AKIVA COHEN

Matthew and the Mishnah

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 418

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe

418

Akiva Cohen

Matthew and the Mishnah

Redefining Identity and Ethos in the Shadow of the Second Temple's Destruction

Mohr Siebeck

Akiva Cohen, born 1960; Bachelor of Religious Studies, Tyndale College, Toronto, Canada; Master of Arts, Trinity International University, Deerfield, Ill., USA; 2008 PhD, Tel Aviv University, Israel; has taught New Testament studies at Jerusalem University College, and Ben Gurion University in the Deichmann Program for Jewish and Christian Literature of the Hellenistic-Roman Era, Israel.

e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-154810-9
ISBN 978-3-16-149960-9
ISSN 0340-9570 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at *http://dnb.dnb.de.*

The book was printed by Gulde Druck in Tübingen on non-aging paper and bound by Gulde Druck in Tübingen.

Printed in Germany.

Acknowledgments

> "And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
> Before all temples th'upright heart and pure."
> (John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.17–18)

This revised dissertation represents not only the closure of a long personal journey, but also immense gratification. My journey of 're-booting' my formal academic studies began late in life – when my firstborn son, Yishai, was born; and only a few days prior to my writing this he successfully defended his own Ph.D. dissertation.

There are several scholars to whom I remain indebted. Professor Scot McKnight opened the brave new world of synoptic studies to me and introduced me to the 'Jewishness' of Jesus and the Gospels. Dr. McKnight is thus largely responsible for my subsequent obsession with the Gospel according to Matthew, which has persisted for three decades now and shows no sign of abating. My journey with 'Matthew' is strewn with precious memories. Some are very brief: I recall a phone call with Anthony Saldarini and his willingness to talk to me on the phone form Boston, patiently answering my questions. Graham Stanton and I had a fortuitous meeting at a bus stop in Jerusalem and discussed my idea of comparing Matthew and the Mishnah, and before the bus whisked him away he reminded me that he had done the same with the Damascus Document and encouraged me to pursue my idea. At Tel Aviv University, Professor Ithamar Gruenwald introduced me to close-readings of the Mishnah, and the fascinating world of ritual studies. He also demonstrated a rigorous and creative approach to scholarship as well as his own interest in the New Testament. My biggest academic debt, however, is that owed to my *doctor-vater*, Dr. Michael Mach. Dr. Mach not only spent untold hours discussing the texts of Matthew and the Mishnah with me in his home-office in Jerusalem, but also kept our learning 'light' with his winsome sense of humor. Among the lessons Dr. Mach taught me, none was more practical than his counsel to 'categorize' whenever confusion threatens to discourage one's attempts to make sense of a given text or topic.

Of my dissertation judges, two are of special mention. Professor Ulrich Luz not only opened up the rich world of the First Gospel to me through

his commentary and studies on Matthew, but also offered much practical and generous advice, and gave of his time to correspond with me by email after I had received my doctorate. His life work on Matthew continues to be a rich deposit that yields many precious gems to fortunate students. Although I did not have the privilege of meeting the late Professor Friedrich Avemarie, I was privileged to have him as one of my dissertation judges. His voluminous and detailed comments upon my work, and his encouragement and enthusiasm granted me a glimpse into both his erudition and his kindness. I was shocked and saddened to learn of his untimely death. May his memory be blessed.

I also owe a word of thanks to Professor Jörg Frey. My providential meeting with him during my first year of teaching a course on the early Jesus movement at Ben Gurion University resulted in his invitation to publish my revised dissertation in the WUNT 2[d] series. I recall saying goodbye to Professor Frey as he bravely headed off on a bus from Beer Sheva with my printed dissertation on his lap, assuring me that he was going to read it on the way to Jerusalem. I hope my work enlivened his journey, or at least helped him to get a good sleep during that trip! Along with Dr. Frey, I am grateful to Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, the editorial director of Theology and Jewish Studies at Mohr Siebeck, and Bettina Gade from the production department, for their patience and assistance with the editorial process. I cannot sufficiently thank Dr. Claus-Jürgen Thornton for demonstrating the patience of Job and the exceptional attention to detail he exhibited in assisting me to format my work for Mohr Siebeck.

