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relations with the daughters of men. Others sought to relate the story of Og and the story of his war with Moses as a battle between two completely righteous individuals, with the sole decisive advantage held by Moses in this struggle being his membership in Israel, the people that had been chosen by God as an act of Divine grace, with no rhyme or reason. Moses' victory is therefore the triumph of this conception of chosenness, that assumes that the Divine aid extended to Moses proves that the selection of Israel ensues only from the Divine love of Israel, with no apparent reason or cause.

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The Miracle of the Cruse of Oil The Metamorphosis of a Legend

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A popular view among historians considers the famous Hanukkah story of the cruse of oil, which appears in the Talmud and seemingly also in the Scholium of *Megillat Ta'anit*, as evidence of the determination of the Sages to erase the memory of the Hasmonaens.

A careful examination of the traditions about Hanukkah in the Scholium of *Megillat Ta'anit* demonstrates, however, that the story, as it appears in the Babylonian Talmud, is a secondary form. The two extant versions of the Scholia offer different traditions in explaining the celebration of Hanukkah. Scholium O makes no mention of finding any oil and offers other reasons for the establishment of the festival. Scholium P does present, among other traditions, an early version of the story, which does not mention any miracle with regard to the finding of the oil. This same episode appears later in the Babylonian Talmud after it had evolved and crystallized, and when all other traditions had been rejected. The Babylonian Talmud is, in fact, the only source for the legend of the bit of oil that lasted eight days. The supernatural basis of this story, as well as its introduction as the only explanation for the celebration of Hanukkah, is a Babylonian manipulation, motivated by literary rather than historical purposes.

THE INTENT BEHIND THE STORY OF THE CRUSE OF OIL

The Babylonian Talmud¹ provides an explanation for the festival of Hanukkah based on a citation from *Megillat Ta'anit*:²

¹ B.Šabb. 21a. The version presented below is based on the edition of the Talmud printed in Venice in 1520. A selection of alternative versions is presented from the following manuscripts: Toronto, Friedberg 002-9 (Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts [hereafter: IMHM], F 70583); hereafter: T; Oxford 366 (IMHM, F8347); hereafter: O; London Or. 5558 n.50 (IMHM, F6519-20); hereafter: L; Vatican 127 (IMHM, F8606); hereafter: V; Munich 95; hereafter: M.

² *Megillat Ta'anit* is a short Aramaic document from Second Temple times which lists some thirty-five days during the year on which fasting, and in some cases even delivering eulogies for the dead, is prohibited because of festive events and victories which occurred on these dates. On *Megillat Ta'anit* and its commentary, the Scholium, see Vered Noam, *Megillat Ta'anit: Versions, Interpretation, History* (Heb.) (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2003). See also Noam, "The Scholion to *Megillat Ta'anit*: Towards an Understanding of its Sema'a" (Heb.), *Tarbiz* 62 (1993) 59-99, and the bibliography in the footnotes, 55-56; Noam, "Two Testimo-

מאי תורנה [רת"ר]⁷ ככ"ה יומי⁸ תורני⁹ תמוני; [אונרן]⁷ דלא לעספך בהר"ג [ורלא להתענות בהר"ג].⁹

That is the reason for Hanukkah? [For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev <commence> the days of Hanukkah, which [are] eight, on which one may not eulogize [and may not fast].

The Talmud immediately follows this citation with an explanation involving the famous tale of the miracle of the cruse of oil:

שכשנכנסו יוונים להרכיל תמאז כל השמונים שבהירכל, וכשגברו מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחתם, ברוקין ולא מצאז אלא פך אחד של שמן¹⁰ שזדה מונה כרותמי של כ"ג, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד. נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו ח' ימים. לשהה אחרת קבעתם ועשאתם ימים¹² טובים בהלל והודאה.¹⁴

For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils in the Temple, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil (T: a small cruse) which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient [quantity] only for one day's kindling; yet a miracle was wrought therewith and they kindled [the candelabrum] from it for eight days. The following

nies to the Route of Transmission of *Megillat Ta'anit* and the Source of the Hybrid Version of the Scholion" (Heb.), *Tarbiz* 65 (1996) 389-416. For a general review, cf. Joseph Tabory, *Jewish Festivals in the Time of the Mishnah and Talmud* (Heb.) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew Univ., 1995) 307-22 and the bibliography cited there. The critical edition of the *Megillah* and its Scholium which has served scholarship until now is that of Hans Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle: Eine Untersuchung zur jüdisch-hellenistischen Geschichte," *HUCA* 8-9 (1931-32) 257-351. On the merits and shortcomings of this edition, see Noam, "Scholion," 59-60, and 92, n. 155. The passages cited below from the *Megillah* and its Scholia are based on my new edition, Noam, *Megillat Ta'anit*.

1. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
2. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
3. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
4. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
5. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
6. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
7. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
8. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
9. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
10. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
11. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
12. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
13. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]
14. *Megillat Ta'anit*, corruption. In the manuscripts: דתן, דתניא, דתניא. [ד"ר"]

year they designated and appointed them [the days] a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

Scholars have been puzzled by this explanation which the Sages give for Hanukkah, an explanation not found elsewhere in any of the non-rabbinic sources. According to 1 Maccabees, the festival celebrates the dedication (*hanukkah*, תנוכה, תנוכה) of the Temple and the Temple vessels – the candelabrum (*menorah*), the altar of incense, and the table – and it places particular emphasis on the consecration (also *hanukkah*, תנוכה) of the burnt-offering altar, which was defiled and rebuilt by the Hasmoneans.¹⁵ 2 Maccabees associates Hanukkah with the eight-day Feast of Tabernacles,¹⁶ and it too emphasizes the dedication of the Temple, the consecration of the altar and the renewal of the sacrifices on the altar.¹⁷ Josephus as well relates Hanukkah to the purification of the Temple by Judah Maccabee. He states that the festival is called φῶτα – "Lights" and offers his own reason for this name,¹⁸ an indication that he is unfamiliar with the miraculous kindling of the candelabrum in the Temple. These descriptions in Josephus and 1 and 2 Maccabees present the dedication of the Temple as the result of the military victories described previously,¹⁹ thus indicating that Hanukkah commemorates a military triumph as well as a religious rededication. This aspect of the festival is reflected in the aforementioned legend too, represented by the laconic phrase, "when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them."²⁰ In view of the paucity of information about the Hasmoneans in rabbinic literature in general, the story of the cruse of oil stands out as almost the only description offered by the Sages of the high point in the Hasmonean revolt, an event so momentous that it led to the establishment of a festival that was celebrated for all generations. It is a commonly-held view among historiographers that the story of the cruse of oil, which appears both in the Talmud and in the Scholium of *Megillat Ta'anit*, is but one of many examples of what may conceivably be an intent on the part of the Sages to wipe out all traces of the Hasmoneans.²¹ Accordingly, the Sages replaced the historical

15 1 Macc 4:36-60.
16 2 Macc 1:9, 18: 10:6. The author includes the eighth day as part of Sukkot unlike the later halakhic ruling of the Sages which stressed that it was "a festival unto itself" (*b>Sukkah* 47a, 48a, and parallel sources).
17 2 Macc 10:1-6.
18 *Ant.* 12:325.
19 1 Macc chap. 3, 4; *Ant.* 12:287-315. Note especially Judas' words (1 Macc 4:36, and the parallel in *Ant.* 12:316): "Now our enemies have been defeated. Let us go purify the sanctuary and restore it."
20 This aspect is emphasized in the ritual texts of Hanukkah, such as *Al Hanisim* and *Hanerot Hadales*; see n. 46 below.
21 One of the main twentieth-century proponents of the theory involving the differences and

reality of the Hasmonean revolt with an incidental, marginal anecdote and, in place of the human victory, substituted a miraculous occurrence that makes no mention of the Hasmoneans themselves.²² During the middle of the twentieth century a shift occurred; Jewish scholars, influenced by the Zionist revival, took pains to prove that the Sages had in fact lent their support to, and identified with, the Hasmoneans.²³ As to the story of the cruse of oil, and indeed that this legend had its origin in the Scholium of *Megillat Taʿanit*, from where it was introduced into the Babylonian Talmud, and that its original context in the Scholium of *Megillat Taʿanit*, following the question regarding the eight-day duration of Hanukkah, indicates that the story was essentially intended to explain the length of the festival — eight days — and not the reason that the festival was instituted.

However, the argument over the intent behind the tale of the cruse of oil is fundamentally flawed. Neither school of thought was familiar with the story's original literary-textual foundation. Careful scrutiny of the traditions regarding Hanukkah that appear in the Scholium of *Megillat Taʿanit* raises questions about most of the information that scholarship has relied upon until now. The story, as it appears in the Babylonian Talmud, is apparently a secondary rendering, which is not based on the Scholium of *Megillat Taʿanit*. It is evident from its original form and context that the episode was never intended to

the hostility that existed between the Hasmonean dynasty and the Pharisaic sages is Victor Aptowitzer, *Parteipolitik der Hasmoneerzeit im rabbinischen und pseudographischen Schrifttum* (Vienna: Verlag der Kohn-Foundation, 1927). A description of the history of scholarship in this regard is presented by several scholars who reject this theory. For a review of the main arguments and counterarguments see: "Did the Jewish People and its Sages Cause the Hasmoneans to be Forgotten?" in Gedaliah Alon, ed., *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew Univ., 1977) 1–17. In the view of Yehoshua Efron, researchers over the generations were influenced by the predominating attitudes of their day, which distorted their conclusions. He reviewed the research in this regard in an attempt to determine the different attitudes prevailing at different periods of time: "The Hasmonean Revolt in Modern Historiography," in Yehoshua Efron, *Research on the Hasmonean Period* (Heb.) (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameyuhad, 1980) 15–40. For a new approach to the matter, and a description of the research conducted over the last few decades, see Daniel R. Schwartz, "On the Question of the Opposition of the Pharisees to the Hasmonean Dynasty" in Uriel Rappaport and Yisrael Ronen, eds., *The History of the Hasmonean State against the Background of the Hellenistic Era* (Heb.) (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi and Hainiversitah Hapatachah, 1994) 442–53; Isaiah Gafni, "The Hasmoneans in Rabbinic Literature," in David Amit and Hanan Eshel, eds., *The Hasmonean Era* (Heb.), *Ikan 19* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1996) 261–76.

