

# Beyond the Text #1

## The Geography of Eretz Yisrael

### THE TANNAITIC PERIOD

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Tannaim</i>	<i>Historical events in Eretz Israel</i>		<i>World events</i>
4th century B.C.E.		The conquest of Eretz Israel by Alexander the Great	332 B.C.E.	Greek rule in the East
3rd century B.C.E.	Shimon HaTzaddik Antigonus of Sokho			
2nd century B.C.E.	Yose b. Yoezer Yose b. Yoḥanan Yehoshua b. Peraḥyah Nitai HaArbeli	Hasmoneans		Decline of Seleucid power
1st century B.C.E.	Yehudah b. Tabbai Shimon b. Shetaḥ Shemayah, Avtalyon	Alexander Yannai		
30 B.C.E. - 20 C.E.	Hillel, Shammai	Herodian period	30 B.C.E.	Rise of the Roman Empire in the East. Augustus
20 C.E. - 40 C.E.	1 Gamliel (I) HaZaken			
40 C.E. - 80 C.E.	2 Shimon b. Gamliel (I) Yohanan b. Zakkai	Destruction of the Second Temple	70 C.E.	Vespasian, Titus
80 C.E. - 110 C.E.	3 Gamliel (II) of Yavneh Eliezer b. Hyrcanus			
110 C.E. - 135 C.E.	4 Akiva	Bar Kokhba revolt	135 C.E.	Hadrian
135 C.E. - 170 C.E.	5 Shimon b. Gamliel (II) Shimon (b. Yoḥai) Meir			
170 C.E. - 200 C.E.	6 Yehudah HaNasi	Final redaction of the Mishnah	200 C.E.	Caracalla, Alexander Severus

## THE AMORAIC PERIOD

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Eretz Israel</i>	<i>Babylonia</i>		<i>World events</i>
Transitional period 200 C.E. - 220 C.E.	Oshaya Rabbah Bar Kappara Hiyya			
220 C.E. - 250 C.E.	1 Hanina (b. Hama), Yannai, Yehoshua b. Levi	Rav, Shmuel	226 C.E.	The Sassanid kingdom in Babylonia
250 C.E. - 290 C.E.	2 Yoḥanan (b. Nappaha) Resh Lakish	Huna, Yehudah (b. Yehezkel)		
290 C.E. - 320 C.E.	3 Ammi, Assi, Zera	Rabbah (b. Naḥmani) Yosef (b. Hiyya)		
320 C.E. - 350 C.E.	4 Hillel (II), Yonah, Yose (b. Zevida)	Abaye, Rava, Rami b. Hama	313 C.E.	Christianity becomes an officially recognized religion in the Roman Empire
350 C.E. - 375 C.E.	5 Mana (II) Tanḥuma b. Abba	Pappa		
375 C.E. - 425 C.E.	6	Ashi, Ravina (I)	395 C.E.	Final redaction of the Jerusalem Talmud
425 C.E. - 460 C.E.	7	Mar b. Rav Ashi		Roman Empire divided into East and West
460 C.E. - 500 C.E.	8	Rabbah Tosafa'ah Ravina (II)	476 C.E.  C. 500 C.E.	Fall of the Roman Empire in the West  Final redaction of the Babylonian Talmud

### Judah and Galilee

“There are three territories in respect to the law of removal [of sheviit produce]: [these are]: Judea, Transjordan, and Galilee, and there are three territories in each one.” (Mishnah Sheviit 9:2)

“Eretz Yisrael is divided into three separate lands with regard to marriage: Judea, Transjordan, and the Galilee.” (Mishnah Ketubot 13:10)

"This is your bill of divorce if I do not come back from now until the conclusion of thirty days, and when he was going from Judea to the Galilee he reached Antipatris and he returned immediately, his condition is void This is your bill of divorce if I do not come back from now until the conclusion of thirty days, and he was going from the Galilee to Judea, and he reached Kefar Otnai and returned immediately, his condition is void" (Mishnah Gittin 7:7)

