origins of the seder and haggadah in the advancement of the rabbinic movement in the post-destruction period. Hence, we shall of necessity explore the impulses in rabbinic circles that led to their creation.

A turning point in the modern understanding of the rise of the rabbinic seder was Bokser's (1984) monumental study of the origins of the seder. Bokser's central thesis is that the tenth chapters of *m.* and *t. Pesahim* transform earlier Temple practice, adapting it to the needs of post-destruction Jewry, while attempting to portray and in fact maintain continuity with earlier periods.

Bokser does not deny outside influence on the shaping of the rabbinic seder. He notes that Justin Martyr, Origen and Melito all emphasize that without a Temple the Jews can no longer celebrate Passover, their holiday of redemption (1984: 25-28). Christian communities in this period were developing their own rituals to be observed on the eve of Passover. Rabbis of the second century might have felt the need to offer compelling answers to such challenges. Elsewhere he notes parallels between the seder and Greek symposia (1984: 50-66). However, Bokser posits that neither a response to Christianity nor assimilation of Greek custom was the sole or even the main generative cause of the formation of the seder. Rather, throughout his research Bokser emphasizes an internal need felt among rabbis for reconstruction and continuity after the two devastating revolts. Such a need would have existed even among circles unaware of or unconcerned with competition from groups forming other answers to the crisis.

Based on this premise, Bokser closely analyses the tenth chapter of *m.* and *t. Pesahim*. He lists nine ways in which these texts transform early ritual while maintaining continuity with the past. These include raising the status of the *matzah* and bitter herbs such that they are equal with the paschal lamb which can no longer be offered (1984: 39, 41-42; 1990: 8-9). When the Temple still stood, these foods would have taken a secondary role to the sacrifice. Wine, mentioned by Jubilees and Philo as customary, is now mandated (1984: 41). The practice of reciting the Hallel is contin-

ued and in the same manner as it may have been when the Temple stood (1984: 42-43; see also Friedman 2002: 458). Even the literary structure of tractate *Pesahim*, in which the description of the seder is preceded by four chapters describing Temple Passover ritual, leads to the literary impression that the seder was performed in Temple times (1984: 48). We can add that Hoffman (1999b: 114) points to several ways in which the *matzah* received the symbolic significance and actual regulations earlier accorded to the paschal lamb. In sum, the aforementioned scholars emphasize the deeply felt rabbinic need to portray themselves in close continuity and harmony with the past. In contrast, Zahavy (1990: 93-94) locates in the post-70 CE rabbinic seder a 'blatantly anti-cultic' impetus. With a distinct, although not altogether different emphasis, Zahavy writes, the 'scribal factions renovated the festival and transformed the feast into an occasion for Torah-study and a deft means of usurping the authority for controlling ritual formerly claimed to be exclusively in the domain of the priesthood' (1990: 93-94; compare Bokser 1984: 87-88).

Two larger implications that stem from Bokser's research should be noted. First of all, Bokser's analysis of the Mishnah is synchronic. Throughout his book, he analyses the Mishnah as a coherent document carefully crafted by editors with a decisive agenda. As such, diachronic analysis is inappropriate to the Mishnah, or at the least does not exhaust its hermeneutics. Second, rabbis perceive of themselves as leaders of the larger Jewish community. The seder ritual as described in rabbinic texts is not an intellectual exercise intended for an audience of other rabbis. Rather, it is a pedagogical ritual intended for a broader audience. The place of rabbis in these centuries is a hotly debated topic, with a noted trend toward minimalism (Schwartz 2001). While Bokser's theories do not bring answers to this question, they do demonstrate that when creating ritual, the rabbis saw themselves as serving the larger Jewish community.

External Influences: The Symposium

Since Stein's groundbreaking work in 1957, the similarities between Greek symposia and the descriptions of the seder in tannaitic literature have been thoroughly documented. Tabory (1996a: 373-77; 1999) elaborates on several points of similarity between symposia and the seder (see also Friedman 2002: 423-24). Tabory's discussion is based upon his separation of the seder into two historical levels (one which existed before 70 CE and one which was created after the destruction) and upon his analysis of the development of sympotic literature. Tabory finds differing levels of

influence for each historical strata, with more external influence located in the later strata (1999: 67-68). Tabory even finds sympotic influence in the later, perhaps geonic (eighth to tenth centuries), redaction of the Haggadah (1999: 68). Indeed, he summarizes by stating that 'the paschal meal has changed from a sacrificial meal, in which the food was the main event of the evening, into a type of sympotic meal which itself went through changes' (1999: 73-74). This leads to the conclusion that sympotic influence was the main factor in the seder's development.