22 For an analysis of this approach to rabbinic sources dealing with the Hasmoneans, see the bibliography in Efron, "Hasmonean Revolt," n. 84.

23 See Alon, "Did the Jewish People," and Efron, "Hasmonean Revolt," and the bibliography in Schwartz, "Opposition," 442–43, 452–53. For the reasons for the change of direction in the research, see Schwartz.

24 Above, n. 21.

replace historical events with miraculous ones, as claimed by one school of researchers, nor was it originally intended to explain the length of Hanukkah, as claimed by the other school. More importantly, an examination of the story in its original context, alongside the other rabbinic traditions regarding Hanukkah that appear in the Scholium, indicates that it would be a mistake to regard it as the only representation of the attitude of the Sages to Hanukkah and, indirectly, to the Hasmoneans.

TRADITIONS REGARDING HANUKKAH IN THE SCHOLIUM

The Scholium, the Hebrew commentary on *Megillat Taʿanit*,²⁵ explains the nature and times of the events listed in this ancient text. The explanatory materials include historical stories, homilies, and *aggadot* relating to the festivals listed in the Scroll. From my own research on the Scroll and its Scholium,²⁶ it has become abundantly clear to me that the Scholium appearing in printed editions is not a single treatise, but a combination of two separate works, of two different versions of the Scholium. One version, Scholium O, is preserved in the Oxford manuscript in the Bodleian Library. Michael 388 (Neubauer Catalogue no. 867.2); the other version, Scholium P, is preserved in the Parma manuscript, Palatine Library. De Rossi Collection, no. 117.²⁷ The two Scholia differ in content, structure and style. Each of these two original versions contains ancient authentic material alongside later meaningless formulations of no intrinsic worth. Most of the corruptions, discordances and later rewritings that appear in the printed editions of the Scholium come from a secondary, medieval hybridization of the two versions, hereafter referred to as the "hybrid version." The hybrid version is what appears in all of the other manuscripts, and it is this version that also made its way into the printed editions and was the source used by nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century scholars. It also left its misleading imprint on the Lichtenstein edition,²⁸ used by scholars over the last seven decades. The absence in the scholarship of the most basic knowledge about the way the work evolved and how it was transmitted left its mark also on the tale of the cruse of oil. Reconstructing the Scholia's original traditions regarding Hanukkah, and removing from these the impediment of the hybrid version, sheds new light on the evolution of the story of the cruse of oil in particular, on the traditions regarding Hanukkah in rabbinic literature in general, and even on the connection between the Babylonian Talmud and the two versions of the Scholium of *Megillat Taʿanit*.

25 For the literature on the subject, see n. 2 above.

26 Noam, *Megillat Taʿanit*; Noam, "Scholion?"; Noam, "Two Testimonies."

27 For a description of the MSS, their nature and interrelationships, see Noam, "Scholion," 60ff.

28 Above, n. 2.

The chart below presents the two original versions of the Scholium, as well as the later hybrid version, which is based on the Cambridge manuscript, as the later hybrid version, which is based on the Cambridge manuscript, Cambridge University Library, Add. 648/9. The text of *Megillat Ta'anit* that is explained in the Scholium appears in bold letters at the beginning of each of its versions. The story of the cruse of oil, as presented in each of the Scholia, is highlighted with an alternate typeface in the Hebrew text and *italicized* in the English translation. Symbols used in the Hebrew represent the following: ++, word/s within were added between the lines of the manuscript; [[]], a tear in the manuscript, supplemented by the author of this article; °, unclear letter in the manuscript; { }, erased in the manuscript.

	<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version (H)</i>
1	בעשרים והמשה בו	בעשרים המשה ביה	1 בעשרין והמשה ביה
2	הנכה יומין המניא	יומי הנוכה	2 יום הנוכה המניא יומין
3	ולא למספר	ולא למספר	3 ולא למספר
1	מפני ששמואל גויס		1 כשנכנסו גוים קדוהכל
2	את בית המדוש		2 טמא כל השומנים שבוהכל
3	וכשתקפה מלכות		3 וכטבירה יד
4	בית חשמונאי		4 בית חשמונאי
5	בדקוהו ומצאו בו		5 נמצוהו בדקו ולאו מצאו
5	שטין שחור		6 אלא פך אחד
7			7 שריה מונה בוחתמה
8			8 של כהן גדול שלא נשמה
9			9 ולא היה בו {אלא לחדליק}
10			10 + למדליק אלאי
11			11 יום אחד ונעשה בו נס
12	והדליק בו את החרות		12 והדליק ממנו שמה ימים
13	כל אותו ימים		13 לשמה אחרת
14	שהדליקו בהם את החרות		14
15	נשאוים יום טוב		15 קבועים שמה ימים טובים
16			16 ומה ראו לעשות הנוכה
17			17 שמה ימים
18	והלא הנכה שפשה	בימים הראשונים תנסיכית	18 והלא הנכה שפשה

	<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version (H)</i>
19	משה אינה	משה	19 משה במדבר לא עשה
20	אלא שבעה		20 אלא שבעת ימים
21			21 שנאמר ומשמה אתל מנער
22			22 לא מצאו שבעת ימים והוי
23	שני יודי המקריב		23 ואומר יודי המקריב
24	ביים הראשון את קרבנו		24 ביים הראשון את קרבנו וגוי
25	ובשביעי בשבה		25 ובשביעי
26	הקריב אפרים		26 הקריב אפרים
27	והלא הנכה		27 רכן מצונו בתנוכה
28	שעשה שלמה אינה אלא		28 שעשה שלמה שלא עשאה
29	שבעה		29 חנוכה משה וחנוכה
30	שני כי הנכה המוכה		30 שני כי חנוכה המוכה
31	שבעת ימים		31 שבעת ימים
32	והמו שבעת ימים		32 והמו שבעת ימים
33	מה ראו לעשות זך		33 ומה ראו לעשות חנוכה זך
34	שמונה		34 שמונה ימים
35			35 אלא בימי מלכות ייך
36			36 נכנסו בית חשמונאי
37			37 ליהיכל
38			38 ולמה נהגת לדודי[[ת]]
39			39 שעשאוים כצאמם מצדה
40			40 לרוחה ואמרו בה הלל
41			41 והדליקו בה נרות כשהרה
42			42 להדליק את הנרות
43			43 אלא בימי מלכות ייך
44			44 שנכנסו בני חשמונאי
45			45 להיכל שבעה שפורים
46			46 של ברזל
47			47 בידים חסונים בניך

	<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version (H)</i>
48	הווי מעצמקין בהם	ונעשה גם והודיענו ממתנה	והדליקו בהם את הנרות
49	כל שמנה	עד שמתנה ימים	49
50	ומה ראו לגמור בהם	ומצאו מזבח סחור ומקניהו	50 ומה ראו לגמור בהן
51	כל שמנה וכלי שירת	כל שמנה וכלי שירת	51
52	את ההלל	ולכן נהגתו שמונה	52 את ההלל
53	ללמוד שכל תשועה	היתה הזכות המזוב[[ת]]	53 אלא שכל תשועה
54	ותשועה שעשה		54 ותשועה שהקב"ה
55	הקב"ה לישראל		55 עשה להם לישראל
56	הן מקדמיון לפניו		56 היו מקדמיון לפניו
57	בהלל		57 בהלל בשירה
58	ובשבה		58 ובשבה והודוהא
59	וכן הוא אומ' בספר עזרא		59 בענין שני
50	ויענו כל העם בהלל		60 ויענו בהלל
51	ובהודות ליי' כי טוב		61 ובהודות ליי' כי טוב
52	כי לעולם חסדו על ישראל		62 ויגו' 62
53	וכל העם הריעו חרועה		63
54	גדולה בהלל ליי' על הוסד		64
55	בית יי' ואומ' ליי' הישועה		65
56	על עמך ברכוך סלה		66
57	לקב"ה לעשות לנו		67
58	נסים ונפלאות ולנו		68
59	להלל ולברכו		69
60	שנ' על עמך ברכוך סלה		70
71	מצות נר חנוכה נר אחד		71 מצות חנוכה נר
72	לכל בית		72 איש ובריתו
73	והמחודדו נר אחד לכל		73 והמחודדו נר לכל נפש ונפש
74	והמחודדו מן המחודדו וכו'		74 והמחודדו מן המחודדו
75	כדאיאת בבמה מוליקין		75 בית שמאי אומרים