In writing this revised dissertation, I have engaged what, in our era, are highly specialized fields of study, venturing out of my own area of specialization in Matthean studies into realms of expertise far outside those of my own. The benefits of such a decision have been a rewarding learning experience for me; however, the implications of such are clear, viz. that I have thus made myself vulnerable to many lines of criticism. I am very grateful to Professor Anders Runesson whom I had the privilege of getting to spend some time with during his sabbatical year at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Professor Runesson's creativity in Matthean studies deepened my understanding of the sociology of the Matthean community, necessitating a refinement of my thinking as I revised my doctoral work. He also read sections of my work and saved me from several faux-pas vis-à-vis the archaeology of first century synagogues, although I am solely responsible for whatever errors remain. Although a more narrow discussion would have protected me from some wrong turns that I have no doubt made upon unfamiliar terrain; nonetheless, the view has been far more panoramic than would have been the case had I gone the safer route. My hope is that, in spite of its weaknesses, those who make the effort to read

this present work will benefit from some of the modest insights that such comparative studies make possible.

My highest debt of thanks is to my Maker:

Thou art the supreme light,
and the eyes of the pure of soul shall see Thee,
and clouds of sin shall hide Thee from the eyes of sinners.
(Solomon Ibn Gabirol [ca. 1021–1058] from *Keter Malkhut* ["The Kingly Crown"], Section One, "The Praises of God.")

Finally, I would like to thank my family. To my two wonderful sons, Yishai and Elad, thank you both for your patience with your 'student-father' through the years. If the last shall be first in my list, it is fitting for me to now thank my beloved wife Susan. Susan, my studies and this publication have cost you much. I will always be grateful to you for supporting me on this journey; this work is dedicated to you with much love and gratefulness.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AIPHOS	*Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves*
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AJSR	*Association for Jewish Studies Review*
AJT	*Asia Journal of Theology*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
AYBRL	The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 2d edn. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979
BAIAS	*Bulletin of the Anlo-Israel Archeological Society*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDAG	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d edn. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur Evangelischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BJS	Brown Judaic Series
BMSEC	Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRLAJ	Brill Reference Library of Ancient Judaism
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*

BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CHJ	*The Cambridge History of Judaism*. Vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period.* Edited by W. Horbury, W. D. Davies, and J. Sturdy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Vol. 4: *The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*. Edited by S. T. Katz; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series
CPJ	*Corpus Papyrorum judaicorum*. Edited by V. A. Tcherikover. 3 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957–64
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
CSHJ	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
D&A	W. D. Davies and D. J. Allison
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ErIsr	*Eretz-Israel*
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FF	Foundations and Facets
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte
HeyJ	*Heythrop Journal*
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik/Handbook of Oriental Studies
HR	*History of Religions*
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	*Hebrew Union Collegel Annual*
HUTh	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IOS	*Israel Oriental Society*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Jounal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JGRJC	*Journal of Greco-Roman Judaism and Christianity*

JJA	*Journal of Jewish Art*
JJMJS	*Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JJSSup	Journal of Jewish Studies: Supplement series
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JRASup	Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series
JRitSt	*Journal of Ritual Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods: Supplements
JSJT	*Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSRS	*Judea and Samaria Research Studies*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th edn. with revised supplement. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996
MGWJ	*Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*
NCB	New Century Bible
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NET	New English Translation
NGS	New Gospel Studies
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDNTT	*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Edited by C. Brown. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–85
NIV	New International Versions
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTAbh NF	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen: Neue Folge
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
ODJR	*The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*. Edited by R. J. Z. Werblowsky and G. Wigoder. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983
P. Oxy.	Papyrus Oxyrhynchus
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*

