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Übersetzung des Talmud Yerushalmi. Reihe 2: Seder Mo'ed (Festzeit), Band 8: Besa (Ei)

Translated by Andreas Lehnardt

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The present volume is another fine translation of a tractate of the Yerushalmi, the Jerusalem Talmud, into German. The present volume engages with Tractate *Betzah*, “egg,” also referred to as *Yom Tov*, “festival.” The larger units of textual discourse, *sugyot*, of this tractate mainly focus upon the question of the permissibility of preparing food on a festival that has an official festival character as opposed to private festivals. Therefore, the framers of this document included material that seeks to navigate the border line between Sabbath laws and festival laws. Any scholar who knows about the confusion in the order of the Jerusalem Talmud will appreciate the clear order of the translation, which reflects the organizational skills of the editors of the *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi*, the Hebrew/Aramaic text edition of the Jerusalem Talmud. It is a well-known fact that the Gemara of the Jerusalem Talmud, also referred to as the Talmud of the Land of Israel by Sa’adya, often differs from the order in the received Mishnah and the attempts in the different Talmud editions—in manuscript form or in printed form—to correct these problems. As far as the Jerusalem Talmud Tractate *Betzah* is concerned, the talmudic enquiry here is exemplary in detail: arguments move by careful and clearly indicated steps, and the material is presented with painstaking care for thorough explanation. Overall, Tractate

Betzah is an important tractate because of the dearth of food regulations in the Jerusalem Talmud as opposed to the Babylonian Talmud.

Since this publication is part of a series, the complete translation of the Jerusalem Talmud into German, which is presently edited by Martin Hengel, Peter Schäfer, Hans-Jürgen Becker, and Frowald Gil Hüttenmeister, the format of the translation is fixed: a short introduction, rigorously defined terms, a list of parallel passages, an index of scriptural and rabbinic passages (from Mishnah, Tosefta, and the Jerusalem Talmud), rabbis and other authorities, place names. Unclear terms, mainly the Hebrew assimilations of Greek and Latin terms, are traced through the dictionaries, some commentaries, and the ever-growing secondary literature on the rabbinic corpus.

An example of this type of lexical scrutiny applied by the translator is the term *gulgikin* (the reading of MS Leiden) in *Betzah* 5:2, 63a, which, according to D. Sperber ("Clarification of Readings: Levdakos–Charikon; Lektika," *Sinai* 14 [1998]: 165–69 [169]) should be understood as *lektika*, a sedan-chair (based upon the Latin *lectica*). Thus, the translator correctly refers to it as "Sänfte" (158), which makes sense within the context of the passage. One of the controversial terms used in the Jerusalem Talmud—which follows a stylistically "earthy tone" throughout its collection of rabbinic discourses—is *oinogaron* (*Betzah* 2:8); Lehnardt (61d; 98 n. 340) supplies a list of possible meanings of the term, including Rashi's eleventh-century commentary to the Babylonian Talmud, with slightly varying lexical entries from "wine sauce" to "fish broth." We might add the commentary *Qorban ha-'edah* on this passage in the Jerusalem Talmud (Wilna, 1922), which explains *eynagerin* (another vocalization of *oinogaron*) as "beet broth boiled to a pulp." Whatever the elusive meaning of this liquid food (soup, sauce, pulp) may be, the important aspect in the discussion is that "ground pepper" was added to it; the translation has "gefüllt mit," which obviously means "full of" ground pepper (Hebrew: *betokhan*). The members of Rabban Gamliel's house (Gamliel II of Yavneh, late first until early second century, Nasi of the Sanhedrin) ground pepper on a festival day; however, a dinner guest is assured that the pepper was ground on the festival eve.

The problem of defining the permissible type of sweeping on a festival as opposed to the Sabbath (see *b. Shabbat* 95a) is discussed by the Jerusalem Talmud (*Betzah* 61c) as well (German translation, p. 92). Having mentioned three matters regarding which Rabban Gamliel's ruling had been more stringent than those of his colleagues, the Mishnah goes on to list three matters where the reverse is true: Rabban Gamliel's ruling was more lenient than those of his colleagues in matters

pertaining to a festival. The statements in the Gemara of the Jerusalem Talmud may be summarized in the following manner. One may sweep between couches, since Rabban Gamliel permits this. The Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbat* 95a) states that one may not sweep the floor on the Sabbath, in order to avoid trying to even out some depression in the (mud) floor. This would be classified as the forbidden labor of "building," one of the major categories of forbidden work on the Sabbath (the thirty-nine primary labors as defined in *m. Shabbat* 7:2). However, in the Jerusalem Talmud it is not done in Rabban Gamliel's house, although he permitted it. Rambam maintains that sweeping is prohibited even according to R. Shimon, because one may suspect that during the process of sweeping a person might forget himself and revert to his usual work-day, behavior and even out depressions in the floor unintentionally. Tur (ad. loc.) deals with this problem in a highly analytical manner and says that the rabbis did not differentiate between floors but prohibited the act of sweeping.

