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RHETORIC AND TIME SPELLING.
RESEARCH ON THE CONCEPT OF HISTORY IN THE
BIBLICAL LAMENTATIONS ACCORDING TO *EIKAH*
RABBATI

To

D.

M.

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M.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Books of the Bible

Gen.	Genesis	Joel	Joel
Exod.	Exodus	Hab.	Habakkuk
Num.	Numbers	Mi.	Micah
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Zeph.	Zephaniah
Josh.	Joshua	TMLam.	Textus Massoreticus of
Lamentations			
Judg.	Judges	Zech.	Zechariah
1-2 Sam.	1-2 Samuel	Qoh.	Qohelet
1-2 Kgs.	1-2 Kings	Job	Book of Job
Isa	Isaiah	Ps.	Book of Psalms
Jer.	Jeremiah	Prov.	Book of Proverbs
Ez.	Ezekiel	Esth.	Esther
Hos.	Hosea	Dan.	Daniel
Amos	Amos	Ezra	Ezra
Obad.	Obadiah	1-2 Chr.	1-2 Chronicles

Hebrew Abbreviation

וגומר = גוי “and so forth, &c, a clerical term used in bible citations to have the writing out of the entire quotation” (Jastrow 255a)

Other Abbreviations

A.	Anecdote, which may be a narrative
<i>b</i> Er.	Babylonian Talmud, Erubin
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
C. I.	Community of Israel
col.	column
E. J.	Encyclopaedia Judaica
<i>E R.</i>	<i>Eikhah Rabbati</i>
Heb.	Hebrew
id.	idem
i.e.	[Latin] <i>id est</i> , that is to say
<i>J. Sahn.</i>	Jerushalmi Talmud, Sahnedrin
l.	line
M.	Mashal
<i>M. Ed.</i>	Mishnah Eduyot
<i>M. Git.</i>	Mishnah Gittin
<i>M. Sot.</i>	Mishnah Sotah
<i>M. Ta'an</i>	Mishnah Ta'anit, etc.....
<i>op. cit.</i>	[Latin] <i>opus citatum</i>

PT	Palestinian Talmud
T. Pis.	Tosefta Pischa (for Pesachim)
S.	Simile
Sti	“scripture-and-tradition-based interpretation claims” TGLam <i>Targum</i> of Lamentations
vide	[Latin] see, consult
viz.	[Latin] <i>videlicet</i> , that is to say, namely

Other Conventions

1. Biblical verses and *Eikhah Rabbati* extracts and quoted in *italics*
2. The TMLamentations verses that are not expounded in *Eikhah Rabbati* are underlined and bolded
3. *Sti1 means that this claim is not expected to be at this place in the argument structure of the *Midrash*.

0. INTRODUCTION

This section of the work details an overview of the subject of the proposed research. It situates, defines and circumscribes the subject of our research, and details a literature review of the subject with regard to past and present research.

0.1. The Subject of the Proposed Study

Although the present research deals with history, it is not, however, concerned with history in general. Rather, it is specifically concerned with the history in *Eikhah Rabbati* (*E. R.*), the rabbinic comment (*midrash*) on the Biblical Book of Lamentations.

0.1.1. The *Eikhah Rabbati* Used in This Research

Eikhah Rabbati is the subject of our present research. It is the classical exegetical rabbinic commentary of the Amoraic period ¹ on the Biblical Book of Lamentations. *E.R.* is available in the Ashkenazic as well as in the Sephardic recensions. However, our research will mainly be focused on the five chapters, termed *parashiyyot*, of the Sephardic recension of *E. R.*. The *parashiyyot* are found in Romm Vilna Midrash Rabbati (MR) of the Five Megillot, also known as the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* (henceforward Vilna edition). The latter is based on the 1587 Cracow edition, which itself is affiliated with the text whose edition carried in Constantinople from 1514 to 1519 was completed in 1520. Such choice means that the thirty-four (rather thirty-six² to be more precise) *petihta`ot*, which are mentioned here for the first time, will not be dealt with in the present work, except for comparison purposes.³ Furthermore and for practical reason, our research will neither be concerned with the Ashkenazic Buber's

¹ It will be shown farther that *E.R.* also reports sayings of the rabbis of the Tannaitic period as well.

² Indeed, it should be noted that the second and the thirty-first *petihta`ot* are double. Thirty-six is a highly symbolic number; it is the numeral equivalent of the Hebrew איכ"ו, see its use in the expounded Lam. 1, 1. chapter II.

³ See C. N. Astor, *The petihtao`t of Eicha Rabba*, Ann Arbor (Mi): UMI Dissertation Services, 1996.

edition of *E. R.*⁴ The latter has not yet deserved accurate examination of its literary value. It will be used as a testimony to the text traditions.

On the other hand, our work will, at times refer quite beneficially to the Ashkenazic Buber's edition of *E.R.* for comparison purposes. This is because we believe that a comparative approach should help us in defining the main features as well as the originality of the topics of interest we decide to study and analyze. Thus, as a consequence of this approach, questions regarding the criticism of text strongly recommended by G. Stemberger⁵ as fundamental, are not addressed in the present work. However, exceptions will be made, whenever text criticism is needed to clarify the status of evidently except biased passages that are encountered.

0.1.2. Literature Overview of This Subject, Status Quaestionis

Is *E. R.* concerned with history? If this is the case, what does *E.R.* tell us about history? How does *E. R.* conceive history? A number of recent researches on *E. R.* can be considered as concerned with the history aspect of this commentary. However, these researches often deal with history in *E.R.* in terms that do not address our specific questions of interest. This is because, in general, the perspective of these researches is different. Another reason is that the findings of these researches obviously depend on the *E.R.* material that the interested researchers have decided to study. S. J. D. Cohen, for instance, dismisses discussing important issues such as “the types of exegesis and literary forms employed by Lam. R”, as well as “a complete thematic index to, and literary analysis of Lam. and Lam. R..”⁶ Instead, he focuses on the specific treatment of seven themes common to the Biblical Lamentations and their comment in *E. R.* A. Mintz offers, on the other hand, a different approach in his research (1984) preceded

4 D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge 1991, 247 - 251 provides a brief account of *E R.* text traditions.

5G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 225; for *Eikhah Rabbati*, see P. D. Mandel, *The Tale in Midrash Lamentations Rabba: Version and Style* (in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1983; idem, *Midrash Lamentations Rabbati: Prolegomenon, and a Critical Edition to the Third Parasha* (in Hebrew), Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997 according to D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 247, and G. Hasan - Rokem, *Riqmat hayim: ha-yetsira ha-ammamit be-sifrut hazal* (in Hebrew), Tel-Aviv 1996, for the English translation *The Web of life - Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, by B. Stein, Stanford 2000.

6 S. J. D. Cohen, “The Destruction: From Scripture to Midrash”, *Prooftexts*, Vol. 2 (1982) 37, see footnote 4.

by an article (1982) on the same issue.⁷ This author spends considerable efforts expounding on the main rhetorical features of the Lamentation genre: (a) first, as this genre is exposed in the Biblical Book of Lamentations, and (b) then, as it is exhibited in the rabbinic commentary *Eikhah Rabbati*. He further argues that the Book of Lamentations together with the consoling Second-Isaiah and the apocalyptic Daniel are, within the Hebrew Bible, the sole historically dated forms of the responses to the catastrophes.⁸ It must be noted here that we do not follow this author in his attempt to reduce *Eikhah Rabbati* to the simple status of a literary and rhetorical reworking of the Biblical Book of Lamentations by the rabbis.⁹ On the other hand, typological features found in *E R.* and their historical setting will be, instead, central focuses in the present research.

Similar focus on literary features is observed in D. Stern's works.¹⁰ This author's research is mainly concerned with the analysis of the *mashal* (plural, *meshalim*), the rabbinic Parable, found among others within the *midrashic* Lamentations. From the latter,¹¹ D. Stern holds the view of the two-part structure of the *mashal*, the two components both of which he abundantly details. For this author, a *mashal* comprises two distinct components: (a) a fictional, rhetorical and allusive tale in a narrative form, known as the *mashal*-proper, and (b) an

7 A. Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations and the representations of Catastrophe". *Prooftexts*, vol. 2 (1982), 1-17, idem, *Hurban. Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature*, New York 1984, 17-83.

8 More precisely, they "represent different stages in the formation of a response to the Destruction", ibidem 21.

9 If it is true, pertaining to relationship between these two books, that "[T]he only possible response to catastrophe was reading", ibidem 50, and that "reading and interpreting are not dependent upon experience and memory. They depend not upon the authenticity of experience but upon will and imagination, the will to recover meaning from the text and the imagination of exegetical ingenuity, which in turn depend for success, upon time and distance", ibidem 51. We are not, however, told what this "time and distance" means. In this regard, see E. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, New York/London 1970, 25 - 29, on history and religious experience, and below.

10 D. Stern, *Interpreting in Parables: The Mashal in Midrash, with Special Reference to Lamentations*, Harvard 1980, the text of his dissertation not available to us; idem, "Rhetoric and Midrash. The Case of the Mashal". *Prooftexts*, Volume 1 (1981) 261-291; idem, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature*, Cambridge 1991, his revised dissertation; idem, "The Rabbinic Parable and the Narrative of Interpretation", in: *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought and History*, M. Fishbane, (edit.), New York 1993, 78-95.

11 D. Stern, "The Rabbinic Parable and the Narrative of Interpretation", in *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis. Thought and History*, M. Fishane, (edit.), New York 1993, 79.

exegetical explanation or application, called the *nimshal*, which follows the *mashal*-proper and in which the message from the *mashal*-proper is somehow assessed.¹²

A number of selected *meshalim* are examined in their rhetorical features as well as in their message out of their textual anchorage because, as it is said,¹³ neither formal nor thematic unities can be found in the whole *Eikhah Rabbati*. On the other hand, D. Stern's work, in which "reading a *midrashic* passage in its literary, documentary context" is declared to be a "very problematic venture",¹⁴ propounds sporadically interesting insights into the historical setting of the *E. R. meshalim*. This occurs because this author enhances the allegorical, *i.e.*, the referential nature of the *mashal*: this is in accordance with his view¹⁵ that the *mashal* is intended "to persuade its audience of the truth of a specific message relating to an ad hoc situation"¹⁶ by suggesting the concerned message through an elusive tale. In this regard, it is quite worth noting

12 See D. Stern, "Parables in Midrash, 8-9; in his "Rhetoric and Midrash", *Prooftexts 1* (1981) 278, D. Stern describes adequately the regularized *mashal* components as following: 1. illustrand, 2. introductory formula, 3. *mashal*-proper, 4. *nimshal*, 5. proof-text, which is the verse occurring in the illustrand as the exegetical occasion; see below and the critique of the issue in J. Neusner, "Appendix Two. Stern's Parables in Midrash", in *The Talmud of Babylonia. V. A. Yoma*. Chapter 1 and 2, translated by idem, (Brown Judaic Studies 294). Atlanta 1994, 103-107.

13 D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 152 f.

14 D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 153 f for the focus on 'native literary and rhetorical units', such as, "the *mashal*, the *petihta*, the enumeration, the aggadic narrative, etc..."

15 D. Stern, "Rhetoric and Midrash. The Case of the Mashal", *Prooftexts. Volume 1* (1981) 264-266; idem, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 12.

16 We underline. Rabbinic *mashal*, D. Stern insists in "Rhetoric and Midrash", *Prooftexts 1* (1981), 263-265, has not the status of "an illustrative parallel" to abstract ideas or believes used "as a form of proof in argument" the parable has in Greek rhetoric. See D. Stern, "The Rabbinic Parable and the Narrative of Interpretation", 80, for a differentiated view. And the referential function of the *nimshal* helps guess the *Sitz im Leben* of the *mashal*, see I. Gruenwald's factors 3-creation of new views related to existence-, and 4-existential attitudes related to Scripture- of the midrash in her "Midrash and the "Midrashic Condition" ", in "The Midrashic Imagination, Jewish Exegesis, Thought and History, M. Fishbane (edit.), New York 1993, 7, and below for the historical context of the *midrash*.

Stern's concept of *midrash*¹⁷ which he says to be in contrast to Isaac Heineman's view, and also to the contemporary literary theories on the same topic.¹⁸

A wealth of *E. R.* narrative stories is also the focus of research by Hasan-Rokem.¹⁹ This author holds the view that these stories are representative of the variegated and not exclusively prominent forms of human fates bounced up and down in the turmoil arising from the destruction by Romans in 70 and 135 CE, of Jerusalem and of the Jewish world. This assumption and the use of an approach that enhances the historical setting have largely contributed to the formulation of the present hypothesis of this research. Popular beliefs as well as the various contexts of folk narratives are the main standpoint from which G. Hasan-Rokem examines these records. These popular beliefs and folk narratives lend support to the very interesting view that Rabbis as well as other protagonists (*e.g.*, women, children, uneducated people, strangers, etc....) mentioned in *E. R.* stories had read and interpreted the Biblical Book of Lamentations in the light of the spiritual experiences of their respective times.²⁰ The modern theoretical framework within which the author conducts this research²¹ provides us with useful informative views. However, it should be noted here that with regard to their historical reliability, these views do not go beyond the traditional claims and findings which are based on

17 It is reported in D. Stern, *Parables*, 1991, 44: "The midrash, as a narrative of exegesis, begins with a crisis and is followed by an effort at recuperating or saving the text - saving not only its meaning but its value, its felt importance in the life of the reader. (...) Rather than primarily determining the Torah's meaning, or its multiple meanings, midrashic interpretation seems more concerned with maintaining the Torah's presence in the existence of the Jew, with bridging the gap between its words and their reader, with overcoming the alienation, the distance of Torah, and with restoring it to the Jew as an intimate, familiar presence." Similar views are properly expressed in J. Chopineau, "Lecture et Sens. Note sur une perspective midrashique" in *Sens* 10 (1975) 3-7.

18 See D. Stern, *Parables*, 1991, 43-45.

19 The results are presented in her *Riqmat hayim: ha-yetsira ha-hammamit be-sifrut ha-zal*, transl. The Web of Life - Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature, Stanford 2000.

20 This is the very reason of the use of the folk narratives. This claim means that G. Hasan-Rokem's statement, *ibidem*, 45, that "[F]olk narratives as a powerful instrument for offering a valid spiritual alternative to the doctrine of retribution as an interpretation of historical of the times" does not take into account the location of these narratives in the rhetorical structure of Lamentations.

21 G. Hasan-Rokem relies on P. Ricoeur's recommendation that the interpreter has to resort to "cognitive models crucial to the interpreter's culture." Text as "projection of the world" and as "communication of self-understanding" are the pillars of this research, *ibidem*, 20.

philological approach.²² Further, the rabbinic ideological stand, which is weakened by the quest for considerations proper to G. Hasan - Rokem, of broadening the social basis of this kind of literature, is consequently not sufficiently contextualized.

Addressing the link between language and history seems not to be the main priority in the theological commentary by J. Neusner on the Biblical Lamentations to *E. R.*²³ This stance is consistent with Neusner's hypothesis of a "documentary reading of the writings of Rabbinic Judaism". This means that each rabbinic book must be accounted for as a document of this Judaism on its own terms as well as within its specific framework.²⁴ J. Neusner's general approach consists in showing "at what passages, in what manner, with what result do principal components of the formative documents of the Rabbinic Midrash set forth in a systematic way theological propositions. And finally, how do these cohere and form part of a larger, cogent and theological structure?"²⁵

With regard to the subject of interest of this research, J. Neusner's claim that *Eikhah Rabbati* exhibits "distinguishing traits and distinctive viewpoints on issues of its own choosing"²⁶ within the documentary hypothesis of Rabbinic Judaism, and, per se, deserves the predicate of a literary and unitary work,²⁷ is interesting. We espouse this view as an integral component of the basic hypothesis on which our present research will be conducted.²⁸ In

22 See D. Ben-Amos's point in this regard in his "Lamentations Rabbah: Trauma, Dreams and Riddles. A recension to Galit Hasan-Rokem", *Prooftexts* 21, 3 (2001) 406-7.

23 J. Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash. Volume Five: Lamentations Rabbati*. (Studies in Ancient Judaism), Lanham/New York/Oxford 2001.

24 J. Neusner (edited by), *Category Formations of the Aggadah. The Earlier Midrash-Compilations. Volume II*. Lanham/New York/Oxford 2000, vii.

25 J. Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash, Volume Five: Lamentations Rabbati* (Studies in Ancient Judaism), Lanham / New York / Oxford 2001, xiv.

26 J. Neusner (edited by), *The Native Category - Formations of the Aggadah. The Earlier Midrash - Compilations. Volume II*. Lanham/New York/Oxford 2000, viii.

27 It is about text, whose status as a constituent of a canon is part of its interpretation, and "[The] criterion for interpreting a passage is now its role within the programme of the document. The context predominates, and that thought-context we discern text by text", *ibidem*, 19.

28 D. Stern, *Parables*, 1991, (315), footnote 1, knows about it, but rejects it, among others, on the basis of Steven Fraade's review of Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The evidence of Leviticus Rabbah*, Chicago 1986, in *Prooftexts* 7 (1987) 179 - 194.

addition to this concept of Neusner, our work will also emphasize the utilization that *E. R.* makes of the language, as well as its literary features in order to propose historically contextualized²⁹ theological views³⁰ which, to name but a few instances, distinguish *E.R.* in the form and content from the Biblical Book of Lamentations.

Similarly, because of the permeation of language by history, records from the *targum* of Lamentations (TgLam) worked by C. M. M. Brady³¹ are considered and constitute a valued documentation for our present research. As G. Stemberger puts it,³² the *targum*, in general, “*teilt mit dem Midrasch die Grundeinstellung gegenüber der Bibel und sieht sie als umfassende Offenbarung Gottes an Israel für alle Zeiten; er kommt mit denselben Methoden (...) weithin zum selben Textverständnis (...).*” Brady is aware here of this actualizing approach of the *targum*³³ when he states³⁴ on the base of a wealth of aggadic data, that the *targum*’s dealing with the Biblical Lamentations “followed particular exegetical and theological traditions in creating his interpretations of Lamentations. These traditions are specifically rabbinic and place the *targum* well within the rabbinic milieu.”³⁵ However, Brady’s presentation³⁶ of the socio-historical

29 The documentary reading looks for “large, coherent aggregates of thought, within texts and then among them”, *ibidem*, 18. Historical context is not part of this programm.

30 “Rabbinic Judaism” itself is a historical product, “the religious system of Israel’s and the world’s order that is put forth by Rabbinic sages of late antiquity, the first six centuries C. E. (...)”, in J. Neusner (edited by), *The Native Category - Formations of the Aggadah. The Earlier Midrash - Compilations*. Volume II. Lanham / New York / Oxford 2000, 6, but also, *ibidem*, against the use of archeology, for instance, that “material culture can illustrate the kinds of utensils to which the Rabbinic sages make reference, but not embody the principal ideas or beliefs that they affirm, let alone the way in which these ideas or beliefs coalesce as a logical account of world-order”, the only theoretical issues, the documentary hypothesis and reading is interested in.

31 See Christian M. M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations. Vindicating God*, Leiden / Boston 2003.

32 See G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, 1989, 26.

33 The question whether the *targumim* are rabbinic in their origin or not is, however, a matter of ongoing debate, see P. S. Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures”, in: J. M. Mulder (ed.), *Mikra; Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. Section 2, Philadelphia 1988, 217-221, 238-250.

34 Christian M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 16, but see also, *ibidem*, 14.

35 See G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bible*, München 1989, 26 on the close relationships between the *targumic* and *midrashic* exegetic and ideological agendas; for rabbinic views on the biblical text, see *idem*, “Vollkomener Text in vollkommener Sprache. Zur rabbinischen Schriftverständnis”, *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie*, Band XII (1997) 53-65.

36 See Christian.M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 4-8.

setting of TgLam does not go beyond the usual general treatment of the *Sitz im Leben* which characterizes this kind of research. Namely, Brady's presentation of the socio-historical setting of TgLam does not account for the specific features of the rabbinic allegorical treatment³⁷ that obviously leads to an historical appropriation required by the Biblical text³⁸ in this document. It is well established that C.M.M.Brady does not see the *targum* as a response "to the events of 586 B.C.E., or even 70 C.E.." Rather, this *targum* is thought of as being "a response to the Book of Lamentations and its challenging message."³⁹ These methodological assumptions are the main explanation of the fact that the particular historical situation that this *targum* addresses remains unnoticed.

0.2. The Proposed Research

The present research project consists in examining a concept of history, which is sufficiently addressed and alluded to by many research works, and which can be considered as conveyed by the views and the preoccupations of the Rabbis whose statements are reported in

37 Rabbinic allegory does exist and it has specific features. It does not exclude the literal, on the signifying based meaning; as R. Loewe puts it, "it exploits the resources of the letter in order to reinforce its own variety of allegorical interpretation, by adding thereto colorful verisimilitudes, and these are sometimes discovered by a remorseless insistence upon one literal (or possible) meaning of a single word, in a sense paradoxical to the context as naturally understood", idem, "The 'Plain' Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis", quoted in E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York 1981, 15. Its dealing is provided in D. Banon, *La Lecture infinie. Les voies de l'interprétation midracchique*, Paris 1987, 34-5: "[L]ire la Bible, c'est (...) ouvrir l'écrit qui, comme tel, est fermé sur lui-même, au questionnement de la voix; c'est ébranler les structures rigides du texte en y introduisant le souffle de la parole (...). A condition de ne pas entendre, par parole, le concept qui lie la voix et la pensée, de telle sorte qu'on en arrive, comme l'a bien montré Jacques Derrida, à effacer le signifiant au profit du signifié;" referring to J. Derrida, *La Voix et le Phénomène*, Paris 1967, 87f: "le phonème se donnant comme l'idéalité maîtrisée du phénomène."

38 The concept leading this actualizing appropriation has been characterized by G Stemberger as following: "[W]enn die Bibel ein geschlossener Kanon, die einzige und unüberholbare Offenbarung Gottes an sein Volk ist, (...) muss sie für jede Zeit gelten. Der Begriff des Anachronismus hat unter dieser Voraussetzung keinen Platz: "es gibt kein Vorher und Nachher in der Tora" (Pesachim 6b und öfter). Das vorangige Ziel des Auslegers ist nicht der ursprüngliche Wortsinn des Textes, sondern sein zeitloser Gehalt. Daher bedarf die Bibel eine ständige Aktualisierung, in der der Ausleger die Gegenwartsbedeutung des Textes bzw. der biblischen Geschichte stets von neuem zu erheben hat. Aktualisierung fügt dem Text nicht eine neue Bedeutung hinzu, liest nicht etwas in den Text hinein, sondern findet einfach aus der dem Text innewohnenden Bedeutungsfülle die für die Gegenwart besonders relevanten Gesichtspunkte heraus," idem, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 25-26.

39 Christian M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 4.8.

Eikhah Rabbati. A number of assumptions must be first outlined, before the main proposals of the present research are presented.

0.2.1. The Text of Lamentations as Genre and History

Let us posit that, because of its status as the rabbinic comment to the Biblical Book of Lamentations, *Eikhah Rabbati* is related in form and content to the latter. This claim is a strong assumption for the understanding of our present work. It suffices, at this stage, to mention, for instance, that the questions whether *E. R.* deals with “*was wirklich geschehen ist*”⁴⁰ as well as with the possible answer (s) to these questions, must be addressed to *Eikhah Rabbati*’s *Vorlage*, that is, the Biblical Book of Lamentations as well. In this regard, it is worth noting the positively nuanced view on the Biblical Lamentations as an account on history in the comments of Rudolph,⁴¹ Renkema⁴² and Berges.⁴³ It should also be noted here, on the other hand, that modern scholarship considers, *mutatis mutandis*,⁴⁴ that the Biblical Book of Lamentations is also much indebted for its form and content to its forerunner, namely, the Mesopotamian literary tradition of lamenting over destroyed cities. In this literary tradition, emphasis is on a *Grundthema*, i.e., the destruction of cities and their temple(s) as well as the consecutive distress of the populations concerned.⁴⁵ In this respect, the assessment and literature in the comment by Berges⁴⁶ are of great interest.

40 German for “What does really happen?”

41 W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*. (KAT 171/3) Gütersloh 1962, 193.

42 J. Renkema, *Lamentations* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament). Leuven 1998, 41-47.

43 U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament). Freiburg im Breisgau / Basel / Wien 2002, 30-70.

44 See *Les cinq rouleaux. Le chant des Chants, Ruth, Comme ou Lamentations, Paroles du sage, Esther*, traduction de H. Meschonnic, Paris ([1970]1995), 89, and A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York, 1984, 17-18.

45 M. Ta’an 4.6 speaks cryptically of the ban to the fathers on entering the land, the destruction of the Temple the first and the second time, the capture of Beth-Tor and the plough of the City as having taken place on the 9th of Ab/Av.

46 U. Berges, *Klagelieder*. (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament), Freiburg im Breisgau / Basel / Wien 2002, 46-52.

Consequently, on the basis of the claim that the Book of Lamentations is concerned with the historical destruction of Jerusalem and of its Temple in 586 B.C.E., one may legitimately ask how historically reliable the data related in this book are. Indeed, we are entitled to doubt when we observe that the concerned data are reported in a written document pertaining to a transcultural literary genre of Lamentations as well as to the ideological and literary common lamenting *code* (Berges).⁴⁷ And we have an instance at the hand. A. Mintz speaks, in this regard, of “long-used traditions of communal laments and funeral songs”⁴⁸ which the poets of Lamentations were equipped with in their own undertaking. This author clearly emphasizes, on the other hand, the ideological differences between the Sumerian and the Biblical reliable historical reports on the destructions of city states. These two features of the Book of Lamentations, both described as a traditional literary genre that addresses historical issues,⁴⁹ are equally found in *E. R.*, its rabbinic commentary.⁵⁰ Obviously, these two features are related one to another. Thus, the treatment of one requires taking into account the other in defining a context.

0.2.2. Conception of History in *Eikhah Rabbati*

The present research is aimed at revealing the conception of history in *E. R.*. In order to achieve this objective, the approach we have opted for will take into consideration (i) the rhetorical and literary findings by researches, which are focused on literary components of *E.*

47 It is obvious that we are addressing here the discussed relationship between literary genre and history. In any event, it has to be differentiated how history is understood and presented in a genre.

48 A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 1.

49 The issue here is the Bible as literature, history, symbol altogether. A French Introduction may somewhat tell how these genres can be related to one another: „Le mot «symbole» désignait jadis un signe de reconnaissance: on partageait un objet et on en remettait la moitié à deux personnes. Dans la suite des temps, cela devait leur permettre de se reconnaître. Considéré en lui-même, l’objet n’a pas d’importance. Il n’en a que comme signe de reconnaissance. Le langage biblique est symbolique lorsque nous découvrons dans ses textes comme un miroir qui, reflétant notre expérience, nous en révèle le sens. Nous nous y retrouvons vraiment. Nous pouvons alors en quelque sorte nous écrier: „C’est bien cela! C’est mon histoire! Je m’y retrouve! Je comprends!“ „Introduction Générale“, in *La Bible de Jérusalem*. Nouvelle édition. Paris: Cef-Desclée de Brouwer, 1979, xxiv, col.1.

50 J. Neusner, *Category - Formations of the Aggadah. The Earlier Midrash - Compilations*. Volume II, Lanham/New York/Oxford 2000, 10, 17 underlines the distinctive composition feature in Aggadic, such as *E. R.*, against halakhic documents, stressing the fact that they do not set forth neither articulate a topical programme, but carry out together the literary and exegetical programme on Scripture and the demonstrations of category - formation statements of Rabbinism.

R., such as the narrative stories, the *mashal*-parables and others, and (ii) the established assertion that both the Book of Lamentations and *Eikhah Rabbati* are unitary texts. However, unlike earlier works, the research we propose will not be primarily and exclusively a literary and critical analysis of *E. R.* records extracted from their literary context for determining the historicity, i.e., historical quality, of the contents of the concerned records.⁵¹ This is because *E. R.* is a literary comment of a literary work.⁵² *E.R.* utterances should, therefore, be examined in their literary forms, taking into consideration the location of the concerned utterances within the literary structure of *E.R.*. The proposed research will analyze the linguistic as well as literary resources of *E. R.*, with special emphasis on the characteristic poetical and rhetorical features and devices used for propounding history views and commitments. Here are some indications on the way this work is going to be laid out.

We outline below the scheme that will be formally followed in conducting our research. It will be shown that *E. R.* is constituted, *inter alia*, of statements that are various in their shapes. These statements can be described in their occurrence and layout as in the following scheme, which we will utilize in the present research,

- (1) Textus Masoreticus Lamentation (TMLam.): Chapter x, Verse y,
- (2) *E. R.* to TMLam. y, x: “Rabbi [R] expounds / states”⁵³ [Z] to TMLam. y, x.”

The effectiveness of the method of taking into consideration the subject that the statement [Z] in the scheme above is concerned with as well as the message that the said subject actually conveys, clearly depends on the linguistic shapes and features, on the genre as well as on the layout of the *E. R.* page of interest that contains, in succession, the quoted passages of the Biblical text. Consequently, the last two parameters (, i.e. genre and layout) are critical in

51 M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford 6, speaks of unravelling “the textual strands and documents of the canonical text, and of reorganizing them into modern histories of Israelite religion and institutions” as the principle the established historical-philosophical method relies on.

52 Deductive procedure will be required in dealing with the historical setting of *E. R.* interpretive means.

53 Then, the complete and frequent phrase is in many cases: “Rabbi [X] says in the name of Rabbi [Y].”

determining, in the message of interest, the historical reliability of statement (Z).⁵⁴ In other words, the research approach we propose for our present inquiry requires that the quoted TMLam. y, z is examined and analyzed with reference to its location within the literary structure of the Book of Lamentations prior to any examination, analysis and interpretation, within the concerned context, of the wording and meaning of [Z] as stated by Rabbi [R].

The expounding [Z] can be a simple statement as well as an extended text such a narrative. It is studied by analysing the grammatical, literary as well as the rhetorical features which define its shape. Rhetoric is defined here as a knowledge shared by individuals, “for all, up to a certain point, endeavour to criticize or uphold an argument, to defend themselves or to accuse.”⁵⁵ The choice and the use of persuasive and expressive resources of language to set up discourses that are effective depend, however, on assumptions and expectations related to different socio-historical circumstances.⁵⁶

Furthermore, it is compelling that use will be made, in the proposed research, of a complementary search for interpretative category of types, within the well- established biblical typological framework, which is defined here as a relationship between persons, events and places.⁵⁷ Typology is required, in our research, for assessing the very nature and meaning of the historical issues of interest for the present work. Contrary to the restrictive view, which considers typology as an exclusively Christian invention and interpretative tool, typological hermeneutics has convincingly proved to be an inner - and even a post-biblical achievement.

54 See H. L. Strack, and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. and edit-ed by M. Bockmuehl, second edition, Minneapolis 1996, 56f, henceforth Strack/ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, and below.

55 This is a translation of Aristotle, *The “Art” of Rhetoric*, with an English translation by John Henry Freese. Cambridge/London ([1926] 1975), I.i.1.

56 The history of rhetoric since classical times accounts for these varying assumptions, resources (,i.e. between *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio* with the figures), emphases (discourses, figures and tropes), and expectations, see G. Genette, “La Rhétorique des Figures,” introduction to P. Fontanier, *Les Figures du Discours*, Paris 1977, 5-17; J. Culler, *Literary Theory. A very short Introduction*, Oxford 2000, 69f; H.-A. Fischel, Henry A., “Story and History: Observations on Graeco-Roman Rhetoric and Pharisaism , (1966), in idem (ed.). *Essays in Graeco-Roman and related Talmudic Literature*, New York 1977.

57 See S.- G. Hall, “Typologie” *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Band XXXIV. Berlin 2000, 208-224.

For illustration, reference is made to the works of Gopal⁵⁸ and Fishbone⁵⁹ for the biblical schemes, to the works of Oster⁶⁰ for the New Testament and the Church Fathers, as well as to the work of Neusner⁶¹ which is characterized by this author's innovating, somehow ahistorical, but time-oriented category of paradigm and paradigmatic thinking as applied to the Bible and to the Rabbinic writings as well. For similar reasons, works of S. J. D. Cohen and A. Mintz⁶² on *E.R.* should be considered as typological studies. This is because *E. R.* main themes are presented and analyzed with reference to their counterparts in the Biblical Book of Lamentations.⁶³

The concept we propose to validate in the present research can be stated as follows. There exists a solid basis, which allows us to confidently propound on the one hand that (i) the hermeneutical tool of types should be extended to also include literary genres, such as the biblical genre of Lamentations. On the other hand, (ii) history, which is not to be dismissed,⁶⁴ and literary as well as allegory-based linguistic forms, which help check the historical persistence of typological events, categories and themes, do provide material basis on which it is possible to assess the transformation and decay of these type.⁶⁵ This is clearly observed in *E.*

58 L. Goppelt, *Typos*, Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testamentes im Neuem. Darmstadt ([1939] 1969).

59 M. Fishbane, *Biblical interpretation*, 350-379. Typological findings belong undoubtedly to the dynamics of traditum and traditio discussed pages 6f.

60 K. H. Ostmeyer, "Typologie und Typos: Analyse eines schwierigen Verhältnisses", *New Testament Studies*. Vol. XLVI (2000) 112-131.

61 J. Neusner, *The Idea of History in Rabbinic Judaism*, Leiden/Boston 2004, 200f.

62 See respectively Shaye J D. Cohen, "The Destruction: From Scripture to Midrash", *Prooftexts*, Vol. 2 (1982) 18-39, and A. Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations and the Representation of Catastrophe". *Prooftexts*, vol. 2 (1982), 1-17, idem, *Hurban*, 1984, 17 -83.

63 M. Himmelbauer relies on these Biblical records to state that "[D]ie Typologie ist (...) keineswegs eine christliche Erfindung, der Form nach ist es eine jüdische Methode", idem, "Der Verlust der Wurzel", in *Dialog-Du Siach*, Nr.90 (Jänner 2013)23. And he recalls, ibidem, the pronouncement of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, that "[H]eute ist für die katholische Kirche klar: Eine typologische "neue Deutung beseitigt nicht der ursprünglichen Sinn."" M. Himmelbauer accounts for P. Landesmann, *Der Antijudaismus auf dem Weg vom Judentum zum Christentum*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012.

64 Typological events and themes are partly accounted for when their historical setting is overlooked, or not sufficiently reconstructed.

65 Typology seems in this sense to be the old theoretical framework within which the permanent, and mostly traditional process aiming at actualizing biblical events, themes, and motives, that is inner to the Scriptures, takes place. Rabbinic claims and other post-biblical linguistic records document the same literary and ideological phenomenon. That the two destructions of the Temple in 586 BCE and in 70 CE are said to have

R. dealing with the TMLam. utterances.⁶⁶ For illustration, let us consider the established scheme below which occurs in *E.R.*,

- (1) Textus Masoreticus Lamentation (TMLam.): Chapter x, Verse y,
- (2) *E. R.* to TMLam. y, x: “Rabbi [R] expounds / states⁶⁷ [Z] to TMLam. y, x,

In line (2) of the above scheme, [Z] which is the *E. R.* statement made by Rabbi [R] expounding the TMLam. y, x on the basis of allegory, may refer either to records relating to the Tanakh and the past, either to material pertaining to the alleged historical horizon of Rabbi [R],⁶⁸ or to both as subsumed under what J. Neusner calls the plausible “notion that the past was a formidable presence in the contemporary world.”⁶⁹ The quasi-autobiographical implication of the interpreter in this kind of re-appropriation process of a past event relies on the methodological assumption that the interpreter has to perceive himself and his time as virtually implied in the scriptural case concerned (as an intended reader-listener/audience).⁷⁰ Such re-

occurred on the 9th Ab, for instance, is due to a ‘fictitious symmetry’, although F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, vi, 268 speaks of “the exactness of the cycle of Destiny”. The fact is that in Jer 52,12f, -the 10th of the 5th month-, and in 2 King 25,8,-the 7th-, two different dates are ascribed to the first destruction! And R. Dreyfus lists in *Sens* 7(1985)219/20 eleven biblical and post-biblical disastrous events, from the decree to march 40 years in the desert in Exodus to the Shoah in 1940/45 as occurring on the 9th Ab.

66 This *E.R.* historically dealing with the Biblical Book of Lamentations has surprised the French translator of the same Biblical Lamentations: „[C]’est pourquoi les Juifs lisent ce livre le 9 Ab (cinquième mois, l’année commençant à Pâque) qui, chose curieuse, marque non seulement cet anniversaire-Jerusalem et Temple destruction in 587 B.C.-mais aussi la chute du Second Temple sous les coups des Romains“, in „Les Lamentaions, Introduction,“ in *Traduction œcuménique de la Bible. Ancien Testament*.. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf-Les Bergers et les Mages, 1975, 1635.

67 Then, the complete and frequent phrase is in many cases: “Rabbi [X] says in the name of Rabbi [Y].”

68 Some of the traits of the accounts the Rabbis left on events of their days are provided in J. Neusner, *The Idea of History in Rabbinic Judaism*, Leiden/Boston 2004, 214: “anedoctes of lives..., episodes..., stories..., the present represented within the framework of the past...”.

69 In J. Neusner, *The Idea of History in Rabbinic Judaism*, 225, with the complement: “ And having lived through events that they - the sages - could plausibly discover in Scripture - Lamentations for one example, Jeremiah another - they also found entirely natural the notion that the past took place in, was recapitulated by the present as well.” See idem, 310f the groping discovery of the massive presence of the present in the contemporary reconstructions in history.

70 This is a feature of many Biblical texts, e. g. Exod 24, 1-11, Deut. 31, 9-26, 2 Kgs 22 and Jer. 36, etc, in which the gap between text and reality, between the past of the “story” and the present of the “discourse”, in particular with the presence of the reader in his act of reading, is bridged, see J. L. Ska, “*Our Fathers Have Told Us*” *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, Roma 1990, 47f.

appropriation is illustrated, as it happens in the linguistic and literal forms of the Book of Lamentations, in the following *E. R. midrash* to TMLam. 2, 2, lines 96b -98:⁷¹

‘R. Yochanan (A2) used to expound the verse “*The Lord has laid waste without pity* (Lam. 2, 2) in sixty ways,⁷² and Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4) in twenty-four. But is not the number ascribed to R. Yochanan (A2) greater than that of Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4)?⁷³ The reason is that Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4), because he was closer to the Destruction of the Temple, he would remember as he expounded and stop to weep and console himself.’

A. Mintz relies on this *midrash* to lend support to his view that the expounding of Scripture “depends not upon the authenticity of experience but upon the will and imagination.”⁷⁴ Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked, that the *midrashic* tradition that is recorded here induces to the conviction that also the specific historical circumstances of Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4) and those of R. Yochanan (A2), as well as the personal emotional frames of both do influence the production of their minds. For this reason, we are entitled to think that the forms of the language these two Rabbis use in their interpretation effort are in one way or another correlated with these historical and individual factors.

In light of this, the present work will consequently consider the likely hypothetical historical settings of the Rabbis⁷⁵ which rely on (i) the established as well as controversial traditional praxis⁷⁶ of attributing statements and other utterances to personalized Rabbis, and on (ii) the historical fact of Rabbinic generations⁷⁷ of Tannaim and their commentator Amoraim

71 All the lines of the text of the *editio princeps* of *E. R.* used in this work have been listed in each chapter with Arabic numerals.

72 The explanatory cases were related to the Destruction of the Temple and to its aftermath.

73 As a Tanna, Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi is closer to the events related to the Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE than the Amora R. Yochanan (A2).

74 A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 1984, 51

75 See Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996 on this issue.

76 See Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 56 - 62 for discussion.

77 The *Iggeret* of Rav Scherira Gaon of Pumbedita (ca.906-1006) in 987 to the community of Kairowan, and the *Book of Tradition* (Sefer ha-Qabbalah) of Abraham Ibn Daoud (1160/61) are the main sources of this location of the Rabbis in periods. See G. Stemberger, *Das Klassische Judentum*, 2009, 12 for criticism of the rabbinic dealing with historical data, and ibidem, 13, for assessment of the historical value of this periodisation: “[D]och ist der hier übernommene zeitliche Ansatz zu rechtfertigen.” Further idem, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*,

extended from the first to the fifth centuries of the Christian Era. Abundant data are available from research led by W. Bacher,⁷⁸ from the main introduction work to Rabbinics,⁷⁹ which is amply referenced in this research, as well as from other studies. All of them provide needed literary records, which have to be checked with material evidences from archaeology, history of cultures, sociological records, etc....

To sum up, it should be noted, at this point of our study, that the rabbinic dealing with the biblical Lamentations in *E.R.* is based on history. Together with the outcomes of the scholarly works briefly outlined earlier, this rabbinic dealing contributes to lend credence to the view that history, according to *E.R.*, does exist. Its assessment largely depends on the ability that historical individuals possess to account using the literary and rhetorical devices of their time for the forms and the contents which inherited traditions take in their own generations. The study of these new forms and new contents expressed in *E.R.* constitutes the subject of the present research, which is structured in six chapters, as outlined below.

0.2.3. Structure of the Proposed Research Work

The division of this work into five chapters is primarily based upon the early uttered postulate of the literary structuration and historically conditioned meaning of *E. R.*, two features of *E.R.* which are in close alignment with the Biblical Book of Lamentations. In *modo conosciendi*, effort has been made to list first the interpretative and semantic forms proposed by the Rabbis in *E. R.* in their respective comment in order to explain the meaning of the literary units found in TMLam. which are collected in the appendix one. The questions that have been addressed in this research can be summarized as follows, (1) what are the kinds of Biblical text, (*viz.*, the present Masoretic text or another kind) is used by the Rabbis of *E.R.* in their comments

9. Auflage, München 2011, 17. The rabbis will be consequently quoted in accordance to their generation following (T) for 'tannaite' and (A) for 'amoraite'.

78 See the bibliography below.

79 Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996.

in *E.R.*; and (2) how do the *E.R.* Rabbis address their text, that is, on what kind of literary units, text, paragraph, line, colon, bicolon, word (s), etc...⁸⁰ do they focus.

It has been found out that these Biblical passages are accounted for in the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* by means of different claims (Sti), anecdote narratives (A) and *meshalim* (M) in *E.R.*. The use of these different literary forms in the interpretative work does not appear to be arbitrary. They are catalogued in appendix two, which lends visual support to the view that claims (Sti), anecdote narratives (As) and *meshalim* (M) are strongly interconnected and predictable components of an explanatory system evidently very effective in its assumptions and predictions. They belong to the typical rabbinic dealing with the Biblical Books and learning from them. Literary units which are briefly outlined in appendix three are detailed and discussed in the five chapters of this research

In Chapter One, Scripture - and - tradition based claims (Stis) of *E.R.* are analyzed with particular emphasis on their quality as historically conditioned statements made in order to account for and deal with the new historical situation that the interpreters of Lamentations had to face. In Chapter Two, we examine the anecdotic narratives (A), as we earlier and similarly examined the Scripture-and-tradition based claims (Sti) in Chapter One. It is, therefore, worth stressing here that the assertive claims (Sti) and the anecdotic narratives (A) which are both spellings of the *present* are, in all evidence, part of an interpretive effort based on the view that the meaning of the history (i.e., historicity of events/situations) is polarized between the biblical proposals and their actualization by the reader and the expounder in the context of their *day*.

Chapters Three and Four basically detail hypothetical discussions. That is, they examine and discuss what that *day* of the reader and expounder in earlier chapters might have been like. They therefore propound reconstructed statements about historical issues, which the assertive claims (Stis) and the anecdotic narratives (As) are relating to, and which are part of an explanatory effort that is completed by the *meshalim* detailed and discussed in Chapter Five. The research project is briefly presented and the findings as well as the significance of his

80 The phenomenon of choice in the history of the use of the Bible has been extensively documented in its intertextual aspects, in which some biblical texts are the focuses of study and liturgy to the detriment of many others, in G. Stemberger, *Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 9 - 53.

research are provided in the Conclusion. Three appendices report data that have been collected from the linguistic analysis of the Biblical Book of Lamentations and from *Eikhah Rabbati*. The present research relies on this material. A bibliography details the documents and works used in this enterprise and an abstract provides insights into the project, the components and the main findings of this work.

It must be further emphasized here that the subject studied in the present work is a vast research subject, which cannot be exhausted in this work that focuses on the *E. R.* literary forms. The aim we assign to the proposed research is to uncover what these *E.R.* literary forms tell about history, which history cannot be other than religious history, that is, the biblical history in a rabbinic comment and in rabbinic terms. Based on the assumption that the biblical text does contain all what God wants for all times to convey to and plan with his people,⁸¹ the analysis of the forms written at times in *Eikhah Rabbati* and relating to as well as actualizing this eternal biblical project, may help understand what the corresponding biblical units are about.⁸² This concept of an oriented time beyond the *E.R.* conditioned forms constitutes the very topic of the proposed research. This evidently explains the reason why the present work will constantly be referring to the biblical so

81 G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 9.

82 The thorough analysis of the literary forms will be needed in many cases to avoid the impasse of an historicizing interpretation of a literary fiction. See U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 182.

I. DEVASTATING BREAKDOWN. ITS CAUSES AND IMAGES. THE PAST IN THE PRESENT IN THE CLAIMS (STIS) (TMLam. 1,1-2,22)

The present Chapter focuses on claims (**Stis**) related to verses of the Biblical Book of Lamentations which have been examined in the appropriation endeavour of the Rabbis and which are recorded in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The hypothesis, which we briefly outline and put forward here, is that the expounding of these verses with the support of the biblical counterparts they are related to in the traditions of interpretation reported in *Eikhah Rabbati* is not intended at establishing the real meaning of the mentioned verses at the time when they were first formulated. Rather, it occurs to us that these claims were made to primarily account for the historical situation at the time of the interpreters. The real issue here, which is the subject of our project, is concerned with the claims made in *Eikhah Rabbati* and their biblical support. The study of the subject requires we deal with the vast Tanakh⁸³ in its variegated forms in *Eikhah Rabbati*, which is one of the feature of a typological interpretation as mentioned in literature.⁸⁴

The present research project is concerned primarily with the selected verses of the Biblical Lamentations Vorlage examined in the previous chapter and reported in the Annex 1. Consequently, our research also requires considering the Book of Lamentations in its entirety as Vorlage, which consists of the rhetorical structure⁸⁵ which encompasses its five Chapters. This structure can be described as the dynamics behind the various forms of relationships between the main characters involved in the play unfolding the vicissitudes of God's covenant with Israel through successive stations.⁸⁶ Finally, the project uses records from the Tanakh in general that

83Tanakh is the acronym for "Torah"[Law]-"K'tuvim"[Writings or Hagiographa]-"N'viim"[Prophets] that represent the canonical Jewish Bible.

84This is the necessarily literary basis, which prevents from reducing typology to a technique dealing just with 'persons, event-(s), or places', as this is the case in L. Goppelt, *Typos. Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen*, Darmstadt 1969, 18 - 20; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford 1986, 351; K.- H. Ostmeyer, "Typologie und Typos: Analyse eines schwierigen Verhältnisses", in *New Testament Studies*, Vol. xivi (2000), 112 - 131; J.-S. Alexander, "Typologie", in *Theologische Realenzyklopaedie*, Band xxxiv, 34 (2002), 208.

85This proposal has been made in A. Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations and the Representation of Catastrophe", in which it is called "The Rhetoric of Lamentations", *Proof-text*, vol. 2 (1982) 1-17; and in A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York 1984. It is based on the three assumptions presented in A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York 1984, 271: 1) the five chapters of Lamentations are probably of different authors; 2) each chapter displays a literary unity; 3) the design of the whole book as the result of an informed redactional intention.

86On the question of a connection or not between the five poems of the Lamentations, see J. Renkema, *Lamentations*. (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament). Leuven 1998, 34 - 41 who considers, for quite different reasons, p. 16f, that "all the five songs are closely related both from a literary perspective and in terms of content"; K. Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte des Alten Testaments*, 115, speaks of a structure in three parts: Klage - Bitte - Lob" which occurs also in the psalms of Lamentations, but he finds it fully realized only in Lam. 5.

are concerned with the exegetical work within the argumentative and explanatory frames of *Eikhah Rabbati*. These various forms of the Tanakh are used and reasserted in the present research by means of the established scripture-and tradition-based claims (Sti), which have been identified in Chapter One of this work. These claims are considered as the matrices for the new views brought about in *Eikhah Rabbati* in reaction to new historical challenges.

The listed Sti-claims (Stis) are studied in the present Chapter and in Chapter IV. As stated earlier, these claims are examined, using a hypothesis, within the context of the rhetorical structure of the Lamentations text propounded by A. Mintz. This examination is not based on the content,⁸⁷ but rather on the account of the literary development of the said textual content.⁸⁸ The merit of such examination is obviously based on the interpretive proposals reported in *Eikhah Rabbati*. Furthermore, data related to the Biblical Lamentations from the Septuagint, from the targum of Lamentations and from modern scholarship as well, will be used for a deeper and better understanding of the theme researched .

In summary, the main objective of the present research is to ascertain the use by *Eikhah Rabbati*, of the literary, rhetorical and ideological substratum of the Bible in general and Lamentations in particular, in its endeavour of expounding targeted colas and bicolos of the said readings. Indeed, “writing books within books” is not unusual in the Bible,⁸⁹ and *Eikhah Rabbati* is a Rabbinic work. The question now is, Does *Eikhah Rabbati* deal with such characteristic, and if yes, how? In this section of the work, the established procedure will be followed in order to conform, whenever possible, with the two sections of Lamentations as well as with the stanzas that are defined, for reason of clarification, in the terms of proposals made by J. Renkema , U. Berges and other modern scholars. Complementary explanations as well as extended justifications are amply provided in the selected books of these authors.

Pertaining to TgLam, the fact that C. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum*, except on pp. 139-140, does not take into account this feature, although he speaks, p. 136, of “the structural center of TgLam, beginning with TgLam 3,25” and mentions, footnote 7, Brevard Childs’ statement that “indications of how the book was understood must lie in the form and function of its various parts in relation to the all”, does not help understand TgLam claims in literary and historical contexts.

87This is the case, e. g., in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*. Gütersloh, 1962.

88Content and textual structuration as communicative medium, instead of theological statements, have to go hand in hand. It is noteworthy that the same subdivisions of the text of Lamentations are proposed with light differences by U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 2002, 91, 131, 178, 235, 274, on the basis of literary and poetical features, in general accordance with J. Renkema, *Lamentations*, Leuven 1998.

89J. L. Ska, “Our Fathers have told us.” “Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives”, Roma 1990, 46-53, has dealt with this topic.

The present section (TMLam.1,1-11) is the first of the two main sections outlined, based on the rhetorical structure of Lamentations. It is within this structure that will be examined all the claims (Stis) made in *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of the first two chapters of the TMLamentations.⁹⁰ The section heading is based on the issues examined. What is accounted for in this section should be regarded as the major theme that is discussed in the two *Eikhah Rabbati* corresponding chapters one and two.

The material in support and for the justification of this section is provided and basically defined as follows: (i) about 1137 (one thousand one hundred and thirty-seven) lines have been generated in *Eikhah Rabbati* for expounding chapter one of TMLam., (ii) 459 (four hundred and fifty-nine) lines for expounding chapter two of TMLam., (iii) 324 (three hundred and twenty-four) lines for expounding chapter three of TMLam., (iv) 277 (two hundred and seventy-seven) lines for expounding chapter four of TMLam., and (v) 123 (one hundred and twenty-three) lines for expounding chapter five of TMLam.. This gives a total of two thousand three hundred and twenty (2320) expounding lines of which, one thousand ninety-six (1596) lines are utilized in picturing the accounted breach of the covenant by the Community of Israel and the ensued sufferings, whereas only seven hundred and twenty-four (724) lines are dedicated to the paving of the path to the reconciliation with the Holy One, blessed be He.

This section is structured in four subsections as follows: (i) the report on a fallen Community (I.1.1), (ii) the account of the first aggression (I.1.2), (iii) the account of the second aggression (I.1.3), and (iv) the surge (I.1.4).

I.1. Fallen Community of Israel (TMLam 1, 1-11)

The first eleven verses of chapter one of TMLam. constitute a literary unit. This is because these verses comprise predicates and attributes to the city (TMLam. 1, 1.1), the nation (TMLam.1, 1.4), the province (TMLam.1, 1.5), the weeping woman (TMLam.1, 2.1), Judah (TMLam.1, 4.1), the mother (TMLam.1, 4.5), and Jerusalem (TMLam.1, 7.1; 8.1). Are all these designations referred to the same addressee? The answer is yes, for these designations are all related to the construct of the collective Zion-Jerusalem personified in the mentioned individualizing entities.⁹¹

⁹⁰These claims are therefore related to the first two chapters of the Biblical Lamentations, while the second section encompasses the *E.R.* claims to the three remaining chapters of the same Lamentations.

⁹¹Noteworthy is that the lamentations dealt with here are collective, see for instance, W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth, Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*. 1962, 209; and D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations* 16, speaks of the first of the five Lamentations as of “an impressive poetic depiction of the city of God”. An extended explanation on the need to resort to the individualizing personification of Fair Zion to account concretely for the historical blow of the

Obviously, the detailed predicates and attributes generated in *Eikhah Rabbati* to account for the aforementioned entities, are the centre of interest for the present research project. It is sufficient, under the present heading, to establish, on the basis of a literary analysis,⁹² the content of the made claims in order to consequently address (i) the fall reported in TMLam. 1, 1-6 and (ii) the sin mentioned in TMLam. 1, 7-11.

I.1.1. Fall of the Community of Israel (vss. 1-6)

This heading focuses on the claims made in *Eikhah Rabbati* that are related to the picture drawn on the Community of Israel in the stanza (TMLam. 1, 1-6). It is worth recalling here that in the present work all the encoded rabbinic statements are clustered together in the Annex II, based on the targeted verses from the Book of Lamentations detailed in Annex I. The unique context of these verses lets postulate that all the concerned claims are semantically related. The accounting for the content of the clustered claims (Stis) appears in a row of variously extended paragraphs (&) that reflect somehow the exegetical effort of *Eikhah Rabbati*. It must be noted here, though, that the undeniable semantic connection between these paragraphs is not always evident. Particular attention will be paid to the innovative content of the claims.

1§. Culpability of the Community of Israel

The first colon expounded is TMLam. (verse 1.1) = E. R. (א) איכה יִשְׁבֶּה בָּדָד “How (*eikhah*) lonely sits”.⁹³ This colon and its explanation have been rightly characterized as the preamble, i.e. the introduction to what follows. A first hypothesis assumed here is that all the *Eikhah Rabbati* literary components generated to comment this TMLam. 1, 1.1 are part of a unique literary unit analogue for instance, *mutatis mutandis*, to the individual *sugya* of the Babylonian Talmud.⁹⁴ Consequently, we can confidently consider that *Eikhah Rabbati* accounting for TMLam. 1, 1.1 is made of (i) Scripture- and-tradition based interpretations (Sti1) (lines 1-3), (ii) *mashal* 1 (lines 4-8a), (iii) Sti2 (lines 8b-10a) and Sti3 (lines 10b-11a), (iv) *mashal* 2 (lines 11b-17a), (v) a simile (S) (lines 17b-30a), (vi) Sti4 (lines 30b-39a) and Sti 5 (lines 39b-41a). The second assumed hypothesis is that all these explanatory components provide together

people of Israel as a whole in the *Book of Lamentations* is provided in A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations” 2-4.

92This is not a diversion. The midrash consists indeed in pointing out the Scripture meaning(s) relevant to the present situation, see G. Stemmerger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, 26.

93This is the first colon of TMLam. 1, 1 as picked up in E. R..

“How lonely sits/ the city full of people/ she has become like a widow/ (she that was) great over the nations/ (she that was) the princess among the provinces/ she has become a payer of tribute.”

94See Strack/Stemmerger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996,51, and S.G. Wald, “Baraita, Baraitot”, *EJ*, second Edition, 3 (2007) 125, col.1.

the whole picture of the Community of Israel, and they are all semantically connected. Furthermore, they contribute, by the way of composition,⁹⁵ to the *midrashic* in this case, *haggadic* meaning of the commented colon.

In the following examination below, very similar in its compositional characteristic, we focus on the first statement component of this interpretive unit while taking into consideration the above stated syntactic and semantic context. The first claim (Sti1) (lines 1-3) is anonymous. It states:

‘Three prophesies (are) using the word *eikhah*: Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Moses said: “*How (eikhah) can I by myself bear your complaint, your burden and your strife?*” (Deut. 1, 12). Isaiah said: “*O how (eikhah) has become a harlot, the faithful city!*” (Isa. 1, 21). Jeremiah said: “*How (eikhah) lonely sits?*” (Lam. 1, 1.1).

The comment of *Eikhah Rabbati* focuses on the interrogative adverbial particle *איכה* (*eikhah*) (“*how*”) in TMLam. 1, 1.1 which is the extended form of *אי* “*how*”. This adverbial particle“ depicts a striking change, from virtue to vice, for example in Isa. 1, 21, or often, from a glorious past to a miserable present.”⁹⁶ The anonymous interpreter in *Eikhah Rabbati* relies on the last meaning in order to emphasize TMLam. present theme of “contrast of former glories to present desolation.”⁹⁷ This interpreter deems this meaning, based on his use of the *nithpael* perfect tense, as assumed, that is, prophesied (*נִתְנַבֵּא*)⁹⁸ in his exegetical enumeration.⁹⁹ This is a genre, which comprises a list of the biblical authorities Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah; this list is then reinforced by the addition of another list that comprises three illustrative verses selected from the sixteen utterances in the Tanak,¹⁰⁰ in which *איכה* (*eikhah*) occurs in this form¹⁰¹ as the first word.

95G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum: Kultur und Geschichte der rabbinischen Zeit (70n. Chr. 1040n. Chr.)*, München 1979, 161 speaks of a composition -“Zusammensetzung”- by the way of a mosaic of rabbinic teachings in the treatment of well determined themes. A striking illustration of this “sketchy explanatory strategy”, more or less based on the poetical units of the text, is given by the same Writer in his comment on *E. R.* comment to Lam. 1, .1-3 in his *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel. Einführung - Texte - Erläuterungen*, München, 1989, 113-116.

96D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 18, but also U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 95 speak also of this meaning.

97D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 18.

98*Eikhah Rabbati* according to Munich Codex Heb. 229 has *ad locum* for obvious theological reasons אמרו 'they have said'.

99See W. S. Towner, The Rabbinic “*Enumeration of Scriptural Examples*”, Leiden 1973, and the handling of this topic in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 174f.

100S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae hebraicae atque chaldaicae*, Lipsiae 1896, 43 propounds seventeen occurrences of this form, four in Lamentations Book (1, 1; 2, 1; 4, 1; 4, 2) and the qere of 2 Kg. 6, 13.

101It is therefore not the “unusual morphology” of *איכה* in the three occurrences to decide their choice.

The reasons for choosing these biblical records are obvious. While “*How (eikhah) can I by myself bear your complaint, your burden and your strife?*” (Deut. 1, 12) is attributed to Moses and “*O how (eikhah) has become harlot, the faithful city!*” (Isa. 1, 21) is ascribed to Isaiah, “*How (eikhah) sits*” (Lam. 1, 1.1) is traditionally attributed, as the whole Biblical Book of Lamentations, to Jeremiah.¹⁰² In their present occurrence in *Eikhah Rabbati*, the three verses quoted here are epideictically juxtaposed by the *Eikhah Rabbati* Compiler. It occurs to us that the Compiler does not consider the concerned verses as either a matter of dispute or debate¹⁰³ but rather as differentiated and historically successive traits of a descriptive picture of an ethnic group (Deut. 1, 12), a woman (Is. 1, 21) and a city (Lam. 1, 1.1). The term “city” itself is here more or less personified by the way of a metonymic disclosure,¹⁰⁴ as in the case of the term “matron” in the *mashal* that follows.¹⁰⁵ Evidently, this appears to be the reason why it is reported that נתנבאו ‘they have uttered prophecies’, that is, in the Bible, appropriate for Isaiah and Jeremiah, whereas Moses hardly appears, *expressis verbis*, as prophet in Deut. 18, 15; 34, 10 (but here Moses is the prophet without parallel; the rabbis consider him the father and teacher of all prophets).¹⁰⁶ Moses is presented here as being at the very beginning of the period and the process¹⁰⁷ which lead the Community of Israel from happiness, through infidelity, to disgrace.¹⁰⁸ According to

102E. R. agrees with the preface of the LXX to *Threni seu Lamentationes*, which the *Vulgata* locates just after the Book of Jeremiah, see *Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio*, Vatican 1979, 1422.

103See Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 50; they belong neither to a dialog nor to a conversation, see, for example, K. Berger, *Formen und Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, Tübingen/Basel 2005, 308f.

104It is the metonymy of the inhabitant- the Jerusalemite(s) of a particular place-container, the city of Jerusalem, as this will be obvious in the following comment, see P. Fontanier, *Les figures du discours*, Paris ([1821-1830] 1977), 82-83, 111-112, and further “the personification of Zion/Jerusalem” in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament), Freiburg im Breisgau/Basel/Wien 2002, 52f and below.

105This term is used in the following *mashal*, but the TgLam. to Lam. 1, 1.1 gets Jeremiah speak of למספד עליהון הוה “to mourn over them with *eikhah* just as Adam and Eve were judged”, bringing the reference to Adam's sin, see below.

106But see Num. 6-7.

107 E.R. qualifies it as the realisation of three prophecies, the latter being a discussed designation, as shown in the Munich Codex Heb. 229, which uses instead אמרו ‘they said’, *in loco*; the same variant occurs in the online *Eikhah Rabbati* text of the Academy of the Hebrew Language. D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash: The case of the *Mashal*”, 1981, 290, note 57, considers that “[A]bout the prophetic character of Lamentations, there is no disagreement among the Rabbis, though there is a difference of opinion as to when the book was first publicly recited.” This tradition may justify the present occurrence of נתנבאו בלשון איכה

108G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel. Einführung - Texte - Erläuterungen*, München 1989, 113-114 speaks of three steps in the history of Israel, God's fiancée: 1) the happiness in the beginning, by the entry into the promised Land; 2) the frivolity, that is, the idolatry, in the generation of the kings; and 3) the misfortune after the destruction of Jerusalem, which is equivalent to a divorce, see chapter vi below. For a similar view in the targum (TgLam. 1, 1f), which considers that this history starts with Adam, see E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York, ([1976] 1981), 77f, C. M. M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 2003, 18-47.

Eikhah Rabbati, this is the very subject of Lamentations. This is the traditional claim. Evidently, this claim goes beyond the original historical setting and intent of the Biblical Book of Lamentations.¹⁰⁹ However, this traditional claim provides a theological understanding of the historical situation of exile as assessed by the interpreter, *vide infra*.

With regard to the use of the literary genre of enumeration, D. Stern is right when he considers that “[the] enumeration itself (...) does not explain the word’s meaning or that of the list.”¹¹⁰ Indeed, very little or hardly anything is said relating to the content of the three “prophecies”. The three prophecies stand for a statement that pertains to the present. Such use of a *marshal* appears an inescapable tool for the very explanatory logic that is observed. The observations outlined here as well as the historical context addressed in the present *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding are discussed in the next chapters.

Our examination now proceeds to focus on the next claims made in the examined colon. The following claims (Sti2-3) (lines 8b - 11a) are made by the Amora R. Levi (A3) and by the Tannaite Simeon Ben Azzai (T2). They state:

‘[Ben Azzai] said to them: Israel did not go into exile until they had repudiated the Divine Unity, the circumcision which has been given to the twenty generations, the Decalogue, and the Pentateuch. This is according to the numeral value of the letters constituting the word *eikhah* (Sti2).

R. Levi stated: Israel did not go into exile until they repudiated the thirty-six ordinances in the Torah for which the penalty is excision, and the Decalogue. This is according to the numeral value of the letters constituting *eikhah* (*yashva badad*)’ (Sti3).’

The claim made by R. Simeon Ben Azzai (T2) gives a surprising answer to a not less surprising question of his students asking for an expounding from ‘the Book of Lamentations.’¹¹¹ This move is odd because it assumes that the debate that precedes on the very nature and the meaning of *eikhah* as a Book is a settled issue.¹¹² Although in agreement with the previous claim

109 This view is not surprising. S.J.D. Cohen, “The destruction: From Scripture to Midrash”, in *Prooftexts*, vol.2 (1982) 21 - 22 considers, on the basis of literary features of Lamentations that “its author, like the authors of the laments found in the Psalter, may have been tempting to confront catastrophe as an absolute. He laments not only the fall of a lone city in 587 B.C.E., but all falls from disgrace, all disasters inflicted by heaven upon a sinful humanity.”

110D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991,175.

111This is the translation of מגילת קינות for the roll or scroll of lamentations in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York, ([copyright 1971] 1996), 1362, col. 2.

112This debate is mentioned in the Buber’s edition, the Munich Codex Heb. 299 and the online edition that have R. Eleazar (T1) and R. Yochanan (ben Zakai?) (T1)’s statements on the כה of איכה to deal further with this adverbial particle; it is thought of these Tannaites on the basis of the close relationship between them, according to W.

(Sti1) on the present desolation in exile of the Community of Israel, the answer of Ben Azzai (T2) is surprising because of the following: there is no apparent reason for this Tannaite to only focus on this form of *eikhah* and then to explain, using a symbolizing interpretation¹¹³ of the gematria which is the numerical value “thirty-six” of the letters אֵיכָה , and which corresponds, in the rabbinic ideological taxonomy, to the traditional items, viz. (i) Divine Unity, (ii) circumcision given to the twentieth generation since Adam, (iii) the ten words (Decalogue),¹¹⁴ (iv) the five books of Moses (Pentateuch), all items said to have been neglected by Israel to the point to deserve the exile.

It is obvious, however, that with this statement, Ben Azzai (T2) adds an unusual component to the interpretation of *eikhah* suggested so far, namely, the cause of the exile, while previous interpretations of *eikhah* overlooked or simply postponed seeking, as mentioned earlier, the cause of the exile, as these interpretations were concerned only with the issue of the nature of the Lamentations scroll. The claim of R. Levi (A3), which follows, completes the accusatory act against the Community of Israel.¹¹⁵ This claim further states the neglect (i) of the thirty-six ordinances punishable by excision¹¹⁶ and (ii) of the Decalogue: this is in order to account for the forty-six numeral value of the Hebrew consonants in the words *eikhah* and *badad*.

The characteristically striking emphasis on the exile and its alleged causes rules out any consideration on the connotation of *badad* either as an isolation, as stressed in the Targum on Lamentations (TgLam),¹¹⁷ or as a positive separation, according to Num. 23, 9 and Deut. 33, 38. But how historically reliable are these accusations? Has the Community of Israel committed all

Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, erster Band, Strassburg 1903, reprinted Berlin 1965, 33. But why in this case the occurrence of אמר instead of the properly tannaitic תני? The Munich Codex Heb. 299 repeats their names at the end of the expounding of the same topic! They are followed by R. Yehudah (T3) and R. Nechemyah (T3) claiming that the *qinot* scroll is a warning for the first and a lament for the second. This is dealt with in the *editio princeps* at the end of the comment on this colon, see below.

113This is the translation of “symbolisierende Auslegung” falsely used for אנכי by W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, erster Band, Strassburg 1903, reprinted Berlin 1965, 420.

114It should not include all the Torah, referred to in the following mention of “five Books...”, as stated in G. Stemberger, *Midrash. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel. Einführung - Texte - Erläuterungen*, München 1989, 114.

115Israel or the more common ‘Community of Israel’ is recorded in *E. R.* as the Rabbinic equivalent of the Biblical “City”, “Zion”, “daughter of Zion”, etc...

116The rabbinic tradition holds thirty-six offenses punished in the Torah with being cut off (the people) by the Lord himself, see Gen. 17, 14; Ex. 12,15.19; 30,33,38; 31,14; Lev. 7,20.21.25.27; 17, 4.9..., Num. 9, 13; 15, 30.31; 19,13, etc., from Lisowski, *Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Alten Testament*, Dritte verbesserte Auflage besorgte von H.P. Rüger, Stuttgart [1958] 1993, 701, col. 3-702, col. 1.

117See the expounding of these items in E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York: Hermon Press, ([1976] 1981), 25, with comment in C.M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*.

these transgressions? The question of the historical setting of these claims will be addressed below.

We now focus on the following claim (Sti4) (lines 30b - 39a). It is anonymous and is preceded by the introductory formula *dabar acher* דבר אחר that is translated ‘another interpretation’ of איכה

‘Jeremiah said to them: What do you find in an idol that you so yearn for it? If it had a mouth so as to be able to discuss, we would have spoken thus (*kakh*) and thus (*kakh*).

Since, however, [it cannot speak], let us state its position, and let us state His.¹¹⁸ Let us state its position: “*So (koh) says the Lord, you shall not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are terrified at them*” (Jer. 10, 2).

And let us state His: “*So (koh) shall you say to them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish* (Jer. 10, 11). *Not like these is the portion of Jacob, for He is the Former of all things, and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; the Lord of the hosts is his name*” (Jer. 10, 16).

The use of the introductory formula *dabar acher* ‘another interpretation’ in the expounding of *eikhah*, does not make this claim an alternative, but rather a supplementary comment that alludes to the accusation of idolatry. G. Stemberger has rightly noticed¹¹⁹ that the present claim relies formally on two particles, namely, *how*’ expressing the question, and *thus*’ providing the answer, both of which may be deduced from איכה.¹²⁰ The question is real. It is an indication of an indignant astonishment expressed by Jeremiah the prophet. The reason for such an amazement is that the issue addressed in this claim at this moment is the very nature of God which is being defined as having the ability to speak, discuss, and present stands, as shown in Jer. 10, 2.11.16. Idols neither possess such ability nor make heavens and earth. The Lord alone has made all things, and Jacob is his portion. This is a polemical claim¹²¹ that helps also decide the very nature of the Book of Lamentations. This is debated in the next claim below

118These are the words Cohen uses to translate what G. Stemberger, *Midrasch, Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 110 - 111 renders with a passive form: ‘Thus, all that regards matters related to the idol, and what is about the Lord has already been said.’

119G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 114.

120This particle is also object of the repeated discussion Eleazar (T1), this time R. Eliezer (ben Hyrcanus (?T1), had with R. Yochanan (ben Zakkai?) (T1) in the Munich Codex He. 299.

121The polemical point does exist, indeed, and it pertains to a confrontation between religions, see below.

Claim Sti5 (lines 39b - 41a) is the content of a discussion held by R. Yehudah (T3) with R. Nechemyah (T3). Both are later students of R. Aqiba (T3) and are reported¹²² to have often debated one with another. The claim has two parts and is stated as follows:

5. 1. ‘R. Yehudah and R. Nechemyah. R. Yehudah said: The word *eikhah* expresses nothing else than reproof; that is what is stated, “*How do you say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us?*” (Jer. 8, 8). And R. Nechemyah said: “The word *eikhah* implies nothing else than lament; that is what is stated; “*And the Lord called to the man and said to him, Where are you?*” (אֵיכָהָ ayyekah) (Gen. 3, 9), meaning “Woe to you” (אֵי לַכָּה) (*oi lekhhah*).

5.2. ‘When was the Book of Lamentations composed? R. Yehudah said: In the days of Yehoyakim. R. Nechemyah said to him: Is it that it is wept over a dead person before he dies! But, when was the Book of Lamentations composed? After the destruction of the Temple; and see proof of this in the words, “How lonely sits.”’

This claim is quite unique because the statements that make it are exclusive, and all these statements, that are related one to another address the very nature of the Book of Lamentations. If the Book of Lamentations is a “reproof”, as asserted by R. Yehudah (T3), then it must have been written before the Destruction of the First Temple as a warning of the terrible drama that was to come. On the other hand, if the book is a “lament”, as asserted by R. Nechemyah (T3), it must then have been written only after the Temple had been destroyed. The situation was chaotic. Only mourning was then the appropriate behavior. To sum up, the claims as well as the *meshalim* generated in this colon, which ends showing God as a mourner, agree with the view asserted by R. Nechemyah (T3),¹²³ and this view is a line of understanding that can certainly be concluded from the Biblical Book of Lamentations. This line of understanding is one of the main *Eikhah Rabbati* proposals with regard to history, *vide* below.

2§. Populous City of Jerusalem

The second series of claims is made to account for the TMLam. (verse1. 2) = *E. R.* (ז) העיר רבתי עמ “*the city full of people*”, which is, in its content, contrasting to the preceding because it refers to a city, which, as U. Berges puts it,¹²⁴ was the symbol *par excellence* of the community and of the multiple social contacts enabled by it. According to the Vilna edition, *Eikhah Rabbati*

122W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, erste Band, Strassburg 1903, reprinted Berlin 1965, 225, and in Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 77.

123This is in accordance with the targum, see Codex Vaticanus Urbinas Hebr. 1 of Targum on Lamentations, Appendix 2, 1, in C.M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations: Vindicating God*, Leiden/Boston, 2003, 147. Allusion is made to Adam’s sin, see G. Hasan-Ro-kem, *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 45.

124U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 96 - 97.

is concerned with this colon by means of two narrative anecdotes (As. 1-2) successively followed by a *mashal* (M) and by two claims (Stis 1-2). These anecdotes are two accounts of the material greatness of Jerusalem,¹²⁵ based on the phrase עַם רַבִּתִּי “full of people”,¹²⁶ *vide infra*. The next *mashal* helps understand the feature of Jerusalem as a populous city; this feature of Jerusalem is also addressed by the two other claims which are examined together here for the purpose of methodological request, although the two claims are made after the *mashal*, becoming *ipso facto* comments of it.¹²⁷ That they were traditionally distinct is shown by the Buber edition where the second claim (Sti2) precedes the *mashal*. Formally, the *mashal* constitutes a unit *per se* which can, therefore, end without any contribution from the claims.

1. The first claim (Sti1) (line 67) is part of the answer, in two components, to the rhetorical request ‘[I]f you wish to know how many multitudes there were in Jerusalem, you can ascertain from the priests’ [Cohen] (*E.R.*, lines 64b - 65a). In the Vilna edition, this request introduces the *nimshal* to the *mashal*-proper released as an answer to a similar request that carries forward the expounding of the present colon TMLam. (verse 1.2) ‘If you wish to know how many multitudes they were in Jerusalem, you can ascertain it from the priest’ [Cohen] (*E.R.*, lines 61b - 62a), *vide infra*. As such, the claim under examination comments the proof-text of the *mashal*:

1.1 ‘We have learnt that a bull was offered by twenty-four priests, and a ram by eleven’ *Eikhah Rabbati*, l. 67a.

This claim provides Tannaitic information that asserts an abundant liturgical practice during the era of the First Temple. Two traditions have been, however, added in the formulation of this first claim in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The terms ‘bull’ and ‘ram’ in *Eikhah Rabbati* chapter one, line 67 to TMLam. 1, 1.2, occur in a reverse order in the Mishnah Yoma 2

1.2 ‘A ram was offered by eleven: the flesh by five, and the inwards, the fine flour, and the wine by two each’, M. *Yom* 2, 6.¹²⁸

125G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München, 1989, 115 speaks of “Beflügelung”, something like the firing of the imagination that just a word makes possible.

126This is a choice made by *E.R.* because the ambiguous עַם רַבִּתִּי means ‘full of’ as well as ‘great among’. The targum, for instance, translates מְלִיא אוֹכְלוֹסִין וְעַמְמִין סְגִיָּאִין ‘full of peoples and many nations’, see E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 79. On the chireq compaginis of רַבִּתִּי now without real meaning, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, völlig umgearbeitet von E. Kautzsch, Hildesheim/New York, ([1909] 1977), & 90k.

127See an identical use of traditional records, a *baraita*, in the *nimshal* of the *mashal* to TMLam. 3, 1. Its function is, however, different. See for such a general use of a *baraita* as a source S.G. Wald, “Baraita, Baraitot”, in *E.J.*, second edition, volume 3, Detroit/Farmington Hills, Mi, 2007, 126.

128Seder Moed, Masekhet Yoma, in *Schischa Sidre Mischna*, edited by Ch. Albeck and H. Ya-lon, six volumes, Jerusalem 1959, 227; M. Yoma 2, 6, in *Mishnah (The)*, transl. by H. Dandy, Oxford ([1933] 1989), 164.

‘A bullock was offered by twenty-four: the head and the [right] hind leg - the head by one and the hind leg by two; the rump and the [left] hind leg - the rump by two and the hind leg by two; the breast and the neck - the breast by one and the neck by three; the two forelegs by two; the two flanks by two; the inwards, the fine four, and the wine by three each. This applies to offerings of the congregation; in private offerings [one priest] that is minded offering may offer [all]. For the flaying and the dismembering of both [the offerings of the congregation and private offerings] like rules apply’, M. *Yom* 2, 7.¹²⁹

Both *loci* witness the huge number of priests committed to the offering of sacrifice. Evidently, correlating the number of priests with the number of animal victims offered provides a good estimate of the population making the offerings. The data here lend support to the claim that the class of priests comprised many members during the First Temple’s era. These data indicate how highly popular was the piety amongst the population and how large was the population that came into the Temple for bringing offerings.

1.2. The second tradition is a *baraita*¹³⁰ proposed as a reply to the situation of the Second Temple’s era, following a request addressed by the above records from Mishnah Yoma 2. The version of the Tosefta Pischa (Pesachim) is quoted here, as follows, for comparison purpose,

‘One time, Agrippa the king wanted to know the census of the population. He said to the priests: “Set aside for me the kidney of each and every Passover - sacrifice”. And they put aside for him six hundred thousand pairs of kidneys - double the number of those who went out of Egypt, and there was not a single Passover - sacrifice in which were not numbered more than ten participants, excluding those who were unclean and those away on a trip. On that very day, the Israelites entered the Temple mount and it could not contain them all. And it was called the crowded Passover’, T. Pischa 4, 15.¹³¹

The *Eikhah Rabbati* report (l. 68-74a) is remarkably identical in its wording to its counterpart text of Tosefta Pischa although embedded in the context of a discussion on the

129 Seder Moed, Masekhet Yoma, in *Schischa Sidre Mischna*. Edited by Ch Albeck and H. Ya-lon, sic volumes, Jerusalem 1959, 228; M. Yoma 2, 6, in *Mishnah (The)*, transl. by H. Dandy, Oxford ([1933] 1989), 164.

130 G. Stemmerger, “Narrative Baraitot in the Yerushalmi”, Offprint of *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, 1, edited by P. Schäfer, Tübingen 1998, 64, considers with B. De Vries, *EJ* 4(1971) 189, a baraita as an “outside Mishnah”, i.e. “every halakah, halakhic Midrash, an historical or aggadic tradition which is “outside” (i. e., not included in) Judah ha-Nasi’s Mishnah”; see also for etymology, S.G. Wald (2nd ed.) “Baraita, Baraitot”, in *EJ*, second edition, volume 3, Detroit/Farmington Hills, Mi, 2007, 125.

131 Translation of T. Pis, in *The Tosefta*, edited by S. Lieberman, New York, 1962, 166, reworked on the basis of *The Tosefta*, transl. by J. Neusner, New York 1981, 137 - 138. It is reported that king Agrippa’s request alludes to an identical move made by the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, who wanted to impress Nero, according to F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 42.

validity of the Passover - sacrifice slaughtering.¹³² It needs therefore not to be reproduced here. The main differences, in linguistic terms, between the two texts reside in the meaning of *Eikhah Rabbati* פסח מעוכין 'Passover of the crushed' and of the Tosefta Pischa פסח מוכין translated either as 'Passover of spongy substances'¹³³ or 'Passover of the injured'.¹³⁴ The reference to the order of King Agrippa II (50-100 C.E.)¹³⁵ is reported in both traditions. The 'forty or fifty' reported by R. Chiyya (T5) and the 'hundred persons' reported according to *Eikhah Rabbati* by Bar Qappara (T5) are, in both cases, people taking part in the Passover-offering. These are historical facts and they are part of the rhetorical strategy of *Eikhah Rabbati*. Within the present literary context of *Eikhah Rabbati* explaining TMLam.1,1.2, this strategy of *Eikhah Rabbati* considers the reports resulting from the tradition of Passover offerings as accurate historical reports on the status of offerings and the population making the offerings during the era of the Second Temple. The historical content of these reports will be examined, *vide infra*.

2. Another feature related to the "populous" Jerusalem and reported in *Eikhah Rabbati* is the rate at which the population grew in this city. The subject is in the Vilna edition addressed by the second and last claim of this explanatory unit, (Sti2) (lines 74b - 77) as an answer to the question, 'How used the Israelites to grow and multiply'? The answer is worded as follows,

‘A man married his twelve years old son to a wife who was capable of bearing a son. Then he married his twelve-year old grandson, so that he himself did not attain twenty -six years without seeing grandchildren. This, to fulfil what was said, “And see the sons of your sons. Peace be upon Israel.” (Ps. 128, 6).

The rate at which the population grew in Jerusalem is drawn in Hebrew as an epideictic picture by means of six verbs.¹³⁶ All these verbal predicates inflected in the periphrastic tense הִיהָ + singular or plural active participle are to indicate a routine action. The protagonists who represent 'Israel',¹³⁷ are a twelve-year old son and grandson, a wife 'capable of bearing children', and a father who saw his grandchildren before attaining twenty-six years of age: all this is a fulfilment of Ps. 128, 8. Together with the preceding claim, this claim is a formal praise to the

132This context help understand the statement, 'excluding those who were unclean and those on a trip' .

133See מוכ in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971] 1996), 741, col. 2.

134Further with M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, if it is derived from נכה , 910, col. 2.

135According to S. Lieberman's comment, in idem, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah. A Comprehensive Com-mentary on Tosefta*, New York, 1962, 568.

136They are basically: פרי 'to grow', רבי 'to multiply', נשא 'to marry', אור 'to come back', גע 'to reach', ראה 'to see'.

137This term used in the Vilna edition is wanting in the Buber's edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*.

prosperity of Jerusalem. This is in a striking contrast to the assertion of the next colon. The historical content of this claim will have assessed in Chapter three of the present work.

3§. Community of Israel Like a Widow

The third descriptive feature of the population of Jerusalem is provided in expounded TMLam. (verse 1.3) = *E. R.* (ג) *היתה כאלמנה* “*she has become like a widow*”. As stated earlier, the present colon is structurally a contrast and antithetical unit¹³⁸ to the previous colon “*the city full of people*”(vide 2§). This colon is, on the other hand, synonymous to TMLam 1, 1.1, “*How alone sits*”. Both cola deal with the theme of the abandoned city. Indeed, the present image of “a widow” renders and reinforces the present reality of loneliness evoked in TMLam.1,1.1 in terms of social distress, and of loss of status.¹³⁹

This issue is examined in three rubrics in the Vilna edition. The three rubrics comprise (i) the lexical claims (Sti1) of R. Abba b. Kahana (A3), (ii) the simile (S) of R. Chama b. Uqba (A/third century) and the Rabbis’ *marshal* (M), and (iii) the claim (Sti2) of R. Aqiba (T2) and the Rabbis’ claims (Sti3). The Munich Codex Heb. 229 has the same text with similar interpretative rubrics which exhibits, however, three lexical as well as grammatical differences. Namely, (a) this text uses an hiph’il *הפלישו*¹⁴⁰ ‘they made him go to extremes’, in lieu of the simple form *פלישו*; (b) it reads *עליה* ‘upon her’, whereas the Vilna edition has *אליה* ‘to her’ (line 84), and (c) with the Buber edition, *שומרת יבם* ‘the woman waiting for the brother-in-law’,¹⁴¹ against the Biblical *אלמנה* “widow”. Moreover, the Buber edition repeats Jer. 51, 5 in the first and third rubrics, whereas the other two editions use this citation only in the third rubric. The observed floating expounding of this text is obviously due to its cryptic wording.

It is to be noted that the introductory claim (Sti1) (lines 78b - 85a) made in the first rubric is related to the preposition כ “like” which is quite ambiguous¹⁴² when it is related to the status of the Community of Israel, and this evidently requires an explanation. Moreover, what does *היתה כאלמנה* “*she has become like a widow*” mean? This said, the lexical claims (Sti1) by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) state,

138This is together with the synonymous and the synthetic cola, the third type of the cola that occurs in TMLam. 1, 1.6 below, see U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, Freiburg im Bresgau/Basel/ Wien 2002, 77f.

139See U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 97, and D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 19: “Jerusalem is compared to a widow because widows, together with orphans, were the most defenseless people in ancient society (...), and the most pitied”. The fact is that, “[I]n the Ancient Near East almanah designa-ted not so much a woman who had lost her husband as the social status of a woman who has no legal protector and who may, thus, be abused with impunity”, according to C. Cohen, “The Widowed city”, reported in A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 3.

140The Buber edition has *הפישו*, a pa’el of *חפש* for a similar meaning ‘to dig’.

141This trait implies that she is a widow.

142This predicate is from A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York 1984, 80.

‘ They (the Israelites) did not go to the extreme of rebellion against Justice, and she (the Justice) did not go to the extreme in punishing them. They did not go to the extreme of Justice, as it is stated,

(a) “*And the people [were] as complainants*” (Num. 11, 1) - “*complainants*” is not written here, but “*as complainants*”; (b) “*The rulers of Judah were as removers of a border*” (Hos. 5, 10) - “*removers of a border*” is not written here, but “*as removers of a border*”; (c) “*For Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer*” (id. 4, 16) - “*is a stubborn heifer*” is not written here, but “*is like a stubborn heifer*”.

And the Justice did not go to the extreme in punishing them,

(a) It is not written: “*She has become a widow*”, but “*as a widow*”, just like a woman whose husband went to a distant country but with the intention of returning to her; (b) “*He has bent his bow like an enemy*” (Lam. 2, 4) - “*an enemy*” is not written here, but “*like an enemy*”; (c) “*The lord has become like an enemy*” (ib. 5) - “*an enemy*” is not written here, but, “*like an enemy*”.

The examination of those biblical records leads to the conclusion that the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of TMLam. 1, 1.3 היתה כאלמנה “*she has become like a widow*” does not focus on the desperate and precarious situation of the widow in the ancient society. It must be stressed here that such an image is incompatible with the usage of the figurative language used in the Book of Lamentations as well as it is incompatible with the usage of the Hebrew equivalent of the comparative preposition “*like*”. The real and significant gap between the image and the reality actually conveyed by this mitigating language¹⁴³ is interpreted negatively by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3)¹⁴⁴ as documented by the Bible, and as supported by the rabbinic principle of the talionic logic of reward ‘*measure for measure*’.¹⁴⁵ Zion being “*like a widow*” should, therefore, be interpreted to mean that transgression has been committed, and that this committed transgression did not go to the extreme to deserve and cause the rupture of the matrimonial bond. Otherwise, had the transgression been extreme, the Israelites would have been punished accordingly, that is, to the extreme. They have, indeed, transgressed and the Lord has punished them consequently. He also had pity and has spared them. Obviously, the Lord’s מדת הדין ‘*Attribute of justice*’ evoked

143I owe this view to A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 1984, 70-71, where it is abundantly spoken of the rhetorical figure of ‘qualification’ as part of a program to blunt the harsh extremities of the Destruction and shape it to fit the covenant paradigm.

144The Buber edition has R. Aibo (A4), whose circumstances of life and relationships are unknown, according to W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III*. Strassburg 1899, reprinted Hildesheim 1965, 63.

145Midah keneged midah, see E. E. Urbach, *The Sages - Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1975, 371f.

in the *Eikhah Rabbati* text has not prevailed over the Lord's opposite Attribute מִדַּת הַרַחֲמִים , i.e. 'the Attribute of Mercy'.¹⁴⁶

What is the meaning of "like" associated with "widow"? Does it mean 'approximately a widow' to indicate a widow without formal and actual widowhood, which would be the image of the Israelites' condition of being "only an approximation of the abandonment of the widow?"¹⁴⁷ Much more, the *midrash* asserts 'She is like a woman whose husband has gone to a distant country but with the intention of returning to her'. This is also the content of R. Chama b. Uqba (A/third century)'s simile (S) (lines 85b-87a) which follows. In this simile (S) the uncomfortable situation of the Community of Israel is compared, in rabbinic terms, to the case of a marriage in which the fulfilment of the duties of marriage is of primary concern, which is to say more precisely that the widow only wants her support and not getting back the contract of her marriage.¹⁴⁸ This is a very complicated situation. The question now is, how such a complicated and difficult situation can be settled? Such a complicated situation is, indeed, difficult to settle without the help from the following *mashal* which, due to its form, content and for methodological approach is examined below. The claim (Sti1) of R. Aqiba (T2)'s and the Rabbis' claims (Sti2) do also deal with the meaning of the widowhood of Israel (lines 93b - 96a) and they both come after the *mashal*. Like the *mashal*, these claims are concerned with the ambiguous historical situation of Israel. They will also be examined together with the *mashal*, as suggested earlier. It will be shown that the mentioned marriage covenant is valid and that the fulfilment of its clauses is, indeed, a matter of real concern. The debate on the nature of this enduring bond of this marriage covenant between the two partners while historical circumstances compel to deny it remains a recurrent theme in *Eikhah Rabbati*, as this can be ascertained from the next expounding.

4§. Community of Israel Great in Intellect Over the Nations

The fourth feature characterizing the mourning population of Jerusalem and its situation is detailed in TMLam. (verse 1. 4) = E. R. (7) רַבְּתִי בְּגִיִּים "(she that was)" great over¹⁴⁹ the nations". This is a statement with an undeniable political connotation in which D. R. Hillers

146E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981, 78. This is the reason a *mashal* will be used in addition.

147E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 78.

148That is the *ketubah*, which, according to Jastrow, contains among other things, the settlement of a certain amount due to the wife once her husband dies or divorces her, see M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971] 1996), 680, col.1- 2.

149This translation is conform to the choice made by *Eikhah Rabbati* against the other meaning "among" of the Hebrew בְּ .

sees¹⁵⁰ rightly “an element of hyperbole”. This colon should be understood, on the basis of its Masoretic atnah accent, that it is structurally parallel and synonymous in its meaning to the preceding (verse 1.2) *עם רבתי* “full of people”. This is probably the reason why this colon is expounded in *Eikhah Rabbati* with the somewhat different meaning as *רבתי בדעות* “great in intellect” by means of a series of riddling (lines 96b-20a) followed by a similar series of dream narratives (As) (lines 230b-328a) in which a certain political and religious confrontation can be observed. Both series of narratives will be examined in the chapter dedicated to narratives.

Although no claim is formally made on this colon in *Eikhah Rabbati*, the present introductory explanation to these narratives occurs here for the following two reasons. Firstly, the interpretation of *רבתי בגוים* “great over the nations”, spelled as *רבתי בדעות* “great in intellect”, is a case of substitution of meaning and is as such a claim (Sti)¹⁵¹ made in *Eikhah Rabbati* on this statement from the Tanak. It is important to note that all the expounding accounts that come after are all based on this new meaning. Secondly, the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* as well as the Munich Codex Heb. 229 both present this new interpretation in the following order: (i) (verse 1. 4) *רבתי בדעות* ‘great in intellect’, (ii) (verse 1. 5) = *E. R.* *שרתי במדינות (כא)* “(she that was) the princess over the provinces” and (iii) riddling narrative series (As) of R. Huna (A4)’s in the name of R. Yose (T2/3/A3). One obviously notes here that the (verse 1. 5) = *E. R.* *שרתי במדינות (כא)* “(she that was) the princess over the province”, which is examined in the next paragraph, is introduced by TMLam. 1, 1.4, and further expounded by means of the eleven riddle tales and seventeen dream narratives¹⁵² which follow and address the historically relevant theme of the superiority of the Community of Israel in intellect, as we explain it below.

5§. She Is a Tributary Community

We examine the fifth feature ascribed to the Community of Israel in *Eikhah Rabbati*. This feature is encoded on the basis of the colon TMLam. (verse 1. 5) = *E. R.* *שרתי במדינות (כא)* “(she that was) the princess over the provinces” as well as of the verse that comes next. And it is dealt with in three rubrics, as follows.

Research mentions that TMLam. (verse 1.5) recalls historically the political and religious precedence of Jerusalem which may have been reinforced over the other regions of the country by the reform - oriented King Josiah (640 - 609 B.C.E).¹⁵³ This colon is not accounted for in

150See D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 18: “This language belongs to description of Jerusalem, not as she ever was in fact, but as she was in the eyes of those who believed her to be the city of God”.

151It does, however, not appear as such in the list of claims.

152Some narrative deals in fact with the relationship between the inhabitants of Jerusalem and those of the provinces!

153U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 97-98 provides an extended somewhat ‘anachronistic explanation’- with extension taking place under Josiah, rebellion under Jeroboam!- of this colon based on the history, while W. Rudolph, *Das*

Eikhah Rabbati by means of a special claim that might allude to this significant moment of the past; it is instead reanalysed, as it seems, to coalesce with the previous colon TMLam. 1, 1.4 “(she that was) great over the nations”, interpreted as רבתי בדעות “great in intellect”, into the one unit במדינות (שרתי) “(she that was) great in intellect over the provinces” from which the attributive נשרתי “princess” of TMLam (1. 5) has been, consequently, excluded.¹⁵⁴ This theme of the superiority in intellect stated on the basis of these two cola is deemed by the Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* as illustrated and demonstrated in the two series of the following riddling and dream narratives (As) that follow and are examined in Chapter IV .

With regard to this claim on the superiority of Jerusalem, the Biblical TMLam. (verse 1.5) proclaims, on the other hand, that this dominant position of the Jewish Capital no longer exists because a “role reversal” (E. Levine) has taken place. The rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* also holds similar position, and it does not innovate telling here why the change took place. *Eikhah Rabbati* firmly asserts that the situation has changed for the worse. Moreover, it provides, based on the following TMLam. (1, 1.6) דיתה למס “(she) has become a payer of tribute”, the reasons of this change by means of three accusatory and one comforting claims which are framed and expressed in terms similar to those of the claims to the other negative colon TMLam. 1, 1.1 of this verse. Let us now examine these claims.

First negative claim (Sti1) (l. 328b - 333a) states,

‘R. Yochanan said: Because Israel transgressed the condition which they accepted at [Sinai], for that reason, she (Zion) became tributary (למס) [*lamas*]. The letters of למס and of סיני have the same numeral value (130). R. Ishmael b. Nachman¹⁵⁵ said: Because Israel worshipped idols, for that reason she (Zion) became tributary (למס) [*lamas*], the letters of למס and of סמל ‘idolatrous image’ being the same. R. Berekhyah said: The inversion of למס is סמל [*semel*]. But the Rabbis stated: למס [*lamas*] means for the melting (ל + מסא) of the heart.’

Zion is subject to a tribute, this is an assumed fact in the Masoretic text. However, it is unclear to whom she pays this tribute. We notice here that *Eikhah Rabbati* is, rather, interested in the causes of the said subjugation which are provided by [*lamas*] of the present colon, that is

Buch Ruth. Die Klagelieder, 211, sees the splendour under the united reign of David and Salomon followed by Jeroboam’s rebellion; he has no reason to reduce מדינות to “cities”.

¹⁵⁴Was this exclusion necessary? שרתי is analogous to רבתי ‘great’ as a construct form of שרה, the feminine ‘princess’ of שר ‘commander, sovereign, king’, see for this meaning W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, Berlin/Goettingen/ Heidelberg ([1915] 1962), *ad locum*, and W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, Hildesheim/New York ([1909] 1977), & 90 k - l, for the form. The targum renders it as ושליטא באפרכי “she that ruled over the provinces”, see E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 79. That the *midrash* does not account for it is due to an interpretive choice whose motivation can only be a matter of speculation.

¹⁵⁵The Buber edition has R. Samuel, the Small (T2?), b. Nachman/b. Isaak (A3?), b. Ammi (A4?).

expounded by means of the same symbolizing decoding of the gematria used in the interpretation of TMLam. 1, 1.1. Furthermore, the accusation, as supported by the resemblance in the sound and the numeral value of the letters, is typically rabbinic in that it mentions for the second time, the transgression against the Sinai covenant and idolatry. Once the accusation made and the consequent present exile of Israel justified, the next step is dedicated to a possible return.

Second negative claim (Sti2) made by R. Uqba (A?) is summarized as follows.

This claim is a case of the haggadic creative story,¹⁵⁶ which relies on the tradition of Abraham interceding on behalf of the wicked (Gen. 18) and it addresses Jer. 11, 15. 1-2. Abraham, the beloved of God and the father of the Israelites, looks for his children in God's house in the night of the ninth of Ab. He meets the Holy One, blessed be He, who seems surprised by his presence. The Holy One, blessed be He, lets Abraham know that he cannot find his children because, (i) they have sinned and are in exile, (ii) there has been no consideration for the righteous because Israel has committed evil,¹⁵⁷ (iii) many of these children of Abraham have done wrong¹⁵⁸ and the good deeds have been consequently undervalued, (iv) their distinguishing circumcision¹⁵⁹ has been disregarded, (v) they have rejoiced over their downfall,¹⁶⁰ and, therefore, deserve the punishment according to Prov. 17, 5. Father Abraham has no other choice but lament over this fate that has befallen his children.

Third negative claim (Sti3) and a comforting claim (Sti4) are summarized as follows.

As for *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding TMLam. 1, 1.1, the Vilna edition as well as the Munich Codex Heb. 229 both let R. Yehudah (T3) and his opponent R. Nechemyah¹⁶¹ debate¹⁶² on the relationship between the sins of the Israelites, the acrostic forms of the Book of Lamentations and a possible relief. R. Yehudah (T3) considers (Sti3) that the Book of Lamentations has been written in alphabetic acrostics because Israel has sinned against the Torah, which is written from *alef* to *taw*.¹⁶³ As expected, R. Nechemyah (T3) counters (Sti4) saying that Isaiah has preceded and healed from *alef* to *taw* all the curses Jeremiah spoke against sinner Israel.

156The scholarship on *midrash* in general and haggadah in particular, owes this descriptive concept and its 'counterpart' creative philology, to I. Heineman, *Darkhé Haaggada*, Jerusalem: Magnes/Masada 1970.

157Jer. 11, 15.2. עשיתה המזמתה "she has done her evil."

158Jer. 11, 15.3. עשיתה המזמתה הרבים "she has done evil, many."

159Jer. 11, 15.4. ובשר קדש יעברו מעליך "and the holy flesh has passed away from you."

160Jer. 11, 15.5. כי רעתכי אז תעלזי "('your wrong'=) you have done wrong and you rejoice!"

161Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 77.

162The claims made here were announced from R. Yehudah (T3) and from the Rabbis!

163The proof-text is Dan. 9, 11, in which the first letter alef, and the last taw, are used in את , the accusative particle and in תורתך "your Torah": "all Israel has transgressed your Torah (law)."

The proof for claim Sti4 is provided by R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4), R. Aibo (A4), and the Rabbis¹⁶⁴ on the basis of the refutation of the twenty-two verses of TMLam. chapter one, traditionally ascribed together with the other four chapters of this Book to Jeremiah, by means of contrasting twenty-two verses from the Book of the traditional master of Jeremiah, Isaiah, after the inserted expounding of TMLam. 1, 2.1α בְּנוֹ תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָה “*she bitterly weeps*”.¹⁶⁵ The search for a historical setting for this comforting view is the subject of Chapter Three. In the following paragraph, we examine the other *Eikhah Rabbati* features of fallen Jerusalem.

6§. Intense And Universal Weeping

TM Lam. (verse 2)¹⁶⁶ is the second verse of this first unit on the basis of which fallen Zion is further pictured in series of characteristic features. Here, *Eikhah Rabbati* focuses on TMLam. (verse 2. 1) בְּנוֹ תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָה “*she bitterly weeps in the night*”. The enduring weeping of Zion, referred to in this colon by the use of the Hebrew absolute infinitive followed by the inflected form of the same verb, *vide infra*, is used in *Eikhah Rabbati* with great emphasis to express, on the account of this colon, (i) an intense experience by means of a series of claims made within a kind of a proem, and (ii) a genuine trouble occurring within the covenant.

1. Accounting for an Intense Weeping Experience

The proem related to this subject draws heavily on Ps. 42, 4.1 and on Ps. 77.7f. The proem accounts for the weeping experienced as an unending and uncomfortable situation as well as for tears as source of food.

1.1. Four claims are related to the theme ‘tears as food’. The four themes form together a literary and clearly distinct unit which is inserted in the Vilna edition in the *E. R.* expounding of the TMLam. 1, 1.5¹⁶⁷ The unit is based on Ps. 42, 4.1, וְלֵילָה, לֶחֶם יִמְעַתִּי לֶחֶם “*my tears have been my food by day and by night*”. From the syntactic connection of “tears” and “food” in the utterance “*food by day and by night*,” R. Acha (A4) infers (Sti1) that the “tears” were also poured without end¹⁶⁸ “*by day and by night*.” The tears are constant as well as substantial food. The

164This is, as A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 1084, 74 notes, one of the two illustrative cases of the inter-textuality of prolepsis, the rhetorical figure of anticipation and fulfillment.

165This erroneous insertion does not exist in the Buber edition.

166TMLam. 1, 2 “She bitterly weeps| her tears (are) on her cheeks| she has none to comfort her || (...) all her friends have dealt treacherously with her| they have become her foes”.

167It is useful to bring to memory that this is also the case in the Munich Codex Heb. 299, and not in the Buber edition.

168The Buber edition has for the same R. Acha (A4) translated, ‘As food is constant, so is the ninth of Ab constant; as food is constant, so are my tears constant.’ This picture drawn in the *midrash* is in accordance with the biblical literary image described by A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations” ..., *Prooftext*, vol. 2 (1982), 3, “The raped

Rabbis deduce (Sti2), using this claim and on the basis of 1 Sam. 1, 7, “*And she wept, and did not eat*”, a sort of inclusiveness, that is, tears and food are somewhat one and the same thing: who weeps needs no food, and better: he/she eats (with) tears. This is said to have been the situation of Israel in her exile to Babylon: the Israelites refused to follow Ezekiel who, on God’s request (Ez. 12, 3), had brought “*tools for the exile*”, which tools R. Chiyya b. Abba (T5) (Sti3) and R. Simeon b. Chalata (T5) (Sti4) opportunely interpret as kitchen utensils. Consequently, they had to weep while kneading the dough in a pit and ate food mingled with gravel stones, as said in TMLam. 3, 16.

On the other hand, the *midrash* plays down this hard experience of consuming tears. More opportunely, it addresses the most difficult part that is the second half of (Ps. 44, 2.2), the standing “*While they say to me all the day long, Where is your God?*” which is concerned with the unbearable.

1.2. This absence of God revealed by the weeping is the second topic addressed, using Ps. 77, 7-11. Various features are successively examined which render, step by step, the weeping of the Community of Israel a painful issue.

1. 2.1 Recall of the Past

The first step is the recall of experiences of past days, as stated in Ps. 77, 7.1 *אזכרה גינתי בלילה* “*I will remember my song in the night.*” In this context, the interpretation of the word *גינתי* “*song*” by R. Aibo (A4) (Sti5) as ‘break’, i.e., the ‘destruction’¹⁶⁹ that Israel endured from the heathen kingdoms,¹⁷⁰ seems inappropriate. Instead, R. Yehudah (A4)¹⁷¹ rather speaks (Sti6) of the remembrance of Israel’s songs in the nights of old. The “*nights of old*” here are referred, in

and defiled woman who survives (...) is a living witness to a pain that knows no release. It is similarly the perpetualness of her situation that comes through most forcefully when Zion is pictured as a woman crying bitterly alone in the night with tears wetting her face (1,2). The cry seems to ululate permanently in the night; the tear forever falls to the cheek. It is a matter not just of lingering suffering but of continuing exposure to victimization.”

¹⁶⁹This statement is ascribed in the Buber edition to R. Yehudah b. Simon (A4).

¹⁷⁰The Hebrew *גינתי* is the construct form with the first person suffix of *גינה* ‘song on stringed instrument’ (‘Saitenspiel’), ‘derisive song’ (‘Spottlied’), in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament, ad locum*, 1. ‘knocking, affliction, defeat’, 2. ‘music’ in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, ad locum*. It is a deverbal form of *גנן* ‘to strike, to knock’. The proof-text to this claim, Gen. 14, 20, *ברוך אל עליון אשר מגן צריך בידך*, “*Blessed be God the Most High, who has delivered your enemies in your hands*”, uses a *pi’el* form of *מגן*, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*. As such, this proof-text contradicts a claim that is related to the defeat of Israel, see the comment of the translator, A. Cohen.

¹⁷¹R. Aibo (A4) in the Vilna edition.

the Vilna edition, to the biblical “*night of Pharaoh*” (Ex. 12, 29), “*night of Gideon*” (Judg. 7, 9), “*night of Sennacherib*” (2 Kings 19, 35), which all allude to Israel overcoming her enemies (Sti7),¹⁷² and it is an unequivocal indication that the present disappointment is the cause of the tears poured. Here is the moment to think about this situation.

1. 2.2 Reflection

The present step reasonably considers the fact that the expected rescuing intervention has not occurred. This observation could be the main reason why there is no rabbi named here, who would endorse this basically individual and collective cathartic process in its two moments. The *midrash* presents these moments as self-evident in (i) Ps. 77, 7.2 *עם לבבי אשחזה* “*I will speak with my own heart*”, (ii) Ps. 77, 7.3 *ויחפש רוחי* “*and my spirit will carefully search*”. This unavoidable examination of the personal conscience leads one to the following questions we examine below.

1. 2.3 Unanswered Questions

This step consists of three questions directed at God for his present observed behaviour. We examine them below.

1. 2.3.1 The two questions of Ps. 77, 8.1-2 *ולא יסיף לרצות עוד / ואלעולם יזנח אדני* “*Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he appease no more?*” are answered differently. While TMLam. 3, 31 reassures that “*The Lord will not cast off for ever*”, it cannot, however, be denied that the appeasement he provided to Moses (Ex. 33, 11) and to Elijah (Kings 19, 15) failed to materialize in the present time of the *midrash* (Sti8). Thus, this question remains unanswered.

1. 2.3.2 The question in Ps. 77, 9.1 *האפט לנצח חסדו* “*Is his mercy gone forever*” is answer-red positively on the basis of the Greek word ἄφεξ ‘let go’ by R. Reuben (A4) (Sti9). However, R. Chanina b. Pappa (A3)¹⁷³ (Sti10) and R. Simon (A3) (Sti11) keep questioning, both respectively using support from Ex. 33, 19 and of Jer. 16. 5.

1. 2.3.3 There is no answer either to the question of Ps. 77, 10.1 *השכח חנות אל* “*Has God forgotten to be gracious*.”¹⁷⁴ However, the question from Ps. 77, 10.2 *אם קפץ באף רחמיו* “*has he in anger shut up his compassion?*” [Cohen] is, at last, answered as indicated in this statement (Sti13) made of two contrasting components worded as follows ‘although he is angry, but his mercy is near’. There is no doubt that Zion continues to complain of having

172It can not be overlooked that the Buber edition mentions also the ninth of Ab night, night of defeat, to which the present TMLam, 1, 2.1 is appended as proof-text.

173He is correctly said in the Buber edition in the comment to Ps. 77, 9.2 *גמר אומר לדר ודר* “*has his [what he said =] word failed for all the generations?*”

174The Buber edition repeats this colon five times in various formulations, as to show that this is the very issue.

been forsaken, and this is lent support from Isaiah 49, 14. On the other hand, the recall of the very principle that “although he is angry, but his mercy is near” signals a turning moment from unanswered questions to tentative answers.¹⁷⁵

1. 2.3. 4 Questioning and Confidence. One observes a change in emphasis now. This change in emphasis is evidently marked by the expounding of Ps. 77, 11 stressing the weakness of the ‘complainants’ and the need to appease God.

(1) It is very tempting for the utterers of the unanswered questions to convince themselves that the addressee (The Most High) could not react. This was a desperation move that was overcome effectively, when R. Alexandri (A2) interpreted the following Ps. 77, 11.1-2 שְׁנוֹת יָמִין עָלֶיךָ / ואמר חֲלוּתִי הִיא “*And I said: This is my weakness, that the right hand¹⁷⁶ of the Most High could change*” [Cohen], as the confession made by the ‘complainers’ to acknowledge that it is their own¹⁷⁷ weakness that has caused the right hand of the Most High to change (Sti14). It must be emphasized here that from this moment begins a differentiated view on the weeping and its causes. It is this view that prevails in spite of a contradicting view stated in claim (Sti15) by R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3).¹⁷⁸ In this claim (Sti15) the argument that the Lord has decided to end the covenant is taken up to justify the absence of God’s reaction to the dire exile situation of Israel. R. Simon (A3) lends instead support to R. Alexander (A2)’s claim, using an allegory on the revolution of the sun (Sti 16), which cannot stop moving. The *marshal* (M) of R. Isaac (A3) about a warrior, who was unable to defend his provincial fellows, helps cope with this situation.

(2) The present step focuses on the new constellation of relationships between the covenant partners on the basis of Ps. 77, 11.2 שְׁנוֹת יָמִין עָלֶיךָ “*That the right hand of the Most High could change*” [Cohen]. R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) achieves this breakthrough by means of a semantic reanalysis of the argumentation utterances, which helps restore the covenant framework. Namely, if the right Hand of the Most High is submitted to sickness, it may be healed, and this means that there is hope for those who rely on it; however, if the right Hand of the Most High is changed, there is no hope because only

175This turnabout seems to characterize the accounts of lamentations, see A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations ...”, *Prooftext*, vol. 2 (1982), 10-16.

176This is “the Lord’s helping power”, in W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. I. Vom Abschluss der Mishna bis zum Tode Jochanans. 220 bis 279 nach der gew. Zeitrechnung*, Strassburg, 1892, reprinted Hildesheim, 1965, 200.

177This means that the focus is on the first person suffix of חֲלוּתִי “my weakness”, and not on his, that is, on God’s weakness.

178He supports R. Alexander (A2)’s claim in the Buber edition in which it is stated: ‘Because they worshiped idols, your hand has changed’, while his objection is ascribed to R. Simon(A3) in the *editio princeps*.

this right Hand can provide security. This was already the thinking of R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1), who was convinced with the support of TMLamentations 5, 22, that the Lord has not rejected the Community of Israel, but he is only angry at her. Therefore, there is room for appeasement (Sti 17).

2. Weeping Within the Covenant.

Here we examine what is traditionally known as the ‘regular expounding’ that relies no longer on Ps. 77 in the account for the extent of the weeping caused by the disaster resulting from the iniquities of Israel.¹⁷⁹ The focus is at present on TMLam. (verse 2. 1) *בְּכֹה תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָהּ* “*she bitterly weeps in the night*” that is the basis on which the weeping of the Community of Israel is further dealt with. There is no doubt, however, that the main concern is and remains the emphasis on the covenant,¹⁸⁰ the ultimate reality attained in the wake of the afore-examined questioning process.

Three structuring linguistic forms are used in the expounding, which help distinguish and develop with great emphasis three themes (*vide infra*). This observation is supported by the inverted order in which these same components occur in the Buber edition. Let us briefly examine the three issues in question.

2. 1 With regard to the nature of weeping, two distinct types of weeping are observed, viz. a real and a frivolous weeping. A claim (Sti18) related to this issue is first made by the Holy One, blessed be He, against the Community of Israel. In this claim (Sti18), the Holy One, blessed be he, makes a distinction between the *בְּכֹה* של *תפלות* ‘frivolous’¹⁸¹ weeping’ and the *בְּכֹה* של *ממש* ‘real’¹⁸² weeping’. R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) sees the frivolous weeping (Sti 19) as illustrated in Num. 11, 10; 14, 1.¹⁸³ Real weeping, on the other hand, is instanced by (i) R. Aibo (A4) (Sti 20) in Jer. 31, 15, Ps. 137, 1, and (ii) R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) (Sti21) in TMLam. 1, 2, Ps. 137,

179Isa. 59, 1-2 *הִנֵּה יָד יְהוָה קְצָרָה יָד יְהוָה מִהוֹשִׁיעַ (...) כִּי עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם הִיוּ מִבְדִּילִים בֵּינֵיכֶם וּלְבִין אֱלֹהֵיכֶם* “*Behold, the hand of the Lord is not shortened from saving (...). But your iniquities are coming between you and your God*”, quoted as proof-text for R. Isaac (A4), or R. Levi (A3)’s *mashal*, uses the term of ‘iniquities’ to qualify Israel’s deeds.

180It is in this rubric that, according to R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3), the Holy One, blessed be He, intervenes twice to introduce his own discretionary point of view into what was until now a monologue of the Community of Israel in the expounding of TMLam. 1, 2.1, see first item.

181 *תפלות* ‘frivolity’, ‘trivialness’, ‘obscenity’, in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, ad locum.

182 *ממש* [‘something tangible] substance, substantial, real’, in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babil and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, ad locum.

183The targum to TMLam.1,2.1 also asserts that the weeping of the Israelites reported in Num 14,1 as following the account of the returned spies to the encampment made the Lord angry. “He decreed that it should be thus in that night throughout their generations over the destruction of the Temple,” translation in C.M.M.Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 2003, 155.

1. Cases of weeping and comforting of the complainant do find support in these views, provided that we, of course, agree with R. Aibo (A4) that the Holy One, blessed be He has promised the reward, following the weeping, of restoring Israel from captivity (Sti22), as it is written in Jer. 31, 16f.

2. 2 Claim Sti23 is about what is evidently described as the “occasions” of the weeping. The claim is based on the grammatical structure *בכו תבכה* of TMLam.1, 2.2 which is the absolute infinitive *בכו* “to weep over” followed by the finite third singular person of the imperfect tense *תבכה* “she weeps over”. This grammatical structure is said to express intensity.¹⁸⁴ As in the targum,¹⁸⁵ it is here analyzed (Sti23 shown below) in accordance with the rabbinic interpretation principles¹⁸⁶ as a composite of two predicates that govern two different series of complements representing the sample of the causes of the weeping in the Tanak:

“Weeping, she weeps” – “Weeping” on account of one calf, “she weeps” on account of two calves.¹⁸⁷ Another interpretation: [“weeping”] on account of Judah, [“she weeps”] on account of Zion and Jerusalem. Another interpretation: “Weeping” on account of the exile of the ten tribes, “she weeps” on account of the exile of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.’

2.3 Last claim Sti24 on the subject of weeping is about extending Israel’s weeping to other characters, to things and into the night; this is based on two variants of the phrase *בכו ומבכה* “weeping” [and] she makes the others weep,¹⁸⁸ as shown below:

‘Another interpretation: “weeping” she makes the others weep with her.