In contrast, Bokser (1984: 50-66) emphasizes that while the rabbis did borrow external customs, they were adamant at creating distinctions which would prevent participants from confusing the cultural identity of the meal in which they were participating. The symposium was, according to Bokser (1984: 94), not ultimately determinative in shaping the seder's overall character. Rather, 'the impetus for recasting the celebration lay in the need for continuity with the past and for overcoming the loss of the paschal lamb' (1984: 53). After surveying pre-70 CE evidence of Jewish groups using meals to celebrate religious moments outside of the Temple, Bokser concludes that these Jewish precedents make it unlikely that the rabbis were impelled to reshape the seder based on the model of Hellenistic symposia (1984: 61-62). Finally, Bokser lists ways in which rabbis intentionally dissociated the seder from key elements in the symposia (1984: 62-66). The two that seem most convincing are the mandated participation of all social classes and the forbidding of the *afiqoman* (*m. Pes.* 10.8), understood as Greek after-dinner revelry. However, we should note that the need to create signposts to distinguish the Jewish ritual from Greek pagan ritual only emphasizes how close the two may have seemed to actual participants.

Christian Competition

While the symposia parallels have been the focus of much research, recently greater attention has been paid to Christian–Jewish parallels (for a summary see Hoffman 1999a: 15-19). I will focus on the possibility that rabbis shaped the seder in response to early Christianity. To appraise this possibility we must proceed cautiously with regard to the dating of the rabbinic seder and the development of its individual components.

In a recent Hebrew article (1995), which was later published as part of a Hebrew book (2000) and in an abbreviated form in English (1999), Yuval, a historian of the mediaeval period, claimed that many elements of

the rabbinic seder were created in order to distinguish their ritual from the parallel Christian Easter celebration and to respond to Christian theological claims made in the wake of the destruction of the Temple. Yuval points to Passover/Easter parallels from the end of the first century through the mediaeval period. Since this review article focuses on the earlier period, we shall concentrate on Yuval's claims with regard to the mishnaic and talmudic periods.

Yuval begins (1999: 100) by comparing the story of the five rabbis who gathered in B'nei Brak to spend the night telling the story of Passover (see Glatzer 1989: 26-29) with the Easter celebration as described in the *Epistula Apostolorum* 15. In both cases sages/disciples gather together to study all night until the rooster crows. Yuval continues by pointing out that following this story in the Haggadah there appears a midrash attributed to R. Elazar b. Azariah concerning the obligation to tell the story of the exodus at night (see Glatzer 1989: 28-29). As an addendum to R. Elazar's midrash, other sages add that the obligation to tell the story of the exodus will exist also in the coming messianic period. Because the rabbis to whom these traditions are attributed are all believed to have lived in the late first century CE, Yuval concludes that the practice of telling the story of Passover was initiated in the Yavneh generation (for a more skeptical approach to attributions, see Neusner 1994: 668-79). Yuval compares this with the parallel toseftan story (*t. Pesahim* 10.12) in which Rabban Gamaliel and other sages spend all night in Lydda learning the laws of Passover. Yuval sees a transition between the earlier story in the Tosefta (in which rabbis discussed the *laws* of Passover) to the later stories included in the Haggadah (in which rabbis discussed the *story* of Passover). Later rabbis began to tell the story of the exodus as 'an implicit polemic against the messianic Jews who transformed the memory of the Exodus into their new Passover account of the crucifixion of Jesus' (1999: 102).

Hauptman (2001: 15-16) criticizes Yuval for his use of these stories. The story of the five rabbis gathered in B'nei Brak is not found in tannaitic or amoraic literature, and is only found in the Haggadah starting in the geonic period. Hauptman does not believe that the Haggadah's B'nei Brak story should be used in reconstructing the history of the tannaitic period. While other scholars besides Yuval, such as Safrai and Safrai (1998: 45-46, 117, 208), do regard the Haggadah's story as an authentic tannaitic source that was preserved orally outside of any other rabbinic composition until it appears in the geonic period, the textual evidence

supports Hauptman's proposal. Recently Mor (2003: 304-11) posited that the Haggadah's B'nei Brak story is a late talmudic and perhaps even early mediaeval, Babylonian creation which polemicizes against the spiritual and halakhic concerns of the Palestinian, toseftan story. The later story, in which R. Gamaliel is conspicuously absent, polemicizes against his insistence that a roasted lamb can and should continue to be eaten after the destruction (this practice will be discussed further below). Mor detects other polemical elements and shifts in focus from the earlier story. As a late polemical story, it may tell us something about its Babylonian editors, but it should not be lent any credence as a historical source for the second century.