76	יום ראשון מוליק שמנה		76
77	מכאן ואילך נוחת והולך		77
78	וכ"ה אומרים יום ראשון		78
79	מוליק אחד מכאן + ואילך +		79
80	מסיף והולך		80
81	שני ימים היו בעידן		81
82	אחד עשירי כדברי ב"ש		82
83	ואחד עשירי כדברי ב"ה		83
84	זה נותן טעם לדברי		84
85	וזה נותן טעם לדבריו		85
86	זה אומר כפיר הגג		86
87	וזה אומר מעלין בקדש		87
88	ואין מורידין		88
89	מצות הדלקה		89
90	משחשקע החמה		90
91	עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק		91
92	ומצוה להניחה על פתה		92
93	ביתו מבחוק ואם היה		93
94	רד בעליה מניחה בחלון		94
95	הסוכה לרשות הרבי'		95
96	ואם מחירא מן הגוים		96
97	מניחה על פתח ביתו		97
98	מכפנים ובשעת הסוכה		98
99	מניחה על שלהנו ודין		99
1	On the twenty-fifth day of it [Kislev]	On the twenty-fifth day of it [Kislev]	On the twenty-fifth day of it [Kislev]
2	[commence] the eight days of Hanukkah	[commence] the days of Hanukkah	[commence] the day [sic] of Hanukkah, which are eight days
3	and [on which] eulogizing the dead is forbidden	[on which] eulogizing the dead is forbidden	[on which] eulogizing the dead is forbidden

Scolium P

Scolium O

Hybrid Version (H)

1	Because the heathens defiled		When the heathens entered the Temple	1
2	the Temple.		they defiled all the oils in the Temple.	2
3-4	And when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed,		And when the Hasmoneans overpowered	3-4
5	they searched it and found in it		and defiled them, they made search and found	5
6	pure oil		only one cruse	6
7			which lay with the seal	7
8			of the High Priest which was not defiled	8
9			but which contained sufficient	9
10			for kindling only	10
11			for one day and a miracle was wrought therewith	11
12	and they kindled the lights therewith.		and they kindled from it for eight days.	12
13	All of those days		The following year	13
14	on which they kindled the lights			14
15	they appointed a festival.		they designated them [the days] an eight-day festival.	15
16			And why did they determine to celebrate Hanukkah	16
17			for eight days?	17
18	And was not the dedication [חנכה] performed		And was not the dedication [חנכה] performed	18
19, 20	by Moses only seven [days]?		by Moses in the desert only seven days?	19, 20
21, 22			As is stated, "And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting for seven days" etc.	21, 22

Scolium P

Scolium O

Hybrid Version (H)

23, 24	As is stated: "And he that presented his offering the first day"		And it says: "And he that presented his offering the first day" etc.	23, 24
25	And on the seventh day, on the Sabbath,		"This was the dedication of the altar"	25
26	Ephraim presented his offering.		Ephraim presented his offering.	26
27	And was not the dedication		And so have we found that the dedication	27
28	performed by Solomon only		From Solomon onward performed by Solomon was	28
29	seven [days]?		the dedication of Moses [was celebrated] and also his [Solomon's] dedication.	29
30, 31	As is stated: "for [they observed] the dedication of the altar seven days"		As is stated: "for [they observed] the dedication of the altar seven days"	30, 31
32	and the feast seven days."		and the feast seven days."	32
33	Why did they choose to celebrate this one		And why did they choose to celebrate this dedication	33
34	for eight [days]?		And eight [days] when the House of Lebanon was taken(?)	34
35			Because in the days of the Greek kingdom	35
36			The dedication of the Hasmoneans entered	36
37			[was to be celebrated] for [all] generations.	37
38			And why is it celebrated for all generations?	38
39			For they observed them when they emerged from distress	39
40			to relief and they recited on it the Hallel	40

continues

<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version (H)</i>	
41		And they kindled the lights on it in purity.	41
42		For when the Greeks entered the Temple	42
43		they defiled all the vessels	43
44		and there was no oil in what to kindle.	44
45, 46		And when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed they found one cruse	45, 46
47		did they have in their hands, and they (joined [overlaid] them with tin	47
48		and they were occupied with it	48
49		all eight [days].	49
50		And why did they determine to finish/recte on them	50
51		all eight [days] and the service vessels	51
52		the Hallel?	52
53		To teach that for each and every	53
54		salvation that the Almighty	54
55		wrought in Israel	55
56		they greet Him	56
57		with Hallel	57
58		and with praise.	58
59		And thus is it stated in the Book of Ezra:	59

<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version (H)</i>	
60		"And the entire nation sang one to another in praising	60
61		and giving thanks unto the Lord: 'for He is good,	61
62		for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel!	62
63		And all the people shouted	63
64		with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation	64
65		of the house of the Lord was laid." And it states: "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord;	65
66		Thy blessing be upon Thy people. Selah."	66
67		It is for the Almighty to perform for us	67
68		miracles and wonders and it is for us	68
69		to praise and bless Him	69
70		As is stated: "Thy blessing be upon Thy people. Selah."	70
71		The precept of Hanukkah [demands] one light	71
72		for each household	72
73		and the zealous [kindle] a light for each member [of the household]	73
74		and the extremely zealous, etc.,	74

<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version (H)</i>	
75		Bet Shammai maintain:	75
75		On the first day eight [lights] are kindled	76
77		and thereafter they are gradually reduced.	77
78		And Bet Hillel say: On the first day	78
79		one is kindled and thereafter	79
80		they are progressively increased.	80
81		There were two old men in Sidon,	81
82		One observed according to Bet Shammai	82
83		And the other according to Beth Hillel.	83
84		The former gave a reason for his action	84
85		and the latter gave a reason for his action.	85
86		The former stated that it should correspond to the bullocks of the Festival	86
87		and the latter stated, because we promote [in matters of] sanctity	87
88		but do not reduce.	88
89		It is incumbent to kindle it	89
90		from sunset	90
91		until there is no wayfarer in the street.	91

<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version (H)</i>	
92		And it is incumbent to place it by the door	92
93		of one's house on the outside; and if one	93
94		dwells in an upper chamber he places it at the window	94
95		nearest the street.	95
96		And if one is afraid of the Gentiles	96
97		one places it at the door of one's house	97
98		on the inside, and in times of danger	98
99		it is sufficient to place it on the table.	99

Each of the two original versions of the Scholium (P, O) incorporates several traditions regarding Hanukkah, while the hybrid version contains all of them. The following are the topics appearing in each of the versions:

<i>Scholium P</i>	<i>Scholium O</i>	<i>Hybrid Version</i>
<i>The miracle of the cruse of oil</i> (1-15)	A comparison with the dedications of Moses and Solomon (18-34)	<i>The miracle of the cruse of oil</i> (1-15)
A comparison with the dedications of Moses and Solomon (18-34)	<i>The miracle of the cruse of oil</i> (36-49)	A comparison with the dedications of Moses and Solomon (16-34)
<i>The iron spits</i> (43-49)	<i>The repairing of the altar</i> (50-53)	<i>The iron spits</i> (41-48)
<i>Why did they determine to recite the Hallel?</i> (50-70)		<i>Why did they determine to recite the Hallel?</i> (50-63)
<i>The manner of kindling the lights</i> (71-75)		<i>The manner of kindling the lights</i> (71-99)

From this point onward we will discuss each unit separately and then explore the way the different units were combined. In light of this analysis, we will discuss the story of the cruse of oil, its origin, the way it evolved, and its place among the other units in the Scholia.

UNITS OF THE SCHOLIA AND PARALLEL VERSIONS

THE DEDICATIONS OF MOSES AND SOLOMON

The two versions of the Scholium compare the Hasmonean dedication to Moses' dedication of the Tabernacle and Solomon's dedication of the Temple. Scholium P asks about the difference between the Hasmonean dedication, which was celebrated for eight days, and the other two dedications, which lasted seven days: "Why did they determine to celebrate this one for eight [days]?" (lines 33–34). Against the background of all biblical consecrations of the Tabernacle and the Temple, which lasted seven days,²⁹ the duration of eight days of Hanukkah is indeed puzzling. In the books of Maccabees it is never clearly explained. 2 Maccabees (10:6; 1:9, 18) does create a connection between the festival of Tabernacles and Hanukkah, but the author does not state explicitly that the duration of the biblical festival is the reason for the duration of the Hasmonean one. Scholarship has offered different solutions to this riddle,³⁰ but it seems that the historical truth behind the eight days of Hanukkah is still rather vague. Scholium P's answer to this question appears in the next unit, in the story of the iron spits: "Because in the days of Greece the Hasmoneans entered . . . and they were occupied with it all eight [days]" (lines 43–49). In other words, the erecting of a new candelabrum for the Temple out of iron bars — perhaps fashioning it out of their own weapons (see below) — took eight days, and therefore the dedication by the Hasmoneans lasted eight days and not seven.

Appropos the mention of the dedication of the Tabernacle in the desert, Scholium P cites verses from the Bible as evidence that the dedication lasted seven days: "And he that presented his offering on the first day . . . And on the seventh day, on the Sabbath, Ephraim presented his offering" (lines 23–26). These verses deal with the presents brought by the chieftains of the tribes following the dedication of the Tabernacle (Numbers 7:12). It is surprising that the Scholium cites these verses as the source for the seven days of the dedication of the Tabernacle, rather than citing the biblical verses that deal with

the seven days of consecration (דַּוְּאִיָּוְוִו) (see Lev 8:33–35). The presentation of the offerings of the chieftains lasted *twelve days* (see Num 7:10–88), and according to rabbinic tradition, did not coincide at all with the days of consecration. Even more surprising is the mention of the presentation of the offering of Ephraim on the seventh day. Since the chieftains continued the presentations of their offerings on the days after Ephraim's offering, how does the day on which Ephraim presented his offering serve as evidence that the dedication of the Tabernacle lasted seven days? In this regard the hybrid version (lines 21–22) offers an additional verse that does not appear in the other versions of the Scholium: "And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting seven days" (Lev 8:33), which refers to the seven days of consecration. Perhaps the hybrid version is preserving the original source of P, or perhaps this is a later supplement.