1. “Weeping” she makes the Holy One, blessed be He, weep with her, for it is written (Isa, 33, 7; Gen. 15, 5) (...).

2. “Weeping” she weeps and she makes heaven and earth weep¹⁸⁹ with her, as it is stated (Joel 2, 10) (...). “Weeping”, she weeps and she makes mountains and hills weep with her, as it is written (Jer. 4, 24) (...). “Weeping” she weeps and she makes the seventy nations weep with her. R. Pinchas said: The seventy bulls which Israel used to offer on the Feast of Tabernacle corresponded to the seventy nations, so that the world should not be depopulated through/or of them.

184See W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, völlig umgearbeitet von E. Kautzsch, Hildesheim - New York, ([1909] 1977), & 113 l-n, E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York, ([1976] 1981), 81.

185E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York, ([1976] 1981), 81.

186J. Bonsirven, *Exégèse rabbinique et exégèse paulinienne*, Paris: Beauchesne et ses fils, 1939, 196.

187That is, the golden calf and the two calves set up by Jeroboam, see 1 King 12, 28.

188This structure is made up of the absolute infinitive followed by the present participle of the hiph'il.

189This is the second variant made up of the absolute infinitive followed by the present participle of the qal, and by the present participle of the hiph'il.

“*Weeping*”, she weeps and she makes the Community of Israel weep with her, as it is stated (Num. 14, 1) (...).’

The first and most regular¹⁹⁰ structure בוכה ומבכה ‘she weeps and she makes [X] weep with her’ is used to indicate the implication of two categories of supernatural beings, the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Ministering Angels, in the weeping. The second variant בכו בוכה ‘she weeps bitterly and she makes [Y] weep with her’ implies the involvement of (a) four natural elements combined in two, viz. heaven combined with earth, on the one hand, and mountains combined with hills, on the other hand, and (b) the seventy nations for the missing of the sacrifice of the seventy bulls¹⁹¹ as well as of the Community of Israel.¹⁹²

It is worth noting here (i) that the participation of the hierarchical components of the ‘reality’ in the weeping of the Community of Israel recalls the involvement of the entire nature in the mourning of the Holy One, blessed be He, for the suffering of the same Community of Israel, as reported in one of the *meshalim* accounting for TMLm. 1, 1.1, and (ii) that the universal weeping is correlated with the mention of the most overpowering moment rendered in *Eikhah Rabbati* (verse 2. 1β) בלילה (כה) “*in the night*”, a time at which the weeping is said to take place. The said night is no longer seen as one among the nostalgic nights of victory for Israel mentioned at the outset of this expounding. Neither is this night considered as an ordinary and undetermined night amongst other nights. This night is a unique and a well-defined one.¹⁹³ This unique night is the metonymy of the overwhelming and enduring darkness, and as such, it intimately relates to the weeping (Sti1). R. Aibo (A4) further considers (Sti2) that this very feature of lack of light (darkness) and of communication at night is very appropriate in bringing home the ‘Lamentations’ experience as lived at the time of the Destruction of the Temple and during the exile, as it is stated in the case (*ma`aseh*) (A) reporting the reaction of Rabban Gamaliel (T2/T5) at the weeping of a woman.

190It is the only phrase used in the Vilna edition as well as in the Buber edition for eight cases.

191See the translator’s comment *ad locum*, based on R. Pinchas (T4/5)’s explanation: ‘The bulls were offered in atonement for the sins of the nations to save the world from being destroyed because of their evil. Hence the heathens may well weep with her, because there is none now to atone for them.’

192The Community of Israel was already the main subject targeted in the expounding of this semi-colon!

193It is correctly rendered ‘On *that* night’ by E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York, ([1976] 1981), 82 as a finding of the *midrash*.

7§. Weeping for a Number of Targeted Victims

The features examined here as related to the weeping of the fallen she-city of Zion are the object of a discretionary choice. As an illustration of this discretionary choice, there is, for instance, no claim in *Eikhah Rabbati* on the *collectivum*¹⁹⁴ of the inflected¹⁹⁵ דמעתה “her tears” of the colon TMLm. (verse 2. 2) = *E. R.* (כו) על לחיה “her tears on her cheeks”. The preceding extensive comment on the weeping appears to have been deemed sufficient to account for the huge ravages caused by the immense devastation *Eikhah Rabbati* was dealing with. Consequently, the interpreter focuses, instead on the adverbial על לחיה “on her cheeks” in the claim (Sti) reporting on what is characterized, in Chapter One, as the four categories of the privileged mourned victims¹⁹⁶ of the Destruction, viz. the priests, the leaders, the judges and the young men. It states,

“*And her tears on her cheeks*” - on account of her priests, as it is stated: “*They shall give to the priest the leg, and the two cheeks, and the stomach*” (Deut. 18. 3). Another interpretation: on account of the mighty men, as it is said: “*And he [Samson] found a fresh jawbone of an ass*” (Jud. 15, 15). Another interpretation: on account of her judges, as it is said: “*With a rod on the cheek shall they strike [the judge of Israel]*” (Mi. 4, 14). Another interpretation: on account of her young men. You find that when the enemies entered the Temple, they seized the young men and bound their hands behind their backs. They wept and their tears ran down their cheeks. They could not weep for them, and the tears were fixed on their cheeks like the scar of a boil.’

It is well established that the fixation on the fate of priests, powerful men, judges and young men whose case is so extensively reported in comment scarcely supported by biblical *Vorlage*, is deliberate. This fixation is a wilfully wanted historical innovation, especially when one considers that the lemma לחי “jaw” is used seventeen times in the Tanak in various textual contexts. It is also worth noting that there is not a single mention of either women or young women, and of either kings or prophets whose deplorable elimination is repeatedly mentioned

194See W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 1962, *ad locum*. The Lamentations in the *Septuaginta*, Duo volumina in uno, edit. A. Rahlfs, Stuttgart, ([1935] 1979) has the plural wordform τὰ δάκρυα, *ad locum*.

195This is the constructed singular form to which the feminine singular pronominal suffix is affixed.

196A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 3, speaks of “exposure to victimization” present already in the Biblical Lamentations Book.

elsewhere in TMLamentations. Search for the historical credibility of such fixation on the fate of such groups of persons should, thus, be carefully conducted along with the search for the meaning of the ideological message intended to be conveyed, while keeping in mind that the accounting could also have been made to achieve a rhetorical effect wanted by *Eikhah Rabbati* interpreters.

8§. Comforted Would-be Mourner

The claim made by means of the TMLam. (verse 2. 3) אין לה מנחם “*she has none to comfort her*” asserting the absence of supporters showing solidarity with the mourning Fair Zion, as it is the case in the parallels of Job 2, 11-12, Isa. 51, 19, and Ps. 69, 21, is strikingly dealt with straightforward as contradicted by R. Levi (A3)’s optimistic stance in *Eikhah Rabbati* indicated in the statement (Sti) shown below:

‘Wherever it is said [in the Scriptures] “*has none*”, it indicates that there will be in the future.’

The proof of this claim on the basis of the Biblical evidence Gen. 11, 30, 1 Sam. 1, 2, Jer. 30, 17, TMLam. 1, 2 where this phrase “*has none*” occurs, is respectively provided by Gen. 21, 1, 1 Sam. 2, 21, and Isa. 59, 20; 51, 12. A Comforter will come to the mourning Community of Israel to change her situation for the better. The Holy One, blessed be He is, without doubt, the expected Comforter, it is argued.

9§. Weeping Amid Defection and Enmity

For the present feature of abandonment and solitude in the catastrophe, *Eikhah Rabbati* agrees with TMLam. (verse 2. 5/6) = E. R. כל רעיה בגדו בה היו לה לאיבים (כח) “*All her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies*”. However, *Eikhah Rabbati* specifies by the way of a grievance that the deceiving lovers and friends are now not only simply the figurative ones,¹⁹⁷ they are also no longer the political allies that might have been alluded to the TMLamentations 1, 2.¹⁹⁸ R. Jacob of Kefar-Chanan (A/ third century) sees here an allusion

¹⁹⁷This according to D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 19 in the sense of the literary genre ‘lamentations’.

¹⁹⁸At least if U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 99, is right that the anti-Babylonian alliance of Jer. 27, 3, is mentioned here, and that it is also about the move of the neighbouring nations against Judah and Jerusalem in 2 King 24 2. Also in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Das Klagelieder*, 211.

(Sti) to Archangels Michael and Gabriel,¹⁹⁹ reported²⁰⁰ to have been ordered to set fire to the Temple, which was much dearer to them than to Israel.

10§. Judah in Exile Because of Transgressions

TMLam. (verse 3. 1)²⁰¹ = *E. R.* גלתה יהודה (כט) “*Judah is gone into exile*” is the third verse on which a set of claims are made in *Eikhah Rabbati*. However, these claims are no longer related to the fallen she-city. Rather, they are related to the ravaged land and tribe of Judah.²⁰² this closeness of land and tribe suggests that Judah bore, together with the capital city dealt with in the previous comment, the degrading marks of the humiliation. This theme is examined in *Eikhah Rabbati* by means of somewhat innovative claims in that these claims address the departure of Judah as population into exile, the causes of the exile, and the harsh conditions of life in exile

1. An anonymous interpreter lists first in a claim (Sti) the traits which distinguish the departure of Judah into exile as opposed to the departure into exile of heathen nations. The following traits transform Judah’s exile into a torture:²⁰³ There is no exile for heathen nations. There exists no real exile for heathen nations because the gentiles do not endure the privations required by the adherence to the dietary laws, and they do not go into exile barefooted.²⁰⁴ The use of the same simple predicate in the feminine form גלתה יהודה “*Judah is gone into exile*” in contrast to the masculine form in Jer. 52, 27 ויגל יהודה מעל אדמתו “*And Judah went into exile from*

199See in E. E. Urbach, *The Sages. Their Concepts and Beliefs, Jerusalem*, 1975, 138, the claim that gentile nations were ruled over by Guardian Angels, and Israel by the Holy One, blessed be He. See, however *ibidem*. 141. 170. 171 Michael as ‘Guardian Angel of Israel, who fights their battles’, and 142, 145, the Ministering Angels Michael and Gabriel as the guardians of Israel.

200This is in *Yalqut*, see *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, by A. Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), footnote *ad locum*.

201This colon is part of TMLam. 1. 3 “Judah is gone into exile because of affliction / and because of great servitude / she dwells among the nations / and she finds no rest // all her pursuers have overtaken her [within the straits].”

202This is obvious, although W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Das Klagelieder*, 211, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 100 consider that it is about the land Judah.

203This is the *E. R.* understanding of TMLam. 3. 1 גלתה יהודה מעני against W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Das Klagelieder*, 204: “Weggeführt ist Juda aus Elend und schwerer Knechtung”, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 211, has “Juda ging in die Verbannung aus Elend und schwerer Knechtschaft.”

204The nations are said to make use of אסקפסיות, a plural of אסקפסטי, from σκαπαστη, ‘tilted wagon, litter with canopy’, in M. Jastrow, (compiled by) *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971] 1996), *ad locum*.

his land” completes the *midrashic* picture of the Community of Israel mortification in exile: “their strength became weak like woman’s” [Cohen].

2. Another *midrashic* innovation is the explanation of the causes of the exile in the expounding of מעוּי into ‘because of affliction’²⁰⁵ they have provoked when (i) they have not eaten unleavened bread at Passover (מצות לחם עוני) (Deut. 16, 3) (Sti1), (ii) they seized the pledge of the poor (עבט עני) (Deut. 24, 12) (Sti2), (iii) they committed violence against the poor’s pledge (עשקו שכיר עני) (Deut. 24, 14) (Sti3), (iv) they have stolen the due to the poor (מתנות עני) (Lev. 19, 10) (Sti4), (v) they have eaten the tithe for the poor for which they deserved death penalty according to R. Bibi (bA3) and Rab Huna (bA3) in the name of Rab (bA1) (Sti5), and (vi) they worshipped idols, as interpreted by R. Acha (A4) based on Ex. 32, 18 אנכי שומע “the sound of those who sing I do hear,” as well as by R. Yehudah (A4), who extended in the name of R. Yose (A3) the sin of the golden calf to all the generations (Sti6). The last and seventh causes of the exile is provided in R. Acha (A4)’s expounding of TMLam. (verse 3. 2) = E. R. (ל) מרוב עבודה into “and because of great servitude they caused” (Sti) which means that they did not free the Hebrew slave (עבד עברי) as requested in Jer. 34, 14.

11§. No Rest in Exile²⁰⁶

The consequences of the seven gross transgressions detailed in 10§ are further described by *Eikhah Rabbati* interpreters as of great concern at their time as well. First, there is the unrest reported in TMLam. (verses 3. 3-4) היא יֵשְׁבָה בְּגוֹיִם לֹא מִצָּאָה מְנוּחָה “*she dwells among the nations and she finds no rest.*” R. Yudan b. R. Nechemyah (A4) explains (Sti) in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) that this condition of unrest the Community of Israel went through “among the nations” was positively necessary to provoke in her the painful and nostalgic feeling that she had to find the way back home, as this is stated in Gen. 8, 9 and Deut. 28, 65. Second, there is the

²⁰⁵This is an innovation in *Eikhah Rabbati*, the targum and the LXX, because the Hebrew preposition מִן in TMLam. 1, 3 מרוב עבודה and מעוּי is instead presented as local in W. Gesenius, *Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 17. Auflage, Berlin/Göttingen/Heidelberg 1962, 140, col. 1, in combination with the simple form גִּלָּה; see the same analysis in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 211-212. E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 83 speaks of ‘Mem of condition’, a meaning like “Judah went into exile from (= German aus, heraus) affliction and from great slavery” (J.P. Green, Sr.), “worunter es durch Assur, Ägypten und Babel zu leiden hatte” (W. Rudolph).

²⁰⁶This heading does not correspond to E. R. rubric (ל) for the inadequacy of the content of the latter.

persecution they suffered in their country (Sti1)²⁰⁷ as falsely inferred from the interpretation of *כל רודפיה השיגוה בין המצרים* “*within the straits*” of (verses 3. 5-6) “*All her pursuers have overtaken her within the straits*” which is in total agreement with the statement of Ben Nannus (T2) in the *Mishnah* בסימניו במצרייו ‘within [its marks and] its boundaries.’ One should note here that this reference to Ben Nannus (T2)’s saying is of no help with regard to the information about the location in their land where this persecution of the Community of Israel took place. The whole M. BB. 7, 3, to which the utterance of Ben Nannus (T2) belongs only deals with the conditions of a successful or failed sale of land as uttered in the two grouped statements stipulated below:

“He who says: I will sell to you [a kor’s space of soil] as measured by a rope, be it less or more, the condition ‘be it less or more’ makes void the condition ‘as measured by the rope’; and he who said: ‘Be it less or more as measure by the rope’, the condition ‘as measure by the rope’ makes void the condition ‘be it less or more’. So Ben Nannus. He who says: I will sell to you [a kor’s space of soil as measured] by or within its marks and its boundaries, and the difference was less than the sixth part, the sale holds good; if it was as much as a sixth the buyer may reduce the price.”²⁰⁸

As rightly put by S. Buber,²⁰⁹ the statements above detailing the view of Ben Nannus (T2)²¹⁰ regarding the binding conditions of land sale are the two stipulations specifying the request ‘as measured by a rope’. This view is also present in the *Mishnah* of the *Talmud* of the Land of Israel, *Yerushalmi*,²¹¹ and in the *Mishnah* of the *Babylonian Talmud*²¹² as well.

207W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 211 for different reason, and D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 7, 19, who agrees with, hold the same view, against U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 100-101.

208The translation, partly from Baba Bathra, 7, 3, in *Mishnah (The)*, transl. by H. Danby, Oxford ([1933] 1989), 376, is conform to Seder Nezikin, Masekhet Baba Bathra, 7, 3 (h) edited by Ch. Albeck, in *Schischa Sidre Mischna*, edited by Ch. Albeck, in Ch. Albeck and Ch. Yalon, Jerusalem/Tel-Aviv ([1959] 1977), 143.

209S. Buber, ‘Introduction’ (h), in *Midrasch Echa Rabbati*, idem (edit.), Wilna 1899, 10.

210The ascription to the second generation of the Tannaim is provided by H. Danby, Appendix III, in *Mishnah (The)*, transl. by H. Danby, Oxford ([1933] 1989), 799, where it is spoken of ‘Simeon Ben Nanos’.

211See y B. B. 7, 3, in Baba Bathra, [The *Talmud of the Land of Israel. A Preliminary Translation and Explanation*, vol. 30], transl. by J. Neusner, Chicago/London, 1984, 121.

212More explicit is the deictic ‘these’, in ‘these are the words of Ben Nannus’, which concludes b. B. B. 105a, see *Mishnah* and the following Gemara, in Baba Bathra [The *Babylonian Talmud*], chap. i-iv, transl. by M. Simon, London 1935, 436-439.

On the basis of these above gathered data, it is obvious that the statement in *Eikhah Rabbati* chapter one, line 477 '[A]s we have learnt in the Mishnah, these are the words of Ben Nannus: within its marks and boundaries', is substantiated in part by records available for this work. It is also likely that the Compiler uses the similarity of sound between TMLam. 1, 3.6 בין המצרים "within the straits" and M. Baba Bathra 7, 3 בסימניו במצריו 'within [its marks and] its boundaries' in order to transfer the more precise Mishnah meaning of 'within the borders' to the somewhat vague Lamentations "within the straits".²¹³ Obviously, the intent here is to convey a historical as well as a geographical picture for the understanding of this verse. The persecution itself is described in the Ketheb meriri's narrative (A), *vide infra*.

12§. Zion Abandoned to Her Desolation

The fallen city is addressed in the following TMLam. 1, 4-6 as Zion (see TMLam. 1, 4.1; 1, 6.1). And on this same interpreting line as Zion that the fallen city is addressed in *Eikhah Rabbati* in another series of qualifying statements. The first feature of the fallen city of Zion stated in *Eikhah Rabbati* is related to TM Lam. 1, 4.1²¹⁴ = E. R. (לא) דרכי ציון אבלות "the roads of Zion do mourn". More prosaically, the comments to TMLam. 1, 4.1 possibly allude to the insecurity that followed the first Destruction,²¹⁵ which, in all probability, might have deprived Jerusalem of religious festivals (without temple?). *Eikhah Rabbati* claims, that focus here on Zion instead of addressing "the roads of Zion", are enough picturesque on the forlornness of Zion. For instance, Zion is reported to suffer, so to say, from the urge that compels all creatures to return to their mates (Sti1) which implies that the desolated people needed having company. R. Huna (A4) is reported to be the author of this claim. An anonymous interpreter finds evidence for this claim from observing a wild bitch running after a dog. R. Ammi (A3) provides evidence of the desolation with the case of cedars, according to Isa. 14, 8. Looking for the cause of this desolation, R. Abdimi of Haifa (A/third century) brings just the focus on the state of the roads of

²¹³This is also the view of the comment *in loco*.

²¹⁴This colon belongs to TMLam. 1, 4. "The roads of Zion do mourn / without any going to the appointed feasts / all her gates are desolate / her priests sigh // her virgins are afflicted / and she (is) in bitterness."

²¹⁵W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 212, interprets Jer. 41, 1-9 as a proof of this post destruction insecurity; see also D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 20, U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 101-102.

Zion, based on TMLam. 1, 4.1 = E. R. (לא) דרכי ציון אבלות “*The roads of Zion do mourn*”²¹⁶ which is considered as confirmed by the TMLam. (1, 4. 2) = E. R. (-) מבלי באי מועד “*without anyone going to the appointed feasts*”²¹⁷ that follows (Sti2) without saying why *the roads of Zion do mourn*. It is here worth noting that in the more explicit accusatory explanation of the targum to Lamentations, the roads of Zion mourned first, ‘while Jerusalem was built’, ‘when the sons of Israel refused to go up to be seen before the Lord three times a year.’ They mourned for the second time when Jerusalem was destroyed because of Israel’s sins.²¹⁸

Eikhah Rabbati that does not mention the cause of the mourning of these roads draws instead further on R. Huna (A4)’s aforementioned claim on the desolation of Zion when it lets an anonymous interpreter state that (verse 4. 3) כל שעריה שוממין “*all her gates are desolate*” is a strong evidence that no one ‘enters or leaves through them (gates)’ [Cohen] (Sti3). In this context, the following (verse 4. 4) כהניה נאנחים “*her priests sigh*” does not address the miserable fate of the priests in the wake of the Destruction of Zion. It records instead the absence of devotees willing to go and fulfil the duty of priestly due, according to Deut. 18. 3, (Sti). In this same context, the (verse 4. 5) בתולתיה נוגות “*her virgins are afflicted*” no longer refers to the young women that played some role in the existing cult, for instance, singing and dancing in the festivals.²¹⁹ R. Isaac b. Simon (A)²²⁰ identifies “*virgins*” with the beautiful disciples of the Sages

216R. Huna (A4)’s idiomatic comprehensive ‘[A]ll the creatures seek their mates’ may have been stated to account for what E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 85, calls “the unusual gender of the Hebrew דרכי ציון אבלות”, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 17. Auflage, 1962, *ad locum*: דרך is feminine, but always masculine in the plural.

217The mention of “*appointed feasts*” recalls that the failing pilgrims were the very mates of the roads of Zion, and this claim excludes the reading that ‘the roads were not guarded with turrets and catapults’, in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, addressing the *Eikhah Rabbati* בורגין ‘keeper’ and בליסטין not as ‘councillors’, but as בליסטין ‘catapults’.

218See C.M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 156 for the translation *ad locum*, and E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 85 for this comment, which focuses on the second destruction of Jerusalem, according to the literature mentioned in the footnote!

219W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 212 cites Ps. 68, 25f, Jer. 31, 13, Judg. 21, 19-21, and he is followed by D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 20, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 102.

220This is also the reading of the Vilna edition, against ‘R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (b. Pazzi)’ (A4) of the Buber edition.

‘who had become like wax’²²¹ [Cohen] (Sti1). Similarly, in the name of R. Isaac (A3),²²² R. Samuel (A4) speaks of the beautiful but afflicted councillors (Sti2).²²³ An anonymous interpreter completes the desolated picture reporting on the sexual violence²²⁴ inflicted on Zion, which provoked her bitterness²²⁵ (Sti3) that is accounted for in TMLam. (4. 6) והיא מר לה “*And she (is) in bitterness*”, based on R. Huna (A4)’s claim used as theme in the expounding of this colon.

§13. Overpowered Zion

The following series of features picturing fallen Zion in the wake of the preceding ones is related to TMLam. 1, 5.1²²⁶ = *E. R.* (לב) היו צריה לראש “*Her foes have become as chief*” which is seen in the comments as the fulfilment of the threat “*He [the alien in Israel’s midst] will become the head, and you shall be the tail*” (Deut. 28, 44). The reference to the covenant and, then, to the dwelling in the sin and its consequent retribution, is now explicit.²²⁷ The targum to TMLam. 1, 5.1 deems the threat fulfilled because “*Those who oppress her have been appointed over her as leaders*” [Brady]. This allusion is also found, in a passive form, in R. Hillel b. Berekhyah (A5)’s claim (Sti1) in *Eikhah Rabbati*, as shown below:

221The claim relies on the paronomasic connection between the TMLam. 1, 4.5 נוגת ‘afflicted’, and דונג ‘wax’, see, ‘they became (yellow-complected)’ in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York, ([copyright 1971] 1996), *ad locum*.

222The Buber edition reads ‘R. Samuel b. R. Isaac’ (A3).

223The *bouleutes* ‘councillors’, members of the city *curia*, or council, were among the most influential political protagonists of the second Destruction period, see the next narrative (A) to this item. *E. R.* to TMLam. 4, 18.1, and the issue of “Membership of City Councils” in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 26f.

224This claim is supported by the connection of the same TMLam. 1, 4.5 נוגת “*afflicted*”, with the piel of הגה ‘to pierce’, ‘open’, in combination with מכתה ‘her wound’, synonymous to the גילו את מכתה ‘they revealed her wound’ in the Buber edition. See the display of different images of the plight of the virgins in E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 85.86.

225The bitterness of Zion-Jerusalem is due to its personification, see E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 85.

226It is part of TMLam. 1, 5, which is picked up in *E. R.* together with part of TMLam. 1,6 “*Her foes have become as chief / her enemies are at ease / for the Lord has afflicted her/ for the multitude of her transgressions// her children have gone away/ captives before the adversaries /// From the daughter of Zion has departed her splendour*”.

227It is recalled by W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*. 1962, 212. D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 21-22, and by U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 102.

1. ‘Whoever came to persecute Israel is first made a chief [Jastrow]. What is the ground [of R. Hillel’s statement]? “*Her foes have become as chief.*”

2. You find that before Jerusalem was destroyed, no province was held as important; but after Jerusalem was destroyed, Caesarea became a metropolis.’

The present variant of this claim (Sti1) according to this reading of the Vilna edition, in which a statement is followed by an illustration, is simpler and easier for comprehension compared to the variant of the Buber edition.²²⁸ The Buber edition focuses instead on the second claim (Sti2), which identifies and actualizes the designated destroyers of the First (586 BCE) and the Second (70 CE) Temples of Jerusalem,²²⁹ and which is made on TMLam. 1, 5.1 quoted above and on TMLam. 1, 5.2, איביה שלו “*Her enemies are at ease*” as follows in the Vilna edition,

1. “*Her foes have become as chief*”: this is²³⁰ Nebuchadnezzar,
Her enemies (...) at ease: this is Nebuzaradan,
2. *Her foes have become as chief*: this is Vespasian,
Her enemies (...) at ease: this is Titus’.

The narrative (A) that follows this claims in the Vilna edition provides the ideological and historical context of the above two claims on the change in the possession of the power this time within the Community of Israel, see next chapter.

§14. Children of Zion Watched Over by the *Shekhinah*

The next series of features that account for the fallen Zion is related to TMLam. 1, 5.3-6 = E. R. (לג) צר “*For the Lord has afflicted her for the multitude of her sins, her children have gone away, captive before the adversary*”. This biblical verse is the occasion for an anonymous interpreter to repeat²³¹ (Sti1) that the Lord has not

228The Buber editions has the extended “Caesarea became a metropole, Antipatris a province, and Neapolis a colony” as component of the second claim (Sti2) expounding of TMLam. 1, 5.2 איביה שלו “*Her enemies (...) at ease*”.

229See the protagonists of these destructions in Z. Yavetz, ‘The Jews and the Great Powers of the Ancient World’, in E. Kedourie, (edit.), *The Jewish World Revelations, Prophecy and History*, London ([1979] 1986), 89-107.

230*Eikhah Rabbati* has the Hebrew demonstrative masculine singular pronoun זה .

231This is conform to the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 text, -it is wanting in the Buber edition-, against E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 87, 3, where it supports the targum ‘rebellion’, see next footnote.

saddened Zion without reason, but, “for the multitude of her transgressions.”²³² It is in the accounting of the admitted TMLam. 1, 5.5-6 צר עולליה הלכו שבי לפני צר “*Her children have gone away, captive before the adversary*” that *Eikhah Rabbati* innovates using the terms from its own historical tradition. The departure of her children into exile is no longer assessed as the fulfilment of “one of the curses threatened (on her) for breach of (the) covenant (Deut. 28, 36, 63-68).”²³³ Instead, *Eikhah Rabbati* lets R. Yehudah (A4)²³⁴ state (Sti2) that the exile of the children was cause of grief for one of the components of God, viz., the feminine persona of God, that is, the *Shekinah*,²³⁵ who consequently departed into exile with them from captured Jerusalem. Such a move definitely shows how the *Shekhinah* loves the children of Israel because this did not happen either for the exile of the Sanhedrin or for the exile of the priestly watches.²³⁶ The support for this claim is lent by TMLam. 1, 6.1 ויצא מן בת ציון “*From the daughter of Zion has departed*” which follows immediately, as explained by R. Acha (A4).²³⁷ The starting point of his proposal is provided by the *ketib* מן - בת which grammatically appears quite unusual²³⁸ for suggesting to

232The Biblical פשע means ‘sin’ in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 17. Auflage, 1962, *ad locum*, although D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 22, has the specifying ‘rebellion’, in “allusion to political life, where it is a common term for revolt against a suzerain (2 King. 1, 1; 3, 5, etc...)”; it is replaced in the targum to Lamentations *ad locum* by the more specifying מרודא ‘rebelliousness’. E. Levine holds this replacement as juxtaposed to the targum version ‘the enemies have become appointed rulers over her’ [Levine], which “reflects the historical reality of the political situation,” idem, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 86.

233See D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 22.

234The Buber edition has R. Yehudah bar Simon (A4).

235See A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 59: The *midrash* represents God as feminine persona, who “includes both the *Shekhina*, the indwelling divine presence that reposed between the cherubim atop the Holy of Holies in the Temple, and the Holy Spirit (*ruach hakodesh*), which seems to be the voiced, projective aspect of the *Shekhina*”, and in his feature of a masculine persona, as King and Father. Also D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 128f on *Shekhina*’s departure, and E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 37 - 65.

236The Buber edition stresses this view letting first the departure into exile of the ten tribes, and secondly, of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin precede these two items. The *Shekhina* did not accompany them.

237D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 7 - 8 considers this link between TMLam. 1, 5.5 and 1, 6.1 by means of the grammatical means of waw-consecutive as rather, “awkward, since the connection to the preceding line is not very close (...)”. He seems, however, to be influenced by the *midrash* when he states that “perhaps the idea of the children going away into exile suggests to the writer the departure of the glory of Israel with which the new stanza begins”, *ibidem*, 22.

238This was unusual for the *midrash*, but not for the Hebrew grammar, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, völlig umgearbeitet von E. Kautzsch, Hildesheim - New York ([1909] 1977), & 102ab, with records of similar forms.

account מן as an allusion to מנת , the construct of מנה ‘portion’. This reanalysis evidently helps the rewording of TMLam. 1, 6.1 into ויצא מנת בת ציון ‘And the portion of the daughter of Zion went into exile’,²³⁹ where ‘portion’ is identified with the Holy One, blessed be He, as stated in Ps. 16, 5, “*The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup.*”

This view that the Holy One, blessed be He, went into exile with the children of Israel is furthered by an anonymous interpreter on the basis of (verse 6. 2) כל הדרה “*all her splendour*”, which is first reanalysed as an apposition to the semantically defined מנת , but which afterwards and successively has been reinterpreted into a number of meanings of which five occurrences are considered as alluding to: (i) the Holy One, blessed be He , as in Ps. 104, 1b (Sti1), (ii) the Sanhedrin , as in Prov. 31, 25 (Sti2) , (iii) disciples of the sages , as in Lev. 19, 32 (Sti3), (iv) the priestly watches , as in 2 Chron. 20, 21 (Sti4), and (v) the children of Israel, as in the present TMLam. 1, 6.2 (Sti5). The last allusion to TMLam.1,6.2 is the occasion for R. Yehudah (A4)²⁴⁰ to conclude this expounding repeating his claim related to TMLam. 1, 5.5-6, that the Holy One, blessed be He, shows his love to the children of Israel by going into exile with them as the *Shekhinah*. This interpretation of TMLam. 1, 5.3-6 together with TMLam. 1, 6.1-2 is considered as an accusation opposing the children of Israel to the other social groups. This interpretation is present in TMLam. 1, 5-6.²⁴¹ *Eikhah Rabbati* carries this interpretation further with new arguments, *vide infra*.

15§. Rulers of Zion Accused of Irresponsibility

The next set of features describing the fallen Zion is based on the TMLam. 1, 6.3²⁴² = E. R.(ל) “*Her rulers have become like harts*” which focuses on the rulers of Zion. The fate of the rulers is detailed as “ cast in the form of a simile involving either “stags”, MT: ‘*ayyalim*, or “rams”, ‘*elim*, implied by Greek and Vulgate.”²⁴³ *Eikhah Rabbati* possesses all the available

239The Buber edition paraphrases the reanalyzed form as ויצא ממנה , ‘he/it went out from the portion or from her.’

240The Buber edition mentions R. Yudan (A4).

241W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 212, notes only that two groups of prisoners going into exile worry the mother Jerusalem, the children and the nobles of the City.

242It is expounded together with the rest of TMLam. 1, 6 “*Her rulers have become like harts / and they have gone without strength / before the pursuer.*”

243D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 23.

information about these two interpretations of the TM consonantal כִּאֵילִים. It is on the basis of this knowledge that R. Yehudah (A4)²⁴⁴ claims that the rulers of Zion can be (i) either tender-hearted like lambs (Sti1), quoting Isa. 5, 17, “*Then the lambs shall feed as in their pasture*” to lend support to this meaning, (ii) or hard-hearted (Sti2), quoting TMLam. 1, 6.3 “*Her rulers have become like harts*” to support this meaning in his own claim. The *midrash* underscores this hardness of Israel’s leaders²⁴⁵ when it overlooked TMLam. 1, 6.4, “*they did not find food*”, that would unequivocally bring the weakness of the nobles to public attention, as this is the case in the targum to Lamentations.²⁴⁶ To make this point, the *midrash* reports on an issue in whose handling it rightly proves that the hardness of the nobles of Zion was, indeed, their very weakness (Sti3), as shown here below,

‘R. Simon (A3) said in the name of R. Simeon b. Abba (A3), and R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) in the name of R. Yehoshua (T2): As these harts turn their faces one beneath the other in the time of intense heat, so the nobles of Israel saw a transgression committed but turned their faces away from it. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: A time will come when I will do the same to you’.

The Buber edition has a second simile which comes first. In this simile, seemingly anonymous,²⁴⁷ the weakness of the leaders of Israel is accounted for differently. As a proof of the weakness of the leaders of Israel, this simile uses TMLam. (verse 6, 5/7) which follows. It is stated as shown below:

‘As the harts in the time of intense heat are exhausted, and they cannot endure the power of the sun, so Israel could not sustain the yoke of the nations, as it is said: “*And they have gone without strength before the pursuer*”. (TMLam. 1, 6.5/6)

244The Buber edition has instead R. Abbahu (A3), and uses the wordform active participle מוֹשֵׁלֵן ‘you compare them’ against the passive participle plural מְשׁוּלֵין ‘they are compared to’.

245This is assessed against E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 88, where it is said that the targumic rendering of כִּאֵילִים as “*like harts*” instead of the “*like lambs*” found in the other versions “may reflect midrash based on uncertainty as to the identity of animals, or at the very least, recognition that the consonantal text is equivocal.”

246The targum, that, in contrast to the *midrash*, does not rule out a verse, is explicit with its ‘[H]er nobles were wandering for food, like stags who wander in the desert and find no suitable place for their pasture’ [Brady].

247It may be ascribed to R. Yehudah (A4) who is the author of the preceding claims.

To conclude, there is no room for any equivocation that the rulers of Israel are hard-hearted,²⁴⁸ and that this hardness of heart is actually a sign of their weakness, as this is shown in the simile above and in the following colon.

16§. Weakness of Rulers Due to Neglecting the Holy One, blessed be He

The last set of features characterizing Zion this time personified in [the rulers of] Israel is based on TMLam. 1, 6.5/6 = *E. R.* (לה) וילכו בלא כח לפני רודף “*And they have gone without strength before the pursuer*”. In his analysis, D R. Hillers holds that the Hebrew predicate *radaf* for “to hunt” in 1 Sam. 26, 20 makes real sense with the preceding “stags”, and this in accordance with TM Lam. 3, 52 and Jer. 16, 16, “where the enemy is compared to a hunter”.²⁴⁹ Similarly, the rulers of Israel are literally and helplessly hunted into captivity like animals.²⁵⁰ In two claims, *Eikhah Rabbati* resorts to different reasons to account in innovative terms for the lack of strength of the rulers of Israel mentioned by the Biblical text. A third claim gives an illustration, while the fourth and last claim asserts that the return back into the land will occur. The first claim (St1) made by R. Azaryah (A5) in the name of R. Yehudah .b. R. Simon (A4) states as follows,

‘When²⁵¹ Israel perform the will of the Omnipresent,²⁵² they add strength to the heavenly power,²⁵³ as it is said, “*To God we render strength*” (Ps. 60, 14).²⁵⁴ When [Israel, however, does not perform the will of the Omnipresent],²⁵⁵ [they weaken, if it is possible to say so, the great power of him who is above], as it is written:

248See “*hard of heart*” in Ez, 3, 7, but also “*stiff-necked people*” in Ex. 32. 9; 33, 3; 34, 9; Deut. 9, 6.13; 31, 27.

249D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 23.

250U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 103 says the same: “[D]ie Fürsten, d.h. Mitglieder der sozialen Elite finden kein Auskommen mehr und sind der Verfolgern kraft-und schutzlos”. W. Rudolph, *op. cit.* 212, in the wake of the targum, speaks of ‘hunger’ - “*ausgeliefert*”. He thinks of the move of the Babylonians against the leaders of the pro-egyptian party (2 King. 25, 18-21; Jer. 39, 4-7; 52, 4-11).

251The Buber edition has בשעה ‘at the moment’, against בזמן ‘at any time’ in the other text tradition.

252The Buber edition and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 have the ‘Holy One, blessed be He.’

253The phrase ‘strength to the heavenly power’ is opposed to the less affirming ‘strength to the power’ in the Buber edition, and to the ‘strength and power’ in the Munich Codex Heb. 229.

254Noteworthy is that the prooftext is: “*And now, I beseech you, let the power of the Lord be greater*” (Num. 14, 17) for this claim in the Buber edition, while, the *editio princeps*, which uses it in its second claim, resorts for the same first claim to this Ps. 60, 14.

255All this sentence is replaced in the Buber edition by ‘At the moment when they provoke him to anger’, with the present TMLam. 1, 6.5-6 as a consequence prooftext: ‘When they provoke him to anger, “[*and they have gone without strength before the pursuer*].”

“You have weakened the Rock that brought you into being” (Deut. 32, 18) (...) [Cohen].’

The second claim (Sti2) stated by R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) himself in the name of R. Levi b. R. Tarfon (A3) is identical in its wording to the claim above that precedes with however the following exceptions: (i) first, the present claim addresses the strength and weakness of the Holy One, blessed be He, and not the strength and weakness of the Omnipresent-Hebrew *maqôm*-, and, (ii) second, the texts used as proof in this second claim are different, namely, (a) Num, 14, 17 *“And now, I beseech you, let the power of the Lord be great”* is used as proof text for the “strength”, while (b) TMLam.1,6.5-6 *“And they have gone without strength before the pursuer”* is used as proof text for the “weakness” of the Heavenly Omnipresent and of Israel as well.²⁵⁶ The proof texts make the difference between the first and the second claims, the human partner, that is Israel, being responsible for his own weakness that has by the way of implication ‘not strengthened the Omnipresent.’ This is explicitly stated in the second claim.

Illustration of Israel’s above stated weakness, which is condemned by the Holy One, blessed be He, in order for the Holy One, blessed be He to justify his own inactivity, is provided by R. Huna (A4), R. Acha (A4), R. Simon (A3) in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2), and the Rabbis in the name of R. Chanina (T1/ A1/3) (Sti3). It is said that nobody was willing in Jerusalem to teach a page of Scripture and a chapter of Mishnah to his fellow Israelite.²⁵⁷ However, the *plene* spelling of the vowel [ô] in רודף *“the pursuer”* in the bicolon *“And they have gone without strength before the pursuer”* (TMLam. 1, 6.5-6) under inquiry leads R. Acha (A4) assert (Sti4) that the complete exile alluded to in this letter - symbol, calls for a complete redemption, as it is stated in the *plene* writing of גואל *“the redeemer”* in, *“And the redeemer will come to Zion”* (Isa. 59, 20). This reference to optimism concludes the innovative views of *Eikhah*

²⁵⁶The Buber edition uses also the concluding TMLam. 1, 6.5-6 as the proof-text of the weak-ness; this may explain the fact that only a claim occurs in this text.

²⁵⁷*Eikhah Rabbati* is unequivocal in its use of the hiphil imperative דף הקריני for the derived *deverbativum* ‘miqra - Scripture’, and השנינו פרק אחד for its derived *deverbativum* ‘the Mishnah’. The Buber edition is more explicit with its למדני פרק אחד ‘teach me a chapter of Scripture’, מסכת אחד ‘a talmudic treatise’, השניני סדר אחד ‘teach me an order of Mishnah’. The same Buber edition has a somewhat different series of utterers for this claim: R. Huna (A4), R. Acha (A4), Resh Laqish (A2) in the name of R. Hoshayah (A1), and the Rabbis.

Rabbati in a stanza in which the city, Judah, Zion and the rulers of Zion have been successively accused of transgressions.

CONCLUSION to TMLam. 1, 1 -6

Personified Jerusalem is said to have been once a rich, populous and intellectually superior metropolis. Instead, she is mostly pictured here in the condition of exile caused by her transgressions against the stipulations of the Sinai covenant and by her idolatry. The exile into which the Community of Israel has been deported has resulted in the Community insecurity that has consequently led, among other things, to absence of protection, subjugation to a tribute, enduring weeping, persecution, desolation and lack of religious festivals. However, the hope is that the healing does exist since the Holy One, blessed be He, that has been weakened by rulers unable to promote the Mishnah and the Talmud, goes into exile with his people; this will end the exile and restore the Community of Israel.

I.1.2. Sins Of Jerusalem Against The Torah (vss.7 - 11)

The following TMLam. 1, 7-11 no longer deals with neither the land nor with the external decrepitude of the city of Zion as such. Instead, it focuses on the twisted mental frame, the spiritual condition (as suggested by זכרה “*she remembers*” of TMLam 1, 7, 8) of the Community of Israel, and on the consecutive loss of her precious internal possession (as expressed in מחמדיה “*her desirable things*” of TMLam. 1, 7, 10, 11). Let us examine the details in the following paragraphs.

1§. In Exile, Jerusalem Remembers Her Rebellions

Eikhah Rabbati reports in pure rabbinic terms the involvement of the Jerusalemites in the fall of their city. In the following commentary, the first set of items characterizing this new subject is related to TMLam. 1, 7. 1-2, which is judiciously discussed being opportunely commented along with TMLam. 1, 7.3 (verses 7. 1-3) זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודיה כל מחמדיה

“Jerusalem remembered / the days of her affliction and wandering / all her desirable things.”²⁵⁸ Unfortunately, the English rendering of those three cola is very simplistic and helplessly inadequate in conforming with the argument structure of the Hebrew predicate זכרה “she remembered”. This predicate is, for instance, paraphrased as הוֹת דְּכִירָא “she held in remembrance” in the targum to Lamentations “in order not to limit it to the perfect tense.”²⁵⁹ This predicate is transitive.²⁶⁰ And the fact that it can require two direct objects is its normal lexical requirement²⁶¹ which may become a source of equivocation that can cause differently motivated readings.²⁶² The text of the Vilna edition which is quasi identical to the text of the Munich Codex Heb. 299 is the only one reliable text for the issue we examine here. In this regard, the Buber edition appears to report unreliable claims which do not match the biblical text that is to be interpreted. The syntactic choices that we find in *Eikhah Rabbati* are historically dated and they lead, as such, to a claim (Sti1) which is typical of rabbinic mind and intent, namely, the first direct complement is rendered as a *accusativus temporis*,²⁶³ while the second coordinate phrase is reanalysed and made into the only direct object with an appropriate meaning, *vide infra*,

‘Jerusalem remembered/ in the days of her affliction, the revolts (meradin) in which she rebelled against the Holy One, blessed be He’ [Cohen].

258These cola belong to the usual TMLam. 1, 7 expounded in E. R. “Jerusalem remembered / the days of her afflictions and wandering / all her desirable things // when her people fall by the hand of the foe / and none to help he / the foes have seen her/ they have mocked at her downfall”.

259E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 89.

260See the descriptive definition in W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, &43.

261See the cases of ‘double accusative’ exposed in W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, & 117 f-h for the *verba sentiendi*, but much more the *accusativus temporis* in & 118 and below.

262Here is a sample of some different syntactic choices: (i) double accusative in the targum to Lamentations, ‘Jerusalem remembered the days of old, when she was surrounded by walled cities and strong open town, rebelling and reigning over all the earth, and all her lovely things which she had in earlier times’ [Brady], (ii) first *accusativus temporis* in W. Rudolph: “Jerusalem denkt/ in den Tagen ihres Elends und Irrsals an all ihre Herrlichkeiten, die sie besass/ seit alters”, idem, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 204, (iii) one accusative in D. R. Hillers, „Jerusalem calls to mind the days when she was banished in misery”, idem, *Lamentations*, (iv) double genitive accusative in U. Berges, “Es gedenkt Jerusalem der Tage ihres Elends und ihrer Heimatlosigkeit, all ihrer Kostbarkeiten, die da waren seit den Tagen der Vorzeit”, idem, *Klagelieder*, 86..

263The Hebrew grammar allows such a move, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, & 118 i: in the determination of time, the accusative (*accusativus temporis*) provides the answer to the question, “when?”.

The days alluded to are, however, neither the past “exile - and post exile days,”²⁶⁴ nor the past days of prosperity according to the targum.²⁶⁵ Instead, they are actually the present and painful days of exile during which Jerusalem brings memories to her mind²⁶⁶ in accordance with the spirit of the second stanza (1, 7-11). Issues dealt with in *Eikhah Rabbati* to be mentioned here are as follows: the anonymous interpreter speaks of ‘rebelliousness’ (a) first, which is the rabbinic reading²⁶⁷ of the uncertain²⁶⁸ מרוד , and (b) second, the ‘words of the Torah’ (Sti2) which are the new meaning of the second accusative TMLam. 1, 7.3 “*all her desirable things*”²⁶⁹ according to Ps. 19, 11. The neglect of these *desirable things* is presumed to be the cause of the present afflicting situation²⁷⁰ as described in the claims related to the following cola:

1. The (verse 7.5) בנפל עמה ביד צר “*When her people fall by the hand of the foe*” [Cohen] explains TMLam. 1, 7.1²⁷¹ when it describes the consequences of the rebellion, as this is also presented in the targum²⁷² which, owing to the partial sound resemblance צר “*enemy*”, identifies Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian as the enemy into the hands of whom the people of Jerusalem fell in 586 BCE and by whom they were oppressed. The Rabbis whose statements are quoted in *Eikhah Rabbati* obviously had different figures for identification in mind while they used the two explanatory proverbs:²⁷³ (i) ‘When the ox falls, many are the slaughterers’ [Cohen] (Sti3), and

264This is the interpretation of TMLam. 1, 7.1 “*days*” read as accusative in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 180.

265This syntactic choice made it necessary to resort to a contrastive coordinate to account for TMLam. 1, 7.

266W. Rudolph is right in his analysis and interpretation: “*Zugleich gehen in diesen Tagen des Elends, wo so viele ihrer Söhne die Heimat verlassen müssen ihre Gedanken in die Vergangenheit, die um so glänzender erscheint, je trüber die Gegenwart ist*”, idem, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 212.

267See M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targum, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*, 838.

268It may be derived either from מרד ‘rebellious’, ‘bitter’, either from רדד ‘oppress’, or from רוד wander’.

269W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*; 212: מרודיה refers to all that was great and made Israel happy.

270E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 90, is right that this view, which is somehow common to the targum and to the *midrash*, provides, “in theologically acceptable terms, the reason of the destruction of Jerusalem and the capture of the populace.”

271It refers indeed “to the actual days of the fall of the city and the beginning of the exile, a pe-riod which was in the past from the writer’s point of view,” in D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 9.

272The targum reanalyzes TMLam. 1, 7.5 adding a causal sentence with the consequence that the biblical temporal is ruled out: “[B]ut because of her sins, her people fell into the hands of ...” [Brady].

273This characterization as a proverb is used by M. Jastrow in his explanation of רדד ‘to be sharp’, in idem, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*,

(ii) ‘When the ox falls, their knives sting’ [Cohen] (Sti4) which are said to have been uttered respectively by the Babylonian and by the Palestinian Rabbis. The two proverbs rationalize a precise and particular case through the universality so characteristic of this genre,²⁷⁴ which renders mentally bearable the awful fall of Jerusalem caused by her own rebellion.

2. The following (verse 7.6) ואין עוזר לה “*And there is none to help her*” underlines the feature of dereliction and helplessness of the conquered Jerusalem (see TMLam. 4, 17). The Rabbis characterize the situation further in two additional proverbs: (i) ‘When the bride is ill-treated, she recalls the seven days of her marriage feast’ [Cohen] uttered by the Babylonian Rabbis, and (ii) ‘When the son goes barefoot, he recalls the comfort of his father’s house’ [Cohen] ascribed to the Palestinian Rabbis, respectively referring to the loss of the wedding joy (Sti5) and to the loss of security of the father’s house²⁷⁵ (Sti 6).

3. The picture of the humiliated Jerusalem is completed by the four last claims related to TMLam. (verses 7. 7-8) שחקו על מַשְׁבֹּתָה “*They have mocked at her downfall*”. Jerusalem is the target of mockeries by her enemies. Biblical records indicate that such enemies’ behaviour has always been a source of greater bitterness to her and to Israel (see TLMam. 3, 14, Job 30, 1, Prov. 1, 26, Ps. 44, 14; 79, 4) (Sti7). The present insulting mockeries are reported to arise at present from her “*downfall*”, a translation of the Hebrew *hapax legomenon* מַשְׁבֹּתָה which is considered as a *deverbativum* derived from שָׁבַת ‘to cease’.²⁷⁶ It appears that ancient versions render differently this word and that commentators often change it.²⁷⁷ The targum adds further confusion by incorporating two paraphrases to account for it: ‘The persecutors watched ‘*her go*

New York, ([1971] 1996), 425, and by A. Cohen, in *Lamentations* [Midrash Rabbah]. Transl. by A. Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 108, where it is spoken of ‘local proverbs’.

274E. Levine alludes to this universality when, explaining this lack of the mention of specific enemies, he considers that “whereas previously” the entire world was afraid to lay a hand upon her, “now, they are all enemies”, idem, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 90, with quoted literature.

275The Buber edition has the same expounding, which addresses however a different, not quoted colon.

276W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 466, col. 2 deduces this derivation chain, with however מַשְׁבַּת in TMLam. 1, 7 as only evidence.

277See the witnesses in E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 90.

into captivity' and they laughed because 'her good fortune had ceased from her' [Brady]."²⁷⁸ To this confusion, *Eikhah Rabbati* adds two biblical and one traditional anonymous interpretations to account for the cause of enemies' mockeries of her which emphasize the idea of cessation²⁷⁹ in accordance with the rabbinic view, viz., (i) the cessation of the Sabbaths, a transgression against Ex. 20, 8, (Sti8), (ii) the non-observance of the sabbatical years, a transgression against Lev. 25, 4, (Sti9), and (iii) R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) ceased to be from Jerusalem (Sti 10) which is considered as her downfall.

2§. Enormity of the Sin of Jerusalem

The second set of items addressing the mental picture of fallen Jerusalem is related to TMLam. 1, 1.8 חטא חטאה ירושלים "Jerusalem **has sinned grievously**".²⁸⁰ The very use of this *figura etymologica* in Hebrew²⁸¹ is always aimed at producing an effect similar to that caused by the *infinitivus absolutus*. Namely, *figura etymologica* and *infinitivus absolutus* both forcefully underline *in abstracto* the 'verbal', in the present case the 'substantial' concept of sin, as in this case, without, however, addressing specific inflecting categories such as tempus and modus for the verb, genus and numerus for the noun.²⁸² If Jerusalem suffers in exile where she is object of scorn from nations, the cause is, asserts the Biblical Lamentations, the great sin²⁸³ she has

278The italicized items are two candidates, by sound and by meaning, to render the same משבתה as is shown by their respective Aramaic counterparts 1. חזוהא מעיקיא דאזלא בשביתא 'the persecutors watched her go into captivity', 2. חייכו על טובוא דפסק מבינהא 'they laughed because "her good for-tune had ceased"', see ibidem.

279The cessation took place in Jerusalem, but the observance in exile; it was therefore criticized and mocked by the nations, as reported in the Buber edition, with addition of the cessation of the מלכות 'selbst' - government and of the past glory, *ad locum*.

280It is part of TLM.am. 1, 8 "Jerusalem has sinned grievously/therefore she has become as an object of derision // all who honoured her, despise her / because they have seen her nakedness / she herself groans / and turns backward."

281It is also called cognate accusative in E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 92, and it means the internal or absolute object accusative, in that it is expressed by a noun which belongs to the same root with the predicate, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, & 113a.

282See further W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, & 113a.

283The targum *ad locum* has חובא רבא חבת ירושלים "A great sin has Jerusalem sinned" but also "a great guilt has Jerusalem contracted" [Levine], against the nearly literally "Peccatum peccavit Jerusalem" in the Nova Vulgata.

committed.²⁸⁴ *Eikhah Rabbati*²⁸⁵ has reported on the dire conditions of the exile, and it had explained that the transgression of the commandments of the Torah by Israel and the acceptance of the transgression by her are the most plausible justification of the exile. In this very characteristic context of the specifically accountable condition to which the Community of Israel is submitted, *Eikhah Rabbati* lets an anonymous interpreter express as follows, by means of a comparison (Sti1), the specific character of the sin of Jerusalem,

‘The idolaters, do they not sin? But although they sin, their sins are nothing. Israel, however, sinned and were punished.’

Is the sin committed by idolaters really ‘nothing’ as it is stated in *Eikhah Rabbati*? The translator of this *Midrash*, who changes this literal rendering into ‘[B]ut although [the heathen nations] sin, it has no sequel in punishment’, pointedly notes the very difference. Indeed, although the heathen nations sin, “their punishment is not severe for the reason that they did not accept the Torah and, since they were not redeemed from Egypt, their obligations are not so great.”²⁸⁶ The enormity of the sin of Jerusalem²⁸⁷ which is not specified yet is, therefore, in connection with the experience of the Exodus from Egypt and with the related reception of the Torah, *vide infra*. Therefore, it is the specific context of the Sinai covenant that explains the special character of the sin of Israel and the quasi - automatic ensuing of consequences worded first in TMLam. 1, 8.2 *לנידה היתה* “*For that reason she has become לנידה*”. In the literature, the Heb. *לנידה* has

284U. Berger, *Klagelieder*, 105 points out that פשע that occurs in TMLam. 1,5.14.22 means “misdeed”, the very concept of חטא “sin” referring to the breakage of the relationship with JHWH. The next claim will address this context.

285This is also the text found in the Munich Codex Heb. 229, with the difference that Israel is opposed to the אומות העולם ‘nations of the world.’

286See footnote 3 *ad locum*.

287The Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* provides the most complete procedure to describe the greatness of the sin of Jerusalem combining this traditional claim with two preceding scriptural evidences based on the stressing effect of linguistic features in Isa. 40, 2.2 *כפלים בכל חטאתיה* “*[Jerusalem] has taken from the hand of the Lord double her sins*”, and on Ez. 9,9 *מאד מאד גדול ביהודה* “*And He said to me: The iniquity of the house of Israel and of Judah is very, very great.*”

been interpreted as meaning either ‘an object of head shaking/of derision,’²⁸⁸ ‘wandering,’²⁸⁹ or ‘menstrual,’ ‘unclean.’²⁹⁰ Here, *Eikhah Rabbati* characterizes Jerusalem as ‘doomed to vagabondage’ (Sti2). This is also the semantic choice made by the targum to Lamentations,²⁹¹ as E. Levine rightly puts it,²⁹² in order to introduce the causal feature of ‘uncleanness’ of Jerusalem alluded to in ערוה “her nakedness” of TMLam. 1, 8. 3-4 “All that honoured her despised her, **because they have seen her nakedness**” [Cohen] (Sti3) that comes next.²⁹³ The emphasis on the implied uncleanness of Jerusalem as detailed below may be seen as confirmed by *Eikhah Rabbati* last anonymous claim (Sti4) based on TMLam. 1,8.5-6²⁹⁴ which states that Jerusalem is logically no longer fit, according to Lev. 21, 7-8, 13-15 and Deut. 17, 14-20, either for priesthood or for kingship.²⁹⁵ It is worth noting here the well-established fact that this claim (Sti4) relies on the relevance of the Torah as regulatory body of prescriptions. This has to be said in regard to U. Berges’ claim on TMLam. 1, 8.6²⁹⁶ that Jerusalem is ashamed of her behaviour and, isolated, she

288It will be in this case an elliptic form of מנוד ראש from נוד ‘to move’, ‘to be unsteady’, ‘to escape’, in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 490-1; see also M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 883, col. 1., W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 206, D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 2, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 105.

289It is derived from נדד ‘to move’, ‘to be restless’, ‘to be flee’, in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 486-7, M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* 877. See also LXX εις σαλον *ad locum*.

290Both meanings are related, because the present will be the metonymy of the effect, making in this case this form derive from the piel of נדה ‘to banish’, ‘to excommunicate’ for cause of uncleanness, in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 487; M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* 878, and *abominabilis* in the *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum, ad locum*.

291It uses the same Aramaic noun phrase לטליל ‘as wanderer’.

292See E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 92.

293The uncleanness of Jerusalem is the very topic of TMLam. 1, 8-9. The meaning ‘physical nakedness’ implies for ערוה ‘shame’ for being unclean, in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament, ad locum*, but also, with M. Jastrow, sexual ‘unchastity’, ‘lewdness’, ‘obscurity’, idem, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, ad locum*. Pertaining to TMLam. 1, 8-9, it is noteworthy that D. R. Hillers, who interprets TMLam. 1, 8.2 לנידה as ‘object of scorn’, considers that the writer of Lamentations “may have intended a pun on a word of similar sound *niddah*, “menstruous, unclean thing”, for he introduces as the reason for the scorn that her revilers “saw her naked”. The same two ideas, exposure of nakedness (*erwah*) and uncleanness (*niddah*) are associated in Lev. 20, 21 (cl.. Ez. 22, 10), hence it seems unlikely that the sequence here is entirely fortuitous”, *op. cit.*, 92.

294TMLam. 1, 8.5-6 ותשוב אחור גם היא נאנחה “*She herself sighs and turns backward*”.

295The Buber edition text adds to this claim in the interpretation of TMLam. 1, 8.6 “and [she] turns backward” the hardship they had to experience every day, without real progress, because of their own disobedience, according to Jer. 7, 24.

296See U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 106.

withdraws into herself. This typically rabbinic expounding of TMLam. 1, 8, specifically when we consider the insistence on obeying or transgressing the Torah, evidently provides the obvious choice of the cola which are accounted for in TMLam. 1, 9 that follows, and of the related explanatory claims made to account for them in line with the present claim.

3§. Sin Against the Torah: Idolatry, Sexual Immorality and Murder

The third group of items related to the mental condition of fallen Jerusalem is based on TMLam. 1, 9.1.3 5-6.²⁹⁷ The syntactic indeterminacy that can be observed in TMLam. 1, 9.1 *טמאתה בשוליה* “*Her uncleanness (was) in her skirts*”, due to the poetic nature of this phrase, is the sole reason for the lack of clarity experienced in matching this metaphoric statement to fallen Jerusalem. The issue of lack of clarity of TMLam 1,9.1 is voiced at length by D. R. Hillers when he states that “‘pollution’, ritual uncleanness, is a not very euphemistic reference to menstrual blood (cf. Isa. 64, 6 [5H]) but the exact point of the image - assuming that the writer had something very specific in mind - is difficult to determine. One finds elsewhere the idea that the innocent bloodshed in a city makes it **unclean** (Ps. 106, 38-39 ...); perhaps that is the idea here, but nothing in the immediate context prepares for it. Elsewhere, one finds the notion that “whoredom” with idols or other nations makes the land (pictured as a woman) unclean, ritually impure; thus Hos. 5, 3;6, 10, Ez. 23, 7, 13.”²⁹⁸

D. R. Hillers apparently misses to account for the two series of evidences he has collected, and he thus failed to address the issue of “the exact point of the image” the writer may have had in his mind. A real meaning of this metaphor must exist, but D.R. Hillers, who suspected it, remains unconvinced of such a meaning. On the other hand, it is well established that there is a link between bloodshed and uncleanness, whoredom, ritual impurity and idolatry. W. Rudolph in his time missed to recognize this link by reducing the use of the concerned metaphor in TMLam. 1, 9.1 to an image made for the simple purpose of illustration and comparison.²⁹⁹ U.

297The cola of the TMLam. 1, 9 expounded in E. R. are “*Her filthiness is in her skirts (...) / therefore has she gone down wonderfully // behold, O Lord, my affliction / for the enemy has glorified himself*”. They are accounted for by means of positive and negative interpretations.

298D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 24.

299“*Diese Sünde*” - unnamed but mentioned in TMLam. 1, 8 - “*vergleicht 9 mit der menstruellen Unreinheit der Frau* (vgl. Lev. 15, 19ff): *Wie dieses Unwohlsein normalerweise unbemerkt bleibt, so hatte auch Jerusalem*

Berges' view, much more pertinent, is that the picture of uncleanness sticking to the woman's skirts in TMLam. 1, 9 is a further dramatization of the image of the naked woman in preceding TMLam. 1, 8, and this image of the naked woman makes one suspect this very image to be presumably the great sin³⁰⁰ committed by Jerusalem. These views are reasonable. They make TMLam. 1, 8 cohere logically with the following TMLam. 1, 9. They make likely the referential link between the metaphoric physical uncleanness of the naked woman and the ethical category of sin of idolatry.³⁰¹ Finally, as to 'pollution' symbolizing the ritual uncleanness, this term simply refers to sin, more precisely, to the consequences of the sin..

Eikhah Rabbati focuses on this link and accounts for it in three claims (Sti 1-3), a narrative (A) and a *mashal*. The first claim related to TMLam. 1, 9.1 טמאתה בשוליה "Her uncleanness was in her skirts", is made by R. Berekyah (A5) in the name of R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) (Sti1), and is as follows,

‘All the priests who officiated in the days of Zedekiah were uncircumcised. That is what is stated, “*When you brought in the sons of aliens, uncircumcised of heart and uncircumcised of flesh*” (Ez. 44, 7).

This claim, in which the circumcision of flesh and the circumcision of heart are nearly declared equivalent, may surprise in that it makes mention of ‘the days of Zedekiah’, the king under the reign of whom (597 - 587 BCE) Jerusalem was destroyed and the Israelites deported into exile by the Babylonians of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE. Even more striking is the link, based on a metaphoric equivalence, between the unclean female Jerusalem in TMLam. 1, 9.1 and the uncircumcised ‘priests who officiated in ‘the days of Zedekiah’. Here, the uncircumcised priests clearly represent the female Jerusalem whose unclean skirts correspond to the priests’ impure hearts and garments. This theme is also examined in the second claim (Sti2) which is

geglaubt, mit seiner Sünde unentdeckt bleiben zu können, aber, “es bedachte nicht das Ende davon” (vgl. Jes. 47, 7; Deut. 32, 29), dass nämlich die Sache aufkommen (im Bild: das Blut durch die Kleidung dringen und sie besudeln) könne (Jes. 64, 6) ...”, idem, Klagelieder, 213. It is noteworthy that E. R. does not interpret TMLam. 1, 9.2, “She did not remember her end” obviously to concentrate only on the present TMLam. 1, 9.1.

300U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 106.

301See the analysis of the ‘whoring’ as denoting “both the political allegiances Israel made with gentile nations (Ezek. 16, 26) and her idolatrous practices (6, 17)” in D. Sern, *Parables in Midrash*, 170 and below.

based on Ex. 28, 34.3³⁰² and is again concerned with the garments of the priests. The same theme is further examined in the following tannaitic narrative (A), which focuses on Jerusalem because “*beshuleha*”, “*in her skirts*” that is mentioned in it, designates now the geographical Valley of Tophet on the outskirts of Jerusalem, *vide infra*. The following *mashal* (M), drawing further on the same theme, indicates that the image of the woman that is dealt with is a metaphor figuring the city of Jerusalem, and it then tells how and when the polluting sin has been committed, *vide infra*.

On one hand, the absence of circumcision of “*the priests of the days of Zedekiah*”, which should have caused the impurity of their hearts and garments and, consequently, the ruin of Jerusalem due to their impure services, will be then replaced by the equivalent impurity of Jerusalem and of her inhabitants. On the other hand, the polluted services of these priests will be represented by the guilty involvement of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the ‘cardinal sins’ of rabbinic Judaism, namely the idolatry, the sexual immorality and the murder³⁰³ which are the main infringements of the Torah that the Rabbis conceived.³⁰⁴ Consequently, the female Jerusalem will be no longer considered as only the victim of the violent humiliation caused by her foes, as this is the case in TMLam. 1, 8-9.³⁰⁵ Instead, she will be also considered as responsible and consequently held accountable for her deeds and for her own destiny.

It is in the light of this obedience to or of the transgressions³⁰⁶ against the Torah that the following TMLam. 1, 3.9 *ותרד פלאים* “*Therefore has she gone down wonderfully*” is no longer interpreted in *Eikhah Rabbati* as documenting the tremendous and ultimate fall of Jerusalem.³⁰⁷

302Ex. 28, 34.3, “*on the hem of the robe*”. The Buber edition has the two claims, but reversed, the second claim, whose scope is smaller, comes first.

303See A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 55f.

304A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 56: “the distinction between Torah and the three cardinal sins seems specious, for the former is simply an inclusive term for the latter.”

305U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 106-107 describes this position of the woman on the basis of biblical evidences.

306It is obvious that this focus on the accusation is cause for the missing of TMLam. 1, 9.2 *לא זכרה אחריתה* “*she did not remember her end*”, and of TMLam. 1, 9.4 *אין מנחם לה* “*She had no comforter*”, in *Eikhah Rabbati*; both of them appear unlikely to add some relevant element to this topic as it is handled here.

307The TMLam. 1, 9.3 *ותרד פלאים* is rendered by a double translation in the targum, *ונהחת ונפלת והות פריש*, “And she went down and fell and was set aside”, as to account for the unusual Heb. *פלאים* “*wonderously*” in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 641, col. 2. It is about a retribution, whose “exact nuance

Indeed, *Eikhah Rabbati*'s anonymous saying that 'she [Jerusalem] has come down into painful trials'³⁰⁸ is quite explicit. The anonymous saying specifically means, as Cohen rightly puts it in a comment, that sufferings were inflicted upon them "to make Israel reform"³⁰⁹ (Sti1). This view brings our understanding of the TMLm. 1, 9.3 into the realm of retribution which is made of "reward and punishment" as requested by the Torah.³¹⁰

4§. A Praise for the Torah

The theme of the Torah is dealt further with here, as the same TMLam. 1, 9.3 *וְתָרַד פְּלִאִים* "Therefore has she gone down wonderfully" leads, in a second move in *Eikhah Rabbati*, to six claims relating to TMLam. 1, 9.3. 5-6. These claims enhance the value of wisdom and the status of the Torah used as the standards *par excellence* for the accusatory assessment of the destruction of Jerusalem as well as of the population massacres that accompanied it.

The first claim of the series on the same colon TMLam. 1,9.3 (Sti2) is, as to illustrate the new interpretative paradigm, a praise of the righteousness. This claim is a piece of irony offered by an old man against R. Isaac Pesaga (A2). The latter hardly accepted to let the old man pay tribute to his deceased fellow villager R Yose (A2)³¹¹ of Milchaya in the presence of the "lions of the Torah" -reported *verbatim* in the text – that were R. Yochanan (A2) and R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2). The old man's utterance is as follows,

‘We find that the death of the righteous is more grievous before the Holy One, blessed be He, than the ninety-eight curses mentioned in Deuteronomy and the destruction of the Temple. Pertaining to the curses, it is written “*Then the Lord will make your plagues wonderful* (Deut. 28, 59),³¹² and in connection with the destruction of the Temple, it is written: “*Therefore, has she gone down*

escapes” - in D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 25, or simply “surpasses all representation”, according to U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 107.

308The Munich codex Heb. 229 has the complete variant נַחֲתָה לָהּ לְנִסְיוֹנִין.

309See footnote 3 *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, transl. A Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 111.

310The educative potential of the suffering is largely exposed in E. E. Urbach, *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 444-448.

311The Buber edition does not mention him as a rabbi.

312Deut. 28, 95. וְהִפְלִא יְהוָה אֶת מַכּוֹתָיו

wonderfully” (TMLam. 1, 9.3).³¹³ But in connection with the death of the righteous it is written: “*So, behold, I am going to do wonders among this people; the wonder, even a wonder*” (Isa. 29, 14. 1-2) for the reason that, “*the wisdom of his wise ones shall perish, and the wit of his witty ones shall be hidden*”³¹⁴ (Isa. 29, 14.4-5).

The subsequent and quite enthusiastic approval from a previously suspicious R. Isaac Pesaga (A2), and, to some degree, from R. Yochanan (A2) - approval based on the finding of the three “wonders” in Isa. 29, 14.1-2 related to the glorification of the wisdom-, brings down somehow the despair caused by the Destruction of Jerusalem. However, the overcoming of this despair would occur only on the basis of (i) the high consideration for wisdom held by the sages³¹⁵ and that was represented at that time by the Torah, and (ii) the respect and esteem in which the sages were actually held, as well as of their ability to promote the wisdom, that is, the Torah.³¹⁶ Only relying on this kind of thinking can we understand the following four claims as accusation instances related to Ps. 119, 85, “*The proud have dug pits for me which are not according to your law*”³¹⁷ which is introduced to expound TM Lam. 1, 9. 5-6 כי ראה יהוה את עניי הגדיל אויב “*Behold, O Lord, my affliction, for the enemy has glorified himself*”.

5§. Complaint Against the Transgression of the Torah

It is on the basis of this all-encompassing ideology of the Torah that the Destruction of Jerusalem is assessed by the Sages. This assessment parameter is extended, at this time, to the deeds of the enemy, using TMLam. 1, 9.5-6 כי הגדיל אויב ראה יהוה את עניי “*Behold, O Lord, my affliction, for the enemy has glorified himself*” that follows. Characterized as “a prayer of the city” by D. R. Hillers³¹⁸ or as “a tiny plaint psalm” by W. Rudolph,³¹⁹ this bicolon is uttered this

313TMLam. 1, 9.3. ותרד פלאים.

314Isa. 29, 14. לכן הגני יוסף להפליא את העם הזה הפלא ופלא ואבדה חכמת חכמיו ובינה נבניו תסתתר.

315This claim is supported by E. E. Urbach’s comment of Simon the Just’s declaration, that ‘Upon three things the world is based: upon the Torah, upon Temple service, and upon deeds of loving-kindness’, in his *The Sages - Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1975, 286.

316This view recurs in the *mashal* to TMLam. 4, 11, see below.

317 Ps. 119,85. כרו לי זדים שיחות אשר לא כתורתך.

318D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 25.

319W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 213.

time in *Eikhah Rabbati* by the Holy Spirit,³²⁰ that is, one of the second component of God's feminine persona.³²¹ What does this mean? This utterance by God in one of his feminine aspects means that God himself utters as victim³²² this 'prayer- complaint' against what appears as the excesses of the enemy because not conform to the Torah.³²³ The rationale of this divine move against deeds "which are not according to your-divine - law" (Ps. 119, 85) ³²⁴ is presented as documented in five claims.

The first two claims are made by R. Abba. b. Kahana (A3)³²⁵ and are stated as follows: the enemy has transgressed the Holy One, blessed be He's Torah, (1) in accordance with Hos. 10, 14³²⁶ and in violation of Deut. 22, 6³²⁷ by taking the mother and her young (Sti1), and (2) in accordance with Ps. 78, 31³²⁸ and in violation of Jer. 9,20 ³²⁹ by killing children from Synagogues, and young men from Houses of Studies (Sti2). R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) wrote two similar claims stated as follows: the enemy has transgressed the Holy One, blessed be He' s

320The introductory forms used in the text are וררה"ק צוהת ואומר 'The Holy Spirit cried and said.'

321The appropriation of the figure of God in the *midrash* leads to "a split along different lines, which nicely replicates a basic feature of the biblical text: the split into masculine and feminine personae. The feminine persona includes both the Shekhinah, the indwelling divine presence that reposed between the cherubim atop the Holy of Holies in the Temple, and the Holy Spirit, which seems to be the voiced, projective aspect of the Shekhinah (...). It is in the masculine aspect of God as King and Father that divine pathos is most powerfully communicated", in A. Mintz, *Hurban, Responses to Catastrophe...*, New York, 1984, 58-59.

322God's Voice, which is absent in the Biblical Book of Lamentations, is read and heard inevitably as a victim in a text in which only victims speak. This is an act of appropriation of the Biblical text by the *Eikhah Rabbati* interpreter (s), to assure that "God's concern for Israel had not forever lapsed", see A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 57.

323The motif of the enemy's excesses is present in the TMLam., and will be overwhelmingly used in *Eikhah Rabbati* interpretation of TMLam. 1, 9.5/6. It fits the recuperation line of *E. R.* and points "to surplus of pain that resists reassurance and consolation", in A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 78.

324Ps. 119,85. כרו לי זדים שיחות אשר לא כתורתך

325The two claims are inverse in the Buber edition.

326Hos 10, 14, "The mother was dashed in pieces with her children."

327Deut. 22, 6, ["If a bird's nest happens to be before you, in the way(...)], you shall not take the mother and the young."

328Ps. 78, 31, "And God's wrath came on them and killed the fattest of them; and he struck down the young men of Israel." The fattest and the young men were those who frequented the synagogues and the schools.

329Jer. 9, 20, "[For death has come into our windows, entering into our fortified palaces,] to cut off the children from the street, the young men from the broad places."

Torah (1) in violation of Lev. 22, 28³³⁰ and in accordance with Hos. 14, 10³³¹ by slaying mother and child in one single day (Sti3), and (2) in violation of Lev. 17, 13,³³² and in accordance with Ps. 79, 3³³³ leaving uncovered the shed blood of his victims (Sti4).

The concluding claim (Sti5) is reported by R. Berekhyah (A5) as uttered by the Community of Israel against the Holy One, blessed be He. The community accuses him for refusing burial to her children while he gives, instead, the burial to Egyptians. While the first part of this accusation, as detailed above, is documented *verbatim* in Scriptures, its second part is, however, the product of rabbinic ingenuity transporting present day views based on the very same Scriptures. The shame that the Community of Israel has not been protected against her foes is the main theme addressed here. The evident historical setting of this theme is examined below.

6§. A further Protest Against the Enemy Violating the Torah

The fourth set of items related to the mental condition of fallen Jerusalem is based on TMLam. 1, 10 which is accounted for by five claims and a *mashal* (M). Although *Eikhah Rabbati* is formally concerned only with TMLam. 1, 10.1 = *E. R.*(מ) ידו פרש צר “*The enemy has spread out his hand*”, it is evident, however, that the first claim (Sti1) that is presented below, which is anonymous in *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to TMLam. 1, 10.1 but is ascribed to R. Isaac (A3) in Proem IX, is definitely based on TMLam. 1, 10.1 as well as on TMLam. 1, 10. 5-6 אשר צויתתה לא בואו בקהל לך “*Whom you commanded that they not enter into your congregation*”:

‘You find that when the enemy entered the Temple, Ammonites and Moabites entered with them; and while all the other ran to plunder the silver and gold, the Ammonites and Moabites ran to plunder the Torah³³⁴ for the purpose of

330Lev, 22, 28, “But an ox or sheep, it and its young one, you shall not slaughter in one day.”

331Hos.10, 14 “The mother was dashed in pieces with her children”.

332Lev. 17, 13, “And any man of the sons of Israel, or of the aliens who reside in your midst, who takes in hunting any beast or fowl which may be eaten, then he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust.”

333Ps. 79, 3, “They have shed their blood like water all around Jerusalem; and there is no one burying.”

334Noteworthy is that “the Torah” is the translation in the *midrash* for מהמדיה “the desirable things” that occurs in TMLam. 1, 7.3 as well as here, in TMLam. 1, 10.2, which is not quoted *verbatim* in *Eikhah Rabbati* as the basis for the claim.

expunging, “*An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord*”³³⁵ (Deut. 23, 4) [Cohen].

Recalling Deut. 23, 4 as this is the case here in the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment helps express a sounding ironic protest³³⁶ against the lack of protecting the Torah. Indeed, the targum which identifies the enemy as Nebuchadnezzar, intentionally inserts into the otherwise asyndetic³³⁷ pronominal TMLam. 1, 10.3-4 באו מקדשה כי ראתה גוים “*Indeed, she has seen the nations enter her holy place*”³³⁸ that follows, the Congregation of Israel which in protest opposes Deut.23,4 to the Holy One, blessed be He, who seems quite forgetful of his own command thereby allowing the Ammonites and Moabites now to enter his Temple. However, whether the present TM Lam. 1, 10.3 actually alludes to Deut. 23, 4 is a matter of discussion.³³⁹ It is evident, on the other hand, that the *midrash* has performed here a discretionary appropriation of Deut. 23,4, which led to the production of a *mashal* (M) by R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) in the name of R. Levi b. Partha (A/ third century) and which based on Deut. 23,4.

In any event, *Eikhah Rabbati* expressly draws further on Deut. 23,4 as this is seen in the following claims. They are concerned with the legacy for different generations to deal with the conflicting relationships inherited from the past: (i) Four deeds document patriarch Abraham’s good behaviour towards patriarch Lot (Sti2) (Gen. 12, 4; 13, 5; 14, 6; 19, 29), (ii) four cases show afterwards that patriarch Lot’s descendants³⁴⁰ acted aggressively against Abraham’s descendants (Sti3) (Num. 12, 5f; Judg. 3, 13; 2 Chron. 10.1; and TMLam. 1, 10.1), (iii) the sins of patriarch

335The comment from the Buber edition resorts to the following identifications, which differ from the present reading of the Vilna edition and the Munich codex Heb. 229: 1. ידו פרש צר “*The enemy has spread out his hand*”: these are the Ammonites and Moabites”; 2. על כל מהמדיה “*over the desirable things*”: this is the Torah, as it is said: הנהמדים מזהב ומפז “[*they are*] more precious than gold, even much fine gold” (Ps. 19, 10/11).

336See the resort to juxtapose contradictory sentences to utter protest, in the expounding of TM Lam. 1, 9.5-6 above.

337The present TMLam.1.10.3-4 does not logically, that is, according to its syntax, follow the preceding bicolon.

338The targum has completed it as following, אף כנשתא דישראל שריאת ליללא ארום חזת עממין נוכראין עלו לבית מוקדשהא, ‘The Congregation of Israel too began to howl, for she saw foreign nations entering the Temple.’

339The historical source is 2 King.25, 13-17. W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 213 recalls that Ammonites and Moabites played a role in the 597 BCE attack against Jerusalem, while D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 25, sees in the case of a reference to Deut. 23,4 the broadened application of the Deuteromic command to all non-Israelites, as in Neh. 13, 1-3, because “the Babylonians (Chaldeans) were the ones who entered the temple (...), since there is no evidence that the Ammonites and Moabites figured in the destruction of Jerusalem at that time”.

340The Ammonites and Moabites were descendants of Lot according to Gn, 19, 37f.

Lot' s descendants are consequently recorded four times (Sti4) (Deut. 23, 4f, Mi. 4, 5, Neh. 13, 2, Josh. 24, 9), and (iv) four prophets announced retaliatory actions against Lot' s descendants (Sti 5) (Isa 15, 1, Jer. 49, 2, Ez. 25, 10-11, Zeph. 2, 9). All these claims report also on the on-going disputes with foreign nations from which Jerusalem appears to have suffered at that time. The historical setting of these claims will be discussed together with the *mashal* (M) to which all the claims are related.³⁴¹

7§. Jerusalemites Suffer of Food Starvation

Here we examine the last set of items displaying the image of fallen Jerusalem based on TMLam. 1, 11. The emphasis here is no longer on the spiritual condition of Jerusalem that might have presumably led to the present disaster. One finds here five claims and two anecdotes providing supplementary features of fallen Jerusalem. Colon TMLam. (verse 11. 1) כל עמה נאנחים *“All her people sigh”*³⁴² is targeted first; it is the occasion for two expounding interpretations. The first expounding interpretation is a claim on the food situation during the one year and a half of the siege that led to the first Destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE as reported in Jer. 52, 6, *“And in the fourth month, in the ninth of the month, the famine was severe in the city, so that there was no food for the people of the land.”* The rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* states in an anonymous claim (Sti1) that the clause, *“so there was no food for the people of the land”*, should be completed by the contrasting sentence *“but there was food for the sons of Judah,”* in opposition to the situation before the second Destruction, as described in TMLam. 1, 11 *“All her people sigh .”* It is concluded that the people of Judah were this time no longer spared from food starvation.

The anecdote narrative (A) that follows gives a picture of the mentioned overwhelming Starvation during the siege,³⁴³ which ended with the Second Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

341The first claim (Sti1) has been also identified as an anedocte narrative (A), see below. But even in this case, it assumes much more the function of the illustrand of the *mashal* and will, therefore, be handled with the latter...

342The Buber edition departs from this tradition we find in the Vilna edition and the Munich codex Heb. 229 targeting all the TMLam. 1, 11.1-2 bicolon, מבקשים לחם כל עמה נהנחים *“All her people sigh, they seek food”* for substantially the same claims.

343It was in the spring of 70 C.E. that Titus assembled his army near Jerusalem, but Jerusalem was isolated and under food restraint since 68 C. E., when it fell prey to hardships imposed by inner Jewish conflicts fueled by

What is reported here is no longer not, who had food and who had none, rather it is all about how people painfully strived to get food that was not available, *vide infra*, as it is detailed in the two claims associated with the said anecdote narrative. An insight into the magnitude of the catastrophic effects of the starvation imposed by the siege will hardly be given, at the end, by Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4)'s cryptic phrase 'about the size of a date' (Sti1) nor by R. Chananya (T1/2/3/A3/5)'s similar utterance 'about the size of a berry' (Sti2): these two utterances were made in reply to the question '[W]ith what minimum quantity of food is the soul refreshed', which is asked in the expounding of TMLam. 1, 11.2β להשיב נפש "To bring back the soul" which follows. The ravages caused on souls and bodies by the lack or by the shortage of food are further briefly reported in R. Pinchas (A5)'s *ubedah-ma'aseh* (A) which accounts for TMLam.1, 11.3 כי הייתי זוללה ראה יהוה והביטה "See, O Lord, and behold, how abject I am" which concludes the present theme.

We examine *Eikhah Rabbati* comments on TMLam. 1, 11 once again together with the aforementioned anecdote narratives (A), *vide infra*.

CONCLUSION to TMLam. 1, 7-11

Main conclusion from TMLam. 1,7-11 is as follows. *Eikhah Rabbati* draws summarily the inner image of personified feminine Jerusalem as a sinner woman. This rabbinic comment says, without much detail, that she has rebelled and has transgressed the commandments of the Torah. She is unclean because she has committed idolatry: she has made offerings to idols, which is equivalent to having sexual relationship with forbidden partners. As a consequence, she has been punished and deported into exile. Her punishment at the hands of the enemy has been very harsh and beyond the standards allowed by the Holy One, blessed be He in his own Torah, that the enemies strive in their cruelty to capture as their prey while the people starve to death. In exile, she faces the mockery of the nations, a situation that leads to question her status of the elected of and her covenant with the Holy One, blessed be He.

the diverging views between the war parties on the conduct of the war, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under the Roman Rule*, 312f.

I.2. First Account Of The Aggression Against The Community Of Israel (TMLam. 1, 12 - 22)

TMLam section 1, 12 - 22 mirrors the preceding TMLam. 1, 1-11: it is constituted of two stanzas, *viz.*, verses 12-16 and 17-22 in which, except in verse 17, Zion/Jerusalem speaks for the first time and complains about her pains. The enemies are mentioned in TMLam. 1, 17. 19. 21. 22, and a number of comments assert, in the first stanza, that the Lord appears as the great adversary.³⁴⁴ *Eikhah Rabbati* gives a quite contrasting view with regard to the opponents and the complainers as well as to the magnitude of the sufferings. While the previous section TMLam.1, 1 - 11 focused on the picture of the fallen Community of Israel, the emphasis of the present section is on the sufferings endured by the Community. This theme is examined in two subsections, as detailed below.

I.2.1. Severity of the Ordeal (vss. 12-16)

This subsection provides, in seven series of claims (Stis) intermingled with narratives (As) and a *mashal* (M), the first account of the cause and nature of the sufferings that the Community of Israel and many others endure. *Eikhah Rabbati* appears to have brought some innovation regarding the protagonists involved: here the complaining characters include the poet, Zion, and even the Holy One, blessed be He. Evidently, the complaining protagonists have their respective different reasons for complaining.

1§. The Punishment of the Community of Israel Harsher Than the Punishment of the Heathen Nations.

³⁴⁴See D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 17 where TMLam. 1, 12-22 is titled “Zion’s anguish, as she herself feels it”, and *ibidem*. 26 where TMLam. 1, 12.5/6 is quoted “Yahweh has brought to pass “*the day of his burning anger*” as the expression of the idea of a *dies irae*” present in Amos and in TMLam. 2, 1. 21, 22; see the extended comment on this topic in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 111f and also 110 for the text division and related comments; he omits, however, to notice that the Lord is *expressis verbis* named in TMLam. 1, 12. 6 as the great enemy.

The first series of claims providing the first insights into the blow suffered by the Community of Israel, is related to TMLam. 1, 12.³⁴⁵ Versions and comments appear to account differently for the introductory asyndetic TMLam. 1, 2.1α = E. R. (מב) לא אליכם as “*let it not come to you*”, although there is at first glance no reason that can justify these diverging approaches. The Nova Vulgate has “*O vos [omnes]*” which is identical to Symmachus “ω υμεις [πάντες].”³⁴⁶ The LXX (Rahlfs) reads literally “οὐ πρὸς ὑμας”, while the Aramaic אשבעיה לך ‘I adjure you’ of the targum means that the masoretic Hebrew לוא has been interpreted here as the positive oath particle³⁴⁷ and is also rendered as such by E. Levine and nearly so by Cohen, in accordance with the Jewish tradition of “*may it not come to you.*”³⁴⁸ It is worth noting here that in the claim (Sti) below uttered for the first time by the Community of Israel, *Eikhah Rabbati* undeniably presents a case for the comparison, better a confrontation context of what should be equally assessed as an invitation, a request, and an oath:

‘May there not come upon you *what has come upon me!* May there not occur to you *what has occurred to me*’³⁴⁹ [Cohen].

Argument for such a confrontation is supported by a number of observations. First, the addressees who are not mentioned in the Munich Codex Heb. 229³⁵⁰ are the idolaters.³⁵¹ Second, TMLam. 1, 12. 1b כל עברי דרך which follows and which is usually translated “*all you who pass by*”³⁵² is rendered as ‘all you that pass by [transgress] the way of the Torah’³⁵³ [Cohen] (Sti) in

לוא אליכם / כל עברי דרך / הביטו וראו / אם יש מכאוב כמכאובי / אשר עולל לי // אשר הוגה יהוה/ביום חרון אפו 345

346See E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 99.

347Its negative Hebrew counterpart is לולא, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 380, col. 1, with the mention of this verse, TMLam. 1, 12.

348The mention is of *bSanhedrin* 104B, idem, *op. cit.* 99. Noteworthy is that U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 89, speaks in this case of ‘request / invitation’ (Aufforderung) with Praetorius, against W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 207, for whom this phrase cannot be used “weder als Aussage noch als Frage noch als Aufforderung”. F. Praetorius’ proposal in *ZAW* 15 (1895) 143 is also accepted by D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 10, who rejects, however, the variant championed by the Jewish tradition.

349The italic typeface at the personal discretion of the writer to underline the confrontational stance of this sentence.

350This fact is due to an obvious corruption of this passage.

351The Vilna edition calls them עובדי כוכבים ומזלות, and ‘heathen nations’, in the Buber edition.

352That is the case also in the targum באורחא. U. Berges, *Klagelieder* 110, speaks of “*imaginaere Passanten*” in vss. 12. 1 and 18. 2 to whom he ascribes a diverting role.

353All the variants report כל עוברי דרכה של תורה.

Eikhah Rabbati. Third, further evidence is given in the Buber edition by an utterance, which is based on TMLam. 1, 12. 2-3 *הביתו וראו / אם יש מכאוב* “*behold and see if there is any pain*”, and which states ‘he did not bring upon the nation like [what] he brought upon me; he was not strict with the nation, like he was with me.’³⁵⁴

The Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, using TMLam. 1, 12. 2 as basis, slightly requalify the authors of the enormous pain inflicted upon the Community of Israel, when in these two works the origin of the enormous pain is transferred on Nebuchadnezzar and Vespasian who will be consequently punished. The transfer is smartly accomplished by means of their modified quotation shown in italics of the text of M. *Ed.* II, 10, below,

‘We have learnt in the Mishnah, ‘The judgement of the generation of the Flood lasted twelve months; *the judgement of the Egyptians*, twelve months; *the judgement of Job*, twelve months; the judgement of Gog and Magog, twelve months; the judgement of the unrighteous in Gehenna, twelve months; (the judgement of) *Nebuchadnezzar, three years and a half, and Vespasian, three years and a half.*”

The Holy One, blessed be He, remains also here the agent inflicting this unequalled pain in response to unequalled behaviour of Nebuchadnezzar and Vespasian. This confident claim is supported by the rendering of the Hebrew *po`al* passive *`olal* in the following TMLam. 1, 12. 4, in the Vilna edition (Sti) with the support of Deut. 24, 21, using the brutal and active anti-Torah terms of ‘*cutting of my gleanings*’, within the broader context of TMLam. 1, 12. 4 and in the absence of the defusing comparative allusion of the Buber edition.³⁵⁵ However, even in such a case, R. Acha (A4) is quite confident enough to state, on the basis of TMLam. 1, 12. 2-6, that a day of repentance by Israel will cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to change his mind (Sti), that is, to stop the *cutting the gleanings* of his Community, *vide infra*.

354The Buber edition maintains further this contrasting context in rendering TMLam. 1, 12. 4 *אשר עולל לי* “*which is done upon me*” as ‘he has cut of my gleanings, he has not cut of their gleanings’. And U. Berges is right, that the main issue is the recognition of the uncomparable pain of Zion, *idem, op. cit.* 110.

355The targum to Lamentations *ad hoc* could not be more explicit in this regard with its paraphrase *דיתבר יי יתי* ‘the Lord has shattered me’. U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 111f provides an extensive *excursus* on “the day of the Lord” and “the Lord’s anger”, both topics which are present in the collective memory as *dies irae*.

2§. The Holy One, blessed be He, Has Himself in His Attribute of Justice Punished the Community of Israel (v. 13).

The examined account of TMLam. 1, 13³⁵⁶ that comes next is all except unanimous. D. R. Hillers and U. Berges³⁵⁷ insist that the language used in this verse as well as in TMLam. 1, 14 that follows, belongs definitely to a Biblical repertoire that addresses the same theme of the subjugation of Zion which is described in four images detailed as follows. Image one, the occurrence of the fire “*from on high*”³⁵⁸ in TMLam.1,13.1 which W. Rudolph considers to be a simple comparison,³⁵⁹ is related by both D. R. Hillers and U. Berges to the burning anger reported in TMLam. 1, 12. 6.³⁶⁰ Image two, the word רשת “*net*” or “*trap*” in TMLam. 1, 13. 3 is recalled and compared by W. Rudolph with an ensnared wild animal³⁶¹ that is ultimately turned back. Image three, TMLam. 1, 13. 5/6 נתנני שממה כל היום דוה “*he made me desolate, sick all day long*”, is considered by U. Berges to sum up the effects of Zion’s turmoil and isolation caused by God’s action as described in the previous verses.³⁶² Image four, dealt with in TMLam. 1, 14.1, is differently accounted for, *vide infra*.

The rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* focuses, on the other hand, on features relating to the main protagonist, *viz.* the Holy One, blessed be He, as well as on the theological qualification of Zion’s subjugation. *Eikhah Rabbati*’s main textual traditions provide, by and large, records with few lexical changes and omissions, omissions being observed, *vide infra*, in a number of sentences we later examine. Further, this account of *Eikhah Rabbati* of the TMLam. 1, 13 is made of claims

ממרום שלח אש/ בעצמתי וירדנה// פרש רשת לרגלי/ השיבני אחור. נתנני שממה/ כל היום דוה.356

357D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 27, U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 114.

358 מרום means ‘height’, ‘altitude’, ‘heaven height’ in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, Berlin/Göttingen/ Heidelberg 1962, *ad locum*; the targum to Lamentations reads מן שמיא ‘from the heavens’, while the LXX has ἐξ οὐρανό.

359”Like a lightning” in idem, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 214.

360Noteworthy is the fact that U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 114, interpretes the bones (עצמותי) targeted by the fire as a metaphor of buildings, walls and houses of Zion. This is also the rendering of the same lemma in the targum to Lamentations, ... שלח אשתא בכריי תקיפין... ‘he sent fire into my strong cities...’

361U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 114, speaks of an hunting motif succeeding to the fire motif.

362U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 115; the same analysis is provided by W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 214, with clear mention of the sickness of Zion.

which can all be examined together as a whole formed of a single exegetical-homiletical narrative (A): this is because the claims address one and the same subject.³⁶³ Based on our method of research, the approach for considering as an atypical anecdote narrative the present narrative formed by a series of claims (Stis), is based on the following rationale: such a narrative cannot be adequately described as a typical anecdote narrative (A) which is characterized by a typical scheme that comprises, *inter alia*, (i) a plot, (ii) a “narrative time”, (iii) a “narration time”, (iv) a “narrator”, and (v) a “point of view”.

Now, the starting point of this *midrashic* account of the TMLam. 1, 13 is provided by Ps. 71, 19a.³⁶⁴ This account is introduced as a request by R. Ammi (A3) addressed to R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3).³⁶⁵ The response from R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3) is worded as follows,

‘In the same manner that the creatures of the terrestrial world need to practise righteousness one towards the other, so it is necessary for the beings of the celestial world to practise righteousness one towards the other’ (Sti1),

This claim (Sti1) is a theological account for מַמְרוֹם “*from on high*,” i.e., from the Lord and from his dwelling place (2 Sam. 22, 17//Ps. 18, 17; Isa. 24, 18) both seen under the consideration of his צְדָקָה “*justice*” which is punitive here. The illustration of this claim (Sti1) is provided in (Sti2) by R. Yochanan (A2) in the name of R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3)³⁶⁶ on the basis of the repetition of the phrase “*he said ..., he said*” in Ez. 10, 2. 7b.³⁶⁷ The divine punitive action against those on earth who do not repent and do not practise the righteousness is carried out by Gabriel according to a description made by R. Yehoshua of Siknin (A/fourth century) (Sti4) in

363It has been said above that this characterization is provided by D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 238-240, where it is presented as one of the three, with the *mashal* and the *ma'aseh*, most frequent narratives in Rabbinic literature. Its very features, a mingling of exegesis, story and homiletic considerations, make that this narrative is dealt with among the claims.

364Ps. 71, 19a, “Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heights.”

365R. Ammi (A3)’s request is worded as following, ‘In as much as I have heard about you that you are master of *Haggadah*, what is the meaning of ...’ [Cohen].

366This ascription is wanting in the *Buber edition*.

367Ez. 10, 2. 7, “*And he said to the man clothed with linen, and he said, Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, and fill your hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and sprinkle on the city... And one cherub stretched out his hand from between the cherubim to the fire that was between the cherubim. And he lifted and put it into the hands of one clothed with linen. And he took and he went out.*” R. Isaac (A3) adds another support (Sti3) for this expounding.

the name of R. Levi (A3), with emphasis on Ez. 10, 8. R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) states expressly in the name of same R. Levi (A3) on the basis of the same Ps. 71, 19a (Sti5) that ‘the righteousness performed by Israel with his hand enables all beings above and below to endure’ [Cohen]. The very connection between ‘above’ and ‘below’ established in this *midrash* alluding to the righteousness of Israel is further illustrated and supported by 1 Kings 20, 28, Est. 7, 5, and Lev. 21, 1; the stylistic repetition of the same predicate reported in these references is reckoned as an indication of two related statements. In conclusion, the three claims (Sti 6-8), which are absent in the Buber edition, theoretically assert the origin of the righteousness. They also introduce the no less theological views on the application of justice, using as basis the same Ps. 71, 19a

This biblical colon Ps. 71.19a is interpreted this time in an anonymous claim (Sti 9) as alluding to the two luminaries, *viz.*, the sun and the moon, whose creation by God detailed in Gen. 1, 14, 16, 368 is traditionally ascribed to the Lord’s Attribute of Mercy.³⁶⁹ This context enables another anonymous interpreter to make the following claim (Sti10). This claim (Sti10) is highly critical and homiletic; it is based on Ps. 71, 19c,³⁷⁰ and it expounds TMLam. 1, 13a as worded below,

“*O God, who is like you?*” (Ps. 71, 19c): since you subdue³⁷¹ the Attribute of Justice. At that time [when the enemy conquered Jerusalem] the accuser sprang before the Throne of Glory, and said,³⁷² ‘Lord of the universe, shall this wicked person boast, saying, ‘I have destroyed the house of God, I have burnt his Temple!’ If this is the case, let fire descend from above and let it burn [the

368See the Buber edition in which the creation of the luminaries, stated in Gen. 1, 16 ויעש אלהים את שני המאורות הגדולות “*And God made the two great luminaries*” is introduced as a proof-text to Ps. 71, 19b אשר עשית גדולות “*You who have done great things*”.

369This is a comment provided by the translator, *ad locum*. See the extended account of God’s Attributes of Justice and of Mercy as a further development against the suggestion of dualism entailed in the designation of God as *Elohim* and *Adonay*, in E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 448f.

370Ps. 71, 19c, אלהים מי כמוך “*O God, who is like you?*”

371The Buber edition is explicit, מי כמוך מעליונים, מי כמוך בתחתונים; מי כמוך מאריך אפך במדת הדין “*Who is like you among the heavenly creatures, who is like you among the earthly creatures, who is like you who abstain from the Attribute of Justice.*”

372This intervention in which the prosecuting angel represents the Attribute of Justice is obviously a contest between two Attributes; it aims at “maintaining unimpaired the position of the Attribute of Justice... preventing the scales from being unjustly inclined towards mercy,” in E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 460.

Temple].’ What is immediately written? “*From on high he sent fire into my bones*” (TMLam.1,13a)

The historical conquest of Jerusalem, which is alluded to above in TMLam. 1, 13a, is rhetorically qualified against any self-glorified claim of the heathen nations as an act of the punitive divine justice that had befallen the Community of Israel:³⁷³ this view is asserted by R. Yehoshua (A4)³⁷⁴ in the name of R. Levi (A3) (Sti11). Obviously, this means that there is no abandonment of the Community of Israel by the Lord to the power of the wicked. That means that even in the present situation, the Holy One, blessed be He, remains the All-Merciful keen to protect the Community of Israel. For illustration, it is worth noting that *Eikhah Rabbati* account of the TMLam. 1, 13a uses the traditional story in which God, who has created the two *great* luminaries, the huge sun and the small moon, tries quite hard in justifying what is presented as his move for quieting the complaining *small* moon.³⁷⁵ What *Eikhah Rabbati* provides in the account of the TMLam. 1, 13 that follows, is the records of the Holy One, blessed be He’s repentance for this injustice, and it documents the reasons for the complaint of the Community of Israel, as well:

1. The translation and the account of TMLam. 1, 13. 2β וירדנה in *Eikhah Rabbati* bears the characteristic marks of this Rabbinic commentary which distinguish it from a number of other explanatory proposals. Namely, the LXX renders it into the Greek κατήγαγεν (πυρ) which appears to be somewhat the modified equivalent of the Hebrew hiphil of ירד ‘to go down’. The Nova Vulgate, partaking of the same analysis, renders it into “*immisit (ignem)*”. It is worth noting that D. R. Hillers, who does not find suspect that the “LXX, which is very consistent otherwise in rendering Hebrew *waw*-consecutive by *kai*, does not have *kai* here,”³⁷⁶ appends this Greek

373This designation is explicit in the Buber edition.

374The Buber edition reads R. Yehoshua (A4) in the name of R. Levi (A3).

375The story told by R. Simeon b. Pazzi (A3) is reported in *b. Chullin*, chapter three, 42A-67B; it is explicitly stated, in a remark of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2), that the Holy One, blessed be He, uses the goat offering for the new moon to atone because he has made the moon smaller, see *Tractate Chullin*, volume XXX. B, Chapters 3-6 (*The Talmud of Babylonia*. An American Translation), transl. by T. Zahavy. Georgia/Atlanta 1993, 123. Noteworthy is that H. Atlan. “Violence fondatrice et référent divin”, 441, relies on this story to give support to his claim of a violent but righteous God, “*un Dieu qui, s’il est injuste sur le plan éthique, est juste sur le plan de l’effet fondateur*”, *ibidem*, 445.

376D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 11.

conjunction to the English synonymous of the Greek predicate, viz. “*and sank*”, which does not refer to the much more plausible רדה ‘to subjugate’, ‘rule’, ‘govern’,³⁷⁷ that only the targum³⁷⁸ and the *midrash* accept and examine. The Vilna edition³⁷⁹ of *Eikhah Rabbati* spells out this core meaning (Sti) in three Scripture-based explanations rendering it respectively as ‘to exile’ (Judg. 14, 9), ‘to overpower’ (Ps. 72, 8), ‘to rule’ (1 Kings 5, 4). The three explanations are then followed by two traditional accounts in which additional meanings of this word form are mentioned, namely ‘to plough’ ascribed to Tineius Rufus³⁸⁰ as well as ‘to see’ in the sentence ‘He saw that the *Attribute of Justice* overtook her’ [Cohen], the last meaning having been derived by R. Bebal of Sergunieh (A3)³⁸¹ according to the notarikon method.³⁸²

2. TMLam. 1, 13. 3 פרש רשת לרגלי “*he has spread a net for my feet*” that follows, is not rendered word for word, as this is the case in targum,³⁸³ LXX,³⁸⁴ Nova Vulgate,³⁸⁵ and in modern commentaries as well.³⁸⁶ All the concerned witnesses and translations apply the same literal expounding to TMLam. 1, 13. 4-6³⁸⁷ while the targum adds the texts in italics, as shown below, in its rendering of TMLam. 1, 13. 4-6, ‘he caused me to shrink back *before my enemies*’

377See ‘*herrschen*’, but also ‘*plügen*’ in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament, ad locum*, and M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 1996, 1451, col. 2.

378It seems that the targum finds necessary to justify it translating the preceding object complement בעצמותי ‘*in my bones*’ into the Aramaic into בכרכיי תקיפין ‘*into my strong cities*.’

379It differs slightly from the Buber edition on this issue.

380It is about the baraita ‘Tineius Rufus - who was legate in Judaea when the Bar Cochba’s revolt broke out in 130 CE- ploughed the Temple;’ see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 445, where this tradition is said to have appeared in *Chronicon Paschale*.

381This is a translator’s proposal, instead of רגניא that occurs in the midrashic text.

382Notarikon, from notarius, “*Schnellschreiber*”, is said to “*versteht die einzelnen Buchstaben eines Wortes als Akrostichon, als Anfangsbuchstaben einer Reihe von Wörtern, bzw. zerlegt ein Wort in seine Silben, die als selbständige Wörter gedeutet werden*”, in G. Stemberger, *Judaica Minora I*, 116. The present TMLam. וירדנה is consequently accounted for as made up of ויר ‘he saw’ + דנה ‘the justice’.

383פרש רשת לרגלי ‘he spread a net for my feet’.

384It has: διαπέτασεν δίκτυον τοῖς ποσίν μου.

385See its: expandit rete pedibus meis.

386See the literal expounding in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 214; D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 27, where this syntagm is a metaphor of Zion’s trouble; U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 114.

387TMLam. 1, 13. 4-6: כל היום דוה / נתנני שממה / הכשיבני אחור “*he has turned me back, he gave me desolation; all the day faint.*”

and ‘he caused me to be desolate all day, *abominable* and weak’. In contrast, Rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* brings innovation by adding word forms considered as appropriate, reinterpreting the Hebrew words using a preposition, and by modifying the consonantal and vocalic configurations of TMLam. Lemmata in order to extend the picture of the punished, and now despairing Community of Israel. This is the case in the claim (Sti1) related to TMLam. 1, 13. 3 made by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) as worded here below,

‘If you see benches filled with Babylonians set up in the land of Israel, look for the feet of the Messiah. What is the reason? “*He has spread a net for my feet*” [Cohen],

Similarly, the same case is commented as well in the baraita³⁸⁸ ascribed to R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) (Sti2), as worded below,

‘If you see a Persian horse tied in the land of Israel, look for the feet of the Messiah. And what is the reason? “*And this shall be peace: when Assyria shall come into our land*” (Mic. 5, 4).’

The question where do ‘the Babylonians’ and ‘the Persians’ come from, is tentatively answered by the claim that פֶּרֶשׁ (*“he has spread”*) is read פֶּרַס ‘a Persian’ (equivalent of Babylonian) so that the present *midrash* can be paraphrased as follows: ‘When the Persian (Babylonian) is like a net, that is, so numerous that he occupies all places, then watch to the feet of the Messiah.’³⁸⁹ Much more persuasive are the addition of preposition and the reinterpretation through the contextualizing word forms that take place in *Eikhah Rabbati* present accounting for the TMLam. 1, 13. 3-4-6:

“*he has turned me back*” from the priesthood and from the kingdom (Sti),³⁹⁰ “*he has made me*”, that is, [doomed] to “*devastation*”, “*all the day faint*”, that is, [doomed] to the axe’ (Sti).

The features added in *Eikhah Rabbati* to the biblical wording of the above verses characterise the ordeal of Fair Zion in a picture which remains vague. This is an evident proof of

388See the use of תָּנִי ‘he taught’, that did not occur in the Buber edition.

389Footnote 5, where this explanation is said to be as plausible as any, in *Lamentations* [Midrash Rabbah], transl. by A. Cohen, London, ([1939] 1961), 121.

390The adverbial complement ‘from the priesthood and from the kingdom’ has been used in the same context, that is, following אַחֲרָי “*after*”, in the *E. R.* expounding of the TMLam. 1, 8.6, see above.

Eikhah Rabbati constant endeavour of addressing the Biblical Lamentations selectively in order to treat its complaints in its own and adequate terms. The assessment of the historical setting of this account is examined below.

3§. Leniency and Severity of an Enduring Ordeal (v.14.1/3)

TMLam. 1, 14³⁹¹ is part of the sub-stanza TMLam. 1, 14-16 in which Fair Zion accounts for the destructive consequences of her own “*transgressions*” (פִּשְׁעֵי) (cf. TMLam. 1, 15.4) apparently claiming that the enemy’s yoke has been imposed over her by the Lord.³⁹² This paraphrased rendering of TMLam. 1, 14.1 נִשְׁקַד עַל פִּשְׁעֵי / בִּידוֹ does not gather any interpretive consensus. Actually, the disputed issues are about the grammatical features and the lexical meanings of נִשְׁקַד³⁹³ and, in particular, about the very category (i.e., substantive or preposition) of the consonantal עַל. Targum statement אֲתִיקַר נִיר מְרוּדִי בִּידִי ‘The yoke of my rebellion has become heavy’ is considered by E. Levine as “reflecting a reading of נִשְׁקַד based on שְׁקַד which is found in some Heb. manuscripts”³⁹⁴ On the other hand, the Hebrew שְׁקַד “to watch”³⁹⁵ appears as alluded to by the LXX “Ἐγρηγορήθη ἐπὶ τὰ ἀσεβήματά μου” as well as by the Nova Vulgate “*Vigilavit super iniquitates meas.*”

391 נִשְׁקַד עַל פִּשְׁעֵי / בִּידוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגּוּ / עַל צוּאֲרֵי / הַכְּשִׁיל כַּח / נִתְּנִי אֲדִנִּי בִּידִי / לֹא אוֹכֵל קוֹם

392 This is the interpretation of this colon proposed by U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 115, and by W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 214: “er hat ihr (14a.b) ihre Sünden als schweres Joch (...) aufgelegt.” Highly diverging is, however, D. R. Hillers’ proposal: “Watch is kept over my steps”, idem, *Lamentations*, 3, 11.

393 The basic שְׁקַד is said to be a doubtful verb in W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 1962, 781, col. 2.

394 E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 100. Noteworthy, however, is that neither W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 1962, nor M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targum, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the midrashic Literature*, 1996, brings שְׁקַד in relationship with ‘heaviness.’

395 This is its only meaning according to W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 1962, while M. Jastrow, *A. Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the midrashic Literature*, 1996, 1620-1621 adds ‘to bend, twist, plait’, also for the reported שְׁקַד.

It is on this fundamental meaning of שָׁקַד defined as ‘to see/to consider’³⁹⁶ that interpreters in *Eikhah Rabbati* base their five claims (Sti1-5)³⁹⁷ while replacing the niphil form of נִשְׁקַד by its active counterpart and, at the same time, omitting the opaque עַל. The emphasis is here on the wrong done and on the peculiar forgiving ways in which the wrong is dealt with. The first and the fifth claims are made by the Community of Israel. In both said claims, the Community states that it mistakenly hoped that its crimes would be forgiven. In the first claim (Sti 1), the indictment of the Community of Israel has been read³⁹⁸ on high. The next three claims (Sti2-4), which the Compiler ascribed to the Holy One, blessed be He, details the punitive consequences, which are exceptionally harmless, as worded below,

(Sti2) He (i.e., the Holy One, blessed be He) said: ‘If I exile them at the winter solstice, they will be afflicted by the cold and perish. I will, therefore, banish them at the summer solstice, so that even if they sleep on the roads and in the open places, not one of them will come to harm.’

(Sti3) He said: ‘If I exile them at the winter solstice, there will be no grapes on the vine and no figs on the fig-trees. I will, therefore, banish them at the summer solstice, when there are grapes on the vine and figs on the fig-trees, and even the leaves are not withered.’

(Sti 4) He said: ‘If I exile them by the way of the desert, they will perish from hunger. I will, therefore, banish them by the way of Armenia where there are town and cities, so that food and drink will be available for them’ [Cohen].

The last claim (Sti5) is as said above on the delusion of the Community of Israel and it is related to TMLam .1, 14. 2ב יסתרנו which is no longer analyzed and rendered as a predicate of the preceding “yoke” (עַל) and ‘my transgressions’ (פִּשְׁעֵי).³⁹⁹ This predicate proclaims in *Eikhah*

396 *Eikhah Rabbati* makes use in the explanation of the synonymous סָבַר ‘to look out for’, ‘think’, imagine’, ‘speculate’.

397 There are six claims in the Buber edition. The Vilna edition and the Buber edition recall expressively that *shin* is written, while the mss. Munich 229 and the Buber edition use obviously mistakenly סְקוּדָה הַיְיָ, the Vilna edition having for the same claim שְׁקוּדָה הַיְיָ.

398 This is the rendering of the wordform נִקְרָא that the Buber edition uses in its fourth claim (Sti4), while the *editio princeps* has נִקְרַע ‘has been torn up’, that A. Cohen replaced in his translation.

399 This is the common argument structure. The targum has מְרֻדִּים בְּשׁוּבָשׁוּ דְּגוֹפְנָא אִשְׁתַּבְּשׁוּ ‘intertwined are (my rebellions) like the tendrils of the vine’, which is somewhat the same in the LXX [ἐν χερσίν μου] συνεπλάκασαν

Rabbati the succession - “*they are knit together*” - of the ancient Great Powers who are said to have been imposed in pairs, upon the Community of Israel, by the Lord (Sti1), viz. Babylon and the Chaldeans, Media and Persia, Greece and Macedonia, Edom (Rome) and Ismael. Associated claim (Sti2) that the severe powers alternated with the lenient ones has to be amended to meet historical reliability and credibility.⁴⁰⁰ Here again, *Eikhah Rabbati* brings in further innovation in its accounting for TMLam. 1, 14. 3 עלו על צווארי “*they rise on my neck*”⁴⁰¹ (Sti) implying that the Community of Israel paid the imposed yoke by the enemy powers proclaiming twice a day *Shema Israel* in accordance with Deut. 6, 4.

4§. The Community of Israel Made a Refuse of Nations (vss. 14.4-15.5/6)

Translations as well as comments further explain almost unanimously TMLam, 1, 14. 4⁴⁰² that follows as completing the image of Fair Zion chafing under the yoke imposed by the heavenly oppressor. The poetic division in cola of the present sentences allows, however, different readings. The question here is whether the word form כחי “*my strength*” is a grammatical subject as in “*my strength has failed*”⁴⁰³, or a grammatical object as in “*he has caused my strength to fail*.”⁴⁰⁴ The issue is about the agent and the causes of the pains that will be examined in detail below. It is worth noting that the LXX has the first reading that is completed by TMLam. 1, 14. 5/6⁴⁰⁵ that follows, ὅτι ἔδωκεν κύριος ἐν χερσίν μου ὀδύνας, οὐ δύνησονται στήναι, “*the Lord has*

[τὰ ἀσεβήματά μου] and in the Nova Vulgata “[*in manu eius*] convolutae sunt (*iniquitates meae*). There is a light difference in U. Berges’ “Aufgelegt ist das Joch meiner Verfehlungen, durch seine Hand gebunden”, idem, *Klagelieder*, 87, see also W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 214, and the somewhat similar D. R. Hillers’ “they - the steps - are entangled by his hand”, idem, *Lamentations*, 3.

400A. Cohen cites Radal’s emendation: the Chaldeans were severe but Babylon lenient, Persia severe but Media lenient, Greece severe but Macedon lenient, Edom severe but Ishmael lenient, see idem (transl. by),: *Lamentations* [Midrash Rabbah], 123, note 2.

401It can as well be rendered, “*His yoke on my neck*.”

402 הכשיל כחי.

403The LXX reads ἡσθένησεν ἡ ἰσχὺς μου as well as the targum אַתְּקַל חֵילִי .

404The *Nova Vulgata* has “*debilitavit virtutem meam*”, as this is the case in “*He has brought my strength low*” in D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 3, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 116: “Damit [mit dem Stieg von Zions Verfehlungen über ihren Nacken] brachte JHWH ihre Kraft zum Straucheln.”

405TMLam. 1, 14. 5/6 קום לא אוכל בידי נחנני אדני “*the Lord has delivered me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand*” is translated in the targum by the straightforward יכיל למקם אנה דלית אנה בידא מאן דלית אנה יכיל למקם which goes together with the *Nova Vulgata* “*dedit me Dominus in manu, de qua non potero surgere*”. And the modern U.

given in my hands pains which I will not endure”.⁴⁰⁶ The Greek version resorts further to the same agent, the Lord, and uses the same literal rendering in the dealing with TMLam. 1, 15.⁴⁰⁷ It is reported, based on the predicate סלה “to throw away /despise/reject”⁴⁰⁸, that the aggression of the oppressor has been extended this time to “my mighty ones”, “my young men”, and to “the virgin daughter of Judah” who are now suffering like in a wine-press.