Above all, most scholars of rabbinic literature would consider it methodologically unsound to rely on literary testimony that first appears in the eighth to tenth centuries to reconstruct the history of the early second century. This is especially true when the Tosefta, an authentic tannaitic text, contains a parallel story lacking any mention of rabbis telling the story of the exodus. Furthermore, in the *Mekilta DeRabbi Ishmael Pascha* 18 (Lauterbach 1933: I, 167) a tannaitic midrash on Exodus, R. Eliezer, an early-second-century sage, mandates that a group of sages must study the laws of Passover until midnight, a requirement similar to that in the Tosefta and different from that in the Haggadah's B'nei Brak story. Hence, proper scholarly caution rules against the use of the Haggadah's story in any reconstruction of what occurred in Yavneh or at any point in the tannaitic period. With regard to the Haggadah's midrash obligating the telling of the story of the exodus in the messianic period (Glatzer 1989: 28-29), Hauptman correctly points out that the source is taken from *m. Berakhot* (1.5), where the context is the obligation to mention the exodus during the benedictions accompanying the evening Shema. This text too should therefore not be interpreted in the context of second-century Passover polemics.

Yuval (1999: 106-107) also identifies anti-Christian polemics in Rabban Gamaliel's mandating the symbolic explanation of the three central Passover foods, paschal lamb, *matzah* and bitter herbs (*m. Pesahim* 10.5). Rabban Gamaliel's strong language ('anyone who does not say these three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation') is intended to exclude from Judaism those who impart christological meaning to the foods, a tactic similar to that employed in the same sage's establishment of the 'blessing against heretics' (see *t. Berakhot* 3.25; Palestinian Talmud *Berakhot* 4.3, 8a; Babylonian Talmud *Berakhot* 28b). However, we should note that

Kimmelman (1981; see also Boyarin 2001: 427-37) concludes that the 'blessing against the heretics' was not originally directed against Christians, and Yuval has not demonstrated why Kimmelman's opinion should be rejected. Tabory (1999: 69) suggests that both Rabban Gamaliel's mishnah and Jesus' explanation of the bread and wine can be attributed to the sympotic custom of providing symbolic explanations for foods brought to the table. Hoffman (1999b: 116-17) notes that the *matzah* provided symbols of salvation for both Jews and Christians. Their development is parallel but it remains to be proven whether they are polemical.

Mishnah Pesahim 10.4 mandates the recitation of a midrash on Deut. 26.5-9. Although the Mishnah itself does not contain the text of this midrash, it appears in all editions of the Haggadah (e.g., Glatzer 1989: 38-49). Hoffman (1987: 91-92) dates the midrash to the late parts of the first century CE, although his proofs are largely conjectural (for a structural and interpretive analysis of pieces of the midrash see 1987: 90-102). Yuval interprets nearly the entire midrash, its structure and its individual points as an anti-Christian polemic (1999: 109-13; see also Hoffman 1987: 92). According to Yuval, the rabbis chose the passage from Deuteronomy as opposed to Exodus 12 in order to distinguish themselves from Christian exegetes such as Melito and Origen, who based their Easter/Passover sermons on Exodus. The Deuteronomic passage avoids mention of Moses, 'thereby refuting the view that Moses is an archetype of Jesus' (Yuval 1999: 110; see also Bokser 1984: 78-79). In contrast Hoffman (1987: 101) suggests that the Deuteronomic passage, originally recited by farmers upon bringing their first fruits, was chosen due to the Roman destruction of Palestinian food supply. Yuval (1999: 111) also understands the Haggadah's comment on 'He saw our ill treatment' (Deut. 26.7) in this light. The Haggadah understands this ill treatment as referring to 'the cessation of sexual relations, as it is said: "God looked upon the children of Israel and God knew" ' (Glatzer 1989: 44-45). According to Yuval, the allusion to God's providing the Israelites with children even when the Egyptians prohibited them from having sexual relations 'counteracts the claim of Jesus' miraculous birth' (compare Hoffman 1987: 95). Yuval (1999: 112-13) locates other parallels and polemics between the midrash and early Christian literature.