Mention of the dedication of the chieftains in Scholium P remains unclear. However, several connections between the offerings of the chieftains and Hanukkah may be found in various sources. The paragraphs narrating the offerings of the chieftains are read from the Torah in the synagogue during Hanukkah, thus giving them an important place in the laws of the festival.³¹ A *midrash* involving the commandment given to Aaron to light the candelabrum in the Tabernacle (Num 8:1–3) associates the Hasmonean Hanukkah with Aaron's sorrow at not presenting any offering of his own at the dedication of the chieftains.³² A different *midrash*, which completely negates the plain meaning of the biblical text, asserts that work on the Tabernacle was completed on Hanukkah.³³ Furthermore, in the same manner that the Scholium mentions the offering of Ephraim on the seventh day apropos the mention of the *seven days* of the dedication of the Tabernacle, there is a *midrash* that connects the presentation of Manasseh's offering on the *eighth* day with the *eight-day* Hasmonean festival of Hanukkah.³⁴ In addition, the wording in the Scholium, "on the seventh day, on the Sabbath, Ephraim presented his offering" alludes to yet another *midrash*, according to which the seventh day of the offering of the

²⁹ *M. Meg.* 3:6

³⁰ For the reference see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1946) 6:79 n. 420.

³¹ *Pesikta Rabboti* 6 (ed. Meir Friedmann [Vienna: self-published, 1886] 24a); *Midrash Tanhuma, Pekudei* 11; *Midrash Tanhuma* (ed. Solomon Buber [Vienna: Romm, 1885]) *Pekudei* 6, p. 130; *Bemidbar Rabbah, Naso* 13, 1 (51a).

³² With regard to the verse, "On the eighth day Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, chieftain of the children of Manasseh," *Midrash Tanhuma* in *Naso*, 29 begins its homily, "Let our master teach us: A Hanukkah light . . ." This passage is also found in *Pesikta Rabboti* and in the *She'itot*, and the surprising *halakhah* that it contains with regard to kindling with a used candle is dealt with at length in the scholarly literature. See Victor Aptowitzer, "Untersuchungen zur Gao-näischen Literatur," *HUCA* 8–9 (1931–32) 383–95.

²⁹ See Lev 8:33–35; 1 Kgs 8:65; 2 Chr 7:9.

³⁰ Tabory, *Jewish Festivals*, 370 n. 9; 375 n. 24 lists a comprehensive bibliography. See his own suggestion (374) with reference to the purification and consecration of the altar and the Temple in the days of Hezekiah, which lasted eight days.

chieftains occurred on the Sabbath, and the offering of Ephraim suspended the Sabbath;³⁵ however, it is unclear how this *midrash* relates to the context under discussion.

As to Scholium O, the text of the Oxford manuscript is very fragmented and corrupt, thus making it difficult to reconstruct the underlying original version. Perhaps Scholium O intended to offer a list of the different Hanukkahs that had been celebrated since the "former days" (see line 18), all of which had been discontinued, with the exception of the Hasmonean Hanukkah: "And in former days the dedication by Moses . . . From Solomon onward the dedication of Moses [was celebrated] and [also] his [Solomon's] dedication . . ." (lines 18–29). These Hanukkahs were discontinued, but "the dedication of the Hasmonians [was to be celebrated] for [all] generations." (lines 36–37). In contrast to Scholium P, Scholium O draws an analogy between the Hasmonean dedication and the dedications of Moses and Solomon to *explain* rather than to *pose a question* about the eight days of the Hasmonean Hanukkah. Following this explanation, Scholium O offers no further explanations for the number "eight" (in contrast to Scholium P), as the analogy is in itself the explanation. It would appear that Scholium O finds an allusion to the eight days in the mention of the number "eight" appearing in the description of Solomon's dedication of the House of Lebanon. The vague, corrupted sentence in Scholium O, "And eight [days] when the House of Lebanon was taken?" (line 34), may be a vestige of an explanation for eight days, since the verses in the Bible relating to Solomon's dedication also mention an "eighth day": "And on the *eighth* day they held a solemn assembly; for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days . . ." (1 Kings 8:66).³⁶ Perhaps it was the intention of Scholium O to find support for eight days in the eight days of Solomon's dedication. Possibly, it was connecting the "eighth day" appearing in the citation to the dedication of the "king's house" referred to in 2 Chronicles (7:11), which may have taken place on the eighth day, and thus the mention of the "House of Lebanon" (i.e., the king's house) in the Scholium.³⁷ But it is also conceivable that the "House of Lebanon" mentioned here is a metaphor for the Temple itself, as is commonly found in the *midrash*.³⁸ 2 Maccabees lends support to

35 *Tanhumta, Naso*, 28; *Bernitzbar Rabbah, Naso* 141 (57b); *b. Mo'ed Qat. 9a* (see the pseudo-Rashi commentary, regarding the words "and an individual offering").

36 According to 2 Chronicles, he sent the people away only on the twenty-third of the month. See *b. Mo'ed Qat. 9a; Beresi Rabbah* 35 (eds. Julius Theodor and Chanoch Albeck [Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1965], 332).

37 If so, perhaps it should be emended to: when the house of Lebanon was *completed* (לְבָנוֹתָּהּ).

38 Perhaps the citation of the verse, "This was the dedication-offering of the altar" in the context

this hypothesis and also offers an important parallel comparison with the dedications of Moses and Solomon. The prophecy, attributed to Jeremiah, addressed to the exiles on their way to Babylon includes the following:

Unknown shall the spot be [the spot where the tent of meeting, the ark and the altar of incense were hidden, upon the exile to Babylon] until the Almighty gathers the people together again, and mercy come; then indeed shall the Lord disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen, even the cloud, as in the days of Moses it was visible, and as when Solomon prayed that the place might be consecrated with solemn splendor. It was also narrated how he in his wisdom, sacrificed at the dedication and completion of the Temple; as Moses prayed to the Lord, and fire descended from heaven . . . so Solomon also prayed and the fire descended and burned up the burnt-offerings . . . and likewise, Solomon too kept the eight days. (2 Macc 2:8–10, 12)

These verses compare the future redemption of the exiles with the dedication of Moses and the dedication of Solomon, while verse 12 notes: "and likewise, Solomon too kept the eight days." It would appear that the words "likewise" and "too" (ωσαυτως, και) allude to a comparison of the eight-day dedication of the Temple by Solomon with the eight-day dedication of the Tabernacle by Moses, according to the author of 2 Maccabees. This passage in 2 Maccabees deals with a fire coming down from heaven both for Solomon and for Moses, and the Pentateuch states that after the seven days of consecration, precisely on the eighth day, there came forth "a fire from before the Lord . . . upon the altar" (Lev 9:1, 24). It would appear, as already noted by scholars, that underlying the great emphasis on eight days in this passage is the eight-day Hasmonean Hanukkah.³⁹

of the dedication by Moses was also intended to offer grounds for the eight days of Hanukkah from the eight days of consecration by Moses. What appears in the extant Scholium O may conceivably be a remnant of an association made in the original Scholium O between the eighth day of consecration and the last day of the presentation of the offerings of the chieftains, which is the day of "the dedication-offering of the altar, on the day when it was anointed." It is this particular portion of the Torah that is customarily read on the eighth day of Hanukkah. The sages, however, tended to identify the eighth day of consecration specifically with the first day of the chieftains' offerings.

39 See for example the editions of Abraham Kahana, *Haseferim Hahisortiyim* (Heb.) (vol. 2: Tel-Aviv: Hotsa'at Me'orat, 1937) 2:1:182–83; Solomon Zeitlin and Sidney Tedesche, *The Second Book of Maccabees* (New York: Harper, 1954) 112–13; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *2 Maccabees*, AB 41A (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday/Anchor, 1984) 186. With regard to the problems involved in these verses in general, see Goldstein, 184–86.

We have not found any attempt in rabbinic literature to demonstrate that Solomon's dedication of the Temple was an eight-day celebration, nor have we found any comparisons of the lengths of the dedications (תנוכת) in general.⁴⁰ However, another interesting association between Hanukkah and Solomon is found in *Beresit Rabbah*:⁴¹

א"ר לר' . . . וארתן שבעת יצלים] של תנוכת שלמה[דרין ישראל ארכין ושותין רשמתים ומדלקים נרות (!).

R. Levi said . . . and during those seven days [of the dedication of Solomon] the Israelites ate and drank and were joyous and kindled lights (!).

In summary, Scholium O and Scholium P are unclear, fragmented and corrupt. In spite of this, they appear to be preserving an ancient *midrash*, also preserved in 2 Maccabees, which essentially compares the Hasmonean dedication to the dedications of the Tabernacle and the Temple. The tradition in Scholium O, which appears to find support for the eight days of the Hasmonean dedication in an eight-day dedication by Solomon, is closer to the tradition in 2 Maccabees than is Scholium P, which contrasts the seven days of Solomon and the eight days of the Hasmonean dedication. Scholium O is thus closer to an even earlier tradition known to Jason of Cyrene, the author of the earlier, more extensive work on which 2 Maccabees was based. This tradition has no explicit parallel version in the rabbinic literature, yet one trace of it nevertheless remained in *Beresit Rabbah*.