It should be noted here that *Eikhah Rabbati* comment on TMLam. 1, 14-15 focuses neither on describing the huge pains endured by the Community of Israel, nor on the unilateral complaining about the excessive cruelty of the alleged author of the inflicted pains. *Eikhah Rabbati* Rabbis appear to be aware of the following: the deplorable fate which had befallen the Community of Israel had to be accounted for on the basis of their own doctrine on the broken condition of the human beings in general, as well as of the current conduct of the Community of Israel in particular. This is the ideological context taken into consideration by R. Tanchum b. R. Yirmeyah (A/fourth century) in his account of the TMLam 1, 14. 4 with the claim (Sti) that fasting, a journey, sin and the kingdom of Babylon⁴⁰⁹ weaken a man’s strength.

Berges, *Klagelieder*, 116, has the complete “JHWHs Hand (V 14a) und die Hände der Feinde (V 14c; vgl. 10a) machten gemeinsame Sache gegen sie!”

406The LXX brings innovation through double translation and subordinate: TMLam. 1, 14. 5 becomes the causal subordinate of the preceding TMLam. 1, 14.4 as indicated in the use of ὅτι in the sentence ἡ θένησεν ἡ ἰσχύς μου, ὅτι ἔδωκεν κύριος ἐν χερσίν μου ὀδύνας, οὐ δύνησμαι στήναι, „my strength became weak, because the Lord gave in my hands pains I will not stand.“ The LXX „in my hands“ renders the Hebrew בְּיָדֵי in TMLam.1.14.5, and LXX „pains“ translate בְּדוֹי on the basis of דוּה ‘pain’ which is absent in the present TMLam.1,14.5, see the proposed analysis of this double translation in J. Lust/E. Eynikel/K. Hauspie, (compiled by), *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, revised edition, Stuttgart, 2003, 427, col. 2. This reading seems abandoned in the LXX edited by R. Hanhart, Stuttgart, 2006.

407TMLam. 1, 15. 1 סלה כל אֲבִירֵי יי “the Lord has trampled all my mighty ones”; 1, 15. 3/4 קרא עלי מועד / לשבור “he has called a solemn assembly against me to crush my young men”; 15. 5/6 לבתולת בת יהודה “The Lord has trodden as in wine-press, the virgin daughter of Judah.”

408This meaning is supported by W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 1962, 544, col. 2. D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 12-13, rejects it for incongruity with a context “which demands a physical action.” It is true that the *Nova Vulgata* has further the identical *sprevit* ‘rejected’, ‘disdained’; but the LXX has ἐξῆγεν, which is equivalent to כָּבַשׁ ‘to press’, ‘oppress’, ‘force’, ‘tread’.

409These listed causes of weakness are said to be supported respectively by Ps. 109, 24; 102, 24; 31, 11; Neh. 4, 4. The *midrashic* use of the aphel plural מַחְשִׁין [חָשַׁשׁ] ‘they weaken’, to render the Heb. hiphil singular הַכְשִׁיל is remarkable. And the addition of ‘the kingdom of Babylon’ to the preceding weakening three items in this list of b. Gittin 70a may correspond to an opportune appropriation of a traditional view, see below.

Similarly, TMLam. 1, 14. 5/6⁴¹⁰ is no longer thought as the quintessence of an alienating delivery to the power of unnamed foes. *Eikhah Rabbati* Rabbis referring to this bicolon comparably see in it the miserable fate of a pitiful husband who, for the reason of an excessive *ketubah*, is unable to get rid of his bad wife (Sti1), while R. Huna (A4) mocks, in the wake of R. Chanina (T1/ A1/ 2/ 3/ 4)⁴¹¹ (Sti2), the unfortunate humanity condemned to worry about the fulfilment of their needs. While TMLam. 1, 15. 1 alludes, as indicated in translations and commentaries, to the inflicted torture, R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) (Sti1) and R. Levi (A3) (Sti2) definitely detail the endured torture equivalent meanings as provided in their respective times and by their own assessments.⁴¹² Last observation: *Eikhah Rabbati* is alone⁴¹³ to rely on the contiguity of TMLam. 1, 15. 3/4⁴¹⁴ with TMLam. 1, 15.5/6 to assert that ‘the death of youths is considered as grievous as the destruction of the Temple’⁴¹⁵ [Cohen] (Sti3). The mention here of the destruction of the Temple alluded to by the metaphor TMLam. 1, 15.5 *גת דרך אדני לבתולת* „*Lord trod (as) a winepress the virgin*“⁴¹⁶ makes the focus of explanation shift from the general and individual consideration on sufferings and their causes observed in the claims that precede to the common and historically recorded pains: this is seen in the claims (Stis) and the series of anecdote

410TMLam. 1, 14. 5/6 נתנני אדני בידי / לא אוכל קום.

411The Munich Codex Heb. 229 repeats instead the name of R. Huna (A4).

412In his statement ‘In Bar Gamza they call refuse *‘sallutha’*’, the opaque massoretic Hebrew סלה is correctly related to “*refuse*” by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3), who relies on a similar meaning that he finds in Bar Gamza, or in Bagorta, according to the Buber edition, while R. Levi (A3) who mentions its historically attested equivalent, ‘to crush’, to trample’, relates it to *mesalselah*, ‘comb’ from Arabia.

413But see also the targum *ad locum*, and below.

414TMLam. 1, 15. 3/4 *גת דרך אדני / לבתולת בת יהודה* versus TMLam. 1, 15.5/6 *קרא עלי מועד / לשבור בחורי*

415 ‘The death of youths’ is asserted in accounting for TMLam. 1, 15. 4/5, while the allusion of TMLam. 1, 15. 5/6 to the destruction of the Temple and to its dramatic consequences are *midrashic* findings that the biblical *גת* “*wine-press*” in this verse alludes to the Temple, on the basis of the parsing account of Jer. 18, 8 *מבליגתי* in *Eikhah Rabbati*, petihta 32, ‘[W]ithout (מבלי) an anchor in the Torah to fulfil the commandment and good deed, I made my house (my) wine-press (גיתי)’. In any event, the *midrashic* treatment of this harvest imagery in the account of TMLam. 1, 16 is related to the following targumic paraphrases of TMLam. 1, 15, in italic type, ‘The Lord has crushed all my mighty ones with me, he has established a time against me to shatter the *strength* of my young men. *The nations entered by the decree of the Memra of the Lord and defiled the virgins of the House of Judah until the blood of their virginity was caused to flow like wine from a wine press when a man is treading grapes and grape-wine flows* [C. M. M. Brady]. See the contrasting, TM conform rendering of this verse in the Nova Vulgata.

416 „*To tread the grape with feet*“ is perceived in Isa. 63,2f, Jer. 32, 25 and Joel 4,13 as the metaphor of God’s judge of Israel, his vineyard, according to Isa.5,1-7.

narratives (As) that follow and account for TMLam. 1, 16. 1, *vide infra*. In the following claims (Stis) and anecdote narratives (As), *Eikhah Rabbati* asserts that in spite the Holy One, blessed be He, has punished the Community of Israel, he, however, still remains the merciful Lord who cares for and suffers for this Community.

5§. The Holy One, blessed be He, And the Community of Israel Weep Over the Disaster (v. 16.1-4)

Various translations and interpretations are propounded to account for TMLam. 16. 1 = *E. R.* (מה) על אלה אני בוכיה “*for these things I weep*” that comes next. The divergences between these translations and interpretations appear to arise from the treatment of the prepositional phrase על אלה “*for these*”, depending on the issue the prepositional phrase in question is referred to. For instance, W. Rudolph considers the said prepositional phrase as related to the content of the preceding TMLam. 1, 13-15⁴¹⁷ and D. R. Hillers appears to reasonably agree with him.⁴¹⁸ This anaphoric value of the said prepositional phrase is further stressed by U. Berges for whom TMLam. 1, 16 is simply the summary (*resumé*) of Zion’s preceding reasons for complaining.⁴¹⁹ It is true that the Septuagint adds this phrase as an adjunct to the preceding TMLam. 1, 15. 5/6,⁴²⁰ whereas the targum goes a different way. Namely, the targum replaces the masoretic demonstrative pronoun אלה “*these*” by the deplorable atrocities which it is supposed to refer to: ‘Because of the babes [that] were smashed and the wombs of the pregnant women [that were] ripped open.’ These two atrocities are the epitome of the unbearable present disaster that makes the Community of Israel weep. The above targum reanalysis process referring to subjects not mentioned in preceding verses, except if it is admitted that these subjects illustrate what is summarily alluded to in preceding verses, is also

417W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 214.

418It is possible that D.-R. Hillers’ assessment of this phrase is included in his general statement that “This first-person section of the chapter” -from 1,12f- “closes with the picture of mother Zion weeping, and the familiar theme recurs; “any comforter is far from me” (vs.16),” idem, *Lamentations*, 28.

419U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 116-117.

420TMLam. 1, 15. 5/6 ληνὸν ἐπάτησεν κύριος παρθένῳ θυγατρὶ Ἰουδα, ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐγὼ κλαίω “*the Lord trod the wine-press to/against the daughter of Juda, for these I weep*”; see the German rendering of Hirsch-Luipold/Maier, that erases this syntactical reanalysis: “*Die Kelter trat der Herr bei der Jungfrau, der Tochter Juda. [16] Darüber weine ich*”, in W. Kraus und M. Karrer, *Septuaginta Deutsch. Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung*, Stuttgart, 2009, 1351.

observed in the *midrash Eikhah Rabbati*. In this reanalysis process, the utterer of the statement is no more the complainant of the biblical Masoretic text supposed to be Fair Zion, while the catastrophe which is the object of the complaint in the statement is exposed in accounts reporting the humiliations to which the inhabitants of Jerusalem of all walks of life are submitted to, as it is reported in the narratives (As) that follow, *vide infra*.

The aforementioned rabbinic view is based neither on the Vilna edition nor on the Munich Codex Heb. 229 comment to TMLam. 1, 16. 1.⁴²¹ Actually, Vilna edition and Munich Codex Heb. 229 both begin their respective comment of TMLam.1,16.1 with ten reproduced narratives (As). Here in this research, the intervention of the new protagonists mentioned earlier above is reported in the *Eikhah Rabbati* variant of the Buber edition. In this variant of *Eikhah Rabbati*, the narratives (As) that occur in all the text traditions of *Eikhah Rabbati* only come after a number of series of claims (Stis) related to the supposed protagonists. We use the Buber edition readings here for the following reason: starting with claims on the protagonists, they are semantically coherent in proposing *ad locum* the same comment which the other text traditions dedicate, evidently erroneously,⁴²² to the following TMLam. 1, 17.1 = *E. R.* פרשה ציון בידיה (נט) “Zion spreads out her hands.” In the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*, the account for TLam. 1, 16.1 is made of a succession of, (1) two claims (Stis) followed by two *meshalim*, both of which related to Jer. 8, 23⁴²³ that accounts for the alleged utterer of the said verse Jer. 8,23, (2) seven claims (Stis) based on Ps. 42, 6⁴²⁴ concerned with the aftermath of the conquest, (3) ten anecdote narratives (As) which give the appalling picture of the dramatic havoc caused by the Roman conquest, and (4) six concluding claims (Stis) that list other losses.⁴²⁵ The claims (Stis) reported

421TMLam. 1, 16, על אלה אני בוכיה

422This is also the opinion of Radal, according to A. Cohen, *Lamentations*, 138, footnote 7.

423Jer. 8, 23 עמי / את חללי בת עמי / ויעיני מקור דמעה // ואבכה יומם ולילה / מי יתן ראשי מים / “Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” [Jay P. Green].

424Ps. 42, 5(6) המון חוגג / עד בית אלהים בקול רנה ותודה / ואשפכה עלי נפשי / כי אעבר בסך אדם / “I remember these things and I pour out my soul on me - for I passed over with the throng; I led them to the house of God with the voice of joy and gratitude, a multitude keeping the feast.”

425The three series of claims (Stis) have been termed as three explanatory rubrics in Chapter One.

in these interpretive components are examined on methodological grounds in the following three rubrics for the evident reason, viz., the differences in their content.

5§.1 The Holy One, blessed be He, Weeps

The first of the two Scripture-based claims (Stis) introduces the present rubric. The claim is in the form of a question reported by the Compiler and concerning the very utterer of Jer. 8, 23⁴²⁶ while Jeremiah the prophet is considered traditionally to be also the complainant of TMLam. 1, 16. 1.⁴²⁷

‘Who spoke this verse? If you answer that it was Jeremiah, is it possible that he should live without food and sleep? Who, then, spoke it? He who indulges neither in eating nor sleeping; as it is written, “Behold, He that keeps Israel does neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121, 4) [Cohen]’ (Sti).

On the basis of logical congruence, the above claim states that the Holy One, blessed be He, is actually the utterer of TMLam. 1, 16. He is therefore the complainant that struggles against the damages caused to the Community of Israel. This assessment is completed and supported by the evidence provided by the following claim (Sti) made by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) in the name of R. Levi (A3):

‘It is written, “And God said: ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place’ (Gen. 1, 9). The Holy One, blessed be He, said: “Let the waters gather themselves into me for the purpose for which I utilise them” [Cohen].

The very reason for ‘the waters to gather themselves’ is that the Holy One, blessed be He, intends to use them for the purpose of “weeping for the destruction of the Temple”, as a commentator has correctly observed.⁴²⁸ In the present expounding, the following anecdote narratives (As), that will be examined in the next chapter, show that the loss of the Temple in 70 C. E. represented, as it appears, a horrific disaster which deserved mourning by the Holy One,

426 עמי 23 „Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for he slain oft he daughter of my people. “

427 TMLam. 16. 1 = E. R. (מח) על אלה אני בוכיה “for these things I weep”. This is the reason comment accounting for this issue in the Buber edition has to be used here.

428 This determination of the purpose of the waters is provided in A. Cohen, *Lamentations*, ad locum, 139, footnote 1.

blessed be He himself, due to its impressive dimensions and religious significance. The two *meshalim* (Ms) that immediately follow in *Eikhah Rabbati* have apparently been used by R. Chaggai (A4) in the name of R. Isaac (A3) and R. Yehudah b. Simon (A4) to account for a historical destruction of the Temple that, in all evidence, had metaphysical meaning, *vide infra*

5§. 2 The Weeping Community of Israel

This second rubric focuses further on the pain experienced by the Community of Israel. Here, the dire suffering is fuelled by the painful memories of the destruction of the pilgrimage infrastructures and traditions: a dramatic breakdown that has occurred in the wake of the destruction of the Temple. This theme is examined on the basis of Ps. 42, 5(6)⁴²⁹ which, in its sounds and lexical components, provides the linguistic foothold for seven stated complaints (Sti1-7). The stated complaints are all introduced by Ps. 42, 5 (6) colon אלה אזכרה “*these things I remember*”⁴³⁰ that evidently alludes to the issues referred to in the prepositional phrase על אלה of the TMLam. 1, 16. as being the causes of the endured pain. The Vilna edition textual variant of these claims is identical to the textual variant of the Munich Codex Heb. 229.⁴³¹ However, the textual variant of the Vilna edition text is sole used in our study because it provides the best structured series of the said claims.⁴³²

Pertaining to these claims (Sti), the Community of Israel complains of the decrepit condition of the roads leading to Jerusalem that are no longer cared about⁴³³ and are now hedged

429 s. 42, 5 (6) אלה אזכרה/ ואשפכה עלי נפשי/ כי אעבור בסך אדם/ עד בית אלהים בקול רינה ותודה/ המון חוגג.

430 This is the case in the Vilna edition text and not in the Buber edition.

431 The only exceptions being that the latter has a second claim corrupt in its wording and wanting in the Vilna edition, and that it does not use the introductory colon before the claim on the Vespasian’s cruelty.

432 The ordering and the wording of the claims reported in this text tradition differ from the *Eikhah Rabbati* records edited Boy Buber.

433 This is the rendering of מתקנים of the Vilna edition in the Cohen’s translation; the Buber edition has מסולקות ‘removed’ in its fourth claim.

with thorns (Sti1).⁴³⁴ The pilgrims' heads, usually covered by trees providing shade,⁴³⁵ are at present exposed to the sun (Sti2).⁴³⁶ The shade of the Holy One, blessed be He, that also covered the pilgrims, has been replaced by "the shadow of the oppressive governments" [Cohen] (Sti3).⁴³⁷ It is reported in this context, as illustrated by a claim (Sti4) in the Vilna edition,⁴³⁸ that the Roman emperor Vespasian⁴³⁹ placed, eighteen miles from Emmaus,⁴⁴⁰ guards who roughed up the pilgrims, asking them the question,

“To whom do you belong?” They would answer, ‘We are the men of Vespasian, or Trajan, or Hadrian’ [Cohen] (Sti4).

The three claims that follow focus on the changed mood of the pilgrims. Apparently, the usual recitations of the hilarity-filled Jer. 31, 6, 2,⁴⁴¹ Ps. 122,⁴⁴² and Ps. 150, 1⁴⁴³.⁴⁴⁴ have been, instead, replaced by silence (Sti5).⁴⁴⁵ Songs and psalms⁴⁴⁶ have given way to weeping (Sti6).⁴⁴⁷ The rejoicing of the multitude of pilgrims⁴⁴⁸ has been replaced by their silence (Sti7).⁴⁴⁹ The

434The שך “thorny edges” of the Vilna edition is synonymous with the סך of the Buber edition that is somewhat in sound relationship with the סכך “with the throng” of the Ps. 2, 5 (6).

435The *editio princeps* speaks of אילנות מסככות while the Buber edition has in the third claim ascribed to R. Berekyah (A5) the past participle מעוככים. This wordform contains the word סך of the Ps. 42, 5 (6).

436This second claim in the Vilna edition is third in the Munich Heb. 229 text, the wording of the second claim in the latter being obviously corrupt.

437This claim is the first in the Buber edition where it is stated by R. Yudan (A4) and by R. Nechemyah (T3).

438See the introductory phrase אלה אזכרה “these things I will remember”, that is wanting in the Buber edition.

439The Buber edition adds the cursing attribute עצמות שחיק paraphrased as ‘his bones be ground’.

440Emmaus is generally preferred to Pameas (Caesarea Philippi), that is likely to be deduced from the *E. R.* word פאמיז, because of the nearness of Emmaus to Jerusalem as goal of the pilgrimage.

441Jer. 31, 6, 2 קומו ונעלה ציון “Arise, and let us go to Zion.”

442Ps. 122, 2 עמדות היו רגלינו בשעריך ירושלים “Our feet are standing within your gate, O Jerusalem.”

443Ps. 1, 051 הללויה הללו אל בקדשו “Halleluyah, Praise the Lord in his sanctuary”.

444Ps. 150, 6 כל הנשמה תהלל יה הללויה “Let everything that has breathe praise the Lord”.

445The support is provided by אדם “I led them” of the Ps. 42, 5. 4/5 “For I passed over with the throng; I led them to the house of God”. This wordform gives way to the Aramaic / דמומה סלקא / דמומה נהתה on the paranomasic basis of the passive participle of דם ‘to be silent’, ‘dumb’, ‘at rest’ in ‘and now in silence does the Community of Israel go up (to the ruins of Jerusalem) and in silence &c’ [Jastrow].

446See Ps. 42, 5, 6 בקול רנה ותודה “With the voice of rejoicing and praise”.

447There is no scriptural support to this claim except within the general context mentioned above.

448This comes from Ps. 42, 5. 6 המון חוגג “A multitude keeping the feast”.

449See the Sti5.

immense suffering caused by the Roman conquest is further detailed in ten contextualizing anecdote narratives (As) that account for the war ravages on the human victims. Worth noting in these narratives is the Holy Spirit, the feminine representation of the Holy One, blessed be He, crying her pains *vide infra*.

5§.3 Additional Losses Complained About

The present rubric is made of six tradition-based claims (Stis) asserted by the Rabbis. These claims are mostly based on the identification of additional matters considered as alluded to by the demonstrative אלה "these" that occurs in TMLam. 16.1. R. Yehudah (T3), in a discussion with his habitual contender R. Nechemyah (T3), considers on the basis of Jer. 4,9⁴⁵⁰ that the said deictic refers to 'the loss of senses as to the departure of the Shekhinah' (Sti1). Instead, contender R. Nechemyah (T3) thinks with Zech. 4,14⁴⁵¹ that the deictic is about the cessation of the priesthood and of the kingship (Sti2).

The same deictic אלה "these" in TMLam. 16.1 reminds (i) R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) of the cessation of the Torah (Sti3) according to Deut.12,1,⁴⁵² (ii) R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) of the ongoing idolatry (Sti4) deemed as related to the golden calf mentioned in Ex.32,4,⁴⁵³ (iii) R. Zabdai b. Levi (A1) (Sti5) of the cessation of the sacrifices as alluded to in Num. 29,39,⁴⁵⁴ and (iv) the Rabbis and R. Chiyya b. Abba (T5) of the disappearance of levitical watches in which fasting was held for the protection of sea travellers on Monday, for the protection of land travellers on Tuesday, and for the protection of the babes against croup on Wednesday, as opposed to fasting on Thursday made for the protection against miscarriage and against the death of nursed children (Sti6).

450 Jer. 4,9 [והיה ביום ההוא/נאום יהוה] יאבד לב המלך ולב השרים ["*And it will happen, on that day, says the Lord, that the king's heart and the heart of the rulers shall fail.*"]

451 Zech 4,14. ואמר אלה שני היצהר/העומדים על אדון כל הארץ. ["*And he said, These are the two sons of the fresh oil who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*"]

452 Deut. 1,21 אלה החקים והמשפטים אשר תשמרון לעשות "These are the statutes and the ordinances which you shall take heed to do..."

453 Ex. 32,4 [ויקח מידם ויצר אתו בחרט/ועשהו עגל מסכה//ויאמר] אלה אלהיך ישראל ["*And he took from their hands and formed it with an engraving tool. And he made it a casted calf. And they said,] These are your gods, O Israel.*"]

454 Num. 29,39 אלה תעשו ליהוה במועדיכם "These [are what] you shall prepare for the Lord in your appointed seasons."

It should be noted here that the rubric examined above begins and ends with complaints about the dire and catastrophic situation that had befallen the children of Israel after the huge and devastating Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The rubric is also concerned, like the preceding rubric, with the disorganization of the religious festivals which used to take place in Jerusalem. A matter of concern is whether these complaining claims all solely deal with the theme of complaints or they also pertain to many other subjects. The historical reliability of these claims (Stis) will be also examined and analyzed.

6§. The Controversial Expected Messiah (v. 16)

Claims (Stis) related to TMLam.1,16.1 על אלה אני בוכיה “*For these things I weep*” that precedes, are historically contextualized by ten anecdote narratives (As) which are examined in Chapter Two. TMLam.1, 16.2 עיני עיני יורדה מים “*my eye, my eye runs down with water*” that follows is accounted for in *Eikhah Rabbati* by means of a *mashal* (M) that adds a comforting feature to the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of TMLam. 16, 16.1, *vide infra*. In light of these observations and in comparison with them, the comment of *Eikhah Rabbati* for TMLam.1,16.3-4 כי רחוק ממני מנחם/משיב נפשי “*because far from me is a comforter, one to revive my soul*” that comes next is only in part an innovation. Modern commentators speak of the return of the weeping woman, mentioned in the previous section TMLam.1, 1-11, who finds no consolation in her sufferings.⁴⁵⁵

The Septuagint shifts its focus on a somewhat different reading,⁴⁵⁶ that the targum to Lamentations assumes expanding the argument structure of the present verbal form while inserting the theme of comfort⁴⁵⁷ which is equally a significant subject in *Eikhah. Rabbati*. The

455This is the view of W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Buch Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 214, and also of D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 28 where it is spoken of the weeping of mother Zion, the comforter being far from her. U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 117 makes it clear that the comforter, whose remoteness is complained, is JHWH, the protecting God, himself.

456Noteworthy is the noun phrase ὁ παρακαλῶν με where the Hebrew, which has also the participle preceded by articles, has only the participle מנחם without direct complement, with obvious nominal value. This is also the rendering of the *Vulgate*, “*quia longe factus a me consolator;*” see W. Genesius -E. Kautzsch, *Hebräische Grammatik*, Hildesheim/New York, ([1909] 1977), &126,1b Hebrew participle with article.

457The targum read, יתרחק ממני מנחם מקים יתי וממלל תהחומין על נפשי, “for far from me is an comforter to revive me and speak words of comfort for my soul” [C.M.M. Brady].

rabbinic commentary *Eikhah Rabbati* does not mention the allegedly continuous weeping of the community of Israel. Instead, in all the textual variants of this commentary, the Rabbis hold a discussion in nine claims (Stis) introduced twice by the question ‘[W]hat is the name of King Messiah’ and in one anecdote narrative (A), about the name and therefore the identity of the Messiah. It is obvious that the subject of Messiah is discussed in connection with the consolation alluded to by the Hebrew participle מנחם in TMLam. 1.16.3-4. Four of the nine claims made precede the anecdote narrative (A). In the first claim (Sti1), R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) calls the comforter יי “the Lord”, based on a thinking of R. Levi (A3) that relies on Jer. 23,6. This claim is worded as follows,

‘It is good for a province⁴⁵⁸ when its name is identical with that of its king, as it is written, “[A]nd the name of the city from that day shall be the Lord is there” (Ez.48,35).⁴⁵⁹ And the name of its king identical with that of its God, as it is stated, “[A]nd this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord is our righteousness”(Jer.23,6)’[Cohen].

The second claim (Sti2) is made by R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) for whom ‘Shoot’ is the name of the Messiah, based of Zech. 6,12 where this name is attributed to a man “*who shall shoot up out of his place, and build the temple of the Lord.*”⁴⁶⁰ This allusion to the temple to be built appears to make R. Yudan (A4) call, in the name of R. Aibo (A4), the Messiah the ‘Comforter’ (Sti3) as mentioned in TMLam.1,16.3/4. This is because both Hebrew words ‘Shoot’ and ‘Comforter’ have the same numeral value. This is what R. Chanina (T1/A1/3/4) asserts in a claim (Sti4) that is followed and contextualized by a narrative (A) in spite of the narrative (A) explicit connection to R. Yudan (A4)’ s statement, *vide infra*.

Other names ascribed to the King Messiah reflect the thinking of three schools, which considered as significant the name related to their founders once it is supported by scriptural witnesses. These names are as follows. The King Messiah is called (i) ‘Shiloh’ (Sti5) by the school of R. Shila (bA1), based on Gen.49,10, (ii) ‘Chaninah’ (Sti6) by the school of R. Chanina

458 The Aramaic מדינה means ‘city’, ‘province’, ‘country’ in M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, second edition, 2002, 291, col.2.

459 Ez. 48,35.2β יהוה שמה is read ‘the Lord shall be its name’ instead of ‘the Lord shall be there’, according to A. Cohen, *Lamentations*, (1939[1961]), 136 footnote 2 where no treaty of the talmud is mentioned.

460 Zech. 6,12.3-5 הנה איש צמח שמו ומתחתיו יצמח ובנה את היכל יהוה

(T1/A1/3/4), based on Jer.16,13, (iii) ‘Yinnon’ (Sti7) by the school of R. Yannai (A1), based on a spelling of Ps.72,17, while (iv) R. Biba of Sergunieh (A3) calls him ‘Nehirah’ (Sti8) , based on Dan. 2 ,22. Concluding the debate, R. Yehudah b. Simon (A4) repeats, in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac (A3), that David remains the eternal name of the Messiah⁴⁶¹ because, as argued by R. Tanchuma (A5) and based on Ps. 18,51, mercy has been promised by the Lord “*to David and to his seed, forever.*” Obviously, keeping hope alive for a davidic Messiah was sign of confidence and of attachment to tradition in time of turmoil.

7§ The Overpowering: Enemy Has Harmed the flourishing Children (v. 16.5-6)

TMLam. 16.5 *היו בני שוממים / כי גבר אויב* “*my children are desolate, because the enemy has prevailed,*” which follows, has been accounted for in modern commentaries as part of the sub-section TMLam. 1, 12-16.⁴⁶² Modern commentaries detail the “picture of mother Zion weeping”, as mentioned earlier,⁴⁶³ and this time the picture describes her weeping over the desolation of her children. Ancient witnessing records indicate in general the same turmoil endured by her children and that had also befallen mother Zion herself because of the havoc inflicted on her children by the overpowering enemy.⁴⁶⁴ In accounting for the same colon, as worded below, *Eikhah Rabbati* makes no mention of the violent enemy, while it uses two natural images that actually focus on the feeling of devastation caused by the blow inflicted to the Community of Israel:

461 This everlasting prerogative is stated by in his *שמיא* *אי ממיתא הוא דוד שמיא* ‘whether he be of those still living or of those who are dead, David is his name.’

462 This is the case in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 213, D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 29 where it is spoken of the “first-person section” that goes to end here, U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 91.

463 See W. Rudolph, *op.cit.*, 214: “*Bilder der weinenden Frau*,” D.R. Hillers, *op. cit.*, 28, while U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 116-7 sees in vs. 16, Zion’s “*Resümee ihrer Klage*,” against God failing to protect, with an equivalence to Zion’s fate in TMLam. 1, 11: “*So wie sie einsam und vom Leben abgeschnitten ist (שוממה; vs.13.5), sind auch ihre Kinder verstört (שוממים), weil der אויב “Feind” übermächtig ist.*”

464 Except light differentiating semantic nuances, there is a somewhat agreement in the meaning between the targum to Lamentations *היו בני צדיין* ‘my sons are desolate’ (confounded), the Septuagint, *ἐγένοντο οἱ υἱοὶ μου ἡφανισμένοι*, “*my sons were destroyed*”, and the Vulgata, “*facti sunt filii mei perditii*”.

1. 'R. Aibo (A4) said (Sti1): It is like the tuber of a cabbage; as the latter grows the former diminishes in size. 2. R. Yehudah b. R. Simeon (A4) said (Sti2): It is like a sow which grows smaller as her litter grow bigger.'

In his comment reported in the footnote on R. Aibo (A)' s claim, A. Cohen writes that "[S]imilarly, the more powerful the enemy grows the weaker Israel becomes." There is in this Cohen' s assessment between the enemy and the Community of Israel nothing of the kind of the metonymic relationship entailed by the two images of the tuber related to the cabbage, and of the sow to the litter to which the Rabbis alluded to in *Eikhah Rabbati*. Both of these vegetable and animal images are mostly concerned with the pains afflicting the components of the Community of Israel. Such interpretation is quite historically relevant, as indicated elsewhere in later analysis.

CONCLUSION

Many modern commentaries have correctly noticed that TMLam. 1, 12-16 is the first subsection in which Fair Zion relates the pain that has befallen her. *Eikhah Rabbati* accounts for these sufferings. However, the said sufferings are no longer here the destructive and quite unspecified blows of the biblical Lamentations. The Community of Israel goes into exile under mitigated aggressions that have, however, caused many losses; these aggressions are even complained about by the Holy One, blessed be He himself. The comment, which follows, further focused on the features of the unusual relationship between the Holy One blessed be He, and the Community of Israel, a relationship sewn with rebukes as well as with shared status.

I.2.2. Rebellious And Confident Community Of Israel (vss. 17-22)

As observed earlier, present stanza TMLam.1,17-22 significantly differs from the preceding one in that (a) the enemy is repeatedly alluded to here in TMLam.1,17,19,21,22, as source of discomfort and (b) Fair Zion reacts strongly to her situation complaining either about the Lord (TMLam.1,18,19) or to him (TMLam.1, 20-22), in continuation of her complaint claims that began in TMLam.1, 12-16. Here, the various grievances uttered by Zion are introduced by the intervention of the poet in TMLam.1,17⁴⁶⁵ who agrees with her victim status, before Fair

⁴⁶⁵He is the same utterer who speaks in TMLam. 1,1-11, see W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth.Das Hohelied.Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 214; see also D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 28, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 117f.

Zion subsequently impresses special traits of doxology and acknowledgement of her fault (TMLam.1,18.2) on her speech, and introduces the next move for a final request (*Bitterklage*) in TMLam. 1, 20-22.⁴⁶⁶ *Eikhah Rabbati* further focuses on the cause of the pain that befalls the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Community of Israel, while it lessens the extent of the reproaches uttered by the Community to the Holy One, blessed be He.

1§. The Community of Israel Punished for Cause of Transgression (v.17.1)

Modern commentaries are unanimous that the return of the poet in the colon TMLam. 1,17.1 פרשה ציון בידיה “*Zion spreads out her hands*” brings a shift in the treatment of the complaint as well as in the perception Fair of Zion has about herself. That Fair Zion is said to have “*spread out her hands*” is assessed as a metaphoric sign meaning that she is now in search for someone who can help her and get her out of those pains she has detailed in the preceding verses. This focus on herself as a victim combined to her own posture of imploring help implies that Fair Zion emerges now to the consciousness that she has committed some faults.⁴⁶⁷

Among the ancient versions, the Septuagint and the Vulgate have a word-for-word counterpart to the Hebrew text, while the targum to Lamentations makes explicit the image of Fair Zion in despair expanding the predicate “*spreads*” by means of the adverbial phrase ‘from anguish like a woman spread upon the birth stool.’⁴⁶⁸ This is also the explanation line of the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* where the same TMLam.17.1 is expounded first by the comparison sentence ‘[L]ike a man sinking into the sea that spreads his hands in search for a support to cling to it’. This claim is then followed by a *mashal* uttered by R. Yehoshua of Siknin (A/fourth century) in the name of R. Levi (A3) on a son struck by his father the king. The Vilna

466See detailed analysis and extended comments in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 117-118, and the treatment on the shift of themes introduced in TMLam.1, 17: a “progressive turning toward Yahweh” named as “author of calamity” and humbly justified in his action, and a kind of concluding restatement of previous requests, in D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 28-29.

467This is an explicit interpretation present in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 118, while D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 28 notes the “shift in emphasis” without commenting it otherwise; and W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohelied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962 considers that spreading her hands implies that the abundant weeping expressed above hinders Fair Zion from uttering further words.

468The targum rendering is פרשת ציון ידהא מן עקתא היכם דמפרשא אתתא על מתברא

edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* has this same *mashal* that will be accounted for in Chapter Five.⁴⁶⁹ It is part of the second, the other interpretation introduced by *dabar acher*, of the present colon after the first one that we rather consider as accounting for the preceding TMLam. 1, 16. 1 and is for that reason dealt with there.

The colon TMLam.1, 17.2 אין מנחם לה “*there is none to comfort her*” that follows, is accounted for word-for-word by modern commentaries⁴⁷⁰ as well as by the Septuagint and the Vulgate. The targum has the same meaning, but emphasizes its rendering of the Hebrew participle מנחם by a substantive within a coordinate sentence.⁴⁷¹ By repeating R. Levi (A3)’s explanation to TMLam.1, 2.3 that ‘[W]herever it says, “*is none*”, it indicates that there would be in the future’ [Cohen], *Eikhah Rabbati* confirms its optimistic posture that the very situation of the Community of Israel is not desperate. We refer here to the historical setting that will be dealt with below. The treatment of the following TMLam.1,17.3-4 צוה יהוה ליעקב סביביו צריו “*the Lord has commanded concerning Jacob that his neighbours should be his foes*” is very differentiated depending on the complement (s) of the predicate צוה “*has commanded*”. Modern commentaries⁴⁷² and the Vulgate⁴⁷³ consider “*his foes*” as the direct object of the predicate. The Septuagint has syntactically unrelated word forms,⁴⁷⁴ while the targum to Lamentations reanalyses the argument structure of the predicate “*has commanded*” into the complex sentence “*has commanded to keep the commandments and Torah, but they transgressed the decree of his Memra. Therefore, his oppressors encircle Jacob.*” It appears that this targumic reanalysis of TMLam. 1,17.3-4, that is

469We maintain that the two explanatory rubrics that precede this *mashal* in the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb.229 account correctly for TMLam.1,16.1, see explanation at 5 § above.

470See W. Rudolph’s “[S]ie hat keinen Tröster, weil Jahwe selbst ihre Nachbarn, die sonst zum Trösten kamen (2), als Feinde gegen sie entboten hat...”, in idem, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 214 . And U. Berges considers that Fair Zion spreads out her hands for having nobody to comfort her, see idem, *Klagelieder*, 118.

471The targum has the explicit על לבבהא תנחומין די ימלל תנחומין “she screams but there is no one that speaks consolations to her heart”.

472See W. Rudolph, *op. cit.* 214 quoted above, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 86, 118, “*JHWH habe Jakobs Bedränger (צור) von ringsumher aufgeboden* (צוה).”

473Vulgata has, “*mandavit Dominus adversum Jacob in circuitu eius hostes eius.*”

474The LXX reads ἐνετείλατο κύριος τῷ Ἰακώβ, κύκλῳ αὐτοῦ οἱ θλίβοντες αὐτόν .

obviously motivated by the semantic family of the predicate צוה “*has commanded*” is present in the *Eikhah Rabbati* claim to this colon that follows as a proof of a punishment,

‘like Challamish to Naveh, Castra to Haifa, Susitha to Tiberias, Jericho to Naaran, Lydda to Ono.’⁴⁷⁵

This claim is better understood if considered as completing the last sentence of the targumic rendering, “Therefore his oppressors encircle [the transgressor] Jacob.” In striking similarity to the claims made in *Eikhah Rabbati* to the previous section TMLam. 1,1-11, the emphasis is further on the neglecting of the commandments of the Holy One, blessed be He, as cause of the ensuing punishing action.

2§. King Josias (641-609 BCE) Died for Cause of Rebellion and Idolatry (v.18.1-2)

The same reproach of not obeying the commandments is further present in the accounting of TMLam 1,18.1-2 כִּי פִּיהוּ מְרִיתִי י"י צָדִיק הוּא “*The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against his word*”. Fair Zion takes on in this verse the turning stance toward the Lord introduced by the poet in TMLam.1,17 with this confession that D. R. Hillers ascribes to legal language.⁴⁷⁶ W. Rudolph sees here Fair Zion’s admission of a deserved punishment.⁴⁷⁷ And U. Berges speaks of a deuteronomistic “*Gerichtsdoxologie*” that, if it does not nullify Fair Zion’s complaint, opens the path leading to the coming request for an action of the Lord who has been proclaimed free from any responsibility for the exile.⁴⁷⁸ The Septuagint and the Vulgate provide a word-for-word rendering of TMLam.1, 18.1-2.⁴⁷⁹ An extended expounding is found in *Eikhah Rabbati* and in the targum that ascribe this statement to King Josias (640-609). More explicitly, both of

475 These items of the Vilna edition are ordered somewhat differently in the Buber edition: ‘Like Challamish to Naveh, Susitha to Tiberias, Castra to Haifa, Jericho to Naaran, Lydda to Ono.’ Worth to be noted is the use of Ez.5,5 that only the Buber edition provides as proof-text.

476 D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, New York 1972, 28 where the complete confessing formula is reported: “Yahweh is in the right and I am in the wrong”.

477 W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, Gütersloh 1962, 214-5: Zion’s Schuld-“Eingeständnis der verdienten Strafe”.

478 U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 2002, 119.

479 The Septuagint has the aorist of παραπικραίνω “to embitter”, “to provoke” in J. Lust/E. Eynikel/K. Hauspie, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Revised edition, Stuttgart 2003, 466, col.1; the Vulgate reads literally “*quia os eius ad iracundiam provocavi*”.

them make use of 2 Chr.35,20-23 that reports the unfortunate move of King Josias against the King of Egypt Necho that passed through the Land of Israel to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates.

The targum accounts for the TMLam. 1, 18.1-2 as a confession made by King Josias for having tried to obey to Lev. 26,6.4⁴⁸⁰ attacking mistakenly Pharaoh Necho on the plain of Megiddo for the simple reason that 'he had not been commanded [to do] and he had not sought instruction from before the Lord' (Brady), as the targum argues. The following TMLam. 1,18.3-6,⁴⁸¹ that is not mentioned in *Eikhah Rabbati*, is ascribed in the targum to Jeremiah the prophet that is said to lament the death of King Josias after having tried without success to deter him from moving against the Egyptian King. The text of *Eikhah Rabbati* has much more comments in the Vilna edition than in the Buber edition. Both traditions provide, however, a substantially identical account of the big trouble King Josias is said to have put himself in. The rabbinic comment in *Eikhah Rabbati* adds to the claims it has in common with the targum the view that TMLam.1,18.1-2 was heard by Jeremiah the prophet as asserted by King Josias while he was dying struck, as R. Mani (A2/5) states, by three hundred arrows. *Eikhah Rabbati* considers that King Josias made a mistake moving against the Egyptian Necho on the recommendation of Lev.26, 6.4 because, it is exposed in a narrative - claim, his own generation was overwhelmingly permeated by idolatry. We find the same theme of transgression and of idolatry as a cause of exile in the comment of the following verses.

3§. Ambiguous Exile: Seduction to Idolatry and Resistance with The Comfort of The Torah (vss. 19-20)

TMLam 1,19.1⁴⁸² and 1, 20.1-6⁴⁸³ are dealt with together in this work against, for instance, U. Berges' proposal of a sub-stanza TMLam. 1,17-19 on the reason that it is spoken

480Lev.26,6.4 וחרב לא תעבר בארצכם "and the sword shall not pass over into your land" [Green].

481TMLam. 1, 18.3-6 בשבי הלכו ובחורי בתולתי ומכאבי וראו מכאבי בתולתי ובחורי הלכו בשבי "I beseech you, all peoples, hear and see my sorrow. My virgins and my young men have gone into exile."

482TMLam. 1, 19.1 קראתי למאהבי הם רמוני "I called for my lovers; they deceived me"

483TMLam 1, 20.1: מעי חמרמרו: ראה יהוה כי צר לי "Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress, mine inwards burn", 1,20.2 "my heart is overturned within me", 1,20.3 בבית כמות חרב מיוחץ שכלה חרב "on the outside the sword bereaves; in the house it is like death."

about the Lord, while in the following 1, 20-22 it is spoken to him.⁴⁸⁴ This argument is not compelling. It seems, indeed, that, in spite of the presence of the imperative form ראה “Behold” in TMLam. 1, 20.1, Fair Zion speaks here neither about the Lord nor to him. The Lord is surely involved to a certain degree but as a partner in a complaint against Fair Zion’s foes. It seems therefore that the focus of the two verses is on the immensity of the pain suffered by Fair Zion herself. This claim made here is obvious when the other traditions of interpretation related to these verses are taken into consideration. Ancient traditions are in most cases close to the textus masoreticus, nearly accounting word-for-word 1,19-20 as a catalogue of pains endured by Fair Zion. This is the case in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate where it is spoken of the deception caused⁴⁸⁵ by “my lovers”,⁴⁸⁶ “my priests”, “my elders” that “expired” for lack of “food”.

The targum to Lamentations makes the difference. It deals with all the TMLam. 1,19 by means of striking innovations related to the first bicolon that link the destruction of the First Temple to the destruction of the Second one. Jerusalem is reported asserting that, when she ‘was delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar’, she ‘called to her friends’ that were the sons of the nations, with whom she ‘made treaties, to come to’ her ‘aid’. These friends are said *to have deceived* her, turning instead to be those that attack her. It is specified that the Romans that entered with Titus and Vespasian building siege works are alluded to here.⁴⁸⁷

This targumic rendering of this verse recalls the *Eikhah Rabbati* treatment of the same verse. The rabbinic comment accounts only for the biblical phrase “my lovers” by means of two contradictory claims. The first claim (Sti1) is made by the Rabbis. According to this claim, the mentioned biblical “lovers” are the false prophets that ‘made the community of Israel love their idols’. They are accused, as stated by מזוהים in TMLam. 2,14 read along with the targum with altered vocal, of having ‘seduced’ this Community in going into exile.⁴⁸⁸ Clearly in contrast to

484 U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, Basel/Wien 2002, 117.

485 The Hebrew רמנו “they deceived” is rendered by παρελογίσαντό “they deceived” in the *Septuagint*, and by “deceperunt” in the *Vulgata*.

486 The TMLam מאהבי is rendered by εραστάς “lovers”, “admirers” in the *Septuagint*, and by “amicos” instead of the marked “amantes” in the *Vulgate*.

487 See the Aramaic Lamentations in E. Levine, *The Aramaic Versions of Lamentations*, New York 1981, 34, 104.

488 This accusation is common to the Buber edition and the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*, while the Buber edition ascribes to these false prophets the call to separate the priestly due and the tithes that is said to have been made by the true prophets in the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*!

this claim is the following R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3)'s statement (Sti2) that these “*lovers*” are the true prophets who made the Community of Israel ‘beloved by the Holy One, blessed be He’ in such a catastrophic time. These prophets are declared true because they have even in the exile actively encouraged this Community to observe the commandments. This claim is supported by Jer. 31, 21 spelled out as alluding to a request of the Holy One, blessed be He,⁴⁸⁹ founded on the conviction that the *Shekinah*, has never abandoned this Community in all her exiles,⁴⁹⁰ to excel in observing His precepts. The second, this time anonymous interpretation of the same Jer. 31, 21.3-4 to account for TMLam.1, 19.1 considers this prophetic verse as a call to repent from the misconduct that has led to the decline of a Community in exile. This interpretation is in line with the dealing with the present miserable situation on the basis of the following TMLam.1, 20.

As a matter of fact, it is question in this verse TMLam.1, 20 of *distress*⁴⁹¹, *burning inwards*, *overturned heart*, *rebellion*,⁴⁹² *bereaving sword outside* and of a *situation similar to death in the house* that ancient versions as well as nearly all available modern comments consider for granted.⁴⁹³ U. Berges and the targum make the difference moving on the same innovative line along with *Eikhah Rabbati*. In the targum, the inconceivable Hebrew מעי חמרמרו “*my inward parts ferment*” is rendered by מעי אדגרו ‘*my bowls are piled up*’ (Levine), the indefinite מרו מריתי „*I have grievously rebelled*“ is replaced by the specifying ‘surely I have transgressed the decree of the Lord’, and the syntactically indeterminate כמות „*as death*“ is developed into ‘the dying agony of starvation like the destroying angel that is appointed over *death*’. The picture that emerged from these linguistic transformations is that of a big number of persons that die of starvation for having transgressed the commandments of the Lord.

489The biblical ציונים “*roadmarks*” in Jer 31, 21.1 is rendered specified by ‘the marks of the precepts by which Israel used to be distinguished’ in the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*. The Buber edition has an identification claim: these roadmarks are ‘the commandments and the good deeds by which Israel used to be distinguished’.

490 This is the interpretation of the ketib הלכתי ‘I went’ in Jer. 31, 21.3-4 by R. Chiyya (T5). The support to the claim that the Holy One, blessed be He, went with him into exile is provided by Isa.43, 14.1, for the exile in Babylon, Jer.49, 38.1, for the exile in Elam, and Zech. 9, 13-14, for the exile in Greece.

491 The Hebrew impersonal צר לי in TMLam1,20.1, see this form in Gesenius/Buhl, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 17. Aufl., 1926, 696, col.2, is rendered by the deponent, also middle form θλιβομαι “*I am distressed*” in the *Septuagint*, and tribulor in the *Vulgate*.

492 The Hebrew composite form מרו מריתי is rendered παραποικραινουσα παρεπικρανα “*rebelliing I have rebelled*”, while the *Vulgate* has “*amaritudina plena sum*”, that is said in Lust/Eynikel/ Hauspie (compiled by), *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 2001, 466. col.2, to be mistakenly associated παραποικραινω .

493 The Biblical text is rendered word-by-word providing the picture of what W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 215, of a “*körperlich und seelisch*” suffering Fair Zion.

This gain in specification of the otherwise generally undetermined Hebrew text can be obtained using literary means. Recalling that the abstract Fair Zion is also a personification figure in Lamentations, U.Berges suggests accounting for the Hebrew phrases *burning inwards*, and *overturned heart* as alluding to the burning houses in the city.⁴⁹⁴ This change of reference from a suffering ideal person to a concrete destroyed city the content of these biblical figures is submitted to, is also present in the rendering of these verses in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The Hebrew passive pe'al חמרמרו [מעני] “*my inward parts ferment*” is rendered by R. Chiyya b. Chanina⁴⁹⁵ by the direct object complement מורות מורות ‘lumps of gum’,⁴⁹⁶ while, according to R. Samuel b.Nachmani (A3),⁴⁹⁷ they were made גושין גושין ‘clods of earth’.

Now, if you ask what the rendering of the Biblical TMLam.1, 20 in *Eikhah Rabbati* does mean, you have the answer provided in the Buber edition of this rabbinic commentary:

‘R. Judan said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because the Torah was neglected, as it is stated: „*For a good teaching I gave to you*“ (Prov. 4,2); R. Isaac [said]: Jerusalem was destroyed only because they placed on the same level the distinguished man and the inferior and the minor, as it stated: „*And as with the people, so with the priest*“ (Isa. 24, 2); and it is written afterwards: „*The Land shall completely be emptied und utterly stripped*“ (Isa. 24,3). Rav Chamnuna [said:] Jerusalem was not destroyed until the school girls ceased to exist there, as it is stated: „*Pour it-the fury of the Lord-out on the child in the street*“ (Jer. 6,11). And why „*pour –it-out?*“ Because the child was *in the street*. R.Ulla (A5) [said:] Jerusalem was not destroyed until they did not insult one another, as it is stated: „*So they shall fall among those who fall. In the time of their punishment, the shall stumble*“ (Jer.8,12). And Rav Amram said: Jerusalem was not destroyed until they did not admonish one another, as it is stated: „*Her rulers have become like bucks*“ (Lam. 1, 6). In the same way, the bucks stick their head in the tail of one another, the like happened to Israel: the people of that generation squeezed their faces into the ground, so that they could not admonish one another.’

494 U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, Basel/Wien 2002, 121.

495 The Buber edition has R. Chama b. Chanina (A2).

496 M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumin, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashim Literature*, New York [(1971) 1996], 748, Col.2, speaks of a „play on חמרמרו“. The Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* has כחמורות ‘like ruined piles’ [Cohen].

497 He is replaced by R. Simeon without further specification in the Buber edition.

What the Buber edition provides in the comment above is the justification of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and this is a moral one. Transgressions against the Torah have been committed, and Jerusalem has deserved punishment as Moses predicted in the same words reported *verbatim* by the following TMLam. 1, 20.5-6: “*The sword shall bereave from outside, and terror from within*” (Deut.32, 25). That the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* does not mention the present explanatory attempt to make sense of the sufferings that befell the people in Jerusalem and in exile may indicate that the Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* were not so unanimous in their understanding of the very causes of these sufferings. We see this indeterminacy of their views in their expounding of the following TMLam.1, 21.

4§. The Community of Israel Suffers for Having Been Elected (v.21)

Various views have been propounded to account for the TMLam.1.21.⁴⁹⁸ Modern comments mentioned the broad context in which Fair Zion turns toward the Lord, appealing to him to see (v.20), to hear (v.21), “and finally (vss.21-22) to bring retribution on the enemy”.⁴⁹⁹ The obvious reason that justifies the hope in this avenging action is that the foes rejoice (v.21.3) over the evil that has befallen Fair Zion, although they obviously do not know where this evil comes from. And TMLam. 1,21.5 is said by U. Berges to provide the basis of the confidence that Fair Zion’s hope will be fulfilled: “*You brought (הבאת) the day you have called*” (TMLam.1, 21.5). *A day of judgement has been brought against Fair Zion. A similar day on which the enemies will be destroyed is predicted to come.*⁵⁰⁰

This modern account of TMLam.1, 21 is not substantially different from the views we found in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate. Minor nuances can be seen in the Vulgate Lam. 1,21.5

498 TMLam.1,21.1-2 „שמעו כי נאנחה אני אין מנחם לי *They have heard that I sigh; there is no comforter to me*“, TMLam.1,21.3-4 „כי אתה עשית ששו כל איבי שמעו רעתי ששו *all my enemies have heard my evil, they rejoice, for you have done it*“, TMLam.1,21.5-6 „ויהיו כמוני יום קראת *you will bring the day you have called, and they shall be like me*“.

499 D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, New York 1972,28; see also W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 215. And U. Berges, *Klagelieder* 2002, 122 speaks of Fair Zion summing up here how the three parties, JHWH, foes, Nations have behaved in regard to her: the enemies cannot console her; they rejoice instead over her evil.

500 U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 122.

'*diem consolationis*' in that "*the day*" to come shall bring consolation to Fair Zion that will have the opportunity to witness the destruction of her enemies. And the Septuagint, that enhances the confrontation with the Nations reading the present masoretic perfect third person plural שמעו "have heard" in TMLam.1,21.1 as an imperative plural 'Hear O Nations!', characterizes the expected coming of this "*day*" as the outbreak of the καιρός.⁵⁰¹

Somewhat diverging views are provided in the Targum to Lamentations. If it has in common with the Septuagint the imperative plural in its noun phrase שמעו אומיא 'Hear O Nations' accounting for שמעו in TMLam.1,21.1, the Targum makes the difference insisting in regard to the evil that the evil מטת עלי 'has overcome me', and in regard to the agent הוואי [את] 'it is you the Lord' of the TMLam.1,21.4 עשית that „has done" it causing the enemies to bring upon her a *day* of 'retribution'. The Lord, that is said to have acted 'summoning a coalition to destroy Fair Zion', is called to take the same action⁵⁰² against her foes.

This heavily drawing on the biblical turn toward the strong and particularizing relationship binding Fair Zion to the Lord⁵⁰³ that we find in the last verses of this first Chapter of Lamentations is also straight out emphasized in the *Eikhah Rabbati*. Accounting for TMLam.1, 21, the rabbinic comment rules out TMLam. 1,21.3 on the evil that has befallen Israel. It focuses instead on the cola obviously deemed appropriate to crystallize this pretention. There is first TMLam.1,21.1 שמעו כי באנחה אני "They have heard that I sigh" that is expounded by means of two contextualizing claims. R. Yehoshua (T2) (St1) states on the one hand that those enemies were the Canaanites led by the king of Arad. They attacked the Israelites that mourned after the death of Aaron, according to Num. 21,1. The Rabbis, on the other hand, consider in a claim that is

501 The Septuagint has provided this complement to the TMLam.1,21.5 קראתי reading it as ἐκάλεσας καιρόν 'you have called the appointed time'.

502 The same predicate הבאת „you have brought" in the perfect is rendered a second time as an imperative את הבא, see E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York, [(1976) 1981], 106 where it is spoken together with S.R. Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, Oxford, 1892, 18ff, of the „perfect of prophetic certitude', an event intensely desired, or fully believed to be forthcoming, is described in the perfect tense as a completed event", falsely seen in all the targumic renderings of this verse. Also the same view in D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 15: "the author of Lamentations uses occasionally the perfect to express wishes and requests."

503 See the appropriate rendering of TMLam.1, 21.3-5 in the French translation: „tous mes ennemis entendaient mon malheur, ils jouissaient; en fait c'est toi qui agissais: tu as fait venir le jour que tu avais fixé," in *Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible. Ancien Testament*, Paris, 1975, *ad locum*.

followed by a story (Sti-A2) that the enemies were the nations of the world that blocked in the north, the east, the west Israel attempting to flee after the destruction of the Temple.⁵⁰⁴ And there is secondly the following TMLam.1,21.4 *כי אתה עשית* 'in fact, it was you that have punished the Community of Israel'. The *mashal* (M) that accounts for this expounding details the historical context that helps the Community of Israel accept her sufferings, see below. It is on the basis of this privileged status that this Community can explain TMLam. 1, 21.5-5 as follows:

„You will bring the day you have proclaimed, and they shall be like me“ 'in trouble', but not *„like me“* 'in redemption' (Sti).

The struggle for a new and appropriate meaning has been arduous. The outcome has, however, deserved the endeavour: on the one hand, we have the enemies that are said to be misled in their views on the evil that has befallen the Community. On the other hand, the same Community of Israel considers that she belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He, and that her sufferings are the price paid on behalf of this mutual attachment with the Holy One, blessed be He. This perception informs the account for the following TMLam.1,22.

5§. The Community of Israel Confident in Spite of Punishment (v.22)

Modern comments do not depart from their expounding line mentioned in the preceding paragraph (§ 4) in dealing with TMLam.1,22.⁵⁰⁵ The turn of Fair Zion to the Lord that began when she praised the Lord's justice in TMLam.1, 18,⁵⁰⁶ confessing that the Lord stands at her side, is now at end. The enemies having shown at this point that they were against her rejoicing over the evil that has befallen her,⁵⁰⁷ it is time to articulate further on the basis of the TMLam.1, 22 the call for revenge that has been launched in TMLam.1,21.5-6. The Lord has to take action

504 This claim of the Rabbis is reported by the Vilna edition as well as by the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*. The story contextualizing this claim is in the Buber edition part of the next *mashal* that accounts in both text tradition for the following TMLam.1, 21.4 *כי אתה עשית*.

505 TMLam.1, 22.1-2 *ועל כל רעתם לפניך ועל כל פשעי* „Let all their wickedness come before you, and do to them“, TMLam. 1,22.3-4 *כאשר עוללת לי על כל פשעי* „just what you did to me for all my transgressions“, TMLam.1,22.5-6 *כי רבות אנחתי ולבי דוי* „for many are my groans, and my heart is sick.“

506 U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 121 spoke of „*Gerichtsdoxologie*“.

507 Their „*Schadenfreude*“ when *they hear* of her evil is obviously their last hostile move against Fair Zion in this Chapter.

against her foes for their transgressions just as for the same reason Fair Zion has been punished,⁵⁰⁸ because, as Fair Zion argues, “her groanings are many, and her heart is sick”.⁵⁰⁹

We find in the contrary various accounts of the revenge against Fair Zion’s foes mentioned in the present TMLam.1,22 in ancient text traditions. A word - for - word rendering of the Hebrew text is provided by the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Noteworthy is that both of them translate similarly the predicate in TMLam.1, 22.2-3 עולל לי כאשר עוללת לי „do to them just what you do to me”.⁵¹⁰ ἐπιφύλλισον αὐτοῖς, ὃν τρόπον ἐποίησαν ἐπιφύλλισα „gather their gleanings the way you did the gleanings” in the Septuagint is a reading we find in the „devindemia eos sicut vindemiasti me” of the Vulgate. This rendering of the TMLam.1, 22.2-3 predicate עולל is according to W. Gesenius the second meaning of this Biblical verb.⁵¹¹ The Targum of Lamentations rules this meaning out. Although it enhances the reason of the advocated revenge modifying the predicate of TMLam.1,22.1 by means of a circumstantial adverb תיעול ביום דינא רבא ‘may there enter on the day of the Great Judgement’, and specifying this evil as בשותהום דאביעו לי ‘the evil they have done to me’, it uses instead a euphemism to render the same Biblical עולל עלי: ותסתקף להום היכמה דאתקגתא עלי: ‘may you turn against them as you have turned against me...’. The very nature of this action is otherwise not cleared up.

Eikhah Rabbati on the contrary describes the advocated revenge not only expounding on the second meaning of the Biblical polal עולל, but also resorting to what U. Berges calls⁵¹² the

508 The call for revenge is mentioned in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 215, D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 28, U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2012, 122 where the modalities of this revenge are exposed: Fair Zion ist not moved by blind revenge; her hope is instead to see the Lord’s justice reigns everywhere, that is, not just against Fair Zion.

509 TMLam. 1, 22.5-6. These are the last words asserted by Fair Zion in this Chapter. As U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 123 mentioned, there is no hope of restoration: „[W]eder hier noch später bittet Zion in den Klgl um ihre Wiederherstellung; diesen Schritt wagt sie noch nicht (...). Dass sie JHWH gegen Ende des Gedichts als Tröster erfährt, selbst da, wo er ihr als strafender Gott begegnet (...) trifft nicht zu. Denn Zion beendet ihre Bittklage nicht erleichtert und getröstet, sondern seufzend (V 4.8.11.21) und kranken Herzens“ (vgl. 1,13; 5,17; Jer 8,18).“

510 W.Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, Berlin/Göttingen/Heidelberg, 17. Auflage, 196 593, col. 1 with reference to TMLam.1,22, „sich mit etwas beschäftigen, besonders im übeln Sinn: einem etwas antun, mit ל Thr 1, 22 “.

511 W.Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 17.Aufl. 1962, 593 , col.1: „wahrscheinlich denominiert, Nachlese halten, rein ablesen (...). Bildl: Nachlese halten von Kampf, das heißt gleichsam als Nachlese der Hauptschlacht.“

512 U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 123.

principle of connective justice. Guaranteed by the Lord, U. Berges claims, the principle of connective justice that stipulates that a deed cannot be separated from its consequences, has to apply indiscriminately to Fair Zion and to her foes. And that is exactly what the Community of Israel asserts in the expounding of TMLam.1,22.1-3:

„Let all their wickedness come before you; and do to them, as you have done to me,, (1,22.1-3). 'Bring upon them what you have brought upon me; be as strict with them as you have been strict to me' (Sti1).

Concerning the very nature of this punishment, the *Eikhah Rabbati* repeats in its account of TMLam.1,22.3 the view the Rabbis previously expressed in their explanation of TMLam.1, 12.4, where the same *polal* of עוֹלֵל occurs:

„And do to them, i.e.“ 'cut off their gleanings as you have cut off mine' (Sti2).

While we find the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding on TMLam.1,12.4 '[F]or he has been strict with me and cut off my gleanings (,olalti') repeated in its account of TMLam.1,22. 2, it is worth recalling that in *Eikhah Rabbati* mind, the *Eikhah Rabbati* resorting together with the Septuagint and the Vulgate to the metaphor of 'cutting of the gleanings' partakes in a peculiar strategy. It has the function to tell that what was at that time deemed as a Torah prohibition expressed in Deut. 24,21⁵¹³ that is, by the way quoted in the Buber edition as proof text supporting the *Eikhah Rabbati* account to TMLam1,22,2, was overtaken when the Community of Israel has been attacked: „[I]n his punishment God spared none, unlike the Torah which commands that in vintaging the gleanings must be left over,“ A. Cohen writes commenting *Eikhah Rabbati* account of TMLam.1,12.2.⁵¹⁴ And it is this kind of punishment that does not conform to the requisites of the Torah the same Community of Israel recommends against her enemies. The rabbinic comment does not, however, apply this principle of connective justice in its explanation of the following TMLam. 1,22.5-6 כי רבות אנהתי ולבי דוי „for many are my groans, and my heart is sick“ obviously because it innovates.

513 Deut. 24,21 אחריו לא תעולל אחריו „When you gather the grapes of your vineyard you shall not glean it afterward.“

514 *Lamentations*, translated by, A.Cohen, London ([1939] 1961) , 118, footnote 1.

Against the accounting traditions mentioned above that focus on Fair Zion's enduring suffering, ⁵¹⁵ *Eikhah Rabbati* (Sti3) expounds the TMLam.1,22.5-6 by instancing the bold statement: '[Y]ou find that with everything through which Israel sinned, they were punished thereby and with that same thing they were comforted.' This claim is illustrated by the quotations of three respective biblical verses related to (i) each of the nine body organs head, ear, eye, nose, mouth, tongue, heart, hand, and foot, (ii) to the personal pronoun <he>, (iii) to the demonstrative adjective <this>, (iv) to the natural element <fire>, ⁵¹⁶ (v) to the existential particle <there is>, and (vi) to the adverb <double>. The resort to this rhetorical figure of repetition⁵¹⁷ combined to intertextuality helps assert the *Eikhah Rabbati* view that the history of Israel is woven by sin, punishment and comfort. It is therefore on this comforting note specific to it that the rabbinic comment reported in *Eikhah Rabbati* on the first chapter of the biblical Lamentations is concluded.

CONCLUSION

The research presented above focuses on almost one hundred – seventy claims (Stis) made in *Eikhah Rabbati* to account for the 112 cola targeted in the first chapter of the Biblical Lamentations. Relying on traditional interpretive tools such as the identification, the symbolic interpretation, the syntactic changes, the vocalization alteration, the modification of adjectives, the incorporation of non-biblical elements,⁵¹⁸ treated in rhetorical terms and categories, the present rabbinic comment throws light on new protagonists, new deeds and misdeeds, on rebellions, mostly against the Torah, and on new reasons of complaint, while no word is spent to deal with the victims of the blows mentioned in the masoretic text! Surprisingly, *Eikhah*

515 The widespread view is correctly provided by U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 123: „[W]eder hier noch später bittet Zion in den Klageliedern um ihre Widerhersatellung; diesen Schritt wagt sie noch nicht (...). Dass sie JHWH gegen Ende des Gedichts als Tröter erfährt, selbst da, wo er ihr als strafender Gott begegnet (...) trifft nicht zu. Denn Zion beendet ihre Bittklage nicht erleichtert und getröstet, sondern seufzend (vss 4.8.11.21) und kranken Herzens (vgl. 1,13; 5,17; Jer 8, 18).“

516 The fire ist he last item dealt with in the Buber edition.

517 A.Mintz, *Hurban*, 73-74 speaks of „a rhetorical mode applied to the juxtaposition of texts, prolepsis, the figure of anticipation and fulfillment.“

518 These interpretive technics are used as well in the targum, as demonstrated by E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York, [(1976)1986], 16, on the basis of R. Loewe, „The 'Plain' Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis.“

Rabbati mitigates sometimes the responsibility of the Community of Israel, said much more to suffer for resisting against the transgression of the Torah, while king Josias and the false prophets, for instance, are accused of succumbing to idolatry as well as to mislead her. The enduring bond with the Holy One, blessed be He, is reasserted, a claim that changes from the despair expressed in the Biblical Lamentations.

I.3. The Second Account Of The Aggression Against The Community of Israel (TMLam. 2, 1-10)

The second Chapter TMLam.2, 1-22 of the Biblical Lamentations is in its content quite in contrast to the first Chapter TMLam. 1,1-22 that precedes. This is because Fair Zion's final enterprise to redefine her relationship with the Lord, with her foes and with herself, move that is described in the last TMLam 1,20-22 seems totally overlooked here; the poet undertakes instead at the beginning of this chapter to list the punitive actions carries out by the Lord against Zion and Judah (vss.1-10). The same poet presenting himself afterwards "as [...] compelled by the truth of Zion's perception of God as warrior,"⁵¹⁹ complains to Zion inciting her to react (vss. 11-19); this move causes, in return, Zion to articulate herself her own complaint and to make a request to God (vss. 20-22). A structure of the present TMLam.2,1-22 as based on two sections (2,1-10 and 11-22) subdivided in stanzas has been proposed and it will be used in this research. It is based on Zion's psychological evolution as correlated with the poet's behaviour. Worth noting is the poet's break down in TMLam. 2,11.⁵²⁰

The first section (TMLam.2,1-10) is made of stanzas TMLam. 2,1-5 and 6-10. Dealing with this first section TMLam. 2,1-10, our research will ascertain how *Eikhah Rabbati* accounts for this pain mentioned in the Bible in regard to the experience of the Community of Israel.

I.3.1. The Mild Punishment Of The Community Of Israel (vss.1-5)

519 A. Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations", 5, alluding to the outcome of TMLam.1,1-22.

520 See U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 130-31; D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 42, outlines differently the same content of this chapter : A. Since it is Yahweh who destroyed Zion...: 1) Yahweh himself destroyed Zion, vv.1-9a, 2) How and why Yahweh destroyed Zion, vv. 9b-17; B. Therefore, cry out to Yahweh, vv. 18-9; C. Zion's languished appeal, vv. 20-22.

The first stanza TMLam.2,1-5 of the first section strikes at first glance by the enumeration and the characterization of the punitive actions (vss. 2,1.1, 2.1) taken by Lord in his fury (vss. 2, 1.1.6, 2.3,3.1, 3.5, 4.6) against specifically what A. Mintz calls “the corporate embodiment of the Judean polity,”⁵²¹ the daughter of Zion (vss. 2,1.1,4.5), Jacob (vss.2,2.2, 3.5), daughter of Judah (vss. 2, 2.4 ,5.5), and Israel (vss. 2,1.4 ,3.2, 5.2). The public character of the victims is further underlined by the mention of the king and princes (vss.2,2.6), that has its parallel in king and priest (v.2,6.6), king and princes (v.2,9.3), and prophets (v.2,9.5). The project we carry out here is to see how the content of this stanza is dealt with in the different interpretive traditions we examine in this work.

1&. Terrorizing Blows Similar to Those That Caused Previous Destruction (v.1.1)

The modern literature accounts for the TMLam.2, 1/2 אִיכָה יַעֲיֵב בְּאַפּוֹ אֶת בִּת צִיּוֹן „*how has the Lord in his anger set the daughter of Zion under a cloud*“ with the focus on the predicate יַעֲיֵב of this bicolon. Besides this unanimity, divergences have to be pointed out on the very rendering of this predicate. D. R. Hillers recalls together with W. Rudolph⁵²² that this predicate “is traditionally taken as a denominative verb from ‘*āb*, “cloud,” and translated “cover with cloud” (...). But this explanation of the *hapax legomenon* ⁵²³is suspiciously *ad hoc*, and the meaning is not especially suited to this context, nor is “beclouding otherwise an image for punishment.”⁵²⁴ The meaning both Authors and many other scholars quoted by them consider as suited to the present context is provided by the Arabic ‘*āba*, “to blame, to revile”, the translation

521A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 6. It seems that Zion is no longer conceived “as an individualized woman.”

522 W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder* 1962, 218.

523 See, *Lamentations*, [Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible] , Paris 1975, 2.1 : “*Comment ! Le Seigneur, dans sa colère, veut assombrir la Belle Sion !*”, and *Lamentations* , [La Bible de Jérusalem] Paris 1979, 2,1 : “*Quoi ! Le Seigneur, en sa colère, a enténébré la fille de Sion*” ; UBerges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 124 : “*Ach, wie umwölkt in seinem Zorn der Herr die Tochter Zion.*”

524 D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations. Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 1972,35.

of TMLam.2,1/2 being in this case spelled as following: „*how has the Lord in his anger despised the daughter of Zion.*“⁵²⁵

These modern controversial renderings of the present bicolon are also present in ancient versions that seem to inspire the modern ones. The targum to Lamentations reads איכדין יקוץ יי 'how has the Lord detested in his strong anger the Community of Zion', but the Septuagint and the Vulgate are unanimous with their respective ἐγνόφωσεν "he has darkened", and *obtexit caligine* "he has covered with darkness".⁵²⁶ The rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* accords in meaning with the records from the Septuagint and the Vulgate; it resorts, however, to a proem to account for this enigmatic metaphor.

The *Eikhah Rabbati* petihta-proem to TMLam.2,1.1/2 shows an effort to define in two rubrics that are similar in their formal structure⁵²⁷ this bicolon by the way of identifications within the overall biblical context.⁵²⁸ The first rubric that focuses on the target of the blow, takes off from the opening verse Job 30,15.1 ההפך עלי בלהות „*terrors are turned on me*“. R.Chanina (T1/A1/3) ascribed this assertion (Sti1) to the Community of Israel complaining against the Holy One, blessed He, of having let the terrors, that in the past afflicted other nations (Est.6,16, Ezek.26,21, Ex.15,15⁵²⁹),⁵³⁰ befall her. This complaint is amplified by R. Acha (A4)'s statement (Sti2) comparing the same terrors on the basis of Ps 88,7/8 to a 'segment of column rolling in an open space until it knocks against a stone and stops by it'. And Job 30,15.2/3 תרדף כרוה נדבתי „*you pursue my honour like the wind, and my salvation passes away like cloud*“ is for the Compiler the occasion to present the victims of the Holy One, blessed be He's terrors, namely, the rescuer noble-hearted men of the Community of Israel that are said to have been cast

525 W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder* 1962, 216 has: „*Ach, wie hat entehrt in seinem Zorn / der Herr die Tochter Zon.*“

526 Pertaining to the relationship between these two meanings of יעִיב, the very existence of the Hebrew עֵב „dark cloud“ shows that it is not obvious that the targumic "detest" is a record of the change of meaning the present Hebrew predicate יעִיב went through, and that the LXX ἐγνόφωσεν is derived from the Aramaic עֵיבא 'thickness, darkness', as E.Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, ([1976] 1981),109 puts it. What the records provide are various efforts to account for a literally confused wordform.

527 The proem structure that requires concluding by the means of the prooftext is respected in the Vilna edition only, the second rubric in the Buber edition missing the prooftext.

528 See D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 159f on the structure and the function of the proem-petihta.

529 This reference is inexistent in the Buber edition

530 The Buber edition adds *ad hoc* בשבילי on behalf of me'.

away respectively like wind (Sti3) and like cloud (Sti4), as proven by the present TMLam.2, 1,1/2.

The second rubric of this proem provides five informative claims (Sti1-5) on the ways the afflicted blows have been and therefore will be carried out on the basis of Deut. 8,20 כגוים אשר יהיה מאביד מפניכם כן תאבדון „*like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so you shall perish.*“ The Compiler asserts in the Vilna edition as well as in the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* that the nations of the past as well as the Community of Israel have to be punished ‘through the priest and the prophet’ (Sti1), ‘with the blast of the shofar and the shouting’ (Sti2), both cases alluding to Jos. 6 that reports the fall of Jericho. We find also in both text traditions the mention of the punishment through the collapse of the wall as in Jos.6,20.4 (Sti3) as well as of the remaining of fourteen towns after invasion of Israel as, according to Ezra 4,9f, the Assyrian Empire found itself with only fourteen nations (Sti4). Sti3 and Sti4 are ordered differently, while the fifth claim (Sti5) is particular to each of the text traditions: the Buber edition, alluding further to Jos 6, 20.2,⁵³¹ mentions Am.4,3 ופרצים תצאנה אשה נגדה „*and you shall go out at the breaches, each woman before her.*“ In the Vilna edition, R.Yehudah b.R.Simon (A4) adds to his claims (Sti3) based on Jos.6,20.4 mentioned above the punishment through the clouds (Sti5) as stated in Jer.4,29, that he considered proven by the concluding verse TMLam.2, 1.1/2 under examination.

This premised proem on the blows assessed as terrors on nations helps now display the identifying lexical meanings of the same predicate יעיב in the bicolon TMLam.2, 1.1/2 איכה יעיב באפו אדני את בת ציון „*how has the Lord in his anger... the daughter of Zion.*“ R.Chama b.R.Chanina (A2) identifies יעיב with חייב ‘has condemned’ (Sti1), on the pretext that there is some place where this is the case. And it is on the same pretext that R. Samuel b.R.Nachmani (A3) identifies this TMLam.2,1.1/2 predicate with כייב ‘did ... wound’ (Sti2), while the Rabbis render the same predicate by שיים ‘has imposed fine over’.⁵³² All these meanings are, however, still general because they do not specify the terrorizing action taken by the Holy One, blessed be He.

2&. The Holy One, blessed be He, has Penalized the C.I. (v.1.3/4)

531 Josh .6, 20: „*and the people went up into the city, each man in front of him.*“

532 This is the rendering in the Vilna edition, and according to M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the midrashic Literature*, New York, 1996, 1535, Col.2. The Buber edition has אשיב ‘has brought back’.

The next colon TMLam.2,1.3/4 השליך משמים ארץ תפארת ישראל „*he has cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel*“ expresses together with the following lines “clear and vivid ideas”, according to D.R.Hillers that considers, paraphrasing this bicolon, that “[T]he extent of the catastrophe is described as a fall from the sky - traditional in Hebrew as the absolute height - to earth, the absolute depth.”⁵³³ But the very object that falls, the object mentioned in the biblical תפארת ישראל, is not clear and it appears that it is for that reason variously rendered. W.Rudolph translates it by “*die Zier Israels*” and speaks of the “*Vorzügen der Erwählung*”, that are, in his view, Jerusalem or the Tempel.⁵³⁴ It is the “glory of Israel” without further specification in D.R.Hillers,⁵³⁵ as this is also the case with “*die Zierde Israels*” in U.Berges’ commentary.⁵³⁶ The Septuagint reads δόξα „*glory*“, the targum תושבחה ‘praise, glory’, and the Vulgate *inclitavit* Israel „*the fame of Israel*“. Is it perhaps because we must see with Wieser in the various accounts of this bicolon a not nearly specified “allusion to the mythological motif of a fall from heaven (Isa 14,12, Ezek.28,17)”⁵³⁷ that the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* resorts to two *meshalim* (Ms 1-2) to deal somewhat successfully with the case of this pain inflicted on the Community of Israel? The Rabbis will be concrete rendering תפארת ישראל by the ‘son of the King’ and the ‘Community of Israel’, *vide infra*.

3&. Action Taken Without Regard to the Covenant with the Patriarchs (v.1.5-6)

The next item that characterizes the pain endured by the Daughter of Zion is the Lord’s obliviousness of הדום רגליו according to the following TMLam.2,1.5 ולא זכר הדום רגליו „*he has not remembered his footstool*.” W. Rudolph speaks of the “*footstool*” as being the temple as well as all the Holy Land, “*als die Stelle auf Erden, wo das Himmlische und Göttliche das Irdische berührt*” that have been overlooked, and consequently neglected by a despising Lord.⁵³⁸

533 D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 43.

534 W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 222.

535 D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 31.

536 U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 124.

537 The information is from D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43.

538 W.Rudolph, W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 222. This is also the view of D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 35, where it is spoken of „a reference to Zion or the temple as the presence of

“Yahweh”, D.R.Hillers wrote in accordance with W.Rudolph’s view, “paid no attention to the fact that Zion was his own “footstool,” his own elect city and temple, sign of his presence with his people.”⁵³⁹

The Hebrew הדום רגליו in TMLam.2,1.5 was obviously not a source of concern to the Septuagint that translates it literally by ὑποποδίου ποδῶν αὐτοῦ „the stool of his feet,” identical to the Vulgate *scabelli pedum suorum* “the stool of his feet”. This was, however, not the case with the targum. In an effort to explain what this noun phrase is about, the targum to Lamentations transforms TMLam.2,1.5/6 in a paraphrase in which this bicola is seen as another designation of the destroyed Temple: ולא דכר בית מקדשיה דהוה גלוגדקא דרגלוי ולא חס עלוהי ביום תקוף רוגזיה ‘he did not remember the temple which was his footstool nor did he spare it in the day of his fierce anger.’

In regard to all these proposed meanings accounting for TMLam.2,1.5 ולא זכר הדום רגליו it appears that *Eikhah Rabbati* makes the difference with its innovation. The problem with the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding is, however, its floating form in the textual records. While the *Eikhah Rabbati* text of the Vilna edition reports R.Chanina b.Isaac (A4)’s claim based on sound similarity: ‘The Holy One, blessed be He, does not remember the blood [*ha-dam*] that was between the feet of the aged one’, alluding obviously to the covenant sealing circumcision blood of the patriarch Abraham, as this is recorded by the proof verse Gen.17,27 (Sti), R.Yudan (A4)’s *mashal* (M) on the complaint of the subjects of a king that follows makes sense only if it is added to the expounding that we find in the Buber edition. The Buber edition reports indeed first two claims: (i). ‘R. Chanina b. R. Isaac (A4) states (Sti1): Israel said: The Holy One, blessed be He, did not remember us – the blood between the old one’s feet, as stated in Gen.17,24, (ii). The Rabbis said (Sti2): The Holy One, blessed be He, did not remember in our behalf the blood spread in the Land of Egypt’, to which follows secondly R. Yudan’s *mashal* (M) that is obviously related to this claim. It will be shown in the examination of this *mashal* (A) that the Buber edition text is conform to the main *Eikhah Rabbati* innovative views accounting for the destruction of the

God.“ And for U. Berges, “his footstool “ refers to Jerusalem, Zion and the Temple together, in idem, *Klagelieder*, 136.

539 D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43. The French *Lamentations*, [La Traduction œcuménique de la Bible, L’Ancien Testament], 1975 has « «L’escabeau de ses pieds », and *Lamentation*, [La Bible de Jérusalem], 1979, « son marchepied ».

Community of Israel, (*vide infra*). This destruction occurred, as stated in TMLam.2,1.6, on the “day of the Lord’s anger”, the very leitmotif of this first stanza,⁵⁴⁰ that R. Acha (A4) considers as a day of salvation if the Community of Israel has practised conversion (Sti).⁵⁴¹

4&. Heavenly Blow That Does Not Spare the Righteous Ones (v.2.2)

The following verse TMLam.2,2.1/2 בלע אדני לא חמל את כל נאות יעקב „*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob*“ asserts the fact of this destruction carried out by the Lord on *the day of his anger*. This verse is, indeed, part of vss. 1-9 that, according to W. Rudolph,⁵⁴² complains the very catastrophe. It is repeated word-for-word that the Lord himself⁵⁴³ has devastated⁵⁴⁴ without any form of mercy (לא חמל)⁵⁴⁵ the *dwelling places of Jacob* (נאות יעקב).⁵⁴⁶

Nearly Word-for-word but not without differences in nuances are also the ancient renderings of TMLam.2,2. The targum of Lamentations has the predicate שיצי ‘has destroyed’, the Septuagint reads regularly κατεπόντισεν, “swallowed” in TMLam. 2, 2; 2,5.2.3, and the Vulgate has *praecipitavit Dominus*, “The Lord has thrown down” for the Hebrew בלע. Much more imagination has been displayed in the account of the following noun phrase נאות יעקב. The

540 See U. Berges, *Klagelieder*’s extended comment on God’s anger mentioned here as the driving force of his punitive actions, *ibidem*, 135.

541 This expounding is a repetition of R. Acha (A4)’s claim to TMLam.1,12. The Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* has a preceding claim to R.Acha (A4)’s statement based on a text tradition reading a repeated חרון אפו: ‘his anger is repeated twice; one is related to the first, the second to the second sanctuary.’

542 W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 221.

543 On the Lord as agent, see U. Berges’ statement: „[I]n der ersten Stanza (V 1-5) beklagt ein Sprecher die nationalen Folgen der zerstörerischen Kraft JHWHs, die sich gegen die „Tochter Zion“ (V 1a.4c), „Tochter Juda“ (V 2b.5c) und gegen „Israel“ V 1b.3a.5a“, „Jakob“ (V2a.3c) richtet,“ in *idem*, *Klagelieder*, 20112, 134.

544 The Hebrew predicate בלע „to swallow“ is figuratively commented by U. Berges as following: „Der Schutzzott gebärdet sich wie ein gefräßiges Ungeheuer, das alles gierig verschlingt (בלע) (vgl. 5a.b.8b.16b),“ *idem*, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 136.

545 U. Berges speaks of an evolution in God’s handling and in the perception of it: “[W]eder die Psalmen, noch andere Gebete im AT trauen JHWH einen so radikalen Willen zur Zerstörung, wohl aber die Propheten, allen voran Ezechiel. Was die exilische Prophetie dem Gottesvolk androhte, das schonungslose Gericht Gottes an seinem Volk, hat sich in den Klageliedern bewahrheitet (Klgl 2,17.21),“ *idem*, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 136-137.

546 This is the case in D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 31, while W. Rudolph speaks of “Fluren, halls”, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 125, 137, of “Weideplätze Jakobs, Jacob’s pastures,” where “Jacob” is said to mean also the kingdom of Judah after the fall of the north kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C.E., while the “pastures” are said to be useful country as well cultivated and inhabited zones. See the French unanimity in “*les demeures de Jacob*” in *Lamentations* [La Bible de Jérusalem], 1979, 1282, and «*les prairies de Jacob* » in *Lamentations*, [La Traduction œcuménique de la Bible. Ancien Testament], 1975, 1641.

of them, the man during them, according to R. Yochanan (A2)'s comments (Sti), was the scribe, the executioner and the High Priest angel Gabriel, as described in the same verse. "*The weapon in his hand*" (Ez.9,1) was for fighting, for razing (Isa.27,9), and to cause exile (Jer.51,20) (Sti). These angels had to carried out five decrees (Sti), mentioned in Ez.9,6, namely, "*to slay utterly (i) the old man, (ii) the young man and (iii) the maiden, and(iv) little children and (v) woman.*"

The target of this punitive move was on the one hand the Temple, according to Ez.9,1 expounded by R. Yehudah b.R.Simon (A4)(Sti), the Rabbis and by R. Pinchas (A5)(Sti) with the support of 2 Kings 16,15, and Lev.13,30. On the other hand, they were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that the angel Gabriel had according to Ez.9,4 "*to mark with a mark*",⁵⁵¹ interpreted as the letter *taw* in which R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) (Sti), R. Nachman (bA3/A5)(Sti), the Rabbis (Sti), Rab (bA1) (Sti), R.Chanina b.Isaac (A4), see an allusion to their practice of the Torah that R.Simon (A3) declares in an answer to a question of R.Hoshaya (A1/3) altogether as deficient (Sti).

The very role of the Holy One, blessed be He, as an agent in this punitive action must be assessed as sufficiently puzzling. R. Eleazar (T3/A3) can argue on the basis of the lack of the mention of God in Ez.9,5, that God 'never associates His name with what is bad'[Cohen] (Sti). R. Aibo may have supported the claim (Sti) that God defended the Righteous against the Prosecutor that accused them of having not sacrificed their lives in defence of God's name: There is in them no 'such a wickedness as to merit a document of extermination'[Cohen]. R. Yehudah b.R. Simon (A4) lets, however, God state that both the Temple and the people 'have merited a document of extermination'(Sti). They deserve to *be utterly swallowed*, and the sternest angel Gabriel had to start destroying the people,⁵⁵² lets R. Tanchuma b. Abba (A5), who sees here a case in which God retracted from his good promise, the Holy One, blessed be He, order. It is therefore obvious, according to *Eikhah Rabbati*, that this proem introduces the claims (Stis) and narratives (As) that follow as illustration of this change that the Holy One, blessed be He,

⁵⁵¹ Ez.9,6: על כל איש אשר עליו התו אל תגשו, "*but to every man who has the mark on him, do not come near.*"

⁵⁵² The scriptural support ist provided by Ez.9.6: וממקדשי תחלו, "begin from my Temple", that R. Tanchuma b. Abba (A5) reads differently according to the '*al tiqré* principle' as the passive form, the Hebrew pu'al, ממקודש, "from my sanctified ones" transforming a noun phrase into a verbal one.

underwent. We now focus on these claims (Sti) that are peculiar to *Eikhah Rabbati*, while its narratives (A) will be dealt with in the next chapter.

5&. Damages caused to Infrastructures and to Human Beings (v.2.1/2)

The rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* states against the many other word-for-word expounding traditions that the blow asserted by TMLam.2, 2.1/2 was in its extent a terrible one. It was decided by God, it has been carried out by his angels according to the views reported in the poem, and it affected various targets that are successively recorded as follows:

(1)

בלע י"י ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב *"the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob."*⁵⁵³ R. Pinchas (A5) said in the name of R. Hoshaya (A1/3): "There were four hundred and eighty synagogues in Jerusalem"⁵⁵⁴ according to the word "full" in Isa. 1,21, "She that was full of Justice," that is spelt without *aleph*⁵⁵⁵ and each of these synagogues had an elementary school and an advanced school: an elementary school for Scripture and an advanced school for Mishnah"⁵⁵⁶ (Sti1).

(2)

בלע י"י ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב *"the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob,"* that means all the celebrities of Jacob: R. Ishmael (ben Elisha)⁵⁵⁷ (T2), Rabban Gamaliel (T1/2/5),⁵⁵⁸ R. Yeshebab⁵⁵⁹, R. Yehudah b. Babaq (T2), R. Chutsapith,⁵⁶⁰ R. Yehudah ha-Nahtum, R. Chananyah b. Teradion (T2), R. Aqiba (T2), Ben Azzai (T2), R. Tarfon (T2), and some would exclude R. Tarfon (T2) and include R. Eleazar Charsanah` (Sti2).

(3)

⁵⁵³ The Buber edition adds right at this location את כל בתי נאותיו של יעקב 'all the houses of Jacob's dwellings'.

⁵⁵⁴ The Buber edition adds here חוץ מן בית המקדש 'except the Jerusalem Temple'.

⁵⁵⁵ Isa.1,21 משפט. It is obvious that four hundred and eighty is the numeral value of the letters in מלתי without *aleph*.

⁵⁵⁶ The Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* adds that Vespasian moved against these infrastructures and destroyed them.

⁵⁵⁷ The Buber edition adds 'the High Priest'.

⁵⁵⁸ The Buber edition has Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel (T1/3).

⁵⁵⁹ The Buber edition adds הסופר the scribe.

⁵⁶⁰ The Buber edition adds המורגמן the interpreter.

'R. Yochanan (A2) interpreted in sixty ways “*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy,*” and Rabbi [Yehuda ha-Nasi] (T4) in twenty-four ways. How is it that the number of the ways ascribed to T. Yochanan (A2) greater than that of Rabbi (T4)! The reason was that Rabbi (T4), because he was nearer to the destruction of the Temple, his recollection was very vivid so that when he expounded this verse he wept and he had to be consoled` (Sti3).

These three claims are only a small part of the *Eikhah Rabbati* account of TMLam.2,2.1/2 “*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob.*” The two literal meanings of the Biblical נִוּחַ „dwelling“ and נֹאֵד „handsome, beauty“ are taken into consideration in the two claims (Sti1-2) that come first. Both *lemmata* are interpreted as the metaphors for ‘synagogue` and ‘famous Rabbis’. The third claim (Sti3) has been used in the introduction to this work as illustrating an historically embedded and emotionally personalized expounding of a verse of the Biblical Lamentations that is found in the *midrash Eikhah Rabbati*. This claim provides an instance of the personal damages caused by the dramatic events *Eikhah Rabbati* refers to in its account of the TMLam.2, 2.1/2. These three claims are followed by claims (Sti) that are to *Eikhah Rabbati*. These claims are combined with the many anecdote narratives (As) that illustrate TMLam.2,2.1/2, see *infra*.

6&. Recording the Wonderful Abundance Before the Destruction (v.2.2.1/2)

We find in *Eikhah Rabbati* additional claims (Sti) that account for the TMLam.2,2.1/2 “*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob.*” The claims further listed in this rubric record the losses of items that are obviously considered as identical to the now metaphorical biblical נֹאֵד „dwelling places“, that is also spelled out as “*celebrities*” in *Eikhah Rabbati*. These losses took place in the Land of Israel obviously in the wake of the destruction of Betar. That losses that occurred after Temple destruction are also mentioned is a clear indication of the concern of the Compiler of this rabbinic commentary to save as extensively as possible records of losses cause by the destruction of Jerusalem and of Betar.

6&.1. The fourth claim (Sti4) (lines 148b-150a) on the list of the claims that account for TMLam.2,2.1/2 “*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob*” is made by R. Yochanan (A2):

'The brains of three hundred children [were dashed] upon one stone, and three hundred baskets of capsules of phylacteries were found in Betar, each basket being of the capacity of three *se'ah*, so that there was a total of three hundred *se'ah*' [Cohen].⁵⁶¹

This claim on the number of the brains of the children shattered and the huge amount of the phylacteries left over or forcefully spilled out in the wake of the capture of Betar is followed in the Vilna edition by two anecdote narratives (A)⁵⁶² that account for the disaster that befell specified groups of the Jewish society, the narrative focus being here on the pupils and on other military leaders, see *infra*.

6&.2. The next claim (Sti5) (lines 162b-164a) is anonymous.

'There were two cedars on the Mount of Olives; beneath one of them were four stalls of sellers of birds for ritual purification; and from one of them they produced every month forty *se'ah* of pigeons from which the Israelites used to get their bird for the purification.'

The Buber edition, that speaks of 'forty stalls', has with its סאין מ' מוציא היה ותחת השני היה מוציא מ' and beneath the second there was the production of forty *se'ah*', puts falsely the focus on the second cedar. The point that only from one stall it was possible to get a huge amount of birds is consequently missed.

6&.3. The third claim (Sti6) (lines 164b – 167a) of this series on the abundance that was once that comes after the next one in the Buber edition, is related to the practice of Mount Simeon that consisted in distributing 'three hundred *garab* [of thin cakes among the poor every Friday]' [Cohen].⁵⁶³ That such a place could be destroyed in spite of this fabulous generosity⁵⁶⁴ is ascribed

⁵⁶¹ This number reported in the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* is correctly rendered into 'nine hundred' on the basis of the Buber's text in *Lamentations*, [Midrash Rabbah], translated by A. Cohen, London ([1939]1961), 161, footnote 2.

⁵⁶² The present anecdote narrative (A) is located in the Buber text just after the narrative (A) reporting the reason Betar was destroyed.

⁵⁶³ The phrases included in brackets are inspired by the Buber edition.

⁵⁶⁴ A *garab* was probably a measure equivalent to one barrel, see *Lamentations*, [Midrash Rabbah], translated by A. Cohen, London ([1939]1961), 161, footnote, 5.

by R. Huna (A4) not to the only harlot present there,⁵⁶⁵ but to the fact that the people of Mount Simeon used 'to play a game with a ball on the Sabbath' [Cohen].

6&.4. The fourth claim (Sti7) (lines 167b-170a) is really a complex one.⁵⁶⁶ It is successively stated that there were ten thousand cities on the King's Mount (Sti7-1), that one thousand of them belong to R. Eleazar b. Charsum ((Sti7-2), that corresponding to them this Rabbi owned thousand ships on the sea (Sti7-3), that a wagon was needed to bring the taxes of three of these cities to Jerusalem (Sti7-4)⁵⁶⁷, and that the three cities, Kabul, Shichin, Magdala were respectively destroyed for cause of dissension [Kabul], of witchcraft [Shichin], and of prostitution [Magdala] (Sti7-5).

6&.5. The fifth claim (Sti8) (lines 170b-178a) is related to three cities in the South, Kefar Bish, Kefar Shichlayin and Kefar Dikrin. These cities were famous in their emblematic names.⁵⁶⁸ Much more famous were these cities, however, because they are said to have 'had a population double the number of the Israelites who left Egypt' [Cohen].⁵⁶⁹ On the contrary, sixty myriads of reeds could not be stuck now there, because, R. Yochanan (A2) claims, the Land of Israel has become contracted after the destruction of the Temple.

6&.6. And the concluding claims (Sti9-10) (lines 178b-180a) of this series in the Vilna edition⁵⁷⁰ address once again the birds for ritual purification. According to Rab Huna

⁵⁶⁵ The only prostitute that practised there is said to have been expelled from there.

⁵⁶⁶ The claims related to the three cities, Kabul, Schihin, Magdala, build an autonomous unit in the Buber edition.

⁵⁶⁷ Textual records entitle to consider on the basis of the claims Sti7-4 and Sti7-5 as autonomous instead of holding them as part of R. Eleazar b. Charsum's cities.

⁵⁶⁸ The first is said to have been called Kefar Bish because this city was so bad -ביש- that it did not give hospitality to strangers, the second was named Kefar Shichlayim for the simple reason that children were brought up like cress-שחליים-, and the third city owned its name Kefar Dikrin to the fact that woman could give birth there only to a son -דכר-

⁵⁶⁹ It is, however, clearly stated in the Buber edition, that each of this city had a population double the number of the Israelites who left Egypt.

⁵⁷⁰ The Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* reports here the claim on the watches and priestly novitiates that is followed by the claim on the cities of Gibbethon and Antipatris.

(T5/bA1)⁵⁷¹, there were three hundred stalls of sellers of birds for ritual purification, and three hundred stalls of curtain-weavers in Kefar Nimrath. This repeated alluding to the universe of the cult introduces in the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* to the extended accounts related to the priests that are dealt in next chapter. These accounts are followed in the Vilna edition by the three claims that seem to have been put together for obvious reasons.

7&. Miscellaneous: The Wonderful Abundance Against the Enemy Forces (v.2.2)

The two remaining claims ((Sti1-2) that are reported in this rubric, have two common features. They are made up of countable items like the preceding claims in 6&. But in difference to the preceding claims, they do no longer praise the regretted abundance that once existed. These concluding claims present as such in all the text traditions of *Eikhah Rabbati* are related instead to awful items that could only be rejected.

The first claim (Sti1) (line 224a) asks and answers the number of the battles the Roman general Hadrian fought.⁵⁷² The answers given by two teachers are fifty- two battles for the first teacher, and fifty-four for the second teacher. And the last claim (Sti2) (lines 224b-227a) is R. Yochanan (A2)'s blessing on everybody that will behold the downfall of Tadmor-Palmyra, for reason put forward by R. Yudan (A4) and R.Huna (A4). R. Yudan (A4) curses Tadmor for having taken twice part in the fall of the Temple, providing eighty thousand archers during the destruction of the first Temple, and forty archers when the second Temple was destroyed. For R. Huna (A4), the number of the archers provided by Tadmor was the same during the destruction of the two Temples.⁵⁷³ These two claims help keep further the focus on regional feuds the

⁵⁷¹ The Munich Heb. Codex 229 has R. Huna (A4) while the Buber edition ascribes first eighty stalls of curtain-weavers to R. Yochanan (A2), and secondly eighty stalls of sellers of birds for ritual purification in Kefar Imri.

⁵⁷² The Buber edition completes this predicate with the adverbial phrase בארץ ישראל in the land of Israel'.

⁵⁷³ If all the available text traditions agree that Tadmor had to fall down for having taken part in the destruction of the two Temples, they hold different numbers of the archers Tadmor provided in the move against the two Temples. R.Yudan (A4) asserts in the Munich Codex Heb.229 forty thousand archers during the destruction of the first Temple, and eighty thousand for the destruction of the second temple. The Buber edition, that helps understand the historical setting of this comment introducing it by Ias.21, 15b, מפני הרב נטושה, *vide infra*, lets R. Yudan (A4) assert that Tadmor provided eighty thousand archers during the destruction of the first Temple, and also the same number in the destruction of the second Temple. For R. Chaniyah, his counterpart in this discussion, Tadmor gave

Community of Israel had to cope with, while the expounding of the next bicolon brings us back into the definition of the losses the said Community had to endure.

8&. The Holy One, blessed be He, Has Imposed His Strong Hand (v.2.3/4)

TMLam.2, 2.3/4 יהודה בת מבצרי הרס בעברתו “*he has broken down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah*” is part of the verses 1-9 that, according to W. Rudolph, deplores the devastating catastrophe that the Lord himself has caused.⁵⁷⁴ Modern comments of this subsection focus on “God (...) depicted as a mighty warrior, pitiless in his anger.”⁵⁷⁵ Among ancient renderings of this bicolon, the Septuagint⁵⁷⁶ and the Vulgate⁵⁷⁷ have nearly the same words with the masoretic text. Worth to note is that the targum to Lamentations also has the same words excepted that the Hebrew object ביהודה בת מבצרי “*the strongholds of the daughter of Judah*” is rendered by the Aramaic יהודה דבית כנשתא ‘the Community of the House of Judah’. This translation brings the focus of this account on the noun phrase ביהודה בת מבצרי “*the strongholds of the daughter of Judah*” as this is also the case in *Eikhah Rabbati* but for evidently a different reason:

‘R. Yudan (A4) said: Every fortress⁵⁷⁸ in Jerusalem [was so strong] that it should not have been subdued in less than forty days. R. Pinchas (A5) said: In less than

forty thousand archers for the destruction of the first Temple, and the same number, forty thousand archers, for the destruction of the second Temple.

⁵⁷⁴ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 221,222. The Lord is said to be the main subject of this section, the agent that has just destroyed the strongholds. See also D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43: “God has struck both the buildings (2a,b; 5a,b)...”, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 137 where the Hebrew הרס is said to express God’s judgement on nations.

⁵⁷⁵ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43.

⁵⁷⁶ The Septuagint reads *κάθειλεν ἐν θυμῷ αὐτοῦ τὰ ὀχυρώματα τῆς θυγατρὸς Ιουδα*, “*he has thrown down in his fury the strongholds of the daughter of Zion*.”

⁵⁷⁷ The Vulgate has *destruxit in furore suo munitiones virginis Iuda*, “*he has destroyed in his anger the fortresses of the virgin of Judah*.” The predicate *destruxit* and the determination *virginis* are the main innovations carried out in the Vulgate.

⁵⁷⁸ The Aramaic בירה ‘fortress’, is replaced in the Buber text by חצר ‘court’.

fifty days⁵⁷⁹ : but when the sins [of the people] won in strength, “*he broke down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah.*”

It is obvious that *Eikhah Rabbati* is interested in telling that the behaviour of the people of Jerusalem was very bad, and that its punishment caused the destruction of infrastructures that otherwise were very resistant. This expounding is in line with views expressed by the Rabbis in their dealing with the previous verses of the Biblical Lamentations Chapter two as well as with the following TMLam.2, 2.6 by means of an anecdote narrative (A), *vide infra*.

9&. The Holy One, blessed be He, Has Transferred the Power to The Nations (v.3.1/2)

The next TMLam.2,3.1/2 גדר בחרי אף כל קרן ישראל „*he has cut off in fierce anger all the horn of Israel*” accounts for a further destroying action of the Lord. W.Rudolph, that considers that with TMLam.2,3 “*Yahweh’s unmittelbares Handeln tritt stärker in den Vordergrund*”, claims, on the basis of the cultural meaning of קרן „horn” (of the bull) as symbolizing the force, that the Lord “*hat Israel aller seiner Machtmittel beraubt*”.⁵⁸⁰ The same decoding of “horn” as a metaphor is also present in the assertion that “Yahweh (...) has destroyed her strength and pride”, that we find in D.R.Hillers’ commentary,⁵⁸¹ and also in U.Berges’ account of this colon.⁵⁸² The Septuagint and the Vulgate provide a word-to-word rendering of this colon that is conform to the wording of the masoretic text, while the targum to Lamentations innovates in its rendering of “*horn of Israel*” by יקרא דיעקב ‘glory of Jacob’.⁵⁸³ This targumic translation of this noun phrase is not surprising if we recall with E. Levine that the targum resorts here to a decoding of the

⁵⁷⁹ The Buber text has ‘less than thirty days’.

⁵⁸⁰ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁵⁸¹ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43.

⁵⁸² U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 138, where the horn is presented according to Deut.33,17 as the symbol of the political and military power of the king (1 Sam 2,10), and of all the population (Jer 48,25; Mi 4,13). And it is recalled that while Lord lops of the horns of Israel, he raises high the horns of Israel’s foes (Lam.2,176).

⁵⁸³ E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, ([1976] 1981), 110, as well as C.C.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 203, 158 consider on the basis of textual criticism the present ‘Jacob’ as an error that has to be replaced by ‘Israel’ along with the masoretic text.

metaphor “*horn of Israel*” that we find in the *midrash*.⁵⁸⁴ The *Eikhah Rabbati*’s claim (Sti1) that accounts for TMLam.2,3.1/2, is therefore that

‘[T]here are ten horns: of Abraham, of Isaac, of Joseph, of Moses, of the Torah, of the priesthood, of the Levites, of prophecy, of the Temple, and of Israel. There are some who add: the horn of the Messiah’[Cohen].

The wording of this statement is identical in the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb.229, while the Buber edition reports the ‘horn of the Torah’ as the seventh horn. Every horn is followed by a proof-text in the Munich Codex Heb.229, all the proof-texts being provided in the Vilna and the Buber editions after each horn. All the text traditions are unanimous that these horns, ‘that were set on the head of Israel’,⁵⁸⁵ were taken from them when they sinned, and were given to the other nations according to Dan.7, 20.24. It is further claimed (Sti2) only in the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb.229 that when Israel repents, ‘the Holy One, blessed be He, will restore the horns to their place’ as stated in Ps. 75,11. And that this will happen when he will raise the horn of the Messiah according to 1 Sam. 2,10.4/5.

The rendering and the expounding of the following verses in this subsection show an extended variety of views according to different accounts. The modern comments commonly assess the predicates of the following cola as the punitive actions taken by the Lord against his people. Dealing with TMLam.2, 3.3/4 הָשִׁיב אַחֲרֵי יָמֵינוּ מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב „*he has drawn back his right hand in the face of the enemy*“, for instance, W.Rudolph puts forward that instead of helping his people when the enemy came, Yahweh withdrew his protecting hand from them.⁵⁸⁶ D.R. Hillers emphasizes and specifies that Yahweh “has turned back his (...) “right hand,” a frequent symbol of prowess (often of God, but also, as here, of men, e.g. Ps 137,5)”⁵⁸⁷ And U.Berges finds out

⁵⁸⁴ E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, ([1976] 1981), 110, footnote 1 cites Lam.R. and Leqah Tob.

⁵⁸⁵ *Lamentations*, [Midrash Rabbah], transl. by A Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 169, footnote 1 considers on the basis of this fact that “‘horn’ is understood as a symbol of glory: glory was conferred upon Israel on account of all these.”

⁵⁸⁶ W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁵⁸⁷ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43.

that Yahweh's right, that was successful during the Exodus from Egypt (Exod.15,6.12; Ps 136,12) is no longer raised in favour of Israel (Ps 60,7; 80,16.18; 89,11.14).⁵⁸⁸

The Septuagint and the Vulgate have the same words we find in the masoretic text while the targum to Lamentations adds the explanatory coordinate sentence 'ולא סייע לעמיה מן קדם' and he did not help his people from before...` *Eikhah Rabbati* does not tell what the Lord's right hand is. It lets R. Azaryah (A5) focus instead on the predicate "*has drawn back*" and elaborates (Sti) in the name of R.Yehudah b.R. Simon (A4)⁵⁸⁹ on what this non-action of the Holy One, blessed be he, is about. And the difference is made. The Buber edition adds a comment ascribed to R. Yehuda (A5?) in the name of R. Ma'i on a vision the Holy One, blessed be He gave to David that is related to the first and second destructions of the Temple on the basis of Ps.137,1,7. Its content is, however, identical to claim it shares with the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb.229: when the iniquities of the people increased, the enemy captured Jerusalem, took the mighty men of Israel, bound their hand behind them. At that very moment, the Holy One, blessed be He, declares that, against his commitment⁵⁹⁰ expressed in Ps 91,15, "*I will be with him in trouble*", he is, as to say, at ease, having decided to draw his right hand behind his back, until to the term he has set, as he revealed it to Daniel according to Dan.12,13⁵⁹¹ that appears to be the last verse of this book. This evidently innovating line of expounding that we find in *Eikhah Rabbati* is further applied in the account of the following TMLam.2,3.5/6 ויבער ביעקב כאש להבה „and he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire, which consumes all around“

Modern comments reproduce furthermore or less the wording of the masoretic text. W. Rudolph just adapts the scheme he used in his dealing with the preceding TMLam.2, 3.3/4

⁵⁸⁸ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002,138 where it is stated further that the painful perplexity of the prayer in Ps 77,11, that the Lord's right hand may act differently, is stressed here.

⁵⁸⁹ The Buber edition adds R.Abbahu (A3) in the name of Resh Laqish (A2) although no statement is ascribed to this Rabbi in the comment.

⁵⁹⁰ The Buber edition has, עמו אנכי בצרה (תלים צא טו) 'I have already sworn to my child, "*I will be with him in his trouble*" (Ps 91,17).

⁵⁹¹ Dan.12,13: ואתה לך לקץ ותנוח ותעמד לגרלך לקץ הימים „but you, go on to the end; you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of he days.“

השיב אחר ימינו מפני אויב „*he has drawn back his right hand in the face of the enemy*“ observing that instead of helping his people when the enemy came, Yahweh himself kindled the war fire that “*consumes all around*”,⁵⁹² while D.R. Hillers remains in the realm of the metaphor with the same focus noting that the Lord’s “anger burned like fire against Jacob.”⁵⁹³

The Septuagint, the Vulgate and the targum to Lamentations show as well the same wording we have in the masoretic text, and it is *Eikhah Rabbati* that resorts to an innovation dealing with the effect of the Lord’s burning like fire (Sti):

‘R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2): When punishment comes [into the world], Jacob alone experiences it. What is the proof? “*And he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire*” (Lam.2,3). And when good comes [into the world], Jacob alone experiences it, as it is stated, “*Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad* (Ps 14, 7)‘.

The Holy One, blessed be He’s consuming fire is taken into account because it does exist. But the realm of its effect is reduced by the experiences of the *good*, that also comes and that only Jacob can enjoy it.

10&. Lenient Punishment Because the C.I. Did Not Sin to The Extremes (vss.4-5)

The account of the following 4.1. דרך קשתו כאויב „*he has bent his bow like an enemy*“ is conform to interpretive lines we observe in the dealing with the preceding cola.

W. Rudolph considers further that instead of helping and protecting his people when the enemy came, the Lord himself “*erwies sich als Feind*”.⁵⁹⁴ In D.R. Hillers’ s view, “[T]he following verse (4) makes the picture of God as a warrior still more explicit.”⁵⁹⁵ All his comment

⁵⁹² W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223. This is also the view expressed by U. Berges: JHWH “*selbst hat gegen Jakob mit einer Feuersbrunst gewütet, die alles und jedes verschlingt*”, idem, *Klagelieder*, 2002,138.

⁵⁹³ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43.

⁵⁹⁴ W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223. The same change in description is also noticed by U.Berges: “[H]atte Adonai in V 3b seine Rechte אױב מפני „*vor dem Feind*“ zurückgezogen, so tritt er in dieser Sub-Stanze selbst כאױב „*wie ein Feind*“ auf (V 4a.5a),” idem, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 138.

⁵⁹⁵ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 43; we have the same view in U. Berges: “[D]ie Theophanie unter umgekehrten Vorzeichen setzt sic im Bild des göttlichen Kriegers fort”, idem, , *Klagelieder*, 2002,138.

of this verse is reduced in few claims guided by this picture of the warrior God: “[W]ith bow and sword (...), he killed all the fine-looking warriors of Israel. The tendency in Israelite thought to ignore secondary causes and think of Yahweh as the cause of all calamity (cf. Amos 3,6) could not appear more unmistakably!”⁵⁹⁶

This picture of God as a warrior seems apparently inspired by ancient traditions. The Septuagint and the Vulgate have respectively the same wording with the massoretic text. And the targum to lamentations stressed this focus on God warrior figure and behaviour adding וגרם עלי גירין ‘and he shot arrows at me’ as a coordinate sentence to the unspecified דרך קשת ‘he drew his bow’.

Mentioning once again modern comments on this issue, worth to note is that U. Berges renounces to follow Renkema (1998, 229) in considering the comparative כ „like“ an enemy as an indication of a theological reserve. According to his argumentation, the Hebrew preposition כ “like” belongs to the “*Bildsprache*” and it has to be understood and dealt with as such.⁵⁹⁷ Against this view, it is, however, likely that the Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* would agree with Renkema’s treatment of the preposition “like”. Accounting for the present TMLam.2, 4.1, the Compiler let R. Aibu (A4) nearly repeat (Sti1) the Vilna edition of R. Abba b.Kahana (A3)’s expounding of TMLam.1,1.3, that qualifies God’s action assuaging it,

‘ [T]hey (the Israelites) did not go to the extreme of rebellion against Justice, and she (the Justice) did not go to the extreme in punishing them. They did not go to the extreme of Justice, as it is stated,

(a) “*And the people [were] as complainants*” (Num. 11, 1) - “*complainants*” is not written here, but “*as complainants*”; (b) “*The rulers of Judah were as removers of a border*” (Hos. 5, 10) - “*removers of a border*” is not written here, but “*as removers of a border*”; (c) “*For Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer*” (id. 4, 16) - “*is a stubborn heifer*” is not written here, but “*is like a stubborn heifer*”.

⁵⁹⁶ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44.

⁵⁹⁷ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 139.

And the Justice did not go to the extreme in punishing them,⁵⁹⁸

(a) “*He has bent his bow **like** an enemy*” (Lam. 2, 4) - “*an enemy*” is not written here, but “*like an enemy*”; (c) “*The lord has become **like** an enemy*” (ib. 5) - “*an enemy*” is not written here, but, “*like an enemy*”.”

And after having qualified the lord’s action in the sense of tempering it – God has acted like an enemy, but he is not in his essence an enemy -, *Eikhah Rabbati* transfers in further interpretations God’s direct agency of harsh actions as well as unpleasant features of God in the following cola to others,

‘Another interpretation: “*He has bent his bow like an enemy*”: this alludes to Pharaoh, as it is stated, “*The enemy said*” (Exod.15,9) (Sti2). “*Standing with his right hand as an adversary*” (Lam.2,4): this alludes to Haman, as it is stated, “*An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman*”(Est.7,6) (Sti2). Another interpretation: “*He has bent his bow like an enemy*”: this alludes to Esau, as it is written, “*Because the enemy has said against you: Aha!*” (Ezek.36,2) (Sti3)” [Cohen].

The dealing with the next TMLam 2, 4.3 ויהרג כל מחמדי עין „*and he has slain all the pride of the eye*“ relies on the same interpretive patterns. Yahweh remains for W. Rudolph the agent that has killed “*alle Augenweide*”. In this cryptic designation, the author includes against the ancient versions the Septuagint and the Vulgate, “*nicht bloß die blühende Jugend und die Krieger, die Israels Wonne waren (...), sondern alles, was Israel Freude gewesen war, wie seine Hauptstadt und seinen Tempel*”.⁵⁹⁹ D.R. Hillers sees with the targum to Lamentations⁶⁰⁰ in מחמדי

⁵⁹⁸ The Buber edition has here: ‘It is not written: “*She has become a widow*”, but “*as a widow*”, just like a woman whose husband went to a distant country but with the intention of returning to her.’

⁵⁹⁹ W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223. In this sense, the Septuagint with its πάντα τὰ ἐπιθυμήματα ὀφθαλμῶν μου, “*all the objects of desire of my eyes*”, and the Vulgate “*omne quod pulchrum erat visu, everything that was beautiful in the perception*” are not specific enough.

⁶⁰⁰ It is true that the targum has here much more the papaphrase כל עילם יכל דמרגין להזית ‘every young man and everything which was beautiful to see.’ [C.M.M.Brady].

עין the „fine-looking warriors of Israel“,⁶⁰¹ and U.Berges relies on biblical support to claim that it is about the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah, as well as the Tempel. Against TMLam,1,7,10 [11] where they are the prey for the enemy, U. Berges claims, it is here the Lord himself that is reported to get rid of them.⁶⁰² *Eikhah Rabbati* does not seem to endorse this claim. It only lets R. Tanchum b. Yirmeyah (A/fourth century) identifies (Stis) עין מחמדי with ‘children who were dear to their parents as the apple of their eye,’ and the Rabbis (Sti2) to the Sanhedrin ‘who were dear to Israel as the apple of their eye’ [Cohen]. We are requested to look elsewhere in *Eikhah Rabbati* to know the Holy One, blessed be He’s acting towards the children and the Sanhedrin.

Turning now to the following the TMLam.2.4.5/6 באהל בת ציון שפך כאש חמתו „*in the tent of the daughter of Zion he has poured out his fury like fire*“, it appears that the accounts we examine underscore the views we have been assessing to this point of the present research.