A note of caution, however, should be made with regard to dating this midrash. Early Palestinian Haggadot (eighth to eleventh centuries CE) contain a much abbreviated and somewhat different version of the midrash (Rovner 2000 and 2002). Hence, any attempt at construing the historical

context in which the midrash was created must be cognizant of the earliest appearance of each of its individual elements. In all likelihood, many of the elements of the midrash as it appears in geonic Haggadot—the version to which most scholars, including those cited above, refer—first emerged in Babylonia in the talmudic and even geonic periods.

Yuval also finds an anti-Christian origin in the prohibition against concluding the meal with *afiqoman* (*m. Pes.* 10.8). Since the *afiqoman* continues to receive such a wide variety of interpretations, it is worthwhile to restate Lieberman's interpretation, which, as far as I know, has never been refuted. Lieberman accepts an amoraic interpretation to *afiqoman* found in both talmuds 'that one should not go from *havurah* (eating company) to *havurah*' (*y. Pesahim* 10.4, 37d; *b. Pesahim* 119b). Lieberman writes,

> [The rabbis] were familiar with Greek customs and their banquet manners, that when the festivities would reach their peak, they would burst into others' homes to force them to join in the continuing party, and they called this '*epikomazein*'. The Mishnah warns that one does not conclude the Passover meal with an *afiqoman-epikomazein*, and this is the interpretation of the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud (1995: 521).

Building on Lieberman's interpretation, Bokser (1984: 132 n. 62) and Tabory (1996a: 65-66) claim that the other explanation found in the Tosefta and in the Babylonian Talmud——that *afiqoman* refers to dessert—is harmonious with Lieberman's explanation, for these were 'types of delicacies served after a meal, especially to whet one's thirst' (Bokser 1984: 132 n. 62); compare Tabory 1999: 72-73). Safrai and Safrai (1998: 44) also accept Lieberman's identification of the *afiqoman* (see also Hoffman 1999b: 112). In short, as Hoffman (1999b: 113) summarizes, instead of engaging in revelry, *t. Pesahim* 10.11 mandates the seder participants to spend the remainder of the night studying Torah.

Despite all this, Yuval (2000: 250) claims that the prohibition of the *afiqoman* distinguishes Jewish practice with the Christian custom of 'missa'. In another place (1999: 107; 2000: 92) he gives an entirely different interpretation to *afiqoman*, it too an anti-Christian polemic. Yuval (1999: 115-16) notes that some of his ideas were pioneered a generation ago by Daube (see Carmichael's recent review, 1997) who saw messianic significance in the *afiqoman*. Daube's interpretation of the *afiqoman* is largely based on a post-talmudic practice of calling the last piece of *matzah* eaten at the seder the *afiqoman*. This is not the original meaning

of the word *afiqoman* in the Mishnah or in the Talmuds, nor is the phrase 'they don't conclude the Passover meal with an *afiqoman*' (*m. Pes*. 10.9) inexplicable, as Daube (Carmichael 1997: 94) and Hoffman (1999b: 112) claim. Amoraic debate over the interpretation of a mishnah is not a dependable signpost for a truly obscure, perhaps ancient, mishnah—after all, amoraim (rabbinic sages who lived from 200–500 CE and whose words are found in the two talmuds) debate nearly everything! Daube's interpretation was refuted by Tabory (1981: 35 n. 9) and Bokser (1984: 132 n. 62).

Yuval's work is a rich source for comparing the observances, liturgy and sermons surrounding Passover and Easter. There is little doubt that leaders of each tradition promoted their Passover stories of redemption in competition with other groups, either adopting similar hermeneutic strategies in order to surpass those of their competitors or adopting differing ones in order to distinguish 'theirs' from 'ours'. According to Boyarin (1999: 12) the Passover–Easter connection of the *Quartodecimani* is 'the most important case of Christian-Jewish intimacy in late antiquity'. Segal's (1986) conception of rabbinic Judaism and Christianity as 'sister religions' (Yuval 1999: 104) as opposed to the previous, theologically based model of mother–daughter religions, is a concept which is increasingly finding favour among scholars. Boyarin (1999: 8) proposes 'a model of shared and crisscrossing lines of history and religious development'. Yuval's work is an important corrective to the previous assumption that Jewish practice was always earlier than its Christian parallels, an assumption still occasionally made (Stewart-Sykes 1998: 32-34; Lieu 1996: 222-28).