THE IRON SPITS

According to Scholium P (lines 43–49), the Hasmoneans erected a new candelabrum in the Temple by improvising one out of seven iron spits.⁴² This activity lasted eight days, and consequently Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days. The episode of the spits appears to be missing from Scholium O (however, see below). The episode of the spits is mentioned in a *baraita* in the Babylonian Talmud:⁴³

⁴⁰ *Pesikta Rabbati* 2 (ed. Friedmann, 7a) lists “seven dedications.” But the dedication of Solomon is not listed there at all, nor are the eight days of the Hasmonean Hanukkah or any other Hanukkah mentioned in that context.

⁴¹ *Beresit Rabbah* 35:3 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 332).

⁴² With regard to the commonly accepted explanation as to the nature of these spits, as well as his own ideas on the subject, see Daniel Sperber, “The Spits of the Maccabees: What Were They?” (Heb.), *Sinai* 53 (1963) 280–82.

⁴³ *B. Roš Haš. 24a; b. Abod. Zar. 43a; b. Menah. 28b*. Cf. *Pesikta Rabbati* 2 (ed. Friedmann, 5a).

כדתגיא, לא יעשה אדם בית תבנית היכל, אכסדרה תבנית אולם . . . מנורה כנורה מנורה, אבל יעשה של המשה ושל ישעיה ושל שמותו [קנין] ושל שבעה לא יעשה אפי' של שאר מיני מתכות [לפי שכיוצא בהן כשירדה לפנים (רש"י)]. רבי יוסי בר יהודה אומר אף על עץ לא יעשה כדרך שיעשו מלכי בית השמונאי. אמרו לו משם ראתה שפודין של ברזל היו וחיתום כבעין. העשירו עשאים של כסף, חזרו העשירו עשאים של זהב.

As it has been taught: A man may not make a house in the form of the Temple, or a porch in the form of the Temple court, . . . or a candelabrum after the design of its candelabrum. He may, however, make one with five or six or eight [branches], but with seven he may not make it, even though it be of other metals [since a candelabrum of other metal besides gold would have been permissible in the Temple – Rashi]. R. Jose b. Judah says: Also of wood he may not make it, because thus did the Hasmoneans make it. [The Rabbis] said to him: Is any proof to be deduced from that? The spits were of iron and they overlaid them with tin. When they grew rich, they made them of silver. When they grew richer still, they made them of gold.

The *baraita* does not contain the complete version of the event (“Because in the days of Greece the Hasmoneans entered . . .”) but only makes an allusion to it. On the other hand, the continuation “When they grew rich they made them of silver . . .” is not mentioned in the Scholium. The passage in the Scholium does not appear to be based on the tradition in the *baraita*, but quite the opposite: the *tannaim* engaging in the dispute in the *baraita* are referring to an ancient tradition which reported the story in its entirety, a story similar to that which appears in the Scholium.⁴⁴ The wording in Scholium P, and they joined [והוררום] them with tin” is probably a graphic corruption of the original word (overlaid, חתום) found in parallel versions. The sentence, “and they were

⁴⁴ However the *midrash* in *Pesikta Rabbati* 2: “And why do we kindle lights on Hanukkah . . . entered the Temple and found therein eight iron spits” is suspected of being a later version, which may already be based on the language in the Babylonian Talmud. The expression “and found therein” may have been taken from the incident of the cruse of oil which they found in the Temple; it does not fit in with the event under discussion. (According to the Scholium, the spits were brought into the Temple from outside.) The wording “eight spits” does not make sense and is undoubtedly a corruption by printers. This is borne out by the *baraita* presented above, which proves that a candelabrum with eight branches may not be used in the Temple. Cf. Friedmann, *Pesikta Rabbati*, 5a n.5. His hypothesis is verified by the manuscripts of *Pesikta Rabbati*. These facts were brought to my attention by Dr. Benjamin Elizur (and not as according to Alon, “Did the Jewish People,” 14).

occupied with it all eight [days],” which concludes the episode in Scholium 2; is rather surprising. It should not take eight days to make branches for a candelabrum out of iron spits for kindling the lights! In fact, this sentence does not appear in the parallel versions (neither in *Pesikta Rabbati*,⁴⁵ nor in the reconstructed parallel version of Scholium O, see below). An examination of the introductory sentence to this section in Scholium P, which repeats of the introductory sentence to this section in Scholium Q, which repeats of the historical context of the story from its very beginning (“Because in the days of Greece the Hasmoneans entered the Temple Mount . . .”), indicates that this passage was originally a separate unit, unrelated to what preceded it in the Scholium, and was not originally intended to explain why Hanukkah is celebrated specifically for eight days. The redactor of Scholium P apparently incorporated a short, ancient passage regarding the iron spits into his work as an answer to the question appearing at the end of his preceding unit: “Why did they determine to celebrate this one for eight [days]?” and therefore appended to the end of the story of the spits that the Hasmoneans were “occupied” with it for eight days.

BUILDING THE ALTAR

וּנְצִיאַו מִזְבֵּחַ סִטְרוֹ וְתִקְּוּרוֹ
repaired it

וְכָל שְׁמֹנֶה יָמִים וְכָל שְׁמֹנֶה וָכֵל שֵׁרֵט

וְלִכְךָ נִרְחַגְתָּ שְׁמֹנֶה

וְהָיָה שָׁם הַדְּדִיקָה [תְּנִיחָה] אֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.

This tradition is found only in Scholium O (lines 50–54), and it has no parallel version, either in Scholium P or anywhere else throughout rabbinic literature! It should be emphasized that in the few places where we did find explicit reference by the Sages to the reason for establishing the festival of Hanukkah⁴⁶ there is no mention of the dedication of the altar as an explanation for Hanuk-

⁴⁵ See the two preceding notes.

⁴⁶ Such as the episode of the iron spits in *Pesikta Rabbati* (above, n. 44), the miracle of the cruse of oil in *b. Šabb.* 21b, the victory and the purifying of the Temple in the later version of the prayer “We thank Thee for the miracles” (*Al Hanissim*), and the “miracles” and “salvations” mentioned in general in the prayer, “We kindle these lights” (*Hanerot Halalu*). Cf. also the version appearing in *Masekhet Sofetim* 20:4, ed. Michael Higger (New York: Debe Rabanan, 1937) 343–44; *Hanerot ha’Eilu* and in the ancient Erez Israel version of *Al Hanissim* (which begins *akenisei pela’ot; Masekhet Sofetim* 20:6, 346).

kah. This tradition is closer to that of 1 Maccabees (4:42–59) which specifically regards the dedication of the altar and not the kindling of the candelabrum as the reason for Hanukkah.⁴⁷ Apparently, the dedication of the altar was the focal point of the dedication of the Temple, and therefore in 1 Maccabees⁴⁸ the festival is called “the dedication of the altar [תְּנִיחַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ]” and for all generations — “Hanukkah.” The altar was also a focal point in the dedication of the Tabernacle, in the dedication by Solomon, and in the dedication of the Second Temple.⁴⁹ The extant Scholium O is unclear and corrupt (“And they found a demolished altar and they repaired it all eight [days] and the service vessels”⁵⁰), but an important medieval work which cites Scholium O may help reconstruct it. R. Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, the author of *Or Zarua*,⁵¹ in regard to the laws of Hanukkah, offers an explanation for the eight-day miracle of the cruse of oil in the name of his rabbi, R. Judah b. Isaac, better known as R. Judah Sir Leon.⁵² His explanation is based on *Megillat Ta’anit*:

מֵאַיִן תְּנִיחַת הַתְּנִיחָה בַּעֲשָׂרִים וְחֲמֵשֶׁה בַּסֶּלָו [. . .] וְנִעְשָׂה בָּרַ נֹס וְהוֹדִיאוֹן מִמֶּנּוּ, שְׁמֹנֶה יָמִים לְשֵׁנָה אַחֲרַי קָבָעוּם יָמִים טוֹבִים בְּהֵלֵל וּבְהוֹדִיאָהּ [. . .] וְהָאֵל וְנִעְשָׂה נֹס שְׁהָיָה רוֹלֵק שְׁמֹנֶה יָמִים פֶּיִי מִוֶּרֶד רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בְּרִי יִצְחָק מִשּׁוֹם שְׁחָזֵי טְרוּרֵיָם כֹּל יוֹ יָמִים בְּנוֹנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּבְכֵלֵי שֵׁרֵט, דְּאִמְרוּ בְּמִגִּילַת תַּעֲנִיתִי: וְלִדְרוֹרוֹת הַתְּנִיחָה בֵּית חֲשֵׁמוֹנָאִי וְלִמָּה הָיָה נִוְחָה לְדוֹרוֹתָא, אֲלָא שְׁעִשְׂאוֹתָא בְּצַעַר וְאִמְרוּ בִּן הַלֵּל וְהוֹדִיאָהּ, וְהוֹדִיאָהּ בִּן נִוְחָה בְּסִתְרוֹתָא. לִפִּי שְׁנוֹנְסוֹר יָוִים בְּהֵלֵל וְטִמְאוֹ כֹּל הַכְּלִיָּם, וְלֹא הָיָה לָהֶם לְהוֹדִיק שְׁמֹנֶה יָמִים, וְכִשְׁבֵּר יָד בֵּית חֲשֵׁמוֹנָאִי הֵבִיאוּ שְׁבַע שִׁפְפוּרֵי בְּרוֹל וְחִיפוּם בְּכַעַץ וְהִתְחִילוּ לְהוֹדִיק. וְלִמָּה הָיָה נִוְחָה לְהוֹדִיק שְׁמֹנֶה יָמִים, אֲלָא שְׁחָזֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּבְמִאוֹתָא, וְכָל שְׁבַע הַיָּמִים הָיוּ מִתְקַיָּם בְּכֵלֵי שֵׁרֵט, וְכִי הָיוּ מִתְקַיָּם שְׁמֹנֶה יָמִים, אֲלָא שְׁחָזֵי טְרוּרֵיָם לְהִכִּין וְלִטְוֹה כֹּלֵי שֵׁרֵט וְלַעֲשׂוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, וְלֹא יָכֹל לִיקַח שְׁמֹנֶה יָמִים. וְלִפְיָךְ נִקְרָא תְּנִיחָה עַל שֵׁם תְּנִיחַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ שְׁנוֹסְתָּר וּבְנִאוֹתָא.