There are three territories in respect to the law of removal [of sheviit produce]: [these are]: Judea, Transjordan, and Galilee, and there are three territories in each one. Upper Galilee, lower Galilee, and the valley. . . .Those of Judea are:

the mountain region, the plains [of the south], and the valley. (Mishnah Sheviit 9:2)

## **People of Judah, People of Galilee**

“the people of Judea, who were precise in their language and who would formulate mnemonics for their studies, their Torah knowledge endured for them; with regard to the people of the Galilee, who were not precise in their language and who would not formulate mnemonics, their Torah knowledge did not endure for them.” (Eruvin 53)

“And the Rabbis say: In Judea, people would perform labor on Passover eves until midday, and in the Galilee people would not perform labor on Passover eve at all.” (Mishnah Pesachim 4:5)

2. These two Galilees, of so great largeness, and encompassed with so many nations of foreigners, have been always able to make a strong resistance on all occasions of war; for the Galileans are inured to war from their infancy, and have been always very numerous; nor hath the country been ever destitute of men of courage, or wanted a numerous set of them; (Josephus, The Jewish War 3:3)

Rabbi Yehuda says: The people of Galilee were quarrelsome [*kanteranin*] and would often take vows prohibiting benefit from one another. So their forefathers arose and wrote their portions of the public property over to the *Nasi* so that they would be able to use communal property. (Nedarim 48a)

## **Social Mores and Visits to Jerusalem**

Rabbi Yehuda said: In Judea, at first they would seclude the groom and bride for a brief period before their entry into the wedding canopy, so that he would grow accustomed to her And in the Galilee they did not do so. (Ketubot 12a)

“If he did not write for her, “You shall live in my house and be maintained from my estate throughout the duration of your widowhood”, he is nevertheless liable, because [this clause] is a condition laid down by the court. Thus did the men of Jerusalem write. The men of Galilee wrote as did the men of Jerusalem. The men of Judea used to write: “Until the heirs wish to pay you your ketubah”. Therefore if the heirs wish to, they may pay her her ketubah and dismiss her.” (Mishnah Ketubot 4:12)

Rabbi Yehuda says: Unspecified *teruma* in Judea is forbidden. However, in the Galilee it is permitted, as the people of the Galilee are unfamiliar with the collection of the chamber. (Mishnah Nedarim 2:4)

## **Where is Bet Pagi?**

[This is referring to a case] “where he threshed inside the wall of Beit Pagi,” (Bava Metzia 90a)

“But if the prison is located within the wall of Beit Pagei, one slaughters on his behalf” (Pesachim 91a)

“What is outside the wall? Rabbi Yoḥanan says that it means outside the wall of Beit Pagei. And Reish Lakish says that it means outside the wall of the Temple courtyard.” (Menachot 78b)

“As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me”. (Matthew 21:1-2)

הַתְּאֵנָה חֲנֻטָּה פְּגִיָּה (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים 2:13)

מֵרַב אֲשֵׁי: זֶה קִנְיָה חֲמוֹר וּבֵית פְּגִיָּה (בבא מציעא 9א)

### **Other Centers: Lod and Bnei Brak**

Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: The Sages who discussed this issue counted the votes of those assembled and concluded in the upper story of the house of Nitza in the city of Lod: With regard to all other transgressions in the Torah, if a person is told: Transgress this prohibition and you will not be killed, he may transgress that prohibition and not be killed, except for those of idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and bloodshed. (Sanhedrin 74)

It happened once [on Pesach] that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining in Bnei Brak and were telling the story of the exodus from Egypt that whole night, until their students came and said to them, "The time of [reciting] the morning Shema has arrived." (Passover Haggadah)

Rabbi Simlai came before Rabbi Yoḥanan. He said to him: Would the Master teach me the Book of Genealogies? [The Book of Genealogies was a collection of tannaitic teachings that formed a midrash on the book of Chronicles.] Rabbi Yoḥanan said to him: Where are you from? He said to him: From Lod. Rabbi Yoḥanan further asked: And where is your present place of residence? He said to him: In Neharde'a. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to him: I have a tradition that we teach these subjects neither to Lodites nor to Neharde'ans, and certainly not to you who comes from Lod and your residence is in Neharde'a (Pesachim 62)

### **Usha, Sanhedrin Station**

“At the end of the persecution, our Rabbis assembled in Usha; they were: Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Neḥemya, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yosei, Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai, Rabbi Eliezer son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, and Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov. They sent to the elders of the Galilee and said: ‘Anyone who is learned, let him come

and teach, and anyone who is not learned, let him come and study.” (Shir HaShirim Rabba 2:5)

Rabbi Ile’a said that Reish Lakish said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda bar Ḥanina: In Usha the Sages instituted that a man should sustain his sons and daughters when they are minors.