W. Rudolph notes that even *the tent of the daughter of Zion*, of the city of Jerusalem, deserves God’s particular fury.⁶⁰³ U. Berges is aware of the fact that the symbol of *bending the bow* has been replaced by the metaphor of pouring out his fury, and he explains what this change in symbols means in extent of the destruction carried out by Yahweh: “*Zugleich wird die allumfassende Zerstörung Jerusalems unterstrichen, denn während Pfeil und Bogen auf Einzelne zielen, gibt es beim Ausgießen des brennenden Zornes auch für die Masse kein Enkommen. Die Aktion geht nur von Gott aus, brandschatzende Babylonier sind nicht genannt (vgl. 2 Kön 25,9).*”⁶⁰⁴ Although the Septuagint binds in its layout באהל בת ציון „*in the tent of the daughter of Zion*“ with the preceding TMLam.2,2,3, it has together with the Vulgate words equivalent in meaning to those of the masoretic text. The targum to Lamentations has a much more expanded text. The linguistic forms כנשתא ‘congregation’ that is added to „*the tent*“ and כבעור ‘like fire’

⁶⁰¹ D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 37 is aware that עין מחמדי means literally „those desirable to the eye“, and that it is used elsewhere of people (Ezek.24,16) and of precious things (1 Kings 20,6); he renders it, however, by „good looking-men“.

⁶⁰² U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 139.

⁶⁰³ W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁶⁰⁴ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 139.

that together with אשתא 'fire' to which it is joined has to be rendered as 'like burning fire' aim, however, at stressing the great extent of the blow inflicted by God to the community of Israel.

It is therefore in the light of all these indications that the expounding of the colon TMLam.2.4.5/6 באהל בת ציון שפך כאש חמתו „*in the tent of the daughter of Zion he has poured out his fury like fire*” that we find in *Eikhah Rabbati* appears as really innovating. The very claim (Sti) that '[T]here are four pourings [recorded] four good (Zech.12,10, Joel 3,1, 2, Ezek.39,29), and four for evil (Isa.42,15, Ezek.9,8, Lam.4,2, and the present instance)' [Cohen] makes a differentiated assessment of this blow inflicted by God possible. This differentiated view on God's handling is also present in R. Aibu (A4)'s expounding of the following TMLam. 2,5.1 היה אדני כאויב „*the lord is become like an enemy*“ that is nearly a repetition of the interpretation of the TMLam.1,1.3; 2.4.1, just the way all the other renderings and explanations of this colon see in it the confirmation of their claim on the punishing God, with the only exception of the statement we find in the targum to Lamentations.⁶⁰⁵

These modern explanatory frameworks see also the confirmation of their claim on the punishing God in the following TMLam.2, 5.2/3 בלע ישראל בלע כל ארמנותיה „*he has swallowed up Israel, he has swallowed up her palaces*“. The presence of the double predicate בלע „*he has swallowed*“ in this bicolon is considered as the literary element of inclusion that marks the end of the stanza that started in TMLam.2,1, with the same predicate בלע „*he has swallowed*” in TMLam.2, 2.1.⁶⁰⁶ Yahweh who is one of the important protagonists in this literary unit, is said to have confirmed himself as enemy and as devastating destroyer.⁶⁰⁷ Among the ancient

⁶⁰⁵ Worth to note is that the targum to Lamentations adds דמי „to resemble,” to be like“ reads דמי לבעיל דבבא 'the Lord resembles to the enemy'. E. Levine is therefore right that „the targum reinforces that God is *as* an enemy, rather than an enemy. Instead of understanding the Heb. as asseverative “the Lord has indeed become the enemy, “ it emphasizes the distinction,”“ in idem, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 111.

⁶⁰⁶ TMLam.2, 5 is said to summarize the first „Abschnitt“ in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223, and then first Stanza (vss. 1-5) in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 139-40.

⁶⁰⁷ This view is present in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223, while U. Berges characterizes the extent of his destructing power claiming that the unlimited power of the God of Israel shows itself in swallowing Israel, idem, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 140.

renderings, the Septuagint reads *κατεπόντισεν* for the Hebrew בלע in TMLam.2,2.1 as well as here in TMLam.2,5.2.3 while the Vulgate has “*praecipitavit*” for the same Hebrew predicate בלע “*he has swallowed*” that occurred in the mentioned verses of the Biblical Lamentations. There is therefore no change in the perception of the punishing God that these versions give.

A passably different and more optimist account of the TMLam.2, 5.2/3 בלע ישראל בלע כל „*he has swallowed up Israel, he has swallowed up her palaces*” is provided by *Eikhah Rabbati*. A reworking of the present textual witnesses, that are obviously loosely structured, on the basis of the Buber text, helps understand that the biblical “*swallowing*” has been translated into exiles, that are limited in time:

‘R. Berekiah (A5) and R. Chelbo (A4) said in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachman(A3):⁶⁰⁸ Israel went into exile in three places: one to this side of the river Sambatyon,⁶⁰⁹ one when the cloud descended upon them and covered them, one to Daphne of Antioch. When they return, they will return from three captivities. What is the proof? “*Saying to the prisoners: Go out*” (Isa. 49,9), this alludes to those who went into exile to this side of the river Sambatyon, “*To them that are in darkness: show yourselves*”(ib.), this alludes to those upon whom the cloud came down to cover them, “*They shall feed in the ways, and in all high hills, shall be their pasture*” (ib.), this alludes to those who were exiled to Daphne of Antioch.””

The very perspective of a return from exiles does not rule out the sufferings endured according to the TMLam.2,2.5/ וירב בבת יהודה תאניה ואניה „*and he has multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and moaning*“ that *Eikhah Rabbati* renders together with some modern comment⁶¹⁰ by ‘the most intense afflictions’ [Cohen].

CONCLUSION

⁶⁰⁸ With the Buber text, against the less traditional R. Berekiah said in the name of R. Chelbo in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachman of the Vilna edition.

⁶⁰⁹ Legendary river that ceased to flow on the sabbath. The allusion is to the exile of the ten tribes to Assyria, according to *Lamentations*, [Midrash Rabbah], transl. by A Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 172, footnot 2.

⁶¹⁰ According to U.Berges, „[M]it der Zerstörung gehen körperliche und seelischen Leiden einher, die der hebräische Ausdruck וירב בבת יהודה תאניה ואניה mit der effektvollen, eine Sterigerung andeutenden Assonanz “*ta’anija wa’anija*” einzufangen versucht“, idem, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 140.

Nearly all the modern and ancient accounts claim that the lord has acted just like the enemy does. *Eikhah Rabbati* observes instead that the Only One, blessed be He, may be like an enemy an exert a destructive action, but that he is not in his essence an enemy. *Eikhah Rabbati* focuses no longer on accounting for the items utterly destroyed, but on the choices met by the Holy One, blessed be He. The Community of Israel is punished, but not eradicated, because the covenant prevails, and there is a return from the exile.

CONCLUSION

Targeted action on buildings (2.1; 5.1) and on the people of Zion, on new “corporate embodiment of the Judean polity”; focus on the destructive power of the only Holy One, blessed be He, and on new weak and disobedient human agents such as the elite and some leaders of the Community of Israel as well as the enemy conquerors.

I.3.2. The Punishment Extended to ‘This Kingdom’ (vss. 6-10)

The present stanza (TMLam. 2,6-10) differs from the preceding (TMLam.2, 1-5) in that categorized individuals are mentioned in TMLam.2,10.2 (*i.e.*, the elders of Zion) and 2,10.6 (*i.e.*, the virgins of Jerusalem). Otherwise the already mentioned king and priest (vs. 2,6.6), king and princes (vs.2,9.3), and prophets (vs. 2,9.5) are together with the sanctuary (vs.2,7.1/2), the walls of the citadels (vs.2,7.4), the festival and the Sabbath (v.2, 6.4) the targets of the destruction the Lord carries out (vss.2,6, 7,8) in the fury of his anger (v.2,6.5) according to the Biblical Lamentations. The question in the present research is to know how does the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* account for these biblical data.

1&. The Holy One, blessed be He, Appeased by the Punishment (v.6.11&)

The transition to the present Stanza (TMLam. 2,6-10) is said to be set by the predicate שֶׁהָרַס „*he has ruined*“; and the mention of the אֲדֹנָי „*Lord*“ in TMLam.2,5.1 is considered as tightening up the motif of Gott as enemy (v.4).⁶¹¹ The Lord remains further the main subject of the punitive actions that are dealt with in this stanza. The first of these actions targeted in *Eikhah*

⁶¹¹ See U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 140.

Rabbati is reported in TMLam.2,6.1 וַיַּחֲמוֹס כֶּגֶן שׁוּכּוֹ „and he has exerted violence on his tabernacle as if it were a garden.“ W. Rudolph observes that Jerusalem, that is the religious and political centre of the kingdom, is of great concern to the poet that devotes to her a further description. The present colon TMLam.2,6.1 as well as the following verses, this author notes further, address the situation of the Temple: the holy of holies has been destroyed and desecrated.⁶¹² D.R.Hillers, that has undertaken to translate TMLam.2,6.1. “Yahweh laid waste his “covert”, that is the temple”, adding “if the MT is correct, which is most doubtful,”⁶¹³ considers further that “in verses 6 and 7 the dominant idea is that touched on already in vs. 1: Yahweh has destroyed what was sacred to himself, both sacred objects (altar, sanctuary, temple), people (king and priest) , and institutions (festival and Sabbath)).”⁶¹⁴ U. Berges, that notes that the predicate חָמַס „to exert violence“, has in all the Old Testament only here in TMLam.2,6,1 God as subject, mentions that the comparative point in this colon is the image of Zion as God’s garden (Isa. 51,3), and the Tempel as “Sukkah” (Ps 27, 5; 76,3).⁶¹⁵

The Septuagint and the Vulgate have the equivalent wording of the masoretic text. Only the targum to Lamentations has replaced the Biblical שׁוּכּוֹ ‘his tabernacle’ by the much more specified בֵּית מִקְדָּשֵׁיהּ ‘his sanctuary’, while the same colon is accounted for in *Eikhah Rabbati* by means of three claims:

‘R. Chama brachinine (A2)⁶¹⁶ said (Sti1): It became like a garden that has been deprived of its water-supply and its verdure became white. R. Simeon b. Hachiman said (Sti2): like the first Adam, as it is stated, “*So he drove out the Adam*” (Gen.3,24). R. Abacha (A3) (Sti3) said: The word for ‘tabernacle’ (*sukkot*)

⁶¹² W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁶¹³ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 37.

⁶¹⁴ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44. This is also the view of U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 141: “[D]ie Souveränität JHWHs, die sich im Kampf gegen sein eigenes Volk zeigte, macht auch vor dem Ort seiner kultischen Präsenz nicht halt. Er tat Gewalt an (חָמַס) wie im Garten seiner „Sukka/Hütte.““

⁶¹⁵ U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 141: „Der Gott Israels, der denjenigen, der Gewalttat (חָמַס) liebt, aus tiefster Seele hasst (Ps 11,5), der den Beter vor Gewaltmenschen erretet (Ps 18,49; 140,2.5), ist selbst zum Gewalttäter gegen sein Heiligtum geworden (vgl. Mi 3,12, Jer 7,1-15; 26, 1-19). “

⁶¹⁶ The Buber edition has instead R. Chanina without specification.

is written so that it can be read as *sukko*, i.e. when Israel was exiled the wrath of the Holy One, blessed be He, was appeased (*shakekah*).`

When the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* provides with these three claims that focus on the 'garden' as well as on 'the tabernacle' is certainly the picture of a God that can punish, but also that is able to change his mind. That God's mind is said to change after the punishment makes against the view we find in the other comments and renderings, certain, that a change of and from the bad situation is possible.

The following TMLam.2,6.3/4 ⁶¹⁷ שכח יהוה בציון מועד ושבח "the Lord has got forgotten in Zion the appointed season and the Sabbath" has been listed by W. Rudolph,⁶¹⁸ D.R.Hillers⁶¹⁹ and U. Berges⁶²⁰ among the next object targeted by the destroying fury of Yahweh. And the Septuagint and the Vulgate do not stray from the wording of the masoretic text in this colon, while the targum to Lamentations lets know that it is the joy of the festival and of the Sabbath that the Lord has caused to be forgotten. It is therefore a different expounding of the present colon that we find in *Eikhah Rabbati* where the Compiler reports (Sti) that the Holy One, blessed be He, could not made his festivals and Sabbaths forgotten, but the festivals and the Sabbaths that Jeroboam invented, as stated in 1 Kings 12, 33⁶²¹, according to Lev. 23, 38.

And also the next colon targeted in *Eikhah Rabbati*, TMLam.2,6.5/6 וינאץ בזעם אפו מלך „and he has rejected in the fury of his anger the king and the priest“ is occasion of different accounts. W. Rudolph considers that the capture of the Tempel in 5. Month of the year 587/6 by the Babylonian general Nabuzaradan as reported in 2 Kings 25, 8f has removed the ground on

⁶¹⁷ The Buber edition has also TMLam.6,2 שחת מועד "he has destroyed his appointed season."

⁶¹⁸ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223: „Derselbe Gott, der mit eigener Hand das Sabbatgebot auf die Gesetzestafel schrieb und durch seinen Knecht Mose die großen Jahresfeste (Ex 23, 14f.) gebot, bewirkte durch die Zerstörung des Festorts, dass sie in Vergessenheit geraten mussten.“

⁶¹⁹ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44.

⁶²⁰ U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 140: "[D]abei geht es in der Sub-Stanze V 6-7 um die Zerstörung des Heiligtums, der Kultordnung und des Kultpersonals," also ibidem, 141f.

⁶²¹ See 1 Kings 12,33, where it is said, ויעל על המזבח (...) בחדש אשר בדא מלכו „and he-Jeroboam-offered up on the altar (...) in the month that he devised out of his own heart“. *Eikhah Rabbati* recommends to read מלבו *milibo* „from his hearth“ *milibad* „besides“ alluded to in Lev.23, 38, „beside the sabbaths of the Lord“.

which the function of the king and of the priest rested.⁶²² King and priest were among those D.R.Hillers said that they have been destroyed by the Yahweh, and U.Berges argues with W.Rudolph that the high cult servants, the king and the priest, were made redundant and were affected by disdain after the temple has been destroyed.⁶²³ The Septuagint adds the ἄρχοντα „the prince“ to the king and the priest that are mentioned in then masoretic text as objects of disdain. The Vulgate does not really innovate, and the targum to Lamentations specifies that the priest was the כהנא רבא 'the high priest'. This specification of these biblical designations is also present in the identification (Sti) of the priest with king Zedekiah, and of the priest with the priest Seraiah, son of Mahseiah⁶²⁴ in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

2&. The Servants are Rejected and the Blasphemous Kingdoms Will Be Punished (v.7)

The account of the next TMLam.2,7.1 זנה אדנאי מזבחיו „the Lord has cast off his altar“ addressed in *Eikhah Rabbati* is carried out on the basis of interpretive principles and patterns that are usual in different traditions. In the present case, it appears that the altar before the Tempel that is mentioned in the present colon belongs to the objects reported to have been destroyed by Yahweh according to the expounding of W. Rudolph,⁶²⁵ D.R. Hillers,⁶²⁶ and by U. Berges who considers that the theme of rejection by God is carried on and reaches with the *casting of his altar* and the *spurning of his sanctuary* its climax.⁶²⁷ What is got rid of here, U.Berges claims, are devotional practices that characterize a religious nation. Among the ancient accounts of this colon, the Septuagint, the Vulgate as well as the targum to Lamentations have the same wording

⁶²² R. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁶²³ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 141f.

⁶²⁴ The Buber edition does not mention the controversial Mahseiah, see *Lamentations*, [Midrash Rabbah], transl. by A Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 174, footnote 1, where, according to Jer 51,59, Seraiah is described as the son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah, who was a quartermaster, while Jer. 52, 24 speaks of Seraiah the priest.

⁶²⁵ R. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁶²⁶ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44.

⁶²⁷ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 142.

with the present masoretic text. The rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* brings us with its account of the present colon by means of a *maschal* (M) into the realm of the covenant in which a king rejects the tables prepared for a banquet but not his servants that have provoked him, *vide infra*.

The next colon picked up in *Eikhah Rabbati* is TMLam.2, 7.3/4 הסגיר ביד אויב חומת ארמנותיה “*he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces*”. The focus of the expounding relies in different interpretive traditions on the חומת ארמנותיה “*walls of her palaces*”, that obviously alludes to the “*palaces*” of the city of Jerusalem, and are said to *have been delivered* by God to the foe. In their account of the present colon, modern comments accuse Yahweh of having abandoned Zion to her foes. This is the case with W. Rudolph that renders the TMLam.2,7.3/4 noun phrase חומת ארמנותיה by the surprising “*heiligen Tempelgeräte, die Yaweh gab in die Hand der Feinde*”⁶²⁸ R.D.Hillers does not mention the *delivering of palaces* in his commentary, while U. Berges sees in the sentence הסגיר ביד אויב “*he has delivered in the hand of the foe*” the sign of the change of the author of salvation into the author of disaster.⁶²⁹ In this conditions of the lack of God’s protection, he argues further, it is evident that the conquering enemy had to celebrate his joy in God’s sanctuary כיום מועד “*as in the day of a meeting*”.⁶³⁰ The Septuagint and the Vulgate show a colon similar in its wording to the Masoretic text. It is the targum to Lamentations that paraphrases the TMLam.2,7.5/6 into ‘they raised a shout in the Temple of the Lord like the shout of the people of the House of Israel praying in it on the day of Passover.’

The *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of TMLam.2, 7.3/4 הסגיר ביד אויב חומת ארמנותיה “*he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces*” is further an innovative one in its dealing with the agents of the action expressed in this colon. Against the widespread claim that

⁶²⁸ R. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁶²⁹ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 142.

⁶³⁰ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 142-3. The very assessment of the sentence קול נתנו בבית יהוה כיום מועד “*they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in (on) the day of a meeting*” is matter of contention. For W. Rudolph, the enemies, that have received from the Lord the liturgical tools make a noise that resembles the noise made by the Jewish devotees during the celebration”, idem, *op.cit.* 223; see also the targum to Lamentations *ad hoch*. According to D.R.Hillers, “the enemy was allowed to raise an unholy din in the temple, so that it sounded as though a kind of witches’ sabbath were being celebrated.” See idem, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44.

TMLam.2,7.3/4 pioneers the abandonment of daughter of Zion by God into the hand of her foes, *Eikhah Rabbati* lets R. Berekhyah (A5), R. Chelbo (A4), and R. Aibo (A4) state in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3),

‘You find that when the heathens entered the Temple, they placed their hands behind their necks, turned their faces upwards, blasphemed and reviled, and the nails of their boots made scratches upon floor. That is what is written, “*he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as (in/on) the day of a meeting*”.

This *Eikhah Rabbati* claim (Sti) tells much more about the highly reprehensible blasphemous behaviour of the enemy that enters the Temple than on an alleged support the enemy might have enjoyed in his move from a God willing to abandon the Community of Israel. The account of the next verses of the Biblical Lamentations confirm the present assessment.

As we put it in the analysis of the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment reported in the appendix, the expounding of the following verse 7. 5-6: קול נתנו בבית יהוה כיום מועד “*they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as (in) the day of a meeting*” is an actualizing one. While R. Chanina, R. Acha (A4), and R. Measha (A2) consider in the name of R. Yannai (A1) that this colon refers to the circumstances of the fall of Babylon (Sti1)⁶³¹, R. Berekhyah (A5), R. Chelbo (A4), and R. Aibo (A4) think in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) of Rome (Sti2).⁶³² And summing up this research, R. Chanina,⁶³³ R. Acha (A4), and R. Measha (A2) repeat in the name of R. Yannai (A1) the claim of the fall of Babylon applied this time to Rome (Sti3), as R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) does (Sti4). What we find in these claims (Stis) is therefore the commitment of the Holy One, blessed be He, that Rom will give account of the questionable behaviour displayed during the conquest of the Temple of Jerusalem.

3& The Punishment Has Been Decided of Old (v.8)

⁶³¹ The קול נתנו בבית יהוה „*the noise they made in the house of the Lord*” is no longer the rejoicing cry of the conqueror in the Temple of Jerusalem; מכה אותו הקול נפלה בבל ‘by the strength of this voice did Babylon fall’ as stated in Isa. 21,9, it is claimed in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

⁶³² It is true that the Vilna edition of *Eikah Rabbati* has ‘[T]he noise of woeful disturbance and darkness scends to the great city of Tyre’, the Buber edition and the Muniuch Codex Heb.229 speak of the city of Rom.

⁶³³ This is with the translator *in loco*, instead of R. Huna in the *E.R.* text, see the same reading, line 217.

The account of the following TMLam.2,8.1/2 חשב יהוה להשחית חומת בת ציון „*the Lord has purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion*“ confirm the interpretive patterns that should be well known now.

Modern comments grant further Yahweh a decisive and nefarious role in all the trials and tribulations daughter of Zion went through.⁶³⁴ Yahweh's alleged rejection of the „daughter of Zion“ is said to have been planned from old.⁶³⁵ And it is further claimed that Yahweh not only rejected Israel, he also stood in collusion with the Babylonian general Nabuzaradan in the blow that his army inflicted to Israel,⁶³⁶ and that Yahweh himself carried out these actions. The ancient renderings of the TMLam.2,8.1/2 are similar in all the text traditions. The only innovations are the Septuagint ἐπέστυψεσεν “turned” and the nearly regular replacement of the Biblical Hebrew בת ציון “*daughter of Zion*” by the Aramaic כנשתא דע ציון ‘the Community of Zion’ in the targum. And a further innovation is to be found in *Eikhah Rabbati* in the following claims (Sti) made by R. Yochanan (A2) and R. Ilas: ‘Not from now [but from long ago has he purposed to do this]’ [Cohen], R. Yochanan (A) states (Sti1), adding with Jer. 32, 31 a proof-text that gives the reason of this purpose. “*for this city has been to me a cause of my anger and my wrath from the day that they built it.*” The suffering that befalls the Community of Israel is therefore justified, as R. Ilas puts (Sti2) it: ‘It is like a man who passes a filthy place and stops up his nose’ [Cohen], the Hebrew אפי „my angry“ in Jer.32,31 being interpreted as ‘my nose’ that has been offended.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁴ U. Berges sees the continuation of the theme of destruction by Gott in word-forms such as חומת “walls” (v.7.4), שחת “to destroy” (vss. 5.4, 8,1), בלע “to swallow” (vss. 2.1; 5.2; 8.4) that are repeated in the present stanza.

⁶³⁵ „Lest there be any misconception“, D.R.Hillers claims, „it is made clear that Yahweh did all this, not through inadvertence, but deliberately; he planned it, “ see idem, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44. And U.Berges insists that this planning of old in TMLam.2,8.1/2, the systematic execution mentioned in TMLam.2,8.3/4, and the metaphorisation of rampart and wall in TMLam.2,8.5/6 are the only new elements in the thematic unfolding of this poem, idem, *op.cit.* 143.

⁶³⁶ That is the way W. Rudolph saw it, in idem, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223.

⁶³⁷ See this comment in *Lamentations*, [Midrash Rabbah], transl. by A Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 175, footnote 10.

The next TMLam.2, 8.3 קו נטה „*he has stretched out a line*“ that describes the execution of the aforementioned purpose, is well accepted in ancient renderings while it is object of perplexity in modern research. W. Rudolph is confident that Yahweh himself “*has stretched out the line*.”⁶³⁸ Now, to stretch a line out is “the action of a builder, done to mark straight lines,” D.R. Hillers argues. “It is occasionally used, as here, as a metaphor for divine judgement. It is not completely clear how a phrase from the vocabulary of building becomes a synonym for destruction.”⁶³⁹ U. Berges finds, however, that the line can be stretched out to build (Jer.34,17) as well as to break down (2 Kings 21,13).⁶⁴⁰ This is the interpretive line we find in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

This differentiation in the function of the קו “*line*” suits the differentiated presentation of the action carried out by the Holy One, blessed be He, in *Eikhah Rabbati*, as this appears in the claim (Sti) on the TMLam.2,8.3 קו נטה „*he has stretched out a line*“ in this rabbinic commentary:

‘There is a favourable und unfavourable ‘*line*’: favourable as in, “ *My house shall be built in it-Jerusalem-, says the Lord of host, and a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem*” (Zech.1,16); and unfavourable as in the present instance, “*he has stretched out a line*.”’

This claim on the good and bad *line* provides insights into the stance of the interpreters in *Eikhah Rabbati* to bind together the extent and the motivation of the punitive actions carried out by the Holy One, blessed be He. It is evident that according to *Eikhah Rabbati*, the extent of these actions depends on their motivation. Otherwise we cannot explain why a line used is good or bad. And the account of the following TMLam. 2,8.4-8 יחדו אומללו ויאבל חל והומה „*he has not withdrawn his hand from destroying; and he has made rampart and wall lament, they languish together*“ keeps us further within the realm of this kind of considerations. Paraphrasing the Masoretic text, modern comments note that God makes rampart and wall mourn

⁶³⁸ W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 223. And U.Berges sees here a further step in the presentation of God. God is no longer the “*Einzelkämpfer*” against his people as he appears in Chapter One; Chapter Two lets perceive God as the organizer of the destruction; he makes plans and carries them out, see idem, *Klagelieder*, 2002,143.

⁶³⁹ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 38.

⁶⁴⁰ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 143.

like human beings.⁶⁴¹ Pertaining to ancient rendering, it appears that the Aramaic Qal אביל of the targumj, the aorist ἐπένθησεν of the Septuagint as well as the perfect *luxit* of the Vulgate maintain claim that it is God that sows desolation. The rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* makes in this regard the difference in that it lets R. Huna b.R. Acha (A4?) notices (Sti) only what he considers as the extent of this desolation, the large wall and the smaller wall.

4&. The Gates Sunk That Are the Symbol of an Enduring Covenant in Torah nor Vision (v.9).

We find further the same interpretive lines in the expounding of the following TMLam. 2, 9. W. Rudolph, that considers that the colon TMLam. 2, 9.1 טבעו בארץ שעריה „*her gates have sunk into the earth*“ does not need to be translated obviously to avoid the personification of “*the gates*” implied by the predicate “*sunk*”, has a rational explanation of the content of the present sentence: the destruction and the supposed debris of buildings falling upon them caused the gates to sink into the ground.⁶⁴² Another rational and much more complex interpretation of this colon is provided by D.R.Hillers: “*Her gates have sunk into the earth*”, is probably meant as a literal statement (...). If not, one might suppose that “*the gates*” are personified here, like the “*mourning*” wall in the preceding line (cf.1,4), and then “*sunk into earth*” would recall what is said elsewhere of persons; to have one’s feet sink (טבע) into mud (Ps 69,2,14 [3,15H]; Jer. 38,22) is a figure for being in great distress.”⁶⁴³ This metaphorical interpretation of the present colon is also pioneered by U.Berges who also ascribed the next TMLam.2,9.2 אבד ושבר בריחיה „*he has destroyed and broken her bars*“ to Yahweh on the basis of many biblical proof-texts. The intent of the action was to get either king Jehoiachin or king Zedekiah lose their power⁶⁴⁴ over Jerusalem that was captured.

⁶⁴¹ See W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224, and the extensive comment in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 144 with mention of influence from Mesopotamia.

⁶⁴² W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224.

⁶⁴³ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 38.44.

⁶⁴⁴ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 144-5.

Accounting for the following *אין תורה בגוים* the same W.Rudolph, that considers that this sentence is part of TMLam.2,9.3/4 *אין תורה מלכה ושריה בגוים* „*her king and her princes are among the nations; the law is no more*“ which is said to deal with the dissolution of the order of the State, holds that this sentence *מלכה ושריה בגוים* “*her king and her princes are among the nations*” does not mean that the people were already in exile in Babylon.⁶⁴⁵ And W. Rudolph interprets the next *תורה* as the “*Law*” whose proclaimed lack led Israel to lose his identity as God’s people.⁶⁴⁶ This is, however, not the view of U.Berges who claims together with *Eikhah Rabbati* with the support of the position of the Masoretic accent that the king and the princes had to live among people that did not possess the Torah,⁶⁴⁷ *vide infra*. The following TMLam.2, 9.5αβ *נביאיה* „*her prophets*“ are said in a paraphrase of the Biblical TMLam.2,9.5/6 *מיהוה חזון לא מצאו* „*they found no vision from Yahweh*“ to be ineffective in their charismatic guidance because Yahweh has refused to provide them with his revelation⁶⁴⁸

Among the ancient renderings of the TMLam.2,9, the Septuagint and the Vulgate have the same wording with the masoretic text. It is the targum to Lamentations that expands considerably its text by means of explanatory comments:

‘Her gates have sunk into earth because they slaughtered a pig and brought its blood over them. Her king and rulers were exiled (...) because they did not keep the decrees of Torah, as if they have not received it on Mount Sinai. Even the prophets had the holy spirit of prophecy withheld from them and they were not told a word of prophesy from before the Lord.’

⁶⁴⁵ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224. D.R.Hillers thinks, in contrary, that „[A]ll the most important people”-mentionend in TMLam.2,9.1/2-“are either gone or not functioning: king, princes, priuests – it is they who would normally have supplied the “instruction” (*תורה*) – and prophets“, idem, *op.cit.*, 44.

⁶⁴⁶ W.Rudolph quotes Oettli: „[M]it Gesetz und Gesicht, dem feststehenden und dem flüssigen Offenbarungsmedium, verliert Israel seinen Character als Jahwes Volk,“ idem, *op.cit.*, 224.

⁶⁴⁷ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 145. U.Berges considers, however, on the basis of the listing of king, princes and prophets, that „Torah“ is here not the mosaic Torah, but the priestly teaching that was necessary to distinguish sacred and profane matters, according to Ezek.7,26, Jer.18,18.

⁶⁴⁸ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224. See also the claim in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 145 that relies on the proclamation of Jeremiah in this regard (Jer. 14,13-16; 23,9-40; 28).

The targum has carried out a remarkable work of actualization of the Hebrew TMLam. 2, 9. Noticeable elements of rabbinic literature are incorporated,⁶⁴⁹ the desecration of the Temple that is supposed to have led to its destruction is ascribed to the Jews themselves, the lack of respect for the Torah is said to have been the cause of the exile, etc.... This actualizing line that nearly rewrites this verse of the Biblical Lamentations is also present in *Eikhah Rabbati*. R. Huna (A4) explains in the name of R. Yose (A3) that the gates of Jerusalem TMLam.2,9.1 are said to “*have sunk*” (Sti1) and could for that reason not be broken like the bars (Sti2) because they were protected for having opened to allow the Ark of the Covenant to enter, as requested in Ps.24,7 “*Lift up your heads, O gates*”; “*her king and her princes*” found themselves “*among the nations*” where the Torah does not exist (Sti); the ‘false prophets’ of the Community of Israel, as well as ‘her true prophets’⁶⁵⁰ were no longer allowed to receive some revelation from the Holy One, blessed be He. What this *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding tells about the TMLam.2,9 is that the covenant with the Holy One, blessed be He, was still in force, the exile of the rulers “*among the nations*” without Torah was nevertheless possible and was certainly caused by the lack of the observance of the Torah.

The last *Eikhah Rabbati* account in this stanza deals with TMLam.2,10.1/2 יֵשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ יְדֻמוּ זְקֵנֵי „*they sit on the ground, and keep silence, the elders of the daughter of Zion*“. Modern comments assess this fact of “*sitting on the ground*” as a sign of the mourning,⁶⁵¹ the elders being said to “mourn for Zion with typical mourning rites, as though for a dead person,”⁶⁵² as this is described further in TMLam.10.3/4. The next TMLam.2,10.5/6 הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֹאשׁוֹן בְּתוֹלֶת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

⁶⁴⁹ See the list of Jewish sources used by the targum in E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 114.

⁶⁵⁰ ‘The false prophets’ are the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of the TMLam.2,9.4 גַּם נְבִיאֶיהָ „*also her prophets*“ that is considered as an addition to the basic נְבִיאֶיהָ ‘her prophets’.

⁶⁵¹ See W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224, where it is stated: „[D]ie Ältesten (oder: die Alten?) sitzen schweigend am Boden, nicht aus Ratlosigkeit (...), als ob 10a eng mit 9b.c zusammengehörte, sondern, wie das Folgende zeigt, aus Trauer.“ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44-45 speak also of humiliation: “[T]his traditional attitude (cf.Ezek 26,16, Job 2,12, 2 Sam 13,31, Josh 7,6) expresses humiliation, the earth being symbolic of lowness. In this pose also a man was in direct contact with dirt, a recurring image for mortality”

⁶⁵² D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 1972, 44. This is also the view of U.Berges in his *Klagelieder*, 2002, 146 -7 with mention of parallel in the texts from Ugarit that reflect early Canaanite religion..

“the maidens of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground” is also interpreted as a sign of mourning.⁶⁵³ Ancient renderings of this TMLam.2,10 do not provide this interpretation. The Septuagint has the new *κατήγαγον εἰς γῆν ἄρχηγοὺς παρθένους ἐν Ἱεροσολαίμῃ* „they led to ground the leading princesses in Jerusalem“, the Vulgate reports just the wording that we find in the Masoretic text, and the targum to Lamentations is coherent in replacing the biblical “daughter of Zion” by the ‘Community of Zion’, and in expanding the Biblical TMLam.2,10.3 עפר into אפר מקלה ‘wood ashes’, חגרו שקים into על בשריהון סקין על בשריהון ‘they gird sackcloth upon their bodies’, and TMLam 2,10.5 אחיתו לעפרא דארעא רישיהון into הורידו לארץ ראשן ‘they bow their heads to the dust of earth’. The main innovation in the account of TMLam.2,11.1/2 is, however, carried out by *Eikhah Rabbati*. This rabbinic commentary does not speak of mourning as this is the case in the modern expounding. The Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* seem apparently to have found out that there was no reason for mourning. They considered instead the elders humiliated for not having observed some commandment, see the related anecdote narrative (A) in the next Chapter of this work.

CONCLUSION

Two lines of interpretation emerge in the account of the TMLam.2,1-10. Ancient renderings and modern comments are nearly similar to the wording and the content of the masoretic text. They draw a picture of a punishing God that mistreats daughter of Zion. As A.Mintz puts it, “the fact of God’s direct persecution remains not only unaltered but sweepingly elaborated. He strips, smashes, razes, cuts down, and lays waste (vss 1-9). With premeditated and systematic antipathy, God dismantles Zion: her sacred objects (altar, sanctuary, temple), people (king and priest)., and institutions (festival and Sabbath).⁶⁵⁴

The items of the biblical Lamentations are targeted and dealt with in *Eikhah Rabbati* are nearly reworked. The biblical verses appear within the literary units cola and bicola that belong often to the first line of the three lines the verses are made up of. The result is the contrasted picture of the main protagonists of the Biblical Lamentations that confirm the *Eikhah Rabbati*

⁶⁵³ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224

⁶⁵⁴ A. Mintz, *The Rhetoric of Lamentations*, 6.

claims we found in the preceding Chapter of this commentary. It is further repeated that the Holy One, blessed be He, is not effectively an enemy of the Community of Israel. Human agents carried out main reprehensible punitive work. They will not for that reason remain without repayment. The Community of Israel is not without responsibility in the blows that befall her, and that the Holy One, blessed be He, keeps further his Covenant to the Community of Israel. The next verses of this Chapter of the Biblical Lamentations do no longer focus on the blow the daughter of Zion received. The question to be answered is how *Eikhah Rabbati* deals with the new requirements.

I.4. The Surge of The Community of Israel Through Remembrance (TMLam. 2, 11-22)

The present section (TMLam. 2, 11-22) contains two stanzas (2,11-17, 18-22) in which the disaster described in the previous section is further dealt with and assessed mostly in connection with the request to solve it. The section begins (i) with the picture of a prostrated Zion, and (ii) with the poet's feeling of despair on behalf of Fair-Zion. This mental stance of the poet is followed by (iii) his action to get Zion move, and (iv) the section ends with Zion's surge of awareness.⁶⁵⁵

I.4.1. The Experiences of the Sufferings and the Unbroken Promise (vss. 11-17)

The present stanza makes known at the outset the complaint of the poet driven (vs.2, 11) to despair by the picture of the children expiring from hunger in the streets of the city,⁶⁵⁶ and by "the incommensurability of Zion's pains" (A. Mintz) (TMLam.2,13). The poet's unease is exacerbated by the fact that he has to provide a substantial portion of consolation (TMLam.2,13),⁶⁵⁷ to counterbalance the defection of the prophets (TMLam.2,13-14) and to face the sarcastic

⁶⁵⁵ See a nearly similar analysis in U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 147.

⁶⁵⁶ See the occurrence of *nishpakh* (vs. 2,11.3) and *hishpakh naphsham* (vs. 2,12.5).

⁶⁵⁷ See the extended explanation of the specific, mostly metaphorical means the poet uses to console Zion, in A. Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations", 6-10.

assault of those who make fun of “the humiliated and debased condition” (A. Mintz) of Zion in TMLam.2,15-17.⁶⁵⁸ *Eikhah Rabbati* assessed a little bit differently on the basis of Biblical verses from this stanza the situation the Community of Israel went through.

1&. The Harmful Weeping in the Community of Israel (v.11.1)

The first colon from this stanza to be addressed is TMLam.2,11.1 כלו בדמעות עיני „my eyes are at an end with tears“ In the modern comments, the present colon is considered as a statement made by the poet himself.⁶⁵⁹ He is said to report on his own suffering in regard to the national catastrophe⁶⁶⁰ and it happens that the Biblical specification עיני כלו בדמעות „my eyes are at an end with tears“ is not addressed, with the exception of U.Berges. U.Berges considers the mentioned “tears” as an indication of the feelings of solidarity of the poet with the weeping women.⁶⁶¹ The same solidarity of feelings is seen by this author also in TMLam.2,11.2. חמרמרו „my bowls ferment“, that is ruled out in *Eikhah Rabbati*, and in the next TMLam.2,11.3 נשפך „my liver is poured on the ground“ that is accounted for in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The last colon is, however, assessed by W. Rudolph as a statement made by the poet in his effort to mix up his own mourning with the mourning of the elders and the mourning of the virgins of Jerusalem asserted in the preceding TMLM.2, 10.⁶⁶² The ancient renderings of the two cola TMLam.2,11.1 and 2,11.3 targeted in *Eikhah Rabbati* are similar in their wordings to the Masoretic text, with the noticeable exception of the Septuagint δόξα „honour“ for כבדי „my liver“ in TMLam.2,11.3.

⁶⁵⁸ The present analysis that counts TMLam. 2,15-17 as part of this stanza is somewhat different to the view expressed in A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 8, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 117. It is argued that the three verses have the same argumentative function with TMLam. And TMLam. 3,17 brings the last touch to the picture of the devastation of Zion.

⁶⁵⁹ U. Berges has noticed it: “[M]it der Ich-Rede des Sprechers in V 11 liegt eine deutliche Zäsur vor,” idem, op.cit. 147.

⁶⁶⁰ This claim pertains to all TMLam.2,11, as commented in W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224. See also D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 45: „the poet speaks of his own grief.“

⁶⁶¹ U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 149.

⁶⁶² W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224. It is true that U.Berges sees in TMLam 2, 11.3 נשפך לארץ more than a reminder of TMLam 2,10.1 שכבו לארץ. He also speaks of communion of move between the two cola.

Having to deal with the TMLam.2,11.1, *Eikhah Rabbati* lets R. Eleazar (T3/A3) address the extent of the tears and their consequence for the eye, claiming (Sti1) that 'there is a limitation set for [the tears of] the eye' [Cohen]. A second claim (Sti2), more extended and complete in the Buber edition than in the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb.229, specifies further that there are, effectively, four kinds of tears that are beneficial to the eye, the tears caused by a drug, mustard and collyrium, the tears caused by the laughter being the best of all, besides effectively four other harmful tears, the tears caused by smoke, weeping, straining in a privy, worst being the tears caused by the death of a grown-up child.⁶⁶³ These claims are followed by two illustrating anecdote narratives (A), the first narrative on the weeping of a mother for her grown-up child addressing TMLam 2,11.2 מעי המרמרו *„my bowels ferment“* in the Munich Codex Heb.229, and the second narrative on the weeping of a father for his grown-up child accounting in all the text traditions for the TMLam.2,11. 3/4 על שבר בת עמי *„my liver is poured on the ground for the ruin of the daughter of my people“*. We are in any event far from the sufferings assessed through the feelings of the poet. What is accounted for is the suffering of emblematic persons.

3&. Wealthy Persons Are Not Spared from Death from Starvation (v. 12)

The modern comments consider the following TMLam.2,12⁶⁶⁴ as a personal report provided by the poet that is said to bear witness to the sufferings of the children dying of starvation during and after the siege.⁶⁶⁵ It is spoken of unsuccessful search for food, of starvation and of death of children on marketplaces where foodstuff was usually bid as reported in the

⁶⁶³ Worth to note is the fact that the kinds of the tears reported here are not exhaustive. The Buber edition mentions further the tears caused by the potter, and the tear caused by a black thing among harmful tears.

⁶⁶⁴ TMLam 2,12.2/2 ויין דגן איה יאמרו *„To their mothers they say: where is corn and wine?“*
TMLam 2,12.3/4 כעלל ברחבות עיר *„in their fainting like the wounded in the broad places of the city“*
TMLam.2,5/6 אל היק אמתם *„in their pouring out their lives into their mothers bosom.“*

⁶⁶⁵ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224: *Der Dichter* „zeichnet in 12 mit wenigen Strichen ein erschütterndes Bild von den Leiden der Kleinen, die bei ihren Müttern umsonst um Essen und Trinken bettelten und auf ihrem Schoß ihr Leben aushauchten. Dass hier ein Augenzeuge redet, kann nicht bezweifelt werden.“ See also D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 45: „[T]he famine which struck the little children especially is depicted in a dramatic vignette. Starving children ask their mothers for bread and wine, but there is none, and they faint in the streets, or expire in their mothers' laps.“ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 150 considers TMLam 2,12 as the continuation of the report on the suffering of the children that we find in the preceding TMLam.2,11. He speaks here of a live report of the requests uttered by the dying children and brings a bad propaganda to the punishing God.

masoretic text. The ancient renderings provide no substantial divergences with the masoretic wording of this verse. Only the targum adds the subject רוביא דִּישְׂרָאֵל 'the youth of Israel' to the predicate יֵאמְרוּ; it expanded for clarification the Biblical cryptic כָּחַל בְּהַתְּעַטְפָם into כְּדִּהּוּ צָחִיין 'as they thirst in the same way as one wounded by the sword [suffers] from thirst,' and completes בְּהַשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם with מִן כִּפְנֵא "in their pouring out their lives" 'from hunger' [C.M.M.Brady].

This actualizing effort of the targum is also present in *Eikhah Rabbati* where R.Chanina b. Papai (A3)⁶⁶⁶ accounts for the following TMLam.2,12.1/2 אִיהָ דְּגִן וַיֵּין „to their mothers they say: where is corn and wine?“ claiming (Sti1) that they children wanted white bread and spiced wine for their mothers, while R. Simon (A3) considers (Sti2) that the children asked instead for white bread and old wine. The next TMLam.2,12.3/4 בְּרַחְבוֹת עִיר „in their fainting like the wounded in the broad places of the city“ is expounded in *Eikhah Rabbati* by means of an anecdote Narrative (A) on a husband that dies with his grown son, both of them sent to the market with jewellery by the wife-mother in search for food, TMLam.2, 12.5/6 „in their pouring out their lives into their mothers bosom“ being interpreted (Sti) as referring to the death of the young son of the same woman, according to the Buber edition, *vide infra*. The sufferings of the poet mentioned in the Biblical Lamentations are now the fact of human beings that are clearly recognizable for the simple reason, as E. Levine puts it, that “the midrashim emphasize the pathos of the inhabitants”.⁶⁶⁷

3&. The Unbroken Solitude of The Holy One, blessed be He (v.13.1-2)

W.Rudolph considers the following TMLam.2,13.1/2α מַה אֶעֱיֵדךָ מַה אֲדַמָּה לְךָ „what can I testify for you? What will I compare to you?“ as part of TMLam.2,13-17 that is accounted for under the heading, “Kein Trost und keine Hilfe!”⁶⁶⁸ The same writer that translates the Hebrew

⁶⁶⁶ Only the Buber edition gives mention of this filiation!

⁶⁶⁷ E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 115.

⁶⁶⁸ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224.

מה אעידך by „womit soll ich dich aufrichten?“⁶⁶⁹ resorts to the motto, “*solamen miseris socios habuisse malorum*”⁶⁷⁰ to sum up how this topic is assessed in the Biblical Lamentations. The questions expressed in TMLam.2,13 are, according to D.R.Hillers that considers that TMLam.2,13 is part of the unit vss. 13-16 in which the poet is said to address the city directly,⁶⁷¹ “rhetorical, for there is no adequate comparison for the present wretchedness of Zion.”⁶⁷²

The problem with the TMLam.2,13.1/2α in ancient renderings is the meaning of the predicate of מה אעידך. The Septuagint has *Ti μαρτρήσω σοι* „what will I testify for you?”, the Vulgate *cui comparabo te* “with what will I compare with you”, while the targum has מה אסחד בך ‘what can I bring to bear witness to you!’. It seems, however, that *Eikhah Rabbati*, that lets the Holy One, blessed be He, speak in these cola,⁶⁷³ relies in its five specifying claims on the basic meaning “to testify against” of the same predicate construed with the *bet personae*.⁶⁷⁴ The first and the second claim, made respectively by Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4) and by R. Nathan (T4), are based on the meaning of עידך as “to warn”: ‘[H]ow many prophets did I [God] send to warn you!’ [Cohen], one prophet (Sti1) or two prophets (Sti2)? The third claim (Sti3) is made

⁶⁶⁹ See W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 216. The same Hebrew sentence is rendered by U.Berges by „Was könnte ich dir bezeugen“, idem., *Klagelieder*, 2002, 126.

⁶⁷⁰ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224. D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 45-46 considers, however, the use of this motto not convincing

⁶⁷¹ This is also the view of U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 152: “[Z]um ersten Mal spricht er-der Dichter- Zion direkt an!” D.R. Hiller renders the Hebrew לך מה אעידך מה אדמה by „[T]o what can I liken, to compare you?“, in idem, *op.cit.*, 33.

⁶⁷² D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 45.

⁶⁷³ A.Mintz has resumed the new pathetic stance of God as following: “[I]t is in the masculine aspect of God as King and father that divine pathos is most powerfully communicated. The Master of the Universe is suddenly reduced to a disoriented, grief-stricken man of sorrows. The basic situation is usually given in parabolic terms (...). God’s voice takes over the poet’s voice in chapter 2 in the crucial passage that despairs of finding adequate metaphors for Zion’s condition (“What can I compare to you?” 2,13; the voice exploits alternative meanings of *aidekh* (to warn, to meet, to ornament) to bewail again and again Israel’s failure to heed the various signs of His solicitude: all the prophets, the sanctuaries, the myriads of angels He had sent to them”, idem, Hurban, 1984, 59-60.

⁶⁷⁴ See the extended records of the various meanings of this predicate in different text witnesses in E.Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 115-6.

by R. Jonathan (T3/A1) on the basis of the meaning of עֵידָךְ as “spoil”⁶⁷⁵: ‘[H]ow many spoils have I provided for you!’ [Cohen]. The fourth claim (Sti4) is anonymous, and it is based on the meaning of עֵידָךְ as יַעֲיִדָה ‘appointment’: ‘[H]ow many appointments I made with you!’ [Cohen]. And the fifth claim (Sti5)) made explicit successively by Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4), R. Yochanan (A2), R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) in the name of R. Yochanan (A2), and R. Huna of Sepphoris (A/third century) relies on עֵידָךְ as עֲדִי „ornament“: ‘[W]ith how many ornaments have I adorned you!’ [Cohen].⁶⁷⁶

The following TMLam. 2, 13.2α מַה אֲדַמָּה לָךְ „*what shall compare to you*“ is no longer expounded showing how incomparable the inflicted pain is. In line of the account of the preceding colon, *Eikhah Rabbati* demonstrates in a narrative-claim (A-Sti) based on the Exodus from Egypt and the sojourn in the desert Sinai the unique solicitude the Holy One, blessed be He, has toward Israel. It is therefore evident that the next TMLam.2,13.2 הַבַּת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם “*O daughter of Jerusalem*”, that is regularly ruled out in modern comments, is interpreted by the Compiler by means of a notarikon of יְרוּשָׁלַיִם as composed of וּמַשְׁלֵמַת יִרְאָה expressing a rebuke (Sti) addressed to the ‘daughter who fears and makes peace with me’ [Cohen].⁶⁷⁷

4&. The Holy One, blessed be He, Is Committed to Console (v.13.3-6)

The two cola TMLam.2, 13.3 מַה אֲשׁוּה לָךְ וְאֶנְחַמְךָ „*what shall I equal to you, that I may comfort you*“ that come next are accounted further by W. Rudolph as well as the preceding colon on the basis of the motto “*solamen miseris socios habuisse malorum*”⁶⁷⁸ W. Rudolph notices, however, that the Biblical poet “*möchte gern (...) zum Trost Beispiele ähnlicher Leiden und ähnlicher Volksnot anführen, aber es gibt keine.*”⁶⁷⁹ The argument that finding out comparable cases –the Biblical “*what shall I equal to you-*” will console the daughter of Zion –the Biblical

⁶⁷⁵ It is R. Levi (A3) that found out that ‘aditha is called ‘spoil’ in Arabia.

⁶⁷⁶ The Buber edition has also the witness of heaven and earth against the corrupted Israel according to Deut.4, 25.

⁶⁷⁷ The Buber edition adds a claim of R. Isaak: ‘The Holy One, blessed be He, said: when you do fear, you make peace with me.’

⁶⁷⁸ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224.

⁶⁷⁹ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224.

“that I may comfort you”-because she will get the feeling that she is not alone in this kind of situation may be correct; it has been, however, ruled out by D.R.Hillers as “rather unconvincing.”⁶⁸⁰ The writer prefers stressing the fact that “Zion is shattered totally, beyond repair.”⁶⁸¹

Was it the existence of the kind of considerations expressed by modern scholars on the nature of the relationship between אֲשׁוּיָהּ לָךְ and אֲנֵהֶמָּךְ that has led the Septuagint to propose *Tίς σώσει σε* „who shall save you“ where the Masoretic text reads “what shall I equal to you”, that we find in the Vulgate *cui exaequabo te*? The fact is that the targum has the clearly unambiguous לָךְ וְאֵיכָהֶן מִנְחָם לָךְ ‘How shall I befriend you that I may console you’ [C.M.M.Brady], while *Eikhah Rabbati* reports as account for the present TMLam.2,13.3 the request of the Holy One, blessed be He, expressed in two claims (Sti1-2) by R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A/third century):

‘When I [God] shall become equal to you, I will comfort you’ (Sti1).
When that day will come, about whom it is written “*But the Lord, he alone, will be exalted in that day*” (Isa.2,11), at that hour, I will console you’ (Sti2).

It is only on the basis of this request and of its fulfilment that we understand the *Eikhah Rabbati* innovative expounding based on sound similarity of the TMLam.2,13.4 בתולת בת ציון “*O virgin daughter of Zion*“, that is regularly similar to the wording of the Masoretic text in ancient renderings:

בתולת בת ציון that means, sons distinguished (*Matsuyama*) by circumcision, [the prohibition] of beard-cutting and *tsitsith*.⁶

And the account of the next TMLam.2,13.5 כִּי גְדוֹל כִּים שְׁבָרְךָ „for your ruin is great like the sea“ is conform to the two interpretive patterns that we find in part of ancient renderings and in modern comments on one side, and in the targum and in *Eikhah Rabbati* on the other side. The question to be answered is how can a *ruin* be *great like the sea*.

⁶⁸⁰ D.R.Hillers has argued that « it is not clear just why finding a comparison for Zion would comfort her,» idem, *op.cit.* 45. And U.Berges remains questioning: “*Heißt das, nur der Unvergleichliche könne Zions unvergleichlichen Schmerz heilen?*” idem, *op.cit.*, 152.

⁶⁸¹ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 45-46.

According to modern comments, the poet, that is in search for similar cases to console the pains endured by Israel cannot find them because of the reason that is now given: the blow under which Zion suffers is exceptionally an immense one,⁶⁸² it is “*as great as the sea*”. And we have seen that for D.R.Hillers, “Zion is shattered totally, beyond repair.”⁶⁸³ Concerning the ancient renderings, the Septuagint has the paraphrase *ὅτι ἐμεγάλυνθη ποτήριον σθντριβῆς σου* „because great was made the cup of your breaking“, the Vulgate *contrition* for the Masoretic שבר that the targum extensively elaborates into כשגיאאות בתור גללי ימה רבא בעדן נחשוליהון סג”א תבריך כשגיאאות בתור גללי ימה רבא בעדן נחשוליהון ‘great is your breaking as the greatness of the breaking of the waves of the Great Sea during the season of their gales.’⁶⁸⁴ The surprising thing is that while all the preceding accounts struggle showing their fascination for immensity of the alleged breaking, the Rabbis in *Eikhah Rabbati* say their confidence in the identity of the healer, that remains as a question in the following TMLam.2,13.6:⁶⁸⁵

‘R. Chalfai (A/third century) (Sti1): He who heal the breach of the sea will heal you. R. Abin (A4/5) (Sti2): He to whom you uttered a song at the Red Sea-“*This is my God, and I will glorify him*” (Exod.15,2)-he will heal you. R.Yehoshua b.Levi (A1) (Sti3) said: He will heal your prophets for you.’

What happens in this *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding has been correctly described by A.Mintz in his comment of the *mashal* to TMLam.4,11, that can be quoted extensively: “The Rabbis pipe a tune of reassurance because not to do so would be to concede the finality of the Destruction, and like the tutor, they can continue to play ‘because they alone can comprehend the full story, which the principals, the king and the son, by definition, cannot. The full story is the world of Scripture in its entirety, the vast but finite expanse of the divine word in which

⁶⁸² The biblical poet, W.Rudolph argues, “*möchte (...) zum Trost Beispiele ähnlicher Leiden und ähnlicher Volksnot anführen. Aber es gibt keine. (...) Zu groß ist ihr Unglück,*” idem, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 224-5.

⁶⁸³ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 45-46.

⁶⁸⁴ See the justification of this rendering of the targum in E.Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 116: „[T]he targum recognizes that the noun שבר was chosen, rather than one of the many available synonyms, because this word suggests the noun מְשַׁבֵּר («*breaker* or «*mighty wave* ,) which is appropriate here, for the comparison with the sea.“

⁶⁸⁵ TMLam 2,13,6 מי ירפא לך „who will heal you?“

Lamentations is only one station; within this closed epic world, the Rabbis can potentially rescue any individual element by making it resonate with other elements. So, for example, the verse, “*Your ruin is as great as the sea*” (2,13), which describes the boundlessness of Zion’s grief and names the very quality that makes the event intractable for the poet. For the Rabbis, the mention of the sea is enough to unlock the isolation of the verse and to connect it with a context of deliverance rather than destruction: the great miracle at the sea in Exodus 15.”⁶⁸⁶

5&. This Promise Remains ...

56&1. in Spite of the Betrayal by The Prophets (v.14.1-2)

The answer to TMLam 2,13,6 מי ירפא לך „*who will heal you?*“ is in the focus of the next verses of the Biblical Lamentations.⁶⁸⁷ A series of protagonists are mentioned and claims are made on their ability to provide help. The question that will be dealt with is whether comments on these protagonists confirm or not the patterns of expounding that have emerged in the preceding part of this work. Modern comments take notice that the prophets of the daughter of Zion are the first human beings mentioned in the first colon TMLam. 2, 14.1/2 נביאיך חזו לך שוא „*your prophets have seen for you visions of vanity and delusion*“ that comes next in the Masoretic text.⁶⁸⁸ Rudolph repeats in the wake of the Biblical text in his expounding that these prophets could not help the people come out from their sins and find back to the national welfare as stated in TMLam.2,14.3-6.⁶⁸⁹ And the same writer quotes abundant parallel texts in the

⁶⁸⁶ A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 1984, 73-74.

⁶⁸⁷ It is because of this TMLam 2,13,6 that also U. Berges, *op.cit.* 153 mentions, that we share partly D.R.Hillers’s assessment that „[F]rom speaking of Jerusalem’s misery, the writer turns for a single stanza (vs.14) to consideration of its cause,“ idem, *op.cit.* 46. This claim holds only for the situation before the exile. And D.R.Hillers speaks of a “backward look” in this regard. Now that the exile has taken place, the people needed healing. And the prophets had also to play a role in the new situation.

⁶⁸⁸ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 225 is not surprised that only the prophets are mentioned among the leaders of the country.

⁶⁸⁹ TMLam.2,14.3/4 ולא גלו אל עונך להשיב שביתך „*and they have not uncovered your iniquity, to bring back your captivity.*“ See also D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 46. And U.Berges is right that the prophets are not the only responsible for the decline of Zion because it is spoken of עונך. The fault of the prophets consists in having caused through their misleading visions questionable hopes, see idemj, *op.cit.* 153.

TM Lam 14,14.5/6 ויחזו לך משאות שוא ומדועים „*but they have prophesied for you burdens, vanity and seduction*“

Biblical Books of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel where the same reproach of misleading the people occurs⁶⁹⁰ to give support to his claims. He further distinguished on the basis of the possessive pronoun affix in נביאֵיךָ „your prophets.“⁶⁹¹ these false prophets, to whom he ascribed this bad guidance, from the true prophets, the “Yahweh prophets”, of whom it is obviously not spoken.

The very understanding of this verse TMLam.2, 14, whether it is related to the situation before the exile, post-exile or to both of them, is evidently the reason of its many rewritings that we find in ancient renderings. The Septuagint has nearly the wording of the masoretic text. It reads τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι αἰχμαλωσίαν σου „to bring back your captivity“ where TMLam.2,14.4 has להשיב שביתך, and ἐξώματα „banishment“ for the TMLam.2, 16.6 מדוהים. The Vulgate has *ut te ad paenitentiam provocarent* “so that they bring you to repentance” for the TMLam.2,14.4 להשיב שביתך. The targum has נביאי שקרי דבביניכ חינון חזו ‘the false prophets within you, they have seen’ for the TMLam.2,14.2 חזו, נדיאֵיךָ חזו, it reads ולית משש לנבואתהון ‘and there is no substance to their prophecies’ for the TMLam.2,14.2β תפל, it has ולא פרסימו ית פורענותא דעתיד למיתי עלך בגלל הובך ‘they did not make known the punishment which would overtake you as a result of your sin’ for the TMLam.2,14.3 לא גלו על עונך, it renders לאהדרותך בתיובתא ‘to make you turn back in repentance’ [CM.M.Brady].

Eikhah Rabbati ruled out the distinction false *versus* true prophets addressing the origins and the failure of the prophets: R. Eleazar (T3/A3) considers according to Jer. 23,13 that the prophets of Samaria, as well as the prophets of Jerusalem, as stated in TMLam.2,14.2, have seen “visions of vanity and delusion” (Sti1). R. Samuel b.Nachmani (A3) makes it clear on the basis of Jer. 23,14 that the prophets of Jerusalem are related to horror (Sti2).

These prophets are accused in relation to TMLam.2, 14.3/4 להשיב שביתך ולא גלו על עונך „and they have not uncovered your iniquity, to bring back your captivity“ of having ‘placed veils for the sake of the Community of Israel upon their face’ (Sti), and in relation to מדוהים in

⁶⁹⁰ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 225.

⁶⁹¹ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 225. See also U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 153 where the possessive pronoun is assessed as expressing that these prophets were near to Jerusalem und to the Zionideology.

TMLam.2, 14.5/6 read as *madduham*, 'their banishment [into exile]' of *having* "prophesied for you burdens, vanity and banishment" (Sti).

5&2. Because of the Past Splendour of Jerusalem (vss. 15.1-16.1)

If the prophets without distinction of origins have obviously failed to heal the Community of Israel, the Biblical Lamentations is further interested in the reaction of the next protagonists mentioned in the following TMLam.2,16.2 כל עברי דרך „*those who pass by Jerusalem*“. Reporting their reaction in regard to the ruin of daughter of Zion, the Biblical Lamentations notes first on the basis of TM.Lam.2, 15.1 ספקו עליך כפים „[*all who pass by*] *clap their hands*.“

Modern comments account for the general literary unit TM.Lam.2, 15-16 in which the colon TMLam.2,15.1 is included as an additional report on the lack of consolation from human beings for the daughter of Zion.⁶⁹² These modern comments speak in the present context of the astonishment, „*Schadenfreude*“ and of the disdain of „*those who pass by Jerusalem*.“⁶⁹³ These effectively feelings of hatred from persons that are no aggressors, but familiar with traditions of Israel before exile⁶⁹⁴ are voiced in the following cola, that are also targeted in *Eikhah Rabbati*, the first of these cola being TMLam.2, 15.3/4) שרקו ויניעו ראשם על בת ירושלים „*they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem*“. Among the ancient renderings, the Septuagint and the Vulgate are similar to the wording of the Masoretic text, while the targum expands the Hebrew predicate שרקו „*they hiss*“ with the completing בשפווההום 'with their lips' and replaces בת ירושלים by the usual כנשתא דירושלים 'the Community of Jerusalem'.

Accounting for the same Biblical verses TM.Lam.2, 15-16, *Eikhah Rabbati* does not rejoice nor mock the declined Jerusalem; it presents instead cases that recall the past splendour

⁶⁹² U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 154-5.

⁶⁹³ See W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 225: „[D]ie „des Weges Kommenden“, die am Kampf unbeteiligten Zuschauer, haben nur Hohn und Spott für es in Gebärde und Wort, sie machen es den Feinden (16) nach, die mit dem Ausdruck ihrer befriedigten Rache nicht zurückhalten. Händeklatschen, Pfeife, Kopfschütteln, Maulaufreißen, Zähneknirschen sind nicht bloß Zeichen der Schadenfreude, sondern kommen teilweise (vgl. z.B. Zeph 2,15; Jer 19,8; Ezek 27,36) auch als Handlungen zur Abwehr böser Geister vor; doch dürfte hier wegen der Spottreden (15c.16c) nur an das erstere gedacht sein;“ see also D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 46, where it is spoken of the expression of „contempt of Jerusalem in her ruinous state;“ and Berges, *Klagelieder*, 155.

⁶⁹⁴ See U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 156.

of Jerusalem as to contrast her present ruin and desolation. In this way *Eikhah Rabbati* lets R.Yochanan (A2) claims in the name of R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) against the present TMLam.2,15.1-4, that in her best times, Jerusalem had outside an Arcade of Reckonings and,

‘whoever wished to settle an account ran and paid there, so that he should not leave Jerusalem with something on his mind; to fulfil what was said, “*The joy of all the earth*” (TMLam.2, 15.6) [Cohen].

This past splendour of Jerusalem⁶⁹⁵ is underlined further by another anonymous claim (Sti) on the utterer of TMLam.2, 15. 5-6. While the cities of the nation’s praise themselves, as reported in Ezek.27,3, צור את אמרת אני כלילת יגי „*O Tyre, you say, I am the perfection of beauty*“, other persons show themselves concerned by the reported beauty of Jerusalem, as stated in TMLam. 15,5-6. 5-6 משוש לכל הארץ יפי משיאמרו כלילת יפי „*is this the city which they called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth* .“

The third proof of the past splendour of Jerusalem is provided by the following case (Sti) reported by R. Nathan (T4):

‘A merchant⁶⁹⁶ went to Jerusalem to sell wool. He fell asleep and did not sell it, so he exclaimed, Is this the city you call “*The joy of all the earth!*” He got up early and sold it, so he exclaimed, Rightly are you called “*The joy of all the earth*” [Cohen].

Only getting up earlier could the merchant have the opportunity to get access to the busy market of Jerusalem, as to recall the cases reported in the account of the TMLam.1,1.2. And when *Eikhah Rabbati* accounts for the following TMLam.2, 16.1 פצו עליך פיהם [„*all your enemies*] have opened their mouth against you“, it has this cryptic expounding based on the reversed alphabetical order⁶⁹⁷:

⁶⁹⁵ That it is here about the past Jerusalem is mentioned by te targum to TMLam.2,15/6: הדא היא קרתא דהוו אמרין 'Is this the city our fathers and elders of old called the perfection of beauty and loveliness; the joy of all the earth's inhabitants' [C.M.M.Brady]. Those who speak are obviously „not people who had themselves seen the former glory of Jerusalem, but the descendants of those who had seen it,“ as E.Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, puts it.

⁶⁹⁶ The Buber edition has R. Yochanan (A2).

⁶⁹⁷ In the Hebrew alphabet, the letter *peh* symbolizes 'mouth' and '*ain* 'eye'.

‘Why does the verse beginning with the letter *peh* precede that beginning with the letter *‘ain*? Because they uttered with their mouth what they had not seen with their eye’

Those who uttered what the Cohen supposes to be “probably falsehoods”⁶⁹⁸ were evidently those who based by and the enemies of Jerusalem.

5&3. And Because the Holy One, blessed be He, Has Made a Compromise (v.17)

D.R.Hillers, a modern commentator of the biblical Lamentations, speaks of a connection in the content of the present TMLam.2,17.1 with the preceding TMLam.2,15-16 in that „adding to the intolerable nature of what the enemies say is the fact that they are , even if unconscious of it, doing God’s work. The following verse (17) makes this explicit, but it is there already in the language of the enemies.”⁶⁹⁹ God as the enemy of the daughter of Zion is a permanent motif and also a repeated statement in this second Chapter of the Biblical Lamentations that are here confirmed.

If Modern comments have accounted for TM.Lam.2, 15-16 as a report on the lack of consolation this time from “*those who pass by*” and from “*the enemies of the daughter of Zion*”, the occurrence of the present colon TMLam.2, 17.1 עֲשֵׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם „*the Lord has done what he has planned*“ has been, however, assessed as a new step in weighing daughter of Zion down in the wake of the demotivating statements of the preceding cola.⁷⁰⁰ What is considered as “the major theme with which the poem began: Yahweh has done what he planned”,⁷⁰¹ is repeated, and

⁶⁹⁸ See *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, translated by A. Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 183, footnote 2.

⁶⁹⁹ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 46. U.Berges also speaks of this connection, but for different, more literary reasons, see idem, *op.cit.*, 258: “[D]a JHWH die letzte Ursache für das Tun der Feinde ist (1,12.17.21; 2,8), muss Zion sich klagend und bittend an ihn anwenden,” idem, *op.cit.*, 158.

⁷⁰⁰ See W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 225: „[D]er Triumph der Feinde, der aus 16c spricht, ist nach der langen Dauer der Belagerung wohl verständlich.-Wohin Zion blickt, nirgends ein Ausweg! Im eigenen Volke, kein Halt und ringsum schadenfrohe Gesichter! In dieser Lage stellt V.17, gleichsam die Quintessenz des ganzen Kapitels, noch einmal fest, dass Jahwe selbst alles, auch den Triumph der Feinde (17c: Erhören des Horns=Stärkung der Macht), so gewollt hat; er blieb seinem Wort treu, das dem gehorsamen Volke Heil, dem ungetreuen aber schwere Strafe uin Aussicht stellte (...) “ and also U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 159.

⁷⁰¹ D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 46.

it is made known that “Israel’s destruction was his purpose from “olden times.””⁷⁰² Ancient renderings of the present TMLam. 2,17.1 are similar to the wording of the Masoretic text. And the following TMLam.2, 17.2 בצע אמרתו „he has performed his word“ is only rewritten by the targum into גמר ממר פומה ‘he has completed the Memra of his mouth’.⁷⁰³

Now, the question that *Eikhah Rabbati* seems to answer was what was it exactly that the Holy One, blessed be He, has done. According to R. Ahaba b. R. Zera (A4), the Holy One, blessed be He, has not punished the sinners, as stated in the warning expressed in Lev.26,18 and Lev. 26, 24 against the violation of the covenant on which the targum evidently relies. The Holy One, blessed be He, has instead ‘made a compromise’ (Sti1), according to the meaning of בצע „to break off a part“.⁷⁰⁴ And it is on this meaning of the predicate בצע that R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A/third century) draws his allegorical claim on the mourning God (Sti2) that the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘has rent his purple’.⁷⁰⁵ Further, this innovative expounding of *Eikhah Rabbati* is evident also in the account of the next TMLam.2, 17.5/6 וישמח עליך אויב הרבים הרב קרן „and he has made the enemy rejoice over you, he has raised the horn of your foes.“ Modern comments are in the line of their interpretive patterns when they state that Yahweh himself has caused the ruin of then daughter of Zion, even strengthening her foes.⁷⁰⁶ And also ancient are similar to this Masoretic wording. *Eikhah Rabbati* innovates in that it lets R. Acha (A4) claims that,

⁷⁰² D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, 46.

⁷⁰³ The targum has in fact an extended rewriting of TMLam.2,17 in a sense that is far from the *Eikhah Rabbati* elaboration: עבד יי מה דחשיב גמר מימר פומיה די פקיד למשה נביא מין יומין קדמאין דאי לא נטרין בני ישראל ית פקדיא דיי עתיד: the Lord has done what he planned. He completed the Memra of his mouth which he commanded to Moses the prophet long ago: that if the children of Israel did not keep the commandments of the Lord he was going to punish them’ [C.M.M.Brady].

⁷⁰⁴ See בצע means effectively 1. “to cut, break, especially to brak bread and say the blessing, 2.“ To split the difference, to adjust, compromise“, in M. Jsatrow (compl.by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babbli and Yertushalmi, and the Misdrashich literature*, 184.

⁷⁰⁵ This claim is a repetition of the the claim made by the same R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A/third century) in the *mashal* accounting for TMLam1,1.1.

⁷⁰⁶ See W.Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 225, U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 160.

[W]hen anything good [befalls Israel] he rejoices with them, as written, (Deut.30,9); but when anything bad [befalls Israel] he causes others to do the rejoicing. That is what is written (Lam.2,17.5/6).’

Once again, as A. Cohen puts it in his comment, the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘causes others to do the rejoicing’, “not he himself”.⁷⁰⁷ He mourns, instead, with the Community of Israel.

CONCLUSION

New protagonists- no longer the poet of the Biblical TMLam only-, as involved in the disaster, and assessment of the latter on the basis of new decisive elements: the mothers and fathers, the Community of Israel that suffer, the failure of human supports and the Holy One, blessed be He, that mourns with the Community of Israel, these are proposals made in the *Eikhah Rabbati* account of the Biblical TMLam.2, 11-17. Many of these elements are repetition of preceding findings.

I.4.2. The Awareness Surge of The Community of Israel (vss. 18-22)

This last stanza (TMLam.2, 18-22) of the present section of the Biblical Lamentations accounts for the first step of what appears as a recovery⁷⁰⁸ process that concerns Fair-Zion as well as the poet. The latter appeals to Zion “for the sake of her dying children to rouse herself from her stunned prostration and cry her grief to God (2, 19).”⁷⁰⁹ It appears that Zion does effectively rise for the only time in this poem her voice to God in TMLam. 2, 20 - 22.⁷¹⁰ She “brings the motif of dying children, which has been the original occasion for the poet’ s

⁷⁰⁷ See *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, translated by A. Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 183, footnote 6.

⁷⁰⁸ This designation is from A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 8.

⁷⁰⁹ A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 8 mentions TMLam. 2, 19 as the addressed verse instead of TMLam. 2, 18 where צעק is recorded by manuscripts as an imperative form; see the analysis of W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 217, 220, 221, D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 34, 38-40, against the LXX and the targum *ad locum*, and U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 127, 129.

⁷¹⁰ U. Berges, *Klagelieder*, 164, notes that this lament of Zion concludes the two preceding chapters, and that this is the last time that Zion intervenes as explicit actant in the lamentations.

breakdown, to its extreme (2, 20),”⁷¹¹ and accuses God (*Bittklage*) of being “responsible for cannibalism as well as for priest and prophet murder.”⁷¹² It will be shown that the comments in *Eikhah Rabbati* deal somewhat differently with these requests and accusations.

1&. The Community of Israel Has to Arise Like David to Study the Torah (vss. 18-19)

Modern comments usually recognize here in TMLam.2,18 the next move that is implied by their explanatory patterns. Once it is evident that Yahweh is behind the inflicted blows, and that he alone can also heal the wounded daughter of Zion, the only way that leads out of the crisis between the two protagonists in the present tragedy consists actually in turning back to God and asking for healing.⁷¹³ That is the request the poet made to daughter of Zion, as expressed in the first bicolon of this stanza, TMLam. 2, 18.1-3α *צעק לבם אל אדני הומת בת ציון הורידו וגוי* „*their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let [X] down...*,” that is targeted in *Eikhah Rabbati*. Assessing this bicolon, modern comments have spoken of a call to prayer that entails specific features to be effective: addressed mostly in imperative modus, Zion is to cry “from heart” (...) and to “pour out her heart,” (vs.19) shedding tears continually, night and day,⁷¹⁴ the object of what is to be characterized as her complaint being the loss of children, as stated in TMLam.2, 19.5/6.⁷¹⁵ And ancient renderings are similar to the Masoretic wording of the bicolon TMLam.2,18.1f, except the targum that completes it by means of expansions: *צווח לבהון דִּישְׂרָאֵל*

⁷¹¹ A Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 8.

⁷¹² A. Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations”, 8.

⁷¹³ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 226: „[W]enn aber Jahwe hinter all dem schrecklichen Geschehen steht, wenn sein Wort noch gilt, das nicht nur droht, sondern auch verheißt, dann ist der Ausweg da, dann gibt es nichts anderes, als eben diesen Gott, der jetzt zerschlagen hat, anzurufen, damit er heile, und so fordert der Dichter in immer neuen Wendungen das verzweifelte Zion auf, ihm sein Herz auszuschütten und im Schreien zu ihm nicht nachzulassen. “

⁷¹⁴ D.R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 47, and U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 160-1.

⁷¹⁵ See W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 226. Also D.R.Hillers considers that the prayer is about the children and provides specifications: the prayer is “about „children“ in two senses. In the first place, the slaughtered citizens of Jerusalem are thought of as the children of the personified Zion, who weeps over them like Rachel. In a more literal sense, it is the actual little children who are uppermost in the poet’s mind; zhey are mentioned first and last,” idem, *op.cit.*, 47, and U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 160.

קדם יי די ירחם על יהון שורא דקרתא דציון 'The heart of Israel cried out before the Lord, to have mercy on them. O wall of the city of Zion...' [C.M.M.Brady].

Eikhah Rabbati resorts in its version of the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb.229, to the coordinate sentence 'ועל זה נאמר' and because of this it is said' as to mark a strong connection between the preceding TMLam.2, 17.5/6 קרן צריך וישמח עליך אויב הרים קרן צריך 'and he has made the enemy rejoice over you, he has raised the horn of your foes,' and the immediately following verse, that appears to be the present TMLam. 2, 18.1-3א הורידו גוי ציון הומת בת ציון 'their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let [X] down,'

Besides this transitional bond that may imply a suggestion to account for the two verses together, there is no beginning of an interpretation of the TMLam.2,18.1-3^a in *Eikhah Rabbati*; the rabbinic commentary deals instead extensively with the following TMLam.2, 19.1/2 קומי רוני 'rise up, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches' as this will be now also the case in this work.

The modern comments that examine somewhat TMLam.2, 19.1/2 focus on the mentioned the night *watches* and on their import as well as on the character of the turning point of the present colon . U. Berges notices that the imperative קומי 'rise up' is a "*Weckruf*", and that it marks together with the following רוני 'cry out' a request to complain for a *Wiederherstellung*.⁷¹⁶ Pertaining to the moment this action has to be carried out, the fact that the Biblical Lamentations recommend in this verse the daughter of Zion rise up "*at the beginning of the watches*", W. Rudolph argues, does not mean "at the beginning only of the first watch"⁷¹⁷ - there is indeed no reason to do that. The night guard being usually requested to give a sign of himself at the beginning of the three night watches (Judg.7,19), W. Rudolph concludes that daughter of Zion

⁷¹⁶ See U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 161-162. The same wordforms are used elsewhere to call for breaking into exultation, see Isa.54,1b

⁷¹⁷ The first watch lasts from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. , according to U.Berges hat mentions only the two next watches: 10 p.m. until 2 a.m., 2 a.m. until 6 p.m., see idem, *op.cit.*, 163.

has to cry out her complaint during all the night.⁷¹⁸ And the reason of this complaining is said by the poet to be predominantly the loss of the children.⁷¹⁹

In ancient renderings, the Septuagint has the plural and an expansion in *εἰς ἀρχὰς φυλακῆς σου* „at the beginnings of your watches“, the Vulgate *lauda* “rejoice” for the Hebrew רוני,⁷²⁰ and the targum an extended expanding קומי כנשתא דישרי דשריא בגלותא עסוקי במשנה בליליא ארומ שכנתא דיי שריא לקביליך ובפתגמי אורייתא בשירוי מטרת שפרפרא arise, O Community of Israel dwelling in exile. Busy yourself with the Mishnah in the night, for the Shekinah of the Lord is dwelling before you, and with the words of the Torah at the beginning of the morning watch.’ This actualizing rendering of the TMLam.2,19.1 in the targum is quite in the line of the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of the same colon.

The Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* focus like the modern comments on the night watches, their number, and on how they are to be used.⁷²¹ R. Yehudah ha-Nasi (T4) states that there are four night watches. This statement is followed by considerations on measures related to division of the time in *sha’ah*, *’onah*, *’eth*, and *rega’* held by R. Berekhyah (A5), in the name of R. Chelbo (A4), by the Rabbis and R. Samuel (T2/A3) (Sti1).⁷²² R. Nathan (T4) (Sti2), on the other hand, claims that the night watches are three (Sti2).

The proofs of the two claims are on the basis of 1. 119.62: “*At midnight I will rise to give thanks to you,*” for four watches, 2. Ps.119, 148: “*My eyes go before the night watches, to meditate on your word,*” for three watches, are provided by R. Zeriqa (A3), and R. Ammi (A3)

⁷¹⁸ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 226.

⁷¹⁹ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 226: „[D]er Gegenstand seiner Klage soll (vor allem) der Verlust der Kinder sein, dieser Bürgen der Volkskraft und der völkischen Zukunft (19c),“ See also U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 164.

⁷²⁰ But see also the Septuagint ἀγαλλίασα «rejoice».

⁷²¹ For the methodological choice of this work, the expounding of the present colon, which may be assessed as a narrative, will be dealt with as a collection of claimns (Sit), as this has been the case with the *Eikhah Rabbati* account of the TMLam.1, 13.

⁷²² There is no decisive criterium to decide if we deal here with the Tannaite R. Samuel the Small (T3), or simply, with one of the Amoraim, R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3), Samuel b. Isaac (A3), R. Samuel b. Ammi (A4), see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and the Midrash*, 71. 89, 90, 93.

in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2). It happens in the discussion that Judge 7,19, “*And Gideon came, and the hundred man with him, to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch*” implies also three night watches.

It happens in the discussion led by R. Chizqiyah (A5) (or R. Zeriqa (A3) for other sources), and by R. Abba (A3),⁷²³ that the two claims are correct

Concerning the four night watches: rising “*at midnight*” David, the utterer of Ps. 119, king David, let his “*eyes go before the night watches*” – the plural meaning two. These two psalms denote different points of time in the night. Either David had his meal in private or he had guests, he joined his bed at different moments of the night. The fact was, however, that David never missed getting up in the night to study the Torah. Further, R. Pinches (A5) in the name of R. Eleazar b. Menachem (A/fourth century)⁷²⁴ and R. Levi (A3) hold that the harp that accompanied David in his study was a spur and an invitation to the Israelites to imitate king David in the study of the Torah

Pertaining to the three night watches, R. Huna (A4) and R. Mani (A5) consider the end of the second watch and the beginning of the third watch as “*the middle watch*”. There was enough time to busy oneself studying the Torah.

2&. Because There Is a Compelling Reason to Change (v.20.1)

The next colon of the Biblical Lamentations dealt with in *Eikhah Rabbati* is TMLam.2, 20.1 ראה יהוה והביטה „*see, O Lord, and consider.*“ Its assessment by the modern scholarship is conform to its interpretive patterns. W. Rudolph considers this colon as the only request that the praying mother Zion, following the recommendation of the poet and standing under the blows inflicted by Yahweh that are asserted in TMLam.2, 21.5/6 and 2, 22.3/4, was able to make.⁷²⁵ And U.Berges speaks of a *Bittklage* that is strategically concluding statement introduced into the

⁷²³This is a proposal of the translator, *in loco*.

⁷²⁴The mention is provided in W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III. Anhang* xxii.

⁷²⁵Mother Zion was unable in such a situation to ask for pardon and for the end of the painful blows, see W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 226, but also D.R. JHillers: „Zion’s prayer does not contain any explicit petition, only that Yahweh should look: „*Consider whom you have treated so.*””, *op.cit.* 47.

Book of Lamentations.⁷²⁶ The complaint of daughter of Zion is illustrated by two cases, that is, by four cases,⁷²⁷

The first case justifying Zion's complaint is spelled out in TMLam.2, 20.2-4 למי עילת כה „to whom you have done this; shall women eat their fruit, children dandled in their hands?” Modern comments consider the present bicolon as a questioning and also as an indication. We have here the first issue mentioned in the preceding TMLam.2, 20.1 Yahweh has to take notice about.⁷²⁸ And by her questioning instead of asking for help or for pardon, daughter of Zion aims at reminding the apparently forgetful Yahweh how, behaving so badly, he has effectively disdained his own promises to his elected one.⁷²⁹ This move from the daughter of Zion was not without influencing the perception the protagonists of this drama had about themselves and about each other. As A. Mintz puts it, “[M]aking God responsible of cannibalism as well as for priest and prophet murder and thrusting these acts before Him – these are signs of a rhetorical ingenuity far more effective than the mode of self-pitying complaint in

⁷²⁶ According to U.Berges, „[I]hre Bittklage beendet nicht nur Klgl 2, sondern ist zugleich dert Schlussakkord der ersten zwei Gedichte insgesamt. Es ist das letzte Mal, das Zion explizit als Aktant in den Klageliedern auftritt,” idem, *op.cit.*, 164.

⁷²⁷ This has to be said against W.Rudolph's reducing view of two cases, see next footnote. Zion's *Bittklage* cites two cases that occur in TMLam.2, 20. The two other cases are brought in the following TMLam.2,21-22. The proof of this claim ist provided by the analysis of U. Berges: “[D]ie V 20.22 bilden mit dem Thema der Kinder den äußeren Rahmen, was durch das Verb טפח „auf den Händen tragen/pflegen” in V20b.22c bestätigt wird,” idem, *op.cit.* 164.

⁷²⁸ U. Berges recalls that, see idem, *op.cit.*, 164-5.

⁷²⁹ W.Rudolph puts it clearly: „[I]n diesem kleinen Satz (TMLam.2,20.1) wagt sich der Hinweis auf die Erwählung Israels hervor, auf die Unvereinbarkeit der göttlichen Verheißung mit einem so schrecklichen Erleben, aus dem zwei besonders krasse Beispiele hervorgehoben werden: Dass Mütter ihre Kinder aufressen, dass die heilige Person des Priesters und der in Gottes Rat stehende Prophet im Heiligtum selbst ihr Blut vergießen mussten, war das nicht wider jede göttliche Ordnung? Dieser Hinweis soll Gott zum Einschreiten veranlassen, aber es steht viel mehr zwischen den Zeilen als dass es klar ausgesprochen wird, weil man sich unter dem Zorn fühlt, idem, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 226.“ See also D.R.Hillers, *Lamentations*, sees in this content of Zion's prayer something that “comes close to being a reproach to Yahweh, or if not that, then at least a strong appeal to his compassion,” *ibidem*, 47., and U.Berges, *Klagelieder*: “[D]urch zwei mit נא eingeleitete Fragen (V 20b.c) treibt Zion JHWH in Erklärungsnot und zieht die Leser/Hörer auf ihre Seite,” And the same writer considers that the *Wortspiel* olalta, “you have done” and olale “children of” may let Zion think that JHWH ist the murder of her children, *ibidem*, 165

which Zion presented herself in Chapter One.”⁷³⁰ Ancient readings have notice this literary device and they have used it consequently.

The Septuagint has carried out extended expansions with cryptic meaning. After *τίνι ἐπεφύλλσας οὕτως* „whom have you gathered like that“⁷³¹ for the Hebrew *למי עוללת כה* „to whom have you done this“, it expands the Hebrew *עוללי טפחים* „children dandled in their hands“ into *ἐπιφύλλιδα ἐποίησεν μάγειρος. Φονευθήσονται νήπια θηλάζοντα μαστούς* „the butcher has performed the gleanings. Children sucking at the breast will be slaughtered“. The Vulgate reads *parvulos ad mensuram palmarum* „children at handbreadth“, and the targum has undertaken relatively restrained expansions, *חזי יי ותהי מסתכל מן שמיא למן אסתקפתא כדנן אם חזי לבנאתא דישרי למיכל בכפנא* „see, O Lord, and observe from heaven against whom you have turned. Thus is it right for the daughters of Israel to eat the fruit of their wombs due to starvation, lovely children wrapped in fine linen? “. The Biblical TMLam.2,20.1-4 was a real linguistic and ideological challenge for translations and comments. *Eikhah Rabbati* accounts for its content repeating the pathetic anecdote narrative (A) (2.6.) to TMLam.1,16.1 on the infanticide of Doeg b. Joseph’ s Son and lets the prophet Jeremiah utter the present TMLam.2,20.1-4 as proof text to this vignette.

The second case mentioned by daughter of Zion in her prayer is TMLam.2, 20.5/6 *אם ייהרג במקדש אדני כהן ונביא* „should the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?“ Modern comments count the present TMLam.2,20.5/6 together with the preceding TMLam.2, 20.3/4 as the second illustration of the fact that Yahweh has not taken into consideration his covenant with Israel, see footnote to TMLam.2,20.2-4.⁷³² Among the ancient renderings, the Vulgate has the same wording with the masoretic text, the Septuagint reads *ἀποκτενεῖς* „you shall kill“ for the Hebrew niphāl *יהרג* „should be slain“.

⁷³⁰ A. Mintz, *The Rethoric of Lamentations*, 8.

⁷³¹ The Vulgate has *quem vindemiaveris ita* „whom has you gathered like this“.

⁷³² As D.R.Hillers puts it, „[A]lso revolting to ordinary human religious feeling is the idea that men of God should be killed right in the sanctuary where they ministered (20c). In the lines rendered “Should woman eat...Should priest and prophet...” the imperfect verbs could also be rendered as incredulous questions: “Can it be that woman eat?” etc“, *op.cit.*, 47.

The targum innovates, presenting TMLam.2,20.5/6 as God's response in his Attribute of Justice to TMLam.2, 20.3/4: ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת אם חזי למקטל בבית מקדשא דיי כהנא ונבייא כמה: דקטלתון לזכריה בר עדוא כהנא רבא ונביא מהימן בבית מקדשי דיי ביומא דכפיא על דאוכח יתכון דע=לא תעבדון 'the Attribute of Justice replied, and said, Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the Temple of the Lord, as when you killed Zechariah son of Iddo, the High Priest and faithful prophet in the Temple of the Lord on the Day of Atonement because he told you not to do evil before the Lord.' In *Eikhah Rabbati*, it is the Holy Spirit that answers to Jeremiah repeating the question expressed in TMLam.2,10.5/6 as 'referring to Zechariah the son of Jehoiada'⁷³³ [C.M.M.Brady] (Sti).

3&. Although The Repressive Fury of the Holy One, blessed be He, Drives to Despair (v. 21. 1)

The third case of complaint dealt with in *Eikhah Rabbati* is related to the TMLam.2, 21.1 „שכבו לארץ חוצות וגוי [young and old] lie on the ground of the plaza“. W. Rudolph considers it as one of the blows reported by daughter of Zion under the suggestion of the poet as inflicted by Yahweh without regard to the age.⁷³⁴ It is further true that this blow is cited together with other blows ascribed to Yahweh such as the move against virgins without consideration for the sex (TMLam.2,21.3), the ruthless treatment (TMLam.2,22.3/4) of the children that “*have been nursed and multiplied*” (TMLam.2,22.5/6),⁷³⁵ *vide infra*.

The rendering of the present TMLam.2, 21.1 in the Septuagint and the Vulgate is similar to the wording of the masoretic text. The targum innovates by means of expansion: דמכו על ארעא 'the young and the old who were accustomed to recline on pillows of fine wool and upon ivory couches were prostrate on the earth of the open markets.' And we find a similar picture of desolation in *Eikhah Rabbati*

⁷³³ It is here about the priest Zechariah in 2 Chr 24,20f that is obviously held for the prophet Zechariah mentioned in Esdr 5,1; 6,14 (Zech 1,1.7); and Mt. 23,35.

⁷³⁴ W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, 1962, 226.

⁷³⁵ The inclusive feature of God's punishment is underlined by D.R.Hillers in his comment: “[None has escaped. Old men and boys, young men and women, they lie in the streets, unburied. As in vs. 17, the poet puts Yahweh, the ultimate and in his mind the real cause, in the foreground; only at the very end (22c) do the human enemies receive notice”, *op.cit.* 47; see also U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 164.

(Sti), where the present colon is quoted as proof text to Jer.6,11. Worth to be note is here the anonymous claim reported in the Buber edition: לפי עבירה שעברו כך היתה מפלתן 'their downfall war conform to the transgression they have committed.'

4&. And the Aggressiveness of the Acquainted Ones Causes Desolation (v.22.1)

The fourth and last case of complaint that is related to the prayer of the daughter of Zion is based on TMLam.2, 22.1 מגורי מסביב תקרא כיום מועד „you have called, as in day of appointment, my terrors all around.“ Modern comment consider it as the only blow of 'this stanza inflicted by the human agents of Yahweh's wrath.'⁷³⁶ Yahweh remains, however, the main responsible of the destruction.⁷³⁷ Among the ancient text witnesses, the Vulgate is near to the Masoretic text wording, the Septuagint *Ἐκάλεσεν ἡμέραν ἑορτῆς παροικίας μου κυκλόθεν* „he has called a day of celebration for my stay in foreign country from all around“ reminds of a floating text tradition, that we find also in the targum: תהי קרי הירותא לעמך בית ישראל על יד מלכא משיח היכמה דעבדתא על יד משה ואהרן ביומא דאפיקה ית ישראל ממצרים ואתכנשון עולימי חזור חזור מן כל אתר דאתבדרו תמן ביום תקופ רוגזך 'you will declare freedom to your people, the house of Israel, by the king Messiah just as you did by Moses and Aaron on the day when you brought Israel up from Egypt. My children will gather all around, from every place to which they had scattered in the day of your fierce anger, O Lord.'

The claims we find in *Eikhah Rabbati*, at least on the basis of the present witness of the Vilna edition,⁷³⁸ do not certainly compete in confidence with this account from the targum. Expounding the TMLam.2, 22.1 תקרא כיום מועד מגורי מסביב „you have called, as in day of appointment, my terrors all around“ with the focus on *megurai*, an anonymous interpreter, resorting to its root *gur*, claims that *megurai* are those who dwell in my house (Sti), while R.

⁷³⁶ D.R.Hillers notices it: “[T]he human agents of Yahweh's wrath are brought into the picture at the very end. Yahweh invited them to gather on all sides of the city and lay siege to it. Since they encircled it, there was no chance for escape (...). Like the first poem, so this also ends on a low, pathetic tone, as mother Zion mourns once again the loss of her children.” *op.cit.*, 47-48.

⁷³⁷ See U.Berges, *Klagelieder*, 2002, 167.

⁷³⁸ The Buber edition does not provide substantial support, and the reported results of textual criticism on the text from the Vilna edition, that is similar to the text of the Munich Codex Heb.229, are quite sceptical on its reliability.

Eleazar b.R. Marinus (A/fourth century) renders this colon by: 'the men that were parasites at my table did you lead against me'[Cohen] (Sti). And pertaining to the following ולא היה ביום אפ „and there was, in the day of the anger of the Lord, an escaped one or a survivor“, R. Chiyya (T5) considers with the proof of TMLam.2, 22,5/6 איבי כלם “those whom I have nursed and multiplied, my enemy has consumed”, that it is spoken about the sons and the daughters of the Israelites that will be caused by their sins to perish. Here we have to deal with a warning, that is also another form of confidence.

CONCLUSION: FROM A BITTKLAGE TO A CALL

The analysis of the TMLam. 2, 1-22, that has been the object of the preceding research, finds out that many predicates of action occur in this text. It is often reported about actions of violence such as בלע, חרס, חמס, etc.... that are carried out by Yahweh against the daughter of Zion as well as against her leaders, her children, her religious infrastructures. Aggressive words and adjectives such as אויב, אף, אש חמתו are also abundantly used. To account for this disruptive picture of the over clouded Fair-Zion that ends with a *Bittklage* of daughter of Zion against the punitive Yahweh, comments are usually committed to draw just on the actions and the experiences reported in TMLam.2,1-22.

Only in regard to this methodological reason that is also an ideological one –method relies on principles-, it is evident that the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* makes the difference in its account. Here are a couple of findings from this research: 1. *Eikhah Rabbati* deals in the most of the cases with the first colon, the first bicolon of the targeted verse, carrying out a rhythmic, time based expounding that appear to be very differentiated; 2. many words of violence that we find in the Biblical Lamentations are overlooked, and the meaning of those accounted for is often changed to express less violence; 3. the Community of Israel, that has in many cases replaced the Biblical daughter of Zion, is requested to bring her own faults into account and to keep herself busy with the Torah, 4. and the Holy One, blessed be He, that inflicts blows, shows also features of compassion and of kindness that do not exist in dramatic account of the Biblical Lamentations. In the Chapter Three of this research, it will be shown that the *Eikhah Rabbati* claims and accounts are historically motivated. They deal with a quite particular historical moment, *vide infra*.

II. THE COLLAPSE OF A WORLD. THE MIDRASHIC SPELLING OF THE PRESENT IN THE ANECDOTE NARRATIVES (As) (TMLam 1,1- 2,22)

This Chapter handles matters connected with the previous chapter in that both of them focus on the literary and rhetorical components of the first two chapters of the TMLamentations worked out in *Eikhah Rabbati*. Its specific object consists in that the inquiry will deal with the anecdote narratives (As), the temporally ordered accounts of connected events, which occur in *Eikhah Rabbati*. It has been found out in the first Chapter that more or less eighty-six anecdote narratives variously extended are used in this rabbinic commentary in the expounding of the Biblical Book of Lamentations. These statistical data are considerable enough to let think of a strategic choice made by the interpreters, the other Rabbis and by the editor(s) to integrate all these literary narrative forms as suitable materials in their interpretive endeavour to account for the biblical Lamentations. All of these anecdotes are catalogued as narratives. Do they qualify as such? The listing of these literary units under this sampling predicate deserves some explanation to help understand the approach they are submitted to in this research.

The identification of these units as narratives is based on a negative criterion: although all of them are not similar in their shape, they have in common the minimal feature that they are not made up of the purely affirmative formulation, which characterize the form of the statement (Sti), nor of the double structure of the *mashal*, see below. Positively, it has been stated that the anecdote narrative (A) is generally, but not exclusively introduced by the term Hebrew ‘*ma`aseh*’/Aramaic ‘*ubeda*’, and that it is often a more or less short story which helps expound a biblical text. The anecdote narrative is, however, much more than this introductory formula. And we rely in this research for heuristic and orientation reason on J. L. Ska’s prototypical⁷³⁹ proposals on a grammar of the narrative in general, and of the biblical narrative in particular. It considers “not only the performance on the narrative stage leading to a narrative structure (1. the

⁷³⁹No general definition will be imposed to the *E. R.* narratives. A differentiation of the literary forms in which the narration is used as activity, for instance between the anecdote, *ma`aseh*, and the *mashal*, should not result in disjunctive and exclusive forms. Only the indication of prototypical features, which are not deduced, but inferred from the various frames of the narratives, will account for the variegated forms of the rabbinic narratives and for their frequent recourse to the activity of telling tales.

building up of tension in the plot as dramatic action or recognition process, 2. the climax or the peak of the tension, 3. the falling off of this tension), but also occurs behind the scenes of the narratives.⁷⁴⁰ He considers in his descriptive definition that the narrator and the plot are “the two chief elements of a narrative.”⁷⁴¹ The plot is the “ordered arrangement of the incidents”⁷⁴² on a chronological and logical basis.⁷⁴³ It is prototypically made up of the exposition,⁷⁴⁴ the inciting moment, the complication, the climax, the turning point, the resolution and the denouement. An important remark pertaining to the methodology of this work is that it is in consideration of these defining features of the narrative that literary forms that they do not characterize will be in majority treated as claims (Stis). Further, a word has to be spent about the making force of the narrative. It is about the narrator. The narrator is not to be identified with the author or writer, but is sometimes the ‘implied author’; he is a function, the ‘mediator’ between the world of the narrative and the world of the audience. He picks up data and facts from this last world, fictionalizes them somewhat, presents or summarizes the events, gives the pace of the narration, introduces characters, varies the point of view, decides to let the protagonists speak for themselves or not.⁷⁴⁵ The narrator is a kind of creator who has sufficient power to shape and reshape narratives according to his own and/or his group’s system of values, world-view, norms and interests.⁷⁴⁶ This creative power, which can operate only once embedded in specified

740J.L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*”. *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, (Subsidia biblica - 13), Roma 1990, 39.

741J.L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*”, 2. The prototypical narration act is processed and structured in seven elements: Real author-->Implied author-->Narrator--> Narration --> Narratee --> Implied reader, *ibidem*, 40.

742Aristotles, *Poetics* 6, quoted in J.L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*,” 1990, 2. 17.

743J.L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*”, 2: In a plot, the development rests upon an idea of temporal succession. There is a ‘before’ and an “after”. J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three. *Forms, Types and Distribution of Narratives in Song of Songs Rabbah and Lamentations Rabbah and a Reprise of Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan Text A*, Leiden/Boston 2003, 2f, speaks of the teleological logic, characterized by the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, as the defining criterion of the narrative, and opposes it to propositional, syllogistic logic, arbitrary logic, and paradigmatic, on rules and cases based logic.

744The exposition answers the questions like: Who? Where? When?, and sometimes, also What ?, that is the problem to be solved, *ibidem*, 21.

745J.L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*”. *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 17, 2.

746J.L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*”. *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 17, 41, and also H.A. Fischel, *Essays in Greco-Roman and related Talmudic Literature*, New York 1977; Strak/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 44f, 59f.

historical contexts, deposits its traces on the linguistic materials which are the stuff of which narratives are made.

The project of this research to deal with *E. R.* anecdote narratives in their quality as historical records presupposes considering their linguistic and literary features. Issues related to the literary genre cannot be overlooked, as well as the categories of the linguistic forms such as person, number, time, aspect and mood for the verb, number and gender for the noun and adjective, the kind of clauses and sentences, type of plot,⁷⁴⁷ etc...; existing and available parallel narratives may also be brought into discussion to assess the specific message of the narrative in examination.

The effort will therefore focus on accounting for the narratives in their location within the *Eikhah Rabbati* rhetorical structure. It is striking, indeed, that narratives are used to interpret a Biblical Book. The aim of this Chapter is to take somewhat the measure of their specific contribution, and not only to set up a theory on the narratives in *E. R.* It will be shown that even related in their content to the past, these narratives spell out a present situation which is addressed by their narrators. For this reason, they will be handled within the same contexts and classified on the basis of the same ordering principle with the claims (Stis), without respecting, however, the specifying grouping of the latter into *E. R.* claims to TMLam. 1, 1-6 and to 1, 7-11.

The present heading accounts for the anecdote narratives that occur in the *E.R.* comment to TMLam. 1, 1-2, 22. Only a few of them will be dealt with, and method for dealing with. They will be handled within the rubric ‘account’ because of their occurrence in the expounding of different items.

II.1. The Situation of Exile (TMLam. 1, 1-11)

747J.L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*”. *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 17: A plot may be either an unified, in which all the episodes “are relevant to the narrative and have a bearing on the outcome of the events recounted”, or an episodic one, in which “the order of episodes can be changed (..); every episode is an unit in itself and does not require the clear and complete knowledge” of the preceding episodes to be understood.

The anecdote narratives (As) occur seven times to account for a corresponding number of cola. They vary in length, but they embroider with their means the same theme of the fall of the Community of Israel.

II.1.1. The First Account: The Wealth of Jerusalem

It has to be recalled that *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to Lam. 1, 1.2 העיר רבתי עם “*The city full of people*” contains a first narrative (lines 41b - 45a) followed by a second narrative (lines 45b - 61a), a rhetorical question (lines 61b - 62a), a *mashal* (lines 62b - 66), two *baraitot* (lines 67 - 74a), and a report on the fertility in Israel (lines 74b - 77). The rhetorical question and the report have been dealt with above as two claims together with the *baraitot*, and the *mashal* will come next; the narratives are the object of the present heading.

1. R. Samuel (T2) propounds on tannaitic authority⁷⁴⁸ the first of the two descriptive units to expound the predicative utterance⁷⁴⁹ TMLam. 1, 1.2 “*The city full of or most powerful among the people*”. Formally, it is a vignette of three lines and a half, in which the components of the geographical structure of Jerusalem are listed. The existential copula form in the third plural person of the perfect tense, היי ‘were’ followed by the propositional phrase בירושלים ‘in Jerusalem’, is used in all the textual variants once, but is supposed to occur elliptically before the other phrases. The prefixing of the universal quantifier כל ‘all’ to the next items emphasizes their distribution.⁷⁵⁰ But the number and the occurrence of the cited geographical entities vary according to the diverse text traditions. The *Vilna edition* aligns together with the *Eikhah Rabbati* according to Munich Codex Heb.229 successively the פלטיות ‘open places’, said to be each with

⁷⁴⁸This designation is from J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three: *Forms, Types and Distribution of Narratives* ..., Leiden/Boston 2003, 149-150, in which the two *ma'asim* are presented as an unique narrative, whose illustrating purpose of the populous character of Israel is however accepted and is said realized in the last sentence. The distinctive categorization of the present analysis relies on the lack of an unifying narrative and formal features.

⁷⁴⁹See W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, Hildesheim - New York ([1909] 1977), & 90 I, on the strongly binding character, a sort of *status constructus*, of the *chireq compaginis* in רבתי. But, as E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 79 puts it, the exegetical problem is “the lack of preposition, which renders the meaning of the phrase equivocal. (...) Does it mean “great among” or “full of”?

⁷⁵⁰See M.-P. Fernandez, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, translated by J. Elwol-de, Leiden /New York/Köln: Brill, 1997, 80 where the meaning of ‘each’ and ‘every’ is further mentioned.

very time he moved from there. Jerusalem described as a prodigious entity by R. Samuel (T2) appears as the attracting target that sets the present anecdote in motion. The verbal predicates are partly in the third person singular of the perfect⁷⁵⁷ and partly in the active participles⁷⁵⁸ and in the imperfect⁷⁵⁹. Five imperative forms⁷⁶⁰ transform this epideictic, displaying relation, into a symboleutic, advising one⁷⁶¹ and help unfold the content of this narration. The protagonists involved in this relation are anonymous characters. That his two hundred camels pepper could be sold only in Jerusalem, where he had a friend, as the tailor of Tyre puts it, and that the tailor of Jerusalem did it better than this colleague from Tyre, getting a load, which was not sufficient even in smallest portion to be shared with the occupants of a house on three floors, are so many claims enhancing the poor by comparatively rich Jerusalemites, but also further, the wealth of Jerusalem. In rhetorical terms, this account has to be considered according to its status of an example as an illustration of the splendour of Jerusalem.

Noteworthy, is the fact that these two narratives on the physical, economic and human wealth of Jerusalem are followed by a debate settled with a *mashal* (M) that will be dealt with further, on the number of the population of Jerusalem and the adequate way to count it. The succession of these different literary forms marked in their different genres has a bearing on the meaning of these closely complementary narratives, which is related to their historical setting, see below.

757There are forty-six verbs in the perfect; the case of the introducing combination of the perfect הִיהָ with the active particle סָלִיק , line 46, is unique in this unit. It denotes a past in process. Rare in the later books of the Bible, it became frequent in the post biblical literature, see E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Atlanta 1986, 70: 50 times in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), D. Marcus, *A Manual of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic*, Washington 1981, 8; M.-P. Fernandez, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, transl. by J. Elwolde, Leiden/New York/ Köln, 1997, 137.

758It is used eleven times and in the dialogue.

759Three times.

760 ‘cut’ (line 50), תָּפַר ‘sew’ (line 51), אָמַר ‘tell’ (line 51), חָמַר ‘look at’ (line 53), סָב ‘take’ (line 54).

761 ‘Epideictic’, ‘symboleutic’, and ‘dikanic’ or justifying, are three adjectives used by K. Berger, to characterize corresponding framing, collecting literary genres, *Rahmengattungen*, in his *Formen und Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, Tübingen/Basel 2005, 71f, to bring the traditional *Formgeschichte* close to the rhetorical features of the biblical text. We will rely, *mutatis mutandis*, on his proposals.

II.1.2. The Second Account: A Community Great Over the Nations

This account is related to TMLam. 1, 1.4 = E. R. (ד) רבתי בגוים “(she that was) great over”⁷⁶² *the nations*” expounded as רבתי בדעות ‘great in intellect’. It builds together with the next TMLam.1, 1.5 שרתי במדינות “(she that was) the princess over the nations” the unique *midrashim* claim ‘she that was greater in intellect than the provinces/the nations’ which is interpreted by means firstly of eleven riddle tales (lines 97b-230a), and secondly, by seventeen dream narratives (lines 230b-305a), that are concluded by a summarizing narrative (lines 305b-3228a). The following analysis accounts first for the texts of the riddles. It will deal with the narrative components⁷⁶³ such as the plot, that is, the dynamic, sequential incidents, as well as on the characters and the narration time measured in words, sentences, lines, paragraphs necessary to tell (or peruse) the concrete narrative.

II.1.2.1. The riddling Narratives on The Prevailing Wisdom of The Jerusalemites

The introducing sentence to the following bulk of eleven riddling and eighteen dream narratives⁷⁶⁴ is somewhat differently witnessed. The Munich Codex Heb. 229 *ad locum* speaks of R. Huna (A4) that is supposed to have reported them in the name of Yose, while the *Vilna edition* and the Buber edition have ‘R. Huna (A4) in the name of R. Yose (T2/3/A3)’, with all the uncertainties about the latter. Further, R. Huna (A4)’s statement itself is partly divergent. While the Buber edition reports:

‘Wherever a Jerusalemite went, they arranged a place of honour⁷⁶⁵ for him and seated him there, so as to hear his wisdom,’

the Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition* claim that:

762This is the option chosen by *Eikhah Rabbati* against the other meaning “among” of the He-brew preposition ב.

763The concept of narrative used in this work borrows a lot from J.-L. Ska, “Our Fathers have told us” In *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, Roma 1990.

764See G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 53, the difference between the riddling narrative, in which the riddler, the riddlee, the riddle, and the solution, are included in the narrative, and riddle narrative, which includes only the riddle.

765This is a paraphrase for the symbolically meaningful קתדרה ‘chair’, in M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish, Palestinian, Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, second edition, Ramat-Gan/ Bal-timore/London 2002, *ad locum*.

‘Wherever one of the Jerusalemites went in the province, they arranged a place of honour for him to sit upon in order to listen to his wisdom.’

There is no ‘interested enthronement’ here, but provocative challenge; and we will see that the Jerusalemite demonstrates the power of his wisdom beyond his own city. The focus of the following analysis will be on the specific features of the plot of the riddle. It is made up of a communicating exchange of question (s) and response (s), sometimes with little or much action. It provides a dramatic setting, in which the ‘riddling’ event takes place in two parts,⁷⁶⁶ when the ‘riddlee’ presents the riddle to the ‘riddlee’ and gets it solved.

Riddle. 1. A Jerusalemite Competes with a Provincial

This first riddling narrative is also the most extended (35 lines) and, except orthographic divergences, it is identical in its wording in the available text variants. The main differences consist in the information provided by the Buber edition that the Jerusalemite’s son knew the name of his father’s host,⁷⁶⁷ and in the fact that the text witnesses are not unanimous about the place, which can be held as the stage of this narrative. The Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition* (l. 99b-133a) speak of מדינתא ‘province’, ‘large town’.⁷⁶⁸ The Buber edition has instead ריחמיה ‘his friend’ in אתינס ‘Athens’. It marks all the narratives as עובדה, the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew *ma’aseh*, a designation rejected by J. Neusner,⁷⁶⁹ who considers⁷⁷⁰ ‘conversations’, presentation of Temple ritual, *ma’aseh* and parables as pseudo-narratives, because they are deemed to describe event and action without “invoking teleological logic.” The latter is said by the same author⁷⁷¹ as implicit in the purposive, intentional sequence of facts⁷⁷²

766G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford 2000, 52.

767It consequently omitted the rhythmic refrains הא מילא חדא ‘this is the first word’ (l. 109c- 110 a), הא מילא תניינא ‘this is the second word’ (l. 116c-117a), הא מילא תליתאה ‘this is the third word’ (l. 121a), which indicate the different riddle tests in the *editio princeps*, and spread differently the son’s comment throughout the text.

768See M.Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971) 1996), ad locum, while M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, 2002, ad locum, has city, province, country.

769J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three. *Forms, Types ...*, Leiden/Boston 2003, 153.

770J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 5-6.

771J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 153.

772J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 2f.

used : 1) in shaping every riddling narrative, and 2) in encompassing all the narratives “into a whole that exceeds the sum of the parts.” This second feature will be dealt with below, while the first trait has been tested by J. Neusner in his analysis of the first riddling narrative⁷⁷³ outlined here in its four components with an appropriate comment:

1. Prologue (l. 99b-103): a Jerusalemite assigned before he died his property to his host in a province, who had to give it to his son expected from Jerusalem, provided that he solved three riddles which constitute the rest of the narrative:

2. Problem-solving (l. 103b-110a): the son arrived and found the domicile of his father’s host without being in possession of his address,

3. Problem-solving (l. 110b-116a): the son shares marvellously five chickens among seven diners in the family of his father’s host, in such a way that the number of the diners and the number of the birds make three,

4. Problem-solving (l. 116b-121a): the son shares symbolically a chicken during his second meal among seven diners in the family of his father’s host.

It is evident that the purposive, intentional sequence of facts, which characterizes the teleological logic of the narratives, is sufficiently realized and exhausted when the son coming from Jerusalem, having solved the third problem,⁷⁷⁴ demands that his father’s property be delivered to him, as the Buber edition presents it. The remarkable feature of this narrative in the *Vilna edition* is that this plot, made up of action and a dialogue, goes on with an extended dialogue (l.121b-131) whose rhetorical function is obvious: the Jerusalemite has the opportunity to demonstrate his devastating cleverness. This very topic is diversely modulated in the following narratives.

Riddle 2. Four Jerusalemites Compete with An Athenian in Athens.

This second most extended riddling narrative (23lines) is witnessed in Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition* (l. 133b-155), without substantial differences. The Buber edit-ion has some different lexical and grammatical items of its own, such as אָזלר

773J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative. A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 151-153, where the riddler seems to be the host; but see the subtle analysis leading to the mediating riddler in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life, Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 54.

774The first problem is the son’s ignorance of the address of his father’s friend. And the two other are the two divisions, which contain riddles, that the Athenian cannot solve.

‘they went’, שִׁירוּ ‘meal’, עֶרְסִין ‘beds’, לִי ‘to me’, against אָתָּו ‘they came’, אֶרֶסְטוֹן ‘meal’, ‘banquet’, עֶרְסָאָתָּא ‘the beds’, לָן ‘to us’, some additions and omissions, see the case of אָגַב חֲבֵרְתָּא ‘supported by the next’, in the other variants. These features underline the fact of two traditions without real semantic deviations of the same text J. Neusner divides this narrative⁷⁷⁵ on the basis of the Athenian’s rhythmic refrain אָמַר הָד ‘one of them spoke the truth, and three told lies’ (l. 142, 146, 150), in a prologue and epilogue held together by a tripartite construction:

1. Prologue (l. 133b-142a): four men of Jerusalem got accommodations in a house in Athens. Here they reverse apparent and unspoken riddles of the riddlee host inasmuch as they uncover, as G. Hasan-Rokem puts it,⁷⁷⁶ that “[T]he services provided to the guests are not what they seem”, and the host does not realize it: 1. one of the beds is damaged; 2. the food originates in a dog; 3. the drink in a grave; 4. and the host from a putative father. The first riddle is solved in the prologue by the host’s awareness.

2. Part 1 (l. 142b-146a): the host got this issue solved by the butcher who confirmed the version on the origin of the food,

3. Part 2 (l. 146b-150a): the host received the confirmation provided by the wine-dealer, who revealed where the wine came from,

4. Part 3: (l. 150b-155): the host had his mother confirm the allegations of the Jerusalemite-te on his own identity.

5. Epilogue (l. 154b-155): the Athenians decided as reprisals not to welcome the Jerusalemites for fear of being further declared illegitimate. This protective move was at the same time the unequivocal and loud recognition by the Athenians that the wisdom of the Jerusalemites was devastating and *ipso facto* a danger to their comfort and prosperity.

Riddle 3. A Jerusalemite Competes with Athenians In Athens.

The introductory part of this riddling narrative told in seven lines is somewhat awkward. The Buber text strives explicitly to establish a link to the second riddling narrative, when it starts with אָתָּו יִרְשָׁלַיִם לְאַתֵּינָס ‘a Jerusalemite went once again after a couple of days to Athens’. And it is logically stated that וְלֹא הָיָה בָּעִי שׁוֹם בֶּר נֶשׁ לְקַבְּלִיהָ ‘and nobody accepted to welcome him’ so that he went to a store. The Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition* (l.

775J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 158-154, 164.

776G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life, Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 54.

156 -162) together overlook such a transitional facility and present the otherwise not contextualized case of a Jerusalemite who *אזל גבי תגרא באתינס* ‘went to a merchant in Athens’. Noteworthy is that both of them do not mention the Jerusalemite’s origin of the foreigner as the cause the Athenians did not welcome him. The Buber edition is, therefore, the only to maintain the tension to be re-solved in this narrative. J. Neusner finds out following components⁷⁷⁷

1. Problem (l. 156-158): a Jerusalemite came to Athens in a moment of tension for fear of the Athenians to be further humiliated by the Jerusalemites, at least according to the Buber edition. He was consequently not welcomed and was obliged to get accommodation in a store.⁷⁷⁸ An Athenian told him that three jumps were requested with one accord, if he needed to sleep there.