Qad	*Qadmoniot*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RevScRel	*Revue des sciences religieuses*
RHPR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources chrétiennes
ScEs	*Science et Esprit*
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTU A	*Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt.* Serie A: Aufsätze
ST	*Studia theologica*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum/Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
TSMJ	Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TZT	*Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*
UBS	United Bible Society
VC	*Vigiliae christianae*
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
YJS	Yale Judaica Series
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

Methodological Issues

> "Identity is the answer to everything. There is nothing that cannot be seen in terms of identity. We are not going to pretend that there is the slightest argument about that."[1]

1.1 Research Question

The general research question which guides this study is: *How do the authors of religious texts reconstruct their community identity and ethos in the absence of their central cult?* My particular socio-historical focus of this more general question is: *How do the respective authors of the Gospel according to Matthew, and the editor(s) of the Mishnah redefine their group identities following the destruction of the Second Temple?*[2]

---

[1] A character in N. Dennis, *Cards of Identity* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1955).

[2] The ethos of a community is the lived-out expression of a given community's self-perceived identity and worldview. Community ethos has been discussed in terms of its functional 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' aspects. Thus, Michael Wolter states, "[T]he practices of an ethos point beyond themselves since it is the identity of the group that is expressed by them. … Through *exclusive practices* the group differs from its social environment, whereas the *inclusive practices* are also practiced by the social majority and therefore can suit its integration into society." Idem, "'Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's' (1 Corinthians 10,24): Pauline Ethics according to 1 Corinthians," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (ed. J. G. van der Watt; BZNW 141; Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2006), 199–217 (here 200–201, emphases original). Wolter goes on to discuss the way that Jewish ethos is not limited to the moral categories of 'good' or 'evil,' or 'just' or 'unjust,' but also functions via boundary markers (e.g., circumcision, food laws, festival days), to distinguish it from the surrounding Gentile culture. Wolter acknowledges the work of J. D. G. Dunn, citing "The New Perspective on Paul," in idem, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990), 183–214. See also Wolter's earlier study, "Ethos und Identität in paulinischen Gemeinden," *NTS* 43 (1997): 430–44, and his *Theologie und Ethos im frühen Christentum: Studien zu Jesus, Paulus und Lukas* (WUNT 236; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); S. von Dobbeler, "Auf der Grenze: Ethos und Identität der matthäischen Gemeinde nach Mt 15,1–20," *BZ* 45 (2001): 55–78; and the subsequent volume, *Ethos und Identität: Einheit und Vielfalt des Judentums in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (ed. M. Konradt and U. Steinert; Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002). For Matthew and ethos, see B. Gerhardsson,

Happily for this present study, the wider consensus views which provide the framework for my defining question have enjoyed the focus of vigorous academic debate and discussion in recent years.[3] The fruit of such scholarly engagement has provided us with new lenses through which to evaluate reigning paradigms and consider the consequent proposals of alternative hypotheses.[4] Whereas prior to these studies, the question related to my subject would have been, *in what ways did* the destruction of the Second Temple fundamentally transform Judaism and its emerging sister religion,[5] the Jesus movement – on its way to becoming 'Christianity' –, the question has now become, *did* the Second Temple's destruction fundamentally change Judaism and (emerging) Christianity?[6]

Thus, applied to my particular focus – on the text of Matthew and the Mishnah in this study – the question I am interested in can be asked a number of ways. The *historical* and *literary* question may be phrased as,

---

The Ethos of the Bible (trans. S. Westerholm; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), esp. ch. 3 (33–62), "Early Christianity's Ethos according to Matthew."