Yuval's work would be improved by combining it with that of specialists in rabbinic texts in order to more accurately date the original appearance of phrases, ideas and practices. For instance, in a letter which Yuval appended to his original article (1995: 27-28), D. Rosenthal claims that one sign that the seder is polemical is the repeated trope 'so that the children will recognize' or 'so that the children will ask'. However, Friedman (2002: 439-46) shows that this trope appears only in the Babylonian Talmud. The trope is used to explain why certain actions, which appear perplexing to later Babylonian/Persian eyes unfamiliar with Graeco-Roman eating habits, are performed at the seder. In the earlier, Palestinian literature the idea that actions are performed in order to induce the children into asking questions is completely absent. According to Friedman, the customs at the seder were patterned after Greek eating customs and not initiated as opportunities to polemicize against others.

A problem with Yuval's work is that once he starts looking for polemics, he finds them nearly everywhere. Instead of Sandmel's famed 'parallelomania' we encounter 'polemicamania'. Rabbinic practice is nearly always influenced by and engaging in polemics against Christians. In a review of Yuval's book, Raz (2001) writes, 'one of the questions which requires clarification is the concept "influence", which the author frequently employs… The concept of influence assumes two separate and definable identities, each influencing the other, whereas the topic under discussion presents a more complicated and dialectic relationship'. This statement fits well with Boyarin's extreme caution against defining Jews and Christians in this period as two distinct identities. As Boyarin (1999: 205) writes, 'Yuval…tends to lean exclusively on the model of polemical interaction, rather than considering the possibility of shared and diffuse exegetical traditions, as well'.

Other scholars are more successful at making comparisons without assuming that one group (rabbis or church fathers) are shooting arrows directly at another. Rouwhorst (1998: 269-76) notes the similarities between the Passover seder and Melito's homily but avoids concluding that one was a direct polemic against the other. In reference to Rabban Gamaliel's duty to explain the food items, Hilton (1994: 35) writes 'just as Christians learned to cope with the loss of Jesus by giving a potent symbolism to the bread and wine of the "last supper", so Jews learned to cope with the loss of the powerful temple ritual at Pesach by giving a symbolic value to the main foods'. Other Passover similarities, and not necessarily polemics, are noted by Tabory (1996b) in an article on Justin Martyr's depiction of the crucifixion of the paschal lamb. Brumberg-Kraus (1999) suggests that both Luke's eucharist and the seder's specific eating and speaking rituals stem from the internal needs of each community to symbolically express their theological aims (see also Hoffman 1999b: 124). In contrast to Yuval's reading of the Haggadah's midrash as thoroughly anti-Christian, Hoffman (1987: 96-102) locates in it an encoded message of encouragement to Jews not to flee to the Diaspora in the wake of the Roman devastation of Palestine. In truth, the evidence forces Yuval to admit (1999: 99) that the 'Haggadah itself contains no explicit reference to Christianity'. This sharply contrasts with Christian homilies that are overtly directed against Jewish (but not necessarily rabbinic) Passover exegesis. Indeed, Yuval never proves why we should understand rabbinic practice as polemical and not stemming from the internal needs of a religion facing the destruction of one of its central symbols (as Bokser argues).

Even Boyarin (1999: 19), while reading rabbinic texts as responses to Christianity notes, 'this hardly constitutes a claim…that every aspect of rabbinic Judaism is a response to formative Christianity'. As Raz noted, stricter methodological considerations for defining when a text is polemical are desirable.

In summary, while Yuval's work can be mined for its rich suggestions of polemics and parallels, it should be used with caution and with the recognition that his overall thesis is not representative of the conclusions of most scholars of rabbinic literature and history.

Mishnah–Tosefta Comparisons

Recently, Friedman and Hauptman, two scholars active in source criticism of rabbinic literature, have significantly improved our ability to trace the post-destruction rabbinic transformation of the Passover ritual. First of all, Friedman has pioneered a more methodologically rigorous philological approach towards analysis and comparison of text than was available to or practised by scholars of previous generations. This approach leads to greater precision in tracing the development of rabbinic texts, concepts and practice. Second, whereas Bokser, Safrai and Safrai, and Tabory consistently understand *t. Pesahim* as supplemental to its mishnaic parallels, both Friedman and Hauptman view the Tosefta as preserving earlier sources than those in the Mishnah, and therefore containing a more primal version of the tannaitic seder or at least elements thereof. This theory leads to different results in the dating of the origins of the seder, the haggadah and other elements of the evening's ritual. Indeed, both Friedman and Hauptman push the creation of the seder into even later tannaitic times than was previously thought, to a time very close to, if not synonymous with, the redaction of the Mishnah (220 CE).