2. Solution (l. 159-162a): the Jerusalemite lets the Athenian perform three jumps, which brought him out of the stall, and shut the door behind him.

3. Explanation (l. 162b): the Jerusalemite declared that he had punished him doing just what themselves had planned against him.

This conclusion lends the quality of narrative riddle to this telling, when the Jerusalemite succeeded in reversing the case, once he got the Athenians failed to solve the trap they had imagined against him.

Riddle 4. An Athenian Competes with A Child in Jerusalem.

This four riddling narrative in the Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition* (l. 163-170a) is located at the sixth place in the Buber’s sequence. There are many divergences between the two text traditions. The Buber text has a real plot exposition in which the Athenian is engaged in sustained confrontation with the Jerusalemite child, once the latter came back with the acquired nourishing products: 1. *א"ל ישר חיילך* ‘he said to him, Many thanks,’⁷⁷⁹ 2. *א"ל על מגן* ‘he said to him, Was it for nothing’; 3. *א"ל מאן את בעי* ‘he said to him: What do you want?’; 4. *א"ל את בפריטך*

777J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 154-155. 164.

778J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 155 is with “stall” more explicit.

779This is an idiomatic translation, see M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targum-im, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971] 1996), *ad locum*, against the literal ‘may your strength be firm!’, M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, second edition, Ramat-Gan /Baltimore / London, 2002, 199, col. 1.

ואנא ברגליי 'he said to him, You with your money and I with my legs'. This is the only suitable context within which the last sentence, that is reported also in the other tradition, can be understood. But the Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition*, in which it is said that the child had to buy figs - and also- grapes,⁷⁸⁰ possess the concluding sentence of the demonstration which is missing in the Buber edition, ועבדין ביניהון ונסב מה דהוה ליה, 'they both acted, and the child took the man's portion.'

The reconstructed narrative made up of dialogues and actions, is qualified unitary in its structure by J. Neusner⁷⁸¹ with four others. It is composed of two parts:

1. Problem (l. 63-170a): an Athenian sent a Jerusalem child to buy figs and grapes. The child gave the Athenian the good figs and grapes and reserved the rotten one for himself. The Athenian admired his wisdom, but he reacted proposing to cast lots: 'If I win, I take your share.'

2. Solution (l. 170b): the lots were thrown; the child won and took the Athenian's share.

This straightforward riddling narrative can be understood, however, as much more complicated, when the Athenian's request is considered as the riddle, the Athenian the riddle, and the Jerusalem child the riddlee. The latter acted wisely when he gave the Athenian his due. The situation was reversed when the Jerusalemite child propounded his own riddle, in which case, G. Hasan-Rokem speaks of role reversal⁷⁸². The Athenian was the loser. The accuracy of this analysis is obvious if we consider the following riddling narratives.

Riddle 5. An Athenian Competes with A Child in Jerusalem

Extended in six lines in the *Vilna edition*, this riddling narrative is reported almost identical in its structure by the traditional text variants. The differences are grammatical, the *Vilna edition* (l. 170b-175a) having all the verbal forms used by the Athenian for himself in the first person singular: (l. 172. 174) מה דאיכול ואשבוע ואותיר ואיסב 'which I can eat, with which I can be sated, I can leave over, I can take.' The Munich Codex Heb. 229 mixes the first person in

⁷⁸⁰It is wanting in the Buber edition.

⁷⁸¹J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 156. 164.

⁷⁸²G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 56-57.

singular with the first person plural, with the second being the only used in the report of the Jerusalemite child. On its side, the Buber edition, which lends to this narrative the number seven in its sequence, has all the forms in the first person of the plural: *דיכל ונישבע ונותר וניסב*, although the second person of the singular is the only form the child of Jerusalem used in the three variants, when he gave back the salt he bought. This is the suitable means to establish the difference of status between both of them, and to show his intellectual ascendancy in this simple form of the riddling narrative:

1. Problem (l. 170b-172a): an Athenian sent a Jerusalem child buy something he could eat to his satisfaction so that he had more over for the journey.

2. Solution (l. 172b-175a): the Jerusalem child solved the item bringing him salt, and he succeeded to get the sceptical Athenian accept this supply.

Riddle 6. An Athenian Competes with A Tailor in Jerusalem

This short story in three lines is identical in structures, lexical and grammatical forms in all the three text witnesses. Buber edition puts it at the eighth position in its sequence, and its plot is simple.

1. Problem (l. 175b-177a): an Athenian picked up a broken mortar thrown away in Jerusalem and brought it to a tailor to get it sewn.

2. Solution (l. 177b-178a): the Jerusalemite tailor solved the issue challenging the Athenian to twist first a handful of sand into threads.

The shortness of the story together with the solution of a riddle by means of a challenge are the two features this narrative has in common with the next one.

Riddle 7. An Athenian Competes with A Child in Jerusalem

The main characteristic of this riddling narrative is that all the text traditions witness the same structure and identical grammatical form, but the items this text dealt with are put in different order. According to the Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition* (l. 178b-182a), the order, the Jerusalemite child had to bring *ביעין וחובצין* 'eggs and cheese'; the Buber edition, which locates this story at the fifth place of its sequence, has 'cheese and eggs'. In addition, the question he had to answer was: 'These eggs, whence do they come, from a white chicken or a black one'? In the other tradition, the wording of this question is somewhat different: 'Show me

which cheese is from a white goat, and which from a black goat' [Cohen]. This textual deviation does not, however, blot out the two components of the plot in this story:

1. Problem (l. 178b-180a): an Athenian sent a Jerusalemite child to buy 'eggs and cheese' [*Vilna edition*]. Once the latter came back, he was asked if he could find out the cheese produced from the white or the black goat.

2. Solution (l. 180b-182a): the riddle is solved as in the preceding story when the child required of the Athenian to match the eggs with their origin from a white and a black hen.

It is not reported that the Athenian met the challenge. That he got to face the same ridiculous and ridiculing case he certainly held for out of reach of the child's mental skills seems to be the climax of this narrative. The next will propound a different kind of contest.

Riddle 8. An Athenian Competes with a Priest in Jerusalem

This riddling narrative is reported in three lines in the *Vilna edition* (l. 182b-184), which provides the same text with the Munich Codex Heb. 229. The Buber edition, in whose riddles sequence this story occurs at the ninth position, has a version similar in structures and forms to this variant, but its specific features are obvious: the Athenian פגע 'met' instead of אשכח 'found'; it is about מובלא דקיסין 'the load of the wood' in emphatic form, against מובלא דקיסין 'load of wood'. But its peculiarity, which borders on a corruption of the text, resides in the very wording of the priest's answer: וכד היא רטיבא תנן ותולתא קטם ותלתא אשא אכלה 'When it is damp, all of it turn into smoke, when it is bad, a third part is smoke, a third ash, and a third fire.' Different is the reading provided by the other text tradition, because the *bishta* 'bad' in the Buber edition holds for *yabisha* 'dry': כד יבישא הוה כולה תנן כד רטיבא היא תלתא תנן ותלתא 'when it is dry, all of it turn into smoke, when it is damp, a third is smoke, a third ash and a third fire.' This variant is much reasonable, and it will be expected that the priest answered on the basis of his own experience, except if it is presumed that he possessed a cryptic knowledge, which enabled him to teach the Athenian, so that the narrative has following components:

1. Problem (l. 182b-183a): an Athenian asked a priest in Jerusalem how much of the load of wood turned into smoke.

2. Solution (l. 183b-184a): it is propounded by the priest of Jerusalem, see above.

3. Explanation (l. 183b): this is a statement on the origin of the priest's knowledge: from the pile of the wood on the altar in the Temple.

Riddle 9. An Athenian Competes with A Child in Jerusalem

The Munich Codex Heb. 229 and the *Vilna edition* (l. 185-198a) are not unanimous on the unfolding of the challenge in this narrative. The latter (l. 188) reports with the Buber edition, first the children stating *אמור את דאת גבר סב*. The predicate *אמור* is correctly translated, 'You answer first, for you are an old man' by Cohen,⁷⁸³ and also with the Buber edition, in which this riddling narrative occurs at the fourth place in its sequence. In this case, *אתון דבני אתרא מקדמין לי*, 'since you belong to this place, you are first', which follows, at least in the *Vilna edition*, indicates the polite precedence an old foreigner from Athens let the Jerusalem locals younger have over himself.⁷⁸⁴ The inversion of the two statements in the Munich Codex Heb. 229, is confusing, as this is obvious in the Cohen's translation, which obviously relies on it. There are also some specific lexical forms and order⁷⁸⁵ in the wording of the five riddle items in the Buber edition. Otherwise, the text of this narrative is the same in all traditions, and the components of its plot as identified by J. Neusner,⁷⁸⁶ are:

1. The stage setting (185-189a): an Athenian came to Jerusalem, and found children sitting alone in a school. They set up to enter a questioning and answering contest under the sanction of undressing the loser. The Athenian lets the children start.

2. Problem (l. 189b-190a): the children asked him to find out: nine go out but eight come in, two pour out but one drinks, and twenty-four serve, but he failed and was consequently punished.

3. Help (l. 190b-194a): the Athenian joined their teacher, R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1), and exposed all the disputes.

4. Solution (l. 194b-198a): R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) came to his assistance and helped negotiate the settlement of the conflict. That the latter presented such an united front with the Athenian is deemed by G. Hasan-Rokem as "a stress on the age opposition",

783 *Lamentations [Midrash Rabbah]*, transl. by A. Cohen, London, ([1939] 1961), 78.

784G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 56-57 indicates the opposition "adult Athenian versus Jerusalemite children", but in relation to the help mentioned in the same text that the Athenian received from another adult, R. Yochanan ben Zakkai (T1), see below.

785 עשרים וארבעה משמין "twenty-four serve" is the last item to be mentioned in the other text tradition.

786J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 155-156. 164.

which does not override the main opposition Athens-Jerusalem.⁷⁸⁷ It will, however, be shown below that the ‘adult *versus* children opposition’ is a fundamental component of the ideological arsenal of *E. R.*, which is every bit as good as the national opposition.

Riddle 10. An Athenian Competes with a Jerusalemite in Jerusalem

The *editio princeps* (l. 198b-211a) text variant is similar in its structures and verbal forms to the version of the Munich Codex Heb.229 229, except some clauses as 1. the tale turning point (l. 205) ‘how do you know the camel is blind in one eye’ [Cohen], nearly with the Buber edition, in which this tale occurs also at the tenth position, against the more comprehensive ‘how do you know all these matters?’ in the Munich Codex Heb. 229, 2. more the evident, with the Buber edition, (l. 206) ‘I notice the traces of two of them’ [Cohen], against the less obvious ‘I notice that they trampled from behind,’ and, 3. also with the Buber edition, the picturesque (l. 208) ‘the wine is absorbed in the ground, and the vinegar ferments’, against the unclear⁷⁸⁸ ‘the wine is absorbed in the ground, and the vinegar ferments’. The *editio princeps* and the Buber edition provide, however, a text clear enough to be analysed with J. Neusner⁷⁸⁹ as following:

1. The Prologue/Problem (l. 198b-201a): an Athenian failed after three years and a half in his attempt to acquire wisdom in Jerusalem, and bought an one-eyed slave as a surrogate wisdom.

2. The solution (201b-204a): the one-eye slave gave the proof of his cleverness telling his new owner that a caravan was before them, at four miles away, driven by a she-camel, blind in one eye, with twins in its womb, carrying two skin-bottles of wine and vinegar, and the camel driver was a gentile. The rest of the narrative accounts for this knowledge of the slave in a series of proofs:

- 2.1. The she-camel was blind in one eye (l. 204b-206),
- 2.2. The she-camel had twins in its womb (l. 206b-207a),
- 2.3. The she-camel carried two skin-bottles of wine and vinegar (l. 207b-208a),

787G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 56. The very fact that R. Yochanan ben Zakkai (T1), that is held as the traditional founder of rabbinic wisdom, intervenes on behalf of a representative of the Athenian wisdom may further have reconciling purpose.

788This predicate refers to the two verbal forms of the Munich Codex Heb.229, according to M. So-koloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, second edition, Ramat-Gan/Baltimore/London 2002, 365. 381.

789J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 157-158. 164.

- 2.4. The camel driver was a gentile (l. 208b-210a),
 2.5. The caravan was four miles away (l. 210b-211a).

The narrative ended here, after the one-eyed slave demonstrated the superiority of his cleverness uncovering ironically the existence, the state and the identity of the preceding caravan to the eyes of his owner. The last tale brings the ridicule to the final straw.

Riddle 11. An Athenian Competes with the Jerusalemites

The text of this third most extended narrative⁷⁹⁰ contains only an obvious inconsistency in the statement made in its first and second sentences, at least according to the almost similar version reported in the *editio princeps* (l. 211b-230a) and the Munich Codex Heb. 229. While it is said (l. 211b-212a) that הד מאתינס אזל לירושלים והיה מפלי בבני ירושלים ‘an Athenian went to Jerusalem and was making fun of the locals of Jerusalem’ [J. Neusner], the following sentence establishes that הם אמרין מאן ייזיל ומייתי ליה גבן ‘they - the Jerusalemites - said, Who will go - to Athens - and bring him to us’? The Buber edition, whose version is characterized by a couple of semantically harmless omissions of phrases, solves this contradiction leaving out the first coordinate clause of the first sentence that ‘an Athenian went to Jerusalem.’ It is true that this apparent in-consistency can be settled, if the first sentence is understood in the sense of a repeated or usual fact, as this the case in Jastrow,⁷⁹¹ “An Athenian used to come to Jerusalem and outwit the Jerusalemites frequently”. This verbal aspect, which reasonably relies on the grammar of the repetitive Aramaic form in היה מפלי ‘he used to outwit’⁷⁹², may explain why the Jerusalemites decided to act to solve the case, as this is exposed in the structure of narrative proposed by J. Neusner⁷⁹³:

790It is told in twenty lines, after the first - in thirty-five, and the second - in twenty-three - lines.

791M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushal-mi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971] 1996), 1181, col. 1.

792The case of repetitive action would have been more convincing, if we had היה לבוא “he used to go”, but see for the Hebrew היה +participle, in E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Atlanta, Georgia 1986, 70 and for the Aramaic, in D. Marcus, *A Manual of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic*, (Jewish Theological Seminary), Washington 1981, 8.

793J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 158. 164.

1. Problem (l. 211a-213a): an Athenian was making fun of the Jerusalemites, and the latter agreed to relieve the sheer boredom bringing him to Jerusalem.

2. Solution (l. 213-220): a Jerusalemite joined Athens, and was accommodated by the quarrelsome Athenian. The unusual high price paid to get his obviously willingly broken sandals let the Athenian think about going to sell sandals in Jerusalem. The Jerusalemite supported the project, provided that the Athenian entered the city with him. The rest of the tale unfolds the practical settlement of this issue.

2.1. (l. 221-224a): the Athenian joined the gate-entrance of Jerusalem with his stock of acquired sandals, he agreed to the Jerusalemite's request to have this head shaven and his face blackened, two cryptic symbols, allegedly to conform to a local arrangement addressing foreign sellers.

2.2. (l. 224b-228a): all the potential purchasers found the sandal price of the shaven Athenian expensive, hit him with it on the head and went away.

3. Epilogue (l. 228b-230a): the Athenian complained about this form of unkindness to his host, who advised him about measure taken against ridiculing the Jerusalemites.

The frame presented above belongs to the basic pattern which defines the riddling narrative. Whether "the riddle tale genre is almost completely hidden" in this account, as asserted by G. Hasan-Rokem,⁷⁹⁴ or not, is much more a matter related to the comprehension someone may have of the topic handled in this riddle. That the somewhat enigmatic 'an Athenian was making fun of the Jerusalemite's is sufficient to set off a riddling process is an issue of personal assessment, which has no bearing on the fact that this narrative deals with a riddling situation involving two nations.

CONCLUSION

The eleven narratives analysed above have in common the same plot, which is characterized by a reduced form of exposition,⁷⁹⁵ that is, the setting of the narrative (place, time), and the same types of characters, exclusively a Jerusalemite, confronted with a 'foreigner', a provincial and an Athenian and the same outcome. As J. Neusner puts it, all these "narratives articulate the wisdom through action that is explained, expressed in exchanges of dialogues as

⁷⁹⁴See G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 57.

⁷⁹⁵The key to understanding the narrative, namely, some indications about the contract between the narrator and reader, mentioned in J.L. Ska, *"Our Fathers have told us"*, Rome 1990, 21, is wanting.

well.”⁷⁹⁶ The really specifying feature resides in the narration time (German, “*Erzählzeit*”), that is, the material time, short or long, needed to deal with their case. Jerusalem is presented as the centre of the wisdom, and the superiority of its inhabitants over the provincials and the Athenians is the main issue. A similar motif with specifying features is further developed in the second block of narratives expounding this colon.

II.1.2.2. The Superiority of Rabbinic Dream Interpretation Skill

The nineteen dream accounts come next in the explanation of TMLam. 1, 1.4 רבתי בגוים in its distinctive meaning of רבתי בדעות ‘great in intellect’. They are related to the preceding riddle narratives by the introducing sentence, ‘A Cuthean⁷⁹⁷ who pretended to be an interpreter of dreams’,⁷⁹⁸ to which R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) reacts with his, לית אנא איזיל ואחמי הדין טפשא ‘shall I not go and see this Samaritan stupid in understanding, who makes fun of the people of Jerusalem.’⁷⁹⁹ The latter stands in obvious echo to the preceding ‘[F]rom now on don’t ever make fun of the people of Jerusalem,’⁸⁰⁰ which ends the preceding riddling tale series. The topic of the present series of narratives is therefore the dream, that most cultures consider “as a message to be interpreted and understood.” As such, the dream resembles the riddle, and its interpretation, partly the answer to the riddle,⁸⁰¹ see below. The analysis of these dream interpretation reports in *Eikhah Rabbati* will therefore be focused on the same narrative components such as the characters, the dreamer and the interpreter, on the plot, which means, here, the dream text and its explanation, and on the narration time. We will see that the same narrative parameters can be used to promote the same, but also different proposals, among

796J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*: Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 232.

797The use of this denomination is pejorative and indicative of historical animosity. M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Mid-rashic Literature*, New York, (copyright 1971] 1996), col. 1 spells כוּתָּה, כוּתָּה “*Cuth, Cuthah*, a Babylonian town whence Assyrian colonists were introduced into Samaria”, כוּתָּה, כוּתָּה “Cut-hean, a member of the sect of Samaritans.”

798See extended supplementary comment below.

799This common context to the riddling and dream narratives is stressed in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, transl. by Batya Stein, Stanford 2000, 96.

800This common context to the riddling and dream narratives is stressed in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, transl. by B. Stein, Stanford 2000, 90.

801G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 90

which the focus on dream items related to the “intimacy of family relationship, sexuality and of the body”⁸⁰² explains only partly the linking of the dreams in the present order. Two groups of dreams emerge from this stuff, on the basis of their sequence, the characters involved in, and the issue it is dealt with.

2.1. Interethnic Contest Context: R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) and the Cuthean

The eleven dream texts of this series are interpreted by a Cuthean - Samaritan and by R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) who cannot avoid a dispute which implies much more than the two contenders' abilities.

The Dream 1 (l. 230b - 235a)

The introductory texts to the dream interpretation are in their different versions all except emotionally neutral. The predicates עבד גרמיה in the *editio princeps* (l. 230b -232a) and the Munich Codex Heb. 922, as well as עבד גרמיה in the Buber edition for the same literal meaning ‘he made himself’, to characterize the move carried out by the Cuthean-Samaritan, have a pejorative sense, if we recall that in Ancient times, the dream and its interpretation were deemed to be from divine origin.⁸⁰³ Besides this, the Buber edition juxtaposes explicitly the statement הוה מפליא בבני ‘he set himself up as an interpreter of dreams’ [Cohen] with the הוה מפליא בבני ‘he was making fun of the people’ mentioned at the end of the preceding riddle series, before the Jewish protagonist, R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4), repeats it as a pretext for his own move. The *Vilna edition* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 let only R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) states that ‘the Cuthean, stupid in understanding, was making fun’ of the people, but, the fact that himself undertook to interpret the dreams disqualifies the Cuthean as such from this activity.

1. Problem: the dreamer used the verbal form חמית ‘I saw’ to tell the dream content: ‘an olive tree feeding oil’ [Cohen].

802This is the way G. Hasan-Rokem, op. cit. 99, accounts for the order between the dreams

803See A. Kristianpoller, “Traum und Traumdeutung”, in K. Albrecht, *Monumenta talmudica*, Band 4, *Volksüberlieferungen*, Heft 1. Wien/Berlin 1923, Unverändert reprografischer Nach-druck, Darmstadt 1972, vii-xv, and below.

2. Solution: this visual symbolic material⁸⁰⁴ is decoded successively 1) by the Samaritan's identification words: זיתא נהור ומשחא נהור את חמי נהור בנהור סגיא 'the olive means light, and oil means light; you will see much light'. The 2) 'global' interpretation is provided by R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4), who was sitting there. He stated with a curse: 'May the spirit of that man⁸⁰⁵ explode! This man has known [committed incest with] his mother' [J. Neusner].

The following comment, that addresses the issue at stake, focuses first on the fact of the multiple and diverging meanings for the same dream image. Although the same verbal form פתר in Hebrew, and פשר in Aramaic is used in dealing with the riddle and the dream, a difference in the meaning is evident, when it is stated, for instance in English, that the riddle is solved, and the dream interpreted.⁸⁰⁶ The reason is, as G. Hasan-Rokem finds it,⁸⁰⁷ that "[I]n principle, a dream has multiple meanings, generally, and not just in this specific case. Unlike the riddle, therefore, it does not invite one single solution but a more complex interpretation", all of them valid in hermeneutical terms. Theoretically, this means that the Cuthean-Samaritan and R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) were right to say on their own terms, although they gave diverging explanations of the same dream symbol. The problem, if any, is not which dream interpretation is the only possible and true, in the sense that it can be fulfilled. Considered in its pragmatic-performative aspect, the belief at the *Eikhah Rabbati* time was certainly that each dream interpretation can be realized, as stated in R. Bana' ah's reliable report: "There were twenty-four interpreters of dreams in Jerusalem. Once I dreamt a dream and went around to all of them and they gave different interpretations, and all were fulfilled, thus confirming that which is said: All dreams follow the mouth."⁸⁰⁸

804The distinction is between direct message and symbolic dream, in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 91.

805The Cuthean. But see G. Hasan-Rokem, *The web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford 2000, 98 for the reference indefiniteness of "that man" (*ha-hu gavra*).

806See M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971] 1996), 1248, col. 1.

807G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 98. 105.

808TB Berakhot 55b, quoted partly in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 105: "An interpretation singles out one of all the possible meanings of the dream and determines its fate to come true." The last sentence cites Gen. 41, 13a referring to Joseph's story, in which "the interpretation of the dreams becomes a part of the hero's personality, an act that changes Joseph's fate several times," *ibidem*, 91.

With such an assumption in his mind, it is, secondly, obvious that the role of the moral in dream interpretation,⁸⁰⁹ that is, the quest for an interpretation conform to the facts and as such, appropriate to the dream context, was R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4)'s hobby horse to go on. This is the context within which his curse took place. That he alone was able to produce an appropriate interpretation, so that he could disqualify the Cuthean from interpreting this dream, is an evident polemical point conform to the assessment exposed above, in the introduction, on the competence of the Cuthean to perform dream interpretation. R. Ishmael's cursing words aimed obviously to avoid the fable uttered by the Samaritan-Cuthean come to its realization.⁸¹⁰ This move against the Cuthean may resemble the deadly punishment Bar Hedyā⁸¹¹ was submitted to once his dream interpretation which was motivated by the pay he had received, fell true. Other requisites were needed in R. Ismael b. R. Yose (T4)'s mind to make an interpretation sociologically appropriate, that was at stake, see below.

The Dream 2 (l. 235b - 238a)

1. Problem: another dreamer came to the Cuthean-Samaritan, with a similar dream text: he saw (חמית) in is dream "one of his eyes swallowing the other (חברתה)."

2. Solution: It is provided first 1) by the Cuthean-Samaritan in words, which have been differently reported. While the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 have only the last statement (l. 236b) את חמי נהור בנהור סגיא "you will see much light" [Cohen], the Buber edition (51) adds to this decoding the explicative scheme and items used in Dream 1: "your one eye is light and the other is light; you will see much light."

Once the principle of the multiple meanings of the dream assumed and its upshot on practical level exposed, the next issue to be addressed here in regard to the explanatory process is the implication of the factor of the moral awareness in the interpretation of dreams. That this factor does not work in the case into inquiry is obvious in the method the Cuthean-Samaritan used. The fact that he partly repeated the same words related to a promising future of the dreamer

809The Cuthean-Samaritan is systematically called "the fraudulent interpreter" by G. Hasa-Ro-kem!

810R. Huna b. Ammi (A4?) is tradent of a pronouncement on how to turn, this time, a dream which makes sad, into a good one, in *bBerakhoth*, 55b.

811G. Hasan-Rokem mentions this episode, but for different reason, *op. cit.* 100.

in his decoding of two different dream items, which required logically different interpretations, is an indication of the hoax, which “makes him appear mechanical and unconvincing⁸¹²”. The fundamentals of that time in dream interpretation theory and practice recommended, in the case of symbolic dream images, to consider the personality of the dreamer in his/her social context, as well as the social codes of the dreamt images⁸¹³. R. Samuel b. Nachnami (A3)’s statement in the name of R. Yonathan (T3/A1/A2), that “[A] man is shown in a dream only what is suggested by his own thoughts⁸¹⁴”, was a common assumption and is illustrated in the second 2) once again global solution provided by R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) (l. 237-238a).

“May the spirit of that man explode! That man has two children, and one of them has committed incest with the other.”

Two features characterize this explanation and distinguish it from the preceding: 1) it is related to the past of the dreamer,⁸¹⁵ and 2) it is different from the previous explanation of the same Rabbi, obviously in adequacy to the personal experience of the dreamer, which is related to the role the sexual behaviour played in the dreamer’s life⁸¹⁶. The issue to think about is to enquire if the following dream explanations meet these requisites.

The Dream 3. (l. 238b - 241a)

812G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 98.

813See Aristotle, *On the Prophecy of Dreams* (II), expounded in A. Kristianpoller, Traum und Traumdeutung, in K. Albrecht, *Monumenta talmudica*, Band 4, Wien/Berlin/Darmstadt ([1923] 1972), xii-xiv. The question whether these thoughts are to be located in the past of the dreamer, so that the dream has a psychological premonitory function of helping cope with the current problems, or the same thoughts are present, and the dream has the physiological function of “giving the brain a workout” to get it tuned and warmed up for conscious awareness, as present day researchers claim, has not to be answered by the way of exclusion, see B. Carey, *New York Times*, 23. 11. 2009.

814 See *bBerakhoth*, 55b.

815G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 97 considers this search for dream explanation in the past of the dreamer and the focus on language, the interpretation of the texts made up of the linguistic associations, as common to the rabbis and to S. Freud’s theory of dream as playground for unconscious mind and of dream interpretation.

816The reference to sexual matters in this explanation is attributed by A. Kristianpoller to the “bad opinion” the Samaritan people had at that time, *op. cit.*, xiii-xiv, see also below.

This dream occurs at the fifth place of the dream sequence in the Buber edition, which has the same wording, and the same number of clauses, but inverted, as the other text tradition:

1. Problem: another dreamer came to the Cuthean-Samaritan and told him he saw (חמית) in his dream that “he swallowed a star.”

2. Solution: the Cuthean-Samaritan disclosed this visual image in four clauses: 1) כוכבא נהור ואתה נהור “this man (= you) has seen much light,” 2-3) “the star is light and you are light,” 4) “so light is added to light.” These same clauses are reported in the Buber edition as follows: [3-2-4-1].

This is an indication that they were independent, and that they were reported as a confirmation of the Samaritan hoax. R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) reacted to it uttering his usual cursing formula, before he proposed his Bible-based interpretation: the dreamer had killed a Jew, the latter being assumed by association as denoted in Gen. 15, 5⁸¹⁷, making of this dream “the only dream (...) where the interpretation relies on a biblical verse⁸¹⁸”.

The Dream 4 (l. 241b - 244a)

This dream is wanting in the Buber edition. The *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 299 have the same text, the דהוה in the latter being *de trop*.

1. Problem: another dreamer reported that he has seen (חמית) in his dream “three eyes”.

2. Solution: the interpretation the Cuthean-Samaritan proposed was the old one, except that this time, few words were used: “this man (=you) will see much light.” And R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4)’s double reaction came as expected. He cursed the interpreter as usual, and he innovated and adapted his decoding to the dream text: the dreamer was a baker, he had two eyes and the glowing oven was the third eye.

The Dream 5 (l. 244b - 246a)

817Gen. 15, 5: “And he brought him outside and said, Look now at the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them. And he said to him, So shall your seed be.”

818G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, transl. by B. Stein, Stanford 2000, 95. 99 - 100, where the stress is on the national confrontation induced by this verse in the context of E. R. on the destruction of the Temple.

The text of this third dream in the Buber edition is not always identical in the different traditions, certainly because it signals a change in the words used by the Cuthean-Samaritan.

1. Problem: a dreamer brought a dream to be decoded, but he is reported to have not used the same words: חמית בחלמי ארבעה אודנין “I had seen in my dream four ears and all the people were listening to my words” in the *Vilna edition* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, against חמיתי בחלמי אית לי ארבעה אדנין “I had seen that I had four ears” in the Buber edition.

2. Solution: It is not the same in the different texts. The Cuthean-Samaritan decoded the dream with את שמיע סגיא “you will be very famous” [Cohen] according to the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, and, for the first time, with the new refrain יהוה גברא סליק לרבו “this man is (=you are) rising to greatness, and all the people will listen to your words”, in the Buber edition. On the contrary, R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) kept to his position. He cursed the Cuthean-Samaritan using the usual formula, and he proposed a new, and diverging decoding: the dreamer is “a gatherer of thorns, and when he carries them, everybody flees before him” [Cohen] in the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 299, against the cryptic “this is a man filled with water, two in him, two in his pitcher” in the Buber edition.

The Dream 6 (l. 246c - 251b)

The Buber edition lists this dream also at the sixth position of its dream sequence, and it provides the same text in its main structures and grammatical forms as the other text tradition, apart from some but not negligible deviations in this regard.

1. Problem: another dreamer came and narrated a dream, whose symbolic material is described somewhat differently: he saw (חמית) in his dream that he “was carrying (הוינא טעין) an account book with twenty-four pages written on one side and erased on the other and then vice versa”, according to the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, while the Buber edition omits the auxiliary הוינא טעין and reports ואנא כתיב מן הכא ומחקיק מין הכא “I was writing on one side, and erasing on the other,”⁸¹⁹ without repeating these clauses as this is the case in the other text tradition. The vagueness about the addressee was maintained in the solution.

2. Solution: the Cuthean-Samaritan repeated according to the available text traditions the new explanatory schema, made up of a refrain contextualizing or not a statement of the dreamer: “This man is (= you are) rising to greatness, and your business affairs will be so many that you will keep on writing on one side and erasing on the other, and vice versa.” R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) disqualified the Cuthean-Samaritan with his usual cursing formula, and deciphered the dream stating that the dreamer “had a garment

⁸¹⁹This active voice of these verbal forms is however used also by the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 in the solution!

of twenty-four patches, and (when) he sewed in one place, it became torn in another place.”

Both of these proposals do not address the issue of the identity of the dreamer mentioned in the problem. The Buber edition uses the second singular person even in the solution, while the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 preserve the third singular person. It has to be once again recalled with G. Hasan-Rokem⁸²⁰, that this third singular person, crystallized into the phrase “that man” (*ha-hu gavra*), is ambiguous enough to denote the dreamer and/or the dreamer interpreter.

The Dream 7 (l. 251- 255a)

This dream, which has the same seventh location in both dream sequences, is the very case against the fixation demonstrated by the method the Cuthean-Samaritan used in the interpretation of the dream.’

1. Problem: another dream was brought, and his description was once again not totally identical. This dreamer used for the first time the technical חזית ‘I saw’,⁸²¹ according to the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, completing it with אָנא טעין “I was carrying”, while he stated in the Buber edition חמיתי בחלמי חד טעין “I saw in my dream someone carrying.” The object is in both text tradition the same: “a pole, with a bundle of lettuce tied to it.”

2. Solution: the Cuthean-Samaritan decoded it combining his traditional recipes: “this man is (=you are) rising to greatness,” according to the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, “the pole is light, the endives are light; you will see much light,” in the Buber edition. R. Ishmael b. R Yose (T4) remains also a traditional one: the cursing formula comes first, and secondly, the appropriated explanation, “this man has (= you have) a store of wine that will turn sour, and everybody will come and take of it in bottles and use it for pickling lettuce.”

The Dream 8 (l. 255b - 263a)

This most extended dream account (9 lines) is a series of three dreams dreamt by the same person: they are presented as two, if we consider the occurrence of the predicate , “I saw”, in the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, and as three in the Buber edition. As a matter of fact, it is the last dream, in which the Cuthean-Samaritan intervened as dream interpreter. All

820G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 98.

821There is however nothing in the general expression which makes this dream different from the others.

the traditions have a quasi-identical text. The presentation is based on the *editio princeps* and will be an exceptional one.

1a. Problem: a dreamer came and told first that he saw in his dream that: “everybody was point-ed/-ing at⁸²² him.”

1b. Solution: the Cuthean-Samaritan provided the expected explanation: the new explanatory refrain contextualizing a statement of the dreamer: “this man is (= you are) rising to great-ness, and all will point at you.” R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) reacted with an innovation: he asked for a pay, but he was answered that the dream has been already interpreted.

2a. Problem: the same dreamer came a second time, and reported that he saw in his dream that “all the people were puffing at him with their cheeks and were praising me with their fingers” [Cohen].⁸²³

2bc. Solution: The Cuthean-Samaritan ended his dream deciphering endeavour with the same explanation pattern: “this man is (= you are) rising to greatness, and all the people will praise you with their cheeks.” R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) also remained faithful to his explanatory scheme: he uttered the usual curse and undertook finally to decode realistically the three dreams: the dreamer had seen a store of wheat, 1) on which the drain had dripped, 2) causing the wheat to swell, and 3) to sprout.

The Dream 9 (l. 263c - 269b)

This dream text occurs at the same ninth position in the Buber edition and in the *editio princeps* - Munich Codex He. 229 text tradition. Its intent seems to conclude the wisdom-based confrontation between two nations, represented by R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) and the Cuthean-Samaritan, except that the latter is now the challenging character in the plot,⁸²⁴ in the sense that

822 “they motion with (their) eyes at me”, in the Buber edition, and “they pointed their fingers at me” in the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229.

823 These two dream images are the content of two separate dreams in the Buber edition; the first one of the two being answered by R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) as in the previous case: he requested a fee. And the image of people praising is mentioned in the Munich Codex Heb. 229 only in the explanation.

824 The *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 quote his statement, the same that R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) made in the introduction of Dream 1: “אנא איזיל וחימי חד סבא דיהודאי ד מפלין בברייתא: “I will go and see an old Jew, who makes fun of his fellow,” while the Buber edition reports on the aggressive intent of the Cuthean-Samaritan: “אנא אזיל מגחין בהדין סביהון דיהודאי “I will go to stir up to fighting this old Jew.”

he demanded him to interpret his following dream,⁸²⁵ and that R. Ishmael b. Yose (T4) adds the atomistic dream interpretation of the Cuthean to his global one:

1. Problem: the Cuthean-Samaritan said that he had seen (חמית) in his dream “four cedars, four sycamores, a bag of straw, and an ox riding on them.”⁸²⁶

2. Solution: R. Ishmael b. Yose (T4) interpreted it by means first of the usual curse, which is wanting in the Buber edition, and, secondly, with the following decoding based on a bed: 1) the four cedars symbolize four bedposts; 2) the four sycamores, the four legs of the bed; 3) the straw bag, stands for the cords; 4) the ox riding on them, for the leather mattress on which he sleeps. The following statement: “You will climb into the bed but not descend from it. And so it happened to him” [Cohen] addresses the sixth dream item reported or added in the Buber edition וחד גבר רכיב על תורתא “and a man riding on the ox.” This item is, however, crucial in the economy of this dream interpretation, because it gave R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) the opportunity to resort once again to his globalizing method, and in so doing, to individualize the personal function of his Cuthean contender and to prevail by means of his interpretation.

The Dream 10 - 11 (l. 269c - 273a)

These two dreams, which are equally located in the Buber tradition, are closely linked because they report related dream images. There are no great divergences in the different textual records, except an important mention in the *Vilna edition* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229, that recalls R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4)’s dream interpretation method combining atomistic and global deciphering, and makes think of Cuthean-Samaritans as addressees. The account of this dream interpretation has so far, the most number of components.

1a. Problem: a dreamer came to R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) and said that he had seen (חמית) in his dream “the olive tree in planting time.” It is noteworthy that the olive image occurs also in Dream 1 of this cycle.

1b. Solution: the explanation R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) provided is surprising, but instructive as well: 1) “this man (=you) has seen much light.” This is one of the

825In Yerushalmi *Maaser sheni*, iv, 9 [26a-27b], the Samaritan uses the same predicate, אנה איזול מפלי בהדן סבא that is paraphrased by the translator, “I shall mystify the Jewish elder, [R. Ishmael, by falsely reporting a dream that no one can interpret],” to which the perspicacious R. Ishmael answers, ריקן לית את נפיק ריקן, “even though this was no dream, you will not leave without [an interpretation].”

826That these four dream items are neither complete nor correct is obvious first, from the re-cords of the Buber edition (53): ארבעה שקמין וארבעה ארזין וחד מובלא דקיסין אתר דתבן וחדא תורתא קיימא עליה וחד גבר רכיב על תורתא: (1) four sycamores, 2) four cedars, 3) a load of wood, 4) a place/shovel of straw, 5) an ox standing over it, and 6) a man riding upon the ox,” and, secondly, by the exp-lanation of the Buber’s sixth item in the *editio princeps*, see below. Note the inversion of Buber’s items 1 and 2 in the *editio princeps*.

statements the Cuthean-Samaritan made to explain the Dream 3 of this cycle! But, as G. Hasan-Rokem indicated it in the assessment of this fact,⁸²⁷ it should be no longer surprising, if we consider the following case.

2a. Problem: another dreamer told R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4), that he saw (חמית) in his dream “the olive tree in beating time.”

2b - 3a. Solution: R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4)’s answer, “this man (=you) has to prepare his (your) loins for blows,” was rejected by the dreamer, who, with his complaint that his colleague, who came first, had got a better explanation with the same dream image, gave R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) the opportunity to account for his explanation: “A curse upon you! He saw the olive at the time of planting, you at the beating!”

Although R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) relied on his successful recipe, he maintained his cursing formula, and he proposed item explanation differentiated, much more adequate to meet the circumstances the two dreams took place in.

CONCLUSION to Dreams 1 to 11.

A. Kristianpoller is right when he states⁸²⁸ that this dream cycle is made up of typical cases, which help distinguish the good from the bad dream interpreter. The Cuthean-Samaritan interprets the dreamed visual imagery according to a standard clue and refers it to the alleged future greatness of the dreamer. Because very little is brought as information by his explanations, it seems that these dreams are reported to demonstrate his fraudulence through his method. The talented dream interpreter who is the Jewish Rabbi, in the contrary, accounts for every specific case embedded in the broad context of real life, which includes the past, the present and the future. The interpretation of the dreams of the following cycle gives support to this claim.

2.2. The Inner ethnic Context (G. Hasan-Rokem): The Talented Interpreter

827G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford, 2000, 101.

828A. Kristianpoller, „Traum und Traumdeutung“, in K. Albrecht, *Monumenta talmudica*, Band 4, Wien/Berlin/Darmstadt ([1923] 1972), xiv.

The following six dream texts are characterized by three main specific features, which are the new characters⁸²⁹ in the plot, the exclusive connection to the same Jewish milieu,⁸³⁰ and an-other type more language-based dreams.

The Dreams 12 (l. 273b - 279a)

The *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 text variants are identical, except, in structuralist terms, the paradigmatic use of חזי 'I would see', in the latter, and of חמי 'I would see' in the *editio princeps*. Differences on the same basis exist instead between these texts and the text variant of the Buber edition, in which the title עובדא, the Aramaic term for the Hebrew *ma'aseh*, underlines the transition to this cycle of dreams, with R. Aqiba (T2) as the interpreter rabbi of the first three dreams (12 - 14), against R. Yochanan (A2) for the first two, and R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3) for the third, in the other text tradition. The other deviations are syntactic and are without real bearing on the meaning of these texts.

1. Problem: a disciple sat in session before R. Yochanan (A2), but could not understand his teaching. He told the rabbi, who became aware of the matter, that he was upset by the following dream: he saw (חמית) that he was told (דאמרין לי) in his dream: 1) 'in Adar [the sixth month] you will die', 2) 'you will see Nisan [the seventh month]', 3) 'you will sow but not harvest.'⁸³¹

2. Solution: R. Yochanan (A2) reacted that all the three are good omens and decoded these texts of his verbal dream⁸³² on the basis of sound correspondence: 1) 'you will die in the glory (*hiddur*) of the Torah', 2) 'you will not experience trials (*nisyonin*), and 3) 'you will not bury children born to you.'

Nothing is reported on the effect of this explanation on the troubled student. Then another upset student needed his dream got interpreted by R. Aqiba (T2).

829The Cuthean-Samaritan and R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) are no longer quoted.

830The "academy context" mentioned by G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Mid-rash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 101, is explicit only for the twelfth, the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth dreams, and the same writer considers, with reference to the involvement of a woman in these last three dreams, that "[T]he contact between dreams and reality transcends here the conceptual framework set up previously by the ethnic confrontation between Cuthean and Jew, and even the institutionalized framework of the academy," *ibidem*, 103.

831The Buber edition has another order for these items: 2 - 1 - 3.

832The distinction *verbal* versus *visual* dream, with the focus on language or images, is from G. Hasan-Rokem, see *idem*, *op. cit.* 102-103.

The Dream 13 (l. 279b - 282)

1. Problem: the Buber edition alone speaks of this ‘other student’ of R. Aqiba (T2), who ‘stood upset repeating before him,’ but could not understand his explanation, because, he said, he had seen (חמית) in his dream a bad thing: ‘he wore no pants on his legs.’

2. Solution: the same Buber edition insists on the continuity of R. Aqiba (T2)’s identical and calming answer (א"ל הוא לית בישא), arguing that the image of the legs (*regalin*) without pants in the dream means that when the Festival (*regel*) arrives, he will have nothing.⁸³³

This same dream is anonymous in the other text tradition of the *editio princeps*. The Buber edition reports R. Aqiba (T2), while for the *Vilna edition* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 transmit R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3) as the interpreter of this dream. The Munich Codex Heb. 229 adds to the text it has in common with the *editio princeps* the concluding and ideological important עבד כן ואשכחיה ‘he did thus and he found it.’ And the numeral symbolism of Cappadocia is differently decoded by the two traditions, see below.

1. Problem: a man came to R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3) and told him he had seen (חמית)⁸³⁴ in his dream that people said to him (דאמרין לי) to go to Cappadocia to receive his father’s possessions.

2. Solution: R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3) understood the statement literally and asked consequently whether his father had ever been to Cappadocia. The negative answer he received let him suggest a decoding of this obvious symbolic image by means of the haggadic techniques of notarikon (the breaking of words) and of geometric numeral values of the letters, whose wording differ between the two text traditions: ‘Go, count the twentieth⁸³⁵ beam⁸³⁶ in your house,’ for the *editio princeps*, versus ‘Go, count the beams,⁸³⁷ examine ten⁸³⁸ (דר ערה) in the Buber edition, ‘and you will find them.’ And as said above, only the Munich Codex Heb. 229 reports that this interpretation was confirmed by the following events.

833The Buber edition has the promise of ‘fat meat’.

834The Buber edition has the itpael לי אתחמי “I was shown (in my dream).”

835R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3) is said to rely in his deciphering of Cappa- in Cappadocia on the numeral value -twenty- for the Greek letter *kappa*, which works only within the numeral symbolic of the eleventh letter *kaf* of the Hebrew alphabet that is twenty!

836It is reported that the same R. Yose b. Chalafta decoded the second component -docia, in Cappadocia, translating it as the Greek *dokis*, *dokidos*, ‘beam’.

837‘Beam’ is the translation of the Cappa-, read as the Aramaic קפא ‘beam’.

838 ‘Ten’ is rendered by the Greek *deka*, ‘ten’, as the -docia in Cappadocia.

The diverging numeral accounts of the sounds included in Cappadocia are the fact of dream interpretations based on taking in consideration the symbolism of the words, the syllables, the letters, and the vowels, as this is the case in Dreams 12 and 13. A. Kristianpoller, who provides evidences of the recommendations and the use of these literal hermeneutical techniques by the ancient dream interpreters Artemidorus of Daldis, Aristandros and Cicero,⁸³⁹ deems these interpretations already current in daily life of the people, before they received scriptural support.⁸⁴⁰ That the Rabbis resorted to these techniques underlined their capacities to address better than the Cuthean and their students these issues.

The Dream 15 - 16 - 17 (l. 288b - 304a)

These three dreams,⁸⁴¹ which build together the most extended dream narrative, are closely related because they have the same characters: the only woman dreamer mentioned in the two cycles, the interpreter R. Eleazar (T3/A3), whose name occurs in all the text traditions, his students, whose bizarre handling gave way to a theory on dream interpretation, and the same plot, in which the same dreamer gives unity to the three dreams. The location of these dreams and some of their formal features make them parallel in their function and similar in their structure to the concluding Dreams 11 - 12 of the preceding cycle.

1a. Problem: a woman came to R. Eleazar (T3/A3) and reported having seen (חמית) in her dream that ‘the beam of the house was split.’

1b. Solution: this unique visual image in this cycle is decoded by as a promise of a son:⁸⁴² ‘this woman (= you) will have a son.’ And it happened so.

2a. Problem: this very woman came again to R. Eleazar (T3/A3); she did not say that she had seen in a dream, but reported the content of the same dream: ‘the beam of the house was split’.

839A. Kristianpoller, „Traum und Traumdeutung“, in K. Albrecht, *Monumenta talmudica*, Band 4, Wien/Berlin/Darmstadt ([1923] 1972), xiv-xv.

840A. Kristianpoller, „Traum und Traumdeutung“, in K. Albrecht, *Monumenta talmudica*, xiv.

841This number applies to the content of the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229; the Buber edition, in which the transition to this dream is signalled by the title עיבודא ‘the case’, presents only two dreams.

842G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 104: the split beam is interpreted as the symbol of a “woman’s body, which must be rupted, broken, and torn for her to bear a child.”

2b. Solution: R. Eleazar (T3/A3) provided the same decoding: ‘this woman (= you) will have a son.’ And it happened so.

3a. Problem: the same woman came for the third time; R. Eleazar (T3/A3) was not at the school. And she told her dream to R. Eleazar (T3/A3)’s disciples, who had offered themselves to decode it: ‘I saw in that dream I dreamt that woman whose house’s beam was split.’⁸⁴³

3b. Solution: the disciples told her: ‘that woman (= you) will bury her (= you) husband.’⁸⁴⁴ ‘She reacted weeping. R. Eleazar (T3/A3) heard her voice, he got his disciples tell him how things happened, and rebuked his disciples for having killed her husband, arguing on the basis of 1) Gen. 41, 13: “*And it came to pass, as he interpreted it to us, so it was,*”⁸⁴⁵ and of 2) R. Yochanan’s claim, ‘A dream follows its interpretation, except when it is of wine,’⁸⁴⁶ what the interpretation of a dream is about.

As Hasan-Rokem puts it,⁸⁴⁷ if the same dream image in the Dreams 11 and 12 has been referred to two different meanings because the varying circumstances of the dreaming, the various explanations of the Dreams 15, 16 and 17 are due to the interpreters themselves. The personality of the interpreter is an influential factor in the interpretation of dreams, as in the case of Joseph,⁸⁴⁸ in the Book of Genesis, because he is determining in the uncovering of the dream meaning and in so doing, can play a role in its bad or good fulfilment.⁸⁴⁹ His maturity and his moral responsibility are requested, for they enable him to use his interpretive abilities in such a way to 1) mediate between the true dream inspired by God to a cruel dreamer, as Daniel did it for Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of the same name; 2) and to “extract from the seemingly catastrophic image”, as this is the case in the dreams 15-17, “the growth latent in destruction.” G. Hasan-Rokem considers that “[T]he connection between dream interpretation and personal

843This is the unusual חמית בחלמי ההוא איתתה דשרתא דביתא פק.

844G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 104: the students referred the image of the split beam “to the man of the house: its undoing is death.”

845It has been quoted above, as proof-text to R. Bana’ah’s claim, according to *b* Berakoth 55b.

846The first clause of this sentence is ascribed to R. Eleazar in *b* Berakoth 55b, who provided it with a scriptural support to it, and the second subordinate is recited by a Tanna in the presence of R. Yochanan, in *b* Berakoth 57b.

847G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 104.

848All these cases mentioned in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 91.

849The restrictive clause “except when it is of wine” accounts, however, for the equivocal attitude of the Rabbis “about the importance and validity of dream contents, as well as about their ontological status”, in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life*, 106.

maturity on the one hand, and Torah knowledge on the other,” suggests that, “in many respects, they are one and the same.”⁸⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

The seventeen dream accounts have been presented above on the basis of the same analytical features used in the study of the riddling narratives. It appears that these dream narratives display the same plot marked by a reduced form of exposition, the same types of characters, this time the Rabbis, who either compete against the foreign Cuthean, either disclose to their Jewish enquirers the pertinent interpretation of their dreams. It seems, however, that the inter-ethnic and generational contention on solving the riddling first, and interpreting the dream narratives, afterwards, is a topic, which helps enhance the outstanding skills of the Rabbis in this matter. *Talmudic* and *midrashic* sources themselves, however, are not exempt from records witnessing the reported lack of a clear-cut corpus of rabbinic teaching on dream as revelatory medium, and dream interpretation as testimonial for outstanding abilities.⁸⁵¹ Evidence related to this last issue does exist, and it seems that this is the subject of the concluding narrative, which comes next.

II.1.2.3. Conclusion: The Defeated Rabbi (l. 303b - 328a)

This account ends (line 328a) as proof text to the colon (TMLam 1, 1.4) “רבתי בגוים” *Great among the nations*”, interpreted as ‘great in intellect’. The *editio princeps* (l. 303b - 328a) and the Munich Codex He. 229 texts are identical. The Buber edition has a structurally similar text, with specific lexical forms, i. e. ליסטים ‘robbers’ (l. 306) is wanting, לך ולבהמתך ‘for you and your animal’, instead of לך ולחמורך (l. 317) of the *editio princeps*. It has been correctly analysed by J.

⁸⁵⁰See G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life...*, 104-105 with extended comment on the performative power of the interpretive word.

⁸⁵¹Contradictory statements are quoted by G. Hasan-Rokem, such as ‘And Rabbi Yochanan (A2) said: A dream follows its interpretation,’ against ‘Their Rabbi said to them: dreams are immaterial’, *ibidem*, *The Web of Life*, 106. Much more explicit is R. Abbahu (A3)’s statement: ‘Dreams mean nothing for either good or ill’ [J. Neusner], in E. R. to TMLam 1, 1.4.

Neusner⁸⁵² as a double narrative each of them entitled *ma`aseh*, in which R. Yehoshua (T2)⁸⁵³ is the unifying protagonist opposed to six different characters, who represent six stages in his journey, as this is resumed in the epilogue.

Ma`aseh 1 (l. 303b - 319a)

It is made up of the following stages:

1.1 Stage (l. 303b - 306a): R. Yehoshua (T2) walked and was seen by someone who called him one of the walking robbers treading the way,

1.2 stage (l. 306b - 312a): R. Yehoshua (T2) did not find the way to the city indicated by a child,

1.3 stage (l. 312b - 314a): R. Yehoshua (T2) was rebuked by a child who refused to un-cover his dish,

1.4 stage (l. 314b - 315a): R. Yehoshua (T2) was silenced by a child who refused to re-veal the quality of the water of the city,⁸⁵⁴

1.5 stage (l. 315b - 319a): R. Yehoshua entered the city and he was reprimanded by the little girl who gave him and his ass some water, for having not fulfilled the requirements of rewarding her the way Rebekah got from Eliezer in Gen. 24, 1f.

2. *Ma`aseh* 2 (l. 319b - 326a): R. Yehoshua (T3)

R. Yehoshua (T2) was rebuked by a widow, after he reacted roughly to a food spoiled by his host, because he had eaten at that point three dishes prepared in a boiling pot (*kederah*) without leaving as requested a *pe`ah*.⁸⁵⁵

3. Epilogue (l. 326b - 328a)

852See his *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three. Leiden/Boston 2003, 162-164.

853R. Yehoshua b. Chananyah (T2), according to Erubin, 53b, [*The Talmud of Babylonia. An American Translation*]. Volume III. C. Chapters 5 and 6, transl. by J. Neusner, Georgia 1984, 17, and also in the Buber edition (56).

854The third and the fourth stages are inverted in the Buber edition. This is a supplementary sign, together with the evidence in *b* Erubin 53b mentioned above, that they circulated units. G. Hasan-Rokem, op. cit. 194, refers to this fact and qualifies it as belonging to the editorial stage.

855'We leave *pe`ah* from food prepared in a *kederah* but not in an *ilpas* (a tightly covered stew pot).' This was a rabbinic disposition mentioned in Derek Erets vi, which stemmed from the biblical commandment related to the corner of the field, which provided the portion of the harvest left for the poor, see Lev. 19, 9f, and Cohen's comment *ad locum* in E. R. Here, *pe`ah* means "leftovers of a dish", in G. Hasan-Rokem, op. cit. 196.

R. Yehoshua (T2) claimed that the widow, the girl and the children in this story had won an unprecedented victory over him⁸⁵⁶ and that this unusual achievement fulfilled the understanding of TMLam. 1, 1.4 רבתי בגוים expressed in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

The next question of the historical reliability of this narrative as well as of the preceding narratives expounding this colon remains the issue to be dealt with for a complete view of this interpretive proposal. This will be done in Chapter five. The next step in this research will focus on the narrative materials to which E. R. resorts to expound the following TMLam. 1, 2.1.

II.1.3. The Third Account: The Irresistible Universal Weeping

The expounding of TMLam. (1, 2.1a) = E. R. (כב) בכו תבכה “*She bitterly weeps*”, came next with the focus on the TMLam, 1, 2.1β) = E. R. (כה) בלילה “*in the night*”, which is interpreted by means of two claims (Sti1-2) and of a narrative (A). The first claim (Sti1) addresses the extent of the weeping, while the second (Sti2), made by R. Aibu (A4), associates the weeping in the night with the complaint about the destruction of the Temple. The literary context of this short narrative is therefore different from that of the previous anecdote narratives used in the expounding of TMLam. 1, 1.2 and 1, 1.4, which are not preceded by some claim, that an anecdote narrative may be complete. The present story occurs, therefore, within an explanatory context, in which many claims are made on the phrase TMLam. 1, 2.1α) בכו תבכה “*She bitterly weeps*”. In this regard, there is no similarity with the aforementioned interpretation of Ps. 77, 71 אזכרה נגינתי בלילה “*I will remember my song in the night*,” which recalls the victorious nights of Israel. The present narrative relies on the immediate claims on the high intensity of the weeping, on its

⁸⁵⁶He spoke of לא נצחני אדם ‘never has anyone overpowered me.’ It is noteworthy that R. Yeho-shua did not allude to the man he met at the start of his journey. See further explanations, in G. Hasan-Rokem, op. cit. 198, footnote 17, 250, and the modern proposal on the content of this defeat, ibidem, 195 and 197: “[t]he enigma is translated into an enigmatic form of interpersonal communication, thereby presenting the self with a range of options for establishing relationships with the other. The integration of the subject is repeatedly undermined because of the enigma entailed in the very encounter with the other - boy, girl, woman - and because, in the narrative text, these others also represent the inchoate unintelligible, total, and annihilating forces of the inner space and of destiny”, see footnote 14, p. 250, and the issue of the historical setting below.

universality⁸⁵⁷ and, finally, on its association with the complaint about the Destruction of the Temple.

Sti 1: ‘Why does [the Community of Israel weep] in the night? Because it is only in the night that the sound travels; therefore, it is claimed in the night. **Sti2:** R. Aibo (A4) said:

Night attracts lamentation to him.’

A. ‘It happened (*ma`aseh*) pertaining to a woman who lived in the neighbourhood of Rabban Gamaliel (T2)⁸⁵⁸/T5) and had a grown-up son. Once he died, she used to weep for him at night. When Rabban Gamaliel (T2) heard her voice, he was reminded of the destruction of the Temple. He wept until his eyelids fell out. His disciples noticed it, they stood up and removed her from his neighbourhood.’

This anecdote justifies in its features its qualification as a *ma`aseh* narrative. It is brief and unitary in its structure. The indication of time and place is wanting. It can, however, be deduced from the mention of the main character, Rabban Gamaliel (T2), who belonged to the older group of the Tannaites of the second generation (c. 90 - 130 C. E.); he succeeded Rabban Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) at Yavneh. The second protagonist, the woman, is not named. That she was a woman and she wept are two cultural assumptions⁸⁵⁹ which seem to have been seen as essential to the straightforward drama which completes the exposition of the protagonists in the plot.

The function of this regular narrative is to exemplify⁸⁶⁰ with this particular person the editor’s statement of the universal weeping as well as R. Aibo (4)’s general claim that the

857‘Universality’ means that all the beings and the nature itself weep. The introducing context of the parallel narrative in the Buber edition is instructive, because it is made up of a series of claims. The first claim, supported by Num. 14, 1) used by the *midrash* and the *targum* as proof-text of rebuke, and prototype of the night of ninth of Ab, is that it is ‘about matters pertaining to the night’; it is followed by : 2) ‘this was the night, in which the Temple was destroyed’, 3) they wept *in the night* because this was not good during the day, 4) and also the voice of someone weeping in the night can be heard by far.

858He could not be Rabban Gamaliel 1 (T1), “the elder”, mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles* (Act.) 5, 34-39 as member of the Sanhedrin, and in Act. 22, 3 as teacher of the apostle Paul. He dwelled, therefore, in Jerusalem or in its vicinity, and this was no longer possible after the First War (66-70 C. E.), see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 67.

859See the use of a *meshal* with feminine character in the E. R. expounding of the also culturally determined male אֲנִי גִבּוֹר “*I am the man*” in TMLam, 3, 1f below.

860See D Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 13.

weeping at night is contagious. That it was “the leader of rabbinic Judaism during the time between 80 or 90 and c. 110,”⁸⁶¹ who was overwhelmed by the tears on behalf of the Destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, is the point. And the removal of the mourning woman by his disciples had not really produced the resolution of the crisis for the lack of an effective turning-point: the weeping had to go on because neither the son, nor the Temple would have a rebirth.

II.1.4. The Fourth Account: The Threatening Exile

This is the narrative which is used in *Eikhah Rabbati* in the expounding of TMLam 1, 3.5-6 בין המצרים כל רודפיה השיגוה “*All her pursuers have overtaken her within the straits*”, as to deal with the consequences of the exile due to the many transgressions committed by Israel, as explained above.

The term of “encompassing narrative” (A) has been used in Chapter Two to name this unusual textual construct based on Ps. 91, 6.1, “*The plague that walks in darkness; [the disaster] Ketches*⁸⁶² (*meriri*)⁸⁶³ laying waste at noonday,” because it helps account for all the claims (Stis) and reports (As) related to this unique character as part of an unitary narrative (A), whose components can be considered as some of the different moments, which are the exposition, the story unfolding, the denouement, of the same plot⁸⁶⁴. This narrative can, therefore, be analysed as follows:

1. The exposition contains the information on

861Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996,69. But as D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 13, notes it, “this claim is primarily rhetorical; it has no bearing on the separate question of whether the incident in the *ma’aseh* actually did occur or not.”

862*Ketheb* is the late transcription of the biblical nominal קטב, from a similar arabic root for ‘to cut’, and meaning 1. ruin, disaster, destruction, in Isa. 28, 2. epidemic; in Deut. 32, 24; and here, Ps. 91, 6, see W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, Berlin/Göttigen/Heidelberg 1962, *ad locum*.

863*Ketheb meriri* or simply *Ketheb* is in late Judaism the name of a demon, see W. Gesenius, *op. cit.*, and M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York [copyright 1971] 1996, *ad locum*.

864See J. L. Ska, “*Our Fathers Have Told Us*.” *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, (Subsidia biblica - 13), Roma 1990, 20f.

1.1 the time Ketheb meriri acted was the days of distress from the seventeenth of Tammuz to the ninth of Ab, spoiling from the beginning of the sixth hour until the end of the ninth, according to R. Abba b. Kahana (A3), or from the end of the fourth hour until the beginning of the ninth, as reported by R. Levi (A3),⁸⁶⁵

1.2 the terrifying traits of Ketheb meriri: all over full of eyes, scales, and hair, according to R. Yochanan (A2), while R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) says that it had one eye set over its hearts, which kills whoever looked at it.

2. the unfolding story, properly termed *ma'aseh*⁸⁶⁶ in *Eikhah Rabbati*, relates two cases of destruction related to Ketheb meriri:

2. 1. a pious looked at it and fell dead,

2. 2. R. Abbahu (A3) got a man carrying a stick in the synagogue of Caesarea from striking his neighbour, while a demon stood behind the kicker with an iron rod behind and ready to kill;

3. the denouement deals with the measures taken by R. Yochanan (A2) that the elementary and *Mishnah* teachers had to abstain from using strap during these days, and also by R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) dismissing the same classes during the hours mentioned in the exposition.

Literary facts reported in the exposition are dealt with again in the conclusion of this text. Our claim of an “encompassing narrative (A)” is justified by the textual logic disclosed in this composition. What this last explanation adds to the expounding of TMLam. 1, 3 is the very contribution we have to expect from the narrative in general, the telling of an actualizing story in the interpretation of this Biblical book. The question of the historical setting of this relation will be dealt with below.

II.1.5. The Fifth Account: Rabban Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) and the First Way into Exile

This narrative (A) is extended in nearly sixty-three lines. It follows two claims, the first of which is clearly ascribed to R. Hillel b. Berekhyah (A5), both of them paraphrasing TMLam.

⁸⁶⁵This is the Cohen's translation complement for the *Eikhah Rabbati* text גזיו סוגיא דטיהרא 'he stalks through the greater part of the midday.' Noteworthy is that the same phrase is rendered by the contextually and historically not least convincing 'interrupts the study of the midday' in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 229, col. 2.

⁸⁶⁶J. Neusner does not handle this narrative in his *Rabbinic Narrative. A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003.

1, 5 = E. R. (לב) היו צרייה לראש “*Her foes have become as chief*”, with regard to the rise of the cities rival to Jerusalem. The same thesis is narratively propounded and, as to say, broadened and radicalized in the story told as follows.

The linguistic shape of this narrative is the same in the *editio princeps* and in the text of the Munich Codex Heb. 229. The Buber edition has a couple of diverging grammatical, lexical and textual structures, which may be dealt with in the analysis of the components of this narrative. But all of these variants report the same story, in which the main character, R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1), is presented negotiating the course of his own life and the fate of his epoch within the maelstrom of his conflicting situation. The narrative(A) is made up of an exposition, the complication, the turning-point and the denouement.⁸⁶⁷

1. The exposition (l. 510b - 516a) presents the following “indispensable pieces of information about the state of affairs that precedes the beginning of the action itself⁸⁶⁸”. It appears that what is provided here are the different series of characters of the narrative. The first series is made up of the Roman military chief Vespasian who leads a three years and a half siege of Jerusalem⁸⁶⁹, together with the general of Arabia cited first, and the only who deserves some interest of the narrator in form of a debate on his name, Khilus and/or Pangar, the general of Africa, together with the general of Alexandria, and the general of Palestine. The second series of characters contains four councillors⁸⁷⁰ of Jerusalem, Ben Tsitsit, Ben Gorion, Ben Naqdimon, and Ben Kalba Shbu’a⁸⁷¹. Each of them is said to be able to feed Jerusalem ten years. The third series has two characters, Ben Bathiach, characterized as the nephew of R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) and appointee to the stores, and the latter. The very issue seemed to be the dealing of this constellation of leaders more or less involved in the subject of narrative, the drama of the destruction of Jerusalem. The issue is raised on regard to Ben Bathiach, that in his status as an

867This analysis of the plot in terms proposed by J. L. Ska, “*Our Fathers Have Told Us.*” *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, Roma 1990, 21f is more organic in the sense that the different components of the narrative are connected to each other than the taxinomic computation of the eleven units propounded in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*, Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 165 - 170.

868J. L. Ska, “*Our Fathers Have Told Us*” *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 21.

869This is the reading of הקיף ‘he surrounded’, in the *editio princeps*, while the Buber edition has עשה ‘he spent’.

870This is the *editio princeps* בולטיין, where the Buber edition, more explicit, speaks of three עשירים ‘rich men’, ‘wealthy’. It is true that only the rich men could become councillors, mem-bers of the *curia*, see G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the fourth Century*, Edinburg 2000, 26f.

871The Buber edition quotes three names, Ben Tsitsi Hakkeseth, Ben Kalbah Shbu’a, and Naq-dimon ben Gorion, and provides their etymological decoding.

appointee triggered the inciting moment of this narrative,⁸⁷² when he burnt the stores he had in custody apparently during the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman troops.

2. The solution (516b - 565a)

The attempt to solve the problem of the responsibility in the downfall of Jerusalem seems to have been worded in this narrative in terms of a demonstration on the practice of the true in the sense of the historically responsible leadership. This question is answered in a series of steps by R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s handling with Jewish as well as with Roman leaders (516 b - 565a) as following:

2.1. R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) against the Jewish revolutionary solution (516b - 529a). R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s action took two forms. He first expressed in a roundabout way his resourceful malice and got afterwards to be brought out of Jerusalem.

2.1.1. R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s reproachful outcry (516b - 521a) against the humiliation of the population in Jerusalem.

R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) has heard that his nephew Ben Bathiach had burnt all the stores. He reacted shouting: 'Woe!' People who heard it reported it to Ben Bathiach. The latter urged him to come and asked for explanation. R. Yochanan (T1) saved himself answering falsely that he had not uttered the reproving "woe", but the approving "woe", to get finally the people engage in the battle for the city as planned by the faction Ben Bathiach belonged to, he explained.

2.1.2 R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s exfiltration from Jerusalem (512b - 529a).

The spectacle of the people of Jerusalem feeding themselves drinking boiled straw convinced R. Yochanan (T1) that they were unable to stand before the Roman armies of Vespasian. He got to be transported as a corpse outside of the city by R. Eliezer (T2), R. Yehoshua (T2), and Ben Attach, who left him in a cemetery.⁸⁷³ This is also the turning/point in this narrative.

872 "The inciting moment is the moment in which the conflict or the problem appears for the first time and arouses the interest of the reader." J. L. Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us." Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 25.

873 This is the translation of בית עולם by Cohen, in accordance with M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York, ([copyright 1971] 1996), under עולם, where it is called euphemism. The Aramaic form of the same compound, בית עולם, means, however, 'sepulcher', eternal abode', in M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, second edition, Ramat-Gan/ Baltimore/London 2002, *ad locum*.

2.2. R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) under the Roman shelter (529b-565a)

R. Yochanan (T1) left the cemetery behind and joined the Roman troops. He performed here some deeds deemed as memorable that contributed to change the course of his life.

2.2.1 R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s outstanding wisdom (529b -543a)

The first move R. Yochanan (T1) did was that he asked for 'the king' Vespasian, and when he was brought before the latter, he is said to have greeted him with 'Vive, my Lord, the Emperor'⁸⁷⁴. He predicted to Vespasian, who protested that he had not to be saluted as a king that he was not, and that such a designation could be source of some trouble to him, to become a king, because, as he said on the basis of Isa. 10, 34, only a king was mighty enough to destroy the Temple of Jerusalem, obviously as he had done. The second demonstration of his skill was provided when, placed in the innermost of seven rooms, he was able to say what time in the night and during the day it was, because, as it was argued, he relied on his time measuring practice developed in his study. And the third proof of his abilities came next, when he explained on the basis of Prov. 15, 30 to Vespasian why the latter, who was worried by the case, could no longer wear his shoes after a bath, telling him that the solution he propounded was conform to Prov. 17, 22.

2. 2. 2. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s intercessions (543b - 565a)

The next deeds of R. Yochanan during his stay with the Roman troops were two series of intercessions on behalf of a colleague rabbi, for the city, the population and the Temple of Jerusalem. The first series of intercession consisted in a metaphorical debate with the generals of the Roman army, on the correct strategy to deal with Jerusalem and with its Temple. R. Yochanan (T1) defended against the general of Arabia Pangar, accused by him of bad intentions for having recommended the destruction of the Jewish capital, that the cask and the tower in which a snake nested had to be preserved,⁸⁷⁵ and the snake charmed.

The second series of intercessions took place afterwards at the request of Vespasian, before the capture and after the conquest of Jerusalem. R. Yochanan (T1) got before the capture, after the rejection of his request to spare the city, that the western gate leading to Lydda remained open to provide an exit to those who chose to run away. And once Jerusalem taken into control, he obtained that his friend or relative R Tsadoq (T1)⁸⁷⁶ be brought out of the city by R. Eliezer (T2) and R. Yehoshua (T2) before the last attack.

874The Buber edition has "long live, my Lord, the king!"

875The Buber edition and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 use correctly מנחים 'they preserve' the cask as well as the tower, while the *editio princeps* lets falsely R. Yochanan (T1) state that they burn (שורפין) the tower.

876R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s request concerns all the rabbis (כל רבנן) and it is only after-wards that the focus is put on R. Tsadoq (T1).

3. Denouement (565b - 573a)

The narrative ended when Vespasian allotted the four ramparts of the conquered Jerusalem to his four generals and ordered to destroy them. General Pangram refused to demolish the western wall he received in share, arguing that he had left it as a remembrance of Vespasian's glory, while it is stated in the text that the Heaven had disposed to keep it preserved for being the seat of the *Shekinah*. Vespasian decided to punish this transgression of his command letting the general of Arabia throw himself off the top of the gate. He did it and his ensuing death is said to have fulfilled R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s curse.

It is noteworthy, in regard to the composition of this text, that only the first series of characters mentioned in the exposition occurs in the last scene of the narrative. They have been given to carry out a case whose outcome depends on supernatural terms defined by Rabban Yocha-nan b. Zakkai (T1), as this is explicitly stated at the end of story. The acting of this Rabban in this account has to be assessed in the light of other data related to his time in the search for on the historical setting of this narrative, see below.

II.1.6. The Sixth Account: The Second Way into Exile

The next narrative (A) is introduced as belonging to a tannaitic tradition,⁸⁷⁷⁸⁷⁸ and it is the occasion for the commentator(s) to name the sins otherwise unspecified in the TMLam. 1, 9.1 = E. R. טמאתה בשוליה (לח) “*Her filthiness is in her skirts.*” It is made up of two loosely connected components, the narrator resorting to an episodic plot⁸⁷⁹ to accuse heavily the Community of Israel. J. Neusner, who adds the following *mashal* (M) to this account, speaks of a ‘complex construction.’⁸⁸⁰ The present analysis will focus on the distinctive literary and narratological features of these units. The *mashal* (M) itself will be dealt with as usual in this work, that means, separately.

877This is the case only in the *editio princeps*, and the Munich Codex He. 229, where the ad hoc formula כההוא דתנן ‘as we have learned.’

878

879The episodic plot is opposed to the unified one in that “the order of episodes can be changed, the reader can skip an episode without harm; every episode is a unit in itself and does not require the clear and complete knowledge of the former episodes to be understood,” in J.L.Ska, “*Our Fathers Have Told us*,” 17.

880J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative. A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three. Leiden/Boston 2003, 171.

The narrative under inquiry is a contextualization of the explanation⁸⁸¹ to the colon TM Lam. 1, 9.1 = E. R. טומאתה בוליה (לה) “*Her filthiness is in her*”, which has been interpreted by means of two claims (Sti1-2), the second being worded ‘in her nether limbs’ with Ex. 28, 34 על שוליה המעיל “*in the skirts of her robe*” as its proof text.⁸⁸² It seems, therefore, that this narrative extends this reference first to the priest garments, and afterwards to the geographical place, the outskirts of Jerusalem, when it is stated that ‘[T]here was a place below Jerusalem with the name Tophteh’ [Cohen]. This is an allusion to the time of Jeremiah in Jer. 7, 31 “*They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I did not command, nor did it come into my heart*”.⁸⁸³ The midrash explains Jer. 7, 31 when it presents Tophet⁸⁸⁴ as *deverbativum*, “*seduction*” of פתה ‘to open’, ‘to influence’, ‘persuade’, ‘entice’,⁸⁸⁵ juxtaposing it with [The Targum translates it] ‘the valley of Bar Hinnon’ [Cohen] ascribed to R. Yose (T3, A3?).⁸⁸⁶ And the Buber edition adds the following comment made by the Rabbis, ‘[b]ecause from there, they used to hear the shrieking of their children’⁸⁸⁷ [passed through fire] [Jastrow], which seems to be the inciting moment in which the problem appears. This is related to the presence of a hollow image ‘set up’⁸⁸⁸ within the innermost of seven chambers, holding a fire pan on a copper plate in its hand⁸⁸⁹ to receive the offerings to the image.

881 See the preceding indicative formula *dabar acher*.

882 This is the case in the *editio princeps*, the Buber edition sets at this place R. Berekhyah (A5)’s saying in the name of R. Abba b. Kahana (A3), that ‘[A]ll the priests who officiated in the days of Zedekiah were uncircumcised’ [Cohen], supported by Ez. 44, 7. But as Cohen puts it *ad locum*, the two explanations are the same, in different words.

883 See the two text traditions related to the topic “*sacrifice of children to Moloch*”, in two categories: 1. the forbidding texts, “you shall not”: Lev. 18, 21; 20, 2-5, 2. the accusing texts, “they defiled, they built”, 2 Kgs 23, 10; Jer. 32, 35.

884 תפה in Jer. 7, 31, and תפתה in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

885 The Vilna edition text ascribed this meaning to R. Yehudah (T3/4, A1/2/4/?), while the Buber text speaks of R. Yudan (A4).

886 The damage wording of this answer in the Munich Codex Herb. 229 does not help understand what it was about.

887 ורבנן אמרי שמשם היו שומעים נהמת בניהם.

888 The Aramaic verbal form is היה נתון.

889 The pan is said היתה נתונה.

This introduction is followed by the report on the very performing the sacrifice described in a series of verbal forms: 1. when someone came to offer (היה מקריב); 2. they used to open (פותחים), the predicates 1 and 2 being explicitly repeated twice, and worthy of being considered further as implicit in five cases;⁸⁹⁰ 3. they used to put (נותנין) [the child] on the copper plate; 4. they used to light (היו מסיקין) the fire pan beneath; 5. they used to sing (היו מקלסין) before the image; 6. they used to say (היו אומרים); 7. may the sacrifice be pleasant (יערב); 8. may the sacrifice be sweet (יבסם); 9. the parents had not to hear (לא ישמעו); 10. the parents had not to retract (לא יחזרו). The focus is on the sacrifice of the child which took place amid a great deal of care, providing, as A. Mintz puts it, a systematic elaboration and deepening of horror in seven steps according to the number of offerings, from outside into the inner sanctum.⁸⁹¹ Noteworthy is the fact that all the main verbal forms picturing the idolatrous ritual have a repetitive value.⁸⁹²

This is not the case for the verbal forms in the following and last component of this narrative:⁸⁹³ 1. 'there was' (היה) a specified character, 'a priest',⁸⁹⁴ 2. 'he went' (אתי) to someone, 3. 'he said to him' (אמר ליה); 4. 'such and such image has told me' (אמר לי), 5. 'you do not want' (לית את בעי), 6. 'he said to him' (אמר ליה), which occurs twice, 7. 'wait' (המתן), 8. 'when my young child comes back home' (כד אתי), 9. 'I will give him' (אנא יהיב ליה). Except the last two verbal participle forms,⁸⁹⁵ and the preceding imperative, all the verbal forms are in the perfect, which, as M. Perez Fernandez puts it, has the function "to express an action that took place at some

890Indeed seven types of offerings, graded according to their religious and sacrificial value, are brought: 1. the flour; 2. 'one of doves and pigeons'[Cohen], 3. a lamb, 4. a ram, 5. a calf, 6. an ox, 7. a child.

891A. Mintz also indicates "the parodic contrast between what transpires in this inner sanctum and the Holy of Holies of the true Temple", idem, *Hurban*, 53.

892See M. Perez Fernandez, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, transl. by Ewolde, John, Leiden/New York /Köln, 1997, 19 - 20, 137 for the construction היה plus participle, and 134 - 135 for participle expressing habitual actions in past and future.

893D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 169 distinguishes it correctly as *ma`aseh*, "part exemplum", part villain - tale . See a similar analysis in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, 170 - 171.

894The used term is כומר which, according to (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York, ([copyright 1971] 1996), 621, col. 1, interchanges in Syriac with כהנא and is always used of idolaters. This connotation is missing in M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, 2002, 254, col. 1.

895The function of the participle in this case is to express state or action either taking place in the present or having timeless quality, see M. Perez Fernandez, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, 132.

specific point in the past.”⁸⁹⁶ They provide by the way of a narratological denouement a picture of the unique case presented in accordance with rabbinic moral standards as illustration of the general and usual practice described in the first and second components. It is in regard to these standards that this idolatrous practice is condemned,⁸⁹⁷ the narrative receiving *ipso facto* a new and contemporaneous setting. The reliability of the latter has, however, to be assessed in regard to the historical setting of this narrative (A) and to the following *mashal* (M).

II.1.7. The Seventh Account: The Downfall of the Community of Israel

The heading TMLam. 1, 11.1 = E. R. כל עמה נאנחים (מא) “*All her people sigh*” and depending cola are accounted for by two short anecdote narratives (As), entwined with actualizing claims (Stis) to which they confer a vivid pictured contextual display. The Buber edition has the same text differentiated by a couple of lexical divergences and a comment. The first narrative (A) is related to TMLam. 1, 11.1 expounded with the focus on the quantifier ‘*all*’ in “*All her people sigh*”, to distinguish the victims of the disastrous alimentary situation during the Roman siege which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. from those afflicted by the analogous case before the exile in 586 B.C.E., which, as E. R. states it on the basis of Jer. 52, 6, did not harm the people of Judah.⁸⁹⁸ The involved characters are therefore the predicate patients “*all the people*”, the time is the couple of days before 70 C.E., the place has to be guessed as being the blockaded city of Jerusalem, the issue to be solved being the act of supplying food to the besieged population.

Three statements account for the desperation of the Jerusalemites. The first is that they were obliged to undertake renewed moves to get food. The related narrative speaks of four steps. The second is that they had to offer only the precious golden basket⁸⁹⁹ they obviously possessed,

896M. Perez Fernandez, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, 115.

897The disapproval is a strong one, as stated by the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the E. R. against the attempt to sacrifice the young child who was at school, (lines 631b - 632a), ‘[B]roken man! Of all the sons you have, there is none you are willing to sacrifice for idol-worship except this child who is consecrated to My name.’

898This designation is replaced in the Buber edition by תלמידי חכמים ‘the disciples of scholars.’

899This seems to be the נתנו מהמודיהם “*they gave their desirable things*” in the TMLam. 1, 11.3.

and they were given in return progressively valueless food by the enemy: wheat, barley, straw,⁹⁰⁰ nothing. The third is the bemoaning comment⁹⁰¹ made by R. Yehudah b. Signa (A5) in the name of R. Acha (A4) with the support of Deut. 15, 10⁹⁰² against the besiegers who received but did not give. The concluding claim on the size of a date⁹⁰³ made by Rabbi R. [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4), and on the size of a berry by R. Chananyah (T1/2/3A3/5) as requested to expound the following (verse 11.2a) להגיב נף “*to bring back the soul*” states negatively the extent of a deprivation which annihilated the last resource of self-esteem, as reported in R. Pinchas (A5)’s anecdote narrative (A) to account for (verse 11,3) ראה יהוה והביטה כי הייתי זוללה “*see, O Lord, and behold how abject I am*”:

‘The case of two prostitutes of Ashkelon who were quarrelling with one another. And while they were quarrelling, one said to the other: ‘You should not leave this place because you look like a Jewess. Once they became reconciled with each other, she said: ‘I absolve and remit to you everything. That you said, that I look like a Jewess, that will I neither absolve, nor remit to you.’

CONCLUSION

The seven narratives of this heading provide a contextualization to the claims made on the fall of the Community of Israel described as a departure into exile. Jerusalem is no longer the richest and populous city that she was, neither its inhabitants the wisest population. The latter are now held in contempt, prey to irrepressible weeping and for their haters, because of their violence and idolatry.

II.2. The Conquered Community of Israel (TMLam.1,12-22)

Two accounts are used in this heading to expose the situation of the Community of Israel after the conquest by the Romans. While the second account does have only an item, there is an emphasis on some cases that seem important to be extensively dealt with in the first account. All

900It was the spectacle of starved inhabitants drinking water from boiled straw that according to E. R. narrative to TMLam. 1, 5.1 decided R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) to ask to be brought out of the besieged Jerusalem, see above.

901It is wanting in the Buber edition.

902Deut. 15, 10, “*You shall surely give to him...*” in response to Deut. 15, 9.

903The Buber edition has the size of a berry ascribed to Rab (bA1) and the size of a date to R. Chanina (?T1/A1/3/4).

of them are about the members of the subjugated Community of Israel. The exegetical-homiletical narrative (A) to TmLam. 1,13 has been dealt with as a collection of claims which are not supported by a solid narrative plot.

II.2.1. The First Account: The Weeping Over the Collapse and Loss of Aura

The ten anecdote narratives (As) that are first at the focus of this research occur according to the Buber edition⁹⁰⁴ in the second of the three rubrics that are made up of seven claims (Stis), in which the Community of Israel complains about the breakdown of the infrastructures and of the tradition of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to account for the TMLam. 1, 16. 1. They are followed by the six - or - seven claims (Stis) in the Buber edition in which the complaint reported by the Compiler focuses on statements related to the mistreatment of the children, the cessation of the priesthood and the kingship, of the Torah and the sacrifices, as well as of the levitical watches in which beneficial fasts were carried out. It has been stated that the ten anecdote accounts (As) provide a narrated support to the preceding exegetical claims to TMLam. 1, 16. 1. The present study relies on the Buber edition for the localization of these narratives; it relies, however further, on the texts as displayed in the *editio princeps*. The two traditions report the same narratives, but in somewhat different sequences.

The ten anecdote narratives (As) are neatly distinguished by different characters and place. This work addresses issues related to narrative features such as the plot, that is, the time and/or logic of the telling as a vehicles of transformation, the characters, the narration time. It is not therefore about just deducing the so-called category-formations of the Aggada supposed to be spelled out by means of a topical programme that can be obtained, according to J. Neusner, “simply translating each pericope into its proposition and then organizing the propositions in a coherent system.”⁹⁰⁵ The following analysis will instead rely on linguistic, that is, grammatical,

904This choice is made against data of the other tradition of text represented by the *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229. and even if the adopted view may be questionable, the very fact that the Buber edition presents its own sequence of claims (Stis) and anecdote narratives (As) is indicative of two different arguably defensible readings.

905J. Neusner (edited by), *The Native Category-Formation of the Aggada. The Earlier Midrash-Compilations*. Volume, 2000, 144. His main documentary claims intersect, however, with the findings of this research when the literary-rhetorical components of Lamentations - *Eikhah Rabbati* are addressed. An analysis, that deals with

lexical and literary features⁹⁰⁶ that contribute to the shaping of these anecdote narratives (As). These narratives are subdivided into two groups according to the identity of their characters.

1. The Anonymous Jewish Victims'

With the exception of the third anecdote narrative (A), all the three other anecdote narratives (As) are introduced by the mention of one of the Roman general-emperors involved in the Jewish Wars of the first and the second centuries CE, Vespasian (66-70), Trajan (115-117),⁹⁰⁷ Hadrian (132-135) and, concluded by TMLam. 1, 16. 1 stated by the Holy Spirit.

1.1. The Suicide of the Prominent Jerusalemites

The readings of this first narrative (A1) provided by the text traditions represented by the *editio princeps* (nearly 11 lines) (796b-806a) on one hand,⁹⁰⁸ and by the Buber edition on the other hand, are identical with the only exception of the quoted verses of Ps. 44, 21-22, see below. The noticeable divergences are orthographic,⁹⁰⁹ lexical, with different words used for the same grammatical function, as it will be shown in the following, and syntactic: the text edited by Buber is characterized by completing word forms where the *editio princeps* text seems to suffice with what can be deemed to be the gaps. It will appear that they undeniably contribute to the framing and the meaning of this narrative that is made up of following components:

1. The Roman general Vespasian, that the Buber edition cursed with 'may his ones be pulverized,'⁹¹⁰ is reported to have decided to send three ships filled with prominent

the corpora of narratives and their literary traits, does not ignore the so-called documentary boundaries, and concepts, that they should logically shape, see idem, *Rabbinic Narratives: A Documentary Perspective*, 2003, xiv.

906 They are listed above as comprising "the plot, that is, the dynamic, sequential incidents, the characters and the narration time measured in words, sentences, lines, paragraphs necessary to tell (or peruse) the concrete narrative."

907 This is reported to have been the rebellion of the Jewish diaspora against Rome, see G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 1979, 19, idem, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 9. Auflage, 2011, 12.

908 The *editio princeps* and the Munich Codex Heb. 229 that are different in the omission of some wordforms only, belong to this tradition.

909 This is represented by one case: the *editio princeps* reads: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, enlightened [האיר] them', while the Buber edition has: [העיר].

910 This is the rendering of the recurrent cursing formulaic עֲצֻמֹת שְׁחִיק see A. Cohen, *Lamentations*, 125, note 3, and J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*, Volume Three, 172. 173. 175.

men and women from Jerusalem,⁹¹¹ obviously to practise prostitution in the Roman brothels;

2. The embarked prominent Jewish men decide to resist to avoid angering further their God⁹¹² abroad. A dialogue follows that is made up of a question to the women, ‘built for sexual relations,’⁹¹³ and who reject also the Vespasian’s plan⁹¹⁴ They make the decision to throw themselves into the sea, to gain life in the world to come.⁹¹⁵ This move is encouraged by the Holy One, blessed be He, quoting Ps. 68, 23;⁹¹⁶

3. the conflict is settled by the suicide of the prominent Jews: they throw themselves into the sea, one company after another,⁹¹⁷ reciting Ps 44, 21-23;⁹¹⁸

4. and the denouement is provided by the Holy Spirit crying TMLam. 1, 16. 1: “*For these things I weep.*”

1.2. The Massacre of the Jewish Fighters

The second (A2) and the third (A3) anecdote narratives (As) have in common the same characters. They are closely bound; their frames are identical in both text traditions. But only in the *editio princeps* does the first narrative possess a concluding sentence and the formulaic TMLam. 1, 16. 1, while the introduction of the second narrative differs in both traditions. Pertaining to the second narrative (nearly 10 lines) (806b-816a) (A2), it has to be noted that both

911This specification is provided by the Buber edition, the *editio princeps* having only the common גדולי ירושלים ‘prominent citizens of Jerusalem’, according to M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary...*, *ad locum*.

912This is according to the Buber edition; the *editio princeps* reads the simple pronoun הכעסנוהו ‘we have angered him’.

913This is the rendering of the euphemism לך לך that occurs in all the textual traditions.

914The function of this dialogue introduced by four אמרו ‘they said’ is obviously to help dramatize the inner life of the protagonists in search for a decision, as this is the case in the Bible, see R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 63-87, and J. L. Ska, ‘*Our Fathers have told us*’, 89f, with literature.

915The Buber edition has, ‘we will have a share in the world to come’.

916The Buber edition only expounds this Ps. 68, 23 “*The Lord said, I will bring [them] back from Basham*”, ‘I will bring them back from the teeth of lions’; “*I will bring them back from the depths of the sea*”, ‘this is meant literally’.

917This is the rendering of ה of the *editio princeps*, while the Buber edition has ספינה ‘freight-ship’ [Jastrow].

918The two text traditions differ in the order of the cited verses; the Buber edition has the regular order with the last verse complete, while the *editio princeps* quotes the first colon of Ps. 44, 23 before Ps. 44, 22, Ps. 44: 21, “*If we have forgotten the name of our God, and have spread our hands to an alien God*”; 22, *shall not God search out this? For he knows the secrets of the heart*; 23. *Yes, for your sake we slain all the day long; we are counted as sheep of slaughter.*”

text traditions differ mostly in the use of different grammatical forms, in the readings and the tendency to explicitness of the Buber edition, see below.

1. The Roman general Hadrian, who is cursed even in the *editio princeps* by the formulaic ‘may his bones be pulverized’, stationed troops at Emmaus,⁹¹⁹ at Kefar Leqatia⁹²⁰ and at Bethel of Judea⁹²¹ with the mission to capture⁹²² the Jewish fighters obviously thrown into disarray;

2. Hadrian sent out heralds announce that every hidden Jew has to come to receive an assurance [of safety⁹²³] from the king. The Buber edition only reports the apostasy of the Jewish heralds, while both text traditions inform on the proclamation of the deceitful ‘[I]nstead of asking that the dead be resurrected, pray that those alive will not be caught’,⁹²⁴ that attract only the non suspicious Jews who were gathered in the valley of Bet Rimmon,⁹²⁵

3. Hadrian orders his general to kill them, just the time he has finished to eat a piece of cake and the leg of a chicken,⁹²⁶

4. Hadrian’s order is executed: the blood of the slain Jews streams as far as Cyprus, and the Holy One, blessed be He, utters the TMLam.1,16.1.

1.3. The Jewish Fighters Compelled to Cannibalism

The third narrative (A3) (8lines) (lines 816b-825a) stands in the continuation of the preceding second anecdote narrative (A2) with which it has in common the main protagonists. While the transition to it is clearly marked by the concluding TMLam. 1, 6 1 in the *Vilna edition*,⁹²⁷ the Buber edition begins together with the latter with the mention of the move made

919This is for חמתא , in the *editio princeps*, and for חמת גדר in the Buber edition.

920It is cited at the third place in the Buber edition.

921The Buber edition cites at the second place Bet Lehem.

922His ordinance, ‘Whoever escapes from one place will be captured in the other place’ is expressed twice in the *Vilna edition*, the first copule in the perfect, while the Buber edition cites it once and in the imperfect.

923This is an appropriate rendering of the unspecified מילא by Cohen.

924The onset of this sentence is however uncertain in Aramaic: שאיל מחזרה אייתין in the *editio princeps*, and שאול מפלגא מתוך in the Buber edition.

925This designation belongs to the *editio princeps*, the Buber edition reading only ‘in a certain valley.’

926The text of the Buber edition ends here.

927The Buber edition mentions this concluding Holy Spirit’s crying expressed by TMLam. 1, 16. 1 at the end of the third narrative (A3), while the *editio princeps* does not quote it at this position.

by those of the hidden 'Jews'⁹²⁸ that have not been tempted by the deceitful message of the heralds sent by Hadrian. Noteworthy is the fact that the Buber edition is alone in the use of the Aramaic introductory formulaic עובדא 'case' to designate the following deed handled however in both text traditions as the topic of this second narrative.

1. The exposition is made up of two categories of the protagonists: the hidden or imprisoned Jewish fighters that strive to feed themselves with the flesh of their fallen mates brought by one of them in general, and the particular fighter, whose case is dealt with in this narrative.

2. This fighter was sent⁹²⁹ one day to bring back some corpse to be eaten.⁹³⁰ He found the body of his slain father, he hid him, marked the spot, and he reported that he got nothing. Another was sent under the pressure of the famine; he followed the scent, found the body, brought it and they ate it.

3. After they have eaten, the corpse's finder told, answering a question,⁹³¹ from where he got it. The indication he gave led the bereaved son proclaim that he has eaten his father's flesh, fulfilling, the narrator reported, Ez. 5, 10.⁹³² This fact, the Buber edition notes, is complained by the Holy Spirit on the basis of TMLam. 1, 16. 1.

1.4. The Martyrdom of the Jewish Devotees

The fourth narrative (A4) (lines 825b-838a) reports a deed of the third Roman general Trajan (98-117 CE) cursed obviously for violence he committed against Jews in devotion. Both text traditions offer the identical reading and outlines, while the divergences are related to grammatical and lexical forms.

928The Buber edition reads the *ithpae* 'I participle' מטמרין, 'hidden', where the *editio princeps* has the passive הבושין 'imprisoned' with the anaphoric composite מבהון 'those of them' to mean that it was about the members of the same group of Jewish fighters.

929He is well identified by the imperative in the Buber edition, while the *editio princeps* remains in the imprecision of the jussif ייזיל בר נש מינן 'may one of us go out'.

930The Buber edition makes it clear about a company of fighters hidden in a cave.

931The question was put according to both text traditions - see the singular of the *editio princeps*, by the son of the killed fighter; only the Buber edition precises that he asked after קהיין שינוי דיינוקא 'the teeth of the child became blunt'.

932Ez. 5, 10.1-2, "So the fathers shall eat the sons in your midst; and the sons shall eat their fathers."

1. Trajan's wife is said to have given birth to a child on the ninth of Ab, while the Jews⁹³³ were observing the mourning rites of that day, and to have lost him by death⁹³⁴ on Hanukkah. The Jews decided nevertheless⁹³⁵ to light candles to mark the dedication of the Temple following Judas Maccabaeus' victory over Antiochus IV Epiphanes (165-160 BCE). This move is reported by no further precision to Trajan's wife in direct speech⁹³⁶ with the comment that the Jews were against Trajan; they mourned when she gave birth to their child and now that the child is dead, they rejoice lighting their candles.

2. Trajan's wife is reported to have briefed⁹³⁷ her husband on this alleged sedition urging him that he'd better come conquer the Jews and not to remain far away dealing with the inoffensive Barbarians. The general modified his strategic plans, estimated to join the new battle field in ten days, but the wind helped reduced this route⁹³⁸ in five days; he found the Jews expounding⁹³⁹ Deut. 28, 49⁹⁴⁰ and presents himself as the preordained eagle of the misfortune.

3. The resolution of the altercation is carried out in two times. Trajan is said to have first ordered his legions to surround and exterminate the Jewish males. He secondly demanded in a direct speech the Jewish females to surrender themselves to his legions if they wanted to avoid what he has done to their husbands.⁹⁴¹ They refused, requesting the same treatment inflicted to the Jewish males;⁹⁴² they were consequently surrounded and killed by the legions.

933This is the reading of the Buber edition while the *editio princeps* speaks of כל ישראל 'all Israel'.

934The Buber edition has the simple מית, while the *editio princeps* uses the phonotactically and semantically marked נשחתק.

935Both traditions report that this move, framed in direct speech, was an act of conscious resisting: ומה דהיא היא 'what will be' in the Buber edition, and מה דבעי לימטי עלן ימטי 'let what may happen against us occur' in the *editio princeps* that ascribes this act to Israel.

936Both traditions use the slandering expression, אמרין לישן ביש 'they report evil gossip, calumny, denunciation' [Jastrow]. For the Buber edition, the denunciation is made to Trajan himself, using the medium of his wife.

937Only the *editio princeps* speaks of כתבה 'she wrote'.

938The Buber edition ascribes the exceptional performance to the wind, while the *editio princeps* tradition mentions אילפא 'the ship' Trajan went on.

939That Trajan went directly into the synagogue is reported only in the Buber edition.

940Deut. 28, 49a, "The Lord shall raise a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flies". Only the Buber edition does not notice the potential incongruity quoting further Deut. 28, 49b, "a nation whose tongue you will not understand."

941This noun phrase, בעליכם, is used by Trajan only in the Buber edition, the *editio princeps* having the general לאנשים 'to the men'.

942This word occurs in the Buber edition while the *editio princeps* has the picturesque באתעאי 'the inferiors' what you have done בעילאי 'to the superiors'.

4. Their blood is said to have mingled with the blood of others, streaming as far as Cyprus, and the Holy Spirit cried, TMLam. 1, 16. 1, see above the denouement to the 1.2 narrative.

These four narratives (As), whose historical content will be discussed below, are followed by the next six anecdotes in the *editio princeps*, and five in the Buber edition with sufficient features that make them to a particular group of accounts.

2. The Reversed Fortune of the Prominent Jews

The six anecdote narratives (As) that occur in this rubric are each introduced as a *ma'aseh* and concluded further by TMLam. 1, 16 uttered by the Holy Spirit. They are characterized by a recurrent compositional pattern: the Jewish protagonists, all members of the High Society of Jerusalem, as shown in their mentioned biological extraction, e.g. the son versus the father, the daughter of, etc..., are humiliated and consequently demolished in the aftermath of the Roman conquest. This scheme varies in regard to the identity of the involved personages and the extent of the mistreatment. The analysis follows the *editio princeps* ordering of the narratives.

2. 1. The Unusual Reunion of the Two Children of Tsadoq the High Priest (A5)

The outline of this *ma'aseh* (lines 838b-853a), that comes first in all records, is identical in both text traditions; there is no independent reading, but the wording presents a non-negligible amount of differences. The Buber edition fills some syntactical gaps and provides a couple of diverging grammatical and lexical forms that will be reported below. In his analysis of this narrative, J. Neusner considers on the basis of his own analytical principles, that this account aims at the mutual recognition and that this goal is achieved at the end, when both children embrace, kiss each other⁹⁴³ and then expire. But the same Author's remark, that "[O]mitted is a hint as to why they did not know one another to begin with"⁹⁴⁴ indicates undoubtedly that this is

943The Buber edition adds that 'they wept' before 'they expired'.

944J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective. Volume Three*, 2003, 177. It is indeed likely that both teenagers were mature enough when they were brought into captivity and sold as slaves! And noteworthy in this regard is that the Buber edition, on which J. Neusner relies, reports the indicative וטרדון באפיהון 'they kept in commotion in their faces', see further the dealing of the paralel variant in *b.Gittin* with this issue.

a complex narrative that can be described, broadly together with this J. Neusner⁹⁴⁵, and without resorting to the hypothesis of a distance in time between capture and reunion, as made up of two successive plots of resolution and revelation.⁹⁴⁶

1. Exposition: Two children, a boy and a daughter,⁹⁴⁷ of R.⁹⁴⁸ Tsadoq, high priest⁹⁴⁹, are said to have been captures⁹⁵⁰ and brought into exile where two different officers⁹⁵¹ acquired them. The male was afterwards given by his legal owner to a whore in payment of due sexual gratification,⁹⁵² and the female to a merchant⁹⁵³ in exchange of wine, as asserted in Joel 4, 3.⁹⁵⁴

2. Action: The main protagonists are here the wine merchant and the whore. The latter goes to the merchant and offers the deal of pairing her Jewish male slave with the Jewish female slave in his possession. The offspring will be divided among them. It happened that the two youngsters, “treated as animals to be mated for reproduction” (Hasan-Rokem 27) at the benefit of their heathen owners,⁹⁵⁵ found, however, to the human need of questioning⁹⁵⁶ in search for the identity of each other, opening in fact the second case of this telling.

945See the text subdivisions in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, 2003, 176-7.

946The same claim is made when it is stated that this narrative is made up of a staircase plot, that is, based successively on the action first and secondly on knowledge. Further, if it is considered that the project of the harlot was to obtain offsprings to be shared, this narrative is made up of two different scenes, that can rely on J. Neusner's description.

947They are specified in this order in all the textual records.

948This information is provided only by the Buber edition.

949The Buber edition repeats twice this information that is uttered only by his daughter in the *editio princeps*.

950See the Aramaic niph'al נִשְׁבּוּ.

951The *editio princeps* has סרדיוט M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the targumim*. Talmud Babli. Yerushalmi and midrashic Literature, 1996, ad locum, has ‘Roman or Greek officer, captain’, while M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. Second Edition, 2002, ad locum, renders it by ‘soldier’. The Buber edition reads איסטרטיוט , ‘properly soldier, later, Roman officer’, in M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the targumim*. Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and midrashic Literature, 1996, ad locum, and ‘commander’, under איסטרטיג in M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. Second Edition, 2002.

952This precision is given in the Buber edition.

953The merchant is named twice חנוני ‘storekeeper’, in the *editio princeps*, while the Buber edition calls him חנוני for the first time, and קפילא ‘shopkeeper, tavernkeeper’ in M. Sokoloff, *op. cit.*, ad locum, in the second occurrence.

954Only the Buber edition quotes all this verse.

955The Buber edition has סגרו ‘they closed’ [them], while the *editio princeps* reads נסבונון ויהבונון ‘they took them’ within a house.

956 See the use of טרדון באפיהון ‘they kept in commotion in their faces’ in the Buber edition to introduce this step.

3. Recognition: while it is true that the girl launches this new step with her weeping, the interrogatory process that leads to their mutual recognition as brother and sister is marked by the boy's six questions on the reason of her weeping, the name of her father, the place they live in, the identification sign of their house, if she has a brother or a sister, and if she will recognize the distinctive scar, that characterized her brother.⁹⁵⁷

4. Denouement: As soon as the brother has uncovered his shoulder,⁹⁵⁸ they recognize one another,⁹⁵⁹ and the emotional charge of this finding to each other let them embrace, kiss one another,⁹⁶⁰ until their souls expired. This outcome caused the Holy Spirit cry further, "*For these things I weep*"(TMLam.1, 16.1).

2.2. The Ordeal of Miriam Boethus

This second account (lines 853b-864a) in this rubric is fourth in the Buber edition. Both traditions have the same outline, but some differences in words point to the nature of this anecdote. There is no appropriate plot, but a structure that articulates two contrasting moments the protagonist goes through.⁹⁶¹

1. This main character is a certain Miriam and she appears in her features,⁹⁶² 1.1. she is the daughter of Boethus,⁹⁶³ 1.2. she has been married by Yehoshua b. Gamla, that 'the king appointed to the high priesthood.' 1.3 Once she decided to visit her husband performing⁹⁶⁴ on the Day of Atonement in the Temple,⁹⁶⁵ it is reported that carpets were displayed in vain from 'the door of her house to the entrance of the Temple to avoid her feet feel the damp;' 1.4. and when her husband died, she was allowed by the Sages from his estate, two *seahs* of wine. This was obviously a favour with regard to her status, because, according to Hos. 4,11,⁹⁶⁶ wine, as discussed by the Rabbis, had to be provided,

957The Buber edition has in addition three questions: it is made clear that Jerusalem was the place they lived in, their house identified, and it is asked only about her brother and his distinctive sign.

958This is the version of the Buber edition, while the *editio princeps* has גלי גרמיה 'he bared himself.'

959 This is a pure interpretation, because the Aramaic text has the masculine singular חכים דיין לדין 'he recognizes one another.'

960 The Buber edition adds that 'they wept together.'

961 J.Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*, Volume Three, 2003, 179 speaks of "the same two-part program", that is repeated in these anecdotes.

962These traits are focused on in the Buber edition by means of three rhetorical questions.

963 She is as such called 'Marta' in the Buber edition.

964 Only the Buber edition reports that she wanted to see how her husband of high priest 'reads in the Torah.'

965 This latter information on the Temple is not provided in the Buber edition.

966This is in the Buber edition the answer to an explicit question, wanting in the *editio princeps*, on the reason of the mentioned prohibition.

as stated by R. Abbahu (A3) in the name of R. Yochanan (A2), for cooking, or, following R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1), as a complement to the alimony of a nursing woman, to increase milk.

2. The very fact that R. Eleazar b. R. Tsadoq (T2/3) saw the hairs of this prominent woman, in whom he deemed Deut. 28,56 fulfilled, bound by the Roman conquerors to the tails of the horses of Arabs⁹⁶⁷ to make her run from Jerusalem to Lydda⁹⁶⁸ got him despair of consolation.

It is evident, from this analysis, that the first part of this narrative provides a characterization of the main protagonist, while the only action is displayed in the second component, in which the tension is resolved in the sense of degradation caused by the cruelty of the conqueror. This same pattern is used in the following anecdote narratives (As).

2.3. The Humiliating Starvation of Miriam Naqdimon

The third anecdote (lines 864b - 8970a) occurs as the fifth account of this rubric in the Buber edition. It is closely related to the preceding anecdote in some common words, and the broad thematic structure within which it is displayed.

1. The main character is further Miriam, 1. this time a daughter of Naqdimon; 2. the Sages allotted to her⁹⁶⁹ five hundred gold dinars to purchase daily perfumes; 2. she contested, 970 however, this allowance as unsuitable for her.

2. It is further reported that the same R. Eleazar b. R. Tsadoq (T2/3) saw her gathering barley from beneath the hooves of the horses in Acco, in fulfilment of Song 1,8,971 and that this spectacle makes him further despair of consolation.

2.4. The Vexing Mortification of Miriam Nachum

This fourth anecdote (lines 870b-874a) is the sixth account in the Buber edition. In both text traditions, the present narrative is syntactically made up of the same sentences that are woven

967 There is no mention of Arabs in the Buber edition.

968 This painful journey does further not occur in the Buber edition.

969 Both text traditions use the Aramaic פסק 'to provide', 'to assign'.

970 The sentence אף היא עמדה וקללה אותם 'she also stood up and cursed them,' that occurs in both text traditions, means that this anecdote has always followed the preceding, in which the motif of resistance to the decision of the Sages can be, however, hardly pinpointed.

971 It is true that it is by the narrator that רעי את גדיותיך "*feed your kids*" (Song 1,8.2β), that is reported as ראי 'see' in the Buber edition, is suggested to be read רעי את גויתיך 'feed your body.'

by differentiated words and word - forms, exactly as it is original in the use of the structure of the preceding two anecdotes. The juxtaposition of the two contrasting steps is replaced here by a summary plot:

1. The exposition contains data related to the main character, that is, once again, Miriam, 1.1. said to be daughter of Tanchum,⁹⁷² 1.2. to have been taken captive and ransomed in Acco,⁹⁷³ 1.3. and to have been given⁹⁷⁴ a shift.

2. The second component addresses the misfortune of Miriam in her exile, and the way she coped with it. Miriam went to wash⁹⁷⁵ her shift in the sea, the wave came and carried it away. she received another shift, went to wash it in the sea, and once again, the wave took it away.⁹⁷⁶ Her donors put forward to buy another shift,⁹⁷⁷ but Miriam rejected the offer, arguing that ‘the collector has to collect his debt.’

3. Denouement: It seems that it was on the basis of this justification of what Miriam perceived as a punishment,⁹⁷⁸ that the Holy One, blessed be He, ordered the sea to give back her shift.

2.5. More than the Sacrifice of Isaac.

The Martyrdom of Miriam, the Daughter of Tanchum, with Her Seven Sons.

This fifth and most extended story (lines 874b-931a) on a mother with her seven sons⁹⁷⁹ is second account in the Buber edition. There is no substantial difference of its outline in both traditions; but diverging lexical items, sentence structures and biblical quotations are the many evidences showing that this account has been used in various socio-cultural contexts. It is close to the preceding narrative (2.4) with which it shares the same female protagonist, and whose plot

972 ‘Tanchum’ is reported in the Buber edition, while the editio princeps has ‘Boethus Nachtum’.

973 Noteworthy is that except her ascription to the famous Tanchum, the main protagonist is no longer described in features related to her splendor, as this is the case in the two preceding anecdotes.

974 The *editio princeps* reports זבנין ‘they purchase’, and the Buber edition הביאו ‘they brought’.

975 The *editio princeps* reads אזלת למישטפיה ‘she went to wash’, and the Buber edition has ירדה לטבול ‘she went down to/for bathing.’

976 That is אתא גלא ונסביה ‘the wave came and took it away,’ in the *editio princeps*, and עלה הים והציף את כליה ‘the sea rose and caused her garment to float’ in the Buber edition.

977 The Buber edition does not report this move.

978 The use in both text traditions of וכיון שצידקה ‘and when she justified...’ does not imply a direct consequential link between Miriam’s statement and the reappearance of her shift.

979 The versions and variants of this story, that may originate in the Second Book of Maccabees, chapter 7, are provided in G. Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 229, footnote 21, 118f.

receives here a detailed shape.⁹⁸⁰ The text is made up of repeated and extended dialogues interrupted by actions.

1. The exposition (l. 874b-875a)⁹⁸¹ introduces some characters, that are Miriam, the daughter of Tanchum⁹⁸² with her seven sons, on the one hand, and the emperor⁹⁸³ on the other hand. They are related respectively to the Sages and the nations of the world, that intervene in the concluding part of this text. Miriam and her seven sons are said to have been taken captives, and placed within seven *cancelli*.⁹⁸⁴

2. The confrontation (l. 875b-885a): the first six of Miriam's sons resist in an almost similar pattern⁹⁸⁵ the king's request to bow before the image,⁹⁸⁶ invoking

980The main components of this narrative have been exposed in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective, Volume Three*, 2003, 179-184. They are, however, ordered here within units that conform to the present analysis. It is, for instance, not necessary to speak with J. Neusner of "secondary addition" (p. 184) about components that are responsive to preceding counterpart.

981It is termed "prologue" in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective, Volume Three*, 2003, 184.

982It has to be recalled that the *editio princeps* has בת נחתום 'daughter of Nachtum' while the Buber edition reads בת תנחום 'daughter of Tanchum'.

983The *editio princeps* has קיסר 'Caesar, the Roman emperor', and the Buber edition שלטן 'ruler, governor' with both M Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the midrashic Literature*, 1996, and M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, second edition, 2002, *ad loca*.

984The Buber edition does not inform about this location. It just reports that the governor got the captives imprisoned individually - may be in seven *cancelli*- and brought successively before him.

985This pattern is differently worded in the Vilna edition ('[G]od forbid! I will not prostrate myself before an image'), except for the second son that nearly utters the complex sentence that occurs in the Buber edition: '[G]od forbid! My brothers did not prostrate themselves, neither will I do.'

986This request worded השתחוה לצלם '[P]rostrate yourself before the image' [Cohen] is properly speaking made in the Vilna edition only to the first three sons, while the following three sons quote the Scriptures as soon as they appear. The Buber edition has the composite sentence השתחוה לצלם כאשר שהסתהו אחיך '[P]rostrate yourself before the image like your brothers did', that is obviously mechanically used also in the case of the first and eldest son!

successively the Biblical verses Exod. 20, 2⁹⁸⁷. 3⁹⁸⁸; 34, 14⁹⁸⁹; 22, 19⁹⁹⁰; Deut. 6, 4⁹⁹¹; 7, 21. 2⁹⁹² and are put to death.⁹⁹³

3. The climax of the narrative is reached in the timely most extended account (l. 885b-917a), when the emperor faces the seventh son, that is said in both text traditions to be the youngest of the seven sons.⁹⁹⁴ The arguing is layered and complex. The child asserts after his eldest brothers his attachment to monotheism (l. 887-888. 1)⁹⁹⁵ and he recalls the stipulation of exclusiveness in the covenant with the Holy One, blessed be He (l. 888.2-890),⁹⁹⁶ he refuses the emperor's offer of amenities (l. 891-895),⁹⁹⁷ and rejects the emperor's authority⁹⁹⁸ because of his belief in the living God⁹⁹⁹ that cannot, however, deliver his brothers and himself from the present persecution, the emperor being not worthy¹⁰⁰⁰ of 'a miracle being performed through him' [Cohen] (l. 896-917a).

4. The turning-point (l. 917b-922a) that brings "a decisive change of direction in the dramatic action"¹⁰⁰¹ is caused by the intervention of the mother¹⁰⁰² that is opportunely

987Exod.20, 2. 1: "I am the Lord, your God".

988Exod 20, 3: "You shall not have any other gods before me".

989Exod 34, 14: "For you shall not bow down to another god". The Buber edition has quoted Exod 22, 19 below.

990Exod 22, 19: "One sacrificing to the gods shall be destroyed, unless it is only to the Lord". The Buber edition quotes Exod. 20, 5.

991Deut. 6, 4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, the Lord is one". The Buber edition quotes Deut. 4, 39.

992Deut. 7, 21. 2: "For the Lord your God is in the midst of you, a God great and awful". The Buber edition has Deut. 6, 4.

993The Vilna edition gets the emperor גור for all the Miriam's sons, except for the first, while the Buber edition reports the Hebrew צור, that does not occur in the case of the fifth son!

994This may be the reason the emperor addresses him with the vocative בני 'my son' in the *editio princeps*, as the mother will further do. See the child's extended explanatory answer proper to the Buber edition.

995This statement is based on Deut. 4, 39 and is wanting in the Buber edition.

996Deut. 26, 17-18 is mentioned in both text traditions to support this claim.

997This emperor's offer does not exist in the Buber edition.

998It is symbolized by his ring he declares to be willing to throw in front of image to test the child's obedience to his order (l. 896-7).

999The child demonstrates on the basis of the Biblical verses that his God is not an idol, because he speaks, sees, hears, smells, his hands founded the earth, and walks. The *editio princeps* and the Buber edition quote as proof the same Biblical verses, except for the eyes and the throat.

1000This very reproach is expressed in different words, כשר 'fit', 'honest', הגון 'fit', 'worthy', in the *editio princeps*, זכאי 'righteous', אכזרי 'cruel', 'merciless', in the Buber edition. And the *editio princeps* has much more agents committed by the Holy One, blessed be He, to punish guilty human beings than the Buber edition.

1001J. L. Ska, sj, "Our Fathers have told us..." , 29.

1002G. Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life*, 108-125, that is about "the feminine power of laments, tales and love", considers that the tension in this account "focuses on the figure of the woman, the protagonists, and on her relationships with the male characters in the story, ibidem, 114. 117: "the story emphasizes the centrality of the mother, who is as the focus of the confrontation with the authorities." This view is not supported by our narratological analysis.

introduced as to say to encourage her youngest son.¹⁰⁰³ Noteworthy is the fact mentioned by Hasan-Rokem¹⁰⁰⁴ that she does not quote biblical verses.¹⁰⁰⁵ This handling can be deemed as showing her willingness to rely exclusively on her own motherly convincing power to strengthen her youngest son¹⁰⁰⁶ in his determination to resist the imperial pressure.¹⁰⁰⁷

5. The resolution (l. 922b-926a): the emperor's order came to completion when this youngest child is put to death while his mother spends strengthening words, reassuring him that he is joining father's Abraham bosom to whom he has to tell that she made the more effective sacrifice of her seven children.¹⁰⁰⁸

6. The denouement: (l. 926b-932a): there is no suspense more: the Sages account for the age of the slain child, all the nations of the world question about a God that requires his devotees to die for his sake. The bereaved mother, now out of her mind, but qualified "*a joyful mother of children*" (Ps. 113, 9), is said to have afterwards chosen death by suicide for herself, causing the Holy Spirit to repeat TMLam. 1, 16. 1, "*For these things I weep*".