⁴⁷ It also mentions the candelabrum, the altar of incense and the table. However, the main emphasis is on the building and dedication of the altar. The contradiction between the two traditions about the candelabrum and the altar has already been considered by R. Judah Sir Leon; see below.

⁴⁸ 1 Macc 4:56, 58.

⁴⁹ See Lev 9:24; Num 7:10 ff., 84 ff.; 1 Kgs 8:22, 62–64, 2 Chr 7:1–5; Ezra 3:2.

⁵⁰ R. Isaac lived in Germany and France during the second half of the thirteenth century. See Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Tosafists: Their History, Works, Methods* (Heb.) (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew Univ., 1980) 1:436–47; *Or Zarua* (2 vols.; Zhitomir: Shapira, 1865) 2:321.

⁵¹ R. Judah lived in Paris during the beginning of the thirteenth century. For more about him, see Urbach, *Tosafists*, 320–53, and more recently Israel M. Ta-Sima, *Exgetical Literature on the Talmud in Europe and North Africa* (Heb.) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew Univ., 2000) part 2, 107–8.

⁵²What is the reason for Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [...] and a miracle was wrought therewith and they kindled [the candelabrum] from it for eight days. The following year they appointed them [the days] an eight-day festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.” My teacher, R. Yehudah ben R. Yizhak, explained that the miracle of the oil remaining kindled for eight days was because they were occupied all seven days with the building of the altar and with the service vessels, as is stated in *Megilat Ta’anit*: “The dedication of the Hasmonean [is to be celebrated] for [all] generations. And why is it celebrated for all generations? Because they performed it in sorrow and recited on it the Hallel and thanksgiving, and they kindled the lights on it in purity. Because the Greeks entered the Temple and defiled all the vessels, and they had nothing with which to kindle the oil. And when the Hasmonean dynasty had the upper hand, they brought seven iron spits and covered them with tin and began to kindle. And why are the lights kindled for eight [days]? Because they demolished the altar and rebuilt it, and all seven days they were repairing the service vessels.” That means, they could immediately have prepared other oil, but they were occupied preparing and purifying the service vessels and building the altar, and they could not buy other oil. And thus a miracle occurred with the cruse of oil and it lasted for eight days. Therefore, it is called Hanukkah [dedication], because of the dedication of the altar that was demolished and which they rebuilt.

2. Judah Sir Leon is trying to harmonize the reason given in the Talmud for the eight days – the miracle of the cruse of oil – with the reason given in *Megilat Ta’anit* (both the Megillah and the Scholium are referred to as *Megilat Ta’anit* in medieval citations) – “And why are the lights kindled for eight [days]? Because they demolished the altar and rebuilt it, and all seven (!) days they were repairing the service vessels.” He suggests viewing the miracle of the cruse of oil as the direct reason for the eight days of Hanukkah, and the time it took to rebuild the altar as the indirect reason: the length of the miracle of the cruse of oil was the outcome of being occupied with repairing the altar. R. Judah’s effort at harmonization indicates that he was well aware of the contradictions involved in the different Hanukkah traditions, and even of those involved in the very name of the festival – *Hanukkah* (“Therefore, it is called Hanukkah, because of the dedication of the altar”), as opposed to the explanations involving the kindling of the candelabrum. The citation quoted by R. Judah Sir Leon may be able to correct several of the corruptions appearing in the Oxford manuscript with regard to the repairing of the altar:

Scholium O – MS Oxford

Scholium O – Or-Zaru’a

אלא שסחרו המזבח ובנאוהו	ומצאו מזבח סחור וחקקוהו
וכל שעת הימים היי מתקנים בכלי שרת	כל שמנה וכלי שרת
Because they demolished the altar	And they found a demolished
and rebuilt it.	altar and they repaired it
and all seven days they were repairing	all eight [days] and the
the service vessels.	service vessels.

From the wording of Sir Leon’s reason, “because they were occupied all seven days,” as well as from the citation, it appears that the Scholium that he was quoting read “seven days” and not “eight.”⁵² Perhaps what the Scholium was saying was that the altar was demolished and rebuilt in one day, but it took seven days to purify all of the service vessels, as they had been defiled and, according to halakhic requirements, had to be sprinkled with sin-offering water on the third and seventh days. The version appearing in the Oxford manuscript was apparently corrected at a later date from “seven” to “eight,” and the copyist transferred the purification activities from the “service vessels” to the “altar.” As to Sir Leon’s version: “they demolished the altar and rebuilt it,” instead of “and they found a demolished altar and they repaired it,” this is an original version, which is verified by ¹ Maccabees and rabbinic literature:

And they took counsel concerning the altar of burnt offerings, which had been profaned . . . so they pulled down the altar . . . and built a new altar after the fashion of the former [one]. (1 Macc 4:44–47)⁵³

ונגזו בני חשמונאי את אבני המזבח ששיקצוהו מלכלי ייין (מדרות א 1) . . .

. . . wherein the Hasmonaeans had hidden away the stones of the altar which the kings of Greece had defiled. (*m. Mid* 1.6)⁵⁴

⁵² For this suggestion I am indebted to Professor Menachem Kister.

⁵³ See also *Avt.* 12:318.

⁵⁴ Cf. *b. Yoma* 16a; *b. Abod. Zar.* 52b; *Midrash Hagadol Exodus* 20:21 (ed. M. Margalio) [Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1956] 443); David Hoffmann, *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai on Exodus* (Frankfurt: J. Kaufmann, 1905) 115, identified the passage in *Midrash Hagadol* as a citation/remainder of the *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai* and included it in his edition, but the passage does not appear in the J. N. Epstein - E. Z. Melamed edition (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1955).

the same tannaitic law. The *baraita* appearing in the Scholium was cut short in the extant manuscript or in one of its precursors by a copyist who simply refers the reader to the Talmud: "... etc. As is cited in [b. *Šabbat*] *Bameh Mad-ikhi*' (With what may we kindle [the Sabbath lights?])." Therefore, it is impossible to know whether Scholium P contained additional units and how much of the *baraita* itself was actually quoted.

THE CRUSE OF OIL IN THE SCHOLIA TRADITIONS

Scholium P begins its explanation about Hanukkah with the story of the cruse of oil. This is also the explanation given in the Talmud, in the discussion, "What is the reason for Hanukkah?" (תורה) (באי) quoted in the introduction to this article. However, there are distinct differences between the version appearing in Scholium P and the version appearing in the Talmud:

b. *Šabbat* 21b⁶⁴

Scholium P

שכונכנסו יוניים לזיכרל טמאן	מפני שטמאן גויים
כל השמונים שבזיכרל	את בית המקדש
וכשגברו	וכשתקפה
מלכות בית חשמונאי	מלכות בית חשמונאי
ונצחו	
בדקו ולא מצאו אלא	בדקוהו ומצאו בו
פך אחד של שמן	שמן טהור
שהיה מונח בהתמו של כ"ג	
ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד	
נעשה בו נס	
והדליקו ממנו ח' ימים	והדליקו בו את הנרות
	כל אותו ימים
לשנה אחרת קבעום יעשאו	שהדליקו בהם את הנרות
ימים טובים	יעשאו
בהלל והודאה	יום טוב

For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils in the Temple, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them,

Because the heathens defiled the Temple, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed,

⁶⁴ The text is based on the Venice edition (1520).

b. *Šabbat* 21b

Scholium P

they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient quantity for only one day's kindling. Yet a miracle was wrought therewith and they kindled [the candelabrum] from it for eight days.	they searched it and found in it pure oil
The following year they designated and appointed them [the days] a festival	And they kindled the lights therewith. All of those days on which they kindled the lights they appointed a festival.
with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.	