[3] E.g., *Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern* (ed. L. I. Levine and D. R. Schwartz; TSAJ 130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); and the revised versions of papers presented at a symposium held at the Hebrew University in 2009, *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History? On Jews and Judaism before and after the Destruction of the Second Temple* (ed. D. R. Schwartz and Z. Weiss in collaboration with R. A. Clements; AJEC 78; Leiden: Brill, 2012); S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); P. J. Tomson, "Transformations of Post-70 Judaism: Scholarly Reconstructions and Their Implications for Our Perception of Matthew, Didache, and James," in *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings* (ed. H. van de Sandt and J. K. Zangenberg; SBLSymS 45; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 91–121. See now, P. J. Tomson and J. Schwartz, *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History* (CRINT 13; Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[4] This is also exemplified by Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, who has emphasized (291) the importance of an integrative and interdisciplinary approach that assesses ancient Judaism in the wider context of "shifting types of imperial domination." Schwartz sees (ibid.) Jewish literature, art, and archaeology as a response to "the gradual christianization of the Roman Empire." His bold approach, regardless of one's agreement or disagreement with his various claims, models a rigorous and integrative methodology that serves as a (partial) control that is often lacking in myopic monographs laden with unarticulated assumptions about their broader historical and cultural context.

[5] Even this phrasing of the relationship between 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' is the result of such recent refinements of older paradigms as I will discuss in Chapter 3.

[6] Or in the language of the above-cited (n. 3) symposium publication, *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History?*. The evidence of post-70 continuities or discontinuities (e.g., the cult and the roles of its mediators; sects, hermeneutical approach to texts, liturgy, 'religious' art, etc.) becomes the criterion by which hypotheses are tested. And in Tomson and Schwartz, *Jews and Christians*, e.g., J. Schwartz, "Yavne Revisited: Jewish 'Survival' in the Wake of the War of Destruction," 238–52; J. A. Overman, "The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Conformation of Judaism and Christianity," 253–77.

what (if any!) was the impact of the destruction of the Second Temple for the respective authors of Matthew's Gospel and the Mishnah, *as evidenced by the way they constructed their texts?* The sociological question is: what can we learn about the identity and ethos of the authors – and communities – related to Matthew and the Mishnah by studying their respective texts, and specifically for this study, the way their texts relate to – or ignore – the (now destroyed) temple?[7] I am not primarily interested in focusing upon the historical aspect of my topic, but I am interested in the other two aspects. And finally, the theological question is, how have the respective authors of Matthew and the Mishnah articulated their understanding of God and his relationship to their communities in light of the Destruction? For Matthew, students of the Gospels since the early Church Fathers – and far more so since the advent of redaction criticism – have recognized that each of the evangelists[8] offers a unique theological telling of the Jesus story, and in this study I am focusing upon the way that Matthew has told that story. History is the bedrock upon which the New Testament's apostolic witness rests – even if that history is retrospectively woven together with the faith of the fledgling Jesus communities – and so I assume the importance of history for Matthew and the other authors of the canonical Gospels.[9] This study however, as just noted, is not primarily concerned with finding the historical Jesus, although that 'quest' has occupied, and continues to occupy a justly important aspect of Gospel studies.[10] My specific goal is tos determine what ways, if any, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple

[7] Because of the relationship between the temple and the synagogue – whatever that might have been – I am also interested in the way these texts relate to that latter institution as well; and as will become clear in Chapters 9, 11, 12, and 14.3, in the question of the extent of the influence of the former upon the latter.

[8] In Gospel scholarship, the term 'evangelists' is a common way of referring to the authors of the canonical Gospels.

[9] In addition to the witness of the evangelists, see e.g., the statements of Paul, "… and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born" (1 Cor 15:5–7). The Johannine witness: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). The Petrine witness: "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Pet 1:16). "Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ …" (1 Pet 5:1a).

[10] See especially the multi-volume projects of N. T. Wright (*Christian Origins and the Question of God* [4 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992–2013]) and J. D. G. Dunn (*Christianity in the Making* [2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 2009]).

has influenced Matthew's telling of the Jesus story, and what that means for his community's identity and ethos.