As noted above, the analysis of this narrative that has been proposed here accounts for it by means of the same components exposed by J. Neusner. Its stance is, however, holistic,¹⁰⁰⁹ the present story carrying the same ideological message¹⁰¹⁰ with all the other anecdotes of this rubric.

2.6. The Infanticide of Doeg b. Joseph's Son

1003The verbs used to name this action, חָבַק 'to embrace', and נָשַׁק 'to kiss', are reversed in both text traditions.

1004G. Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life*, 117. 118.

1005Only Cant. 4, 11. 2a is used in the Buber edition to name the result of her move.

1006It is only after the emperor orders that the child be put to death that the mother makes the move to embrace, kiss and nurse him (l. 917b-918a).

1007If it is true with G. Hasan-Rokem, that the mother does not "send her sons to die for the sanctity of an ideal, in this case, martyrdom", *op. cit.* 114; she does nothing to avert the emperor's deathly decision being carried out.

1008The link between this story with "the most archetypal story of martyrdom in Jewish tradition, the sacrifice of Isaac", with Miriam's offering of her seven sons standing above that of Abraham, has been noticed by G. Hasan-Rokem, *op. cit.* 118. In the Buber edition, the mother Miriam proposes that the spear be put simultaneously on her throat and on the throat of her son, while she offers, in the *editio princeps*, to be killed first and her son afterwards.

1009It maintains that the whole coheres at the end, and that no component can be considered as a secondary addition, against what is stated in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective, Volume Three*, 2003, 184.

1010G. Hasan-Rokem insists, for instance, that the kind of texts under inquiry allows an approach that distinguishes the historical, ideological message "supported by a doctrine of retribution", from the personal, "experiential interpretation of history, which refuses to accept the ideological justification of suffering as self-evident", *idem*, *The Web of Life*, 32.

This third story in the Buber edition that is located at the sixth and last place in the *editio princeps*, where it is introduced as a *ma'aseh*, is in its five lines (932b-937a) the shortest anecdote of this rubric. Its wording is nearly identical in both text traditions, except the inversion of a prepositional phrase,¹⁰¹¹ the use of different prepositions,¹⁰¹² of the informative אמו 'his mother' in the *editio princeps*, and the somewhat varying introduction of TMLam 2, 20 ascribed to Jeremiah.¹⁰¹³ Otherwise, this narrative is not, as J. Neusner notes, fully articulated as a story;¹⁰¹⁴ it is, however, extended enough around the structure with two contrasting moments building a scheme that is common to the stories of this rubric:¹⁰¹⁵

1. A rich woman, the widow of Doeg ben Joseph, showed her love for her son in measuring him by handbreadths and giving every year his weight in gold to the Temple [Heaven] [Neusner].

2. This fortunate mother was, however, compelled to kill and eat this son during the siege imposed by the Roman troupes upon Jerusalem in 70 CE. Jeremiah, considered by the Rabbis as Author of Lamentations, complains about this cannibalism in TMLam. 2, 20. 3-4, to which the Holy Spirit reacts using TMLam. 2, 20. 5-6 (A10), that the Compiler attests as referring to Zechariah son of Jehoiada.

Conclusion

If the four anecdote narratives (As) opposed Jews against Roman conquerors, the six narratives (As) of this second rubric are characterized by a different compositional pattern: the Jewish protagonists, all members of the High Society of Jerusalem as shown in their mentioned biological extraction, that is, the son *versus* the father, the daughter of, etc..., are humiliated and consequently demolished in their social affirmation in the aftermath of the Roman conquest.

1011The phrase לשמים 'to Heaven', is differently located in both text variants.

1012The Vilna edition reads בירושלים 'round Jerusalem', where the Buber edition has על ירושלים 'over Jerusalem'.

1013The Vilna edition reporting that מקונן לפני המקום 'Jeremiah lamented before the Omnipresent' prepares the Holy One, blessed be He's retort on the basis of the quotation of Zech. 2, 20 that comes next.

1014J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*, Volume Three, 2003, 185.

1015The proof of this view is provided by the parallel version of this story in *b yoma* 38b, see *V. B Yoma* Chapters Three through five [The Talmud of Babylonia. An American Translation], translated by J Neusner, Atlanta, Georgia, 1994, 43. It is here about Doeg (a name that shall rot, according to Prov. 10, 7, in allusion to the wicked Doeg of 1 Sam 21,8) b. Joseph, that was cherished in gold by his mother when he was a child, and that the enemy, and not his mother, slaughtered in no precise circumstances when he grew up! He should never be named after the first Doeg!, see below.

This “from zenith to nadir”¹⁰¹⁶ plot varies in regard to the identity of the involved personages and the extent of the mistreatment. Will there be some consolation for them?

II.2.2. The Second Account: The Expected Messiah

The second account of this series in *Eikhah Rabbati* deals with the messiah’s presence and name in troubled time. The literary context is the debate led by the Rabbis on the name of the messiah in an effort to account for the TMLam.1,16.3 *כי רחוק ממני מנחם משיב נפשי*, *because far from me is the comforter reviving my soul*. “The *Eikhah Rabbati* anecdote narrative is *expressis verbis* a component of the third proposal made by R. Yudan (A4) to call the messiah the ‘comforter’.¹⁰¹⁷ It is however evident that this narrative (A) is in its content a complement to the immediately fourth claim made by R. Chanina (T1/A1/A3/A4) that the messiah has to be named ‘the shoot’ that precedes it. The fact that the same R. Chanina (T1/A1/3/4) settles the debate about the right name of the messiah claiming (Sti4) that both designations, ‘comforter’ and ‘shoot’, have in their Hebrew renderings *מנחם* and *צמח* the same numeral value, and therefore the same meaning, can be seen as a compromise: it happens indeed that both designations ‘comforter’ and ‘shoot’ are deeply implied in the meaning and the very structure of this narrative, as the following scheme illustrates it:

1. The exposition (l.167b): it is about the case (*עובדא*) of a man that is ploughing and one of his oxen lows.

2. The inciting moment (l. 967c-973a): an Arab that comes by learns from a question that the ploughing man is a Jew, and assumes the role of the revealing agent. He tells the Jew that (i) the first lowing of his ox means that he must untie his ox and his plough because the temple of the Jews has been destroyed, and that (ii) according to the second lowing, he has to harness his ox and tie his plough because the redeemer of the Jews has been born. The child-messiah’s name, the Arab says, is *מנחם* the Comforter, his father is Hezekiah and both of them are reported to live in Birat Arba in Bethlehem.

3. The search for the child-messiah (l. 973b-975a): the Jew sells his oxen and plough, he buys felt clothing for children, makes himself ‘from city to city, from province to province’ in search for the child-messiah, and joins Birat Arba (*מטא לתמן*).

¹⁰¹⁶The formulation is from G. Hasan-Rokem. *op. cit.* 119.

¹⁰¹⁷The Compiler-editor lets know that ‘[T]he following story supports what R. Yudan (A4) said in the name of R. Aibo (A4).’

4. Climax - the promised messiah (l. 975b-985a): the attempt to meet the child-messiah reveals itself two times inconclusive. (i) While all the villagers (כל כפריא) are said to come to the messiah's searcher to buy clothes for their children, the mother of the child-messiah, that is addressed by the messiah's searcher, displays her apprehensions: she cannot buy these clothes because, she says, 'a hard fate is in store for my child',¹⁰¹⁸ informing that 'close on his coming the temple was destroyed'[Cohen]. The messiah's searcher invokes his confidence: '[W]e trust in the Lord of the universe that as close on his coming it was destroyed so close on his coming it will be rebuilt'[Cohen] gets her however change her mind and take the clothes. (ii) When the messiah's searcher comes for the second time to get money for his clothes and to see 'how the child-messiah is getting on' [Cohen], he is told by the child-messiah's mother that her apprehensions were justified: (i) 'a hard fate was in store for her child', (ii) he had no chance to live, he has been carried off by strong winds and a whirlwind. The messiah's searcher reacts repeating his confidence: 'I told you: at his coming the temple was destroyed and at his coming it will be rebuilt'[Cohen].

5. The denouement (l.985b- 987a) is provided by R. Abun (A4/5). He claims that all this turbulent agitation and the eager search for the child-messiah prompted by an Arab are useless because, he argues, the Scripture has already reported these facts in Isa.10, 34.2, "*and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one*", that is immediately followed by Isa. 11, 1, "*and a shoot goes out from the stump Jesse, and an branch will bear fruit out of his roots.*" *The Lebanon*, metaphor for the temple according to *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam.1,5, *being fallen*, it is expected that the child-messiah will go "*out from the stump Jesse.*"

CONCLUSION

The coming of the messiah is strongly connected to the past destruction and the coming rebuilding of the temple. The comfort complained about in TMLam.116.1 for its lack will be provided by this messiah at his coming as a shoot. It happens that the messiah's coming as shoot is waited for.

II.3. Decimation of the Leaders of The Community of Israel (TMLam. 2, 1-10)

The analysis of the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to TMLam.2, 1-10 shows a range of literary forms that are usual in this rabbinic commentary and that are now listed in the appendix three. And the occurrence of these forms is highly peculiar to this section. While it is obvious that the

¹⁰¹⁸ This is the rendering of the otherwise cryptic קשייה קשיי ליונק by A. Cohen in *Lamentations* [Midrash Rabbah], London ([1939] 1961), 137.

parables-*meshalîm* are in many cases used as autonomous expounding, contradicting somewhat the assumption that the *meshalîm* are the third element of the explanatory unit made up successively of the claim (Sti) and the anecdote narrative (A), see *infra*, the anecdote narratives (As), the subject of this chapter, that occur in this section can hardly be separated from the many claims (Stis) that precede and follow them. The narratives of this section (TMLam.2, 1-10) are dealt with hereafter in four accounts. These accounts are immediately but also reportedly attached to the expounded verses they address. The overwhelmingly common theme to these accounts is the moral disqualification of the military, priestly and community leaders as well as of the inhabitants of the land that is said to have caused a huge amount of material losses.

II.3.1 The First Account: The Conquest of Betar, Bar Cochba's Fortress and Its Consequences (v.2.1)

It has to be recalled that the preceding narrative (A) that accounts for the TMLam 1, 16.3 deals with the topic of the messiah discussed in his capacity to bring comfort. Although this last anecdote narrative of the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to the TMLamentations Chapter One addresses a verse that is remotely connected to the TMLamentations Chapter Two, the fact that the present *Eikhah Rabbati* anecdote narratives (A) to TMLamentations Chapter Two assess further the topic of the true messianic leader in the Community of Israel is the proof of the fact that there is a sustained composition that cares for thematic unity and echoes in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The exegetical occasion of the present anecdote narratives is the rabbinic expounding of the TMLam.2,2.1. בלע יי' ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב. “*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob*”. The Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* took advantage of their comments to deal successively (i) with the Roman conquest of Bar Cochba's fortress Betar, and (ii) with the very reaction and consequences from the Jewish side to this historical confrontation.

1. Bar Cochba and the Capture of Betar By the Romans

The historically recorded conquest of Betar by the forces led by the Roman general Hadrian is accounted for in *Eikhah Rabbati* by the Rabbis by means of extended comments to the TMLam.2,2.1. בלע יי' ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב. “*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob*”. Detailed losses on the Jewish side are provided as well as the

identities and the enterprises of Jewish leaders that played a prominent role during these tragic events. The focus of the comment is on (i) the identity and on ((ii) the enterprise of Bar Cochba.

1.1 Bar Cochba's Controversial Identity and Forces Against Roman Troops

This is a typical vignette ((lines 99 – 110a) which expresses the opinion the Rabbis had about the Jewish fighter Bar Cochba and about his army. The story reveals therefore who Bar Cochba was held for.

1. The exposition (lines 99 - 101)¹⁰¹⁹ is about the correct qualification of Bar Cochba's move in regard to the main conflict of that time. R. Yochanan (A2) reports that Rabbi [Yehudah ha- Nasi] (T4) calls him 'Bar Koziba' on the basis of reading that changes "*kokab*" in Num. 24, 17 כוכב מיעקב „*a star shall come forth out of Jacob*" into 'kozab' "lie". And R. Yochanan ben Torta (T2) tells R. Aqiba (T2) who considers Bar Koziba as the expected king messiah that he will not see the messiah during his lifetime.

2. The inciting moment (lines 102 – 106a), in which different attempts are made to solve the problem of confrontation, provides a picture of the opposing forces that were involved in the conflict in which, according to R. Yochanan (A2) on the basis of Gen.27,22, the Roman Emperor Hadrian, descendant of Esau,¹⁰²⁰ decimated 'eighty thousand myriads of human beings in Betar' [Cohen]. In the anecdote narrative under examination, eighty thousand¹⁰²¹ trumpeters of the Roman army are reported to besiege Betar. They are said to face 'two hundred thousand men with an amputated finger' gathered by Bar Cochba, to whom the Rabbis recommended to test his blemished soldiers getting every soldier uproot a cedar from Lebanon' [Cohen].

3. The climax (lines 106b – 110a) displays the questionable strategy used by Bar Cochba. His troops composed of two hundred thousand soldiers with an amputated finger together with two hundred thousand that had undergone the test of uprooting the cedar of

¹⁰¹⁹ It has to be noted in regard to the state of this comment and the status of this anecdote narrative (A) that the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* does not report here this debate on the very identity of Bar Cochba. The Buber text tradition of *Eikhah Rabbati* provides these controversial statements of the Rabbis on the identity of the Jewish fighter Bar Cochba as the denouement of this anecdote narrative (A).

¹⁰²⁰ The Buber edition provides an explicit statement on the relationship between Esau and Hadrian on the basis of Gen.27,22: ... קולו של יעקב (בראשית כז כב) רבי היה דורש הקל קול יעקב והידיים ידי עשו (בראשית כז כב) 'Rabbi (T4) uses to expound "*The voice ist the voice of Jacob and the hands are Esau's hands*" (Gen.27,22) as following: the voice of Jacob protesting against what the hands of Esau did in Bethar, while R. Yochanan (A2) expounded the voice of the Emperor Hadrian that slew in Bethar eighty thousand myriads of human beings.'

¹⁰²¹ Much more explicit, the Buber edition has 'eighty thousand זוגות 'pairs' of trumpeters, and each pair appointed over some troops'.

Lebanon recommended by the Rabbis move to war rejecting God's assistance.¹⁰²² Bar Cochba himself demonstrated his extraordinary strength killing a huge number of foes throwing back the missiles from the enemy's catapults that he caught on one of his knees.

4. The denouement (line 110b) is provided in the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* by R. Aqiba (T2) proclaiming Bar Cochba as king messiah on the basis of his performance described in the climax.

R. Aqiba (T2)'s proclamation that Bar Cochba was the expected king messiah that we find in this denouement gives support by the way of an inclusion to the view of this rabbi in the debate reported according to the text of the *editio princeps* in the exposition of this narrative.¹⁰²³ The following story that J. Neusner considers may be for this formal reason as "the first authentic narrative in the composite"¹⁰²⁴ accounts for the consequences of Bar Cochba's strategy in the fight for Betar.

1.2. Bar Cochba in the Turmoil of the Roman Conquest of Betar

The present story provides further features related to the person of Bar Cochba and to the action carried out by this Jewish leader in the fight against the Romans. Because our analysis is interested in finding out the narrated content of this story, it will include the components from the Vilna edition text that J. Neusner, for instance, left over for formal reason¹⁰²⁵ from his definition of the present anecdote narrative (A):

¹⁰²² This rejection of God's assistance is in singular in the Buber edition. It seems therefore to be the fact of the commander in-chief of the troops, Bar Cochba himself.

¹⁰²³ The Buber edition of the *Eikhah Rabbati* reports this debate on the identity of Bar Cochba right here as the denouement of this story.

¹⁰²⁴ J. Neusner (edit.), *The Native Category-Formations of the Aggadah: The Earlier Midrash-Compilations*, Volume II, 197.

¹⁰²⁵ J. Neusner's analysis of the narrative in general addresses the first question: "[O]n what basis does the narrative attain coherence, e.g., what is the action or event that precipitates the telling of the tale?" , idem: *The Native Category-Formations of the Aggadah: The Earlier Midrash-Compilations*, Volume II, 197. The strict realization of this formal project implies that J. Neusner excludes or includes parts of *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to conform to what he considers the authentic narrative. Another reason of the fact that the narrative we account for is much more extended than its version analysed by J. Neusner is simply that the latter relies in this case on the version of the *Eikhah Rabbati* text provided by the Buber edition

1. The exposition (lines 110b-112a) provides two informations that are crucial in the unfolding of this story. It is reported (i) that Hadrian besieged Betar during three years and a half, and (ii) that the Roman general could not conquest Betar because R. Eleazar of Modim (T2) was in the city¹⁰²⁶ 'wearing sackcloth and fasting, and praying daily, 'Lord of the Universe, sit not in judgement today'[Cohen]. Hadrian is reported to have considered to withdraw from the siege.

2. The inciting moment (lines 112b - 114a) is provoked by the move of a certain Cuthean that was, according to the Buber edition, with Hadrian. He told the Roman general that his plans of conquering Betar were condemned to fail so long as R. Eleazar (T2) stood pleading for mercy on behalf of Betar. The Cuthean offered instead the Roman general to do something to help him conquer Betar.

3. The moment of complication (lines 114b – 120a) proposes the successive steps to solve the present conflict: (i) the Cuthean joined R. Eleazar of Modim (T2) at the city gate where he was praying and 'pretended to whisper in the ear of R. Eleazar of Modim'[Cohen], (ii) people that have noticed this move reported to Bar Cochba that 'his friend, R. Eleazar, wishes to surrender the city to Hadrian'[Cohen], (iii) Bar Cochba summoned the Cuthean that refused at the price of being killed to divulge the states secrets he allegedly revealed to R. Eleazar.

4. The turning – point (lines 120b – 127a) is provided when the angry Bar Cochba summoned R. Eleazar of Modim (T2) accusing him, on the basis of the meeting of this rabbi with the Cuthean, that he now intended to surrender the city. Made nervous by R. Eleazar's claims that he was in prayer when the Cuthean joined him, and that he did not for that reason, notice anything, Bar Cochba is reported to kick R. Eleazar to death. A Bat Qol rebuked Bar Cochba on the basis of Zech.11, 17 of having 'paralysed the arm of Israel and blinded their right eye' [Cohen], with the consequence that evil increased in the Land.

5. The conflict was resolved (127B – 137a) by (i) the capture of Betar, (ii) the mysterious death of Bar Cochba, and (iii)¹⁰²⁷ the slaughtering of the inhabitants of Betar, whose blood 'rolled into the sea [staining it for] a distance of four miles'[Cohen], whose bodies built a fence to the 'eighteen miles square vineyard' [Cohen] Hadrian possessed and whose burial, decided by a new king that arose, was the occasion, R. Huna (A4)¹⁰²⁸ claimed, of the institution of the benediction 'who are kind and deals kindly' [Cohen].

This story on the fall of Betar and the massacre of its inhabitants did not obviously exhaust the questioning of the Rabbis on the conquest of Bar Cochba's fortress Betar by the Romans.

¹⁰²⁶ It will be reported in the story that r. Eleazar of Modin (T2) stood at the gate of the city.

¹⁰²⁷ Noteworthy is the fact that statements reported in 5.iii occurred on different locations in the *Eikhah Rabbati* text of the Buber edition.

¹⁰²⁸ This claim is ascribed to T. Chanina (?) in the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*.

Otherwise we could not explain the existence of the following anecdote narrative (A) on the same topic.

1.3. The Misconduct of Its Inhabitants Caused the Ruin of Betar

Although it is explicitly reported in the previous story (A) that Bar-Cochba's arrogance and rudeness led to the capture of Betar by the Romans of Hadrian, the reason Betar fell is the subject of a third anecdote narrative (A) that accounts for the TMLam.2,2.1. בלע י"י ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב *"the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places, namely the celebrities of Jacob"*. The plot is a recognition process leading to the discovery of a social hoax. The story is made up of the following components:

1. The exposition (lines 137b – 139a) presents two related items: (i) the fall of Betar is said to have taken place fifty-two years after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE , (ii) the cause of this ruin of Betar, that is the subject of this story: Betar is said to have been conquered and subdued by the Romans because its inhabitants rejoiced over the conquest of Jerusalem kindling their lamps. The reason of this joy of the inhabitants of Betar is described in the following parts of the narrative:

2. the inciting moment (line 139b) is made up of the question, 'why did they kindle [their lamps]?'`

3. The complication (lines 139c-144a) unfolds two steps that reveal the used by the Jerusalemites to bother the pilgrim from Betar and to harm him:

(i) the councillors of Jerusalem, that met together in session, asked the pilgrim from Betar that came to pray in Jerusalem whether he wanted to become a councillor. If he refused, he was further mockingly asked whether he would like to become a magistrate. It was after the pilgrims from Betar has answered negatively that the second moment in the search for solution was initiated.

(ii) The pilgrim from Betar was told that he was reported to possess an estate, and that he wanted to sell it. In the case he refused to agree with these statements, measure was nevertheless taken to bring him act.

4. The climax (144b – 144a) displays the next move made by the Jerusalemite: '[H]e would write out and send a [false] deed of possession to the steward of the man from Betar, bearing the message, "If so-and-so [the owner of the estate] comes, do not let him enter the property, for he has sold it to me"' [Neusner].

5. The denouement (lines 144b-148a) of the story occurs after the man from Betar discovers the hoax he has been victim of. While he regrets having been in Jerusalem that he cursed according to TMLam.4,18 to be destroyed, he is rebuked on the basis of Prov.17,5 for having rejoiced over the destruction of Jerusalem.

This record on the fall of Betar for one reason or another is followed in *Eikhah Rabbati* by a detailed and extended account of the losses that are reported to have occurred in Betar as well as in the various parts of the Land Israel in the wake of the conquest of Betar as well as of the destruction of the Temple. These losses are mentioned in claims and in anecdote narratives. While the big part of these claims has been dealt with in Chapter One, we focus in the following research on the remaining anecdote narratives (A) that account for the TMLam.2,2.1. בלע י"י ולא "the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob".

2. The Narrated Consequences of the Conquest of Betar by the Romans

There are three kinds of anecdote narratives (A) that are used to account for facts related to the aftermath of the capture of Betar. The first two anecdote narratives, that are also analysed by J. Neusner,¹⁰²⁹ seem quite unique in their kind, while the two following narratives, totally ruled out by J. Neusner, are unusual. They will be for this reason treated together with related claims also because of their thematic unity. The differences between these narratives are indeed made by the extent of the accounts but also by the social protagonists whose deeds and fate are recorded.

2.1. Tragic End of Schools and of Their Pupils

The first anecdote narrative (A) is reported immediately after the account of the fall of Betar in the Buber edition. It is, however, preceded by the claim on the dashed brains and the spread phylacteries in the Vilna edition. In its extent, this anecdote is rather a vignette whose components are:

1. The exposition (lines 155 – 153a) presents part of the human protagonists and the material facts as reported by R. Gamaliel.¹⁰³⁰ We are told that Betar had before its destruction five hundred schools, and that 'the smallest of them had not less than three

¹⁰²⁹ J. Neusner (edit.), *The Native Category-Formations of the Aggadah: The Earlier Midrash-Compilations*, Volume II, 199-200.

¹⁰³⁰ The report must have been made by R. Simeon ben Gamaliel the Second (142 -165) (T3), as opportunely corrected in *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, London, ([1939]1961), 161, footnote 3. Noteworthy is that the Buber edition does introduce R. Simeon ben Gamaliel –with Gamaliel within brackets- only in the denouement of this story that starts without being ascribed to him.

hundred children`[Cohen]¹⁰³¹ whose qualification was that they boasted to fight against their enemies with their styluses.

2. The climax (lines 153b – 154a) of the story is caused by the high degree of iniquities in the Land. It was at that time and for that reason that the enemy came, and `they enwrapped each child in his book and burnt him` [Cohen].

3. The denouement (lines 154b-155a) is provided by the R. Simeon b. Gamaliel- that is clearly asserted in the Buber edition. He claims his suffering for having been left alone, and he applies to himself TMLam.3,51 "*My eye pains my soul from all the daughters of my city*".

2.2. Tragic End of Two Revolutionary Brothers of Kefar Charuba (lines 155b – 162a)

The second anecdote narrative (A) of this series is located in the Vilna edition and the Munich Codex Heb.229 just after the preceding account.¹⁰³² It addresses, however, no longer the behaviour of children moving against their enemy. The fate of two Jewish brothers during the Hadrian's war is instead of interest to the readers of the present story. The plot leads to a discovery and to a recognition:

1. The exposition (lines 155b-157a) accounts for these two anonymous brothers from Kefar Haruba in Galilea¹⁰³³ that killed every Roman that passed by with the project to take the Hadrian's crown and to put it on Simeon's head.

2. The complication (lines 157b – 158a) draws the attempt to carry out this project. The two brothers are reported to move against the Romans that were coming to fight them. The brothers met an old man that calls: `May the Creator be your help against them.` The brothers rejected, however, this prayer.

3. The climax (lines 158b-159a) is once again caused by the high extent of the iniquity that is said to have led to the killing of the two brothers.

3. The resolution (lines 159b-162a) is provided by the confession made by Hadrian. While the heads of the two brothers are reported to be brought by a Goth to the Roman general, Hadrian, that has sent to get their bodies brought to him, is answered that

¹⁰³¹ We are told in the Buber edition text that the smallest school had five hundred children.

¹⁰³² The Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* puts the claims (Sti) on Hadrian's vineyard and (Sti) on the brains of three hundred children dashed upon one stone and on the three hundred baskets of capsules of phylacteries between the two anecdote narratives.

¹⁰³³ Kefar Charuba is said to be by the lake of Gennesareth in A. Cohen (ed.), *Lamentations*, [Midrash Rabbah], London ([1939]1961), 161, footnote 4.

a snake was found around the brothers' necks. This very fact, Hadrian claims, is a proof based non Deut.32,30 that only their God has killed them.

This account of the killing of the two brothers from Kefar Charuba, whose historical setting will be discussed in the chapter of this work that comes next, is followed by a series of claims (Sti) and narrated reports (A), that help draw a wide and terrifying picture of the losses that were caused by the Hadrian's conquest of Betar. We now focus on the last unit of narratives (A) that account for the expounding of the biblical TMLam.2,2,1/2 under examination by the Rabbis.

2.3. Various Fortunes of Priests and Priestly Classes

The account of the TMLam.2,2,1. 'בלע יי' ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב' "*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places, namely of Jacob*" gave further the Rabbis the opportunity to address the fate of another social component of Judaism, the priests. And it is a fact that the different text traditions of *Eikhah Rabbati* try to gather claims (Sti) and anecdote narratives (A) related to this topic. The Vilna edition on which this work relies seems to offer ordered data allowing a clear statement on the priests. This is the reason claims (Sti) and narratives (A) are dealt with together here.

2.3.0. Introductory Claims (Sti)

After the claim on stalls for sellers of birds for ritual purification, the Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* focus on the population of the priests with this claim (Sti) (lines 180b – 183a):

'R. Jeremiah (A4)¹⁰³⁴ said in the name of R. Chiyya b. Abba (T5/A3): Eighty brothers who were priests were married to eight sisters who belong to priestly families. They were married on the same night in Gofnit; and this was besides [the marriages of] brothers without sisters, of sisters without brothers, and of Levites and lay-Israelites'[Cohen].¹⁰³⁵

¹⁰³⁴ The Buber edition ascribes this claim to R. Yochanan (A2) and speaks of 'שמונים זוגים כהנים אהים' 'eighty pairs of brothers that were priests.'

¹⁰³⁵ The Buber edition and Munich Codex Heb.229 provide broadly the same text, although the last manuscript has not 'sisters without brothers'.

This prodigious matrimonial situation in the priestly class is in accordance with the preceding claims (Sti) we have dealt with as accounting for the TMLam.2,2.1/2. It gives consequently a glimpse into the big loss that is reported in the following anecdote narratives (Sti).

2.3.1. Decimation of the Priestly Novitiates (lines 183b – 204a)

This narrative begins formally like the expounding claims of the preceding rubric announcing the amount of the loss that was caused by the present conflict. R. Yochanan (A2) stated in the Buber edition¹⁰³⁶ that eighty thousand priestly novitiates were slain in relation with Zechariah's blood (lines 183b), and the following narrative (A) accounts for this slaughtering of cult agents as being a solution to a problem as the plot of this narrative shows. The plot is also a plot of discovery.

1. The inciting moment (lines 183c -191a): The narrative begins with R. Acha (A4) answering a question of R. Yudan (A4) that the murder of Zechariah took place neither in the court of Israel, nor in the court of the women, but in the court of the priests. It is reported in its qualification that this murder was committed against the prescriptions of Lev.17,13,¹⁰³⁷ and that the agents of this murder despised Zechariah's blood, falling under Ez. 24, 7-8.¹⁰³⁸ This murder. It is further said, amounts to seven transgression: a priest, a prophet, a judge was killed, innocent blood shed, the divine Name profaned, there Temple court defiled, and the murder took place on a Sabbath that was also a day of atonement.

2. The solution of this problem (191b-201a) consists in a series of actions taken by the Babylonian Nebuzaradan to know who's this seething blood, he saw during his campaign against Jerusalem, was. He first got animals slaughtered but was disappointed that their blood could not behave similarly. It was in a second move, after he insisted in his threats to 'comb their flesh with iron combs' that his

¹⁰³⁶ Noteworthy is the fact that the Buber edition mentions just that eighty thousand priestly novitiates were killed to avenge the blood of Zechariah, leaving out all the narrative (A) about how this vengeance took place.

¹⁰³⁷ Lev.17,13 is quoted cut off: אשר יצוד ציד היה וגוי וכסהו בעפר *“and any man of the house of Israel...who hunt game of beast and so on, then he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust.”*

¹⁰³⁸ Ezek. 24 is quoted twice. The first quotation is Ezek. 24,7 that tells the committed error, כי דמה בתוכה היה על צהיה *“for her blood is in her midst; she set it on a shining rock. She did not pour it on the ground, to cover it with dust.”* The second quotation is Ezek.24, 8 that is a report on the repairing action that has to be carried out : להעלות חמה לנקום נקם נתתי דמה על צהיה סלע לבלתי הכסות : *“in order to cause fury to come up to take vengeance, I have put her blood on a shining rock, that it should not be covered.”*

audience let him know the truth that they have rebelled and killed a prophet-priest that bothered them with his warning words. His decision to appease Zechariah's blood was granted only after he implored Zechariah that he has successively killed the men of the Great Sanhedrin, the men of the Minor Sanhedrin, the priestly novitiates, the school-children, "the choicest of Zechariah's people", he said, without having his blood appeased.

3. The denouement (lines 201b-204a) is provided by Nowzaradan changing his mind and repenting. He has, indeed, discovered and realized that if, according to Gen.9,6, "*Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*", he who has killed more than one person deserved to die. Nowzaradan's move is said to have filled the Holy One, blessed be He, with compassion, so that he ordered Zechariah's blood to be absorbed in the ground.

This first account on the slaughtering of the priestly novitiates as part of the victims chosen by the Babylonian general to solve a bloodshed conflict internal to the Jewish community is followed by a second account in which only the priestly novitiates are reported to pay the high price of regional feud.

2.3.2. Mistreatment of Eighty Thousand Priestly Novitiates by the Ishmaelite (lines 204b – 227a)

The present anecdote narrative (A) deals with the second dramatic blow that befell the priestly novitiates. This incident is reported by all the text traditions that differ somewhat in the construction of the sentences. The narrative itself is made up of the following components that built an unusual plot:

1. The problem (lines 204b-205a) is that eighty thousand priestly novitiates bearing golden shields¹⁰³⁹ succeed to break through the ranks of Nebuchadnezzar's army and to flee to the Israelites (Arabs) in search for relief.
2. The unfortunate solution (lines 205b-208). The search for a solution to this problem resorts to a motif of inter-ethnic conflict. While the eighty thousand priestly novitiates are said in the Buber edition to have asked for water, - אמרו להם - 'השקונו מים' - they told them, give us water to drink' -, prompting the proposal from the Ishmaelites that the priestly novitiates had to eat first and to drink afterwards, the text of Vilna edition reports that the fugitive priestly novitiates are given 'salted foods and blown-up skin-bottles' [Cohen] apparently without a previous request made by them. Although the priestly novitiates reacted asking first for

¹⁰³⁹ The Buber edition is explicit that the eighty thousand priestly novitiates bore in their hands eighty thousand golden shields.

drink and afterwards for food, the Ishmaelites are said to have imposed their own aggressive plan giving first salted food and afterwards some drinking. It was after the priestly novitiates had eaten that the tragedy occurred: 'each one of them took his bottle and placed it to his mouth; and the air penetrated his stomach and [distended it so that the wind] split it open' [Cohen].¹⁰⁴⁰

3. The denouement is unusual because it does not contain a report on the expected outcome of this tragedy. It is much more an attack against the Ishmaelites. It is explained, indeed, why this solution is unfair. The claims against the unfortunate solution are provided by the expounding based on sound resemblance and grammatical transformation of Isa.21, 13-15 that is considered as the prophecy announcing the unfair solution:

(i) the reproach on the basis of 21, 13:¹⁰⁴¹ the Arabs, that were at their right place, did not behave as expected to them.

(ii) The neglected duty stated the basis of Isa.21,14¹⁰⁴² consisted in providing the fugitive Jewish priestly novitiates with water and bread.

(iii) There was some reason to help, according to Isa.21,15¹⁰⁴³ that speaks, on the basis of syntax and sound resemblance, of the flight from the sword of Nebuchadnezzar, of the neglect of the sabbatical years (Ex. 23,11), the neglect of the Sabbath (Neh.13,15), the neglect of the war of the Torah (Num.21,14), 'because they did not attend the war of the Torah', with the Buber edition.

R. Yochanan (A2), if we follow the Buber edition, is convinced that although these priestly novitiates had their part of responsibility in the move of Nebuchadnezzar against them, they deserved aid and support. The Arabs rejected both of them, they killed them instead.

2.3.3. Concluding claims, the Lost Prosperity

¹⁰⁴⁰ The Buber edition completed the process adding והיה מפרפר ומת והיה מפרפר ומת 'he moves convulsively in agony and dies'.

¹⁰⁴¹ The affirmative syntax of Isa.21.13 ארחות דדנין — בערב בערב תלינו „*The burden of Arabia: You shall lodge in the forest of Arabia, O traveling companies of Dedanites*“, is transformed in Eikhah Rabbati into two reproaching questions, first on the place, מי נתון ביער הלבנון בערב תלינו: 'who allows you [Arabs] to lodge in the evening in the forest of Lebanon', a secondly, into a question on their behaviour: *the caravans of Dedanites* – had to reciprocate the good deeds their predecessors enjoyed from Abraham according to Gen.21,19.

¹⁰⁴² Isa 21,14 נדד קדמו נדד „*to meet the thirsty bring water, O inhabitants of Tema, with his bread meet the fugitive.*“

¹⁰⁴³ Isa.21.15 מפני חרבות נדדו מפני חרב נטושה ומפני קשת דרוכה ומפני כבד מלחמה „*for they fled from before swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the press of battle.*“

The conclusion to this literary unit on the priests and priestly novitiates is made up of two claims (lines 220b-223). R. Yochanan (A2)'s statements of sixty myriads of towns between Gibbeton and Antipatris and Bet-shemesh. And although Bet-shemesh was 'the smallest of all' (Sti11) and for that reason supposed to be the less popular, it provided before the war eighty thousand priestly novitiates for the service of the Temple (Sti12).

Conclusion

It is noteworthy that the focus of the preceding narratives and claims are on the priests, even when other social classes are mentioned along with the priests as the victims of the aggression. And the loss of the priests is presented as a solution to a problem caused by protagonists that not mentioned in the first case, except that Zechariah is reported to have been killed in the court of the priests, and that are not the priests themselves in the second narrative. This positive image of the priests as innocent victims is stressed by the lack of the sentence גרמו עונות 'the iniquities win in strength' that we find in the narratives related to other Jewish leaders.

II.3.2. The Second Account: The Holy One, blessed be He, Commands the Agents of Disasters (v.2.6)

The second account that we find in the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment of the Biblical Lamentations Chapter Two is an expounding of the TMLam.2, 2.6 חלל ממלכה ושריה "he has defiled the kingdom and its princes" with a focus on the noun phrase שריה ... חלל "he has defiled... the princes." While the patient-direct object שריה "its princes" is expounded by the Compiler as being identical to 'the celestial princes' (Sti2)¹⁰⁴⁴ that appear to be the angels commanding the reigning elements of the nature, the predicate חלל "he has defiled" is accounted for by an anecdote narrative (A) whose main components are:

¹⁰⁴⁴ The first claim (Sti1) identifies ממלכה in the TMLam2, 2.6 חלל ממלכה ושריה "he has defiled the kingdom and its princes" with Israel according to Exod.19,6. And the 'celestial princes' are called מעלה של שרים in both Buber version and Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*.

1. The inciting moment (lines 232b – 234a) consists mostly in a request made by the prophet Jeremiah inciting the Israelites to avoid going into exile¹⁰⁴⁵ by repenting before their enemies arrive. The Israelites are reported to have rejected this warning.

2. The complication (lines 234b – 239a) presents the actions set in motion in two steps to counter the arrival of the enemies.; three of them set up, instead, a process aiming at protecting the city – of Jerusalem- that amounts to building tension against the natural order of the elements wanted by the Holy One, blessed be He, and that is controlled by the angels. Invoking the aid of the angels, the three Israelites undertook each of them to protect Jerusalem successively with a wall of water, a wall of fire, and a wall of iron.¹⁰⁴⁶ In a second step, the Holy One, blessed be He, considering that the three Israelites avail themselves¹⁰⁴⁷ with his own prerogatives, changes the names¹⁰⁴⁸ of the tutoring angels, 'so that when they invoked their names below, they did not respond.'

3. The denouement (lines 239b-241a) of the conflict took place after the wrongdoing of the Israelites grew strong¹⁰⁴⁹ and the enemies invaded them, no Angel that was invoked could provide the needed help. They have been removed from the dominion over the requested aid.

This story on the very power and those that do have it in control is quite in accordance with the stories that preceded. It appears that the following anecdote narrative (A) that we find in this section deals with the same issue of the relevant power. Worthy to note is that the present anecdote narrative (A) is followed in the Vilna edition by a second expounding, *dabar acher*, of the same colon, in which “*the kingdom*” is identified to king Zedekiah, and “*the princes*” further to ‘the celestial princes’.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Only the Vilna edition has the reading גלות *exile* to be avoided, while the Buber version warns against the enemies coming into the land of Israel.

¹⁰⁴⁶ The Buber version of *Eikhah Rabbati* has the following order for these protective elements: 1. Fortification with fire, 2. with water, 3. with iron.

¹⁰⁴⁷ משתמשין *you would make use of* in the Vilna edition, אתון מתגאים *you boast yourselves* in the Buber version.

¹⁰⁴⁸ At least according the *Vilna edition*, while the Buber version reports just the Holy One, blessed be He changed the appointment of the celestial princes, the guardian angels.

¹⁰⁴⁹ The noun phrase גרמו העונות *the iniquities grew strong* does not exist in the Buber edition of this story.

II.3.3. The Third Account: The Elderly, Members of the Sanhedrin, Are Punished for Transgressing the Torah (v.10.1)

TMLam.2,10 יֵשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ יְדֹמוּ זִקְנֵי בֵּת צִיּוֹן “*They sit on the ground, and keep silence, the elders of the daughter of Zion*”. The “*elders of the daughter of Zion*” mentioned in this verse are identified by R. Eleazar (T3/A3) to the ‘members of the Great Sanhedrin of King Zedekiah’. The same R. Eleazar accounts for the predicate “sit down” by means an anecdote narrative (A) that is made up of followings components:

1. The exposition (lines 337a – 341a) contains the warning words of R. Eleazar (T3/A3) not to despise the chapter on vows that appears to be Num. 30. The narrative is, however, about the mistreatment the members of the Great Sanhedrin of king Zedekiah were submitted to by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar rebuked them for having absolved the vow king Zedekiah, that he had appointed over the five kings of Edom, Moab, of the children of Ammon, of Tyre, of Sidon mentioned in Jer.27,3, has vowed to him.

2. The inciting moment (lines 341b – 344a) introduces to what king Zedekiah’s vow was about and how the conflict broke out. King Zedekiah has sworn to king Nebuchadnezzar, to whom he had constantly access because of his favour he enjoyed, not to disclose the shameful incident of tearing the flesh of a yet alive¹⁰⁵⁰ hare and eating he has surprised him involved in.¹⁰⁵¹

3. The complication (lines 344b – 349a) exposes the steps leading to the settlement of the out broken conflict. King Zedekiah revealed against his vow this scene to the five kings he has been appointed over while they were mocking king

¹⁰⁵⁰ The Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* has not this precision.

¹⁰⁵¹ R. Jose b.R.Chanina (A2) holds that the oath has been sworn by the inner altar inside the Temple of Jerusalem, see *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, translated by A.Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 177.

Nebuchadnezzar as an usurper.¹⁰⁵² The five kings informed king Nebuchadnezzar about the disclosure made by king Zedekiah.¹⁰⁵³

4. The turning-point (lines 349b – 355a) occurred when King Nebuchadnezzar came to the Land of Israel. He dwelled, however, in Daphne of Antioch from where he summoned the members of the Great Sanhedrin. He ordered for them seats of honour because of 'their imposing appearance' [Cohen], and on his request, they expounded the Torah to him reading it chapter by chapter and translating it. And the Sages let king Nebuchadnezzar know in an answer to his question related to Num. 30,3 "*when a man vowed a vowed*" in the chapter of vows that they have the power to allow someone retract his vow.

5. The resolution (lines 355b-358a) of the conflict occurred when king Nebuchadnezzar, on the basis of this expounding on the vows offered by the Sages, accused them of having allowed king Zedekiah to retract his vow. He ordered to get the Sages sit down to fulfil TMLam.2, 10.1/2. The Sages themselves completed their own derision "*casting up dust upon their heads*" (TMLam. 2, 10.3) and "*girding themselves with sackcloth*" (TMLam.2,10.4) in reference to the merits respectively to the "*I am but dust and ashes*" (Gen 18,27) of Abraham (Sti), and "*He put sackcloth upon his loins*" (Gen 37,34) of Jacob (Sti).

6. The denouement (358b - 359) of this narrative is provided by the scene that shows the Sages with their 'hairs bound to the tails of their horses and made to run from Jerusalem to Lydda' [Cohen] said to be supported by TMLam.2,10.5/6, הורידו לארץ ראשן „*the maidens of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground.*"

II. 4. The Grieving Condition of the Children During the War (TMLam. 2, 11-22)

There are four anecdote narratives (A) that are used in the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to the present section TMLam.2, 11-22. These narratives will be presented and analysed within their literary context.

¹⁰⁵² The Buber version of *Eikhah Rabbati* quotes 2 Chr.36,13, where this retraction is called a rebellion: גם במלך נבוכדנצר מרד אשר השביעו באלהים "[A]nd also he-Zedekiah-rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God."

¹⁰⁵³ King Zedekiah's disclosure of the awful spectacle of king Nebuchadnezzar tearing the flesh of a live hare and eat it is interpreted in the present narrative as his rebellion against the king of Babylon that is mentioned in 2 Kgs 24,20.

II.4.1. The First Account: The Mother Weeps and Loses Her Eyelashes (v.11.1)

The first narrative (A) in this section is a *ma'aseh*, “case”, “event” is related to R. Eleazar (T3/A3)’s account of the TMLam.2,11.1 כלו בדמעות עיני “*my eyes are at an end with tears*”¹⁰⁵⁴ by means of the following claim (Sti): ‘R. Eleazar (T3A3) said: [T]here is a limit that applies to the eye. ¹⁰⁵⁵[There are three kinds of tears which are beneficial] [Cohen], tears caused by drug, mustard, and collyrium. But the tears caused by laughter are best of all. Three kinds of tears are harmful tears caused by smoke, weeping, and straining in a privy. But the tears caused by the death of an adult child are worst of all.’ The narrative (A) that is attached¹⁰⁵⁶ to this claim is made up of only its main components:

1. Exposition (lines 363b – 36364b): the mother and her adult son.
2. The inciting moment (line 364b): the son dies, and the mother wept over this child in the night until her eye-lashes feel out.
3. The complication – resolution (line 365a): the search for a solution: the mother goes to a physician that makes a proposal: “Paint your eyes with tis eye-paint that I give you, and you will recover.
4. Denouement is wanting: the narrative is open-ended: the suspense and the tension do not disappear completely. ¹⁰⁵⁷

II.4.2. The Second Account: The Father Weeps and Loses His Liver (v.11.3)

¹⁰⁵⁴ „*Mes yeux sont consumés de larmes*“, in the French *Lamentations* [Traduction Oeuménique de la Bible. Ancien Testament], Paris, 1975, 1643, as well as in *Lamentations* [La Bible de Jérusalem], Paris, 1979, 1283.

¹⁰⁵⁵ The *Eikhah Rabbati* text from the Buber version inserts here and answers the question how to pour the tears: an abundant pouring of tears can lead to blindness.

¹⁰⁵⁶ That this narrative (A) is “attached” to the preceding claim is J. Neusner’s view expressed in idem (edit.), *The Native Category-Formations of the Aggadah: The Earlier Midrash-Compilations*, Volume II, Lanham/New York/Oxford, 2000, 202.

¹⁰⁵⁷ The *Eikhah Rabbati* text in the Buber version has this denouement: the mother applies the recommendation of the physician, she could, however, not change her situation: לא הניית כלום ‘there was no benefit’, to confirm the statement of the verse „*my eyes are at an end with tears*.”

The second narrative (A) in this section followed immediately the preceding story, with which it has in common a couple of formal features. This anecdote narrative (A) is also a *ma'aseh*, “case”, “event”. It accounts without a preceding claim for TMLam. 2,11.3 נשפך לארץ „*my liver is poured on the ground*”. Its main components are also scanty:

1. Exposition (line 366a): the case of a father with his adult son.
2. The inciting moment (lines 366b – 367a): the son dies and the father reacted to this decease weeping in the night over him until his liver dropped.
3. The complication - resolution: the search for a solution is not sketched in this narrative. It is evident that the father’s weeping last for ever.
4. A concluding denouement (lines 367b – 368a) is wanting, the narrative is further open-ended: the suspense and the tension do not disappear completely after the father of the dead son is heard saying: ‘My liver has dropped from weeping over him, but it has made no difference.

II.4.3. The Third Account: Even the Prominent Persons Starve to Death (v.12.3-4)

The third anecdote narrative (A) of the present section account in two steps for the TMLam. 2,12.3/4 כהלל ברחבות עיר „*as they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city*”. It is, however, evident that the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of this *bicola* addresses also the preceding *bicola* TMLam.2,12.1/2 ויין איה דגן „*they asked their mothers: where is corn and wine?*” The components of this narrative, that is named a *ma'aseh* in the Buber version of *Eikhah Rabbati*, are:

- 1.1. Exposition (lines 369c – 371a): a woman told her husband to take a bracelet or an earring, to go to the market, in hope to buy something that they eat and not die.¹⁰⁵⁸
- 1.2. Solution (lines 371b – 372a): the husband went to the market; he did not, however, find anything; he fell convulsively on the ground and died.
- 2.1. Exposition (line 372b): the same woman, sent her son¹⁰⁵⁹ to go after his father and see what he was doing.

¹⁰⁵⁸ ולא נמות ‘and we will not die’ is an addition from the Buber version of this narrative.

¹⁰⁵⁹ The Buber version of *Eikhah Rabbati* mentions here her ‘old son’.

2.2. Solution (lines 372c – 373a) : the son went to the market, he found his father dead, fell himself convulsively, and died by him.¹⁰⁶⁰

3. Denouement (lines 373b – 375a): the death of these relatives is deemed to fulfil respectively the TMLam.2, 11.3/4 4 כחלל ברחבות עיר „as they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city“ for the husband and the old son, and the TMLam.2,11.5/6 בהשתפך נפשם אל חיק אמתם „when they pour out their lives into their mothers' bosom“ for the young son, that is this time mentioned also in the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*.

II.4.4. The Fourth Account: Even the Nobly-born Are Victims of Cannibalism (v.20.3/4)

This third story in the Buber edition that is located at the sixth and last place in the Vilna edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*, where it is introduced as a *ma'aseh*, is in its five lines (932b-937a) the shortest anecdote of this rubric that accounts for the TMLam.1,16. Now, the same story appears here as well as the last anecdote narrative of the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to the Biblical Lamentations 2, 11-22. Its components are analysed as following:

1. Exposition (lines 448b – 450a): A rich woman, the widow of Doeg ben Joseph, showed her love for her son in measuring him by handbreadths and giving every year his weight in gold to the Temple [Heaven] [Neusner].

2. Complication (450b): This fortunate mother was, however, compelled to kill and eat this son during the siege imposed by the Roman troupes upon Jerusalem in 70 CE.

3. Denouement (450c – 453a): it is made up of a series of comments:

3.1. Jeremiah complains, considered by the Rabbis as Author of Lamentations, complains about this cannibalism in TMLam. 2, 20. 3-4, to which the Holy Spirit reacts using TMLam. 2, 20. 5-6 (A10), that the Compiler attests as referring to Zechariah son of Jehoiada.

3.2. The Holy Spirit replies: 'Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord,' speaking of Zechariah, son of Jehoiada.

¹⁰⁶⁰ The Buber version of *Eikhah Rabbati* has here a report on the 'young son' of this woman that the edition princeps provides at the of this narrative. This young son wished to suck, but he found no milk. He fell convulsively on the ground, and died.

This fourth anecdote narrative (A) to the section TMLam.2, 11-22 is in its form and content the same that occurred in the *Eikhah Rabbati* account of the TMLam.1,16. It is evident that it is repeated here for reason of style, and therefore of rhetoric. It occurs, indeed, within a context in which three other anecdote narratives (A) similar in form and theme are used in the comment. Its historical meaning is based on this rhetorical feature.

CONCLUSION

1. How many anecdote narratives (A) are there? Two are extended in their components, three are vignettes. There two series of the narratives. The first series contains narratives related to the prominent leaders, while the second series is made up of narratives related to the bounced relationships within families in war time.

Some of them are historical, while other narratives are fictions based on Scriptures!

2. The overall theme of these narratives (As) is a mirror to the II.2. and II.2.2: it is about the reversal of the fortune of the relatives members of the society. The main differences are that the protagonists are now anonymous and that they are not related to well-known members of prominent families in Jerusalem. It seems that the Compilers wanted to used here stuff that he could not locate in preceding comments!

III. THE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL IN ROMAN EXILE. THE HISTORICAL SETTINGS OF THE *EIKHAH RABBATI* CLAIMS (STIS) (TMLam 1,1-2,22)

The present and next Chapters address the issue of the historical setting, that is, of the historical content and context that means place and time of the claims (Stis) and the anecdote narratives (As)¹⁰⁶¹ accounted for in the previous Chapters. It is on this basis that the quest for the most general theme of the historical setting of *E. R.* as a comment and lamentation genre can be addressed. Some explanation is needed to specify right away in the introduction what this topic is about and how it is going to be handled.

III.0. Methodological Assumptions

As much it is in general assumed that a research like this one has to find out whether the facts and the events reported and dealt with in such a document as *Eikhah Rabbati* are historical, in the sense that they did happen in the past and can be checked, as this is usual, for instance, by means of literary records and archaeology, the pursuit of this aim in rabbinics, to which the present comment belongs, is challenging because of the very nature of its texts and the not always uncovered ideological agenda they set.

0.1. Data in Literary Form and Context

E. M. Smallwood is right that many of the apparent references to historical events which occur in the Jewish rabbinical literature “as illustrations, explanations or chronological data either are tantalizingly vague and obscure, or are made difficult to interpret by patent anachronism or inherent contradictions.”¹⁰⁶² This is a correct view on the very quality of these documents as historical records. There is, however, no doubt that the latter pertain nevertheless either properly, say literally, or figuratively to the history. So that the question is, how to deal with them in an inquiry which targets historical issues. Let us start with the following assumption. G. Stemberger

¹⁰⁶¹There will be therefore no other extended introduction of this kind for the historical setting of the anecdote narratives (As) in the next Chapter.

¹⁰⁶²E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1977, 331.

recalls opportunely ¹⁰⁶³ that “[T]he experiences and statements which are ascribed in these texts¹⁰⁶⁴ to Palestinian rabbis of the fourth and fifth generations, i.e. men of the fourth century, appear to me in general to reliably reproduce the situation and feelings of the time; although it cannot be denied that there are difficulties in checking this.” That is the very problem. Once we agree that *Eikhah Rabbati* relates on its time, we are expected to know and to say what it does tell us about it. And the textual and literary nature of its materials exposed in the previous Chapters, requires further to make sure that this question of the “what” *Eikhah Rabbati* is about implies, in this regard, the quest for “how” that is told.

This is the reason why this Chapter will carry out the research on the historical basis of the *E.R.* scripture - and - tradition-based interpretations (**Stis**) and the anecdote - narratives (**As**) taking into account this literary nature¹⁰⁶⁵ of the often sketchy linguistic records they rest on or are made up of, as well as their literary contexts within *E.R.* comment,¹⁰⁶⁶ the so-called *midrashic* context, that appears to be effectively an actualizing appropriation of the literary, rhetorical and ideological framework of the Biblical Book of Lamentations.¹⁰⁶⁷ All these provisos, added to the comparative study of available parallels, should to some extent¹⁰⁶⁸ deter us from taking at face value and out of these different contexts, the apparent historical content of these texts and of their statements, all of them having always been, as their likes by origin and by nature, reused and

1063See G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land, Palestine in the Fourth Century*, Edinburgh 2000, 3 - 4.

1064It is about “the Palestinian Talmud along with the early rabbinic Biblical commentaries, which were edited in Palestine towards the end of the period under discussion, particularly the midrashim on Genesis, Leviticus, the Songs of Solomon and Lamentations,” in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 3-4.

1065This is a catch - all phrase for rhetorical figure, narrative, literary genre, etc...

1066D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 16-19 speaks of real-life settings, narrative settings, exegetical settings. This is the productive frame to deal with the anecdotal and sketchy narratives (**As**).

1067J. Ratzinger/Benedikt XVI addresses the same “Schriftauslegung durch Erzählungen” phenomenon in regards to Lk 1-2 as related to Isa 7,14, using somewhat different interpretive postulates and explanatory framework, when it is spoken of: “eine Geschichte, die ganz aus dem Wort kommt und die doch dem Wort erst seine volle Bedeutung gibt, die vorher noch nicht erkennbar war. Die hier erzählte Geschichte ist nicht einfach eine Illustration für die alten Worte, sondern Wirklichkeit, auf die Worte warteten. Sie war in den Worten allein nicht erkennbar, aber die Worte kommen zu ihrer ganzen Bedeutung durch das Ereignis, in dem sie Wirklichkeit werden”, idem, *Jesus von Nazareth. Prolog: Die Kindheitsgeschichte*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2012, 28. See the criticism of his postulate of the ideological typology in W. Treitler, “Judentum nicht im Christentum auflösen”, in *Die Furche* 68/Nr.47(2012)18, reproduced in *Dialog*, Nr.90 (Jänner 2013)31-32.

1068We recall the discussed historical reliability in Rabbinics, see below.

consequently submitted to a sort of permanent process of historical adaptation.¹⁰⁶⁹ Conversely, a merely literary account of these narratives will be ruled out because the rabbis, in spite of their resort to literary language, were not primarily¹⁰⁷⁰ authors of literature; on the contrary, the inextricable entwining of the literature with theology and history will be stressed on.

This approach will, therefore, be completed in the sense that findings based on internal and literary facts will be matched against external ones, that is, historical considerations. Efforts will be made, by way of inference, to find out external factors, the so-called hypothetical archeological, social - cultural, religious and historical assumptions, whereby possible, which may have motivated the claims (**Stis**) and other anecdotal views (**As**) expressed in *E.R.*. They are deemed to supply the external settings and a controlled context, in which *E. R.* innovative reinterpretations of the *traditum*¹⁰⁷¹ might have taken place. The originators and tradents of the reported¹⁰⁷² claims and narratives will be considered. They provide a kind of foothold to the *E.R.* up-dating enterprise of the Biblical Lamentations on a new historical and literary context, with its special protagonists, specific problems and proposed solutions.

0. 2. Chronological Demarcation The Community of Israel between (1 - 400 CE)¹⁰⁷³

1069The existence of this cultural and literary phenomenon, which pertains to the *midrash* as traditional literature, as well as the way it works, have been illustrated by the ‘*mashal* regulari-zation into the king-*mashal*’ documented and handled in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 19f.

1070What J. Neusner holds about the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud* on literature, theology and history applies *mutatis mutandis* to the *Midrash* as literary, historical and theological enterprise : “[f]or talmudic Judaism, literary texts constitute the data of religion and interpreting them defines the quest for an experience of the sacred. It follows that, to the ancient rabbis and their continuators, one seeks God through the worship effected in a particular kind of learning of a distinctive sort of literature”, idem, “The Talmud”, in E Kedourie (ed. by), *The Jewish World. Revelation, Prophecy and History*. London ([1979] 1986), 109, 118.

1071The main valuable conceptual tools which help account for the setting as described are provided by M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford 1985, 2-19: Introduction, and by K. Berger, *Formen und Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, Tübingen 2005, 68-71, re-founding the traditional *Formgeschichte* on the basis of a sort of a new partnership with the rhetoric and the history of cultures.

1072The content of the text is to be considered in some cases as a necessary corrective to the authors and tradents claims, because, the mentioned Rabbis belong sometimes to different periods and the quoted claims may be ascribed to different Rabbis. This very issue of the rabbinic texts as historical documents has been addressed in I. Ziegler, *Die Königsgleichnisse des Midrasch beleuchtet durch die römische Kaiserzeit*, Breslau 1903, xxviif, and in Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 56-63.

1073This is approximately the span of the historical time between the first tannaitic (10-90 CE) and the fifth amoraic generations (360-400), whose deeds and statements are quoted in *Eikhah Rabbati*. See a survey of the main

How can we draw a line of temporal framework which provides an historical setting to the claims and narratives uttered in *Eikhah Rabbati*? Let us postulate it on the basis of the Rabbis who interpreted TMLam 1, 1.1 considered as the “ouverture of all the Lamentations text.”¹⁰⁷⁴ R. Levi (A3) is the first mentioned (l.4) as uttering a *mashal*. Ben Azzai (T2) comes next (l. 8). He is followed by the same R. Levi (A3) (l. 10), a student of R. Yochanan bar Nappacha (A2), who taught first at Sepphoris and later at Tiberias, and died in 279,¹⁰⁷⁵ R. Berekhyah (A5), a student of Chelbo to become “one of the most important teacher of the fourth century in Palestine”¹⁰⁷⁶ (l. 11-12), the name of R. Abdimi of Haifa (third century) (l. 12), R. Sima (T5?/A1)¹⁰⁷⁷ (l.15), Rab. Nachman (bA3) (l. 17), a student of the next, (Mar) Samuel (bA1) (l. 17), who is said to have been the head of a rabbinic school at Nehardea, and died in 254,¹⁰⁷⁸ Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) (l. 17) who lived in Lydda in the first half of the third century,¹⁰⁷⁹ R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A/3rd century) (l. 26), R. Yehudah (T3) (l. 36)¹⁰⁸⁰ who reports a lot from his father Ilai, himself close to Rabban Gamaliel II (T2) and to his companions of Yabneh,¹⁰⁸¹ and who is known to debate

events in K.-L. Noethlichs, *Das Judentum und der römische Staat. Minderheitenpolitik im antiken Rom*, Darmstad 1996, 9-26. And D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 103, speaks of “religious and political circumstances in which Jews lived in the second, third, and fourth centuries” the Rabbis had to address. Noteworthy is that J.Ratzinger/Benedikt xvi resorts regularly to the interpretive device of “historical, theological, and geographical demarcation”, termed “[D]er historische und theologische Rahmen,” in his *Jesus von Nazareth. Prolog....*2012, 69,99.

1074This work relies on data that shows that compiler(s) of *Eikhah Rabbati* hold(s) it as an unit. And W. Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth, Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder*, Gütersloh, 192, 204 presents and comments this colon as the title of all Lamentations chapter one; see also G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 113.

1075Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 86-89.

1076W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoraer*, Strassburg, 1899, reprinted Hildesheim 1965, 344. S. Berechyah (A5) is said to have performed in Tiberias (ibidem, p. 345, note 6) and in Schythopolis (Bethshean), ibidem, 347.

1077See footnote 59.

1078Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 85.

1079Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 84.

1080This is R. Yehudah bar Ilai (T3) who belongs together with R. Nechemyah (T3) to the later students of R. Aqiba (T20, see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 77.

1081W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, Zweiter Band, Strassburg 1890, reprinted in Berlin 1966, 191.

often as in the case under inquiry with R. Nechemyah (T3)¹⁰⁸² in the post-Hadrian era. (l. 37). Both Rabbis are further once again mentioned (l. 39 - 40).

All these Palestinian and Babylonian Rabbis whose sayings are mentioned in the interpretation of TMLam. 1, 1.1, belong therefore to the post-war generation of Yabneh, see below, as well as to the generations grown up during the years before the end of the Patriarchate in Tiberias.¹⁰⁸³ They are connected with countries and cities in which Jews settled after the Destruction in 70 CE and the 132-153 CE war.¹⁰⁸⁴ This is broadly spoken as a segment of the period of confrontation between the Great Power Rome and the political and religious aspirations of the small Jewish nation. Rome has been extending its imperialism in the region since the second century BCE¹⁰⁸⁵ imposing successively the Hellenistic Herodian rulers and its own, often of poor quality, delegates,¹⁰⁸⁶ before it destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE, and completed this invasion by sacking and transforming Jerusalem into a pagan city in 132-135 CE.¹⁰⁸⁷ The mention of R. Levi (A3) and R. Berekhyah (A5)'s claim brings another element. It

1082See W. Bacher, *Die Agada de Tannaiten, Zweiter Band*, Strassburg 1890, reprinted in Berlin 1966, 225; Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 77.

1083This panoramic stance holds as a catch-all, even in the general case pertaining to the Greco-Roman culture reported by H.A. Fischel, that *sententia* might have been ascribed to a Sage merely to “stress his importance and not to reflect an actual teaching of his”, idem, *Essays in Greco-Roman and related Talmudic Literature*, New York 1977, 72. Noteworthy is the fact that J. Neusner (ed.), *The Native Category - Formations of the Agadah. The Earlier Midrash-Com-pilations*. Volume II. Lanham/New York/Oxford 2000, 17, considers “the same authorities” as one of the criteria of the unique “Rabbinic Judaism”.

1084Detailed data are provided in G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 16, 18.21, with Galilea as the center of the Jewish world after the 132-135 war.

1085This starts with the defeat of the Greek Antiochus III at Magnesia in 190 CE, prelude to the Roman Syria province in 64 BCE, which crystallized the Roman political and military hegemony in the Mediterranean Basin. The Jewish source 2 Book of the Maccabees 11, 34-38 mentions 164 BCE or the first contacts, while the 1, Book of the Maccabees 8, 20.23-30 speaks of a contract between the state of Judas Maccabaeus, and the Roman Empire sealed in 161, see Z. Yavetz, “*The Jew and the Great Powers of the Ancient World*”. In E. Kedurie (ed, by), *The Jewish World. Revelation, Prophecy and History*. London [(1979) 1986], 98-107, but see E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 2, who considers Pompey's invasions of Palestine in 63 BCE as the start of this control; and K.-L. Noethlichs, *Das Judentum und der Römische Staat. Minderheitenpolitik im antiken Rom*, Darmstadt, 8-26 for the overview.

1086E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 331.

1087This is stated without presuming, for instance, that Bar Cochba's Jews first provoked the war against Hadrian's troops, as claimed by Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. IV, 6, in contradiction to C. Dio, quoted in E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 433, and in B. Lifshitz, “*Jerusalem sous la domination romaine*”, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II*, Band 8, 1. aufl. 1978, 474-475. See C. Dio, *Historia Romana*, LXIX, 12, 1.

means that we have to include in this picture, the history of the Jews under the Byzantine Empire, which was erected in 324 CE, when Constantine (274-337CE), who is reported to have overpowered his Roman concurrent Maxentius in 312 CE on a vision of Christ and with the use of Christian symbols,¹⁰⁸⁸ defeated Licinius, the emperor of the East, in the battle of Chrysopolis, for dominion in the Roman East.¹⁰⁸⁹ He opened a new era for all of the Roman Empire, with Byzantium/Constantinople (324-1453) as new capital and government site, and, in religion policy, with Christianity as politically permitted, *religio licita*,¹⁰⁹⁰ even in the east part of the Empire. The Christian Church will progressively emerge, ‘in return for her support of the imperial power,’¹⁰⁹¹ to the status of an integrating power and historical factor supported and promoted by the Roman Empire,¹⁰⁹² in spite of the proclaimed freedom of religion.¹⁰⁹³ G. Stemberger has extensively documented the outcome of this policy in terms of the material evidences of the visible presence of Christianity in Palestine.¹⁰⁹⁴

This is the social and political constellation *Eikhah Rabbati* in its present form addresses. It represented a turning point in the Roman religious history,¹⁰⁹⁵ and as *terminus ad quem*, it is

in M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, Vol. 2, Jerusalem 1980, 391-392, and the numismatic solution in support to C. Dio, in Y. Meshorer, *Jewish Coins of the Second Temple Period*, p.93 cited by B. Lifshitz, “Jerusalem sous la domination romaine”, 475.

1088At least, according to Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 44. 5, the bishop of Caesarea Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* IX 9, 2, idem, *Vita Constantini* 1, 38f; but see for contrasting view *Paneg. Lat. XII; Epit. de Caes.* 40, 7, in K. L. Noethlichs, *Die Juden in christlichen Imperium Romanum* (4-6, Jahrhundert), Berlin 1001, 32, E. Hermann-Otto “Weg zur Alleinherrschaft und Stabilität der Herrschaft”, in *Historia*, Sommer/Herbst (2008) 28-29.

1089M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule*, Jerusalem 1984, 158f.

1090This was already the case in the West with Caesar Galerius’ Serdika edict in 30 April 311, see Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 34, and with Licinius “edict of Milan” in 313 on universal religious freedom, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 543.

1091E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 543.

1092On Constantine and Christianity, see Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 24, 9; P. Barcelo, “Konstantins Bekehrung zum Christentum”, in *Historia*, Sommer/ Herbst (2008) 32-41, and H.C. Brennecke, “Der christliche Kaiser und die Kirche”, in *Historia*, Sommer/Herbst (2008) 42-49.

1093Christianity will become soon in 380 CE, State religion, see Codex Theodosianus (CTh) XVI, I, 2.

1094See the particularly increasing and rapidly expanding influence of the Christians on the new laws of the Empire in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 1, proposes as *terminus ad quem* for his research, the year 438 CE, when the Codex Theodosianus, which “sum-marizes rather more than a century of legal development,” was published by Theodosius II.

1095See the preceding footnote on G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 1 with the proposal of 438 CE as *terminus ad quem* for his research.

the only correct stance which can provide a reliable overview on claims ascribed to Rabbis of different generations¹⁰⁹⁶ of a period, which was characterized as such by two main guidelines.

Supplementary, prominently and religiously motivated decrees were, on the one hand, further added, much more resumed,¹⁰⁹⁷ to the bulk of the laws the Principate has issued in the course of time with the Jew and with Judaism, before their reassessment under new conditions in the Codex Theodosianus published in 438 CE.¹⁰⁹⁸ On the other hand, an official boosting of Christianisation by means of symbolic Christian Church building and of pilgrimage promoting in Palestine¹⁰⁹⁹ was simultaneously set out, which, not only conferred the status of a favored on Christianity, but also prompted seemingly unending disputes and quarrels over territory occupation, power conquering, social and religious identity and, none the least, over the coexistence of the local population groups.¹¹⁰⁰

There is no place for doubt that the picture drawn above represents the overall historical setting which is going to be tested in the case of the Scripture - and - tradition based interpretations (**Sti1**), the anecdote narratives (**As**) and the *meshalim* (**Ms**) which account for the Biblical Book of Lamentations in *Eikhah Rabbati*. Do they fit into it or not? This is the reason

1096The methodological unease caused by “patent anachronisms or inherent contradictions” (E.M. Smallwood) can be faced if we recall that we have to deal with written records gathered after their oral phase, see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 45-55.

1097Laws pertaining to membership of city councils and conversions were the old ones, which obviously needed to be released, see an overview on the legal situation of the Jews at that time in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, Edinburg 2000, 22f.

1098In this sense, and at this stage, emperor Julian’s attempt (361-363) to profess again paganism and his support of the Jewish community were a parenthesis speedily closed, see G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, Edinburg 2000, 22f.

1099This topic has been extensively handled in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 2000, 48-120 for the period under inquiry: plans were set in motion “immediately after 324 to uncover the grave of Jesus” with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (p. 55-60), and here, E.R. to TMLam. 2, 2.1/2.

1100For the relationships between Jews and Samaritans, see below, and for Jews and Christians, see M. Avi-Zonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule. A political History of Palestine from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest*, Jerusalem 1984, 137f, and G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000.

why deductive procedures have been used to cluster the abundant claims and anecdotes to the first two chapters of Lamentations on thematic basis.¹¹⁰¹

The following analysis aims to demonstrate that the *E. R.* claims (Stis) and narratives (As) related to the first two chapters TMLam. 1, 1-2, 22 address the situation of Israel in exile, while those pertaining to the rest of the Book of Lamentations, TMLam. 3, 1-5, 22, deal with the issue of returning from exile. This categorization of the historical setting does not account for two different periods. It represents instead the two components - fall *versus* return - of the literary framework of the Biblical Book of Lamentations¹¹⁰² on the basis of layered claims and narratives reported in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

III.1. A Time of Conquests (TMLam. 1, 1-11)

It has been observed above that the tannaitic as well as the amoraic rabbis who commented the Biblical Book of Lamentations in *E. R.*, either belonged to the generations close to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, or they have been immediate or distant victims and witnesses to the consequences of the devastation of the territory of Judea by the Romans in reprisal for Bar Cochba's rebellion in 132 CE. There is no doubt that this is the historical setting for claims related to mistreatment and to ensuing cry which are made in *E. R.*.

The very topic of the fall of the Community of Israel exposed in *E. R.* to TMLam, 1, 1-11, is spelled out in twenty-three claims (Stis) and seven anecdote narratives (As), which account in rabbinic terms and ideology for what is deemed to be a transient moment of embarrassment. The historical setting of these interpretive devices will be dealt with in three connected headings devoted to the way into exile, to its causes and its extent. The historical setting of the anecdote narratives (As) that contextualize these claims (Stis) is handled next Chapter .

¹¹⁰¹See below.

¹¹⁰²As A. Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations...", 4 puts it, the Biblical Book of Lamentations deals with this unique theme by means of a dramatized speech - and not of a theological state-ment, as an exploration of the traumatized relations between Israel and God ...". This observation means *mutatis mutandis*, that a tannaitic rabbi in E.R. may have his sayings reported for their rhetorical connotations in the situation of exile as well as in that of the historically posterior exit from the exile.

III.1.1. The Hardships of The Exile

The first features of the picture of the fallen Community of Israel drawn in *E. R.* which will be addressed are related to what appeared to the Jews¹¹⁰³ a departure into exile,¹¹⁰⁴ which meant at that time, the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE deemed by the rabbinic tradition as the end of one epoch and the beginning of a new one in Judaea. *E. R.* accounts for this event in claims (Stis) and narratives (As) whose relevance and the proposed assessment are the object of the following analysis.

1. The Conquest and The Subjugation

The historical fact of the troops of the Roman general Titus storming, looting and burning everything that stood in 70 CE in Jerusalem is briefly alluded to in *E. R.* by means of two claims (Sti1-2) and a narrative (A) which rely on TMLam. 1, 5.1 = *E. R.* (לב) *“her foes have become as chief.”* The latter, which is related to R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1), will be dealt at the latest, for its content, that *E. R.* proposes as the solution, while it is focused here on the problem, which is spelled out in the claim in terms of assessment and of the report. The second claim (Sti2) is an anonymous one, in combination with TMLam. 1, 5.2 *איביה שלו “her enemies are at ease,”*

1. *“Her foes have become as chief.”* this is Nebuchadnezzar,
“Her enemies are at ease:” this is Nebuzaradan;
2. *“Her foes have become as chief.”* this is Vespasian,
“Her enemies are at ease:”, this is Titus.’

This is a prototypical case of the typological interpretation which relies on undisputed historical facts. On the one hand Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BCE), who ruled as king of Babylon, and Nebuzaradan reported to have been ‘the chief of the executioners, the servant of the king of Babylon’ (2 King 25, 8.11.20; Jer. 39, 9-11.13; 40, 1; 41, 10; 43, 6; 52.12f. 26. 30). He captured, burned Jerusalem in 586 BCE and caused many to go to Babylon; on the other hand, the Roman general Vespasian, appointed early in 67 CE by the emperor Neron (54-68 CE) as commander-in-chief together with his elder son, Titus, to lead the campaign against the Jewish insurgents.

1103The Romans welcomed it instead as the opportune moment for “improved control and more peaceful conditions”, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 331.

1104The handling of the present topic will therefore not focus first on the sitting posture of Fair of Zion in TMLam. 1, 1,1 = *E. R.* (א) *איכה יושבה בודד “How lonely sits”* for reasons provided above.

The latter conquered Jerusalem in 70 CE, after his father had become emperor (69-79).¹¹⁰⁵ The second claim, which comes as the first (**Sti1**) in E. R., is unambiguous enough to let infer that these two events are somewhat serialized for obvious reasons of condemnation.

This very statement is made by R. Hillel b. Berekhyah (A5) who asserts that the downfall of Jerusalem gave way to the rise of Caesarea, as well - at least according to the Buber edition - as of Antipatris and Neapolis. This claim reflects the spirit of concurrence which characterized the relationships between the more or less self-sufficient ancient cities. Every city - the Greek *polis* - had often its coinage tradition, its economic, political and religious policy and also a control over a more or less extended territory.¹¹⁰⁶ That Caesarea, Antipatris and Neapolis came to fortune after the decline of Jerusalem, becoming respectively a metropolis, a province and a colony, relies on sound historical records. Caesarea, Herod's second and greatest city foundation¹¹⁰⁷ inaugurated in either 12 or 10/9 BCE (Smallwood), had been promoted to "colonial status"¹¹⁰⁸ by Vespasian in 72-73 CE. It is however called "metropolis" on coins minted under Severus Alexander (222-235 CE). Although the grant of this honorary title cannot be precisely dated, it is reasonably assumed that it took place at that time.¹¹⁰⁹ Antipatris, the second city quoted, had been founded also by Herod the Great in the north of Joppa. Smallwood reports that "on the sole coin known for Antipatris, struck under Elgabalus (218 - 222 CE) of the Severi dynasty, the title Ant (oniniana) is clear."¹¹¹⁰ More than that is not known. As for Neapolis,

1105F. Josephus, *The Jewish war*, iii, 1-3, Tacitus, *Historiae*, I, 10:3; II, 1:1; V, 13.3, in M. Stern, (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, volume two, Jerusalem 1980, 7. 8. 22f, E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 306f.

1106See for the Palestine, E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, R. A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, People*, Pennsylvania 1995, for the foundation, the history and the organisation of the cities in Palestine, and the different positions of the cities in regard to the Jewish war and to different military officials in F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*.

1107Herod had first refounded the city of Samaria, and renamed it Sebaste, in the Greek equivalent of Augustus, probably in 27 B. C. E.

1108It was officially named "Colonia, Prima, Flavia, Augusta Caesarea, (or Caesarensis)", see also the same information in B. Lishitz, "Cesaree de Palestine...", 498.

1109See E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 76, 343. 493. B. Lifshitz, "Césarée de la Palestine, son histoire et ses institutions", in H. Temporini und W. Haase (Hersg), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Berlin/New York 1977, 500 is much more categorical: "l'empereur Sévère Alexandre accorda à Césarée le rang de métropole: ce titre apparaît fréquemment sur les monnaies de Césarée."

1110E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 76, 493, footnote 30.

the modern Nablus founded by Vespasian in 72-73 CE, it is said that it had been elevated to the status of a colony as Julia Sergia Neapolis by Philip the Arab (244-249 CE), and became the centre of the imperial cult.¹¹¹¹ All these records are obviously late and seem to have been used by R. Hillel b. Berekhyah (A5) to complain about the status of Jerusalem that had in the meantime mutated into the pagan Aelia Capitolina. It is on this rabbinic background that the next is accounted for.

2. The Overpowering Mistreatment

Eikhah Rabbati is filled with reports on the variegated forms of violence the Community of Israel is said to have suffered from. Those forms deemed to have led to exile are consequently described on the basis of TMLam. 1, 9.5-6 *כי הגדיל אויב ראה יהוה את עניי* “*Behold, O Lord, my affliction, for the enemy has glorified himself*” as motivated by the disrespect for the Torah. This statement was no longer a “prayer of the city” (D. R. Hillers), nor an anonymous “tiny plaint psalm” (W. Rudolph). It was instead the complaint expressed by the Holy Spirit, the second, besides the *Shekinah*, component of the rabbinic view of God, that a couple of rabbis interpreted as addressing the infringement of the Torah by the conquerors. R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) accused (**Sti1**) of the kidnapping of the mother with her young according to Hos. 10, 14 against Deut. 22, 6, and of killing the children (**Sti2**) committed to the service in the synagogues and the studies in the schools on the basis of Ps. 78, 31, against Jer. 9, 2. R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) spoke (**Sti3**) of the slaying of the mother with her child on the one day against Lev. 22, 28, and of uncovered blood (**Sti4**) as stated in Ps. 79, 3. against Lev. 17, 13, and R. Berekhyah (A5) of the shame (**Sti5**) that no burial had been provided to the victims. The fact that the Scripture is requested to document the powerlessness and the sadness of God who cannot protect the weak against the violence is a piece of rabbinic repertoire.¹¹¹² It was, however, motivated by historical incongruities which needed to be accounted for with confidence. It is reported, for instance, that Titus ordered, in the fire of action, his soldiers who were growing weary of slaughter, while many survivors still came to light, “to kill only those who were found in arms and offered resistance,

¹¹¹¹See E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 76, 527-528.

¹¹¹²E. L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 28, speaks of a new direction that the rabbis struck boldly into in their extreme crisis to refuse as definitive the experienced failure and powerlessness.

and to make prisoners of the rest. The troops, in addition to those specified in their instructions, slew the old and feeble...”¹¹¹³ Pertaining to the burial of their relatives, the same source seems to support E. R. claims that “the sick had not the strength, while those with vigour still left were deterred both by the multitude of dead and by the uncertainty of their own fate. For many fell dead while burying others, and many went forth to their tombs before fate was upon them.”¹¹¹⁴ Further, C. Dio spared no detail in describing the mass destruction carried out by the Roman general Julius Severus to end the Bar Cochba rebellion.¹¹¹⁵ The collateral damages of this display of forces took the form of persecution, solitude and famine.

3. The Desolate and Ravaged Jerusalem

Eikhah Rabbati relies on TMLam 1, 4.1 = E. R. (לא) דרכי ציון אבלות “*The ways of Zion do mourn*” to describe another form of the pains that befell Jerusalem at that time. While the comments are unanimous in stating that this colon documents the fact that Jerusalem was deprived of religious festivals after the first destruction in 586 BCE, their rabbinic counterpart points out the same motif, but with the focus on the yearning of Zion for the resumption of the scholastic and other national activities. This analysis is supported by the statement made by the fourth century sage of Tiberias R. Huna (A4) (**Sti1**) that ‘[A]ll creatures seek their mate.’ The pain of Jerusalem assumes an universal significance because it is predicated on animals with the wild bitch running after the dog. R. Ammi (A3) detects the same urge between the cedars, and R. Abdimi of Haifa (3rd century) in the roads to Jerusalem (**Sti2**). E. R. does not accuse with the *targum* Israel of sins and of disrespect for the pilgrimage rules; it observes and lists merely that none comes to enter the gates of Jerusalem (**Sti3**), no devotee to reward the priestly due (**Sti**), no disciple of the sages (**Sti1**), according to R. Isaak b. R. Simon (A), and no councillor (**Sti3**), as attested by R. Samuel (A4) in the name of R. Isaac (A3), for the obvious reason that violence has been committed against the virgins of Jerusalem (**Sti3**).

1113F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 414-415.

1114F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v, 514-515.

1115C. Dio, *Historia Romana*, LXIX, 13: 1 - 3; 14: 1 - 3, in M. Stern, (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, volume two, Jerusalem 1980, 391 - 3.

This is a complaint for Zion which accounts for historical views and facts following the 66 - 70 CE and 132 - 135 CE wars, as they were still experienced in the third and fourth centuries, when well militarized roads were guarded with turrets and catapults.¹¹¹⁶ Although the revolt leading to 66-70 CE war was not followed by any Roman ban on the observance of the Jewish religious ordinances, the destruction of the Temple, the subsequent permanent presence of a legion religiously militant,¹¹¹⁷ together with the indispensable pagan shrines,¹¹¹⁸ baths, shops and other Greco-Roman facilities were sufficient to deter pious Jews from going to Jerusalem in ruin¹¹¹⁹ for religious duties. Further, the Jews were excluded by imperial decree from Jerusalem-*Aelia Capitolina* and from the surrounding territory on pain of death after the 132-135 CE Hadrianic war, to preserve the pagan character of the new city.¹¹²⁰ Another consequence of the lack of the Temple was the cessation of the cult, though hereditary priests continued to exist. A reference after 70 CE to the observance of priestly dues, as this is the case in *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam. 1, 4, is “to be explained as ideal account of procedure, which it was hoped, would some day be restored, rather than as realistic account of actual contemporary procedure.”¹¹²¹ The rabbis were from now on the new religious leaders, and the identification of the affliction of the virgins of TMLam. 1, 4 to discomposure of the disciples of the sages and of the councillors respectively by R. Isaac b. R. Simon (A) and by R. Samuel (A4) in the name of R. Isaac (A3) dealt with issues of that time reworked on the basis of the rhetorical feature of the text of the Lamentations.¹¹²²

1116This information reproduces the propounded reading of *Eikhah Rabbati* בורגנין and בולישין in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi*, see above. And it is reported that the Roman military presence had been reinforced with the establishment of a permanent legionary garrison in Palestine after the 66-70 war, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 331 - 332. 458 for Roman roads in Palestine.

1117Military standards were regularly used as objects of cult.

1118There is, however, no evidence of pagan shrine in the post-70 Jerusalem, but for the traces of a dedication to Sarapis in 116-117 CE, according to E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 76, 346.

1119See E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 76, 346, footnote 58 for literature on Jerusalem in ruin at about 100 CE. See also *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam. 2, 2 on the capture of Bethar, and to 5, 18 on Rabban Gamaliel (T2), R. Eleazar b. Azaryah (T2), R. Yehoshua (T2), and R. Aqiba (T2), see below.

1120See E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 460.

1121E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 340.

1122The councillors played an important role in the administration of the cities according to the Constitutio Antoniniana extending the Roman citizenship to the free inhabitants of the Empire in 211/2, see below.

III.1.2. Time of Weeping and Mourning

The second feature of the picture of the fallen Community of Israel drawn in *E. R.*, which will be addressed, is the provoked weeping, although the start of the Biblical Book of Lamentations focuses on the sitting posture of Fair of Zion in TMLam. 1, 1.1 = *E. R.* (א) איכה “שבה בדד” “*How lonely sits*” for reasons provided above. *E. R.* accounts for this feature in its assuming and expounding of TMLam. 1, 2.1α = *E.R.* (כב) בכו תבכה “*she bitterly weeps*” in a couple of meanings components such as the intensity of weeping, the participation in it, the protagonists, and the reasons of the weeping.

III.1.2.1. The Enduring Weeping

The intensity of the weeping is asserted by R. Acha (A4) (Sti1) on the basis of Ps. 42, 4.1 and is supported by the claims (Sti2-4) made by the following tannaites R. Chiyya b. Abba (T5) and R. Simeon b. Chalafta (T5). R. Acha (A4), who came from Lydda and lived in Tiberias,¹¹²³ interpreted TMLam. 1, 2.1α on the basis of Ps. 42, 4. His claim on Israelites crying without end, obliged to feed themselves with tears, is correct if we consider the political situation of general subjugation under which the Community of Israel had to suffer for more than two centuries.¹¹²⁴ His own fourth generation belonged approximately to the time of Constantius II (337-361 CE), who ruled after the great change introduced by Constantine I that became the sole leader (324 - 337 CE) of the Roman Empire in his era. R. Acha (A4)’s claim is, however, exaggerated, if we recall that the only historical recorded crisis in Palestine of that time, the Revolt against Constantius II (337-361)’s cousin (and brother-in-law)¹¹²⁵ Gallus Caesar (351-352 CE), had been reduced in its importance by present-day findings, to “a series of locally separate disturbances (roughly similar to the race riots of the sixties in the United States).”¹¹²⁶ It can,

¹¹²³Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, second edition, 1996, 93.

¹¹²⁴See E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule. From Pompey to Diocletian*, Leiden 1976; K.L. Noethlichs, *Die Juden im christlichen Imperium Romanum (4-6 Jahrhundert)*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001.

¹¹²⁵This is from G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 169.

¹¹²⁶G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 183. It is said that this Nathanson’s hypothesis “seems to fit the archeological evidence to date, which shows life going on undisturbed in many places in the region, better than the hypothesis of a comprehensive revolt.”

therefore, not characterize the broad picture of a period, the reign of Constantine I and Constantius II,¹¹²⁷ under whom, “despite the harsher tone of the few of his laws that have to do with Jews (...), the Jews of Palestine were certainly not worse off than before.”¹¹²⁸ That they weep continuously cannot be historically taken word for word. It remains for the case in examination that the very expounding of TMLam. 1, 2.1 in E. R. on the basis of Ps. 77 seems to mirror the sort of ambivalent views present in the way the interpreter Rabbis assessed their historical situation and expressed it in the literary and rhetorical context of the Biblical Lamentations. And this is also a history of intelligence.

The lamenting claims (**Sti5-13**) made by the Rabbis in their interpretation of TMLam. 1, 2.1 by means of Ps. 77, 8-11 cannot be reduced to a merely academic coinage without real reference to history. Neither can the questions like: “*Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he appease no more? Is his mercy gone forever? “Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassions?”* (Ps.77, 8-10) be just the quotations from the Old Testament, that they are indeed. Read and expounded in the context of *Eikhah Rabbati*, they are related to theodicy in the sense that “Rabbinic faith and thought were uniquely tested when, in 70 CE, the Temple was destroyed by Titus, and still more so when, after the Bar Cochba revolt, Hadrian transformed Jerusalem into a pagan city (135 C. E.).”¹¹²⁹ And it seems that R. Reuben (A4), R Chanina b. Pappa (A3) and R. Simon (A3), who questioned on God’s mercy, were still facing the fallout of this identity questioning crisis in the next century, although the political and material conditions sketched briefly above provided enough reasons for an affordable making do with the historical circumstances.

III.1.2.2. The Compassionate Divinity

We find traces of a different explanatory (**Sti14-22**) line of the same TMLam. 1, 21 in *Eikhah Rabbati*, which finally prevailed, apparently because it considered the obviously

1127Constantine I reigned from 324 CE, after the victory over Licinius, to 337 CE. Constantine II, son of the preceding, from 337 to April 340 CE; Constantius II, another son of Constantine I and grandson of Constantius I (Constantius Chlorus of the ‘quadriumvirat’ with Diocletian, Galerian and Maximian), from 337 to 361 CE.

1128G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 170.

1129E. L. Fackenheim, *God’s Presence in History. Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections*, 1970.

contradictory situation of Israel, made up of causes of despair, but also of confidence. It is true that in the era introduced by Antoninus Pius (138-160 CE)'s new policy of conciliation¹¹³⁰ after the break made up of disabilities under which the Jewish religion was put in the few last years of Hadrian's reign,¹¹³¹ "the communal life of Palestinian Jewry returned to normal (...). And the Jews of Palestine under the leadership of a [patriarchal] family with a moderate tradition accepted Roman rule from the era of Antonines."¹¹³² The move of the Persians westwards since the beginning of Severus Alexander (222-235 CE)'s rule required a reaction of Rome, which meant that the provinces had to pay for the war effort.¹¹³³ But the same E.M. Smallwood recalls¹¹³⁴ also Jerome (347-420)'s report¹¹³⁵ that Severus and Caracalla had been "very fond of the Jews," who apparently knew to reciprocate keeping them in high esteem.¹¹³⁶ Although "the longstanding

1130Judaism had to remain religio licita but for the Jews, "whose right 'to live according to their laws', as extensively documented by Josephus, was promised in countless Hellenistic decrees and then confirmed by Caesar", in G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 22. They were, therefore, forbidden to undertake proselytism and to convert Gentiles into practicing circumcision.

1131E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 542.

1132This is from E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 475, 486. But, also I. Ziegler makes the same point providing his own reason when he states that "[S]eit 135 erging es ja den Juden bis zu den Konstanten als Untertanen Roms relativ gut. Seitdem die nationale Hoffnung aus dem politischen Leben in das religiöse hinübergeleitet, die Anknüpfung des Messias als Gottes Wunder erwartet wurde und das Ende berechnen verboten war (siehe besonders b. Sanhedrin 96b ff.), hat auch die Spannung zwischen Juden und Heiden ein wenig nachgelassen und der Verkehr im allgemeinen urbanere Formen angenommen", idem, *Die Königsgleichnisse des Midrash beleuchtet durch die Kaiserzeit*, Breslau, 1903, xxiv-xxv.

1133See E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 495, where it is pointed out that "Furius Timesitheus, later to be praetorian prefect under Gordian III (238-244), served as procurator of Palestine at that time, with the specific function of 'exact[ing] the remainder of the annona for the sacred expedition.'"

1134E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 496.

1135E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 496. It is from Corpus Christianorum Latinorum (CCL) LXXV a, 923-4, related to the Jews who applied Dan 11, 34. "And when they stumble, they shall be helped with a little help" to Septimius Severus (193-211) and Antoninus Caracalla (211-218), whose Constitutio Antoniniana in 212 granted Roman citizenship to all the free inhabitants of the empire. It is also assumed not without scepticism, p. 497, that the friendly "Antoninus and Rabbi" tradition in the Jewish literature may have here its setting. The author notes further, p. 499, that the very compilation of the Mishnah that took place nearly at that time was possible only 'in conditions of peace, stability and freedom from political distractions, and the production of the work bears witness to the conditions of the province.' See R. A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, People*. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 1995, 181-182, where the same claims, that the Severan dynasty's policy made possible the emergence of the social power and influence of Yehudah ha-Nasi (T4) and of the rabbis in general, are made.

1136See in E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 496, the mention of an inscription at Kaisun (north-east Galilee) "recording a Jewish prayer for the well-being of Severus and his sons." How could it have been different,

nationalist resentment at Roman domination continued to fester below the surface,”¹¹³⁷ this juridical security prevailed also beyond the chaos, which broke out with the permanent change of Roman rulers in the mid-third century, before Diocletian (284-305 CE) imposed his own policy of order and stability.¹¹³⁸ This may be the historical situation that R. Alexandri (A2) addressed in his category of “weakness”, which does not necessarily mean the sin of Israel as cause for a punishment.¹¹³⁹ It was at this step that a *mashal* (M) was needed, as to account for the fact that God himself and all the creatures were involved in the real weeping of Israel, as this has been largely documented in the claims made *ad hoc* by R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2), R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) of the second part of the third century, and by R. Zeira (A3/A5), R. Berekhyah (A5), R. Pinchas (A5) and R. Huna (A4) in the name of R. Nechemyah (T3). All of these Rabbis belong to a time in which laws of the kind of those prohibiting the purchase of Christian slaves by the Jews and mixed marriages between Jews and Christians in a society becoming more and more Christian “drove the Jews in upon themselves to seek security in separation.”¹¹⁴⁰ They were, however, not deterred from thinking that the fate of the Community of Israel had universal relevance.

III.1.2.3. The Great Defeat

in regard to two rulers whose legal innovation, to resume it with E.M. Smallwood, *op. cit.* 515, had led to the “acceptance of Jews as ordinary citizens on an absolute equality with others.”

1137E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 486.

1138The Jews were affected from the mid-third century onwards by the general anarchy not, “as Jews, but as citizens of an empire” in turmoil, “which proved in the end to be the travail of rebirth to a new era”, so in E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 526f.

1139See E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 498, note 52, in regard to the ‘Acta Pionii’. Pionius is said to have been a victim of the Decian persecution (251)-(The Acts of the Christian Martyrs): “The view that the desolation of Palestine in the third century was divine punishment for Jewish “sins” is a rhetorical cliché and only the Dead Sea area is in question in any case. Evidence for steady Jewish prosperity in the late Roman and Byzantine periods is provided by the large number of synagogues dated up to the sixth century, which have been found in recent years in Palestine, mainly in the north”.

1140E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 545, and the same, but somehow extensively documented and balanced view on the situation at the beginning of the fifth century, in the comment of laws regarding Jews from the Codex Theodosianus, in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 2298f.

The context sketched above may provide also the setting to the *E.R.* last expounding of this mythical weeping, whose connection with the night is underlined by two claims (**Sti1-2**) followed by Rabban Gamaliel (T2/T5)'s anecdote (**A**) to TMLam. 1, 2.1β) = *E.R.* בלילה (כה) “*in the night*”. The focus is, however, on the protagonists involved in this collective weeping. All the natural and ‘supernatural’ forces as well as the Holy One, blessed be He, weep on behalf of a humiliated community that has consequently lost her supporters. The exception would have been provided by R. Jacob of Kefar-Chanan (A/third century)’s interpretation of “*all her friends*” in TMLam. 1, 2. 5/6) = *E.R.* כל רעיה בגדו בה היו לה (כה) “*all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they are become...*” (**Sti**) as referring to the guardian angels Michael and Gabriel supposed to be permanently appointed over¹¹⁴¹ Israel. In so doing, he leaves Israel with the unique support mentioned by R. Levi (A3),¹¹⁴² in the moment of the positive Jewish policy of the last Antoninus (138-192), of the Severi (192-235), and of Diocletian (284-305). Pertaining to TMLam. 1, 2.2 = *E. R.* דמעות על לחיה (כו) “*her tears on her cheeks*”, the *E. R.* anonymous claim (**Sti**), that tears had to be poured down on behalf of bad fate suffered by the priest, the mighty warriors, the judges and the young men, may be the outcome of an effort to specify post war general picture like the following drawn by F. Josephus:

‘Caesar-Titus- issued orders to kill only those who were found in arms and offered resistance, and to make prisoners of the rest. The troops, in addition to those specified in their instructions, slew the old and the feeble, while those in the prime of life and serviceable they drove together into the temple and shut them up in the court of the women. Caesar appointed one of his freedmen as their guard, and his friend Fronto to adjudicate upon the lot appropriate to

1141E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 135 141f.

1142R. Levi (A3), student of R. Yochanan (A2) and twenty-two years preacher in Tiberias, understands literally TMLam. 1, 2.3 = *E. R.* אין לה מנחם (כז) “she has none to comfort her.” E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 136-7 reports on the basis of Exod. Rabba, &7 that “[A]ccording to R. Levi, the Holy One, blessed be He, did (...) promise that Israelites would not be put in the charge of a Guardian Angel in the lifetime of Moses”, but when Moses died, that Guardian Angel was restored to his place, for Joshua saw him, as it is said, And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho... “And he said: Nay, but I am captain of the host of the Lord; I am now come” (Joshua 5, 14). Therefore, it is said: “Behold, I send an angel before thee.” Thus, the verse tells of the punishment: Just as the Gentile nations are in charge of Guardian Angels, so are you in the charge of Guardian Angels”; see also W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. II. Die Schüler Jochanan. Ende des 3 und Anfang des 4. Jahrhunderts*, Strassburg 1892, Hildesheim 1965, 297, where this information on the duration of his preaching activity is provided, and below.

each. Front put to death all the seditious and brigands, information being given by them against each other; he selected the tallest and most handsome of the youth and reserved them for the triumph; of the rest, those over seventeen years of age, he sent in chains to the works in Egypt, while multitudes were presented by Titus to the various provinces, to be destroyed in the theatres by sword or by wild beasts; those under seventeen were sold.¹¹⁴³

The four categories of persons mentioned in the *E.R.* claims belong, however, to the main classes of human beings in the society of Israel used in the Biblical Book of Lamentations when it had to be thought about experiencing loss, as this is the case for the priests (1, 4; 2, 20; 4,13), the mighty warriors (1, 15), the judges (1, 6? 2, 9?; 5, 12?), the young men (1, 15.18; 2, 21; 5, 13.14). Did the Compiler use well proven literary deifications to bring into form otherwise senseless historical data, or is there a covered goal in this focus on traditional social and class ages involved in maintaining covenant, justice and security in Israel?¹¹⁴⁴ In any event, the weeping is perceived in *Eikhah Rabbati* as the main response of the Community of Israel to the crisis which befell her at that time. It was overwhelmingly universal and powerful enough to question the reasonableness of the catastrophe in terms of the relevance of the old covenant traditions¹¹⁴⁵ and the responsibility of the treaty partners for the disaster. The next topic addresses this issue.

III.1.3. The Arguments for A Deserved Humiliation

The destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and the drastic measures taken by the Romans to cope with the Bar Cochba rebellion after 135 CE, it is constantly asserted, were so radical that that both events induced a change in the Biblical and traditional explanatory principle of the covenant, according to which sin is followed by punishment. The prophet Jeremiah viewed the 586 BCE destruction of the first Temple as a punishment decided by God who relied on the

1143F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 415-419.

1144Noteworthy is the report of Tacitus that the men and the women of Israel showed the same determination in the 66-70 CE war, idem, *Historiae*, v, 13. 3, in M. Stern (edit.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, volume two, 23. 31.

1145M. Avi-Yonah holds indeed as certain that “[T]he destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth and of the Temple shook the faith of many Jews”, idem, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule...* 141.

Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar opportunely qualified as his instrument and the rod of his anger. That “[t]he second destruction of the Temple, like the first, had to be viewed as a case of deserved punishment; and the punishment then, as before, became bearable because repentance would end the exile even sin had caused it” could no longer convince,¹¹⁴⁶ because it was inadequate for the pre-sent historical constellation, and, as N.N. Glatzer puts it, “the rabbis could still understand a destroyed Jerusalem in terms of a divine plan for history, not, however, a pagan Jerusalem”¹¹⁴⁷ decided by Hadrian in 135 CE.

Nevertheless, there is a series of claims and anecdote narratives in *E. R.* which display literally records qualified as the sins against the Torah committed either by the Community of Israel, or by her leaders, as well as other cruel deeds of war the conqueror nations were accused of. The hypothesis made here is that the assessment of their literary form and context helps account for their meaning and historical setting in accordance with the new explanatory terms.

1. A History of Transgressions

The first accusations against the Community of Israel are provided by the five claims (Stis) which expound TMLam. 1, 1.1 = *E. R.* (א) איכה יושבה בודד “*How lonely sits*”. The first claim (Sti1) is made by an anonymous interpreter. He relies on the particle *eikhah*, which, as asserted, refers to a striking change from virtue to vice, and from a glorious past to a miserable present,

¹¹⁴⁶See E.L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History. Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Affirmations*, 26-26.

The concept of sin was insufficient to account for the course of the events for the simple reason that “the vast Roman Empire was absurdly out of proportion to the sins of a handful of Jews; and to the repentance of that handful, ludicrously world-historical consequences had to be ascribed.” It is true, however, that the intrusion of the Roman power into Palestine and the ensuing conflicts in the perception and assessment of Roman and Jewish interests were the very problem, which could no longer be solved by M. Julius Agrippa II's (28-92/93 CE) appeal to careful consideration, neither by F. Josephus (37-100 CE)'s opportunistic transition to the enemy, which recalls R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s similar move, nor by his last minute proclamation that God was on the Roman side, see below; and F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, ii, 345-401; v, 361-420, M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten. Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I bis 70n CH*, Leiden/Köln 1961; E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 144-180, 268-292, Z. Yavetz, ‘The Jews and the Great Powers of the Ancient World’, in E. Kedourie (ed.), *The Jewish World. Revelation, Prophecy and History*, London ([1979] 1986), 103f. This was further the historical setting of the rabbinic theological view that the Holy One, blessed be he, went with the mistreated Community of Israel into exile, see below.

¹¹⁴⁷N.N. Glatzer, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichtslehre der Tannaiten*, Berlin: Schocken 1933, quoted in E.L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History...*, 26.

that depicts the present situation of the Community of Israel. This move had a valuable explanatory potential in the third and fourth centuries because a rationalization of the somewhat bad days the Community was going through was needed and was requested, to account for the idea she had about herself and her traditions. The quotation in a row of the three Biblical statements uttered by Moses (Deut. 1, 12), Isaiah (Isa. 1, 21) and Jeremiah on *eikhah* (Lam. 1, 1), (lines 1-3), fulfils the function of an invitation to look backwards in search for the causes of the present troubles.

This retrospective posture means that only a prophetic message had sufficient credibility to address the Community of Israel as the only still objective partner in the covenant with the Holy One, blessed be He, and to convince the *E.R.* addressees that something wrong has taken place. The *targum* to Lamentations used similar terms to account for the situation of the Community of Israel.¹¹⁴⁸ The reasoning was not that their alleged numerous sins had effectively caused the present catastrophe; it was, in the contrary, a plausible recall that they were so unlucky because they had sinned much. There existed therefore a cause for their disaster, by the way of a theological arguing, which had a political relevance and could accounted for only in a *mashal* (M1).

Israel was in exile, and this was the matter to deal with. Historical records provided by reliable sources do not assert that all Israel corresponded to the statements (Sti2-3)¹¹⁴⁹ made by Ben Azzai (T2) and R. Levi (A3).¹¹⁵⁰ The question of the historical content of these claims, that

1148It is reported in the targum to TMLam.1,1.1 that 'Jeremiah the Prophet and High Priest told how it was decreed that Jerusalem and her people should be punished with banishment and that they should be mourned with eikhah. Just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden and the Master of the Universe mourned them with eikhah', in C.M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations: vindicating God*, Leiden 2003, 155.

1149The accusation was of repudiating 1. the divine Unity, circumcision, decalogue, Pentateuch, 2, the thirty-six ordinances in the Torah punished with excision, decalogue. These precepts were then held in high esteem and warmly recommended in the historical context of the Hadrianic anti-Torah persecution, see E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 343f.

1150The main source, F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, II, 345f lets king Agrippa II (50-100) speaks of "the most honest and singled-minded members of the community (...) determined to preserve peace" opposed to "misguided persons", and Z. Yavetz, "The Jews and the Great Powers of the Ancient World", in E. Kedourie (ed.), *The Jewish World*, London 1986, 107 insists that "Jose-phus failed in his attempt to pose as another

is, if the Community of Israel has committed so many transgressions to deserve punishment, has further to take into account the rhetorical relevance of the evident literary style, the hyperbole purposefully used not only in these claims,¹¹⁵¹ but also throughout *Eikhah Rabbati*, by the rabbis of the post-Destruction centuries in Palestine. As Mintz is right that dealt with at that period, that is, read in that post - Destruction historical period, the Biblical Lamentations “elusiveness of the crimes could generate a sense of disproportion between a felt culpability and the actual dimensions of the Destruction; in the space between, a feeling of gratuitousness would take root.”¹¹⁵² And that was the issue to be addressed to demonstrate that the paradigm of God’s covenant with the Community of Israel was valid even after the Destruction and that its requirements of reciprocal obligations between God and Israel had to be recalled.¹¹⁵³ In this context, Ben Azzai (T2), who is said to have been close to R. Aqiba (T2) without having been his student, and whose name is reported in the list of the ten Rabbis victims of the Hadrianic persecution (132-138),¹¹⁵⁴ might have made this claim as an apology in the polemic against Christian views.¹¹⁵⁵

Jeremiah (...). But his treacherous character does not condemn him automatically as a poor historian, nor does his ethics detract from his capacity to analyze the political situation in this respect. It is difficult to fault him.”

1151It is true that hyperbole as figure is already present in TMLam. 1, 1, as noted in D R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 18.

1152While E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 80 tells what this genre is about: “These and other similar midrashim are more than scholastic games: they are attempts to make the popular mind convinced that there was justification for the national catastrophe,” it is A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York 1984, 52f. 57 that defines the issue at stake: “It should be clear that the point of the Rabbis in these exaggerated indictments is hardly to heap abuse on the people or affix an indelible stigma upon his historical identity (...). The purpose was to shore up the battered paradigm of the covenant (...). The evocation of Israel’s culpability was the first step in rehabilitating an apparatus which, once restored, had much more important things to say about the future than about the past.”

1153This is a case of the polemics and apologies, which flourished in the post-Destruction era, and the claims of the rabbis, that aimed at rescuing the perennial Jewish identity, had their counterparts in Christian ones of the same period, see below.

1154In W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, erster Band, Strassburg 1903, reprinted Berlin 1965, 406. 408. 409.

1155W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, erster Band, Strassburg 1903, reprinted Berlin 1965, 421, note 1 ascribes this opinion to Weiss and Jelinek, whose works have not been available for this research. Noteworthy is a similar interpretative pirouette with the same apologetic function, in the Targum, which expounds with the support of Lev. 13, 46 the words בודד “alone” in Lam. 1, 1.1, and the coming כאלמנה “like a widow” in TMLam. 1, 1.3 by means of the image of an unclean man who dwells in isolation. And E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 78, 80 considers that this finding is an answer to the polemical questions: Is Israel being punished, or has Israel been abandoned? Is the destruction of the Temple and the exile

As suggested above, it is true that the four controversial notions of the divine Unity, enhanced in the *Shema* Israel,¹¹⁵⁶ the circumcision,¹¹⁵⁷ the Decalogue,¹¹⁵⁸ and the Torah¹¹⁵⁹ Ben Azzai (T2) referred to, provided to the mentioned rabbis, together with the thirty-six ordinances put forward by R. Levi (A3), the sets of the ethical parameters they needed to possibly rationalize the catastrophes and the calamitous times the Community of Israel was going through. This is the stage at which, in the logic of the *midrashic* interpretation, the coining of *mashal* was necessary, as an attempt to describe somewhat adequately the status and the situation of the Community of Israel at that historical moment. It is proposed by R. Berekhyah (As)'s *mashal* (M2) in the name of R. Adimi of Haifa (A/third century), see below.

The occurrence of the interpretive device *mashal* will be dealt next with the historical setting of the claim (Sti 4) on idolatry the *E. R.* editor let Jeremiah make. Facing paganism that meant defining the terms of the relationship between the Community of Israel and the neighbouring nations was a big issue to the rabbis at that time. It is, for instance, reported that “of twenty-five cities of Palestine west of the Jordan in the fourth century,¹¹⁶⁰ only Tiberias and Sepphoris had a Jewish majority, and only Scythopolis, Caesarea and probably Lydda had

of the people a proof of God having “divorced” them, or is it a proof of the covenant still being in force, as attested to by these punishments? See also the Buber edition, 42. (he).

1156E.E Urbach, *The Sages. Their Concepts and Beliefs*. Jerusalem 1975, 19.

1157The alleged prohibition of the circumcision by Hadrian is mentioned in the *Historia Augusta* as the cause of the Jewish revolt, see E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule. From Pompey to Diocletian*, Leiden 1976, 428-429, where it is reported that Roman sources do not support this statement. The latter is seen, however, as correct in regard to the decision made by Antonius Pius (136-160), when he excepted the Jews from the universal prohibition of circumcision, “while prescribing the same penalties for the circumcision of a gentile as for castration.”

1158Even the Naag Papyrus presents it in combination with the *Shema* Israel, see E.E. Urbach, *The Sages. Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1975, 19.

1159 The term Torah has been deemed appropriate by the Rabbis to designate not the commandments mandated “in the Bible”, but also and principally, the study of those commandments, more specifically, the entire apparatus of academies and courts and scribes and scholars of the Oral Law that in fact constituted the regime of the Rabbis,” in A. Mintz, *Hurban. Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature*, New York 1984, 56; see E.E. Urbach, *The Sages. Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1975, 266f, and below.

1160The situation could hardly be different some centuries earlier, mostly after Hadrian war (132-138).

significant Jewish communities.”¹¹⁶¹ Records of the time show that all the rest of Palestine was in some extent or another exposed to paganism.¹¹⁶² Pagan populations were to be found in the cities, as a consequence of conquests, occupations and migration waves, but also outside the cities. They acquired land, provided the Church with new members, but also continued to cultivate and to care for their traditional and somewhat appealing new beliefs.¹¹⁶³ Rulers of the time fought against or made strategic use of them;¹¹⁶⁴ rabbis,¹¹⁶⁵ and Christians preachers¹¹⁶⁶ moved against them. Often by all means necessary. The mentioned Jeremiah’s claim in *E. R.* is part of them.

2. The Sin Against Sinai Agreement, of Idolatry and of Wrongdoing

The second accusation is related to the case expressed in TMLam. 1, 1.5 = *E. R.* (כא) שרתי במדינות “(she that was) the princess over the provinces” fused with TMLam. 1, 1.4 במדינות (שרתי) רבתי בדעות במשדינות “(she that was) great in intellect over the provinces”, on the basis of the TMLam (1,1.6) היתה למס “has become a payer of tribute”. The historical setting of the first two accusatory claims will be dealt with here, while the consoling claim belongs to the next rubric.

The first claim (**Sti1**) is worded in terms similar to those of the *E. R.* claims to TMLam. 1, 1.1, in that they rely on decoding the symbolic value of the Hebrew letters which make up the Biblical foothold. R. Yochanan (A2) considers Israel tributary, in Hebrew למס, for having not respected the agreement of Sinai (סיני), both Sinai and *lamas* having the same numerical value, hundred and thirty. And R. Ishmael b. Nachman and Berekhyah (A5) accuse Israel of idolatry, the idolatrous carved image (סמל) being constituted by the same, but reversed Hebrew letters with

1161G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 18-19.

1162D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 308, note 33 for data, debate and abundant literature.

1163See this new ‘monotheistic syncretism’, folk religion, superstition, etc..., in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 186f.

1164Constantine (324-337), Constantius (337-361) and Theodosius (380-395)’s actions are recorded as well as Julian’s promotion policy in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 186-187. 196f.

1165See G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 192.

1166G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 192f.

(מסל) *tributary*. It is on the basis of this letter resemblance, broken this time, that the Rabbis further reproach Israel for the melting (מסא + ל) of the heart, that means, the lack of courage. The second claim (**Sti2**) is reported by R. Uqba (A). The Holy One, blessed be He, accuses the unfaithful sons of his friend Abraham (Isa. 41, 8) on the basis of Gen. 18, Jer. 11, 15.1-2 and Prov. 17, 5 of sins, without further precision, of evil, wrongdoing, negligence of circumcision, and rejoicing in case of downfall. Both E. R. claims provide two specifying catalogues of the misdeeds Israel is accused of, whose hyperbolic character is obvious. And like the claims to TMLam, 1, 1.1, the present statements also have the function of convincing the Jewish communities of the third and fourth century in Scythopolis and Tiberias of wrongdoing against the covenantal divine partner, and of deserving the pains they endured. Repeating the covenantal requirements in this rubric aimed once again at the assertion of its perennial character.

3. The Lack of Regard for the Poor and the Hebrew Slave

The E. R. tendency to elaborate the ‘structures of the plausibility’ (A. Mintz) to convince the Community of Israel of her sinfulness, relies further on TMLam. 1, 3.1/2) = E. R. (כט) גלותה יהודה מעוני ומרוב עבודה “*Yehudah is gone into exile because of affliction and of great servitude*”, which is consequently reanalysed to make claims on this issue possible. R. Bibi (bA3) and Rab Huna (b. Chiyya) (b.A3), the successor of R. Yehudh b. Yechzqel at Pumbeditha, accuse-se Judah in the name of Rab (bA1) of not eating unleavened bread on Passover (**Sti1**), of seizing the poor’s pledge (**Sti2**), violating the poor’s pledge (**Sti3**), robbing the poor’s due (**Sti4**), and of eating the poor’s tithe (**Sti5**). R. Acha (A4) of Lydda and Tiberias and Yehudah (A4), blame the same Community, in the name of R. Yose (A3) (**Sti6**), for idolatry, no generation being immunized against the exodus sin of the golden calf.

The same R. Acha (A4) takes advantage of the TMLam. 1, 3.2 מרוב עבודה “*because of great servitude*,” to utter (**Sti**) the last reproach for mistreating the Hebrew slave. Sound similarities have helped the rabbis set up this symbolic enumeration of seven sins, with the obvious intent “to blunt the harsh extremities of the Destruction and shape it to fit the covenant paradigm.”¹¹⁶⁷ The fact is that these alleged misdeeds are indeterminate enough to persuade of

1167A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 1984, 71.

their accuracy. Babylonia as well as Galilee could at that time provide reliable cases to substantiate these blames. Galilee was, however, integrated into the official structure imposed by the Roman-Byzantine empire. It has been asserted that the Lower Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Sepphoris and Tiberias, their officers being responsible for controlling and taxing their territories on behalf of Rome. The patriarchate itself had emerged to a centre of a good functioning network of patron-client relations “that came to operate in effect as an unofficial political-economic-religious government in Galilee.”¹¹⁶⁸ Unavoidable social conflicts could provide cases strong enough to be used to get the population submit to the abiding leadership of the Holy One, blessed be He.