Rabbi Ile’a said that Reish Lakish said: In Usha the Sages instituted that in a case of one who writes a document stating that he is giving all his property as a gift to his sons in his lifetime, he and his wife are sustained from the property until their deaths.

Rabbi Ile’a said: In Usha the Sages instituted that one who dispenses his money to charity should not dispense more than one-fifth.

Rav Yitzḥak said: In Usha the Sages enacted that a person should treat his son gently, even if he does not want to study, until his son is twelve years old. From this point forward he harasses him in all aspects of his life in order to force him to study. (Ketubot 49-50)

### **Twin Cities: Tverya and Zippori**

“Rabbi Oshaya says: Even if she is in Tiberias and her courtyard is in Zippori, or if she is in Zippori and her courtyard is in Tiberias, she is divorced.” (Gittin 77)

“Rabbi Ḥanina found a slaughtered young goat between Tiberias and Zippori and the Sages permitted it to him.” (Bava Metzia 24b)

“Rabbi Yosi said: May my portion be among those who accept Shabbat in Tiberias, and among those who see Shabbat out in Zippori,”(Shabbat 118b)

### **Migdal**

“Rabbi Abbahu said that Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said in the time it takes a person to walk the distance from Migdal Nunia to Tiberias, which is a mil.” (Pesachim 46)

If there was not other dough like it, how long? Rebbi Jacon bar Aḥa, Rebbi Ulla of Caesarea: Up to four *mil*'s walk. (Yerushalmi Pesachim 21a)

### **Caesarea: Rome in Eretz Yisrael**

“Rami bar Ḥama read the verse about him: “and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12), saying that this applies to Rabbi Oshaya, son of Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Bisa,” (Bava Batra 59a)

“Rabbi Hoshaya said: When the Holy One blessed be He created Adam the first man, the ministering angels erred concerning him and sought to proclaim “holy” before him. . . What did the Holy One blessed be He do? He cast a deep slumber

upon him, and everyone then knew that he was [merely] a man.” (Bereshit Rabba 8:10)

“They said to Rabbi Abbahu: What is different about you [Sages of Eretz Yisrael], that you know the Bible as well? Rabbi Abbahu said to them: We, who are situated among you [heretics], we impose upon ourselves this obligation and analyze verses in depth.” (Avoda Zara 4a)

Shemot Rabba 29: “I am the Lord your God” Rabbi Abahu said: A king of flesh and blood may have a father, a brother, or a son to share in or dispute his sovereignty, but the Lord saith, 'I am the Lord thy God! I am the first; that is, I have no father, and I am the last; that is, I have no brother, and besides me there is no God; that is, I have no son'

“When Rabbi Abbahu passed away, the pillars of Caesarea ran with water” (Moed Katan 25b)

### **Ashkelon: Witches and Righteous Gentiles**

“Simeon ben Shetaḥ hanged eighty women in Ascalon, (Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 6:6)

Go and see what one Gentile did for his father in Ashkelon, and the name of the son was Dama ben Netina. Once the Sages wished to purchase precious stones from him for the ephod of the High Priest for six hundred thousand gold dinars' profit, and Rav Kahana taught that it was eight hundred thousand gold dinars' profit. And the key to the chest holding the jewels was placed under his father's head, and he would not disturb him. The next year the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave Dama ben Netina his reward, as a red heifer was born in his herd, and the Jews needed it. When the Sages of Israel came to him he said to them: I know, concerning you, that if I were to ask for all the money in the world you would give it to me. But I ask only that money that I lost due to the honor of Father.” (Kiddushin 31a)