For the Mishnah, which I will discuss in Chapters 8–13, we are clearly dealing with a very different type of document than that of the *First Gospel*.[11] If the latter is best categorized as a biography,[12] whatever we decide upon for the Mishnah, we can readily say that it belongs to a different literary genre. Its content consists of halakic discourse expressed in formulaic and lapidary prose, which, although generally made in the name of this or that sage, does not bear the imprint of individual personality or style. Furthermore, as we shall see, the relationship of its author(s)/redactor(s) towards history is largely anti-contextual, but that is getting the cart ahead of the horse. I will wait until a later chapter to probe the meaning of the form and function of this unique text. I am interested in the Mishnah as a text, and as also explained regarding my interest in Matthew, I am interested in the Mishnah as a text that establishes the identity and ethos of its readers. Furthermore, as sacred literature I am interested in the theology of its authors. What is immediately apparent upon encountering this document is that it is almost wholly temple-centered. My interest in the Mishnah, then, is to attempt to understand why, on the one hand, the temple and its cult occupy such a central role as its subject matter, and yet on the other, the destruction of this same temple is barely alluded to among its voluminous pages. After studying the way that both of these texts relate to the temple, I will discuss the implications for their respective community identities in my final chapter.

Let me begin at the outset, however, by summarizing some of the salient points that recent scholarship has forced us to reconsider regarding what, until only very recently, was assumed to be true concerning major transformations of Jewish history as a result of the Second Temple's destruction. The implications of this recent scholarship for both 'Rabbinic' (esp. 'Mishnaic') Judaism and also for the early Jesus movement are what interest me in this present study.

---

[11] The 'First Gospel' is used synonymously with 'the Gospel according to Matthew,' 'Matthew's Gospel,' 'Matthew,' etc., based upon its position in the canon in accord with what the early fathers thought to be its temporal order in relation to the other canonical Gospels. Matthew's opening with the genealogy of Jesus that begins with Abraham, combined with its Hebraic style and emphasis upon fulfilled prophecy also serves as a natural bridge to cross over from the 'Old Testament' to the New Testament. See my discussion in the following chapter on the authorship of the First Gospel (pp. 32–39), and Chapter 8 for my discussion of the genre of the Mishnah.

[12] See my discussion of the genre of Matthew in the following chapter (pp. 80–82).

1.1.1 Recent Scholarship on the Impact of the Destruction of the Second Temple

Daniel Schwartz has provided us with a helpful analysis and summary of a recent symposium on the subject of the significance of '70' C.E. for Jewish history.[13] Since the conclusions of this symposium – and those of the aforementioned original collection of essays in honor of Menahem Stern,[14] along with other important recent studies[15] – have reopened the discussion on formerly held consensus positions, it is necessary to take note of, and briefly discuss, their implications before proceeding to my particular application of this question.

Daniel Schwartz begins his summary by noting that the question of whether or not 70 C.E. was a watershed in Jewish history has been a topic of discussion for over a century and a half. After tracing the problematic nature of dividing Jewish history into eras, Schwartz notes the instructive example of Heinrich Graetz, whose procrustean attempt to fit Jewish history into three major eras finally proved unsuccessful.[16] Graetz's three eras were: the first era, culminating with a people in their land and ending with the destruction of the First Temple; the second era, culminating with a religious community in their land and ending with the destruction of the Second Temple; the third era, stretching from 70 C.E. to Graetz's day, consisting of a religious community in exile.[17]

Schwartz's purpose in noting Graetz's contribution is in part to honor his inspiring example of a bold and integrative vision of Jewish history, and in part as a caveat to his emboldened – but ultimately failed – attempt to achieve this high but apparently unrealistic goal. Furthermore, whereas Graetz underestimated the significance of the *political* character of his second era (a religious community in the land), Schwartz notes that others have overemphasized this aspect for the (Second Temple) period:

---

[13] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction: Was 70 CE A Watershed in Jewish History? Three Stages of Modern Scholarship, and a Renewed Effort," in idem et al., eds., *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History?*, 1–19.

[14] See n. 3 above.