4. The Irresponsibility of the Zion’s Leaders

The setting up of a catalogue listing the sins committed by the Community of Israel is extended with two further items related this time to the leaders of Zion on the basis of TMLam. 1, 6. R. Yehudah (A4)¹¹⁶⁹ accused first the leaders of Zion resorting to a metaphoric correspondence with TMLam. 1, 6.3¹¹⁷⁰ of being hard-hearted like the harts (**Sti2**).¹¹⁷¹ But this very predicate is deemed in a simile ascribed to R. Simon (A3) in the name of R. Simeon b. Abba (A3), and to R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) in the name of R. Yehoshua (T2), to be, in regard to the observance of the commandments, equivalent to weakness (**Sti3**), because the nobles of Israel did not endeavour to get the committed transgression repaired; they turned instead their faces away from it. The second item relies on the assertion “*without strength*” in TMLam. 1, 6.5/6¹¹⁷² to provide a theological foundation to this reproach. R. Azaryah (A5) states in the name of R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) that the Israelites strengthen the Holy One, blessed be He, when they performed his will (**Sti1**). On the contrary, they weaken him and themselves (**Sti2**), according to R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4), in the name of R. Levi b. R. Laqish (A3). Unfortunately, the latter

1168R. A. Horsley, *Galilee*, 183, G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 25f, and, for a more detailed picture, see idem, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 6f.

1169It is presumed that he is R. Yehudah bar Simon ben Pazzi (A3) and like him he was from Lydda, see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 94. The Buber edition has the Caesarean R. Abbahu (A3).

1170TMLam. 1, 6.3 = E.R. (לד) היו שריה כאילים “*Her rulers have become like harts*”.

1171He has ruled out in the preceding claim (Sti1), the opposite predicate “tender” which may rely on Isa. 5,17.

1172TMLam. 1, 6.5/6 = E.R. (לה) וילכו בלא כח לפני רודף “*And they have gone without strength before the pursuer*”.

alternative occurred (**Sti3**), as instanced by R. Huna (A4), R. Acha (A4), R. Simon (3) in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2), and by the Rabbis in the name of R. Chanina (T1/A1/3): ‘A man would say to his fellow in Jerusalem, Teach me a page of Scripture, but he would reply, I have not the strength. [He would say], Teach me a chapter of Mishnah, but he would replied, I have not the strength’ [Cohen].

These claims are an additional catalogue of neglects the Community of Israel is accused of, the focus being this time on those that TMLam. 1, 6.3 names “*the princes*”, and that *Eikhah Rabbati* qualifies successively as ‘the eminent men of Israel’, as ‘Israel’, and as ‘teachers in Jerusalem’. Their hyperbolic form has the function of convincing Israel of guilt, and it was supported by the conflicts of that time for the true leadership, which belongs to the arguing line of *Eikhah Rabbati*. It suffices to recall in this regard R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)’s confrontation with Ben Battiach in *E. R.* comment to TMLam. 1, 5, above, which is similar to the misunderstanding between R. Eleazar of Modim (T2) and Bar Cochba exposed in the *E. R.* interpretation of TMLam. 2, 2.1/2, below. Both cases provide an approximate idea about how the rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* thought of those they considered responsible for the Catastrophe. But, the re-corded disputes between the rabbis and the patriarchate on the one hand, the rabbis among themselves, as well as between them and the Roman agents and delegates, on the other hand, deliver only a glimpse into the enduring power constellation and power sharing conflicts briefly sketched above, that the rabbis assessed consequently on the basis of their own sociological and ethical standards.¹¹⁷³

5. The Additional Sins Against the Torah: The Rebellion

It has been established that the *Eikhah Rabbati* comments provide historically based accusations to claim the guilt of Jerusalem and of her inhabitants. The present heading account

¹¹⁷³It has been noticed that the Buber edition mentions the more complete components of the traditional basic education route, ‘teach me a chapter of Scripture’, ‘a talmudic treatise’, ‘teach me an order of the Mishnah, which represented the very pillars of the Rabbinic school system in the Amoraic time, that is, from the third to the fifth centuries of the CE. G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 111f speaks of the talmudic era as a time, in which the following types of school came into being: *bet sefer* (‘House of the Book’), as elementary school, *bet midrash* or *bet talmud* (‘House of teaching’), as secondary school, and *yeshiva*, the high school, but see R. Eliezer ha-Qappar (T4)’s *Bet Midrash*, ibidem 114.

for the setting of the *E. R.* reproaches as they are expressed on the basis of the TMLam. 1, 7-9. They will be briefly reported before focusing on the current issue. All these rebukes rely on assumptions and postulates that the rabbinic appropriation of the biblical Lamentations exposed up to this step are based on.

TMLam.1, 7¹¹⁷⁴ is used to assert two series of transgressions and to state their consequences not without having been reanalysed in its syntax and modified in its meaning. Firstly, Jerusalem is in exile whose hardships provide her with the opportunity to think about her rebellions (**Sti1**) and to remember that she has in so doing transgressed the words of the Torah (**Sti2**) (TM Lam. 1, 7. 1-3). Her present situation is therefore not in contrast to a past of prosperity,¹¹⁷⁵ it is described by the Babylonian and Palestinian Rabbis as a moment of mistreatment (**Sti3-4**) without joy and security (**Sti5-6**) because of the errors she had committed in the past (TMLam. 1, 7.5-6). Secondly, her downfall is a subject of mockery to her enemies (**Sti7**) for their Sabbaths (**Sti8**), their sabbatical years (**Sti9**),¹¹⁷⁶ and the end, R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) put his stay in Jerusalem. (**Sti10**).

It is obvious that the coming up of the rabbis with an extended concept of the Torah¹¹⁷⁷ in its written and oral components, including the Mosaic Torah as well as its technical aspects such as the teaching of precepts and *Halakhot*, and the study of the Torah in general,¹¹⁷⁸ is the historical and ideological context, within which the excerpted cola of TMLam. 1, 7 are accounted for. This pertains to *E. R.* innovations such as the rebellion of Jerusalem related to the Torah as well as to the perception of the words of the Torah as the desirable things (TMLam. 1, 1.7-3),

1174The bicolon targeted in *E.R.* is זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודיה

1175This is on the contrary the case in the targum to Lamentations which resorts to a contrastive coordinate to underscore this syntactic choice.

1176Either the Jews observed sabbats and sabbatical years in exile, according to Rashi recalled by Cohen ad locum, or they did not.

1177This extended and finally changing concept of the Torah has been the main topic of E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, Jerusalem 1975, 286-314. Data analyzed by this writer supports the view that the new concept of the Torah is partly and historically related among others to the rising of the Rabbinism, as recalled in A. Guttman, "Rabbinic Judaism in the Making", in L. Levine, (ed.), *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, Jerusalem 1978, 75-87, 108-121.

1178We rely on E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, Jerusalem 1975, 286, where M. Sanhedrin xi, 2 is cited for the first case, and M. Avot ,1, 2 for the second.

whose loss is considered as being the cause of despair for Jerusalem, the (non-)observance of the Sabbaths and of the sabbatical years in TMLam. 1, 7.7-8, as well as the departure of R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) from Jerusalem.¹¹⁷⁹ This last claim is certainly the most interesting one, once it is recorded that this founder of Yavneh / Yamnia short after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE was neither in his origin, nor in his ideological family a consensus building person.¹¹⁸⁰ Noteworthy, is the fact that his case is mentioned after an expounding that targets the rebellion and the infringements of the Torah setting up a literary pattern made up of two contrasting themes which occur also above where it is reported that R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) left Jerusalem in opposition to the indiscriminately violent strategy of the war party, see further below. And the correlated pictures of an ox abandoned to the surgical fury of its sarcastic slaughterers, and of a mistreated bride obliged to take refuge in the remembrance of the comforting past have much more to do with the famous rabbinic measure for measure rule¹¹⁸¹, as well as with the wording of TMLam. 1, 7.6-8, whose rhetorical connotation is obvious, then with a clearly specified historical situation, which may have been addressed. This was not the case neither in the first, nor in the immediately following centuries CE,¹¹⁸² in which there was room for hope.

III.1.4. The Hope in the Catastrophe

Besides the hardships of the exile, the lasting weeping and the listing of a series of accusations dealt with above which account for the Jewish disaster in the first centuries of the CE., there are claims (Stis) in *E. R.* to TMLam. 1, 1-11, which depart somewhat from the acerbic pronouncements dealt with above. They can be considered as really positive amid of the extended destruction in that they give notice of alternative conditions of life, even to self-confidence and

¹¹⁷⁹This item has been dealt with above. E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, 348 speaks of escaping from Jerusalem. Eikhah Rabbati, ad locum, assesses it as a loss for Jerusalem, a judgement conform to the mental frame and to the very political pro-rabbinic claims of the same comment.

¹¹⁸⁰ Stemberger questions, for instance, the very political and social import of the Sanhedrin R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) is said to have set up, see his *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 56-57.

¹¹⁸¹See E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, Jerusalem 1975, 365f.

¹¹⁸²The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was a negotiated issue, see F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v, and it is not sure, at least according to Dio, that Jerusalem had played the major role in Hadrian's decision to transform it into 'Aelia Capitolina' see E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*.

to optimistic view of the future. They pertain mostly to the fate of the population of Jerusalem and to their leaders, and the issue here is to discuss how historically reliable they are.

1. The Holy One, Blessed be He, Went into Exile with the Children

A likely ideologically oriented message is present in the expounding of the following TMLam. 1, 5-6, 1-2.¹¹⁸³ On the one hand, an anonymous claim is made that the Lord has punished Zion because of the multitude of her sins (TMLam. 1, 5.3-4) (**Sti1**). R. Yehudah (T4) considers, on the other hand, on the basis of TMLam. 1, 6.1-2 reanalysed according to Ps. 16, 5 as '[A]nd the portion of the daughter of Zion', that the Lord 'went into exile with the children of Zion' and not with the Sanhedrin nor with the priestly watches (**Sti2**). There is here an obvious allusion to the Rabbinic view of God, precisely of the *Shekhinah*'s departure from Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. The question, whether it is historically documented that the children enjoyed a special treatment to deserve the shelter of the *Shekhinah* on their way into exile, has to be addressed first according to the language used. The term *Shekhinah*, which is the deverbativum of the Hebrew שָׁכַן 'to dwell', 'rest', has been used in this translation in the verses in which it is stated that God or his name dwells, as this is the case in Gen. 9, 27, Ex. 25,8, Deut. 12, 5, as well as in verses, in which an anthropomorphic rendering of the divinity had to be avoided, for instance in Ex. 33, 3; 34, 6; Deut. 4, 39. 32, 40, Num. 23, 21.¹¹⁸⁴ This use of the designation *Shekhinah* witnesses the endeavour made about the first centuries CE to devise a new language certainly for the sake of coming to new terms with updated views on the covenant and the relationship between the involved protagonists.¹¹⁸⁵ As E.E. Urbach puts it,¹¹⁸⁶ the post-biblical notion of *Shekhinah* ['Divine Presence']¹¹⁸⁷ was used for instance by the translator of the targum

1183"For the Lord has afflicted her (Zion) for the multitude of her sins. Her children have gone, captive before the foe. (6.1/2) And from the daughter of Zion all her splendour has departed."

1184All cases quoted in E.E. Urbach, *op. cit.*, 41-42.

1185This holds, if it is true that God himself says, 'I am named according to my acts', according to R. Abba bar Memel (A1)'s paraphrase of Ex. 3, 13 אֱהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֱהִיָּה cited in E.E. Urbach, *The Sages. Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1975, 37.

1186E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 1975, 42.

1187*Shekhinah*, according to E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 1975, 40. It is a deverbativum of שָׁכַן, 'to dwell', 'rest', see M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York, ([copyright 1971] 1996), *ad loca*, and the historical function of this concept in E.L.

Onkelos not “to deviate from the wording of the text on his own initiative”, but “because his generation considered that certain verses could not be rendered literally, as the Tanna R. Judah observed: ‘He who translates a verse literally is a liar’. The translator chose to add the epithet ‘*Shekhinah*’, because in his time it was already used to indicate the presence of God in His sanctuary and among His congregation.”¹¹⁸⁸

Further, highly interesting for the present inquiry on the historical setting of the *E. R.* expounding of TMLam. 1, 5.3-6 is secondly the fact that the coining and the use of the term *Shekhinah* were due to a theological choice, as this is documented by the three following assumptions. The first is the concentration of the *Shekhinah* on some persons, e.g. Adam and Abraham, and upon some places, e.g. the Temple, and the Tabernacle in the Temple, deemed to be the condition of the presence of the same *Shekhinah* in the world.¹¹⁸⁹ The second assumption is that this very confinement of the *Shekhinah* was related to the man’s conduct and deeds.¹¹⁹⁰ Connected to the second is the third assumption reported also in E.R. that the *Shekhinah* went into exile after the destruction of the Temple. R. Chiyya (T5), for instance, was convinced, according to *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of TMLam. 1, 19 on the basis of Jer. 31, 20, of hearing the Holy One, blessed be He, states that he had been with Israel in the exile to Babylon, as well as to Elam (Jer. 49, 38), and to Greece (Zech. 9, 13-14).¹¹⁹¹ This is the ideological and historical context which helps understand R. Yehudah (A4)’s claim made in the fourth century and reported above, that the *Shekhinah* went with the children into exile, and not with the Sanhedrin neither

Fackenheim’s claim that it helped the rabbis strike in the crisis in the new direction that God was present in the history and lamented his decision to get the Temple destroyed, idem, *God’s Presence in History*, 28.

1188E.E. Urbach, *The Sages. Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 42,. This is the conception of the *Shekhinah* in the Talmudim and the Midrashim. For a view of the *Shekhinah* as hypostasis, see E.E. Urbach, *op.cit.* 63f.

1189As such, this view is opposed “to the concept of the immanence of the Deity in the world, which was widely accepted by the Greeks and according to which the Divine immanence in nature is an immutable law”, in E.E. Urbach, *op. cit.* 51.

1190E.E. Urbach quotes, *op. cit.* 52 R. Isaac’s interpretation of Ps. 37, 29, “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever”. “Wherein shall the wicked dwell? In the air? This is the meaning: The wicked caused the *Shekhinah* to leave the earth, but the righteous caused the *Shekhinah* to dwell upon the earth.”

1191That the Holy one, blessed be He, went into exile with Israel is said to be a view exclusive to R. Aqiba (T2) and to those “who followed in his footsteps”, in E.E. Urbach, *op. cit.* 55, 56. The opposite view, held by R. Acha (A4), is that the *Shekhinah* never departed from all the Temple, ibidem, 57. And the third view, ascribed to R. Ishmael, is that the *Shekhinah* is everywhere, see E.E. Urbach, *op. cit.* 62.

with the priestly watches. A claim has been made according to which R. Acha (A4)'s finding (Sti) that the adjacent (verse 6. 1) ויצא מן בת ציון “*from the daughter of Zion has departed...*” on the saving presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, among his chosen people justifies this explanation and relies ultimately on historical evidence.

The capture of Jerusalem by Titus on 9 or 10 Ab of 70 CE included the burning of the Temple and of its contents, such as the Archives, the council-chamber, where the Sanhedrin used to meet,¹¹⁹² the priests' chambers located in the north side of the Temple.¹¹⁹³ The Romans are reported to have plundered valuable Temple furniture such as the Table of the shew-bread and the seven-branched candelabrum, together with bowls, platters, high-priests' vestments; mass of cinnamon, of cassia and spices were delivered by the priest Jesus and the Temple-treasurer Phineas to get their lives saved.¹¹⁹⁴ It is established that the daily sacrifices had ceased earlier in July 70 CE, because no supply of lambs could be further provided to the city.¹¹⁹⁵ That the *Shekhinah* did not accompany neither the Sanhedrin nor the priestly watches into exile belongs, at least in the present context, to the immediate post-war political and religious picture,¹¹⁹⁶ in which the historical facts could have been reinterpreted to meet a biblical statement.¹¹⁹⁷ The women and the children were among the rare chosen victim candidates for the sale.¹¹⁹⁸ It is possible that the Rabbis that had to rethink Judaism in general, accounted for this fact, for the very status of the Sanhedrin, and for the remnant high priestly duties not affected by the

1192 F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 354-355.

1193F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 249-253.

1194F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 387-391. The table of shew-bread, the incense-cups and two silver trumpets were called to be depicted on the victorious Arch of Titus in Rome .

1195F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 93-95, and E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 322, where this reading of the Jewish war is propounded instead of the “lack of men” of the H. St. J. Thackeray's translation of the same passage.

1196The Roman capture of Jerusalem in 70 CE has deprived the Jewish nation of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin, the priesthood, although hereditary priests continued to exist, and of the Temple, see as formulated in B. Lifshitz, “Jerusalem sous la domination romaine,” in Hildegard Temporini und Wolfgang Haase (Hersg.), *op.cit.*, 468-469.

1197 It is, for instance, reported, according to bRH (Rosh ha-Shanah) 31a-b, that the Shekhina has accompanied the Sanhedrin .

1198F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi,382-385. The old and feeble were slain, the seditious and brigands put to death, the tallest and most handsome of the youth reserved for the triumph, those under seventeen sold, those over seventeen had to be destroyed in the theatres by the sword or by wild beasts, *ibidem*, vi, 415f.

destruction of the Temple,¹¹⁹⁹ according to their own inspiration.¹²⁰⁰ A certain criticism of the ancient social and religious order cannot be overlooked in this expounding.¹²⁰¹ The main claim of *Eikhah Rabbati* on this TMLam. 1, 5-6.1/2 is therefore that rebellions have taken place, the ensuing punishment, according to the terms of the covenant, has consequently been inflicted in the form of the exile. But the Holy One, blessed be He, did not abandon the weak and the obedient. That means that his covenant was not nullified at all and this was, undoubtedly, a convenient apologetic argument for the historical context of the fourth century.

2. The Praise for the Righteous According to the Torah

The second item, that is also the conclusion to this rubric on the true guidance, is the recall of the basically positive character of the assumption of the Torah, which inspired the E. R. appropriation of the TMLam. 1, 1-11. It is suggested by the presence, amid the accusations of rebellion, idolatry, sexual immorality and murder against the Community of Israel that occur in the E.R. account of TMLam. 1, 1-11, of a differentiated use of TMLam. 1, 9.3 ותרד פלאים “*Therefore, has she gone down wonderfully*” to praise the Torah as wisdom as well as those who embody it.¹²⁰² The narrated claim (Sti2) related to this issue is made by an old man on the basis of Deut. 28, 59, TMLam. 1, 9.3 and Is. 29, 14 to pay tribute to his fellow villager, the righteous R. Yose (A2) of Milchaya. This move was made against the reluctant R. Isaac Pesaqa (A2), and in the presence of R. Yochanan (A2) and R Simeon b. Laqish (A2):

1199Such as the tithes and heave-offerings.

1200It is correct to say “according to the present power constellation”, because the ancestors of the Rabbis, the Pharisees, e.g. Hillel and his descendants, had their share in the rising of this institution from the Gerousia, see A. Guttman, “Rabbinic Judaism in the Making”, in L. Levine, (ed.), *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, 1978, 75-87, 108-121, and E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 349-350. The two Sanhedrins, the old, headed by the High Priest, and the new, led by the Patriarch-Nasi, together with his vice-president, Av Beth Din, are extensively described in G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 54-60.

1201F. Josephus, who has noted that God warned his people by means of omens against the coming destruction, “finds that God has a care for men, and by all kinds of premonitory signs shows His people the way of salvation, while they owe their destruction to folly and calamities of their own choosing,”idem, *The Jewish War*, vi, 310.

1202It is true that this move occurs just before the Torah standards are used in a comment based on TMLam. 1, 9.4-6 to criticize the inflicted mistreatment.

‘We find that the death of the righteous is more grievous before the Holy One, blessed be He, than the ninety-eight curses mentioned in Deuteronomy and the destruction of the Temple’.

The unanimously accepted assessment of the righteousness as the ultimate standard to be met by God’s and man’s deeds, and the warmly praised old man’s ability to account for this fact on the basis of Scriptures belong to a peculiar time. They enhance the historically dated requirement of a religion which relied on the Torah as the sole medium as this was the case after the destruction of the Temple, to establish and maintain the Jews in direct contact¹²⁰³ with the Holy One, blessed be He’s will. Much more data on the centrality of the Torah will be provided below.

III.1.5. There Is Hope for the Community of Israel

There are five claims (Sti) in the *E. R.* comment to TMLam. 1, 1-11 that accounts for the “fallen Community of Israel in Roman exile”, which do not rely on the seeds of change and hope suggested by the experience of an ongoing protection from the Holy One, blessed be He, neither by the memory of economic, human and cultural wealth of Zion reported in the anecdote narratives (As). The five claims are positive, and they announce a better future. The research for their historical setting will conclude this exposé on ‘the hope in the catastrophe’.

1. Jerusalem Is Not Totally Rejected

The first statement contains a claim is made by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) on the basis of TMLam. 1, 1.3 = (ג) היתה כאלמנה “*she is become like a widow*”. This Rabbi, who was with his friend R. Levi (A3)¹²⁰⁴ a student of R. Yochanan (A2) in Sepphoris-Tiberias, considers with the support of Num. 9, 1, and Hos. 5, 10; 4, 16 that the Community of Israel did wrong, without going, however, to the extremes of the evil and did not, therefore, cause the end of the marriage partnership (Sti1) implied by the covenant with the Holy One, blessed be He. This is a theological and moral assessment of an historical situation, which is effectively dealt with in accordance with

1203This is the way G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 160 sees it, with the support of a dictum of R. Meir (T3) reported in bBer 17a.

1204This is reported in W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, II, Strassburg 1892, Hildesheim 1965, 474.

the Rabbinic talionic principle spelled out in terms related to divorce.¹²⁰⁵ R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) was surely not alone to see the case under research in that way. One of the rare witnesses of the war which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, F. Josephus,¹²⁰⁶ finds it duly to present himself as ‘a Hebrew by race, a native of Jerusalem and a priest,’¹²⁰⁷ and heaped the responsibility of the disaster on the ‘Jewish revolutionary party’,¹²⁰⁸ which was accused of holding the people captive, killing influential citizens, provoking the insurrection of the people headed by Ananus.¹²⁰⁹ While his opus “*The Jewish War*” is said to have been written in Rome to charge the Zealots, and, in so doing, to aid the Roman propaganda,¹²¹⁰ traces of a similar move against the revolutionary party are obviously present in the failed dialogue R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) is reported to have had with his nephew Ben Battiach, ‘appointed in charge of the stores’, in *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam. 1, 5 (lines 510b-521a), as well as in the misunderstanding which led to the murder of R. Eleazar of Modin (T2) by Bar Cochba, according to *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to TMLam. 2, 2 (lines 110b-125a), see below.

That the Holy One, blessed be He, consequently, punished the Community of Israel without, however, destroying it completely as this is supported by the quoted TMLam. 2, 4.1; 5.1,¹²¹¹ was conform to Rabbinic view expressed on their dealing with commandments and rewards,¹²¹² as well as to the historical circumstances, in which R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) made his claim. The latter lived and acted at the beginning of the fourth century in Galilee,¹²¹³ he had the opportunity to realize that the Community of Israel had not been fully uprooted by the

1205The very issue that is the death of the husband is not mentioned!

1206M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten*, Leiden/Köln 1961, 8 holds him for the most complete source on the Jewish freedom party, the Zealots, for the time span under inquiry.

1207F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, i, 3.

1208F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, i, 4.10.

1209F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, iv, 135f.

1210M. Smith, “Palestinian Judaism in the First Century”, in L. Levine, (ed.), *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, 153.

1211TMLam. 2, 4. “He has bent his bow like an enemy”, 2. 5.1 “The Lord has become like an enemy.

1212E. Urbach, *The Sages*, Jerusalem 1975, 365f.

1213W. Bacher, *Die Aggada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, II, 476 assumes that he was from Kefar Chittaja.

successive wars, which took place in the first and second centuries.¹²¹⁴ There was, however, no reason to claim that this Community survived reinforced from the past and present confrontations. The 66-70 CE war deprived Israel as stated above¹²¹⁵ of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin, the priesthood and the Temple that were four pillars of its existence in the country; and the Bar Cochba war (132-135) caused the emergence of the Greco-Roman Aelia Capitolina wanted and founded by Hadrian (117-138) to replace the Jewish capital. Each war was the occasion of restrictive new legislation.¹²¹⁶ Both facts, the permanence of the Community of Israel and the sufferings it endured,¹²¹⁷ are expressed in the more complete comparison of R. Chama b. Uqba (A/third century)¹²¹⁸ (S) reported in the Buber edition: ‘Israel resembles the waitress for the brother-in-law, who demands alimentation, and not *Ketubah*.’ The task of bringing together all these facts is undertaken by the Rabbis in the following *mashal* (M) and related claims (Sti2-3).

2. The Healing Process Has Taken Place

The second statement is made up of the three claims (Sti2-4) prompted by TMLam. (1, 1.6) היתה למס “(she) has become a payer of tribute”. They report the reproaches expressed against the Community of Israel. R. Yochanan (A2), R. Ishmael b. Nachman, R. Berekhyah (A5)

1214Jews went through the 66-70 CE, 115-117 CE, and the 132-138 CE wars, the second being mostly the revolt of the Jews in North Africa (Alexandria, Egypt, and Cyrenaica), Cyprus, Palestine and Mesopotamia, at the end of Trajan’s reign, in E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 389-427.

1215B. Lifshitz, “Jerusalem sous la domination romaine”, in H. Temporini und W Haase (Hersg.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neuern Forschung*, 1977, 468.

1216See E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 342f on the Jewish tax, *fiscus Judaicus*, imposed by Vespasian after the Temple tax has been ruled out, 464f with Jewish literary sources on the post-Hadrianic prohibitions of circumcision, Sabbath observance, ordination of rabbis, study of the Law.

1217In the third century, such sufferings were common to the citizens of an empire “which was passing through the throes of apparent dissolution which proved in the end to be the travail of rebirth to a new era,” thus, E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 526; and see G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land* 2000, 20. 26 for the Jews in Palestine, in which “they were the largest population group” in early fourth century, under Byzantine rule, but were further a “special group, whose interests were to be ordered by special laws.”

1218For the third century, G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 22f, assumes, in the failing of records, that there was “continuity in legal situation” of the Jews, as shaped after Antoninus Pius (138-161), and the awarding of the universal citizenship by Caracalla in 212 CE: freedom of religion, and, as a people, limited autonomy of government, own jurisdiction in civil cases. For the change in the fourth century see *ibidem*, and K.-L. Noethlichs, *Die Juden im Christlichen Imperium Romanum (4.-6. Jahrhundert)*, Berlin 2001, 31f.

and the Rabbis accuse successively the Community of Israel of idolatry (**Sti1**), see above. R Uqba (A4) represents the Holy One, blessed be He, rejecting Abraham's intercession for his sons (**Sti2**) for cause of aggravated misconduct and refusal of circumcision. Complementing this reasoning, R. Yehudah (T3)'s claim that comes next, asserts that the same Community has sinned against the Torah which is written from *alef* to *taw*, as attested by the acrostics of the Book of Lamentations ascribed to Jeremiah (**Sti3**), is not accepted by his colleague R. Nechemyah (T3), on the basis of a proof provided by R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4), R. Aibo (A4) and by the Rabbis, that Isaiah has healed in advance all the curses spoken by Jeremiah from *alef* to *taw* (**Sti4**).

It may be surprising that the above mentioned accusatory claims appear in the present rubric, while they are quite identical to those listed in IV. 1.1.3. There are undeniable similarities in that all these claims assert hyperbolic misdeeds Israel is accused of, which are documented by hardly perceivable textual footholds from the Book of Lamentations. It has been stated further that these claims aim to convince that the deplorable situation of the Community of Israel is due to the which has been committed and that has consequently jeopardized the covenant. The three claims of this heading are, however, somewhat different in their scope.

A. Mintz characterizes the line of reasoning carried out to support R. Yehudah (T3)'s claim as belonging to one of the two texts of E. R. which account for two verses of the Biblical Lamentations by means of the rhetorical figure of "the prolepsis, the figure of anticipation and fulfilment", that relies on the juxtaposition of the texts.¹²¹⁹ Isaiah, in the present occurrence, preceded announcing 'community' against 'solitude' that Jeremiah uttered later, 'end of weeping' against 'weeping', 'return from exile' against 'exile', 'rejoicing against mourning', etc.

This technique of text juxtaposition does not mean that the prophecies made by Isaiah have been effectively fulfilled. R. Yehudah bar Ilai (T3) and R. Nechemyah (T3) went through the turmoil produced by the Hadrianic war (132-135 CE) and its various repercussions. R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) and R. Aibo (A4) lived and acted while a new legislation inspired by the Canons of Elvira (306 CE) was applied against Judaism. The use of Isaiah's consoling

1219A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 74, The prolepsis is used also in the expounding of TMLam. 1, 22.1, see below.

prophecies in such a context had to be reported to a sense of confidence in the history and in the positive character of its course, that could not be reduced to a literary finding.¹²²⁰ The same procedure aiming at the containment of the despair is certainly further at work in R Levi (A3)'s claim (Sti) on the comforter to come, that concludes this heading.

3. There Will Be a Comforter

It has to be recalled that the ruling out of the following TMLam. 1, 2.4 = *E. R.* (-) מכל אהביה “among her lovers” in the *E. R.* expounding as well as R. Jacob of Kefar-Chanan (A/third century)'s interpretation of כל ריעיה “all her friends” of the TMLam. 1, 2.5/6 = *E. R.* (כה) כל רעיה “all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become to her” as referring to the Guardian Angels Michael and Gabriel, leave Israel with the unique support mentioned by R. Levi (A3) (Sti) in his statement.¹²²¹ This was a courageous move made by this student of R. Yochanan (A2) and twenty-two years preacher of Tiberias(?)¹²²² in a moment in which he could not overlooked the positive Jewish policy of the last Antonines (138-192), of the Severi (192-235), and of Diocletian (284-305). This is a strong stance in regard to the Messiah, the resurrection and the World-to-come, that A. Mintz deems¹²²³ not ‘conspicuously’ referred to in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

III.2. The Confidence and the Pains Under the Roman Rule (TMLam. 1, 12-22)

This rubric deals with the historical setting of almost thirteen series of the claims made (Stis) to which two anecdote accounts are related, which are obviously made up of a couple of narratives, told in *Eikhah Rabbati* to draw the first picture of the exile of the Community of Israel on the basis of TMLam. 1, 12-22. It emerges that this exile appears as a moment of inflicted and

1220G. Stemberger, *Juden und Christen im spätantiken Palästina*, Berlin/New York 2007 provides, in continuation of findings exposed in Idem, *Jews and Christians in Holy Land*, 2000, archeological data which document active Jewish settlements in Galilee even amid a strong Christian expansion.

1221R. Levi (A3)'s reported ad locum statement is, ‘Wherever it is written “has none”, it is indicated that there will be in the future.’

1222W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, II. *Die Schüler Jochanan. Ende des 3. und Anfang des 4. Jahrhunderts*, Strassburg 1892, Hildesheim 1965, 297, where this information on the duration of his preaching activity is provided, is silent on the question of its location.

1223See A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 75.

endured pains, for reasons that the rabbis found conform to their thinking, and on the basis of this conceptualization, limited in scope. All these features which characterize the exile will be handled in three headings.

The rabbinic commentary *Eikhah Rabbati* describes the exile of the Community of Israel in terms of humiliation and mistreatment. The question in the present rubric is to ascertain how historical all these claims and pictures are. Are there some independent sources which support them, or do they report rabbinic views of facts which could have been assessed differently? The way the present topic, the historical setting of the *Eikhah Rabbati* claims and narratives, is accounted for should no longer be a matter of confusion.

III.2.1. The Idolatrous Nations Could Not Inflict Such a Blow

It has been stated that *Eikhah Rabbati* accounts anonymously for TMLam. 1, 12¹²²⁴ as a defying call (**Sti**) formulated on the basis of the *ex minore ad maiorem* (*qal wa-chomer*) principle of the rabbinic hermeneutics¹²²⁵ by the Community of Israel calling out to the idolatrous heathen nations, accused of transgressing the Torah (**Sti**), for the blow she has received, and which violates the latter (**Sti**). The *Eikhah Rabbati* rhetorical requalification, which ascribes this suffering to the conquests of Judaea by Nebuchadnezzar and by Vespasian, is, in spite of its historical reliability, an undoubted diversion stratagem. It helps, indeed, reassert, as R. Acha (A4) did it (**Sti**), the trustworthiness of the unbroken relationship with the Holy One, blessed be He, who is perceived as the first author of the pains endured by the Community of Israel, see below.

The obvious context of interethnic contest of this expounding of TMLam. 1, 12 is dated¹²²⁶ but it has its roots in the remote past of Israel. The very mention of the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar, and of the Roman Vespasian, brings the focus on the Babylonian subjugation

1224TMLam. 1, 12) / הביטו וראו / לוא אליכם כל עוברי דרך /

אם יש מכאוב כמכאבי // אשר עולל לי

אשר הוגה יהוה // ביום חרון אפו ///

1225An extended account of the rabbinic hermeneutics is provided by G. Stemmerger in his, “Die Schriftauslegung der Rabbinen”, in C. Dohmen and G. Stemmerger, *Hermeneutik Bibel und des Alten Testaments*, Stuttgart/Berlin/Koeln 1996, 75f.

1226See the mention of R. Acha (A4).

(586-538 B.C.E.) as well as on the immediate Roman annexing (6 C. E. -) of Judaea. The reproach of idolatry against those called “*transgressors of the way*” (*obere derek*) fuelled, however, the state of permanent friction between the Roman administration and the Jewish nationalism that deserves an extended treatment.

The Roman historian Tacitus (56 C. E.-120 C. E.) speaks of the patience of the Jews, reporting that the latter resorted to arms when Caligula ordered them to install his statue in the Temple of Jerusalem.¹²²⁷ The root of the lasting conflict laid at this stage of history, however, in the difference of the views on redemption, as the protagonists of the time championed it. King Herod the Great (37- 4 B. C. E.) had boosted the Judaea economy and restored the Temple of Jerusalem to “a splendour never known before”.¹²²⁸ But these achievements of his policy of Hellenization in the wake of the Hasmoneans were paid by means of cruelty and repressive tyranny at the cost of the respect due to the Jewish Tradition. This was the case, for instance, when Herod set a precedent executing at the beginning of his career the leadership of the first anti Roman ruler Ezechias from Galilee and his companions without trial.¹²²⁹ It is true that he promoted the daily sacrifices of two lambs and a bull in Jerusalem for Augustus (27 . C. E.-14 C. E.)’s well-being as substitute for the universally established emperor worship.¹²³⁰ But he had successively executed the Jewish rebels led by Judas from Galilee who protested when he decorated the theatre of Jerusalem with “graven images” in honour of the same Augustus¹²³¹ as well as against the golden eagle he placed in 5 B. C. E. over the Temple doorway.¹²³²

1227 Tacitus, *Historiae V. 9-10*, Annales, XII, 54, in M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, Vol. Two, 21-22; 28-29, 76.

1228 Z. Yavetz, “The Jews and the Great Powers of the Ancient World”, 106.

1229 See Z. Yavetz, “The Jews and the Great Powers of the Ancient World”, 104, and the explanation in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 45, and 103: “The Jews hated him primarily for his Hellenism and his attitude towards Judaism rather than for cruelty and oppression.”

1230 E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 83. 147-8.

1231 F. Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, xv, 272, 276-9, in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 84.

1232 F. Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, xvii, 149-67; *The Jewish War*, i, 648-55, cited also in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 99, where it is explained that “[T]he Temple eagle must (...) have had some offensive connotation - perhaps simply as the legionary emblem, the symbol of Roman might, and thus, an affront to Jewish national sentiment.”

It is further noteworthy that the Jewish anti-Roman guerrilla fighters that Josephus termed “brigands”, the *Sicarii*,¹²³³ and that he accused of being the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple in 70 C. E., are said to have been themselves the “spiritual heirs” of the nationalist party, inspired by another Judas from Galilee,¹²³⁴ who opposed the Quirinius census in 6 C. E..¹²³⁵ They have in the meantime demonstrated their lasting opposition to the Roman rule based on the same beliefs and motives, the same attitude to the Law as they understood and applied it, the same dream of the recovery of independence of “the Jewish nationalism going back to the days of the Maccabees.”¹²³⁶ They were the same who protested strongly from 30 C. E. onwards against the cruel behaviour and the shocking disrespect for the religious feelings shown by the Roman prefects who brought into Jerusalem their troops bearing pagan insignia.¹²³⁷

1233C. T. R. Hayward assumed, however, that the Sicarii “were organized by Judas at the census in 6 C. E., and that they remained loyal to his descendants, who provided them with quasi-messianic leaders until the fall of Masada. After Menahem’s murder and his followers’ flight from Jerusalem, they are never heard of again in the city, but confined their activities to Masada. The Zealots, by contrast, were active only in Jerusalem. They are not named as a separate group until after the outbreak of the war, when they appear as already organized under the leadership of the priest Eleazar b. Simon”, idem, “The Fourth Philosophy: Sicarii and Zealots”, Appendix B to E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (a new English version), revised and edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar, 602, see also E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 154, “[T]he name Zealot is not applied to them, or indeed used at all, by Josephus in connection with events before 66”.

1234This party is said to have been heir to the rebels of 4 B.C. E. -“year of a revolt led by Judas, followed by the deposition of the High Priest Joazar”-, in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 153 note 40, where the identification of the Judas of the census with Judas the leader of the rebel in 4 B. C. E. is rejected, and 156. This Judas from Galilee was son of the preceding Ezechias who opposed Herod’s tyranny and was killed in 47 B. C. E., but see below. Described by Josephus as members of the Jewish fourth religious sect or philosophy in addition to the sect of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, the nationalists crystallized into a party during the Roman census survey led by the legate of Syria, P. Sulpicius Quirinius in 6 C. E. as prelude to the introduction of the personal tax (*tributum capitis*) paid by the provincials, that they disqualify as “a confession of weakness for people who regarded God as their only master”. See the assessment of the link between the national freedom and the religious confession as a principle shared by the four Jewish philosophies, the so-called fourth sect having been specifically characterized by the resort to violence as “means for the goal” even “against the truth and the interest of the people,” in M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten*, 148.

1235F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vii, 252f.

1236E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews and the Roman Rule*, 155.

1237This was the case with Pontius Pilatus (26-36/37 C. E.) who exchanged in 26/27 C. E. the unit in Antonia with another carrying medallions-busts of the emperor, which were pieces of decorations, but also “symbols of the imperial cult and objects of worship to the troops”, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 161, and also G. Stemberger, “Die Juden in rabbinischer Zeit (1-7Jh.) - Ein Ueberblick”, in idem, *Judaica Minora*, II, 12. In contrast, A. Vitellius, the legate of Syria, who supervised the government of the province of Judaea by the man of his staff Marcellus after the forced departure of Pilate in 37 C. E., is said to have received an enthusiastic

Further, the exemption of the Jews from the imperial cult was one of the main requests submitted to the pretentious emperor Gaius (37-40 C. E.) after the riots in Alexandria in 38 C. E..¹²³⁸ There is no doubt that in Judaea even the High Priests, who were appointed among the Jews who could defend the Roman interests, were themselves against the Roman rule. This fact is certainly recorded in the episode of the extension of the west wall of the Temple inner court decided by the Sanhedrin under the High Priest Yishmael to preserve the privacy of the Temple ceremonies against the bothering view from outside .¹²³⁹ See above V. 1. 1. 3. 6, and below the Jewish reaction by means of the martyrdom.

The very claim that the so-called extreme nationalist Jews were ‘intransigent, intolerant and fanatic in their adherence to their religion’ and in their refusal of the Roman Rules and rulers deserves some qualification for the time being. As Z. Yavetz puts it in regard to 66-70 C. E. Jewish War, “it should never be forgotten that the fiercest conflicts between Jews and Gentiles in antiquity erupted against kings [Antiochus Epiphanes, Titus and Hadrian] who were considered enlightened, liberal and tolerant. All three persecuted Jews with the declared objective of compelling them not to be different from other peoples. Thus, even these ‘well meaning’ rules had fallen victims to the disease of dislike of the unlike, the epitome of intolerance.”¹²⁴⁰ The sufferings these rulers imposed on the Jews in Palestine and elsewhere exceeded the traditional and reasonable account of them as this had been usual within the covenant framework in the claim that the Community of Israel endured trials for having committed the sins, see the account to TMLam. 1, 16. These Jewish pains were deemed as caused by pure idolatrous paganism and the latter had to be opposed as such. Noteworthy is the fact that the coins minted by the leader

welcome for his sensitivity towards Jewish feelings. Leading a punitive expedition against the rebel king Aretas IV of Nabataea, he is reported to have complied to the request of a Jewish deputation “not to take his forces with their iconic standards through Jewish territory”, so that “ he re-routed his army to by-pass the predominantly Jewish areas”, in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 173, commenting F. Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, xviii, 90-5, 120-3.

¹²³⁸See Philo, *In Flaccum*, idem, *Legatio ad Gaium*, and the comment in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 235f.

¹²³⁹See extended comment in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 276f, on the basis of F. Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, xx, 189f.

¹²⁴⁰Z. Yavetz, “The Jews and the Great Powers of the Ancient World”, 107, col. 2.

Simeon Bar Cochba during the second rebellion (132-135 C. E.) announced an action to be taken to renew the cult in the pagan Aelia Capitolina.¹²⁴¹

III.2.2. The Holy One, Blessed be He, Has Acted in His Attribute of Justice (v.13)

The attack led by the *Eikhah Rabbati* commentators against the idolatrous heathens who did not care for the Torah was relevant within the interethnic context described above. Although this move seems historically justified, it was, however, not unilateral but counterbalanced in a following generation by R. Acha (A4)'s statement (Sti) related to TMLam. 1, 12. 5/6 that the Community of Israel had deserved the pains she endured because she had offended the Holy One, blessed be He, without repenting. This claim was certainly a good argument in that it worked well in the historical context of the fourth century C E. interethnic controversies. It was courageous because it addressed in identical terms of reproach the evil done by the heathen nations as well as that the Community of Israel was accused of, not without regard to their evident consequences. Both accounts seem to have relied on the Rabbinic saying that "all is in hands of Heaven" spelled out by R. Chanina, who opportunely indicated the qualification which made the difference adding, "except the fear of Heaven".¹²⁴² This is obviously the theological basis of the *Eikhah Rabbati* dealing with the TMLam. 1, 13¹²⁴³ by means of a list of claims related to the unique theme of the punishment of the Community of Israel.

D. Stern has described this series of related claims (Stis) as a legendary homily whose "conventional piety (..)" frames "a truly unconventional picture of the divine court, which is portrayed as a kind of Byzantine bureaucracy in which even the angels seem to be subjected to union-like rules prohibiting them from trespassing beyond their strict functions while God's own

1241This very intent remains effective in both cases, either the Bar Cochba war reacted against the Hadrian refoundation of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina (Dio Cassius), as well as against his ban of circumcision (Historia Augusta), or the rebellion prompted the move of the Roman general against the Jewish rebels (Eusebius), see G. Stemberger, *Judaica Minora*, II, 13.

1242See *b. Berakhot* 33, as formulated by E. L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 19. 32.

1243TMLam.1,13 ממרומם שלח אש / בעצמת וירדנה /// פרש רשת לרגלי / השיבני אחור // נתנני שממה כל

הים דוה.

honour needs to be looked after by His divine servants.”¹²⁴⁴ This picturing characterization has the virtue of presenting the *E. R.* comments to TMLam. 1, 13 as historically located and for this reason as pertinent. It does not, however, address the historical relevance of the content of this legend as spelled out in its claims that have motivated our analysis. It has been said that *Eikhah Rabbati* accounts for the TMLam. 1, 13 in two rubrics which contain a wealth of considerations on the divine righteousness.

It was R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3) who asserted on a question of his contemporaneous of Tiberias R. Ammi (A3), related to Ps. 71, 19a, that the creatures of the celestial world practise the righteousness the way those of the early world do it (**Sti1**). The demonstration of this claim, which lists instead different transmission chains of requests for action, one of them from heaven to earth, is provided in the first rubric successively by R. Yochanan (A2) in the name of R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) (**Sti2**), R. Isaac (A3) (**Sti3**), R. Yehoshua of Siknin (A/fourth century) in the name of R. Levi (A3) (**Sti4**), R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) in the name of the same R. Levi (A3) (**Sti5**), an anonymous (**Sti6**), Rab (bA1) in the name of R. Eleazar (T4) (**Sti7**), and by another anonymous (**Sti8**).

This proof is considered in the second rubric by the same R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3) (**Sti9**) as illustrated in the traditionally recorded conflict between the two luminaries, the great sun and the small moon. The rabbis resolved it invoking the attribute of Divine Justice (מדת הדין) that the merciful heaven has nonetheless exerted (**Sti10**),¹²⁴⁵ as documented in Isa. 47,2, that Jerusalem declares to explain endured demolition, with the TMLam. 1, 13 as proof-text (**Sti11**), according to R. Yehoshua (T2).¹²⁴⁶

All the aforementioned claims belong consequently to the corpus of the doctrines of tannaitic and amoraic origins the Rabbis used to describe the situation of Jerusalem and the

1244D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 240.

1245An extensive treatment of the Attribute of Justice as opposed to the Attribute of Mercy is provided by E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 448f.

1246Noteworthy is that R. Yochanan (A2) is said to have admitted the very idea of suffering without sin, but on account of love, that R. Aqiba (T2) has asserted and supported in his martyrdom before his disciples promoted it, see E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 444f, and below.

Community of Israel after the Destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C. E. It seems, however, that the period which is addressed is the post severan era in Palestine. R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3) who opened this series of interpretations belonged to the generation of the Rabbis of the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries CE, when the Community of Israel was calm, in security, and could enjoy some order and stability restored when the Roman emperor Diocletian (284-305 CE) came to power¹²⁴⁷ after decades of political and economic chaos under the generals who followed each other as ephemeral emperors (235-284 CE).

It is true, however, that this Community, like the small luminary, was humiliated, as this is recorded by the account for TMLam. 1, 13. 2β וירדנה “*and subdued it*” which belongs to the same historically motivated interpretive move. It underlines the fact of subjugation (**Sti**) in three lexical meanings deduced from the Scripture, from a tannaitic source,¹²⁴⁸ and from an Aramaic-based statement made by R. Bebal of Sergunieh (A3) on the same Attribute of Justice. Within this broad historical context, the allusion to the presence of the Persians, which may be due to a paronomasic treatment of the predicate in TMLam. 1, 13. 3¹²⁴⁹ together with the Babylonians in the land of Israel as announcing the messiah in the two claims (**Sti1-2**) ascribed to R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) and R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3), may carry the traces of the deluded hopes of independence arisen in the wake of the Persian invasion of Syra in 253 CE.¹²⁵⁰ The time was, however, a troubled one,¹²⁵¹ and the Community of Israel had to endure further the hardships that characterized the major part of the third century, as this is accounted for in the Compiler’s

1247E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 527.

1248See the non checked *yTa’an*, IV 5 (69b), according to the translator, footnote ad loc. and the tradition on Tineius Rufus legate in Judaea when the Bar Cochba’s revolt broke out in 130 CE, reported above.

1249TMLam. 1, 1, 3 פרש רשת לרגלי “he has spread a net for my feet”.

1250This episode took place in a period in which the soldier emperors (235-284 CE) imposed repeated demands of annona and other taxes to support their war against the Persians. The latter, whose Shapur I had restored in 250 CE the autonomy of the Jewish Community of Babylonia, might have appeared as an alternative to the Roman oppression in Palestine, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 530 This will be further the case in 614-628, this time against the Christians leaders, see G. Semberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 9, Auflage, 13, and a picture of the negative effects of the Roman policy on the economy and the population of Palestine in idem, *Das klassische Judentum*, 1979, 25-26.

1251See the assessment of the rule of the Roman allies Odenathus and his widow Zenobia of the semitic Palmyra (260-273CE) even over Palestine in E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under the Roman Rule*, 531, G. Semberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 1979, 26-27, and below.

interpretation of (verse 13, 4) השיבני אחר “*he has turned me back*” (**Sti**) and of (verse 13. 5/6) נתנני שממה “*he has made me desolate; and dim all the day*” citing the features such as the lack of the priesthood, the kingdom,¹²⁵² and of the devastation, without being utterly destroyed, as documented in the much more differentiated account for TMLam. 1, 14. 1, see below.

III.2.3. The Community of Israel Made to the Refuse of the Nations

The rabbinic account of TMLam. 1, 14. 4 - 15. 1/6¹²⁵³ supports further the claims on the destruction from heaven related to TMLam. 1, 13 in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The finding made in the previous chapter is that the Rabbis account for TMLam. 1, 14. 4-15. 1/6 making use of their own explanatory *instrumentarium*, and that the humiliating situation of the C.I. is dealt with on the basis of the rabbinic views of that time on the failed behaviour and the almost automatic consequences it entailed. R. Tanchum b. R. Yirmeyah (A/fourth century) considers the man's strength is weakened by the fasting, the journey, the sin and the kingdom of Babylon (**Sti**). That the last item has been added to a list which did not initially contain it has been seen as an allusion to the historical situation of mistreatment. While the heavy *ketubah* is said by the Rabbis to hold the husband prisoner of the bad woman (**Sti1**), R. Huna (A4) and R. Chanina (T1/A1/2/3/4) declare that the human being is subject to natural constraints (**Sti2**). The condition of destruction which follows is further contextualized in that R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) describes it by the term ‘*sallutha*’ from Bar Gamza (**Sti1**) in Palestine, and R. Levi (A4) by ‘*mesalsela*’ used in Arabia (**Sti2**) to mean ‘comb’. And the last claim (**Sti3**) in which the pain caused by the death of the youth is said to be equal to that provoked by the destruction of the Temple provides the context of all this account.

It appears from these statements that the Rabbis focused on the historical and moral deterioration of their communities resulting from the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and that they account for it without overlooking decisive factors that led to what they obviously considered as a puzzling situation. If the present ordeal had been imposed from heaven, its correct

¹²⁵²This is a repetition of the account or the same adverbial particle אחר that occurs in TMLam. 1, 8. 6, see above.

¹²⁵³TM Lam 1,14.4 - 15,1-6 /// לשבר בחור / קרא עלי מועד // סלה כל אבירי אדני /// לא אוכל קום / נתנני אדני ביד / הכשיל כחי / נתנני אדני ביד / הכשיל כחי
גת דרך אדני // לבתול בת יהודה

assessment relied on the requirements of the particular covenant that was made with the human partner. The mention of ‘fasting, the journey, the sin, and of the kingdom that weakened a man’s strength’ recalls unmistakably the requital¹²⁵⁴ component of the Holy One, blessed be He’s covenant with the Community of Israel. Only this interethnic context makes sense of the sufferings endured by the latter in the form of the exhausting journeys imposed by the wicked kingdom, and relaunches in quite new terms, as this will appear below, “the issues of sin and punishment, atonement and reconciliation, originally encountered by the ancient Israelites in the aftermath of the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE.”¹²⁵⁵

The very evocation of the heavy *ketubah* and the involving of Adam’s submission to his needs partake of the same reasoning which aims at accounting for the present disastrous situation in terms of the human being’s failing to fulfil the covenantal tenets. As E. E. Urbach puts it, “[T]he story of Adam and his transgression against the prohibition of eating of the fruit of the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ establishes unequivocally the casual nexus between sin and punishment. The first sin brought into the world death, birth pangs, toil, and fatigue.”¹²⁵⁶ This is exactly the arguing line followed by Chanina (T1/A1/2/3/4), providing an extended scriptural basis to the merely traditional claim on the heavy *ketubah*¹²⁵⁷ which is in any event a formal prescription specific to the Community of Israel. The latter remains *ipso facto* the chosen and

1254The term is used in E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 420 within the rubric ‘Man’s accounting and the world’s accounting’.

1255J. Neusner, “The Talmud”, in E. Kedourie (ed.), *The Jewish World*, 118. The same issues, the author asserts, are now dealt with in the new context within which “the biblical message required repetition and amplification. For, in older times (586), the people had sinned and atoned, and God had forgiven them, they believed, by restoring them to the Land and by allowing them to rebuilt the Temple. After 70 CE the question of why the disaster had come about, and what sin punished thereby, necessarily arose, but the question was now more difficult to answer. “The answer, it is argued, is provided by new stances that stress “on exactness, precision and order releaved in mishnaic language and literature, on the one side, and in talmudic analysis and argument, on the other (...)”.

1256E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 421, and 430 on “death as a universal phenomenon”.

1257If the latter was as מוהר *mohar* a biblical institution according to Exod. 22, 16, it was made by the rabbis to a written document in which “the bridge-groom pledges himself to assign a certain sum of money to the bride in the event of his death or if he is divorcing her, as well as [to] the sum of money so assigned”, in H. Dandy, (transl. by), *The Mishnah*, 794, see also M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature*, 739. Its “heaviness” was assessed by them, as illustrated by the two hundred denars for a virgin, against hundred for a widow, *ibidem*, 245. Further, the terms of divorcing his own wife were specified by the rabbis who conceived them as the fences protecting the laws of Moses, M. Ketubot, 7.

elected partner of the covenant, and as such, a permanent object of the divine solicitude, see below.

III.2.4. The Destruction of the Pilgrimage Infrastructures and Traditions Under the Romans

This is in the Buber edition the second of the three explanatory rubrics that account for the TMLam.1, 16.1 in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The Holy One, blessed be He, weeps in the first rubric, and in the present rubric, it is about the seven complaints (Stis1-7) of the Community of Israel related to על אלה “for these (things)” in TMLam.1,16.1 and that are spelled out on the basis of the על אלה אזכרה “for these things I remember” in Ps.42,5(6). They are located just before the ten anecdote narratives (As) on the human victims, that are followed by the third series of six claims (Stis 1-6) to TM Lam.1,16.1. According to the version of the *editio princeps* that has been used, the Community of Israel complains in the first series of four claims about the present thorny hedges (**Stis1**), the lack of trees that exposes to the sun (**Sti2**), the shadow of oppressive governments that has replaced the shade of the Holy One, blessed be He (**Sti3**), according to R. Yudan (A4) and R. Nechemyah (T3), the bothering through the watchmen posted by Vespasian ¹²⁵⁸(**Sti4**) eighteen miles from Emmaus. Under these conditions, the pilgrims are reported to join Jerusalem in silence (**Stis5** and **7**), weeping (**Sti6**). The linguistic divergences in the records of these claims and the different location of one of them in the textual witnesses are not substantial enough to deter us from thinking that they were connected to the present colon of Lamentations. But how historical is their content? Although Judaea was on longer independent after it has been conquered by Pompey in 63 BCE, ¹²⁵⁹ it is obvious that the present *E.R.* complaints are related

¹²⁵⁸ The Jerusalem of Herod the Great was an hellenistic and Roman metropole with theater, hippodrome, amphitheater, royal palaces, see B. Lifshitz, “Jérusalem sous la domination romaine”, 446-8. And even under the Roman governors before its destruction in 70 CE, Jerusalem was a flourishing city led by the Great-Priest and the Sanhedrin, visited by numerous pilgrims from Palestine and from abroad, with pharisaic schools attracting students from everywhere, and synagogues for Jews from different origins, and consequently, mostly because of the Temple, an important financial and commercial center, at the acme of its glory, see ibidem, 453. Eusebius (260-339) is said to have reported that “in his time the stone blocks of the Temple were dragged away to build theaters and other public buildings”, in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 2000, 53-54, with criticism.

¹²⁵⁹ The fact that the Hasmonean Hyrcanus reigned at that time *de jure* while the power was *de facto* in the hands of the Idumaeen Antipater first, and after him of his son Herod the Great (40-4 BCE) and his own sons and even in that of the Roman governors after their direct implication in Judaea in 6 CE was cause of restlessness

to the oppression the Jews were submitted to once Jerusalem and the Temple have been destroyed in 70 CE. The statement that '[T]he emperor Vespasian placed watchmen eighteen miles from Emmaus' that received from bothered the pilgrims that they were 'the men of Vespasian (70-79 CE), or Trajan (98-117 CE), or Hadrian (117-138)' to their question to whom they belonged would be anachronistic if it did not mean the later reality reality of the mentioned rabbis, when the Temple of Jerusalem was burnt down, and the Jews had the permission to enter Jerusalem only on the ninth of Av.¹²⁶⁰ It is true that this Hadrian's edict did not deter Jewish devotees, such as the "mourners of Zion" and many others from joining in silence Jerusalem, as this is alluded to in the second series of *E.R.* claims.¹²⁶¹ R. Berechyah (A5) to whom the latter are ascribed belongs to the fourth century, after the Constantinian building programme has imposed physical marks of Christianity over Jerusalem and Palestine.¹²⁶² "With the rise of Christianity", M. Avi-Yonah wrote, "not only the situation of the people of Israel changed, but that of the Land of Israel itself."¹²⁶³ Jerusalem had to be conquered, as the mixed feelings that accompanied Julian (360-363)'s tentative move to rebuild the Temple showed.¹²⁶⁴

among the Jews that led to the outbreak of the first group of the zealots-'robbers' according to Josephus-of Ezechias the Galilean, see Z. Yavetz, "The Jew and the Great Powers of the Ancient world", 104, where it is stated that Ezechias, killed by Herod the Great without trial "became the forerunner of a great anti-Roman movement and was venerated by all those who refused to surrender to Roman rule;" see also B. Lifshitz, "Jérusalem sous la domination romaine", 448.

1260 The situation is described in the *E.R.* anecdote to the TMLam.1,18, in which it is reported that R. Gamaliel II (T2), R. Eleazar b. Azariah,(T2), R. Yehoshua (T2) and R. Aqiba (T2) saw at the Temple mount 'a fox emerging from the Holy of Holies,' see below. This is in accordance with the archeological findings that "the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 cannot have been as complete as Josephus describes," in G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 2000, 51.

1261 The *הבלי ציון* 'mourners of Zion' are part of the Jewish reaction to the Destruction of the Temple, see G. Stemmerger, *Das klassische Judentum: Kultur und Geschichte der rabbinischen Zeit (70 n. Chr.-1040 n. Chr.)*, München 1979, 22.

1262 An extensive picture of this church building programme from Constantine era onwards is provided in G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 2000, 48-70.

1263 M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule*, Jerusalem 1984, 160.

1264 The ordinary Jewish population is said to have reacted with spontaneity, while the rabbinic masters feared the return of the possibly concurrent priestly classes, see G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christian in the Holy Land*, 210.

IV. THE ROMAN EXILE: A COMMUNITY IN HISTORICAL TURMOIL. THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE ANECDOTIC NARRATIVES (AS) (TMLam. 1,1-2,22)

IV.0. Introduction

Nearly eight anecdote narratives (As)¹²⁶⁵ occur in the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to TMLam 1, 1-11. The search for their historical setting requires that two issues related to their authorial ascription, as this has been the case for the claims (Stis), and to their formal extent, that has some influence on their meaning, be addressed as no negligible indications of the historical setting. It has to be noted that both of these issues have to be considered in the search for the historical setting of all the anecdote narratives that occur in the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment to the five chapters of the Biblical Lamentations. Most of these narratives (AS) have been characterized on the basis of the finding from Chapter one as located in the wake of a claim (Sti) that they contextualize.

It follows that if the historical setting of the vignette is easily accessible through the setting of the preceding claim with which it can be somewhat formally identified, this is the case in this section for the Rabban Gamaliel (T2/T5)'s anecdote (A) related to TMLam. 1, 2.1β,¹²⁶⁶ for instance, the quest for the historical setting of the remaining narratives, that are formally most extended, requires for this reason a preliminary painstaking work of definition nature. In this regard, the methodological procedures of precautionary nature mentioned in the introduction to the preceding Chapter as required by the literary frame and by the significance of the interpretative materials that occur in *E.R.* will usefully be considered in the present inquiry. The reported narratives (As) have been divided in three rubrics depending on whether they record the continuity of the Community of Israel, her being exposed to idolatry and her raised hope for a better time.

In regard to the thematic content of the anecdote narratives (As) accounting for the section TMLam. 1, 1-11, that is, the fall of Jerusalem, and to their historical setting, it is noteworthy to

¹²⁶⁵They have been analyzed in seven accounts in Chapter Two.

¹²⁶⁶It has therefore been dealt with in the previous Chapter and will not be repeated here.

recall two findings of the previous researches. The first is Smallwood's observation that "[F]or the historian (...) 70 is the end of an epoch. Apart from Josephus' account of the reduction of the fortress, there is no continuous history of Palestine after 70, and the story has to be reconstructed from scattered scraps of information given, sometimes only in casual references, by classical and church historians, from inscriptions (not numerous) referring to Roman officials and troops, from the coins struck in the province (less instructive than Roman coins), and from the evidence of Jewish rabbinical literature."¹²⁶⁷ It happens, however, according to the second finding, that *Eikhah Rabbati* is an amoraic document, and that it consequently provides amoraic views based on tannaitic claims.¹²⁶⁸ J.D. Cohen speaks opportunely of tannaitic silence and proposes pertinently the historical context within which the following anecdotes (As) were produced.¹²⁶⁹ They obviously focus on issues related to the late antiquity rather than to the tannaic period and presuppose therefore an audience that has overcome the destruction of the first centuries.

1267M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 331.

1268The "Chronological Demarcation" in Chapter III has recorded that the most quoted rabbis in *Eikhah Rabbati* are amoraic.

1269J.D. Cohen's statement deserves to be extensively quoted for the value of its analysis: "[T]he reaction of the rabbis [to the revolt of 66-74 CE, the uprising of the Jews of Cyrenaica, Egypt and Cyprus in 115-17 CE, and the Bar Kokhba rebellion of 132-35 CE] was at first the near silence. The rabbis of the tannaitic period (70-200 CE) did not write laments or seek refuge in apocalyptic dreams. They did not establish new fast days. Nor did they accord a place in their curriculum to the study of these momentous events. While tannaitic corpora allude frequently to the destruction of the Temple, they mention Betar (the site of Bar Kokhba's last stand) only once. They never mention the names of the leaders of the wars of 66-77, 115-17, and 132-35. They never mention Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai's alleged role in the drama of the great revolt or Rabbi Akiva's alleged endorsement of the messianic claims of Bar Kokhba. They seldom mention the Roman emperors who oppressed the Jews. The nature of this tannaitic silence is not clear. (...). However interpreted, the fact remains that the tannaim did not tell stories or preach sermons about the military disasters of their era. Instead they busied themselves with the production of books of law and exegesis. The study of history had to wait. The silence was broken in the amoraic (220-400 CE) and post amoraic (400-700 CE) periods. Now a safe distance from the catastrophes of a bygone age, the rabbis told numerous anecdotes and legends about the wicked Roman emperors (Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, and Hadrian), and the good Roman emperors (Antoninus), about the revolutionaries who had led Jews to defeat (Bar Kokhba, Bar Daroma, the biryon) and about the rabbis who supported them (Rabbi Akiva) or opposed them (Rabbi Zochanan ben Zakkai). They preached sermons on the meaning of these events, concentrating upon the relationship of God to Israel and to the Nations of the world. Anecdotes and sermons of this sort can be found throughout talmudic and post - talmudic literature, but are especially prominent in *Lamentations Rabbati*", in idem, "The Destruction: from Scripture to Midrash", *Prooftexts*, vol.2 (1982) 18-19.

IV.1. The Third and The Fourth Centuries: Mortification and Confidence (TMLam. 1, 1-11)

The *Eikhah Rabbati* data related to the TMLam. 1, 1-11 that have been dealt with so far meet the two findings mentioned above. Considering the amount of the work devoted to the present topic, it appears that the hardships and the weeping in the exile, that are extensively invoked in the claims (Stis), are almost wanting in the narratives expected to spell out historical shortfalls. The *Eikhah Rabbati* reports address a specific agenda in which the significance of the main items is obviously correlated with the abundance of the interpretive materials that account for them.

IV.1.1. The Late Echoes of Moaning and of Groaning

E.R. reports in this section a couple of stories related to the sufferings of the Community of Israel. Their very occurrence does not surprise because they are related to the Biblical Lamentations that they account for by literary means. The latter help also determine their amoraic historical setting.

IV.1.1.1. The Persecuted Population

The painful departure from Jerusalem is accounted for by means of the TMLam. 1, 3 *E.R.* that relies on TMLam. 1, 3.1/2 עבדה ומרוב גלתה יהודה מעוני *“Judah has gone into exile because of affliction and of great servitude”* with only one appropriating claim (Sti) among eight others to address this issue. The appropriating rabbinic picture of the departure into exile of Judah is distinguished from the no real exile of the nations to underline its hardness: respect of dietary laws, walk barefooted instead of in litters, so that they became weak like women. Otherwise, this bicolon is reanalysed and interpreted as one of the assertions related to the causes of the departure into exile, see below. It is instead in conformity with TMLam. 1, 3.3/4 = *E. R.* היא יעבה בגוים לא *“she dwells among the nations, and she finds no rest”* that R. Yudan b. R. Nechemyah (A?) qualifies in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) the stay in exile as a moment of trouble (Sti), Judah being submitted to persecution which, according to a tannaitic precision to TMLam. 1, 3. 5/6 *E.R.* כל רדפיה השיגוה בין האמצרים *“all her pursuers have overtaken her within the straits”*,

took place ‘in their country’ (Sti1). The Ketheb meriri composite narrative (A) based on Ps. 91, 6 that comes next contextualizes this claim to the situation of the involved protagonists R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) and R. Levi (A3), both students of R. Yochanan (A2) in Sepphoris - Tiberias, R. Abbahu (A3) another student of the same R. Yochanan, of Caesarea, and R. Samuel b. Nachaman (A3) of Tiberias, in Galilee at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries.¹²⁷⁰ The fact of the internal migration from Judaea to Galilee. after the 66 - 70 C.E. and 132 - 135 CE and 132 - 135 CE war is abundantly documented.¹²⁷¹

The Ketheb meriri narrative (A), however, tells very little about the alleged persecution of the Community of Israel as such, in a period of history in which the patriarchate operations were formally incorporated into the imperial system.¹²⁷² This somewhat cryptic anecdote contains mystic elements on demons assumed to oppress human beings¹²⁷³, within days of distress from the seventeenth of Tammuz to the ninth of Abu,¹²⁷⁴ which is a clear allusion to the issue of the destruction of the Temple. It is interesting in that it witnesses an actualized appropriation of TMLam. 1, 33f, accounting apparently for the careful move made by local rabbis in what was at that time the centre of rabbinic Judaism¹²⁷⁵ to provide security and suitable conditions for the education of young generations, as to stay in resistance to further Romanization

1270See Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 86. For R. Abbahu (A3), see also B. Lifshitz “Caesaree de la Palestine, son histoire et ses instructions”, H. Temporini and H. W. Haase (Hersg.) *Austieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 515

1271E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 473f, G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum: Kultur und Geschichte der rabbinischen Zeit (70n, Chr. - 1040n. Chr.)*, München 1979, 22f. R. A. Horsley, *Galilee History, People*, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 1995.

1272Extensive data are provided in G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 21f, R. A. Horsley, *Galilee*, 111f.

1273See the context of this belief and the proposal of the way to overcome demons in E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 163. 165: the prevailing view was that “the whole world was full of demons, but the Torah had the power to confine the sphere and compass of their activities”, see also page 177, From the seventeenth of Tammuz to the ninth of Ab seems to be such a period of Ketheb meriri.

1274The translator, *ad locum*, footnote 2: “The first breach in the walls of Jerusalem was made on the former date, while the Temple was destroyed on the latter date, exactly three weeks latter.”

1275All of the Lower Galilee was placed under the jurisdiction of Sepphoris and of Tiberias, probably by the time of Hadrian, and remained so until Byzantine time”, in R. A. Horsley, *Galilee*, 91, while Caesarea had possessed from the second century CE, a flourishing second Jewish community, after the first decimation in 66 CE, see B. Lifshitz, “Caesaree de la Palestine...”, 515.

of the culture.¹²⁷⁶ The exile war was there and the main concern resides in coming to term with it

IV.1.1.2. The Starving Population

The pictures of the hungry people are an obligatory part of the report on the war events that led to the destruction of Jerusalem. This was the case for the first destruction in 586 BCE as stated in Jer. 52, 6 which, according to E. R. claim (**Sti1**) to TMLam. 1, 11.1, excludes the “sons of Judah”. The latter are said to be included in the victims of the famine during the second destruction in 70 CE, as asserted in TMLam. 1, 11.1 “*All her people sigh*”. This claim is contextualized by an anecdote narrative (**A**) in which it is told that “golden basket”¹²⁷⁷ was sent by the be-sieged Jerusalemites to the enemy in exchange for food. This deal could, however, not be completed, for lack of provisions¹²⁷⁸ implied in Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4) and R. Chananyah (T1/2/ 3/A3/5)’s claims (**Sti2-3**) A lot, in this accounting for TMLam. 1, 11.1, was provided by the history of that time. F. Josephus speaks of “[T]he recklessness of the insurgents which kept pace with the famine, and both horrors daily burst out in more furious flame.”¹²⁷⁹ He reports further that “many battered for a single measure - of wheat, if they were rich, of barley, if they were poor”.¹²⁸⁰ And the detail of emaciated people who were treated consequently, is not

1276R.A. Horsley considers the difference between the earlier priestly aristocracy and the second/third century in the fact that “[t]he rabbis, who did not officially exercise political-economic power, were cultivating Israelite traditions in resistance to the dominance of Roman political culture and were doing so nearby, in close but not necessarily exploitative contact with Galilean villagers who shared those Israelite traditions”, idem, *Galilee*, 281.

1277The Aramaic קופה של זהב may render the TMLam. מחמודה ; the historical records which speak of gold used in this operation meet obviously the requirements of an emergency like this one, see F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v, 421, 550. For the famine in general, see ibidem, 370-71, 429f.

1278E.R. to TMLam. 1, 5 reports on people who ‘seethed straw and drank its water.’

1279F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v, 424 - 425. And C. Dio tells that Julius Severus “did not venture” in his war against Bar Cochba” to attack his opponents in the open at any one point. In view of their numbers and their desperation, but by intercepting small groups, thanks to the number of his soldiers and his under-officers, and by depriving them of food and shutting them up, he was able, rather slowly, to be sure, but with comparatively little danger, to crush, exhaust and exterminate them. Very few of them in fact survived” idem, *Historia Romana*, LXIX, 133; 14;1, trans. E. Cary, in M. Stern, (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 1980, 391-3.

1280F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v, 427. It is possible that gold was used to get food.

lacking,¹²⁸¹ nor the spectacle of extended desolation. And R. Pinchas (A5)'s anecdote (A) gives an insight into a late view that the Rabbis had on the physical and psychological ravages caused by the famine in the wake of the Roman conquest in the refusal of a prostitute to forgive her mate for the qualification that she looks like a Jewess. This vignette has a mobilizing function that needed in the century of its utterer.

IV.1.2. The Accusation of Idolatry

The highly ideological rabbinic appropriation is strongly emphasized in the *E. R.* dealing with the verses TMLam. 1, 8-9¹²⁸² which are related one to another in their interpretations. TMLam.1, 8.1 is used to account for the pains of the exile. Heathen nations and Israel deserve going into exile for their sins, an anonymous stated (**Sti1**). Israel's exile is, however, much more 'severely felt' because the translator explained, it contradicts the root experience of the Exodus from Egypt. They are therefore prey to vagabondage (**Sti2**), unclean (**Sti3**), and unfit for priesthood and kingship (**Sti4**). This accusation act is further specified on the basis of TMLam. 1, 9.1.3 R. Berechyah (A5) considers in the name of R. Aba b. Kahana (A3) that means, according to an anonymous interpreter, that their understandings clung to the borders of their robes (**Sti2**), as it stuck to the city of Jerusalem from her outskirts (**A**).

The claims (**Sti**) and narrative (**A**) mentioned above complete the list of the very reproaches to the Community of Israel. And their hyperbolic nature is unmistakable. The nodal point in this reasoning is the identity building Torah received by Israel after the Exodus with Moses at Mount Sinai.¹²⁸³ It is assumed that the "[T]orah alone is the covenant between God and His people, and the presence of the *Shekhinah* among His people depends on the fulfilment and

1281[T]hose still in good condition were presumed to be well off for food, while those already emaciated were passed over, as it seemed senseless to kill so soon to die of starvation", idem, *op. cit.*, 426.

1282The cola accounted for in *E. R.* are for TMLam. 1, 8 "*Jerusalem has sinned grievously |therefore, she has become as an object of derision|| all who honored her despise her| because they have seen her nakedness| she herself groans and turns backward*", and for TMLam. 1,9 1.3.5-6 "*Her filthiness is in her skirts (...)| therefore has she gone down wonderfully (...)| behold, O. Lord, my affliction| for the enemy has glorified himself*"; the bicolon TLam, 1,9. 5-6 is accounted for elsewhere for its focus on the mistreatment of Israel.

1283See the same views with rabbinic sources and comments on the refusal and reception of the Torah in G. Stemmerger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 139f.

study of Torah.¹²⁸⁴ The latter imparts a new identity in that “[T]he people that received the precepts became a kingdom of priests and a holy nation of the God-King.¹²⁸⁵ The link between the Exodus and the covenant at Sinai is indissoluble because the Exodus from Egypt provides the cause the covenantal pact has been offered by God and accepted by the Israelites.¹²⁸⁶ Rabbinic sources underscore this Biblical consequential relatedness between the acceptance of the kingdom of heaven as antidote to idolatry which makes unclean and then of the yoke of commandments.¹²⁸⁷ It is, however, noteworthy, that the assessment and the appraisal of the scrupulous or lax observance of these commandments depended on social issues related to times and places.¹²⁸⁸

The anecdote narrative (A) to TMLam. 1, 9.1 supplies a temporal contextualization to these claims, but also the material proof that this antidote had not worked. That an offering had to be brought to an image located ‘within the innermost of seven chambers’ [Cohen] is a hint to idolatry because of what A. Mintz calls “[T]he parodic contrast between what transpires in his inner sanctum and the Holy of Holies of the true Temple.¹²⁸⁹ That a human being was the most appreciated offering is an obvious accusation of murder. Idolatry, sexual immorality and murder are said further by the same A. Mintz to be “the ‘cardinal sins’ of rabbinic Judaism,¹²⁹⁰ those for which a ‘man should prefer death to sin’ (E.E. Urbach). And this injunction to martyrdom relied on pragmatic ground, these three offences having been “singled out not on account of the punishment they involved, but because they rest on fundamental principles the abolition of which

1284E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 286-7. 289.

1285E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 316.

1286E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 316-7. See G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 126f, the permanent reference to Sinai for innovations in the halakha in Rabbinism, the latter being perceived as rediscoveries of forgotten laws from Sinai. Writers and oral laws were deemed to stem from the sole Sinai revelation.

1287E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 385f, 400, and below. (The position of the oral....(ajoute manuscrite....).

1288This topic is extensively exposed and documented in E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 351.

1289A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 53, it is noteworthy that the painful access to the seventh chamber is exemplified by the search for the fifth and youngest son to be given as offering in the second component of this narrative.

1290A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 55.

could undermine the existence of Judaism.¹²⁹¹ This discretionary move of the Rabbis had to be underlined, and this is the case in the *mashal* (M) related to this topic.

IV.1.3. The Alleged and Available Traces of Hope

A striking feature of the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* in its account of the Biblical Lamentations book is the contrasting historical view it draws on the era it deals with. Besides the hardships of the exile, the lasting weeping and the listing of a series of accusations dealt with above that account for the Jewish disaster in the first centuries of the Christian era, there are claims (Stis) and anecdote narratives (As) in this commentary which are really positive amid the extended picture of destruction. These claims and narratives allude to alternative conditions of life, even to self-confidence and to optimistic view of the future. These claims and narratives pertain mostly to the fate of Jerusalem, to her population and to their leaders. The issue here is to discuss and to see how historical they are.

IV.1.3.1. The Grandeur That Was

The focus in this heading will be on two anecdote narratives (As), eleven riddle tales and seventeen dream narratives which occur in the expounding of TMLam. 1, 1.1 2/4 in *E. R.* They speak positively of Jerusalem and of her inhabitants. The obvious literary and rhetoric features which make up these interpretive forms as well as the Rabbis, they are ascribed to help account for their historical setting and consequently for their meaning.

IV.1.3.1.1. A Great and Populous City

1291E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 531. This fear was real “at times of oppressive religious decrees and ordeals”, see *Ibidem*, where it is reported that “[T]he source treating this is the teaching of R. Yochanan (A2): ‘in the name of R. Simeon b. Jehozadak, it was reported that it was decided by (?) in the upper chamber of Nitza in Lydda.: In respect of any law of the Torah, if a man is ordered “Transgress and be not slain”, let him transgress rather than be slain, except in the case of idolatry, incest and murder. ‘But where the Sabbath is concerned, for example, a man should desecrate it rather than be put to death, even though the sabbath, too, involves death by order of the court. See their assessment and other support to the principle of the increase of religious prescriptions according to Rabbinism in G. Stemmerger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 128f, 142f, 150f, 157.

There are a couple of features to be discussed, that are related to the historical setting of the different interpretations of TMLam. 1, 1.2 העיר רבאתי עם “*the city full of people*” propounded in *Eikhah Rabbati* (lines 41b-77). It is, for instance, not certain that R. Samuel (T2)’s picture of the geography of Jerusalem (A1) will match the historical data. E.M. Smallwood has the following description for the time short before the destruction of Jerusalem in July-August 70 CE: [T]he city of Jerusalem is isolated from the surrounding hills on three sides by deep valleys, the Kidron separating it from the Mount of Olives on the East, Gehenna curving round the West and South, the Tyropoeon valley dividing it from North to South, running into the Kidron near its junction with Gehenna at the South East corner of the city. The section of the city East of the Tyropoeon was a long narrow ridge, with the Ophel (later called the Lower City), the Davidic city on its southern end, and the Temple on the northern part of the ridge. Since the Temple locked expansion northwards, the city began to spread across the Tyropoeon valley on to the northern part of the western hill, later known as the Upper City, at an early period.¹²⁹² We have, however, to add the New Town, reported by Josephus to be the Greek translation of Bezetha, surged when “the population”, uniting to the hill on which the upper town lay the district North of the Temple, had encroached so far that even a fourth hill was surrounded with houses.¹²⁹³

R. Samuel (T2), who lived between ninety and hundred thirty (E), did not speak of Jerusalem subdivided into three quarters. He draws instead the image of a unique and compact block of houses crossed by streets, roads, and courts. But even the focused case of his description, the residents, “*double the number of those who came out of Egypt*”, that is six hundred thousand, is by far beyond the “30-40 000 up to 80-100 000” propounded by the historians for this period.¹²⁹⁴ This is asserted also against the two claims (Sti 1 and Sti 2) based on the mishnaic tradition and on the *baraita*, whose hyperbolic coloration is obvious.

1292E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, 24-25. All these features are present on a map of Jerusalem in the annexe to F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, iv-vii.

1293([The city] was built, in portions facing each other, on two hills separated by a central valley, in which the tiers of the houses ended, “in F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v, 136. 148-149.

1294B. Lifshitz, Jerusalem sous la domination romaine”, in H. Temporini und W. Haase (Hersg.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, ii. *Principat*, Band 8, 1. Auflage, Berlin/New York 1977, 453.

Furthermore, the economic wealth of the Jerusalemites reported by R. Eleazar (A3) (A2) may be more overwhelming than it really was. Lifshitz states¹²⁹⁵ correctly that Jerusalem was an important financial and commercial centre, but this was the case mostly because of its many visitors and pilgrims, so that Jerusalem is said to have been at the peak of its glory, before the first war and the destruction of the Temple¹²⁹⁶. But the same author speaks of social conflicts and tensions and discusses with A. Schalit.¹²⁹⁷ If the Jewish war in 66-70 CE was not a move made by the Zealots and their associated poor people as reported by Josephus¹²⁹⁸, against the rich fellow citizens,¹²⁹⁹ and not the outcome of a revolt against the Roman rule. The picture of Jerusalem drawn in *Eikhah Rabbati* chapter one, lines 41b-61a, as a geographically unitary and wealthy city, belongs, therefore, to the pathetic literary view the *E. R. midrash* set up to deal with Israel *after* the Destruction. This midrashic pathos provides “an alternative past, and an alternative picture of Israel before the Destruction.”¹³⁰⁰ The *mashal* (M) which comes next, helps assess differently the case of the populousness of the people in Jerusalem. It appears, therefore, that the picture of the urbane and populous Jerusalem tells much about those who produced it, about their own time and their nostalgia for an idyllic society¹³⁰¹ in the Galilee of the Constantine fourth century.

As this is the case in the other explanatory endeavours in *Eikhah Rabbati*, the hyperbole figure, which is at work in these narratives produced to their Biblical basis, has the historical

¹²⁹⁵Ibidem, 453.

¹²⁹⁶F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 300, speaks precisely of “[F]our years before the war, when the city was enjoying profound peace and prosperity.”

¹²⁹⁷*Sepher Yerushalam*, ed. M. Avi-Yonah, I, Jerusalem -Tel-Aviv 1956, 254.

¹²⁹⁸F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, iii, 137-142.

¹²⁹⁹National liberation or social war? then the rich and wealthy people did exist and it will be spoken about them below; and . Lifshitz, “Jerusalem sous la domination romaine”, in H. Temporini und W. Haase (Hrsg.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 464f.

¹³⁰⁰A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York, 1984, 63.

¹³⁰¹The terms are also from A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 1984, 64. Much more placatory, G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 56, distinguishes between the picture of Jerusalem ‘as a large city of teeming markets and active schools’, inhabited by people whose wisdom “is treated as a renowned sociocultural fact in the context of a Midrash about destruction, this also suggests a great longing for the city that was destroyed. The inner world of the stories, however, does not display sadness, instead, the city and its inhabitants are still fully alive.”

function to help R. Samuel (T2) and R. Eleazar ben Pedat (A3)'s communities¹³⁰² rationalize their uncomfortable situation getting a corresponding idea to their own experience of disaster.¹³⁰³ It is used, therefore, in the function of the *probatio* (proof)¹³⁰⁴ that the claim made in the preceding narrative as well as in the next statements is correct.

IV.1.3.1.2. A Great Nation and Her Glorious Population. The Riddles and the History in *Eikhah Rabbati*

Data from *E. R.* analysed in Chapter Two have shown that the TMLam. 1, 1.4 semi-colon רבתי בגוים (*she that was) great among the nations*” has been understood and expounded as ‘great in intellect’ in *E. R.*, and that this *midrashic* meaning has been disclosed on the basis of the comparative clause “(*she that was) greater in intellect than the provinces*” related to the following (verse 1, 5) = *E. R.* שרתי במדינות (*she that was) the princess among the provinces*”. Now, the issue to deal with here is to account for the historical setting of the riddling and dreams narratives used and presented as the interpreting materials of these cola. The sound method recommends to assess this topic bearing in mind the literary context within which the TMLamentations target of these narratives in *E.R.* רבתי בגוים ‘great in intellect’ occurs as a synonymous parallel to the preceding (1, 2) העיר רבתי עם “*the city full of people*”,¹³⁰⁵ and at the same time as contrasting to the next (verse 1, 6) היתה למס “*has become a payer of tribute*”. Two goals have, therefore, to be achieved, namely to show that 1) these riddling and dream narratives

1302R. Eleazar ben Pedat (A3) received from R. Yochanan bar Nappacha (A2) to lead the school of Tiberias in the aftermath of the Bar Cochba wars, 132-135 CE, see in Strak/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 89.

1303I owe to A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York, 1984, 52f, the meaning of this systematic and strategic use of the hyperbole in *Eikhah Rabbati* as an historically necessary means to rationalize on the basis of the covenant, the disaster.

1304See the function of the exempla in K. Berger, *Form und Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, 84, Aristotle, *The “Art” of Rhetoric*, with an english translation by J. H. Freese. Cambridge/London ([1926] 1975), II, xx, 9, p. 279 considers the exemples as demonstrative proofs only when the rhetorical syllogism, the enthymeme, is not used. They are evidence, ‘a kind of epilogue’ within the enthymemes. D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 14 mentions about the ma’aseh quoted from the Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 53b), that “its unspoken humor and its intentional exaggeration or hyperbole” help enhance “the exemplary didactic force of the (ma’aseh) narrative as a whole”.

1305The expounding similarity is recognized in G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1989, 115.

belong to the common cultural and historical category of the folklore genre; as G. Hasan-Rokem states it, 2) these folk narratives, “woven into the very fabric of rabbinic Aggadah and rabbinic literature in general” have to be seen not “merely as an amusing digressions providing relief from heavier and more important issues of its times.”¹³⁰⁶

The issue of the riddles and dreams and history in *Eikhah Rabbati* will cope in three steps with: 1. the generic features in the riddling narratives, 2. the generic and specific features in the dream narratives, 3. the historically reliable facts in the riddling and dream narratives.

1. Folkloric and Rhetorical Features in Riddling Narratives

Eleven riddlings are used in *E. R.* (lines 97b-230a) to account for the TMLam. (1, 1.4) רבתי בגוים “(she that was) great among the nations”. A. Mintz, among many others, points out that in a midrash dealing with the Destruction of Jerusalem with its institutions, the grandeur, which is enhanced, is not the rabbinic wisdom characterized by “religious knowledge, textual erudition, or the heroes of folklore, which, in the end, is exactly what these stories are.”¹³⁰⁷ The task, which will be carried out here, consists in inventorying and presenting two folk literature genre defining features of these eleven tales, the opening formula and the characters, on the basis of M. Lüthi’s proposals¹³⁰⁸ worked out by G. Hasan-Rokem,¹³⁰⁹ with somewhat different outcomes. The aim is to demonstrate that much more than means for relaxing entertainment or expression of national pride in time of humiliation, the specific folkloric and rhetorical features of these tales, reinforcing narratological findings of the preceding chapter, legitimize specific ideological and historical views,¹³¹⁰ which become obvious once the literary context of these riddle tales in *E. R.* is considered.

1.1. The Opening Formulaic

1306G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life - Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 2.

1307A. Minz, *Hurban. Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* 1984, 64. That “these materials lack the least trace of exegetical embeddings or relatedness to Lamentations”, ibidem, has been underlined also in G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, 116.

1308Max Lüthi, *The Fairytale as Art Form and Portait of Man*. Bloomington 1984.

1309G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life - Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 41-42.

1310G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life-Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 44-45.

The first feature, which characterizes a literary form as a piece of folklore literature, is the presence of a marked and for the time being usual introductory formula, varying often from a cultural background to another,¹³¹¹ such as “once upon a time...”, which seems the most widespread, though it is ascribed in its complete shape “Once upon a time, in a land beyond the sun and the moon...” to the Scandinavian folktales.¹³¹² It provides sometimes a time and place setting to the tale.

+Riddle 1, line 99b:	‘a Jerusalemite went to the province’,
+riddle 2, line 133b:	‘four Jerusalemites came to Athens’,
+riddle 3, line 156a:	‘a Jerusalemite went to a merchant in Athens’,
+riddle 4, line 163a:	‘an Athenian came to Jerusalem’,
+riddle 5, line 170c:	‘an Athenian came to Jerusalem’,
+riddle 6, line 175b:	an Athenian came to Jerusalem’,
+riddle 7, line 178b:	‘an Athenian came to Jerusalem’,
+riddle 8, line 182b:	‘an Athenian came to Jerusalem’,
+riddle 9, line 185a:	‘an Athenian came to Jerusalem’,
+riddle 10, line 198b:	‘an Athenian came to Jerusalem’,
+riddle 11, line 211b:	‘an Athenian came to Jerusalem’.

The main feature, which characterizes these formulae, is that they are specific to the *Eikhah Rabbati* riddling narratives. The repetition of the same formula can be deemed as a rhetorical figure which, besides the hyperbole, enhances the exemplary, didactic force of the narrative¹³¹³ which brings heavily the focus on Jerusalem, a trait that the inventory of the narrative protagonist stresses.

1.2. The Characters

They are the major as well as the minor persons, individual or typological and stereotypical, who either act or react in the tales. They will be for this reason presented in the textual context in which they occur:

1311Indeed, it is not in the nature of things, because it can change at different eras within the same culture, in G. Lohfink, *Jetzt vestehe ich die Bibel. Ein Sachbuch zur Formkritik*, 3 Auflage, Stuttgart 1974, 13-14 for the change of literary forms in general.

1312It is quoted in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 41, together with the other formula: “Many, many years ago, beyond the mountains and the sea, in a far away land” said to be in many folktales from the rest of Europe.

1313D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, Cambridge 1991, 14f.

Riddle 1,	line 99b: a Jerusalemite went to the province, line 193a: the Jerusalemite's son arrived, line 104: he met a twig carrier, line 107: the provincial house-owner, and Jerusalemite 'trustee', line 111b: the trustee's household: wife, two sons and two daughters,
Riddle 2,	line 133b: four Jerusalemites in Athens, line 133c: the Athenian host, line 143a: the Athenian butcher, line 147a: the Athenian wine-dealer, line 150c: the host's mother,
Riddle 3,	line 156a: a Jerusalemite and a merchant in Athens, line 157a: several Athenians in an inn,
Riddle 4,	line 163a: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 163b: a child,
Riddle 5,	line 170c: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 171b: a child,
Riddle 6,	line 175b: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 176b: a local tailor,
Riddle 7,	line 178b: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 178c: a child,
Riddle 8,	line 182c: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 182c: a priest,
Riddle 9,	line 185a: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 185b: school children, line 191a: R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1),
Riddle 10,	line 198b: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 200a: the one-eye blind Jerusalemite, line 201a: the blind seller,
Riddle 11,	line 211b: an Athenian in Jerusalem, line 212a: the inhabitants of Jerusalem, line 213a: a Jerusalemite in Athens, line 315b: a workman in Athens, line 225b: the Jerusalemite sandal purchaser.

The characters are anonymous. There is no individual name, except R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1), and only the citizenship, the age and the function are of interest and are, therefore, mentioned. It is about the cities of Athens and Jerusalem as centres of wisdom. These generics, and as such imaginary features reinforce the narratological findings on competition, extending the superiority in wisdom to all the Jerusalemites, children and half blind included.

Conclusion

There are some remarkable facts, which are common to the eleven riddling tales. first, all of them are introduced by the same literary formula: [X went to A/J] and, secondly, they have the frame defining structure [X got in touch with Y and prevails]. These literary devices confer to these tales the linguistic cohesiveness of an unique collection of tales and the conceptual coherence of the folk literature genre. The letter qualifies them as imaginary literary products belonging to a fictitious time.¹³¹⁴ But narratological findings joined to idiosyncratic introductory formula, together with the involvement of stereotypical places and characters in these riddling narratives are a couple of hints on an historical setting, which becomes obvious on the basis of the following data.

2. The Generic and Specific Features in The Dream Narratives

Seventeen dreams have been presented in their texts and partly analysed in previous chapter. They constitute a considerable amount of material, which, together with the riddling tales, expounds the TMLam. (1, 1.4) רבתי בגוים “(she that was) great among the nations” (lines 230b - 303a). Many records exist, which lend support to the claim that these dreams accounts were part of collections of folk literature, whose main features were and are, according to G. Hasan-Rokem,¹³¹⁵ to be: 1) collective: authors, performers and community shape and reshape it continually; 2) traditional: transmitted from generation to generation; 3) oral in its mode of existence. While the plot and the characters of these dream narratives have been the subject of a preceding chapter, the focus here will be on ascertaining the finding on the appropriateness of the practice of dream interpretation we made before, in a comparative inquiry extended to three parallel reports on dreams and dream interpretation available in *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam. 1, 1.4, in the Babylonian Talmud *Berakhot ix* [54a-57b], and in the Palestinian Talmud *Maaser sheni iv*, 9 [26a-27b]. Particular attention will be paid to their location, their overall structure,

¹³¹⁴The basic concept of the generic approach is that of the riddle pattern in which the apparent answer turns by an enigmatic reversal into an actual question, the riddler into the riddlee, all reality, certainly and truth becoming correspondingly puzzling. This view relies on R. Nechemyah (T3)’s claim that the particle *eikhah* in TMLam 1, 1.1 alludes to lament, and, therefore, to a playful and humorously dealing with the catastrophe, as opposed to R. Yehudah b. Ilai (T3)’s statement that it is about reproof, which supposes the doctrine of the retribution as correlated with the sin, see G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life - Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 41-45. 62-66.

¹³¹⁵G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 7.

their protagonists and, if possible, to their wording. The specimens of dream accounts under analysis will be numbered line by line for comparison. The aim of this procedure is to give support to reliable claims, which may provide some plausibility to the hypothesis formulated here about the historical setting of this *E. R.* expounding of TMLam. (1, 1.4).

2.1. Palestinian Talmud (PT) (“Yerushalmi”) *Maaser sheni* iv, 9 [26a-27]

Rabbinic literature provides abundant and various treaties on the dream. The present study is led as comparison of a couple of these treaties in different interpretive contexts.

2.1.1. Dream in *Halakhic* Context

Yerushalmi *Maaser sheni* is based on the Mishnah *Tractate Maaser sheni*, which deals with the regulations related to the second Tithe. The latter must be distinguished from the first Tithe, which is the subject of the Mishnah *Tractate Maaseroth*. The second Tithe bound to the product after the First Tithe was deducted, had to be given to the levite (Num. 18, 21), who granted a tenth of it to the priest (Num. 18, 26) and to the poor as Poor man’s Tithe (Deut. 14, 28ff; 26, 12) particularly in the third and the sixth years of the seven-year cycle. This is the Tithe which is extensively dealt with in Deut. 14, 22-26:

“(22) You shall surely tithe all the produce of your seed that the field yields yearly. (23) And you shall eat before the Lord your God in the place that he shall choose to cause to dwell his name there, the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the **firstborns** (firstlings) of your herd and of your flock; that you may learn to fear the Lord your God all the days. (24) And if the way is too long for you, so that you cannot carry it, because the place is too far from you which the Lord your God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord your God shall bless you, (25) then you shall give it for silver, and bind up the silver in your hand. And you shall go to the place which the Lord your God shall choose. (26) And you shall pay the silver for whatever you desire, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for fermented drink, or for whatever you desire. And you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.”

The Rabbis endeavoured to define two requisites: 1) this Tithe has to be consumed by the owner himself in Jerusalem; 2) it needs not itself be conveyed to Jerusalem (Deut. 14, 22-23), but it can be ‘redeemed’, that is, converted into money (plus a fifth of its value), and reconverted into food in Jerusalem (Deut. 14, 24-26). *Y Maaser sheni* 4, 6, which is the focus of our inquiry because of the debate on dream it reports, expounds Mishnah *Maaser sheni* 4, 9-12, which deals

with money gained from the exchange of sanctified produce of the consecrated Land of Israel. Related to the dream, the question addressed is: How consecrated is, in halakhic terms, the money set aside by a father who died and revealed it in dream to his son? Is the content of the dream, that is, the amount of money and the place where the father left it, an appropriate and effective medium lending juridical quality to a *maaser sheni*? The affirmative answer provided by R. Yehudah ha-Nasi (T4) against those rabbis who considered the dream immaterial, prevailed, and a set of dreams with their interpretations was subsequently exposed, as to give support to the claim.

2.1.2. y. *Ma'aser sheni* iv, 9 [26a-27b] Text

dream no lines)		dreamer	dream content	dream interpreter
1	47-50a	not specified	money in Cappadocia	R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3)
2	50b-52a	not specified	crown of olive branches 1	R. Yose b. Chalafta
3	52b-54a	not specified	crown of olive branches 2	R. Yose b. Chalafta
4	54b-56a	not specified	watering an olive tree	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
5	56b-58a	not specified	eye watering the other	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
6	58b-60	not specified	'I had three eyes'	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
7	61-64a	not specified	'I had four ears'	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
8	64b-67a	not specified	creatures ran away	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
9	67b-69a	not specified	a book with 12 pages	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
10	69b-71a	not specified	'I swallowed a star'	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
11	71b-74a	not specified	a vineyard with lettuce	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
12	74b-76a	not specified	finger sprinkling down	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
13	76b-77a	not specified	swelling in mouth	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
14	77b-79a	not specified	raising up the finger	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
15	79b-86a	Cuthean ¹³¹⁶	4 cedars, 4 sycamores?	R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
16a	86b-88a	a woman	house lintel broken	R. Eliezer ¹³¹⁷
17b	88-90a	the same woman	house lintel broken	R. Eliezer's students
	90b-94	dream interpretation theory by		R. Eliezer's students and R. Yochanan (A2)
18	95-96a	not specified	shorten leg (<i>ragli</i>)	R. Aqiba (T2)
19	96b-97a	not specified	huge leg ?	R. Aqiba (T2)

¹³¹⁶*Maaser Sheni*. [The Talmud of the Land of Israel. A Preliminary Translation and Explanation, vol. 8], transl. by R. Brooks, Chicago/London 1993, 145, reads "A Samaritan"

¹³¹⁷Although there is some reason to think of R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (T2), quoted often in Mishnah R. Eliezer, see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 69-70, or of R. Eliezer ben R. Yose ha-Gelili (T3), reported to be called sometimes Eleazar, ibidem, 77, evidence from the other two dream versions recommended the generationally non determined R. Eleazar (T3/A3).

The intent of this dream and dream interpretation report is obviously to convince that it is normative to rely on dreams to account for the validity as a *maaser sheni*; dream instances, whose interpretations later materialized effectively, are provided. As Hasan-Rokem puts it, these dreams “are presented so as to persuade us of the truth of the message contained in them, whether directly, as in the case of the first dream, or in more symbolic language, as in most of the other dreams cited.”¹³¹⁸ It is obvious that the main concern was to fix rules to which a successful dream interpretation had to submit.¹³¹⁹ That the latter is provided only by one, and not two, and by a Rabbi, and not a Samaritan, for instance, is another trait serving the same purpose, see below. This focus on the dream interpreter is also the case in the dreamboat reported in the *b. Berakhot ix* [54a-57b].

2.2 Babylonian Talmud (TB) (“Babli”) *b. Berakhot ix* [54a-57]

2.2.1. Dream in *Haggadic* Performative Context

The tractate Dream book of the *b. Berakhot ix* [54a-57] is embedded in a literally well-defined literary context, which deserved to be considered for the delimitation of its extent and the understanding of its meaning.

2.2.1.1. (1-32a): Mishnah (*M.*) *Berakhot ix*

The five paragraphs of Mishnah *M. Berakhot ix* (lines 1-32a in our numbering of *E. R.*), which can be deemed to be the epilogue to be the epilogue of the *M. Berakhot*¹³²⁰, come first. The following *Gemara*, to which the Dream book belongs, deals with the first *mishnah* (32b-437a):

‘If a man sees a place where miracles have been performed for Israel, he should say, Blessed is he who worked miracles for our fathers in this place.’

¹³¹⁸G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, Stanford 2000, 94.

¹³¹⁹See B. Stemberger, “Der Traum in der rabbinischen Literatur”, in *Kairos*, Heft1 (1976) 11.

¹³²⁰See the *M. Berakhot* text in *Mishnah (The)*, trans. by H. Dandy, Oxford [1933] 1989, 2-10.

The *Gemara*, which shows evident features of sustained endeavour aiming at the production of passably unique and well organized text,¹³²¹ is made up of two sections: 1. Introduction (lines 32b-155a); 2. the Dream book (155b-435a), which contains four components.

2.2.1.2. (32-155a): Gemara: 1. Section: Introduction

The first part of the Gemara is characterized by the use of the rhetorical device of numeral genre lists of persons and things¹³²² related to thank or to bless¹³²³ the Holy One, Blessed Be He, lists preceded by two questions:

a. 32b-41: preliminary questions on 1) the origin of the request of blessing, answered by R. Yochanan (A2?), 2) blessing modalities or private and public miracles;

b. 42-155a: seven lists of persons and things bound to the blessing or to the thanksgiving:

b 1. 42-90a: by Tannas: 1s list of eight items

b 2. 90b-106a: by Rab Yehudah (bA2)¹³²⁴: 2nd list of four items,

b 3. 106b-107a: by Rab Yehudah (bA2): 3rd list of three items,

b 4. 107b-128a: by Rab Yehudah (bA2): 4th list of three items,

b 5. 128b-133a: by Rab Yehudah (bA2): 5th list of three items,

b 6. 133b-136a: by Rab Yehudah (bA2): 6th list of three items:

‘a good king, a good year, a good dream’,

b 7. 136b-155a: by R. Yochanan (A2): 7th list of three items:

‘famine, plenty, a good leader’.

Noteworthy is the fact that R. Yehudah (bA2) intervenes (line 150) with decisive view also within the comment to the items introduced by R. Yochanan and that dream itself, the main topic of the following sections, is already mentioned in its substantive (חלום טוב) (lines: 134, 136) and in its verbal form (ותחלימיני) (line 136) within the last numeral genre expounded (133b-136a) by the same R. Yehudah (bA2) on behalf of Rab. The items of the last two lists have been

1321P. S. Alexander, “Bavli Berakhot 55a-57b: The Talmudic Dreambook in Context”, in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, volume XLVI (1995) 231, where the unitary Dreambook is however said to be out of context: “It does not relate to or illuminate in any way the mishnayot under discussion, nor does it dovetail easily with surrounding Gemara.

1322H. A. Fishel, “Story and History: Observations and Graeco-Roman Rhetoric and Pharisaism”, (1966), in idem (ed.). *Essays in Graeco-Roman and related Talmudic Literature*, pp. 74-75, New York 1977, 74f.

1323Although the request to say a blessing is expressis verbis made for the first two lists, the items reported in the other five lists are by nature matters for blessing.

1324Rab Yehudah bar Yechezqel?, see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 88.

mentioned to support the claim that the Dream book, the very topic of the next section, is introduced in the first section. It is, therefore, part of all this *Gemara* to the first *mishnah*. On the thematic level, on the other hand, we cannot overlook the relationship between the mentioned items introduced by R. Yochanan (A2), (line 137: רעב ושובע ופרנס טוב), held by B. Stemberger¹³²⁵ and also, as hypothesis, by P.S. Alexander¹³²⁶ as the starting-point of the Dream book, and the Joseph's narration in Gen. 40-41, which seems to be the *Vorlage* to the list of items ascribed (lines 136-155a) to R. Yochanan (A2), and is part of the argumentation of the Dream book (l. 195-200).¹³²⁷ The main concern of this tractate is, therefore, about the dream interpretation as performative power.

2.2.2. Gemara: Section 2: The Dream book (lines 155b-435a)

We first deal with the context of the Dream book according to the different literary traditions in which it occurs, before we discuss its content.

2.2.2.1. The Dream book Context

The Dream book begins with Rab Chisda (bA3)¹³²⁸'s statement כל חלום ולא טווח "Any dream except with fast"¹³²⁹ (line 155) and ends with the comment to the sentence תייר מת בבית שלום, translated: "Our Rabbis taught: [If one dreams of] a corpse in the house, it is a sign of peace; if that he was eating and drinking in the house"¹³³⁰... (line 435a). The structuration shows that its Author has used his means to conform to his special agenda. We present it first schematically, extended, however, to all the pericope, and, afterwards, in a special and detailed analysis of this dream text variant to meet the requisite of comparison which is a

1325B. Stemberger, *Der Traum in der rabbinischen Literatur*, in *Kairos*, Heft1 (1976) 11.

1326P.S.Alexander, "Bavli Berakhot 55a-57b: The Talmudic Dreambook in Context", in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, volume XLVI (1995) 231.

1327See G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, translated by Batya Stein, 2000, 91-92 on the Biblical Joseph as the positive archetype of interpreter in rabbinic literature.

1328He was a student and friend of Rab Huna, the successor of Rab Yehudah b. Yechezqel (bA2) at Pumbedita, becoming the most important teacher at Sura after Rab Yehudah (bA2), in Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, Minneapolis 1996, 92.

1329The other possible paraphrases: "to dream oneself fasting", "any dream rather than one of fast", see *Berakoth* [The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Zera'im], transl. by M. Simon, London: ([1948] 1961), *ad locum*.

1330*Berakhot* [The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Zera'im], transl. by M. Simon, London ([1948] 1961), *ad locum*.

methodological postulate of this work. We reject on the basis of literary features A. Weiss's proposal¹³³¹ dividing this Dreambook in four parts as following, according to our numbering system: 1) lines 155b-208, 2), l. 209-299, 3), l. 210-413a, 4), l. 413b-437a. We agree, instead, with P.S. Alexander's¹³³² structuration of Berakhot ix [54a-57b] in three parts, although differences in text understanding cannot be overlooked. We consider the numeral genres starting with the quantifier (כָּל) at the line 406b, and which closes (l. 435a) the Gemara comment to this first mishnah, as the conclusion to the Dream book.¹³³³ Schematically, the Dream book is made up of the following components:

155b - 406a: The Dream book:

- a. 155b-208: Statements on how to influence the quality of the dream,
- b. 209-279a: Dream interpreter's power over the dream,
- c. 279b-406a: Cases of dream interpretation followed by dream interpretation principles,
- d. 406b-435a: Conclusion: dream items: bad and good omens.

In such a context, the dream is handled as an item whose fulfilment, against every kind of deterministic attitude, depends on the interpretive skills, as well as on the good and the bad will of the dream interpreter. The question to be answered *b. Berakhot ix* [54a-57b] may be: "How can a dream, obviously mysterious in its very nature, become, as a miracle, cause of a blessing to the Holy One, Blessed Be He." The dealing with the traditional collection of dreams and dream interpretations in *b. Berakhot ix* address this concern.

2.2.2.2. The Dreams in the Dream book

As mentioned above, the dream material presented in the following figure has been almost extracted from its literary context, in accordance with the comparative point of view of this work on this issue. This is the only procedure, which helps highlight the textual and the ideological characteristics of the Babli Dream book.

1331A. Weiss, *Studies in the Literature of the Amorim* (hebr.), New York 1962, 266-269.

1332P.S. Alexander, "Bavli Berakhot 55a-57b: The Talmudic Dreambook in Context", in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, volume XLVI (1995) 231.

1333A. Weiss, *Studies in the Literature of the Amorim* (hebr.), New York, 1962, 264f, and B. Stemberger, "Der Traum in der rabbinischen Literatur", in *Kairos*, Heft 1 (1976) 12-13.

dream no.	line	dreamer	dream content	dream interpreter
1	211b-215		dream interpretation theory of R. Eleazar (T3/A3?) and Raba ¹³³⁴	
2	286b-288	Bar Kappara	death in Adar and Nisan	Rabbi ¹³³⁵
3	288b-289	a Min ¹³³⁶	oil poured on olives	R. Ishmael ¹³³⁷
4	290a-	a Min	swallowing a star	R. Ishmael
5	291	a Min	eyes kissing one another	R. Ishmael
6	297b-300	a Min	fortune in Cappadocia	R. Ishmael

Noteworthy is the fact that this Babli version of five dreams and a theory on dream interpretation of the obviously common dream material occur within the third component of the Dream book, which is dedicated to expose the principles for the interpretation of the dream, that is, to deal with the issue of the correct interpretation according to the dream interpretation canon as this is made evident in the place the item on dream interpretation has in the three variants. On the other hand, the paucity of this common material may be the proof that A. Weiss' claim¹³³⁸ according to which materials in small extent pertaining to the dream existed and were incorporated into *Babli Berakhot ix* needs more examination with a look at the other traditions for a concluding view.¹³³⁹ It cannot, however, be overlooked that only these few dream items may have been propounded because the focus of the *b. Berakhot ix* was not on the illustration of a theory on dream interpretation by means of many cases, but on the performative power possessed by the dream interpreter, as this is extensively dealt with in the Dream book, quite in accordance with the entire blessing theme of the *Gemara* to this first *mishnah* of *M. Berakhot ix*. This claim gains support from the comparison with the *Maaser sheni* iv, 9 [26a-27b] intent, and with the dream tractate of *E. R.* to TMLam. 1, 1.4 put into the perspective of the genre.

2.3. Dreams in Haggadic Confrontation Context In *Eikhah Rabbati* To TMLam. 1, 1.4

1334? Raba (b. Yoseph b. Chama) b4A4.

1335R. Yehudah ha-Nasi (T4), "often simply known as Rabbi", in Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 81.

1336This is according to M. Simon's Soncino translation, and Minäer in the German translation, but in sadducee in the hebrew edition of the Babli.

1337R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (ben Chalata) (T4) with the two other dream versions.

1338A. Weiss, *Studies in the Literature of the Amorim* (Hebr.), New York 1962, 264.

1339B. Stemberger, "Der Traum in der rabbinischen Literatur", in *Kairos*, Heft 1 (1976) 9.

The tractate on dream interpretation in *E. R.* expounding of the TMLam. 1, 1.4 רבתי בגוים in its *midrashic* meaning of ‘*great in knowledge*’ can be understood within two complementary contexts. This passage follows immediately after the riddling tales, where the overall narrative framework is the wisdom competition between Jerusalemite(s) and Athenian(s). The narratological approach in Chapter Two has shown, by means of some features, that the same concurrence situation, this time between different Rabbi(s) against the Samaritan on one hand, Rabbi(s) versus student(s) on the other hand, influences the shaping of the report on dream in *E. R.* (l. 230a-303). This finding has now to be examined in the light of the second, intertextual context, that is, after two dream records have been considered.

dream no. line		dreamer	dream content	dream interpreter
1	232b-235a (T4)	not specified	olive tree feeding oil	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
2	235b-238a Yose (T4)	not specified	eye swallowed another	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R.
3	238b-241a (T4)	not specified	‘I swallowed a star’	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
4	241b-244a (T4)	not specified	three eyes	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
5	244b-246a (T4)	not specified	four ears	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
6	246b-251a (T4)	not specified	book with 24 pages	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R. Yose
7	251b-255a Yose (T4)	not specified	pole+bundle of lettuce	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R.
8	a.256b-258a	not specified	(1)’finger pointed at me’	Samaritan
	b.258b-263a Yose (T4)	not specified	(1)’puffing and praising’	Samaritan+R. Ishmael b. R.
9	265b-269a (T4)	Samaritan	4 cedars, 4 sycamores straw hide + riding ox	R. Ishmael
10	269b-270a	not specified	olive-tree at planting time	R. Ishmael (T4)
11	270b-273a	not specified	olives at beating time	R. Ishmael (T4)
12	273b-279a	student	three pieces bad news	R. Yochanan (A2)
13	279b-282a	not specified	no breeches on leg	R. Yochanan (A2)
14	282a-288a	not specified	fortune in Cappadocia	R. Yose b. Chalafta
15	288b-290a	a woman	house beam broken	R. Eleazar (T3/A3)
16	290b-291a	the same woman	house beam broken	R. Eleazar (T3/A3)
17	291b-300a	the same woman	house beam broken	R. Eleazar’s student

300b-303a dream interpretation theory by R. Eleazar (T3/A3), R. Yochanan (A2), and R. Abbahu (A3).

A brief comparative analysis of the three dream versions on the basis of some of the parameters used in their description is enlightening if we consider plasticity of the common dream materials. First of all, it is obvious that such a common core of dreams does exist and it occurs in the *Y Maaser sheni*, iv 9 [26a-27b], the *b. Berakhot ix*, and *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam. 1, 1.4. The five dreams of TB *Berakhot ix* and seventeen dream contents of *E. R.* are included in the dream collection of the *Y. Maaser sheni*. Secondly, that the sequence of the dreams is different in three lists may be explained by the fact that these dreams circulated as separated units and were afterwards differently assessed and consequently ordered by the editors. The dreamers are mostly anonymous, but the context in *E. R.* lets infer that they were Samaritans. The reason is the main feature, which makes the difference, that is, the number of dream interpreters and their identity, which characterizes the report of the dreams in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The fact that two dream interpreters from different ethnic origins compete one against another, joined to the involvement of the Rabbis in deciphering the dreams for and with their students in this text confirm the project of the editor of *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam. 1, 1.4 to cope with the “concurrence situation of professional dream interpreters,”¹³⁴⁰ but also to enhance the considerable stature of the Rabbis as skilful sages. Both issues were decisive for the historical understanding of TMLam. 1, 1.4.

3. Narrated Time. Historical Setting of Generations and Ethnic Context

That *Eikhah Rabbati* did not expound TMLam. 1, 1.4 רבתי בגוים “(she that was) great among the nations” by means of the religious rabbinic knowledge “of textual erudition, or of scholarly acumen, but rather (by) the kind of cleverness and ingenuity the heroes of folklore” (are used to) is not certainly due to the fact that the *E. R.* interpreter(s) was/(were) fed up with genuine rabbinic products. Folk discourse and motifs seem to have been deemed as the appropriate means to communicate with the Ancient World of that time¹³⁴¹ and to cope with

¹³⁴⁰This is a translated statement of B. Stemberger, “Der Traum in der rabbinischen Literatur”, in *Kairos*, Heft 1 (1976) 10. 11.

¹³⁴¹See the analogy in M. Smith, “Palestinian Judaism in the First Century, in L. Levine, (editor), *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, 155: “First of all, it must be remembered that Judaism to

historical issues at hand.¹³⁴² In this sense, G. Hasan-Rokem is right that “[T]hat midrashic context extra territorializes the Jerusalem of the folktale from the fictional isolation that, to some extent, prevails in the stories, and connects it to the destroyed historical Jerusalem,¹³⁴³ to which the reading and the expounding of Lamentations had to conform. This historical context will be briefly addressed here. All these riddling and dream narratives account for a time (the German “erzählte Zeit”), the time of the narratives,¹³⁴⁴ which is the “Palestine at the end of the Roman and the beginning of the Byzantine periods.¹³⁴⁵ It will be dealt with this time and with its main traits relying on data provided by the E. R. narratives.

3. 1. Time of Confrontation

G. Hasan-Rokem characterizes the historical period mentioned above as a time of confrontation.¹³⁴⁶ The fact is that the editor of *Eikhah Rabbati* ascribes (line 97b) the riddling narratives - and- there is no sound reason to exclude the dream narratives-expounding the TMLam. 1, 1.4 to the amora R. Huna (A4), who spoke in the name of R. Yose (?T2/A4/bA4). These are rabbinic names, that may help cope with the chronological classification of these narratives. R. Huna, also Chuna, Chunya, Nechunya b. Abin, but also Huna hachohen b. Abin (A4) for his priestly origins,¹³⁴⁷ was one of the authorities of the school of Tiberias, when R.

the ancient world was a philosophy. That world had no general term for religion (...). So when Judaism first took place and became conscious of itself and its own peculiarity in the Hellenized world of the later Persian Empire, it described itself with the Hellenic term meaning the wisdom of its people (Deut. 4, 6). To those who admired Judaism, it was “the cult of wisdom” (...).

1342See G. Lohfink, *Jetzt verstehe ich die Bibel. Ein Sachbuch zur Formkritik*, 3. Auflage, Stuttgart 1974, 46.

1343G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 56, but see also ibidem, 43-45.

1344It is called also the narrative time, that is, the duration measured in unit of “real” time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, centuries) of the actions and events in the “story”, see J.-L. Ska, “*Our Fathers have told us*”, 1991, 7.

1345G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 67.

