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SUMMARIES

REMARKS ON JOSEPHUS FLAVIUS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

by Anat Taran (pp. 141–157)

The question of whether Ḥazal were familiar with the writings of Josephus Flavius and whether they made use of them is central to research on the Second Temple period in general and the war of destruction in particular. A clear answer to this question would establish the validity of Ḥazal literature as an independent source of information with regard to historical issues relating to the Second Temple period.

The present paper treats a number of cases where scholars noted a convergence in the descriptions of the destruction as presented in Ḥazal literature and by Josephus. Two additional cases of similarity both from the Babylonian Talmud, are also suggested; one shows an interesting parallel in both sources in the description of the hunger in beleaguered Jerusalem, the second case reveals a common element in a detailed account of the Roman auxiliary troops.

BETWEEN 1096 AND 1648–1649: A REAPPRAISAL

by Edward Fram (pp. 159–182)

Over thirty-five years ago, Professor Jacob Katz attempted to explain why German Jewry committed mass suicide in 1096 while their spiritual heirs, Polish Jewry, did not follow suit during the Cossack rebellion in 1648–1649. Katz postulated that the religious commandment of sanctifying God's Name had taken on a spiritual meaning over the centuries thus diminishing the actual demand to die for the sake of God's Name in the eyes of seventeenth century Polish Jewry. Katz argued that because of this spiritualization of martyrdom Polish Jewry did not follow in the path of its forefathers when the time came to die for the sake of God's Name.

This article argues that the practical demand to sanctify God's Name remained firm in seventeenth century Poland. The Cossack rebellion, however, was neither an attack on Judaism, nor a broad attempt to convert the Jews, but rather a politically, socially, and economically motivated attack against the Polish nobility, its allies and employees, something

perceived by the Jews of the time. Not the objects of a religiously motivated attack, there were fewer opportunities for Jews to sanctify God's Name in the classic sense of the term in 1648 than in 1096 and much less of an emotional demand to do so. Martyrdom was thus not a widespread phenomenon.

THE ENCOUNTER OF EXILES FROM PALESTINE WITH DAMASCUS JEWRY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by Yaron Harel (pp. 183–207)

Following World War I a dramatic change occurred in the attitude of the Jewish community of Damascus towards Zionism. Indifference to and ignorance of the new settlements in Palestine turned to curiosity and a desire to participate in Zionist activities.

This article treats the encounter of the Jewish community of Damascus with the exiles from Palestine, who arrived in Syria towards the end of the war, and the ramifications of that encounter.

On the eve of the war the situation of the Damascus community was in severe decline. Many young men, lacking economic possibilities emigrated from Syria to the west, thereby weakening the community's leadership. The war intensified the situation.

In October 1917 the first group of exiles from Palestine arrived in Syria, including leaders of the *Yishuv*. They began to work actively in Damascus. The exiles described the situation of the local community most critically, accusing the Jews of hindering them more than helping them. Notwithstanding, the exiles did their best to help the community and to disseminate the Zionist ideal among the Jews of Damascus. Their activities took the form of philanthropic assistance, Zionist education, and reconstruction of the community's institutions.

The Jews of Damascus actually sensed that the 'old order' had collapsed and they needed to find an alternative orientation that would provide them with a clear identity and replace the 'old order'. Because of their proximity to Palestine the Zionist alternative seemed to be the one that could provide the Damascus Jews a special status. Furthermore, the Zionist alternative appeared to be developing successfully.

The upheaval in the community's fate reached its climax in the summer of 1918 with the testimony of the Jewish delegation from Damascus at the King-Crane commission. In spite of many threats from hostile Arab parties, the leaders of the Jewish community of Damascus did not refrain from supporting the Zionist claims for Palestine.

*RESEARCH NOTES*A SERMON BY RABBI ELIAHU THE ELDER
WITHIN A MEDIEVAL *MIDRASH*

by Hanan'el Mack (pp. 209–213)

In his book entitled *The First Sages of France*, Professor Avraham Grossman sheds new light on the figure of Rabbi Eliahu the Elder of Manche, one of the most prominent sages in France in the 11th century, noting Rabbi Eliahu's interest in Midrashic literature.

The conclusion concerning Rabbi Eliahu's *tosafot* (additions) to the Midrashim can be reinforced by a *Midrash* from *Numbers Rabbah*, part I, which probably stemmed from 12th century France. Together with quotes from *Seder Eliahu* is a sermon headed by the phrase "Eliahu says", probably authored by Rabbi Eliahu the Elder and found only in the *Numbers Rabbah* manuscript. The unknown excerpt reinforces Grossman's conclusions concerning Rabbi Eliahu and contemporary sages from France.

A study of Rabbi Eliahu the Elder's personality and works reveals some similarities between him and Rabbi Moses Ha-Darshan of Narbonne and mutual influences.