[15] The limits of my study prohibit all but an occasional reference to S. Schwartz's influential study, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*. For its significance, see the learned and helpful review by F. Millar, "Transformations of Judaism under Graeco-Roman Rule: Responses to Seth Schwartz's 'Imperialism and Jewish Society,'" *JJS* 58 (2006): 139–58.

[16] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 1, and ibid., n. 2, citing H. Graetz, *Die Konstruktion der jüdischen Geschichte* (Berlin: Schocken, 1935 [1846]), translated as idem, *The Structure of Jewish History, and Other Essays* (trans. and ed. I. Schorsch; New York: Ktav, 1975).

[17] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 1.

I refer to those many who write as if 70 meant the demise of a Jewish state – which is simply not true. The end of the Jewish state had come already in 63 BCE, when Pompey conquered Hasmonean Judea; or at least in 6 CE, when Rome put an end to even the Herodian vassal state and incorporated Judea directly into the empire.[18]

Schwartz proceeds to ask, if the normative criterion employed by historians to define a given period – viz., who were those ruling over the people and land? – does not indicate that 70 was a turning point, what does? For Schwartz, neither culture, nor religious criteria point to 70 as a decisive turning point for Jewish history; for the former Hellenism continued until the rise of Islam,[19] and for the latter, whether one prefers to mark the end of the period with the Bar-Kokhba revolt,[20] or nigh unto a millennium later with the birth of Rashi, the putative watershed is still bypassed.[21]

Schwartz further notes that the Rabbis are in agreement with standard surveys of the Talmudic period which begin two centuries before 70 with John Hyrcanus, and as noted, end a millennium later. This agrees with the Rabbinic view as evidenced in the Mishnah's tractate *ʾAbot* especially as seen in its first two chapters which list the transmission of Torah from Sinai through the *zûgôt*[22] ("pairs") down to the second century C.E., *without any mention of the destruction of Jerusalem*.[23] Schwartz notes the ironical fact that in this "most central historical document" of the Sages, they "do not hint at any historical event at all. … If the Romans destroyed the Temple, that was sad, but the rabbis' world could still 'stand' without it, on the universally accessible pillars of justice, truth, and peace (*m. ʾAbot*

[18] Ibid., 3.

[19] Ibid., 4 with n. 12, for Schwartz's reference to M. D. Herr, "Hellenism and the Jews in Eretz Israel," *Eshkolot* n.s. 2–3 (1976/77–1977/78): 20–27 (Hebrew).

[20] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 4, n. 13, citing the example of E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BCE–135 CE)* (ed. G. Vermes et al.; 3 vols.; rev. Eng. edn.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–86).

[21] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 4–5, and ibid., 5, n. 14, for his citation of the survey of J. Goldin, "The Period of the Talmud (135 BCE–1035 CE)," in *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion* (ed. L. Finkelstein; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949), 1:115–215.

[22] Though *ʾAbot* does not employ the term *zûgôt*, the 'pairs' represent the generational chain that preserved the oral law, and who link the prophets to the Tannaim. The Mishnah uses the term this way several dozen times in other tractates, e.g. "Said Nahum the Scribe, 'I have received [the following ruling] from R. Miasha, who received [it] from his father, who received [it] from the Pairs (זוגות, *zûgôt*), who received [it] from the Prophets, [who received] the law [given] to Moses on Sinai, regarding one who sows his field with two types of wheat'" (*m. Peʾah* 2:6 [C]). I will use rounded brackets, as I have here, if I make any insertions in Neusner's translation in order to distinguish them from Neusner's square brackets.

[23] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 5.