Scholium P does not refer explicitly to defiled oil, nor specifically to the finding of a sealed cruse of oil, but refers simply to "pure oil." Furthermore, the main thrust of the Babylonian version of the episode – the miracle of the small quantity of oil that "contained sufficient quantity for only one day's kindling, yet a miracle was wrought therewith and they kindled [the candelabrum] from it for eight days" is omitted from the episode appearing in Scholium P. Instead, there is a rather vague reason for the eight days of the festival: "All of those days on which they kindled the lights they appointed a festival." The unconvincing nature of this seemingly appended explanation for the eight-day period is further evidenced by Scholium P's need for an alternative explanation, according to which, "they were occupied with" erecting a candelabrum from "iron spits" (above) also "all eight [days]." By contrast, Scholium O ascribes an eight-day period of activity specifically to the rebuilding of the altar (see above). In the other units of Scholia O and P, the number eight appears to be an artificial addition that was offhandedly appended to the various purification activities in the Temple. The same seems to be true regarding the cruse of oil. The eight days of kindling described in Scholium P are clearly not an integral part of the story of the kindling of the candelabrum. The version of the episode without the explanation of the eight days, as it appears in Scholium P, is an original version whose subject is the renewal of the Temple service, including the kindling of the candelabrum by the Hasmoneans, with no mention of a *miracle or an eight-day motif*. A parallel event involving a "finding" that facilitated the renewal of the Temple service during "the days of the Greek kingdom" is found in the Jerusalem Talmud:

בימי מלכות יחזקאל מושלשלין להם שתי קרפות של דוב וחזיז מעלין שתי כבשים פעם אחת שישלילי להם שתי קרפות של דוב והעלין לידן שתי גדיים באותה השעה ואז הקריח את עיניהם ונצטאר שני שלמים בלשכת השלמים. (ירושלמי תענית ד' ג' דף סח עמוד ג')

During the days of the Greek kingdom, they would send down to them two cages with gold and they would send up two sheep. Once they sent down two cages with gold and they sent up to them two kids. At that moment the Almighty enlightened them and they found two lambs in the chamber of lambs. (y. Ta'am. 4:6, 68c)

Just as in the above example they "found . . . lambs" and presented the daily offering in spite of scheming by the Greeks, here too they "found in it pure oil" with which to kindle the candelabrum. In Scholium P however, the author "appends" the eight-day motif to the end of the story: "They searched it and found in it pure oil" (and note: it does not mention that "it contained sufficient quantity for only one day's kindling").⁶⁵ All of those days on which they kindled the lights they appointed a festival." This superficial explanation for the eight days is similar to the other explanations appearing in O and P: "And they were occupied with it [the spits] all eight [days]"; "And they found a demolished altar and they repaired it all eight [days]"; "The author found it necessary to resort to farfetched explanations of the eight days. Apparently he was unaware of the elegant explanation of a bit of oil that miraculously lasted for eight days in the parallel passage in the Babylonian Talmud. This would indicate that the version of the episode appearing in the Scholium predates the Babylonian version. Apparently, the redactor was as yet unfamiliar with the more advanced and developed Babylonian version. It was the Babylonian Talmud that transformed the superficial connection between the kindling and the eight days into the story of a "cruse of oil . . . a miracle was wrought therewith."⁶⁶ This adaptation of the episode was apparently intended to replace the original flimsy explanation for the eight days with a new explanation that would be both satisfactory and appealing. The possible background of the story may be identified in the biblical miracle of the bit of oil that miraculously turned plentiful (2 Kings 4:1–7). The motif of a miraculous reaction from Heaven to a human activity at the beginning of the Tabernacle/Temple service is also an ancient

⁶⁵ There are those who also place the episode of the cruse of oil in its more developed form at a later date, but for different reasons, involving the development of *halakhot*, see Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle," 275–76.

⁶⁶ See Lev 9:24; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; 2 Chr 7:1; 2 Macc 1:22.

motif.⁶⁶ From a comparison of the versions of the Scholium and the Babylonian text, it would appear that the anonymous editor was blessed with a literary bent of mind, unencumbered by any political agenda.

This state of affairs demands a renewed inspection of the well-known talmudic tale of the cruse of oil. Essentially, the episode is *not a story of a miracle* but rather the story of the *renewal of the Temple service*. The motif of eight days was a later addition to the story, just as it was a later addition to the other activities involved in the renewal of the Temple service — the erecting of the candelabrum and the rebuilding of the altar. In Scholium P this connection is still hesitant and flimsy, while the explanation presented in the Talmud is already well developed and polished, inventing a new motif of a bit of oil that miraculously lasted for eight days.

Thus far we have been dealing with Scholium P. Scholium O, however, does appear to recount the story of the miracle:

שכשנכנסו יונים להריב, טמאו כל הכלים ולא היה שמן להדליק וכשנברר מלכות בית חשמונאי נצטאר פך אחד כוהתמי של כול גזל ונעשה גם והדליקו מנורה עד שמנורה ימים.

For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the vessels, and there was no oil in what to kindle, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed, they found one cruse with the seal of the High Priest, and a miracle was wrought and they kindled [the lights] from it up to eight days.

This is the complete account of the "miracle of the cruse of oil." The wording of the incident, however, was corrupted: It is not "oil's" (שמן) that were defiled, as in the talmudic story of the cruse of oil, but instead, "all the vessels." Generally, the meaning of the word "vessels" (כלים) in the context of the Temple service refers to the Temple service vessels and not containers for storage of oil. The next sentence is syntactically incorrect. It states, "There was no oil in what to kindle" (לא היה שמן להדליק) instead of "There was no oil with which to kindle" (לא היה שמן להדליק בו). The citation about Hanukkah taken from Scholium O⁶⁷ by the author of *Or Zarua* in the name of his rabbi, which was referred to earlier, differs from the extant Scholium O (below), particularly with regard to those sentences which appear to relate to the miracle of the cruse of oil:

⁶⁷ The quoted text that appears before and after the unit under discussion clearly indicates that the citation is from Scholium O. Compare the complete passage in *Or Zarua*, as presented above, with the version appearing in Scholium O in the chart at the beginning of this article.

Scholium O – MS Oxford

Scholium O – Or Zarva'a

שכשכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאז כל הכלים	ולא היה בטהר במה להדליק	ולא היה להם במה להדליק שמתן	וכשכנסו יוונים בהיכל וטמאז כל הכלים	ולא היה להם במה להדליק שמתן
וכשגברו מלכות בית חשמונאי	מציאו פך אחד בהותמו של כותן גוריל	ותשטה נס והדליקו ממנה עד שמתו ימים.	וכשגברו יד בית חשמונאי	תראו שבעה שפודי ברקו ותפוס בבתני
				ותחוררו להדליק.

For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the vessels

Because the Greeks entered the Temple and defiled all the vessels

and there was no oil in what to kindle

and they had nothing in which to kindle the oil.

And when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed,

And when the Hasmonean dynasty gained the upper hand

they found one cruse with the seal of the High Priest

they brought seven iron spits and covered them with tin

And a miracle was wrought and they kindled [the lights] from it for up to eight days

and began to kindle.

The version of *Megillat Ta'anit* (i.e., Scholium O of *Megillat Ta'anit*) that was quoted by R. Isaac of Vienna in *Or Zarva'a* and his rabbi, R. Judah Sir Leon, contained the incident of the iron spits, and *not the story of the cruse of oil!* *Or Zarva'a* cites the miracle of the cruse of oil *from the Talmud*. R. Judah Sir Leon's previously-mentioned attempt to reconcile the contradicting traditions of the dedication of the altar in *Megillat Ta'anit* and the miracle of the cruse of oil in the Talmud, indicates that the story of oil did not appear at all in his *Megillah*, but only in the Talmud. His Scholium O contained only the incident of the spits. Today's extant Oxford manuscript is clearly not an original version. It does not refer to "oils" (שפודים) that were defiled, as in the story of the miracle of the cruse of oil, but "all the vessels" (כל הכלים), including the candelabrum. The syntactically incorrect sentence "there was no oil in what to kindle" (לא היה שפודי ברקו להדליק) is an intentional distortion of the original sentence: "and they had nothing in which to kindle the oil" (לא היה להם במה להדליק שמתן). It was not oil that was missing, but rather a *candelabrum*. The

event that fits in here is the story of the spits and not the story of the oil. It would appear that the story of the spits in Scholium O was intentionally and clumsily replaced by the story of the cruse of oil taken from the Babylonian Talmud, and this occurred only after the time of R. Isaac of Vienna, the author of *Or Zarva'a*.

The hybrid version of the Scholium closely follows the structure of Scholium P with regard to Hanukkah. Incorporated in between the units of Scholium P is an episode from Scholium O (the repairing of the altar). This, typically, is one of the methods used by the redactor for combining the two versions.⁶⁸ In the case of the miracle of the cruse of oil, the hybrid version replaces the version found in Scholium P with the Babylonian version. This too does not in any way constitute a departure from normal practice. The redactor of this compilation repeatedly incorporated units from the Babylonian Talmud and even replaced original passages of the Scholium with parallel passages from the Talmud.⁶⁹ The end of the Scholium also contains several units which were taken from the Babylonian Talmud.⁷⁰ However, in the case of the cruse of oil, the dependence of the author of the hybrid version on the Babylonian Talmud led to an erroneous belief that was widely held and firmly entrenched among scholars, i.e., that the miracle of the cruse of oil is presented in both the Babylonian Talmud and *Megillat Ta'anit*. In fact, it appears only in the Talmud, from which it was later copied into the hybrid version of the Scholium.

