

## CHAPTER XIX.

### EXILARCHS; THE TALMUD AT THE STAKE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT AT THE PRESENT TIME.

Since the colleges were open in Palestine and Babylon, after the destruction of the Temple, there were two kinds of rulers: the Palestinian were called princes (Nassies), and the Babylonian were called Exilarchs (Rashee Hagula). The former are well known to the students, as every one of them is mentioned in the Talmud, and their biographical sketches are written in many books by modern historians, also in our historical and literary introduction to our new edition.

The Exilarchs, however, who are seldom mentioned in the Talmud, are almost forgotten by the historians. Notwithstanding that the duration of their reign is about 450 years, no arrangement of their names and times is to be found in their history.

It is true that some of their names are mentioned in Seder

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[paragraph continues] Ualam Zuta," "Machzor Witree" and "Yuchssin," but it is so confused that no order can be found out.

We have to be grateful to the learned Abraham Krochmal, who first took up this matter, and wrote an excellent long article of seventy-three pages in his "Scholein zum babylonischen Talmud."

His suggestions, however, though of a great genius, are scholastical and were criticised by many in periodicals and pamphlets. Finally Felix Lazarus, in the "Jahrbücher" of N. Brill, issued a separate pamphlet about this subject, the result of which the reader will find in a list further on.

And as many of the Exilarchs were the heads of the colleges in Sura, Pumbeditha and Nehardea and took a great part in the development of the Talmud, they must not be omitted from the History of the Talmud.

LIST OF EXILARCHS. [1](#)

Nahum Johanan Shepot	140-170
Huna I	170-210
Uqba I	210-240
Huna H., his son	240-260
Nathan I. b'Huna	260-270
Nehemiah I	270-313
Mar Uqba II	313-337
Huna III., his brother	337-350
Aba Mari, his son	350-370
Nathan II	370-400
Chanan, son of Aba Mari.	400-415
Huna IV	415-442
Mar Zutra I., son of Chanan	442-455
Chanan II	455-460

Huna V., son of Zutra	465-475
Huna VI., son of Chanan	484-508
Mar Zutra II. (Achunai)	508-520
Huna Mar Chanan	520-560
Kafnai	560-580
Chanini	580-590
Bostanai	-660

With the conclusion of the first volume of this work at the beginning of the twentieth century, we would invite the reader to take only a glance over the past of the Talmud, in which he will see that in almost every century and place of the different countries in Europe, the Talmud was condemned to the stake. By a glance over the present time, however, he will see that not only was the Talmud not destroyed, but was so saved that not even a single letter of it is missing; and now it is flourishing to such a degree as cannot be found in its past history, as will be seen further on.

The details of all the persecutions of the Talmud were given in the preceding chapters. Here we give a list of the places and dates in which it was at the stake, as well as the names of the persecutors.

#### THE TALMUD AT THE STAKE.

<i>Time.</i>	<i>Place.</i>	<i>Persecutor.</i>
1244	Paris	King Louis IX

1244	Rome	Innocent IV.
1248	Paris	Cardinal Legate Odo
1299	Paris	Philip the Fair
1309	Paris	Philip the Fair
1319	Toulouse	Lous

1322.--Burned in Rome by order of Pope John XXII., and accompanied by robbery and murder of the Jews by the mob.

1553.--Rome: Pope Julius III.--Similar burnings by the same order took place in *Barcelona, Venice, Romagna, Urbino* and *Pesaro*.

Here three wagons full of books were burned; but first they were carried through the streets of the city, while royal officers proclaimed publicly that their condemnation was due to the insults to Christianity which they contained. (See also note, vol. ii. p. 52.)

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1554.--Burned by hundreds and thousands in *Ancona, Ferrara, Mantua, Padua, Candia* and *Ravenna*.

1558.--Rome: Cardinal Ghislieri.

1559.--Rome: Sextus Sinensis.

1557.--Poland: Talmud burned because of the charge made against the Jews that they used the blood of Christian children in their ceremonies. This occurred during the Frankist disturbances.

Such was the past of the Talmud which we hope will never be repeated. Now a glance at the end of the last century and the beginning of this one.

The colleges for the study of the Talmud are increasing almost in every place where Israel dwells, especially in this country where millions are gathered for the funds of the two great colleges, the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, in which the chief study is the Talmud and its post-talmudical literature. The heads of these colleges are of the most learned scholars of their time, who are very careful in selecting the professors and instructors for these institutions of learning. We were honored to be present at some lectures which the late great Talmudist, Professor Mielziner, delivered before the senior class in Cincinnati, from which we derived great pleasure and, we may also say that in some instances they were to a degree instructive to us in our task of translating the Talmud.

What concerns the theological seminary in our own city, in which we were not permitted (see App. No. 20) to hear the lectures on the Talmud, we are also in the full belief that it will do much for the study and development of the Talmud in this and in future generations. We use the statement of the Talmud, "One may be certain that a master will not leave out from his hand a thing imperfect," and as the dean of this faculty is not only a learned man but also an experienced teacher, there is great hope that he will do all in his power to select instructors and perfect lecturers for this institution.

There are also in our city houses of learning (Jeshibath) for the study of the Talmud in the lower East Side, where many young men are studying the Talmud every day.

We are also glad to notice that among Gentiles the study

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of the Talmud is more or less spreading, as we have the experience that a great number of Gentiles and almost all the theological seminaries and public libraries subscribed to the Talmud, and also many queries concerning it frequently came to us from Gentiles. This all shows that the study of the Talmud among Gentiles is not very rare.

The Jewish Encyclopædia (see App. 21) which is in progress now is also a great help to the study and development of the Talmud, as all the treatises of the Talmud are and will be separately named, with many particulars which will cause many readers to study the Talmud itself.

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## Footnotes

[116:1](#) We are unable to give their biographical sketches in a clear way, as in many instances we agree with Krochmal, whose arrangement is much different from Lazarus's list and the discussion would take up too much space, which we cannot spare. We have only to say that many of the Exilarchs were only holding their offices, but were not so learned as to take part in the colleges. They were appointed by inheritance and according to the excellence of their morality. All of them were descendants of David's kingdom, direct from Solomon. The Princes of Palestine, who were also descendants of the same kingdom, were only from their mother's side descended from Shepetiah b' Abital.

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[Next: Appendix A.](#)