1:18)."[24] I will return to this *ahistorical* aspect of the Mishnah in Chapters 8 and 10. Having concluded that, neither politics, culture, nor religion, provide us with the justification for claiming 70 C.E.'s epochal significance for Jewish history, Schwartz notes the, nonetheless, counter-intuitiveness of scholars who refuse to discard this notion. In order to explain this state of affairs, Schwartz sets out to explain the "three phases in modern scholarship concerning the nature of Judaism in antiquity," and more specifically, "three stages in the modern understanding of the relationship between priestly Judaism and rabbinic Judaism in antiquity."[25] For my purposes in this introduction, I will simply list the three stages. The first stage, which Schwartz dates until the mid-twentieth century, is represented by the view that "the Pharisees, who were identified with the scribes and also with the rabbis, enjoyed nigh universal authority among the Jews of the Second Temple period."[26] Schwartz explains that such views were based on the portrayal of the Pharisees in texts like the Mishnah, Josephus, and the New Testament.[27] The existence of other sects was also known from the literature; however, the assumption of scholars was that these groups were marginal.[28]

> One way or the other, all agreed that the Pharisees were the most popular and most authoritative type of Judaism during the Second Temple period, all agreed that the rabbis were their heirs, and, therefore, all agreed that the destruction of the Second Temple didn't change much, apart from eliminating whatever power base their competitors had had.[29]

Daniel Schwartz's examples of historians representative of this period include (for Israeli scholarship) the influential role of Gedaliah Alon.[30] Alon's influence is also noted by Seth Schwartz, who in discussing the romantic nationalist ideology of Jewish historians – as exemplified in its

---

[24] Ibid. See also idem, *Reading the First Century: On Reading Josephus and Studying Jewish History of the First Century* (WUNT 300; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 174–77. Schwartz discusses the *inclusio* of "three things" in *m. ʾAbot* 1:2 and 1:18. This is seen by him as an illustration of the transformation from the first saying, viz., Simeon the Just's temple-centered saying (during the Second Temple period), to that of the second saying, Simeon ben Gamaliel's saying (post-70 C.E.) which characterizes Israel's cosmos as a universal one that is not spatially limited.

[25] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 5.

[26] Ibid., 6.

[27] Ibid., 6, where Schwartz mentions Matthew's (23:2) depiction of the Pharisees as "sitting on the seat of Moses."

[28] Ibid., 6–7, and 7, n. 20 for Schwartz's examples of influential works which propagated this view; at the head of the list is "Schürer's handbook"; G. F. Moore's *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927–30); G. Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977).

[29] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 7–8.

[30] See n. 28 above.

contemporary Zionist version – discusses Alon as a paradigmatic first generation Zionist historian. For the latter, the Jews had always constituted a nation, and the Rabbis were envisioned as nothing short of a "distillation of the Jewish national will."[31] Seth Schwartz spells out the implications of such romantic nationalist ideology for the way that these historians read the Rabbinic literature:

> [I]n short, they used what we might call a hermeneutics of goodwill, as opposed to the hermeneutics of suspicion now widespread among non-Israeli scholars. According to this model, rabbinic prescriptions could be used to *describe* Jewish life, rabbinic disagreements were thought to reflect deeper social and political conflicts among the Jews, and so on. In fact, Alon was more careful about the deployment of this model than his followers have been. Thus, although his historiography remains resolutely rabbinocentric, Alon was at least aware, because the Palestinian Talmud told him as much, that the authority of the rabbis in Palestine in the third and fourth centuries was neither absolute nor unchallenged.[32]

Returning to the summarizing discussion by Daniel Schwartz, he then turns to "the second stage" in Jewish historiography that was heralded by the discovery of the Qumran documents and the seismic impact of their challenge to the reigning paradigm. Suddenly, the assumption of Pharisaic hegemony over ancient Judaism was no longer a tenable explanation for the very different picture of ancient Judaism provided by the sectarian 'library.'[33] Of special significance for Schwartz's focus – and for this present study – is his insight regarding the priestly nature of the sectarian scrolls and the community that wrote and preserved them. Schwartz explains that the realization by scholars of the importance of "priestly Judaism" bolstered the importance of the Jerusalem temple and its priesthood and thus the Destruction was indeed viewed as a watershed. The priestly temple had very quickly been replaced by the "Rabbinic center" at Yavneh.[34]

Schwartz places this period of scholarship as continuing up until the 1970s, the decade that began with yet another ideological salvo against reigning assumptions – Jacob Neusner's *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70*, followed by further rounds from Neusner and others – fired at the old paradigm of Rabbinic hegemony.[35] The main props that had held up the reliability of the old view – Josephus, the New Testament and

---

[31] S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 6.