For three technical reasons I shall devote considerable space to a detailed review of their work. First of all, Friedman's research on the seder was published in Hebrew. Second, both scholars' research is geared toward the specialist in rabbinic literature. Finally, their recent conclusions have not yet been assimilated by historians and scholars of early Christianity. I hope that this review will introduce an avenue of research that will have impact on scholars of fields other than rabbinics.

In order to understand Friedman and Hauptman's claims, it is necessary to briefly discuss their thoughts on the dating of the two tannaitic collections of halakhah, the Mishnah and the Tosefta. Friedman (1999)

and Hauptman (2000, 2001) both propose that the generally conceived notion of the Tosefta as a 'companion' to the Mishnah (Goldberg 1987) or a 'commentary' on the Mishnah (Neusner 1994: 152) is often inaccurate. According to Friedman, while the Tosefta received its final redacted form after the redaction of the Mishnah, much of its material is primary to the mishnaic parallels. Friedman's work focuses on parallel pericopae from the two corpuses, demonstrating cases in which the toseftan material contains the pre-redacted sources of the Mishnah. We should note that Friedman's theory of the primacy of the Tosefta contradicts that of Lieberman, his revered teacher, one of the foremost talmudic scholars of the twentieth century, who devoted his life to producing a critical edition of the Tosefta, and succeeded in completing about two-thirds of the work. Friedman's approach has thus caused some controversy among scholars of rabbinic literature. Nevertheless, as of yet, no comprehensive refutation of his work has been published.

Hauptman tends to push the theory of the primacy of the Tosefta even further. According to Hauptman, the Tosefta as we know it today (minus a relatively small amount of later additions, generally obvious by their attribution to late tannaim) existed prior to the publication of the Mishnah and therefore as a redacted corpus reflects a stage of development prior to the Mishnah. For a more detailed review of Friedman and Hauptman's work on this topic see Kulp (forthcoming).

I shall now briefly demonstrate how this theory impacts the dating of the development of the seder/haggadah and its individual elements. One of the outstanding features of the Mishnah is the framework of four cups of wine. Friedman (2002: 405-409, 415) demonstrates that while *t. Pesahim* 10.1 refers to four cups of wine, it is only in reference to the minimum amount of wine that must be provided to poor people in order to celebrate the evening's ritual. The Tosefta does not state that this wine must be ritually drunk on four distinct occasions during the meal. According to Friedman, the idea that the meal is to be organized around these four cups of wine is an innovation of the redactors of the Mishnah.

Hauptman (2001) emphasizes another essential difference between the two tannaitic corpuses: instead of the ritual of questions, midrash on Deuteronomy and telling of the *story* of Passover as mandated by the Mishnah, *t. Pesahim* 10.12 mandates studying the *laws* of Passover all night. The toseftan chapter ends with a story of Rabban Gamaliel and his colleagues studying the 'laws of Pesah' until morning. Importantly, the focus of the night's study was law not story. According to Hauptman, at

some point after the redaction of the Tosefta and before that of the Mishnah, two essential changes occurred: the learning of laws was replaced by the telling of the story and the intellectual element was moved up to precede the meal. She surmises that both of these changes were initiated in order to allow for broader participation in the ritual (2001: 10). Stories are more accessible to non-rabbis than are halakhot (this tension was also noted by Bokser 1984: 70-71). Participants are more likely to be awake before the meal than to stay up all night afterwards. Hauptman is the only scholar confident at dating the innovation of the retelling of the exodus towards the end of the tannaitic period. Whether her noteworthy theory will gain general acceptance remains to be seen.

Hauptman sees in the Tosefta a description of an ordered meal, a proto-seder, and not just a collection of material relating to the Mishnah (2001: 6). This seder does not differ greatly from the customs that were observed during the Second Temple period (wine, food and Hallel). Nevertheless, it does attest to a post-destruction continued observance of the Passover ritual and a slight expansion of the earlier ritual as well. Although the Temple no longer stood, the Tosefta is witness to a rabbinic belief in the continued validity and indeed necessity of a ritualized assembly on the first night of Passover. This assembly consisted of the eating of a communal meal which included the non-sacrificial elements of the Temple meal (*matzah* and bitter herbs), and the recitation of Hallel. The rabbis began the process of adding to the ritual by including *haroset* and the mandated study of Torah.