An indirect outcome of comparing the traditions regarding Hanukkah in the Babylonian Talmud and in the Scholia is that we obtain an indication of the value and origins of Scholium O and Scholium P. These two extant scholia, although fragmented and corrupt, preserve authentic and important traditions. The tradition in Scholium O involving the building of the altar and the

68 See Noam, "Scholion," 74–84.

69 See Noam, "Scholion," 84 and n. 115.

70 "The precept of Hanukkah demands one light for a man and his household"; "There were two old men in Sidon"; "Its observance is from sunset" In the last unit, the redactor apparently decided to incorporate his own *halakha*. Before presenting the passage from the Babylonian Talmud, "But in times of danger it is sufficient to place it on the table," he adds, "But if one is afraid of Gentiles, one places it at the door of one's house on the inside." This type of law appears in the medieval halakic responsa of Germany. The author of the *Haggahot Maimoniyot* on Maimonides' laws of Hanukkah in the *Mishneh Torah* 4:9 states in the name of Rabbenu Simhah: "That we who kindle inside . . . all of the laws regarding where to kindle apply as for outdoors . . ."; and compare to the words of Maimonides himself, *Hilkhot Hanukkah*, 4:8: "In times of danger a person may place the Hanukkah light inside his house from within and it is even (!) sufficient to place it on the table." And in *Shitbolei Halevet* 185, the laws of Hanukkah 72a: "R. Ephraim of blessed memory used to say, Now in these times when we do not kindle outdoors, it is best to place it on the right side from within, and there are those who dispute this. . . ."

repairing of the service vessels does not appear at all in the Babylonian Talmud, nor does the comparison with the dedications of Moses and Solomon. The incident of the iron spits, which was part of the original Scholium O, is in fact included in the *baraita* cited in the Babylonian Talmud, but the version in the Scholium appears to be an earlier version than that of the *baraita*, and it is also not familiar with many of the details mentioned in the *baraita*. As to Scholium P, its presentation of the homiletical interpretation regarding Hallel, and the comparisons it makes with the dedications of Moses and Solomon have no parallel version whatsoever, either in the Talmud or in rabbinic literature in general. The *baraita*, “The precept of Hanukkah [demands] one light” is the only unit that might have been the same as, or similar to, what appears in the Babylonian Talmud, but it was cut short by copyists. The original Scholium O made no mention whatsoever of the story of the cruse of oil; Scholium P presents it in an earlier, more primitive version. These substantial differences in content clearly indicate that there is no genetic connection between the explanation in the Talmud and the scholia in their extant form. Even though Scholia O and P are considerably inferior to the Talmud in syntax and style, they incorporate unique ancient sources, not a trace of which are to be found either in the Talmud itself or in the rabbinic literature in general, but which are verified by such external sources as Maccabees and Josephus. Furthermore, we happened upon one tradition — the miracle of the cruse of oil — which appears in Scholium P in an early variant, while the very same tradition appears in the Babylonian Talmud in a later, reworked version, indicating that Scholia O and P were written and redacted in an atmosphere as yet unencumbered by the influence of the Babylonian Talmud. Interestingly, the miracle of the cruse of oil is conspicuously absent in the ancient Erez Israel *pyyutin*. Mention should be made here of the words of Shulamit Elizur:⁷¹

As with all of the early Erez Israel *pyyutin*, the famous miracle of the cruse of oil is not alluded to here [the *pyyut* “*Eid nakhon lesaf'i*” by Kalliri]. This story, which originated in the Babylonian Talmud, does not appear in any Erez Israel source. The silence of both the midrashic as well as the *pyyutanic* sources in this regard indicates that in Erez Israel at that time this story was as yet unknown.

It would appear that we may also deduce from this something about the antiquity and Erez Israelian provenance of the original traditions of the Scholia.

71 Shulamit Elizur, “The Hanukkah *Pyuyutin*: Symbol vs. Reality,” in *The Hasmonean Era* (Heb.), 303-10. I wish to thank Prof. Elizur for her generous help with regard to the *pyyut*.

CONCLUSION

The story of the miracle of the cruse of oil illustrates several of the impediments that rabbinic literature places in the way of the attempt to reveal the “attitude of the Sages” to a particular subject: the multitude of variations appearing in this literature; the dynamic and fluid way in which it is transmitted; the dominating influence of the Babylonian Talmud over parallel or earlier traditions — all of which may contribute to the creation of a distorted picture.

The extant versions of the Scholia offer three different traditions that explain why we celebrate Hanukkah:

1. Finding pure oil and kindling the candelabrum
2. Erecting the candelabrum from iron spits
3. Building the altar

Of the three explanations, the tradition of the iron spits is the only one that is common to both Scholium O and Scholium P. Both scholia also make a comparison between the Hasmonean dedication (Hanukkah) and the dedications of Moses and Solomon. The wording of the units, particularly the introductory and concluding sentences, indicates that each unit was originally written separately, and the intermediate wording that joins the units in each of the versions, is unconvincing and forced. It can be assumed that several different folk traditions regarding Hanukkah were circulating among the populace during Second Temple times. There were traditions connecting the date of Hanukkah to the renewal of the sacrificial service on the altar. Others tied it to the kindling of the lights in the candelabrum, whether by finding pure oil or by improvising a new candelabrum. Both explanations follow from the two names of the festival, which were known already in Second Temple times — *Hannukah* and *Orot*, “Lights.” Both incidents are mentioned among the purification efforts of the Hasmonians in the books of Maccabees and in the testimony of Josephus.⁷² The reason behind the eight-day celebration of the festival was apparently vague from early on. As a result, artificial “pretexts” for the number eight were appended to each of the traditions, in the Scholium as well as in other

72 Even though they also emphasize the showbread and the incense, the festival is connected specifically to the dedication of the altar. It should also be noted that all of the activities involved in the purification of the Temple, as recounted in 1 and 2 Maccabees, were not known to the authors of the two Scholia. Even though 2 Maccabees alludes to the dedications of Moses and Solomon as the reason for the eight days of Hanukkah, Scholium O is not familiar with the explanation given in 2 Maccabees that the eight days are a substitute for Sukkot. This is further evidence for the impression I get that the versions of the scholia have no direct connection with 1 and 2 Maccabees.

sources: "repairing" the altar and the service vessels took eight days; they were "occupied" with the spits for eight days; according to the Babylonian Talmud, the oil lasted eight days; and the printers of *Pesikta Rabhavi* even emended the number of spits from seven to eight.⁷³ It is apparent that the redactors of the different versions of the scholia collected these traditions and patched them together. One of their methods of combining the uris was presenting one episode as the reason for establishing the festival itself, and another as the reason for celebrating it for eight days. Scholium P presents the incident of the oil as the reason for establishing the festival, and prefaces the incident of the spits with the question, "Why did they determine to celebrate this one for eight [days]?" At the end of this episode we find the unconvincing "and they were occupied with it all eight [days]" appended to it.⁷⁴ In Scholium O, the question of "Why is it celebrated for all generations?" precedes the episode of the spits, while the building of the altar explains that "it is therefore celebrated for eight [days]." In other words, the motif of eight days was not originally included in these explanations. The tradition regarding the finding of oil also did not constitute an explanation for the eight days in the first stage of its evolution.

Scholium O makes no mention whatsoever of finding any oil, and it offers other reasons for celebrating Hanukkah. Scholium P presents an early version of an episode involving the finding of oil, and rather flimsily connects it to eight days, while also providing a series of alternative explanations. This same episode later appears in the Talmud in a more developed, crystallized form which has thrust aside other traditions. In actuality, the Babylonian Talmud is the sole source of an episode involving oil that lasted for eight days! This tradition eventually found its way into Scholium O and corrupted the original version; it even replaced the ancient variation of Scholium P appearing in the hybrid version. The power of this tradition, today and over the generations, compared to that of the other Hanukkah traditions, is an instructive example of the ultimate dominance that the Babylonian Talmud and its traditions achieved in Jewish literature and culture. This dominance, however, is a reflection of later cultural processes, and not of the approach of the Sages themselves. In essence, the reason for Hanukkah given by the Sages is the same reason as that found in Second Temple non-rabbinic sources: the Hasmonean renewal of the Temple service in its various forms. The supernatural basis of the story of the cruse of oil, as well as its representation as the only explanation for the celebration of Hanukkah, is a function of Babylonian inventiveness, motivated by literary rather than political reasons.

⁷³ See n.44 above.

⁷⁴ Indeed, this concluding sentence is not found in the parallel versions of Scholium O, the *baraita* of the Babylonian Talmud, or *Pesikta Rabhavi*.

How the Rabbis Interpreted Halakha to Meet the Needs of the People

A Study of Mortgages During the Period of the Rishonim

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Scholars such as Jacob Katz,¹ Haym Solovitchik² and Edward Fram³ have shown how *halakha* was interpreted by the rabbis so as to conform with the economic needs of the Jewish community. This study, on the subject of mortgages, is in the same genre. It will explore how the Rishonim, in response to the economic conditions of their time, loosened the restrictions on mortgage practices so that Jews could engage in mortgages with each other without hindrance from rabbinic law.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a commercial revolution took hold in Western Europe. The use of money broadened, and together with credit, "the great lubricant"⁴ of the commercial revolution, trade, both local and international, increased. A growing class of merchants developed.⁵ This process continued and expanded in the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century. Modes of transportation improved. Annual fairs for trading were established in major centers. Cities increased in size and population. Commerce and industry expanded providing people not only with the necessities of life but also with an increasing number of luxuries.⁶

1 The *Shabbos Goy* (Philadelphia, New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989) and *Tradition and Crisis* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1993) among others.

2 "Pawnbroking, A Study in Ribbit and of the Halakha in Exile," *American Academy for Jewish Research, Proceedings* 38-39 (1970-71) 203-68 and "Shetar Besefer Ha'itur," *Tarbiz* 41 (1972) 313-24 among others.

3 *Ideals Face Reality, Jewish Law and Life in Poland, 1550-1665* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997).

4 Robert Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976) 72.

5 Carlo Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976) 190-93; Joseph O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975) 293-94.

6 Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution*, 56-84; Sidney Painter, *A History of the Middle Ages, 284-1500*