[32] Ibid., 6 (emphasis original), and ibid., n. 9, for (S.) Schwartz's similar point to that of (D.) Schwartz discussed above, viz., that this type of hermeneutical naïveté vis-à-vis the Rabbinic literature was standard among scholars of *Jüdische Wissenschaft* and their intellectual heirs up until the mid-twentieth century.

[33] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 8.

[34] Ibid., 8–9.

[35] Ibid., 9, and n. 27. J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1971).

the Rabbis – were no longer able to sustain their claims for the popularity and hegemony of Rabbinic Judaism for the pre-70 period.[36] Views about Rabbinic or Pharisaic Judaism for the study of the late Second Temple period gave way to E. P. Sanders's corrective neo-logisms: 'common Judaism' and 'covenantal nomism.'[37] The 1980s saw the integration of new halakic material from Qumran begin to shed light upon the distinction between 'priestly' and 'Rabbinic' Judaism. Scholars were beginning to realize that not only had they erroneously assumed the dominance of the Pharisees for pre-70 Judaism, but also that Pharisaic halakah was one among diverse expressions of Judaism for the period. Even Josephus's advocacy for the Pharisees was now understood as his antipathy to them (!); the picture of a priest-dominated temple continued the clarification of the emerging picture.[38] Another significant study, noted by Schwartz, that also marks the closure of the 'second stage,' is that of Ezra Fleischer, who argued that communal Jewish prayer was a post-Destruction innovation.[39]

Schwartz mentions the work of Shaye Cohen in the third stage. Cohen along with other scholars emphasized the deceptive nature by which history's winners (in this instance 'the Rabbis') ignore challenges to their emerging hegemony and thus greatly exaggerate their self-portrayed dominance.[40] Another historical 'correction' that surfaced during this stage is the restoration of the ongoing post-70 role of the priests.[41] Daniel Schwartz

---

[36] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 9, and ibid., nn. 28–30 for his list of significant contributors to the discussion.

[37] Ibid., 10, and n. 31, for Schwartz's citation of E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). Schwartz's focus is upon the overturning of the old paradigm of Rabbinic hegemony, not the nature of its observance ('covenantal nomism'; I have, however, noted that important element since it is integral to Sanders's contribution. Schwartz insightfully draws attention to the difference between the title of Sanders's opus to the earlier landmark work of W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1958 [1948]), that had not yet integrated the Qumran material (Davies acknowledges such in his 1953 second edition preface, in which he still maintained that the scrolls confirmed his position).

[38] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 11, and ibid., n. 36, for his citation of S. Mason, "Was Josephus a Pharisee? A Re-Examination of *Life* 10–12," *JJS* 40 (1989): 31–35, and ibid., n. 37, as well as idem, "Priesthood in Josephus and the 'Pharisaic Revolution,'" *JBL* 107 (1988): 657–61.

[39] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 11, and ibid., n. 38 for his citation of E. Fleischer, "On the Beginnings of Obligatory Jewish Prayer," *Tarbiz* 59 (1989/90): 397–441 (Hebrew); see also E. G. Chazon, "Liturgy before and after the Temple's Destruction: Change or Continuity?," in D. R. Schwartz et al., eds., *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History?*, 371–92. See also the extensive discussion by L. I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (2d edn.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 530–92.

[40] D. R. Schwartz, "Introduction," 12.

[41] Ibid., with n. 42, for Schwartz's reference to the review of this third stage in S. S. Miller, *Sages and Commoners in Late Antique ʾEreẓ Israel: A Philological Inquiry into*