Friedman (2002: 426-30) stresses the significance of the post-destruction addition of the *haroset* to the Passover meal. In *t. Pesahim* 10.10, R. Elazar b. Zadok (early second century) tells the merchants of Lydda to come and take the 'commanded spices', a reference to the *haroset*. Earlier scholars (Tabory 1996a: 74; Safrai and Safrai 1998: 16) had preferred a version of this source contained in the talmudim (Palestinian Talmud *Pesahim* 10.3, 37d; Babylonian Talmud *Pesahim* 116a) according to which the merchants of *Jerusalem* told their customers to come and buy 'commanded spices'. From this version of the story, they concluded that the *haroset* was already customary in Jerusalem in Second Temple times. In contrast, Friedman believes that the Tosefta nearly always contains a version primary to parallels preserved in the talmudim (Friedman 2000) and, therefore, scholars should be reticent in reconstructing tannaitic halakhah based on talmudic (amoraic) sources. According to Friedman, the *haroset* is an early, but post-70 CE attempt to broaden the practices of the seder ritual. When listing the

Passover foods, the second chapter of the Tosefta (which purports to describe the ritual as performed in the Temple) states, 'the lettuce (bitter herbs), the *matzah* and the Passover are obligatory on the first night' (M. Pes 2:6) In contrast, the Mishnah and Tosefta of the tenth chapter state, 'they bring in front of him *matzah*, lettuce and *haroset*' (*m. Pes*. 10.3; *t. Pes*. 10.9). As Friedman summarizes (2002: 438) 'the paschal lamb goes out and the *haroset* comes in'.

Despite the later redaction of the Mishnah, Friedman agrees that some of its practices were initiated during the Yavnean generation, the generation that lived after the destruction of the Temple (2002: 457-58). After all, as Safrai and Safrai (1998: 19) point out, there are several Yavnean rabbis whose statements are found in the chapter. In other words, Friedman does not completely rule out using elements of the Mishnah, especially those which also exist in the Tosefta, to reconstruct earlier practice. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that none of these rabbis mentions a haggadah or a seder. R. Elazar b. Zadok discusses the status of the *haroset*, R. Gamaliel requires symbolic interpretation of the foods, and R. Tarfon and R. Akiva disagree concerning the wording of the benediction over the Hallel. Therefore, unlike Safrai and Safrai (1998: 49) who based on these attributions conclude that there was already a haggadah and seder in Yavneh in the generation immediately following the destruction, Friedman and especially Hauptman delay such a development for another couple of generations. Friedman claims that a statement by R. Judah (late second century) in *t. Pesahim* 10.9; which mentions 'one appetizer' and 'one [serving of] lettuce', is the earliest reference in rabbinic literature to an ordered meal.

Finally, we should note that Friedman and Hauptman, along with Bokser, view the editors of the Mishnah as shaping and transforming the observances customary until that time. The Mishnah, therefore, tells us a great deal about the ideals and goals of its redactors. However, if the Mishnah is prescriptive, it will be difficult to know how many Jews actually performed the seder/haggadah on Passover, as we do not know what level of authority the Palestinian rabbis had in this period in their own region, not to mention in the Diaspora. Seth Schwartz (2001) recently claimed that rabbis had little to no authority in the larger Jewish community until the fourth century. Even if scholars will disagree with the radicality of some of his conclusions, we should be hesitant about assuming a widespread observance of rabbinic custom. This caution should be heeded when comparing rabbinic and early Christian writings, especially those composed outside of Palestine.