In another instance in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Betzah* 61c), Rabban Gamliel permitted the placing of incense, which would normally involve "kindling," another of the forbidden categories of work. However, Rabban Gamliel permitted the placing of incense; this permission is mainly based upon the dispensation of food preparation on the festival. There is no difference between the prohibited labors on a festival and the prohibited labors on the Sabbath except in matters pertaining to the preparation of food, that is, *okhel nefesh*, food for the soul. The Jerusalem Talmud shows an engagement with the forbidden labors of the Sabbath; the tractate as a whole is a reference to this, moving from "tanning" to "building," and so on. An interesting passage relating the Gemara to the festival of Pesach (*Betzah* 61c) deals with *gedi mequlas* (German translation, 93 nn. 284 and 263). This type of kid (goat) was prepared in the special manner mandated for the Pesach offering. It was roasted in its entirety, with its entrails wound about the spit above the head, resembling a "helmet." Rambam translates *mequlas* as "ornate." The meaning is the same: a kid roasted in the manner of the Pesach sacrifice as proscribed in the Hebrew Bible (Exod 12:9).

The bibliography in this volume is extremely thorough, reflecting the growing corpus of secondary literature related to the text and its problems. Every single Genizah fragment and the fragments found in book bindings are listed separately. It is slightly annoying to see the same work (for example, E. Baneth, *Mischnajot*) listed more than once just to accommodate another citation of pages. It is commendable that the translation permits the citation of very old scholarly works (from the nineteenth century) and of works in many different languages; it is a deplorable fact that many Judaic scholars nowadays simply ignore the

scholarship available in other languages. To the extensive list compiled by the translator one may add the translation and edition of Julius Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, by a present-day authority on Judaism and medicine, Fred Rosner (New York: Sanhedrin, 1978; Northvale, N.J.: Aronson, 1993). In the discussion of the term *Goten*, "Goths" (*Betzah* 60c; 42 and n. 390) I miss the essay by David Goldenberg, "Scythian-Barbarian: The Permutations of a Classical Topos in Jewish and Christian Texts of Late Antiquity," *JJS* 49 (1998): 87-102 (88–89). The introduction to the translation displays some real "Talmudic nit-picking," when a new method of counting the lines of text and the empty lines in the Krotoshyn edition of the Jerusalem Talmud is explained in detail (xxxiii). However, this might be important, since the 1866 edition of the Jerusalem Talmud from Krotoshyn has served as the base text since the beginning of the translation project. There are almost no typographical errors; the manuscript collection mentioned on page 37 note 338 should be corrected to "Kaufmann."

Generally, there is a real need for translations of rabbinic texts that were not "properly" edited by the rabbis or that became defective due to constraints of time, space, and ideology in respect to the transmission of text. Scholarly translations are a type of text edition because they integrate commentaries into the translation that assist in establishing a true text. Obviously, translations are not in Hebrew but in other languages that function as an instant metalanguage to the Hebrew text. The questions may be posed: Who has the authority to edit rabbinic text: scholars or rabbis? Should editing be based on knowledge or identity? Such questioning may lead to the thorny question: Who owns these texts? Under the best-case scenario, the parallel universes of editing and translating would intersect, but as we all know there are very few connections between a secular/scholarly translation as presented here and the "religiously inspired" text edition. As is the usual manner in the German translations of the Jerusalem Talmud, ellipses are filled in, whereas the traditional student of the Hebrew/Aramaic text of the Talmud easily fills in these blanks in the oral study of the text. The German translation has completed the orders Zeraim and Neziqim, and the remaining tractates of the altogether thirty-nine tractates of the Jerusalem Talmud will be finished in the near future. This translation belongs in the Judaica collection of any serious research library and on the bookshelf of any scholar who wishes to engage with a rabbinic text from the Land of Israel.