Paschal Sacrifice after the Second Temple

We have up until now been dealing with the development of the seder and haggadah, widely viewed by scholars as the creative response of rabbis in the second century to the destruction of the Temple. However, there also existed a different response among rabbis and others, according to which the Temple practice of eating a roasted lamb and perhaps even considering it a sacrifice could continue after the destruction (Bokser 1984: 101-106; 1990: 4-6; Tabory 1996a: 92-105; 1999: 71). R. Gamaliel (early second century) seems to have been a proponent of this practice (*m. Pesahim* 7.2; *m. Betzah* 2.7 = *m. Eduyyot* 3.11). There is some evidence elsewhere in rabbinic literature of Jews eating a Passover lamb outside of Jerusalem, in Palestine and perhaps in Rome, after the destruction of the Temple (*t. Yom Tov* 2.15). Scholars debate whether Josephus (*Antiquities* 2.312), refers to this practice as well (Bokser 1984: 105-106). The evidence therefore points to a struggle among Jews over how to continue to commemorate Passover after the destruction; some advocated a continued quasi-sacrificial Passover celebration, while others were adamant that the evening not include anything which even resembled the Passover sacrifice. According to Bokser (1984: 91, 106) most scholars hold that after the Bar-Kokhba revolt all sacrifices ceased to exist. Henceforth, the notion of continuing to eat a lamb on Passover eve fell into disfavour. The reason for the failure of this response to the Temple's destruction is that Jews would not have viewed the newer non-Temple sacrificial practice as being as meaningful and religiously effective as the old practice (Bokser 1990: 7). Henceforth, rabbis and early Christians alike had to search for non-sacrificial replacements for the Passover.

Talmudic Expansions

This review is not the place to discuss the later expansions of the seder, a ceremony which continually grew until the printing presses caused its development to freeze (Hoffman 1999a: 23) until the modern period. Nevertheless, we should note that amoraim faced different historical circumstances than did the tannaim (Bokser 1990: 11-13). The post-tannaitic development and expansion of the seder must be understood in this light. First of all, for the amoraim, the bitter memory of the destruction of the Temple was fading and therefore the lack of the sacrifice could be

more freely acknowledged. Bokser (1990: 11) writes, 'they [post-mishnaic circles] were able openly to acknowledge that a change had taken place, in particular regarding the end of the sacrificial cult'. The sacrificial meat was replaced, in later amoraic times, by the bringing of two other types of meat (Friedman 2002: 437; Bokser 1988: 452-53). To Bokser (1990: 13), such a symbolic substitute would not have been possible to those still actively mourning the loss of the original and authentic Passover.

The second change in historical circumstance is that the seder ritual had already been established in the Mishnah and was already customary (at least in rabbinic circles) by talmudic times. Hence, amoraim are responding to and developing the text of the Mishnah as well as expanding a performed ritual (Bokser 1988). Bokser (1988: 446) demonstrates three phenomena that occur as a result: 'a) diverse neutral features in the mishnaic account of the seder become part of the ritual with added significance and symbolic meaning; b) new symbolic gestures and objects are added; and c) existing features become transformed'. For example, the *haroset* receives symbolic meaning (1988: 446-48, 453-55). The Talmud requires the *matzah* and bitter herbs but not the Passover to be lifted when their symbolic meaning is recited. The wine is transformed from simply a means by which to cause happiness, as it is understood in *t. Pesahim* 10.4, to a symbolic representation of either God's bringing the people out of Egypt or to future acts of redemption of Israel and divine retribution against the Gentiles (1988: 456-57; see also Hoffman 1987: 88). To Bokser (1988: 465-66), then, the seder is a paradigmatic example 'in which an amoraic dynamic process builds on a mishnaic reworking of the biblical heritage by expanding it and by articulating and making explicit many of the ideas and structures which have come to characterize rabbinic Judaism'.

Again, we are witness to the fact that accurate dating of rabbinic sources allows us to understand the development of the seder's components against the backdrop of different time periods and in light of the texts and customs which each generation inherited.

Conclusion

The work of recent historians and rabbinic text scholars has greatly advanced our understanding of the origins of the rabbinic seder. A near consensus has been reached that the seder and the haggadah were innovations of the post-70 CE period and some scholars are confident of their

ability to date these developments within the period between 70–220 CE. The historical, polemical and literary sources that worked to shape the seder have been brought to much greater light. Early Christian practice, including the framing of the last supper by New Testament authors as a Passover meal, are seen not so much as imitating hoary Jewish practices, but as parallel and competing practices among groups occupying similar cultural space, both attempting to provide religious meaning to Passover after the destruction of the Temple and Jesus' death. What remains a desideratum is the production of a critical edition to the Haggadah in English, one patterned after the Safrai and Safrai Hebrew edition but taking into greater account the parallels between rabbinic and Christian developments noted by Yuval and others, the religious/cultural examinations of the rabbinic texts by Bokser and Hoffman, the sympotic influences and parallels examined by Tabory, and the Mishnah–Tosefta comparisons of Friedman and Hauptman.

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