1346G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 71f has found out that narrative motifs of the first, the second, and the tenth riddling tales, which occur in surrounding and somewhat contemporaneous Indian and Arab cultures, are used with different characters, in different context and shaped in different frames inspite of similar plot structures.

1347W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, III, Strassburg 1899, reprinted Hildesheim 1965, 272-273. 276.

Yose (A4) led this institution.¹³⁴⁸ He journeyed to Babylonia for a while and brought back to Palestine the teachings of Rab Joseph (bar Chiyya) (bA3) of Pumbeditha, deceased in 333 CE.¹³⁴⁹ Further R. Huna (A4) is also the tradent of a couple of tannaites.¹³⁵⁰ It is noteworthy that, according to W. Bacher,¹³⁵¹ the *haggadot* transmitted by R. Huna (A4) in the name of Yose belongs to the Babylonian Rab Joseph (bA3). Now, what do we know about R. Huna (A4)'s time? W. Bacher speaks of the intercalary messages that R. Huna (A4) might have sent to Raba bar Joseph bar Chama (bA4), deceased 352 CE¹³⁵² in which, at least in the second, R. Huna (A4) is allegedly reporting on a persecution by the Romans. And it is said that this was the persecution of Caesar Gallus (351-354 CE)¹³⁵³ While the very existence of such a persecution is questioned,¹³⁵⁴ and a short-lived revolt in (351-352)¹³⁵⁵ deemed as possible, it is useful to assess *Eikhah Rabbati* to TMLam. 1, 1.4 on the basis of the chronological context provided by the Rabbis mentioned there. What does the literally established fact on confrontation mean?

1348W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, III, 231 - 236.

1349His name is said to be written either רב יוסף or רבי יוסף or רי יוסי, according to W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, III, 274. 275 footnote 1, Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 93.

1350See W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, III, 277.

1351W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, III, 277, 236.

1352Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 95.

1353W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, III, 277, 275-276. The related text, used also by M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule. A political History of Palestine*, Jerusalem 1984, 180, is GenR 31. 16 (Th-A 283). It is about R. Huna (A4) and his companions' studious activity in a cave at Tiberias, when they fled before the "Goths". The fact of such a Roman persecution is questioned by G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 166: "We do not know whether this means Roman troops or perhaps the patriarch's Gothic bodyguard, which did proceed against rabbis, and thus, this text is not of great help to us."

1354See G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 166f...172, where R. Yona (A4) and R. Yose (A4)'s permission to provide the Roman troops with fresh bread on the Sabbath and at Pessach, because of the Roman general (magister militum) Ursicinus who took over 353 (?) the overall command of the troops to replace Gallus, according to *jShebi* IV. 2. 35 a, and *jSanh* III. 6.1 b, is deemed to be a sign of less nervous relationships.

1355See S. Aurelius Victor's statement, "And meanwhile a revolt of the Jews... was suppressed", with the only mention of the Jewish rebel leader Patricius, quoted in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 169. 170 174, although the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who accompanied Ursicinus from 353, as he did it in the Persian campaign of Julian, in 363, does not speak of such a revolt, see M. Stern, (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, volume two, Jerusalem 1980, 499-501, 600-601.

Eikhah Rabbati to TMLam 1, 1.4 reports on the information related to the known Rabbis: R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) helped Athenian solve a riddle, R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4) competed with a Samaritan, R. Yochanan (A2), R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3), and R. Eleazar (T3/A3) interpreted the dreams of their students, while Eleazar (T3/A3), R. Yochanan (A2), and R. Abbahu (A3) propounded a theory on the interpretation of the dreams. On a historical point of view, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai (T1) belongs to the period of the first Jewish Revolt, which ended with the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple (66-70 CE). Closely related to the foundation of the Rabbinic centre of Jamnia (Yavneh) on the Mediterranean coast of Judaea, which belonged to the emperor's possessions¹³⁵⁶, see below, during the siege of Jerusalem¹³⁵⁷ and with the permission of Vespasian¹³⁵⁸, he is considered in Rabbinic tradition as the leader of the Pharisaic and Rabbinic revival¹³⁵⁹ in a quite new environment.

3.2. The Rabbis Among the Nations

The new start of Judaism with the rabbis took place, as to speak under the shelter of the Roman rule. Once the 66-70 CE war was over, Rome set up a new administrative organization, in which Judaea assumed a renewed status of an imperial province.¹³⁶⁰ The post-war province of Judaea was not altered in its size; it was autonomous, no longer supervised from Syria, and run by its own governor of praetorian rank.¹³⁶¹ The military presence was reinforced, the six

1356G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum: Kultur und Geschichte der rabbinischen Zeit (7-n. Chr.-1040 n. Chr.)*, München 1979, 16.

1357E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule. From Pompey to Diocletian*, Leiden 1976, 349.

1358B. Lifshitz, "Jerusalem sous la domination romaine. Histoire de la ville depuis la conquête de Pompee jusqu'à Constantin (63 a. C.-325 p.C.)", in H. Temporini und Wolfgang Haase (Hrsg.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II. *Principat*. Band 8, 1. Auflage, Berlin/New York 1977, 469.

1359See M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century", in *Israel. Its Role in Civilisation*, ed. by M. Davis, reported in L. Levine, *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1978, 15; E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule. From Pompey to Diocletian*, Leiden 1976, 349.

1360Judaea had been put together with the other districts of Samaritis and Idumaea to build a province under Roman rule in 6 CE, when Augustus ended the administration led by Herodes Archelaus for cause of Jewish complaining. Except the break with king Herodes Agrippa I (37-44 CE), this autonomy limited by the oversight of the legate of Syria over the equestrian procurator of Judaea ended right now after the war, see E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 119. 145.

1361See E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 331. The new province renamed Syria Palaestina was upgraded from praetorian to consular status, according to R. A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*.

former auxiliary units having been replaced by the complete *Legio X Fretensis* located in Jerusalem,¹³⁶² while Caesarea remained the administrative imperial centre.¹³⁶³ It happened that this territory stretched out, after the Hadrian's victory over Bar Cochba's rebellion in 135 CE,¹³⁶⁴ from the southern frontier of the traditional Judaea¹³⁶⁵ to the northern Acco¹³⁶⁶ on the coast, the Golan Heights¹³⁶⁷ and a small strip East of the Jordan.¹³⁶⁸ This was the land¹³⁶⁹ in which under influence of Hellenistic culture, Hasmonean, Roman and Roman client rulers had founded and refunded successively in several centuries more or less largely gentile and autonomous cities with their own territories, inhabited often not without conflicts and frictions by Jews,¹³⁷⁰ together

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 1995, 90; but G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 6, holds the name Syria Palaestina after Hadrian war as one of its results.

1362The legions became two, after the Hadrian war, see G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 10, with the Legio VI Ferrata near the old Megiddo. The latter was transferred to Damascus in the middle of the third century, and the Legio X Fretensis to today's Eilat in the South, to Diocletian's time, see G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 10, for "the Jewish population had long since come to terms with Roman rule", ibidem, 11.

1363E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 331; G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum: Kultur und Geschichte der rabbinischen Zeit (70n. Chr. - 1040n. Chr.)*, München 1979, 15.

1364The Roman general S. Julius Severus captured Jerusalem in 134 CE, and conquered Betar in 135 CE. on 9 Ab according to the tradition, in G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 20.

1365"The Negeb was missing", in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 6.

1366"The area around the lake of Tiberias returned to king Agrippa (50-100)'s rule before it too, reverted to the province of Judea, and its people came directly under Roman rule for the first time", in R.A. Horsely, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, 1995, 90.

1367See G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 131, on a settlement on the Golan by Jews soon after the Bar Cachba Revolt.

1368G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 6, where archeological findings of remains of synagogues, and of gravestones in Zoar are mentioned, p. 20. 150ff; Eusebius' Onomasticon and rabbinic texts support a Jewish presence in the South between En Gedi and Ashkelon on the Mediterranean coast for the fourth century. They are obviously wanting in Judaea and Samaria.

1369It became greater after the Diocletian's reform in 284 CE, when the Negeb and the Nabatean cities of Eilat and Petra became part of this province, in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 6. See ibidem for further modifications.

1370The Jews built the majority in Tiberias and Sepphoris, and "Scythopolis, Caesarea and probably Lydda had significant Jewish communities" in the fourth century, according to G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, 18.

with Samaritans¹³⁷¹, Christian and pagan populations,¹³⁷² made up of village (*pagus*) people (*pagani*), but also of Hellenistic - Roman communities of officials, settlers and veterans, almost oriented to the Mediterranean Sea, intercity trade, and cosmopolitan, but mostly Greco-Roman culture.¹³⁷³

The new entity provided to the Palestinian rabbis for the next generations, but also to the majority of the Jewish population, the geographical, sociological and ideological milieu in which they had to live and to work in during the decades after the war.¹³⁷⁴ The new settlement lends to the form of Judaism, they shaped an undeniable historical character, that R. A. Horsely presents in this way “[f]ollowing the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70, many prominent wealthy, priestly, and/or scribal families relocated in the coastal plain around Yavneh, Lydda, and Joppa. Some of those families and others then emigrated to Galilee in the aftermath of the Bar Cochba Revolt of 132-135¹³⁷⁵. The rabbis established academies on the western frontier of Galilee at Usha and Beth-Shearim before eventually locating in Sepphoris and Tiberias by around 200.¹³⁷⁶ We have seen that R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) belonged to the group, which opened this new chapter of the rabbinic form of Judaism.¹³⁷⁷ That he is said to have helped an Athenian solve a riddle in a competition on wisdom may be correct for matters related to Jewish

1371Many of them lived since the middle of the second century outside of Samaria, in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, 19.

1372The pagan population, which provided the members of the Christian communities, was the majority in the rest of the province, see G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 2000, 6. See ibidem further modifications, 187f for the ‘monotheistic syncretism’, which characterized the fourth century paganism, and the list of Palestinian Bishops at the Council of Nicea in 325, pp. 50-52.

1373This topic is addressed in R. A. Horsely, *Galilee. History. Politics. People*, 1995; see also as an illustrating case B. Lifshitz, “Cesaree de la Palestine, son histoire et ses institutions”, in H. Temporini und W. Haase (Hrsg.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II, *Principat*. Band 8, 1. Auflage, Berlin/New York 1977, 490-518, and G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, 121f for archeological findings on synagogues.

1374E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 473f, 493: “Galilee became the mainly Jewish district”.

1375Lydda survives as the sole Rabbinic school centre of the south to this revolt, see G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 119.

1376R.A. Horsely, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, 1995, 181; G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 22.23.26, and idem, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 19-20, mostly 275 for a differentiated, less “romanticized” view, on the slow start of the Rabbinic leadership.

1377E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 349f.

traditional teachings, but it cannot be historically substantiated once the general relationships between Athens and Jerusalem are addressed.¹³⁷⁸ Characteristic for the era under inquiry is the record of high common cultural ground provided by the letters of the rhetorician pagan Litanies, at the end of the fourth century (388-392 CE), in his relationship with the Jewish patriarch. He was able, on this basis, to help the latter solve internal Jewish conflicts as well as cope with the case of his somewhat turbulent son he had entrusted to him for education.¹³⁷⁹

The information that Jerusalem and the Jerusalemite(s) prevailed over the legendary wisdom of Athens and of the Athenians¹³⁸⁰ is therefore formally a repetition of the TMLam. 1, 1.4. In its meaning, it is a rhetorical device of the fourth century to enhance “ ‘the glory that was Israel’ during the high Second Commonwealth period”.¹³⁸¹ and probably to mobilize, against the cultural assimilation shown by the patriarchal house, for the future.¹³⁸² As for R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3), the dream interpreter, he was one of R. Aqiba (T2)’s students, who founded Usha, although he taught at Sepphoris.¹³⁸³ R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (ben Chalafta) (T4) is reported to have been to

1378”Archeological findings from the Roman and Byzantine period point to the close contracts that had prevailed between Jewish and Hellenistic cultures in Palestine in late Antiquity. See, for instance, Z. Weiss and E. Netser, *Promise and Redemption: A Synagogue Mosaic from Sepphoris*, (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1996)”, as footnote in G. Hasan-Rokem, op. cit. 220; M. Smith, “Palestinian Judaism in the First Century”, in L. Levine (ed.), *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, Jerusalem 1978, 149-156, G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 182-192 and many others have provided evidences that Rabbinic Judaism had used Greek categories to think of itself and to organize its practice.

1379M. Stern (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, Volume Two, Jerusalem 1980, 590-599, puts in perspective in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 242-243, 259-260.

1380G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 78, cites the fourth century’s BCE Greek sage Isocrates, who claimed in *Panegyricos* about Athens: “And our city has left the rest of humanity so far behind in respect to intellect and speech that her pupils have become the teachers of them all”, as quoted in (220, note 38) according to Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961. Jaeger’s assumption of a lasting intellectual influence of Athens and his claim that Christianity resumed and redefined the classic culture and the Greek *paideia* in the fourth century CE are also reported there; see identical view in Henry J. Blumenthal, “529 and its Sequel: What Happened to the Academy,” *Byzantion* 48 (1978) 369-385, quoted *ibidem*, footnote 40.

1381A. Mintz, *Hurban. Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature*, New York 1984, 4.

1382A theology of Israel’s preference is said to have been part of the post 132-135 CE war measures taken by the rabbis to face the delinquency of the Jewish population and identity, in G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 21.

1383Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 76-77.

Rome with R. Aqiba (T2)'s student R. Meir (T2).¹³⁸⁴ He belonged, however, to R. Yehudah ha-Nasi (175-217) (T4)'s generation, when the Sanhedrin migrated to Beth-Shearim,¹³⁸⁵ before it was brought to Tiberias in the middle of the third century.¹³⁸⁶ R. Eleazar, if Eleazar ben Shammua (T3), was one of R. Aqiba's student,¹³⁸⁷ if Eleazar ben Pedat (A3), is said to have been received from R. Yochanan (bar Nappacha) (A2) the leadership of the school of Tiberias.¹³⁸⁸ R. Abbahu (3), a theoretician of the interpretation of dreams, was one of the latter students of R. Yochanan (A2), before he led himself the school of Caesarea.¹³⁸⁹

Dream interpretation was an important issue in a world, in which the dream was considered as a convenient device for communication between supernatural forces and human beings. The dream interpretation was a topic of great concern also for the philosopher, because of the widespread view of the Ancient World that human dreams were produced by supernatural forces¹³⁹⁰ and not by the dreamer him/herself,¹³⁹¹ and also that the best way to cope with them was to be inspired. Cicero defined the dream interpretation as the ability to perceive and to explain issues gods notified to human beings in their dreams.¹³⁹² But if the dreaming could be an individual matter, its perception and its interpretation were cultural issues, in the sense that dreams had to be re-reported in words and dealt with according to de-coding patterns of a

1384Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 80.

1385The patriarch, who spent the last years of his life in Sepphoris, made Beth Shearim into the seat of his administration (the 'Sanhedrin'), of the rabbinic school and his eternal rest, in G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 133f.

1386Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 26.

1387Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 77.

1388Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 89.

1389Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 89.

1390In Biblical terms, they may be God himself as well as evil and demonic forces, in G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life . Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 2000, 91.

1391See A. Kristianpoller, (bearbeitet von), „Traum und Traumdeutung“, in K. Albrecht, (hrsg.), *Monumenta talmudica*, 4. Band *Volksüberlieferungen*, Heft 1, Wien/Berlin, 1923, Darmstadt 1972, viif, for the theory of the dream and its interpretation.

1392Cicero, *De divinatione* II, 63, quoted in A. Kristianpoller, (bearbeitet von), „Traum und Traumdeutung“, in K. Albrecht, (Hrsg.), *Monumenta talmudica*, 4. Band, Heft 1, Wien/Berlin 1923, Darmstadt 1972, xii, see also ibidem, Homer, *Ilias* I, 63f dream interpreter as inspired by god, because of the performative function of the interpretation, also in Talmud Babli, *Berakhot* ix [54a-57b].

culture.¹³⁹³ It had further to become subject of contest between rivalling culture.”¹³⁹⁴ That dream interpretations were ascribed to “more or less institutionalized interpreters”, and R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3), R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (ben Chalafta) (T4), for instance, seem to have been part of them, might be due to their skills and prestige in an era, the second century, the Antonine era, which was also the time of Artemidorus of Daldis, whose dream book is the only of its genre which joined our times.¹³⁹⁵ In such a context, the aforementioned interpretations of dream items can be a piece to be considered as propaganda for the rabbinic dealing with issues believed to be located at the intersection of the Jewish world with other nations. This is shown in the two dream interpretation contexts in which a Rabbi competes, first with a member of a foreign nation, a Samaritan, who at that period, was no longer counted as fellow-tribesman,¹³⁹⁶ and afterwards, with his own fellow-tribesmen, who are his own students. The next narratives contradict somewhat this Rabbinic (self)-image and alleged prestige.

Conclusion: R. Yehoshua (A2): A Rabbinic Failure

The double *ma`aseh* on R. Yehoshua (T2) can be considered as building the conclusion to the series of riddling and dream narratives (lines 305b-328a). The issue of the historical setting

1393G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life . Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 90.

1394That sick Jews, for instance, have practised incubation rites in pagan temples, as reported ibidem, viii may have been one of the causes of dispute between the rabbis and the wise people of the nation, see A. Kristianpoller, (bearbeitet von), “Traum und Traumdeutung”, in K. Albrecht, (Hrsg.), *Monumenta talmudica*, 4. Band, Heft 1, Wien/Berlin, 1923, Darmstadt, 1972, viii, xiii-xiv.

1395A. Kristianpoller, (bearbeitet von), „Traum und Traumdeutung“, in K. Albrecht, (Hrsg.), *Monumenta talmudica*, 4. Band, Heft 1, Wien/Berlin, 1923, Darmstadt, 1972, xiii.

1396The Samaritans have lived in lasting conflict situation with the Jews, see F.M. Cross, “Aspects of Samaritan and Jewish History in Late Persian and Hellenistic Times”, in *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 59, 3 (1966), reported in L. Levine (ed.), *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, 26-31; but G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 2000, 19.121 mentions also, on the basis of Rabbinic records, moments of relative harmony preceding the Bar Cochba’s Revolt. The ensuing punishment had targeted Jews and Samaritans together, see E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 462. The break, that lasted also in the fourth century, came later; it was at that time that the rabbis accused the Samaritans of sacrificing to idols, see G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 221. Had the Samaritans suffered under a possible Antoninus Pius ‘differentiated treatment?’ It is possible that the *E. R.* dream narratives addressed this issue.

of this double narrative will be dealt with considering its literary genre.¹³⁹⁷ J. Neusner¹³⁹⁸ speaks in narratological terms of a “[R]eturn to wisdom pattern”, but it is obvious that this time, the wisdom contest narrative is structurally made up of six related episodes involving a rabbi as the central character. Their assessment by G. Hasan-Rokem focuses on two facts.

The first is that this double *ma`aseh* is “a (...) cycle of stories on R. Yehoshua,¹³⁹⁹ in which a self as pictured in process, “as a constantly evolving subject” in journey, “engaged in a complex negotiation with others as well as with the powers in his unknown inner being, with his destiny,¹⁴⁰⁰ and, in difference to the riddle analysed above, to the Homer’s *Odyssey*,¹⁴⁰¹ and to related Biblical type-scenes¹⁴⁰² with which it may be compared, the protagonist is “unable to reach decisive resolutions.”¹⁴⁰³

The second, in accordance with the narrative itself,¹⁴⁰⁴ is that in this R. Yehoshua’s story, set within the historical context of the post Temple’s Destruction, “[I]t is not only the identity of the individual self and its existence as a subject that are continually tested by the enigma (...), but also the society as an ethnic, cultural, and national framework that is constantly evolving and breaking apart, facing a dialectic of constructions and disintegration at work from within and from without.¹⁴⁰⁵ The failed communication with young characters in the narrative is seen as

1397See on this issue the tannaitic use of Greek rethorical anecdote *chria*, to enhance the figure and concept of the ideal Sage, the *sophos* or *sapiens* to mirror a sociological situation and its values, in A. Fischel, *Essays in Greco-Roman and related Talmudic Literature*, New York 1977, 77, and the assessemnt of this genre in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 240f. 242, where the *E. R.* case is debated!

1398J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*, Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 165.

1399G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 192.

1400G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 194.

1401This reference is used by G. Hasan-Rokem in the definition of the plot of these stories, *op.cit.* 191.

1402They are scenes having in common ‘elements of repetitive compositional patterns’ in the telling of the story, e.g. of the encounter with the future betrothed at well, in Gen. 24, 10-61; 29, 10-61; 29, 1-20; Exod. 2, 15b-21, see R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York 1981, 47-62.

1403G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 194. As such, this narrative is therefore not a riddle, but an “enigma”.

1404See R. Yehoshua’s concluding statement, “[N]ever has anyone overpowered me, except this widow, this little girl and these children.

1405G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 194, 197.

suggesting “a potential for social criticism of the leadership”.¹⁴⁰⁶ It can be referred, for instance, to the episode in *Genesis Rabbah*, where R. Yehoshua b. Chananyah (T2), is reported to have been sent by the sages [of Usha] to bring Jewish rebels gathered in the Beit Rimon Valley in Galilee to better feelings.¹⁴⁰⁷ This move undertaken by Jewish leaders, whether fictional or real, underlines, obviously the social status, and the influence that a rabbi of that time could have in the guiding of the community.¹⁴⁰⁸ Deep within the E.R. commentary, focused on issues related to the fourth and fifth centuries, this historical act has to be accounted for within the perspective of its use in the literary context of the E.R. expounding of Lamentations, as well as in the context of a historical period, in which the rabbis had pinned “all their hopes on salvation brought directly by God at the end of time.”¹⁴⁰⁹ It is in this context of a generalized contention on matters related to leaders, see above, that R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)’s story may appear as a contribution to solve the issue of the true leadership.

IV.1.3.2. The True Leadership. The Case with R. Yochanan b. Zakkai

The question which seems to be addressed in this story is about the true leader in Israel. This question was inevitable in the troubled conditions of life the Community of Israel had to go through at that time. It seems that *E. R.* answers it on the basis of a couple of verses which belong to TMLam. 1, 1-11.

1. R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1), The Ideal *Sophos* and the History.

The *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of the TMLam. 1, 5.1 *היו צריה לראש* “*Her foes are become as chief*” is correctly understood once it becomes obvious how it is historically motivated. This

1406G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 197.

1407See *Genesis* [Midrash Rabbah], LXIV, 10, trans. by A.H. Freedman, London ([1939] 1961), 579-580. By his generation (c. 90-130), R. Yehoshua b. Chanayah (T2) might have been involved in the Palestinian vicissitudes of the Jewish revolt of 115-117 CE, which broke out at the close of Trajan’s reign (98-117) in Egypt, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, the province of Mesopotamia, and in Palestine, see M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1976, 389-427. Usha, as a centre for the Sages, came later, see below.

1408J. Neusner, *Judaism in Society. The Evidence of the Yerushalmi*, Chicago 1983, 196, quoted in G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 28-283, speaks for the earlier centuries of limits imposed to the power of the Sages by popular will and concensus, by established custom, and by other sorts of Jewish Big Men, etc...

1409G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 285f.

issue will be discussed on the basis of historical facts and of the literary language used to account for them.

1.1. R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1), Ideal *Sophos* and Glorification.

D. Stern puts what he calls¹⁴¹⁰ “the story of R. Yochanan b. Zakkai’s flight from Jerusalem and his founding of the academy at Yavneh,¹⁴¹¹ which exists in numerous versions (...),”¹⁴¹² into the category of “extensively developed” sage-story, for the simple reason that it “combines elements of the example,¹⁴¹³ miracle,¹⁴¹⁴ and pronouncement-stories.¹⁴¹⁵ The very concept of “sage” has, however, a sociological and a historical setting which soften its abstract content. In his abundantly documented research, H.A. Fischel considers¹⁴¹⁶ that rhetorical creations of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds have produced and imposed not the idea of the sage in general, but that of the *sophos* or *sapiens*. ” The creation of this notion was a historically appropriate response to a couple of factors deemed to have been influential between the fourth century BCE and the fourth century CE. Then mentioned are among others “the decline” of the *polis* and the rise of empire, the emergence of new social classes, the expansion of slavery, the continuous economic crisis (of Rome), earlier Greek particularism and later Roman civil wars, foreign invasions, the increasing number of competing cults and ways of life - all encouraging a flight into the self¹⁴¹⁷ assessed as a new individual in a new body. The ideal sage, in such a

1410D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 243-244.

1411The narrative from *Eikhah Rabbati* we dealt with does not tell about the founding of Yavneh. The concentration on the motif of getting outside of a city in siege is the point which justifies the use of this story in *Eikhah Rabbati* to expound TMLam. 1, 5.1.

1412See literature on this topic in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 335, footnote 12.

1413D. Stern defines an “example-story” as a story in which “the sage performs symbolic or parabolic deeds, or where his smallest actions (...) are treated deeply meaningful, often with halakhic repercussions”, op. cit. 242.

1414A miracle-story is a story “in which the sage performs a supernatural deed-causing rain to fall through his prayers or through fasting, for example - or in which he becomes involved in a miraculous situation”, ibidem.

1415A pronouncement-story “culminates in a clever remark that is highly quotable in addition to being wise”, ibidem, 243. The case cited is R. Aqiba (T2)’s saying in the story expounding TMLam. 5, 18.1, see below.

1416H.A. Fischel, “Story and History: Observations on Graeco-Roman Rhetoric and Pharisaism”, (1966), in ibidem (ed.), *Essays in Graeco-Roman and related Talmudic Literature*, 74-75, New York 1977, 446.

1417H.A. Fischel, “Story and History...”, footnote 98.

context, was supposed to embody through his actions and wisdom the virtues like the use of reason, the nearness to nature and way to redemption.¹⁴¹⁸

Applied to R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s handling in the anecdote narrative (A) to TM Lam. 1, 5.1 "*Her foes are become as chief*", this concept of ideal sage referred to his "courage, the presence of his mind, his wit, and incisiveness."¹⁴¹⁹ He demonstrated all this in this anecdote story which has been characterized in narratological terms by J. Neusner¹⁴²⁰ as an attempt made by the sage to solve the tension derived from the situation of siege of Jerusalem saving himself and the Torah by means of the same Torah. We have, therefore here, an allusion to the concrete history, which prompts to find out what the general *sophos* genre tells in the expounding of TM-Lam. 1, 5.

1.2. *Eikhah Rabbati* and the Historical Choices Made by R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)

A couple of historical facts will be recalled, with which the literary *sophos* genre will be confronted, in an attempt to understand what it is about. The siege of Jerusalem is alluded to in *Eikhah Rabbati* (1, 510a-511) by the mention of the presence and the action of Vespasian in the Jewish war (66-70CE). It was at the end of 66 CE that the legate of Syria C. Cestius Gallus met the emperor Nero (54-68CE) in Greece and told him the reverses inflicted by Jewish insurgents in Galilee, much more in Judaea.¹⁴²¹ Gallus died after a little while, and "Nero appointed Vespasian, a member of his accompanying suite and a man of great military experience, as commander-in-chief, with his elder son, Titus, as his second-in-command"¹⁴²² Vespasian assembled his troops in spring 67 CE, and launched the first attack in Galilee by the end of 67 CE. It was at that very time that John, son of Levi from Gischala in North Galilee and leader of War-party extremists, arrived with his followers in Jerusalem, with the project to strengthen the Zealots Eleazar, son of Simon, against the moderates, suspected to make a peace deal with the

¹⁴¹⁸H.A. Fischel, "Story and History...", 463.

¹⁴¹⁹All these are these features which characterize the ideal sage according to H.A. Fischel, "Story and History...", 446.

¹⁴²⁰See his *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 170.

¹⁴²¹F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, ii,499-555., E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, 296.

¹⁴²²E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 306.

Romans, who now gained ground.¹⁴²³ The Zealots and allies killed the ex-High Priests Annas and Jesus, son of Gamaliel; they imposed the rule of terror on Jerusalem, compelling “numerous deserters of the moderate party to flee to Vespasian to escape the Zealot ferocity.”¹⁴²⁴ After a break at the end of 67 CE, Vespasian resumed the operations early in 68 CE and by June, he had isolated Jerusalem, conquering most of the rest of the province.¹⁴²⁵ He paused, however, after the death of Nero on 9 June 68 CE, and the successive assassinations of Galba (June 68- January 69 CE) and Otto (January - April 69 CE), before relaunching the war in June 69 CE, while John and Eleazar, joined by Simon, the leader of the *sicarii*, were now engaged in a fratricidal struggle, whose “one of the most serious effects (...) was burning of large stocks of grain¹⁴²⁶, which caused a severe famine, for the control of Jerusalem.”¹⁴²⁷ F. Josephus reports that it was John’s practise “to set light to the buildings stocked with corn and all kinds of provisions, and upon his retreat, Simon advanced and did the same.”¹⁴²⁸ The statement of *Eikhah Rabbati* connecting R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)’s flight with the ensuing famine might have taken place at this stage,¹⁴²⁹ but the reduction in this commentary, of all this case to Ben Battiach (was he an extremist?, a zealot? a sicarius?¹⁴³⁰)’s action seems simplistic, as well as the alleged following meeting of R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) with Vespasian¹⁴³¹ said to have taken place straight away.

The reason is that the war was interrupted when the legions in the East proclaimed Vespasian emperor in July 69 CE. The Roman commander held this as the fulfilment of a

1423F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, iv, 121-8. 135-7, in E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 312.

1424E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 314.

1425E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 310

1426This is reported in F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, v, 24, see also below.

1427E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden, 1976, 316.

1428F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, v, 24. The collective character of his burning is mentioned also by B. Lifshitz, with speaks of a “national suicide”, in idem “Jerusalem sous la domination romaine”, 465.

1429This is also E.M. Smallwood’s claim, see idem, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 314, note 92, also 348-350; R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1) might have met Vespasian at that occasion and told him about his prophecy, which is identical to F. Josephus’ prediction, see idem, *Jewish War*, iii, 399-407.

1430It is supposed that the zealots were not the sicarii, against M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten*, 1961, 223.

1431Ben Battiach’s violent move and R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)’s talk with the Roman general Vespasian makes, however, sense if both episodes are taken for what they might have represented, as opposed to the sophos R. Yochanan and B. Zakkai according to the logic of his literary genre, see below.

prophet-cy¹⁴³² of the deserter F. Josephus,¹⁴³³ who was therefore rewarded with a release from his bonds after the council of war which was scheduled in Berytus.¹⁴³⁴ The new emperor transferred in the spring 70 CE, the Jewish commandment to his son Titus,¹⁴³⁵ who rushed to gather four Roman legions near Jerusalem, for the final attack. If we consider that this was the very siege of Jerusalem,¹⁴³⁶ *Eikhah Rabbati* 's claim that Vespasian surrounded three years and a half Jerusalem has a symbolic value. It was in that time span that F. Josephus endeavoured on Titus recommendation to get many of his besieged compatriots join the territory secured by the Romans.¹⁴³⁷ The Temple was captured on the 10 Ab, after the Roman general had held a council of war on 9 Ab "to discuss its fate."¹⁴³⁸ Nothing is reported on R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)'s participation to such a council,¹⁴³⁹ neither on Vespasian's attendance and alleged proposal to get R. Yochanan's friends and relatives exfiltrated from Jerusalem before the last assault. The narrative of *Eikhah Rabbati* appears therefore for what it is: a literary strong criticism against the Jewish insurgents accused of having delivered Jerusalem to its foes; it is further a rabbinic glorification¹⁴⁴⁰ of the *sophos* R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1), for having managed to deal successfully with tyrants on the basis of the Torah. As such, this narrative belongs to a period in

1432F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, iii, 399-407.

1433F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, ii, 568, iii, 129-131, 345-555, 384-398.

1434F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, iv, 622-629.

1435F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, iv, 658.

1436It started according to R. Lifshitz on the 10th of May 70, and should therefore not have lasted five months proposed by the same, see idem, "Jerusalem sous la domination romaine", 465. 468.

1437F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, v, 114, 261. 361-423.

1438E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 324. 325-326, see . F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, v, 491-501. The fall of Jerusalem on 9 Ab is a traditional assumption, see B. Lifshitz, "Jerusalem ..." 468.

1439F. Josephus, *Jewish War*, vi, 237f scribes that Titus held a council with his staff on the last assault against the Temple, as reported in E.R.; six of his staff-officers are said to have attended the meeting. None of the nouns mentioned in E.R. is listed.

1440That such an assessment is ideological is obvious in the fact that F. Josephus, whose behaviour was similar in the same situation, has been banned from the authoritative rabbinic tradition and punished with ostracism, see M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century", in L. Levine (ed.), *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period*, 149-156 on this issue, and D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 242, on the ideological character of R. Yochanan b. Zakkai's narrative in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

which the Rabbinic re-interpretation of the catastrophic history had won the lead, or at least was a crystallized matter.¹⁴⁴¹

¹⁴⁴¹The Rabbinic literature proposes in principle the point of view of a group which came to leadership after centuries of dispute, see G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 9f, 90f.

V. THE *MIDRASHIC MASHAL* (MS) AND THE OPEN TIME (PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE) IN *EIKHAH RABBATI* (1,1-5,22)

The work in the preceding chapters has been focused on the examination of the literary forms of the claims (Stis) and the anecdote narratives that the Rabbis of *Eikhah Rabbati* used to account for their own history. We now turn to the third literary form that we find in this rabbinic commentary: the rabbinic parable *mashal*. We first introduce to this form before we lead an inquiry on their nature and their contribution to view on history exposed in *Eikhah Rabbati*.

V.0. Introduction

Findings reported in Appendix Three have established that the *midrashic* expounding in *Eikhah Rabbati* relies also on the *mashal* (plural, *meshalim*) – rabbinic parable as an exegetical¹⁴⁴² tool. As mentioned in the General Introduction to this work, our dealing with the *mashal* will rely *mutatis mutandis* on D. Stern's theory on the *mashal*. The reason is that in this theory, the *mashal* can be considered as a medium in the quest for the historical meanings of TMLamentations data as this is accounted for by the *Eikhah Rabbati* findings.

As one can note, it is only now that the *meshalim* (M) are being examined. This is after the statements (Stis) and the anecdote narratives (As) had been addressed. The implication of this chronological sequence is that our focus in the present chapter will be not only on the *mashal* considered as a rhetorical tool whereby the *midrashic* exegesis associated with the *middot* provides the basic microstructures introducing to the macrostructures of the narratives. One notices, in the identification of the *Eikhah Rabbati* literary forms in Appendix Three, that the *meshalim* often come after the other literary forms. This clearly infers that the *mashal* rhetorical and thematic functions complete the meanings of the other forms.

0.1. The *Mashal* in the Interpretation of the *Midrash*

¹⁴⁴²The comprehension of this attribute is the general one in the broad sense of “explanatory”. It does not meet J. Neusner's specification of “halakhic, exegetical, and narrative-recapitulating *mashal*”, see idem, *Rabbinic Narrative. A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Four, Leiden/Boston 2003, 208-219.

Twenty-two (22) *meshalim*¹⁴⁴³ are present in Eikhah Rabbati according to data reported in Appendix Three. This number is quite low in comparison to the four hundred thirty-eight (438) statements and to the eighty (89) anecdote narratives uttered in the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* commentary to expound the Biblical Book of Lamentations. This number is sufficient and should not be taken as accidental. This is rather a strategic choice by the Rabbis to integrate the *mashal* into their interpretative endeavour of the Book of Lamentations.¹⁴⁴⁴ The question now as to why the *mashal* is used in the said interpretive endeavour is relevant and should, thus, be considered. Actually, this question should help understand the nature of the *mashal*¹⁴⁴⁵ as well as the general working of the *Midrash* in general. For A. Mintz,¹⁴⁴⁶ for instance, the *meshalim* as the “more resourceful [tools] than the ordinary instruments of exegesis” at the disposal of the Rabbis enabling them to deal with Israel’s shame *vis-à-vis* the heathen Nations. It helps them “close the gap between the classical prophetic idea that was promulgated before and after the First Destruction and the actual experience of the second great catastrophe in their own times.”¹⁴⁴⁷

Consequently, the *meshalim* (Ms) pertain, together with the claims and the anecdote narratives, to the rabbinic arsenal of exegetical tools.¹⁴⁴⁸ However, the *meshalim* are characterized by an interpretative scope which is different in nature and purpose.¹⁴⁴⁹ This view,

1443D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash: The Case of the Mashal”, *Prooftexts*, vol. 1 (1981), 285, note 34, speaks of twenty-one king-*meshalim* and two non-king-*meshalim*, that means, twenty-three *meshalim* in *Eikhah Rabbati*. This is correct, for instance, if we consider the simile (S) to Lam. 1, 1 as a *mashal*, introduced by the *mashal* formulaic *melekh basar vadam*, see idem, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 22.

1444J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Four, Leiden/Boston 2003, 221f, is right when he intends to expose extensively “not” “the Parable”, an Autonomous Literary Genre, but Parabolic Writing, Part of, and Just Another Option in the Composition of the Document”

1445Is the *mashal*, for instance, a metaphor, an allegory, or both of them?

1446See A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York 1984, 78, 79.

1447The shame before the nation seems not to be the only reason the *mashal* is used to cope with, then it will be shown that the latter accompanies even the rhetorical argument which states the failure of Israel. And D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 133 does no account sufficiently for this strategical use of the *mashal*.

1448E.L. Fackenheim considers that these logical and literary forms, which witness the midrash as fragmentary and whole, can preserve the root experiences on God’s acting in history despite the contradictions such as divine transcendence and divine involvement, divine Power and human freedom, divine involvement with history and the evil within it, see idem, *God’s Presence in History. Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections*, 1970, 18f.

1449D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 15: “In the exemplum (*ma’aseh*), excess or redundancy serves as a guarantee that narrative’s meaning will be understood without ambiguity (...). The *mashal*, in contrast, operates

which stands against the exclusive “either...or” concept¹⁴⁵⁰ in the interpretive strategy of the *Midrash*¹⁴⁵¹ is traditional, and supported by the treatment and the presentation the *mashal* gets in the main anthologies of tannaitic and amoraic works.¹⁴⁵² The meaning of the *mashal* preserved within the midrashic context has to be extended beyond the exegetical occasion.¹⁴⁵³

0.2. The Form and the Function of the *Mashal*.

Our study of the form and function of the *mashal* in the interpretive strategy of *Eikhah Rabbati* will address the *mashal* compositional features and poetics displayed in its use in the expounding of the Book of Lamentations.¹⁴⁵⁴ In this regard, our investigation on this literary form relies on D. Stern’s work. This author particularly focuses on *mashal* poetic features which he deemed to induce “a certain *single effect*,”¹⁴⁵⁵ which obviously must depend on *mashal* shapes.

through a technique that is the opposite of redundancy: it deliberately gives the impression of naming its meaning insufficiently. It uses ambiguity intentionally. Yet, the *mashal* achieves this appearance-the appearance of ambiguity - not by being authentically ambiguous but by shrewdly incorporating suggestive openings for the questioning of meaning; in this way, it artfully manipulates its audience to fill those openings so as to arrive at the *mashal*’s conclusion.” See *ibidem*, 323-324, note 16, for further divergent features.

1450See D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 15: “in some cases, the *mashal* is one of several literary units offering an interpretation for a verse’s meaning, but even in these cases, the separate units together tend to compose simple exegetical miscellanies with no significant superstructure.”

1451See D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 15, for the cases of “the several *meshalim* in *Eikhah Rabbati* that are embedded and preserved in some complex context.”

1452See the numerous and strategically used “*Gleichnisse*” (*meshalim*) in W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, Erster Band: *Von Hillel bis Akiba*, Strassburg 1903, reprinted Berlin 1965 (Tann)., *idem*, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, Zweiter Band: *Von Akiba’s Tod bis zum Abschluss der Mischna*, Strassburg 1890, reprinted Berlin 1966 (Tann 2), *idem* *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, I. *Vom Abschluss der Mischna bis zum Tode Jochanans*, Strassburg 1892, Hildesheim 1965 (PAm 1), *idem*, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. II. *Die Schüler Jochanan*, Strassburg 1892, reprinted Hildesheim, 1965 (PAm 2), *idem*, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. III *Die letzten Amoräer des heiligen Landes*, Strassburg 1899, reprinted Hildesheim 1965 (PAm 3).

1453As D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 17 acknowledges it, the exegetical occasions “are not in themselves the full setting for the *mashal*’s meaning. In these exegetical contexts, the *nimshal* gives the audience all the information they need to understand the *mashal*.”

1454It will, therefore, not be argued on the use of the *mashal* in general, see D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 46f, on the occasions of the *mashal*.

1455See in rhetorical terms, for instance, the effect of blame or of praise. The above quoted phrase is part of Edgar Allan Poe’s sentence: “a skilful artist” who “has constructed a tale (...) has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents, but having deliberately conceived a certain effect to wrought, he then invents such incidents, he then combines such events, and discusses them in such tone as may best serve him in establishing his preconceived effect”, quoted in his *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 102.

As briefly mentioned in the general introduction to this work, the prototypical grammar of the *mashal* proposed by D. Stern¹⁴⁵⁶ comprises the following elements (1) an illustrand describing the opportune exegetical occasion of the *mashal*, (2) one of the characteristic introductory formulae detailed in Appendix Three, (3) a narrative, *i.e.*, the *mashal*-proper, which is defined and analysed *mutatis mutandis* in accordance with the views and approach exposed in the introduction to the narratives (A) in Chapter Two, (4) the *nimshal*¹⁴⁵⁷ which is a parallel with obvious scriptural basis alluding to the *mashal*-proper narrative, (5) a proof text.

In regard to the widespread view that the rabbinic *mashal* - parable is a narrative, the above outline of the *mashal* (M) comprises elements which evidently distinguish this rhetorical genre from the anecdote narrative (A) as well as elements common to both literary forms. It must be stressed here that both genres occur in the *Eikhah Rabbati* general exegetical context, and they are used, in this rabbinic expounding commentary, to account for highly actualized meaning of the Biblical Book of Lamentations. The shape of their narrative is their common as well as their differentiating feature. Concretely, a narrator resorts in his/her account, in both genres, to a point of view and the plot components such as the introductory exposition - in which he/she addresses the likely world familiar to his/her audience that, as such, enjoys the privilege of coping easily with issues related to “Where”? “When? Who? What”, usually tackled in this part of the narrative. The dealing with the “How” pictures sometimes by means of stereotyped motifs and motems the following steps that lead to the denouement of the narrative. The *mashal* specific literary composition, which may be in the form of a staircase, and its double narrative-structure,¹⁴⁵⁸ constitutes the major difference.¹⁴⁵⁹ This specificity imposes formal and semantic

1456“Prototypical” features of the *mashal* means that all the *meshalim* which occur in *E. R.* will be handled on the basis of this frame, although all of them are not made up of all these components, see extended data in D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash: The Case of the Mashal”, in *Prooftext*, vol 1 (1981).

1457This is the narrative about which it is spoken figuratively, symbolically (*nimshal*) in the *mashal*-proper and to which the latter applies.

1458This is the fact, on the basis of the structuration of the *mashal* in *mashal*-proper and *nimshal*, although their functions are different, the *nimshal* being called “explanation or solution”, see D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash...”, 265; D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 68, calls the *nimshal* “another narrative: typically, a single moment in the master plot, the covenantal narrative of God’s relationship with His chosen people...”, *ibidem*, 70.

1459D. Stern speaks of parallel forms, the *nimshal* applying the *mashal*-proper, *ibidem* 22.

constraints on the *mashal* narrator in gathering the two sub-narratives, that is, the *mashal*-proper and the *nimshal*. Let us take an example. Let us take this narrator, who talks in the *mashal*-proper about a king confronted with related characters, and who in the *nimshal* narrates about God and the Community of Israel; if both the *mashal* and the *nimshal* fit one another logically or by contrast, the entire *mashal* has then achieved either its exegetical and rhetorical or thematic goal(s).

Pertaining to the means used in the *mashal* and to their referential character, M. Kutzer mentions another constraint taken into consideration in the setting up of a parable, namely, the nature of its scenario as a play.¹⁴⁶⁰ This literary feature imposes compositional choices particularly in the dealing with the questions “Who?” and “Where?” that are relevant for the history. These questions either remain unanswered or they are answered using oblique means such as (1) fictionalized types, (2) the selection of likely¹⁴⁶¹ characters, of facts and deeds of the daily life, from the cultural system and the language, (3) the omission of any information unnecessary to the unfolding of the scenario, (4) the reorganization and rearrangement of the selected acts and deeds into a new and somewhat unusual setting, while keeping in mind that all these formal means are hard to deal with, as they spur to question the usual combinations in the daily life and to imagine different situations.¹⁴⁶² Dealing with a rabbinic *mashal* that is specifically made up of a *mashal*-proper and of a *nimshal*,¹⁴⁶³ requires, further, to address the

1460See M. Kutzer, “Erlösender Literatur. Vom Mehr-Wert der Gleichnisse: Ein Plädoyer, die Bibel literarisch zu lesen”, *Die Furche*. Dossier, Nr 43/27 Oktober 2005, 12. The examples are provided mostly by the New Testament, but the claims encompassed an extended range of cases. And D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash: The case of the Mashal”, 263f, idem, *Parables in Midrash*, 10f. on Jesus’ parables and the rabbinic *meshalim*.

1461”Likely” is another term for “referential and symbolic”, as this is the case in the allegory. The exclusion of these allegorical features from the *mashal* has been disputed by D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash: The case of the Mashal”, 263f, idem, *Parables in Midrash*, 10f on Jesus’ parables and the rabbinic *meshalim*.

1462Dealing with a parable requires a creative participation which enables a narrative, ‘time based’ identity, see M. Kutzer, “Erlösende Literatur: Vom Mehr-Wert des Gleichnisses...”, and also the account of the poetics of the *mashal* in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 63-101.

1463The composition form of the *mashal* in *mashal*-proper and *nimshal*, the evidence that the king-melek character has been introduced often at the cost of other protagonists and the use of stereotyped narrative structures and motifs in the *mashal*-proper are said to belong to the process of the regularisation the rabbinic *mashal* underwent during its transmission, in D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash...”, 266-267.

function constraint of the *mashal* “to bring a certain message¹⁴⁶⁴ to bear upon an *ad hoc* situation before its audience by suggesting it to them through an allusive tale.¹⁴⁶⁵ The audience must deduce this message for themselves in their real life situation on the basis of the *mashal* historical relevance.¹⁴⁶⁶

We observe here that the fictionalizing means used in the *meshalim* make the historical time remain open. What does that mean? This means that the present is not the repetition of the past, neither the future to be considered a pure extension of the present. The *meshalim* confer, thus, their respective specificity to the past, the present and the future.

In this work, we examine the *meshalim* reported in the context of the *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of the TMLamentations. Data reported in the Appendix 3 support the view that these *meshalim* are substantial part of an interpretive endeavour that relies also on claims (Stis) and anecdote narratives (As). Our treatment of the *meshalim* in their setting within the framework of *Eikhah Rabbati* will address their narratological features, with a particular focus on the characters, the exegetical techniques used, their rhetorical structures of praise and blame as well as their conveyed correlated thematic messages. The very subject of the Biblical Lamentations requires that our handling focuses in four subtitles on the *Eikhah Rabbati* comments on the complaints expressed by and about the characters. The hypothesis advanced here is that the *mashal* completes, in its form and function, the claims (Stis) and narratives (AS) examined earlier above, and affects to some degree the *midrashic* relevance and meaning of history.

1464D. Stern classifies some of the identified rhetorical functions of the *mashal* under two categories, the praise, which includes functions as defence, apologetics, and theological justifications, and the blame, to which polemics, condemnation and complaint belong, see idem, “Rhetoric and Midrash...”, 291, note 59. But see idem, *Parables in Midrash*, 52 speaks of the rhetorical structures praise or blame, which are correlated to thematic categories or messages, apologetics and polemics, both phrased as either praise or blame, consolation, formulated often as eulogy, praise of the dead, complaint, a blame against the *mashal* addressee.

1465See D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 8-9 on *mashal*’s duplicate structure and interpretive procedure, and idem, “Rhetoric and Midrash...”, 265, with the precision that “[T]he allegorical, or symbolic, or referential features of the *mashal* exist only for the sake of enabling its audience to grasp for themselves the ulterior message the *mashal* bears” and not to illustrate abstract obscure and cryptic facts or situations in concrete parallels, nor to proof an argument.

1466D. Stern has recalled the second, third, and fourth centuries C.E. as the historical context of the apologetic and other themes of the *meshalim* reported in his work, see idem, *Parables in Midrash*, 103f.

V.1. The Two Promises (TMLam. 1, 1-11)

The *Eikhah Rabbati* expounding of the TMLam. 1, 1-11 consists of old and new claims (Stis) on the fall of the Fair Zion Community of Israel as well as of the city of Jerusalem; these claims are intertwined with anecdote narratives (As) related to Biblical and Midrashic characters. Seven *meshalim* and a simile are used to account for these claims and narratives. The *Eikhah Rabbati* Rabbis appear to definitely address, through these *meshalim*, purposeful messages to the audiences of their generations. Accounting for their time on the basis of the condemning Biblical Lamentations, the Rabbis also exposed new characters that could vehicle the consoling note of their commentary.

V.1.1. The Embattled Matrona *Mashal* (a) to TMLam. 1, 1.1)

This is the first *mashal* (E.R.א) which occurs in the strategic expounding of *Eikhah Rabbati*. It accounts for TMLam. 1. 1.1 אכה ישב בודד “How lonely sits”. We deal first with its context before presenting it and discussing its message.

V.1.1.1. The Literary Context

1. The literary context is just the immediate position of the *mashal* within *Eikhah Rabbati* framework. The present *mashal* is stated by R. Levi (A3), a Galilean amora on horseback between the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries.¹⁴⁶⁷ It is uttered just after the anonymous expounding of *eikhah* in TMLam. 1, 1.1 by means of three claims, which are for that reason considered as the *mashal* illustrand and its exegetical occasion.¹⁴⁶⁸

2. This *mashal* is immediately followed by the interpretation by Ben Azzai (T2) of the same *eikhah* on the basis of the numeral value of *eikhah* (Sti2) in accordance with the traditional Hebrew alphabetical system. We will show in our analysis that the *mashal* stated by R. Levi (A3)

¹⁴⁶⁷W. Bacher, 1), *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. II. *Die Schüler Jochanan*. Ende des 3. und Anfang des 4. Jahrhunderts, Strassburg 1892, Hildesheim 1965, 296-436 provides plenty of his records.

¹⁴⁶⁸The exegetical occasion is correctly the particle הֵן, which is therefore expounded twice, first by three claims, and secondly, by the *mashal*.

adds further meaning to the terms of the claim that precedes, with which it is linguistically united unit

V.1.1.2. The Text and The Analysis of the *Mashal*

The so standardized *mashal*¹⁴⁶⁹ compositionally comprises, in addition to its introductive illustrand (see 1. below) analysed above as (Sti), the double structure consisting of the *mashal*-proper (lines 4-5a) (see 3. below), and the *nimshal* (lines 5b-8a) (see 4. below).

1. ‘Three uttered prophecies using the word *eikhah*: Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Moses said: “*How (eikhah) can I by myself bear your trouble*” (Deut. 1, 12), Isaiah said: “*O how (eikhah) has she become a harlot!*” (Isa. 1, 21), Jeremiah said: “*How (eikhah) lonely sits*” (TMLam. 1, 1), R. Levi (A3) said:

2. (The matter may be compared) to the case of

3. a noble Roman lady¹⁴⁷⁰ who had three bridegroom’s attendants.¹⁴⁷¹ One saw her in her carelessness, and the second saw her in her infidelity, and the third saw her in her disgrace.’

The *mashal*-proper is introduced here by the formulaic phrase, ‘a case about’ (*mashal le*) as shown in (3) above, and it is made up of two sentences. A first sentence, built on a main clause as ‘it may be compared to the case of a noble Roman lady’, is joined to a relative sentence as ‘who had three *shoshbim*’. The focus is on the subject, namely, the noble Roman lady and her three attendants. The second sentence, which is complex, contains a list of three structurally identical coordinate clauses which are of the same perfect transitive predicate basis, each with a numeral ordinal pronoun (‘Y saw X’) from the thrice Hebrew numeral cardinal pronoun ‘one’ of

1469The *mashal* is said to have undergone a transformation process from a popular form of teaching and preaching to a device in the study of the Scripture, see D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 19. 206f for the features characterizing this change.

1470A translation in this context according to M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. Second Edition, Ramat-Gan/Baltimore and London 2002, 303, against the culturally neutral “matron lady” in M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright 1971], 769.

1471Also with M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, 543, which is historically more informative than the neutral paraphrase ‘a noble lady who had three representatives of her family at hand’ in *Lamentations Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, by Jacob Neusner, Atlanta 1969, 146.

the first sentence as agent; all three clauses are then followed by three prepositional adverbial phrases (*in Z*).

4. Similarly, Moses saw Israel in their glory and their carelessness, and said: “*How (eikhah) can I by myself bear your trouble*” (Deut. 1, 12). Isaiah saw them in their infidelity and said: “*O how (eikhah) has she become a harlot!*”. Jeremiah saw them in their disgrace, and said: “*How (eikhah) lonely sits*” (Lam. 1, 1).¹⁴⁷²

The *nimshal* (lines 5b-8a) as in (4) above follows the *mashal*-proper (3), just after the formulary ‘similarly’ (*khaki*). The *nimshal* comprises three independent sentences of identical structure, parallel and similar to the structure of the second sentence of the *mashal*-proper; the three sentences are the three components of the introductive illustrand, without however the introductory ‘Three uttered prophecies using the word *eikhah*’. In the *nimshal*, the three characters, who ‘uttered prophecies’ are now the ‘three attendants’ of the *mashal*-proper, and the addressee, the Fair - Zion of the illustrand is replaced by the noble Roman lady of the same *mashal*-proper.

It is now place to stress the interest of this approach on the present *mashal* as well as on the following *meshalim* for this research on history in *Eikhah Rabbati*. The noble Roman lady symbolizes the Community of Israel and the three probably Roman attendants represent the Biblical Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah. This translation of the three Biblical characters with their specified failures into what is seen as their Greco-Roman counterparts under a particular point of view of their social and cultural environment at the beginning of the fourth century CE is a typical *midrashic* operation. This operation is designed to “maintain the Torah’s presence in the existence of the Jew, (...) bridging the gap between its words and their reader, (...) overcoming the alienation, the distance of the Torah, and (...) restoring it to the Jew as intimate, familiar presence.”¹⁴⁷³ The narrative form of this mediating translation holds this meaningful transfer open with reference to its source¹⁴⁷⁴ and its individualized reception as well. It is worth noting here,

1472D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 44.

1473Resorting to the category of consort’s career helps understand the syntactically astonishing place of *eikhah* in TMLam 1, 1,1 not as the hint to a final and gratuitous catastrophe, but as an indicating moment of the covenant paradigm made up of happiness, sin and punishment.

1474D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 176 speaks of ‘the apologetic’ function of this *mashal*. This is correct on historical point of view. The ‘*matrona*’ mentioned in the *meshalim* of this commentary was at that moment “die

therefore, that the rhetorical message of blame condemning the Community of Israel, as conveyed in the present midrashic *mashal*, assumes much more positive¹⁴⁷⁵ and apologetic connotations of the long suffered divine solicitude than the afflicted picture of the ‘solitary Fair - Zion’ of Lamentations.¹⁴⁷⁶ The question now is: Is the present opening message justified in the context of the overall message of the *Eikhah Rabbati* commentary?

V.1.2. The Threatened Son (*Mashal* (b) to TMLam. 1, 1.1)

This *mashal* is the second (b) *mashal* in *Eikhah Rabbati* and it addresses the same item together with preceding *mashal*. It is uttered by R. Berekhyah (A5) in the name of R. Abdimi of Haifa (A/third century).

V. 1. 2. 1. The Literary Context

The *mashal* occasion is the expounding of TMLam. 1, 1.1 by the claim (**Sti**) of Ben Azzai (T2) stating that Israel went into exile for having repudiated the divine unity, the circumcision, the Decalogue and the Pentateuch supposedly symbolized by the thirty-six numeral value of the letters of *eikhah*. The present *mashal* is followed by the claim (**Sti**) uttered by R. Levi (A3) stating that Israel’s exile was caused by the transgression of (i) the thirty-six ordinances of the Torah which is punished by exclusion, and (ii) of the Decalogue, held to be represented by forty-six numeral value of *eikhah* and *badad*. It has been argued that these claims are rhetorical

freigeborene, in manus-Ehe verheiratete Römerin” (= free born, in the manus-marriage standing Roman married woman), who enjoyed an honourable status in the family, H. Gugel, “Matrona”, in *Der Kleine Pauly*, edited by K. Ziegler and W. Sontheimer, III, 1969, 1984. And the *manus* is the besides the *mancipium* and the *potestas* the power of the husband or of his *pater familias*, see D. Medicus, “Manus”, in *Der Kleine Pauly*, III, 1969, 982-984. The fact that the *matrona* had attendants enhanced her image. She is not a *meretrix*.

1475The finding is identical to the same attenuating function, historically determined, of the Adam’s episode and of related features in the rendering of the same word *eikhah* in Lam. 1, 1. 1 by the targum to Lamentations, *ad locum*, see below, and E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York 1981, 78.

1476The finding is identical to the same attenuating function, historically determined, of the Adam’s episode and of related features in the rendering of the same *eikhah* in Lam. 1, 1.1 by the targum to Lamentations, see below, *ad locum*, and E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York 1981, 78.

pronouncements accounting for a historical issue. The *mashal* completes obviously, these assessments with its own message.

V. 1. 2. 2. The Text and the Analysis of the *Mashal* in *E. R.*, lines 12-17a

All the text variants available have the same five components of the standard *mashal*. The text of the *Vilna edition* is almost identical in sentence structures to the Munich Codex Heb. 299 variant, with orthographic divergences in the cases of R. Sima's (T5/A1?) (line 15) for R Simai and Onkelos (line 15) for Aqilas. The Buber edition has the same sentence number and structures, with lexical differences.

2. ('The matters may be compared) to the case of

3. a king (that) had a son. So long as the son obeys the will of his father, the father clothes him in garments of fine wool, but when he disregards his will, he clothes him in garments of exile.'

The introductive illustrand (1) is missing here, and its lack in the *Eikhah Rabbati* text should be seen as the sign that this *mashal* is closely related to the preceding claims. The motif of a relationship between a father and his son is traditional.¹⁴⁷⁷ Traditional and conventional is also the contrastive narrative structure:

If X obeys Y, then Y rewards X.
If X disobeys Y, the Y punishes X¹⁴⁷⁸

This narrative structure is sufficiently flexible to be used in the present *mashal* to account for the traditional symbolism of garment¹⁴⁷⁹ which is deemed to represent בדיד "lonely" in the expounding of TMLam. 1, 1.1: If the son obeys, then the king rewards him with *bigdei melatin*,

¹⁴⁷⁷See its occurrence in a couple of meshalim in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*. 24f.

¹⁴⁷⁸D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 71f, with four *meshalim* in which this narrative frame is used.

¹⁴⁷⁹See evidences in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash* 73, 301, note 13.

‘garments of fine wool’,¹⁴⁸⁰ if the son disobeys,¹⁴⁸¹ then the king punishes him with the garments of (in) the exile.¹⁴⁸²

4. Similarly with Israel. So long as they obeyed the will of Holy One, blessed be He, it is written, “*I clothed you with richly woven work*” (Ezek. 16, 10).¹⁴⁸³ R. Sima (?T5/A1) said: The word means ‘in purple garments’, and Onkelos translates it into ‘embroidered garments’. But, when they disregard the will¹⁴⁸⁴ of the Holy One, blessed be He, the Lord clothes them in the garments of the exiled (*bigdei bedudim*),

5. as it is written “*How lonely sits the city*”.

The *nimshal* is, in its structure, a parallel narrative which translates the *mashal*-proper symbolisms. Here, the king represents the Holy One, blessed be He, in the tradition of the *editio princeps*, and the *Maqom* “place”, in the Buber edition. The traditional narrative structure is *ipso facto* applied to the covenant between God and Israel, on the basis of the context specific exegesis of *badad* in TMLam. 1, 1.1. The specified transgressions mentioned by Ben Azzai (T2) and R. Levi (A3) are cause of exile and garments of exile, whereas the obedience to the will of the Holy One, blessed be He is rewarded with valuable clothing. The covenant is, therefore, still in force despite Israel’s transgressions. This is attested by the punishments threatening the King’s son.

R. Berekhyah (A5), that uttered this *mashal*, pertains to the era that follows the era of the pro-Judaism policy¹⁴⁸⁵ of Emperor Julian (361-363); this post-Julian period is the time when Christianity became State religion.¹⁴⁸⁶ R. Berekhyah (A5) needed, therefore, such an

1480The Aramaic מילת “fine wool” designates the city of Milet famous for the quality of its wool, see G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, 114; the Buber edition has בגדים בדודים to be read בגדי בדודים “garments of the exiled”, see M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 139, col. 1.

1481The Buber edition has כועס עליו “he was angry against him”.

1482The Buber edition reads סמרטוטים “rags”, which are obviously less valuable than the “garments of the exiled”.

1483The Buber edition has now for Israel *klê melat*, ‘garments of fine wool’.

1484See the hiph הכעיסוהו “they made him angry”, in Buber edition.

1485G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, Edinburgh 2000, 198-216 proposes a detailed picture of the historical context of Julian’s rejudaization of Palestine.

1486The decision was made in 380 by the Emperor Theodosius I (379-395), see G. Stemberger, *Das klassische Judentum*, München 1979, 34, see below.

unambiguous apologetic and consoling message at that time to strengthen, rally and mobilize his community,¹⁴⁸⁷ the Community of Israel, telling them that the Holy One, blessed be He had not abandoned his people and that he still cared about them.

V.1.3. The Mourning King (*Mashal* (c) to TMLam. 1, 1.1)

Rab Nachman (bA3), who died in 320, propounds the following simile (S), which Samuel (bA1), who died in 254 CE,¹⁴⁸⁸ is said to have reported in the name of R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1)¹⁴⁸⁹ about a king mourning his dead son. It is to be noted that the Buber edition is the unique text variant in which this *mashal* is ascribed only to Rab Nachman (bA3).

V. 1. 3. 1. The Nature and the Literary Context

Here we speak of ‘a simile’: this is against D. Stern, who considers this literary form as a ‘*mashal*’ *sui generis*, as this should similarly be also said of the literary form fable.¹⁴⁹⁰ For us, the overwhelming reason for disqualifying the incriminated form as a regularized *mashal* is mainly based on the following observation regarding its compositional structure: the *mashal* characteristic fictional narrative component, *i.e.*, the *mashal*-proper, as opposed to the *nimshal*, is completely missing from the structure of the form in question. Instead, we have a series of seven parallel and historical features¹⁴⁹¹ covering “the entire stage of the nature¹⁴⁹² invoked by the mourning God, on the basis of TMLam. 1, 1.1 predicate ישב “*sits*”, interpreted as ‘sitting in mourning’. This is, thus, a simile which we will examine immediately after the *mashal* (M2) of R. Berekhyah (A5). This is due to the simile *bildhaf* character and contiguity to R. Berekhyah

1487W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, III, Strassburg 1899, reprinted Hildesheim 1965, 345f, presents him holding public sermons in the synagogues in Galilee.

1488Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 85.92 states that “Rab Nachman (bA3) was a student of Samuel (bA1), under whom his father served as a court clerk (BM 16b)”.

1489Rien

1490D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 4f. 22-23. And see ibidem, 323-324, on the same topic.

1491A close analysis may uncover that each feature is described by means of the core components of the *mashal*: 1) a fictional trait, followed by 2) an application, and finally by 3) a prooftext.

1492This overall designation is propounded in *Lamentations Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, by J. Neusner, Atlanta 1989, 45.

(A5)'s *mashal* which it follows in the reading layout, which may, in fact, suggest its argumentative function¹⁴⁹³ for the main protagonist is actually the same character in both the foregoing *mashal* and the simile.

V. 1. 3. 2. The Text and the Analysis of The *Mashal* *Eikhah Rabbati*. I, lines 17b-30a

Rab Nachman (bA3) reported that Samuel (bA1) said in the name of R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1): The Holy One, blessed be He, summoned the ministering angels and asked them:

1. A mortal king whose son dies and who mourns for him, what is fitting for him to do?¹⁴⁹⁴ They said to him: 'He hangs sackcloth on his door'. He said to them: 'I too will do so.' That is what is written, "*I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering*" (Isa. 50, 3).
2. What else does a mortal king usually do? They said to him: "He extinguishes the lamps." He said to them: "I too will do so", as it is written: "The sun and the moon are become black, and the stars withdraw their shining" (Joel 4, 15).
3. What else does a mortal king usually do? He turns over the couch. as it is said, "*Until thrones were cast down, and One that was ancient of days did sit*" (Dan. 7, 9) - it is as if they were overturned.
4. What else does a mortal king usually do? He goes barefoot. I too will do so; as it is stated, "*The Lord, in the whirlwind and in the storms, is his way, and clouds are the dust of his feet*" (Nah. 1, 5).
5. What else a mortal king does" He tears his clothing of purple. I too will do so; as it is written, "*The Lord has done that which he devised, he has performed his word*", (TMLam. 2, 17). R. Jacob of Kefar-Chana explains: What does *bitsa emrato* means? He rents his purple clothing.
6. What else does a mortal king do? He sits in silence. I too will do so; as it is said, "*He sits alone and keeps silence*" (Lam. 3, 28).
7. What else does a mortal king do? He sits and weeps. I too will do so'; as it is written, "*And in that day the Lord, the God of hosts, call to weeping and mourning, and to baldness*" (Isa.22,12).

V. 1. 3. 3. Conveyed Rhetorical and Thematic Messages

¹⁴⁹³See K. Berger, *Formen und Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, Tübingen und Basel 2005, 83: "Obersätze in Argumentationen sind Erfahrungssätze, die aufgrund der beim Hörer vorausgesetzten theologischen Metaphern als Vergleich funktionieren können."

¹⁴⁹⁴This is a translation from J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative. A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 21.

All the text traditions contain the same number of identical questions, answers and Biblical proof texts. There are, however, some minor but significant differences, which result from a floating text and are, thus, worth mentioning. These differences can be described as follows. The text from the *editio princeps* has a grammatically different active participle עושה (line 19) in comparison to the Munich Codex Heb. 299 variant which presents, as the Buber edition variant, the singular first person אעשה, further מפרש (lines 27) instead of מפשר with the same meaning “interpret”. The Buber edition text reads שאל and not אמר להם (...) קרא (line 17) and does not possess the cryptic כשמת לו מת (line 18), which Cohen has translated by ‘had a son who died’¹⁴⁹⁵ and prefers the simple אבל to the *hitpael* participle מתאבל (line 18). The Buber edition מה ראוי לו לעשות is equivalent in meaning to the *editio princeps* מה דרכו, though both are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

All these text variants report the same identically listed components of what can be considered as a mourning ritual¹⁴⁹⁶ of that time: the mourner hangs his sackcloth over his door, he extinguishes the lamps, he rests on the ground, he walks barefoot, he rends his robes of purple, he sits in silence, he sits and weeps. These socially and culturally specific data become much more interesting once they are assumed to express the fictional part of the simile. In this context and within the large expounding of TMLam. 1, 1.1, they are said to apply respectively to Isa. 50, 3, Joel 4, 15, Dan. 7, 9, Nah. 1, 5, Lam. 3, 28, Isa. 22, 12; they are all uttered, as his corresponding deeds, by God, the Holy One, blessed be He.

It should be stressed here that the focus in this simile is neither on the son, as in the preceding claims made by Ben Azzai (T2) and R. Levi (A3), nor on the father’s handling with his son, as in R. Berekhyah (A5)’s *mashal* that follows the claims. Instead, their focus is on the character of the king-father, who represents God, described here as totally inclined to resort to human behaviour in his handling himself; the son is dead and remains completely inactive.¹⁴⁹⁷

¹⁴⁹⁵See *Lamentations* [Midrash Rabbah], transl. by A. Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 67. That is a precise ground of the Holy One blessed be He’s mourning which, otherwise, remains wanting.

¹⁴⁹⁶The term is from G. Stemmerger, *Midrash. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel(...)*, München 1989, 114, who provides also its ideological setting, see below.

¹⁴⁹⁷This may be the reason the different text traditions do not even clearly mention him neither that he is dead. In any event, A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York 1984, speaks of a twist. “Badad” in TMLam. 1, 1.1 helps develop the

The symbolic number of the seven acts performed in this ritual is to be interpreted as the symbolic expression of the ‘fullest possible realization’ [Stern] of the analogy between God and the king-father. That Rab Nachman (bA3) lets the Almighty God learn from his angels how to mourn like the grieving human king lends support to the rabbinic view that God, who is out the reach of death, does not humbly know how to mourn. However, his willingness to undertake such a move expresses his involvement in humankind’s history as well as his readiness to be emotionally disturbed by the failure of his beloved and by the bad fate befalling them.¹⁴⁹⁸

Consequently, there is no doubt that the fourth century audience of Rab Nachman (bA3) was consoled by the message that God had never rejected Israel even with the destruction of the Temple, and “that he actually participates with his nation in the sorrow of their tragedy” [Stern].¹⁴⁹⁹ The Lord needed consolation in this tragedy as well. Obviously, the most critical here were the politically and theologically apologetic considerations stated on the basis of the expounding of TMLam.1,1.1 ישב בודד “*he sits lonely*”. These considerations were much more justified by the historical pressure upon the interpreter and his community rather than by an actual justification of a genuine need of resorting to such a rhetorical genre.

V.1.4. A Populous City *Mashal* to TMLam. 1, 1.2

R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) uttered this *mashal* (M) (lines 62b-66) as possible answer to the editor’s rhetorical question on the multitude of people in Jerusalem (l. 61b-62a): “[*How*

theme of divine loneliness transferred from the victim to the victimizer to express God’s new condition after the Destruction.

1498 These assumptions belong to what E.L. Fackenheim calls the three dialectical contradictions which structure the root experience in Judaism; 1. divine transcendence and divine involvement in history, which implies the limitation of the sole Power; 2. divine sole Power and the human freedom required as indispensable witnessing agent; 3. divine involvement with history and evil which exists within it, see idem, *God’s Presence in History*, 8f. See also dated literature on God as mourner in D. Stern, *Parables in Mashal*, 310, note 49.

1499 The confrontation with the historical harshness on the basis of the covenant brought so far this God as mourner motif of the religious experience of the Rabbis, see besides G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München, 1989, 114, D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 125-130.

*lonely sits] the city that was full of people.*¹⁵⁰⁰ I you wish to know how many multitudes there were in Jerusalem. You can ascertain it from the priests.

V.1.4.1. The Literary Context

The *editio princeps* presents the following units in the expounding of TMLam. 1, 1.2, namely: (i) the narrative (A1) of R. Samuel (T2) on the populous geography of Jerusalem comes first (lines 42-45a); (ii) the latter narrative is then followed by the narrative ‘*ubeda*’ (A2) of R. Eleazar (T3/A3) on the commercial wealth of Jerusalem and its inhabitants (lines 45b-61a); (iii) this is well before the editor’s rhetorical question and the present *mashal*; (iv) the editor’s claim (Sti2) (lines 74b-77) on the abundant fertility of the Israelites, which, in the *editio princeps*, ends this series of interpreting units to Lam. 1, 1.2. This is, however, better dealt with in the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati* commentary where the latter series precedes the *mashal* (M) of R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1). The *mashal* is evidently here the ultimate attempt made to solve the issue of the population of Jerusalem, using the strategical role played in general by the *mashal* in this comment.¹⁵⁰¹ This is obviously the choice being made by this work.

V.1.4.2. *Mashal* Text and Analysis *Eikhah Rabbati* I, lines 62b-74a1:

¹⁵⁰⁰I owe this presentation to J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 150.

¹⁵⁰¹That the *editio princeps* reading is questionable in this regard is obvious in its use of the same formulaic and rhetorical phrase מִבְּקֶשׁ אֶת לִידַע כַּמָּה אוֹכְלוּיָן הָיוּ בִירוּשָׁלַיִם מִן כְּהֵנִיָּא אֶת יָדַע “If you wish to know how many multitudes were in Jerusalem, you can ascertain it from the priests” to introduce to the *mashal*, lines 61b-62a, and to the *nimshal*, lines 64b-65a.

[“*How lonely sits*] *the city that was full of people*.¹⁵⁰² If you wish to know how many multitudes there were in Jerusalem? You can ascertain it from the priests.¹⁵⁰³ R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) said:¹⁵⁰⁴

2. (The matters may be compared) to the case of

3. a heap which stood in the marketplace,¹⁵⁰⁵ and everybody tried unsuccessfully to estimate (its volume). A wise man¹⁵⁰⁶ was there, who said to them: “If you want to come to an estimate of its volume, you may come to an estimate based on the amount of priestly ration (*Terumi*)¹⁵⁰⁷ that is separated from it.” [Partly from J. Neusner, p. 150].

4. Similarly, if you want to know how many people were there in Jerusalem, you will ascertain it from the priests.

5. That is what is written: “*And Solomon brought for the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he offered to the Lord, twenty-two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep*” (King 8,63).

V.1.4.3. Analysis, Rhetorical and Thematic Messages

This aforementioned text represents a particular kind of *mashal*, even though the *mashal* characteristic four-component compositional structure is present. Actually, it is the content of this formally regular structure that is quite unusual.¹⁵⁰⁸ Let us explain. The *nimshal* complex sentence is identical to the sentence used in the illustrand. As illustrand, this sentence is expected

1502I owe this presentation to J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 150.

1503It has to be repeated that this somewhat unusual procedure may rely on the historical fact, mentioned by F. Josephus, that the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, “being anxious to convince Nero, who held the nation in contempt, of the city’s strength, instructed the chief priests, if by any means possible, to take a census of the population,” idem, *The Jewish War*, vi, 422, where it is recalled that the operation took place during the celebration of Passover.

1504The predicate is added with the Buber edition.

1505Translation according to M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud babli* (...), for סידקי .

1506J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Leiden/Boston 2003, 150 has ‘smart man’.

1507This is the priest’s share of the crop, of dough, etc...

1508J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative. A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three. Leiden/Boston 2003, 150-151 speaks of an exegetical parable, and he is right that he detects “no freestanding parabolic materials that are adapted for the present purpose. Rather, the parable responds to its task, translating the components into its simile.”

to be used as the proven topic to appear at the end of the demonstration with the status of a proof text. In the present case, it applies instead the fictionalized *mashal*-proper, which is made up of one coordinate sentence addressing ‘a heap’ as the topic. The coordinate sentence is then followed by a complex sentence which consists of a first main clause which is the matrix for a relative clause. The relative clause itself is the main clause of a conditional adverbial sentence preceding its main clause that is itself the matrix for another, second relative clause. The character in the first main clause is פיקה “a wise, prudent¹⁵⁰⁹, clever man”.

The latter character obviously plays the role of the implied interpreter within the narrative structure¹⁵¹⁰ to help disclose the meaning of the *mashal*-proper. This character is the focus here. Noteworthy is that the editor’s claim (Sti2) (lines 74b-77)¹⁵¹¹ about the abundant fertility of the Israelites which, in the Buber edition of *Eikhah Rabbati*, precedes this *mashal*, is shaped as an answer of the Rabbis to a question uttered by a פיקה “a wise, prudent, clever man”.

That a ‘wise man’ should provide hints for solving the issue of how many people were living in Jerusalem is simply a literary tool with the double-facetted hermeneutical relevance of warning and praise. For instance, it is worthwhile to note that, with exception to the second claim (Sti2) which fulfils Ps. 128, 6, the records about the allegedly huge population of Jerusalem only report the masses of people gathering in Jerusalem during the liturgical celebrations. This is asserted by the case reported in 1 King 8, 63 quoted in the *mashal* proof text, as well as by the case detailed in the M. Yom. 2, 6.7, T. Pisha 4, 15 quoted earlier. Finally, the report by F. Josephus¹⁵¹² announcing that “one million one hundred thousand” died during the siege of

1509He is opposed to טיפש ‘obturate, dull, stupid’, in M. Jastrow, (compiled by), *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, Volume I-II, New York ([copyright 1971] 1996), *ad locum*.

1510D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 86, defines the implied interpreter as “an idealized character in the *mashal*, who serves as a model for the real interpreter/reader and who guides the latter’s acts of reading and interpretation,” see below the *mashal* to TMLam. 3, 24.

1511(Sti2) ‘How used the Israelites to multiply? A man married his son at the age of twelve to a wife who was capable of bearing children. Then he married the grandson at the age of twelve, so that he himself did not attain the age of twenty-six without seeing grandchildren. This is to fulfil what was said:”*And see your children. Peace be upon Israel*”’ (Ps. 128,6) [Cohen].

1512F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi, 420; this number is considered to represent “the whole nation shut up by fate as in a prison”, *ibidem*, 428.

Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus is regarded, in this condition and with reason, ‘excessive’ by Smallwood.¹⁵¹³ Moreover, it is no surprise that many of the victims during this siege were in Jerusalem for the liturgical celebration of the unleavened bread. The emphasis, for evident apologetic reason, on the *topoi* “wisdom and participation in the liturgy” clearly suggests that only stupid persons and those who could not mingle with the crowds in celebration were unable to realize not only how huge but also how confident in the covenant with the Holy One, blessed be He, the population of Jerusalem was.

V.1.5.1. The Tormented Spouse *Mashal* To TMLam. 1, 1.3

The TMLam.1, 1,3 היתה כאלמנה “*she has become like a widow*” is further accounted for in *Eikhah Rabbati* by means of a *mashal*, lines 78-96a.

V.1.5.1.1. The Literary Context

This *mashal* attempts to look at the issues relating to the state of covenant of God with the Community of Israel. What is widowhood, *ke-almanah*, if not the very condition of the widow herself?¹⁵¹⁴ What does the life of a married woman mean and look like, if she realizes that her life style is *ke-*, “*similar*” to that of a widow?¹⁵¹⁵ This is, however, what the poet uttered in the Biblical Book of Lamentations with reference to the Fair-Zion. The assessment of R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) asserting that the covenant still prevails, actually implies the existence of the contracting parties. R. Chama b. Uqba (A/third century), who explains the existing conflict in the terms of a request between the sustenance and the *Ketubah*,¹⁵¹⁶ refers to marriage clauses relating

1513E.M. Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 327, note 151.

1514This wording is somewhat from E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, New York ([1976] 1981), 78.

1515”Her husband might as well be dead, since he is not good to her; but she is only “*like*” a widow because, alas, her husband is not dead.” in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 100.

1516The *Ketubah* is the written document in which the bridegroom pledges himself to assign a certain sum of money to his bride in the event of his death or of his divorcing her as well as the sum of money so assigned, in *Mishnah* (The), transl. by H. Dandy, Oxford ([1933] 1989), 794; see the same view in G. Stemmerger, *Das klassische Judentum*, 144, where it is also stated that the *ketubah* was introduced from borrowing because it enhanced the

to divorce as well as to widowhood. This is the literary and ideological context in which the *mashal* is propounded.

V.1.5.1.2. Text, Analysis and Message of the *Mashal*
Eikhah Rabbati I, lines 87b-93a:

1. ‘Another interpretation of “*How has she become as a widow*” (Lam. 1, 1.3). R. Chama b. Uqba (A5) and the Rabbis offer explanations. R. Chama b. Uqba (A/third century) said: it may be likened to a widow who demanded her food but not her marriage settlement (*ketubah*). The Rabbis explained:
2. (The matters may be compared) to the case of
3. a king who became angry at his consort and wrote her a bill of divorce (*get*), but he stood up (to it) and snatched it from her. And whenever she wished to marry someone else, he said to her: “Where is your *get*?” And whenever she demanded her sustenance, he said to her: “But have I not already divorced you?”

The Munich Codex Heb. 299 and the *editio princeps* provide the same text for this *mashal*. The only difference seems to be a grammatical one, namely, the *editio princeps* propounds the *qal* (*paal*), infinitive לעשות “to perform” (lines 91), while the previous manuscript proposes the *niphal*, infinitive¹⁵¹⁷ ליעשות “to be performed”. The Buber edition has a text structurally identical to the text of the *editio princeps*. Its specific features consist of a number of explanatory syntactical adjuncts to the sentences of the two main components of the *mashal*. The *mashal*-proper consists of three coordinate sentences. The first sentence is itself a coordinate sentence; it contains a relative clause - ‘the king became angry’ – that qualifies the character of the main clause. The relative clause is followed by three coordinate clauses relating to the same character - ‘he wrote¹⁵¹⁸ and resisted¹⁵¹⁹ and snatched ...’. The second and the third coordinate sentences are complex consisting each of the same adverbial clause - ‘whenever she wishes to marry/she demanded’. They are followed by the main clause - ‘he said’, which governs a sentential object - ‘where is/I have ... divorced...’

image of the fiancée as autonomous person in that it helped replace the price for her to be paid to her father, according to the Bible.

1517The expected form in this case is להעשות .

1518The Buber edition adds ‘and he gave to her’.

1519The Buber edition has ‘he returned’.

The focus here is on the king, and on his deeds. It is striking to note that the divorce motif given in the bill of divorce –*get*– is the same matter addressed in a narrative relating to a case of widowhood, but see the footnote on *ketubah* above. The character of a capricious king, who pains his wife asking for her due by pretexting an alleged divorce, excludes the case of genuine widowhood and brings under the spotlight, on the other hand, the ordeal of a widow.¹⁵²⁰

4. Similarly, whenever Israel wishes to worship idolatry, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to them: “*Where is the bill of your mother’s divorce?*” Isa. 50,1); and whenever they ask Him to perform miracles for them as formerly, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to them: “Have I not already divorced you?”, as it is written: “*I had put her away and given her a bill of divorcement*” (Jer.3,8).’

The *nimshal* comprises two complex coordinate sentences structurally identical to the last two complex coordinate sentences of the *mashal*-proper. The *nimshal* is about the two partners in conflict, namely, Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He. The widowhood of the Community of Israel is no longer a them here. The bill of divorce –*get*– of the *mashal*-proper, that is given as well as not given, is called here ספר כריתות and is supported by Isa. 50, 1 and Jer. 3, 8. This time, the focus is on the divorced, but not yet divorced Israel. Israel is in the impossible situation to produce her bill of divorce which, if presented, may allow her another marriage. This situation where she cannot (and can nevertheless not) enjoy either the support or the protection of her alleged former partner is an in-between situation.

The meaning of this peculiar situation is discussed apologetically further in the next claim. R. Aqiba (T2) finds (**Sti2**) that this peculiar situation is not different of the situation of a widow. He further argues, however, that Israel cannot be considered to be in such situation unless she loses her ten northern tribes.¹⁵²¹ Using Jer. 51, 5, the Rabbis argue (**Sti1**) against this line of

¹⁵²⁰See the performative and the proof character of the bill of divorce in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 99-100: “The document” “makes” the divorce in Rabbinic law. Once it is accepted by the woman, the divorce is irrevocable (...). And once she takes possession of the *get*, she is a free woman, whether he (her former husband) likes it or not; she is free to marry another man, while her former husband is no longer required to support and protect her”. The difference to Ancient Rome law, which requires no document, but only intention to divorce, is documented in literature provided in the footnote 55, page 304. And this bill is the proof that she is free for another marriage, see extended informations in M. Git.

¹⁵²¹They were deported in 622 BCE by the Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, see 2 Kings 25.

thought of R. Aqiba (T2) by asserting that even the sole loss of her two southern tribes will render Israel a widow. Arguing further, the Rabbis state that the permanent relationship of Israel with the Holy One, blessed be He, maintains her status of a suffering partner who nevertheless holds a real opportunity of asking for accountability, which opportunity the widow of the Biblical Lamentations could not imagine. This line of thinking is a formidable realistic intellectual and spiritual achievement in the historically relevant political setting of the fourth century CE.

V.1.6. The Strong Custodian *Mashal* to TMLam. 1, 2. 1a

This the next *mashal* of this rubric. Accounting for TMLam.1, 2. 1a בכּו תבכה “*she bitterly weeps*”, this *mashal* belongs by its location and in its form to the first rhetorical part of Lamentations. The personified Jerusalem is described as a woman, who goes through a moment of bitter disappointment in her partnership. This was also a motif that was dealt with in the preceding *mashal*.

V.1.6.1. The Literary Context

The present *mashal* is used as a component in the expounding of Ps. 77. 7-11, on whose basis TMLam.1, 2. 1a = E. R. בכּו תבכה (כב) “*she bitterly weeps*” is interpreted. The weeping occurs as a reaction to the feeling of abandonment and despair experienced by Israel. It is in this setting that a questioning takes place, addressing the scope of the weeping: Has the Most High renounced to appease and to be appeased, to show mercy and to be gracious? The immediate context is, however, a debate relating to the interpretation of Ps 77, 11.1-2 ואמר חלּוּתִי הִיא שְׁנוֹת “*and I said, ‘This is my weakness, that the right hand of the Most High could change’*” [Cohen]. R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3) paraphrased it saying: ‘The oath you made with us at Hereby has been desecrated (*nitchallela*), and therefore your right hand has changed.’ R. Simon (A3) reacted with an allegory of the revolution of the sun which never falls sick to become unable to rise. R. Isaac (A3)¹⁵²² reacted further with the following *mashal* (M).

¹⁵²²The term *mashal* is wanting in the text of the standard edition under analysis, it is used, however, in *Midrasch Echa Rabbati*, herausgegeben von S. Buber, 1899, 59, where it is ascribed to R. Levi (A3), while R. Isaac (A3) utters the preceding allegory of the revolution of the sun.

V.1.6.2. The Text and the Analysis of the *Mashal*

1. 'R. Isaac (A3) said:
2. (The matters may be compared) to the case of
- 3a. a mighty soldier who dwelled in a province, and the inhabitants of the province trusted in him, saying: "The enemy troops will not enter here. If the enemy troops attacked his city, as soon as the mighty soldier would go out and confront them they would immediately flee. One time, the enemy troops attacked the province but he (= the mighty soldier) hurled at them¹⁵²³ saying, "My right hand pains me".
- (4). But with the Holy One, blessed be He, it is not so; in contrary,
- (5). "No, the Lord's hand is not too short, that it cannot save" (Isa.59,1).

V.1.6.3. Analysis, Rhetorical and Thematic Messages: The Praise and the Consolation

The structuration of the text of this *mashal* is somewhat different from the standard *mashal* structure which characteristically comprises: (1) illustrand, (2) introductory formula, (3) *mashal*-proper, (4) *nimshal*, (5) Proof text. The unusual features of this *mashal* can be describes as follows: the illustrand is missing and the allegory of the revolution of the sun uttered by R. Simon (A3) just before this *mashal* appears to assume its function. The *mashal* introductory formula is reduced in the *editio princeps* text to the particle ל 'it is like to'. the *mashal*-proper accounts for the topic in two contrasting components. The Hebrew text of the first component consists in two juxtaposed sentences. The first of the two juxtaposed sentences is extended in two coordinate clauses, with the predicates, (1) היה 'he lived'; 2. היו בוטחים ואומרים 'they used to trust and to say'; the latter clause becomes the matrix for two subordinates: (a) the first one יבא 'he will come' is the direct object, and (b) the second subordinate is a complex sentence consisting of (i) two subordinates; (1) באו 'they came', and (2) יוצא ומראה 'he comes out and shows', and (ii) a main clause ברחין 'they run away'. The second juxtaposed sentence is relatively simple, with the predicate באו 'they came' in the adverbial, and אמר 'he said' in the main clause, and הששה 'she pains'. The second component of the *mashal*-proper is contrastive one. It consists

¹⁵²³This reading is supported by *Eikhah Rabbati*, Munich Codex Heb. 299, ad locum. The version of this *mashal* propounded by the online text of The Academy of the Hebrew Language has noteworthy different readings.

of a coordinate sentence made of (a) אינו 'he is not' and (b) קצרה 'she is not short'; introduced by the contrasting particle אבל 'but'.

The Buber edition has the same main rhetorically pertinent symbolism of the 'mighty soldier', who deceived the expectations of his *protégés*. The more personalized שונאים 'enemies' is preferred to the unspecified גייסות 'invaders', and the dissuading weapon of the warrior is replaced by הוא מראה להם ימינו 'he shows them his right hand', *in lieu* of the cryptic פנים 'face' of the *editio princeps*. The *mashal* overall structure remains, however, the same in its lack of the *illustrand*, and the *nimshal*, which is compensated by the use of two contrastive components¹⁵²⁴ of the *mashal*-proper, as to focus on the dissimilarity of behaviour between the human warrior and the Holy One, blessed be He. D. Stern, accounting for this *mashal*, speaks of a "structure closer to the kind of antithetical comparison typical of *melekh basar vadam meshalim*."¹⁵²⁵ This *mashal* particular structure has obviously been used to convey an apologetic message clearing the Most High of any responsibility for Israel's bad situation of.¹⁵²⁶

V.1.7. Rejecting the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Torah *Mashal* to TMLam. 1, 9.1 and 1, 10.1

The present topic is examined in the two aforementioned *meshalim*. Both *meshalim* will be discussed together due to their common function at the closing of the TMLam. 1, 1-11 section. The two *meshalim* carry the same somewhat deceptive message contradicting the preceding much more confident and optimistic message. Moreover, they both occur in a similar literary context.

V.1.7.1. The Literary Context

¹⁵²⁴The second component is introduced by 'but here'.

¹⁵²⁵D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, Cambridge 1991, 21f. The all topic is related to overall shape of the *mashal* which appears to be a mixture of stereotypes, traditional forms and innovation.

¹⁵²⁶The Buber edition is more explicit: (Isa. 59,2) 'Who has caused this to you, if not that your iniquities are between you and your God!'

Both *meshalim* apparently uttered by the same R. Yudan b. R. Simon (A/third century)¹⁵²⁷ in the name of R. Levi b. Partha (A/third century) to TMLam. 1, 9.1 and to TMLam. 1, 10.1, are considered as the sole *meshalim* of the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati* commentary to be subordinated to *aggadic* narratives.¹⁵²⁸ The first *mashal* is preceded by two claims (Sti 1-2) to TMLam. 1, 9.1 respectively stated by R. Berekhyah (A5) in the name of R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) and an anonymous utterer. This resulted in the following composite narrative (A), which provided the immediate occasion of this *mashal*.¹⁵²⁹ Its sequential nearness is the reason why this *mashal* is regarded as a “unfamiliar type of parable”¹⁵³⁰ as it is considered to “recapitulate a free-standing narrative, hence, its qualifier of “the narrative-recapitulative parable.”¹⁵³¹ Ascertaining the nature of this relation between the narrative (A) and the *mashal* (M) lends strong support to the claim that the *mashal* is a rhetorical tool designed to convey an *ad hoc* message whenever there are a need and a request by the literary context. The second *mashal* to TMLam. 1, 10.1 is related to an anecdote narrative (*vide infra*). As stated earlier, both *meshalim* will be discussed together to demonstrate that they share the same features of being closely related to the two narratives (A) and that they both contextualize messages of their messages.

V.1.7.2. The *Meshalim* (ab) Expounding A Rejecting Move

The first *mashal* (M) (a) to TMLam. 1, 9.1 comes immediately after the last component of the narrative preceding it. It is within this context that it is to be examined.¹⁵³² The anecdote narrative is recorded below as a *ma'aseh*:

1527See the report of questionable divergences below, that do not exist in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, Boston 2003, 170, 171, based on the Buber edition.

1528See D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash* and J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative*, below; it cannot be ruled out, however, that the *mashal* to TMLam. 1, 1.2 occurs in a similar *aggadic* context.

1529This is also the analysis propounded by D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 166f under the heading “The *Mashal* and the *Aggadic* Narrative” to stress the *aggadic* context, and by J. Neusser, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, 170.

1530That means in the author categorization neither halakhic, nor exegetical *mashal*, in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentay Perspective*, Volume Four, Leiden/Boston 2003, 208-209f, 217.

1531J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative. A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Four, Leiden/Boston 2003, 217.

1532This is the case in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 169 as well as in J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, 170-171.

‘There was a heathen priest who sent to someone and said to him: “On account of what such and such image has told me that of all the children you have, you are unwilling to sacrifice one of them.” He said to him: “Are they, then, in my control? One works in gold, one in silver, one with sheep, one with herds. But wait! I have a young child, who is at school. When he comes back, I will give him to you.” The Holy One, blessed be He said to him: “Miserable! Of all the sons you have, there is none you could offer to an idol only this one, who is consecrated to my name!”¹⁵³³

The first *mashal* (M) (a) recorded below is conform to the usual standard structure of the genre. Further, it mirrors the main structural and thematic components of the preceding narrative (A), namely, the reproach expressed by the Holy One, blessed be He, and reported in the narrative (A) is repeated nearly *verbatim* in the *nimshal*:

Eikhah Rabbati, lines 632b-637a

R. Yudan¹⁵³⁴ b. R. Simon (A/third century) said in the name of R. Levi b. Partha (A/third century):

2. ‘(The matters may be compared) to the case of

3. a noble woman whose lover said to her: “Warm up some food for me.” She took the portrait¹⁵³⁵ of the king, [used it as fuel] and prepared some food for him. The king rebuked her: “Of all the wood that is at your disposal in this house, you could not use any to prepare food for your lover, only with my portrait!”

4. Similarly the Holy One, blessed be He, said to this wicked man: “Of all the sons you have, there is none you could immolate for idol-worship except this child who is consecrated to my name!”

5. That is what is stated: “*And you took your sons and you daughters, whom you have borne to me, and you gave them for food.*” (Ezek. 16, 20).’

The *mashal* (M) differs from the anecdote narrative (A) which precedes it. The *mashal*-proper reports, indeed, about a matrona, a noble woman and her lover involved in what can be

¹⁵³³This is the שמי in the *editio princeps* text tradition while the Buber edition has שמים “Heaven”.

¹⁵³⁴I. Ziegler, *Die Königsgleichnisse des Midrasch*, Breslau 1903, 376, and *Lamentations Rabbah, An Analytical Translation*, by Jacob Neusner, Atlanta 1969, 162 have ‘R. Judah. R. Simon’, amora of the fourth generation.

¹⁵³⁵This rendering of the Hebrew לורטיא or לורטון *luratiya* or *lavratiya*, has to be understood as “the emperor’s portrait wreathed with laurels” in M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature*, New York ([copyright]1971) 1996, 691, as well as the reading of Lamentations [Midrash Rabbah], translated by A. Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), *ad locum*. But see D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 171, 319, note 34 for extended proposals.

considered as a social case rooted in the Roman imperial customary practices;¹⁵³⁶ the case is obviously deemed useful by the author for conveying the message of this *mashal* (*vide infra*).

The second *mashal* (M) (b) to TMLam. 1, 10.1 is appended to the anecdote narrative (A) that appears to be also a claim.¹⁵³⁷ It is detailed below.

“The enemy has spread out his hand” (Lam. 1, 10.1). ‘You find that when the enemies entered the Temple, Ammonites and Moabites entered among them; and while all the others ran to plunder silver and gold, the Ammonites and Moabites ran to plunder the Torah to get it abrogated, as it is written: *“An Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord”*’ (Deut. 23, 4) (A-Sti1).

1. ‘R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) said in the name of R. Levi b. Partha (A/third century):

2. (The matters may be compared) to the case of

3. a fire that broke out within a king’s palace and everyone ran to plunder silver and gold, whereas the slave ran to plunder his title-deed.

4. Similarly, when the enemies entered the Temple, Ammonites and Moabites entered together with them; and while all the other ran to plunder silver and gold, the Ammonites and the Moabites ran to plunder the Torah for the purpose of expunging,

5. *”And Ammonites and Moabites shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord”* (Deut.23,4).’

The relationship between this *mashal* (M) (b) to TMLam. 1, 10.1 and the anecdote narrative(A) preceding it, is identical to the link between the previous anecdote narrative (A) and the *mashal* (a) to TMLam. 1, 9.1. Noteworthy is the similarity in the repetition of the main motif mentioned in the anecdote narrative in *nimshal* of both *meshalim* (Ms) . except that apart from the principal sentence, all the anecdote narratives (A) are repeated in the *nimshal*.

1536I. Ziegler, *Die Königsleichnisse des Midrasch beleuchtet durch die römische Kaiserzeit*, Breslau, 1903, 375-376 counts this *mashal*, better a variant of it, among those which may reflect the widely, quasi officially accepted adultery at that time so that adulterous husbands were glorified and themselves honoured the lovers of their wives.

1537This view is conform to the logic of the present analysis, see J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*, Volume Three, 171-172, Volume Four, 218, his ‘pseudo-narrative’ having been counted in this work as a claim (Sti).

The two *meshalim* recapitulate, therefore, the respective narratives preceding them. One should note here, however, that this did not happen mechanically. This is because both *meshalim* were evidently set in a new context by their rabbinic authors for a well-defined purpose. This actually adds more meaning to the two concerned narratives. The ‘wicked man’ in the *nimshal* of the first *mashal* (M) (a) is no longer the rabbinic translation of the idolatrous Fair-Zion of the biblical TMLam. 1, 9.1; he has been made a noble Roman lady in the *mashal*-proper, a woman who moves against the king, while the ‘wicked man’s offering of his young son to the idol does no longer obey to the order of a heathen priest of the anecdote narrative. His idolatrous love and devotion are now replaced by the love and devotion which he only owes to the sole king of heaven, to whom his beloved son is to be consecrated.¹⁵³⁸ Moreover, if it is true that “[T]hrough the image of the consort burning the laurel - wreath, the *mashal* offers a concrete, *familiarizing* illustration of the triple condemnation with which God had attacked the nameless father in the preceding *ma’aseh*,”¹⁵³⁹ it must be then concluded that the present *mashal* (a) addresses these idolatrous practices of the third century and characterizes them as reprehensive in the name of the Torah.

This focus on the pre-eminence of the Torah announces the second *mashal* (b) to TMLam. 1, 10.1. Its narrative is based as a claim (**Sti1**) on the identification of “the enemy” which appears to refer to the nations of Ammon and Moab because of the similarity between TMLam. 1, 10.5-6 “*whom you commanded that they not enter into your congregation*” with Deut. 23, 4 “*And Ammonites and Moabites shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord*”. The repetition of the said narrative in the *nimshal* belongs to the demonstration strategy of this *mashal*. But, if this interethnic hostility is amplified by the claims that follow this *mashal* recording Abraham’s four good deeds (**Sti2**) against the four ungrateful misdeeds (**Sti3**) performed by the descendants of Lot, as well as the four records of the sins committed by the Moabites and Ammonites (**Sti4**) which provoked the seal of their doom by four prophets (**Sti5**), the reason is to be found in the present *mashal*-proper, to which the *nimshal* is related by means of its introductory phrase: ‘Similarly, when the enemies entered the Temple’. The *mashal*-proper provides, indeed, an

1538The Buber edition is therefore coherent with “Israel” in the *nimshal* instead of repeating the ‘idolatrous man of the narrative (A).

1539D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 172.

historically updated version of the cause of this ancient animosity abundantly recorded in the Scriptures: the foe has set the fire to the king's palace,¹⁵⁴⁰ which symbolizes the Temple in Jerusalem, and the Ammonites and Moabites who are considered as slaves, have used this opportunity to rob the king's title deed,¹⁵⁴¹ that is, the scroll of the Torah. Rabbinic traditions abound about the accounts of the traditional enemies of the Jews spurring the Romans on to destroy the Temple of Jerusalem.¹⁵⁴² It is quite possible that Levi b. Partha (A/third century) uses TMLam. 1, 10.1 to denounce such historical case of idolatry deemed as a genuine threat to the very survival of the Torah.

CONCLUSION

There is a number of facts which can be observed from the setting, the form and the function of the seven *meshalim* and one simile recorded in TMLam. 1, 1-11. Two of the *meshalim* are related to the narratives (A) while six account for utterances from the verses. The *mashal* form, consisting of two main parallel structures, is well clearly cut, while the number of the components evidently depends upon the issue under examination. Finally, the alluding in the *mashal*-proper to historical data detailed in a fictional scenario involving socially - connected characters, [*e.g.* matrona of the imperial Rome versus attendants, king father versus son, king husband versus spouse, master versus slave, *et cetera*], suggests that these *meshalim* account for the state of the Biblical covenant in the settings of the centuries concerned; this state of the covenant is described in accordance with the literary and historical structure of the Book of Lamentations. The Holy One, blessed be He, appears here faithful, while the human partner is buffeted by opposite choices.

¹⁵⁴⁰The Buber edition reads 'the king's house'.

¹⁵⁴¹ The Buber edition has the more personalized 'king's wife'.

¹⁵⁴²See, for instance, *E. R.* to TMLam. 1, 5.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research deals neither with the history in *Eikhah Rabbati*, nor with the language of this Rabbinic Commentary. It is about both of them. The project of this work was to account on the basis of an obvious language creativity for the related idea of history in the Biblical Book of Lamentations according to the Rabbinic commentary *Eikhah Rabbati*. The main findings, that the language of the Biblical Lamentations is open to history on which basis it can be formulated anew, and that history itself emerges as related to the past, the present and the future will be presented after considering the premises of this work.

1. On the Project of this Research

Previous researches have exposed the presence of historical facts conveyed by variegated linguistics forms and literary records in *Eikhah Rabbati*. Scattered data spread often as scraps of information on history in *E.R.* have been examined in works carried out successively by A. Mintz on issues related to *E.R.* claims and parables, by D. Stern, on the poetics of the *mashal*, by G. Hasan-Rokem, on the narratives as folk tales with stress on their popular features, and by J. Neusner on the theological propositions displayed by this formative document of the Rabbinic Judaism. Noteworthy was the fact that *E.R.* was taken as a literary work, that is, as a linguistic creation based on a “language organized in distinctive ways” to which “special privileges were granted” (J. Culler). It was on this basis that a couple of claims on history, language and their reciprocal relationships had to be made.

On the one hand, the aforementioned studies and their findings provide compelling evidences against the assumption that Biblical language in general, and literary forms as a crystallization of language in particular are just neutral envelopes transporting historical contents. And that the best way to deal with these called events was to extract them as precious contents from somewhat cumbersome forms so that they may become part of an historical treaty. Positively, the move led in our work was to ascertain the plausibility of R. Alter’s claim that the language in general and expressive forms based on the use of language, such as the narratives, for instance, in particular, account for personal choices and attitudes, for cultural visions and historical circumstances.¹⁵⁴³ A theoretical framework was needed, which was integrating enough to allow deduce and explain the findings of the previous scholarship, as well as

1543 R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York, 1981, 112, is explicit that “[L]anguage in Biblical stories is never conceived as a transparent envelope of the narrated events or an aesthetic embellishment of them but as an integral and dynamic component/an insistent dimension of what is being narrated.” With language God creates the world, through language he reveals his design in history to men.

account for related phenomena such as literacy and orality easily retrievable in *E.R.*. This theoretical framework should predict that oral language, written records in general and literature in particular, can be produced and used to convey historical facts, historically conditioned views, author(s)'s specific points of view, once it is recalled that rhetorical creativity has been considered since the era of its Greek founders as appropriate medium to interpret and make history.

As for history in its relationship to the oral and written language of Lamentations, on the other hand, it had to be shown that *E.R.* is a historical work and a work on history. In the wake of the preceding considerations on the pragmatic force of the language, it is obvious that this demonstration had not to be carried out on the basis of scientific logic, the kind, when variables X and Z occur, Z will necessarily happen. The endeavour made here aims at establishing, not less following the logic of historical explanation, how a fact, an historical event X, is perceived and is said to have led from Y, in the present case, through a reworking of the language, from the Biblical Book of Lamentations where it is somewhat stated, to Z. Z is its restatement in the *E.R.* in accordance with Rabbinic particular theoretical assumptions and historical context. A concept of history was therefore needed, that may be accounted for by the different linguistic forms mentioned above as present in *E.R.*, a comprehensive concept that can rely on I. Heinemann's organic thinking¹⁵⁴⁴ that addresses further the experiential dimension of the same historical events.¹⁵⁴⁵ It is on the basis of this kind of postulates that it has been undertaken in this work to demonstrate that all the Rabbinic commentary *E.R.* owes its distinctive formal features and its informative content outlined by previous scholarship firstly to its historically dated accounting of the Biblical Book of Lamentations, secondly to address specific questions and problems of time, and thirdly according to historical and historically conditioned interpretive assumptions and literary devices. The findings corroborate these expectations.

2. Findings: Language, History, and Timely Historical Setting

1544 'Organic thinking', characterized as 'creative philology' and 'creative historiography', does not disdain a kind of thinking present in ancient myth and popular folk literature, see I. Heinemann, *Darkhei Haaggadah [The Methods of Aggadah]*, Jerusalem, Magnes/Massada, 1970.

1545 G. Hasan-Rokem recalls, for instance, P. Schaefer's suggestion to read the story about R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T2)'s escape of Jerusalem under siege "against the background of a rabbinic religious world-view", as "conveying this generation's experience of history," "die gegenwaertige erlebte Geschichte", he considers, however, as spelled out in theological terms, see G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life*, 244, footnote 74.

Worth to be noted is the huge potential of the language used by the interpreters reported in *Eikhah Rabbati* innovating the Biblical language to express their own experiences. Evident is at first glance a sustained effort in *E.R.* to cope with the lexical and syntactical components of the Biblical language of Lamentations to account for historical issues that was the destruction of Jerusalem and of its Temple in 70 CE.. True is the fact of a selective and poetic reception of the traditional masoretic text of Lamentations (TMLam.) as recorded in Appendix 1. It appears that only a couple of units extracted from Lamentations as cola, bicola and tricola are dealt with in *E.R.*. There is no doubt that these poetic structures are picked up because of their openness to history.¹⁵⁴⁶ This link of poetic language to history is undeniable, in that the Lamentations structures held in the Rabbinic comment “witness language repeatedly evincing the power to translate itself into history, a history whose very substance seems sometimes men and their actions, sometimes that language they use.”¹⁵⁴⁷ The following chapters provide convincing data in support to our claims.

Chapter One proposes a research on the forms of the Scripture-, and tradition-based statements (Stis) made by the Rabbis or reported by the Compiler that account further for historical issues. Accounting for the situation of the Covenant at the time of their utterers, it has been shown that these claims rely often on a specific reanalysis of the language of the Biblical Lamentations on the basis of rabbinic linguistic and ideological principles. That many *E.R.* claims (Stis) on items of Lamentations are not without some resemblance in formulation and content with statements that are found in the targum to Lamentations and in the Septuagint, has to be ascribed to the interpretive methods common to these different transactions with the biblical text. They provide support to the view that they exploit the mostly oral resources of the letter of Scripture in order to reinforce the typically Jewish “variety of allegorical interpretation in which the letter is not the potentially jealous stepmother of allegory, but rather her willing

¹⁵⁴⁶It is about a specific language. M. Wolfers noted that “[D]ie Lyrik ist keine Sprache der exakten Definition, sondern eine Sprache, die Räume öffnet für eigene Erfahrungen, für Bilder, die im eigenen Inneren wachgerufen werden. Dann wird eine Brücke geschlagen zwischen dem Gehörten und dem, was meine Existenz ausmacht. Eine solche Sprache ist auch erfahrungsbezogener. Und das halte ich für wichtig: Dass die Erfahrungen der Menschen-ihre Glücksgefühle und bohrende Fragen, ihre Glaubenserfahrungen und spirituellen Wünsche - stärker integriert werden. Die religiöse Sprache in Liturgie und Verkündigung kann nicht einfach die Aufgabe der Spezialisten sein. Eine reiche religiöse Sprache lebt davon, dass sie vom gesamten Volk, von Frauen und Männer in den verschiedensten Lebensformen, geprägt wird,” see idem, “Vielleicht hält sich Gott einige Dichter”, in *Der Sonntag*, 2.6.2013, 7. See also the G. Hasan-Rokem’s insistence of the folklore in *E.R.* in her *The Web of Life*.

¹⁵⁴⁷ R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York, 1981, 112.

handmaid or research assistant.”¹⁵⁴⁸ Their goal was obviously to disclose a meaning that was historically contextualized, as the comparison with modern findings, that address a different understanding of the same Biblical Lamentations, has shown. The many variants that provide the text traditions of the claims (Stis), the anecdote narratives (As), and even of the *mashal* (M) support this claim of the search for a meaning related to its historical context.

A successive extended use of the anecdote narratives (As) is shown in Chapter Two, where they are only described in their components. They are often introduced in the wake of a claim (Sti) on a linguistic item, or simply inserted and incorporated as a block of non-biblical accounts. These narratives have therefore not to be disqualified as irrelevant in the search for and the definition of the meaning of the Biblical Lamentations according to *E.R.*. In some senses, J. Neusner is right that the resort to the enormous corpus of authentic narratives enables the *E.R.* Compiler(s) say fully, completely and accurately what they wished to convey. As such, they are historical narratives by means of which E.R. “reads the book of Lamentations the way Lamentations reads Israel’s history: as the tragic outcome of Israel’s own conduct, but as a tragic moment in the biography of God.”¹⁵⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, the latter is not accounted for without drawing a picture of the situation within which the human counterpart in the covenant finds himself. The use of the mostly folk genre of these narratives does not deter from dealing with the question of their historical reliability, the latter being not identical with the reason the Bible¹⁵⁵⁰ and the present Rabbinic commentary resort to legendary literary genre.

3. History: From Knowledge to Acknowledge

1548 This view is from E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version Of Lamentations*, 15-6, that quotes R. Loewe, “The ‘Plain’ Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis”, and provides a list of interpretive methods whose use in *E.R.* is abundantly recorded. See, for instance, the subtle change of syntax in *E.R.* to TMLam. 1,7, prepositional usage in *E.R.* to TMLam. 1,3.4-6, vocalization alteration in *E.R.* to TMLam. 3,1.1, gematria, in *E.R.* to TMLam.1,1.1.5, etc...

1549 J. Neusner characterizes a Rabbinic narrative as formed by a coherent statement governed by a teleological logic of coherent discourse. A pseudo-narrative is, in the contrary, a writing that resembles a story but that coheres others than through teleological logic, see idem, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Three, 2003, ix, 244-5.

1550 See G. Lohfink, *Jetzt verstehe ich die Bibel*, 3. Auflage, Stuttgart, KBW Verlag, 1974, 78f. Was this legendary genre the only device to overstep the human limits and help express beliefs on the human transcendence? See the same resort to canonical linguistic forms for codified message also in H. A. Fischel, “Story and History: Observations on Graeco-Roman Rhetoric and Pharisaism, 1966, in idem, *Essays in Graeco-Roman and related Talmudic Literature*, New York, 1977.

How historical the claims (Stis) and anecdote narratives (As) are and what do they tell about history are the matters of the next two chapters, and also, on its own kind, of the last one. And it is here that methodological precautions have been exposed to assess the historical setting considering the linguistic, literary and rhetorical forms of these statement and narratives. Chapter Three focuses on the experience of the history of the utterers of the claims (Stis) reported in *E.R.*. The claims (Stis) assert that the Community of Israel was in Roman Exile because of the transgressions of the Torah and also because of their rebellion and idolatry and that the exile itself was as a time of hardships and enduring mourning. The mocked Community of Israel is, however, said to keep hoping that Redemption will come, because the Holy One, blessed be He, had not abandoned her, neither punished her to the extremes and because the *Shekhinah* herself had gone into exile with the children. The same Community lived indeed under the demanding requirements of the Torah, that the Nations have for this reason rejected, asserting *ipso facto* the lasting exclusive covenant of that Community with the Holy One, blessed be He.

Chapter Four account on the historical setting of the anecdote narratives (As). *E.R.* is not without recalling the past splendour relying on the numerous population, the economic prosperity of Jerusalem whose inhabitants were wiser than the Greeks. The Community of Israel is described as under persecution and many of her prominent citizens mistreated by the cruel Roman conquerors. It is true, however, that some of her own leaders, those that raised up in wars against the Romans in the first two centuries of the Christian Era are presented as having been brutal, while those of her leaders, the Rabbis, that championed the cause of the Torah, are said to be the cause of her more than probable salvation.

Chapter five provides on the basis of a couple of *meshalim*-parables the crowning views that the Rabbis and Compiler (s) of *E.R.* propose on their generations on the basis of the Biblical Book of Lamentations. The *E.R. meshalim* are described in their compositional features as generally made up of a narrative, *-mashal*-proper-, on a historically identifiable situation, and a predicative, *-nimshal-*, *ad hoc* view, components, both of them being shaped to convey an appropriate ideological message of the Rabbis. If the so-called authentic narrative, the anecdote dealt with above, is usually said to play with the statements (Stis) and the *meshalim* (Ms) a non-negligible role in shaping *E.R.* as a document,¹⁵⁵¹ the option

¹⁵⁵¹ See the specifically technical meaning and function assumed by this notion in J. Neusner's works, and his view of the narrative as "a coherent sector of Rabbinic documentary writing", in idem, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume three, 2003, ix. It is considered that Neusner's proposals provide a support to our claim that the three literary units, statement (Sti), anecdote narrative (A) and *mashal* (M) that occur in *E.R.* are systematically related to each other.

taken in this research leads to assess the specific form and function of the Rabbinic parable as carrying a distinctive message.

It has to be said once again that the literary units claim (Stis), anecdote narratives (As) and parables-*meshalim* (Ms) are formally and conceptually related to each other. The claim accounts (Sti) for a historical issue that is dealt with in its developmental dimension by the narrative (A). While the latter relates in the majority of the cases the present situation of loss, the Rabbinic parable - *mashal* (M) alludes likely to what R. Alter calls “a horizon of perfect knowledge (...), but it is a horizon we are permitted to glimpse only in the most momentary and fragmentary ways.”¹⁵⁵² The history appears here as a stage on which relatives constantly dispute on issues pertaining to the well-being of their family. It has been successively spoken of embattled matrona, puzzled beloved, impudent subjects, that are sons, gifted spouse, cuddled son, the message being in all these cases a comforting one for the Community of Israel. This was also a historically dated message. P. Veyne has recalled that if ancient Judaism showed in spite of its national character openness acquiring through proselytism new members, it was the ascension of Christianity in the fourth century C.E. that compelled the Jewish communities to seclude themselves from outside world, and to cultivate the kind of self-confidence that the *E.R.* accounts suggest.¹⁵⁵³¹⁵⁵⁴

4. The Idea of History and to Whom This Work May Concern

Has *Eikhah Rabbati* accounted for the historical event of the destruction of Jerusalem and of its Temple? And what does it tell about history?

4.1. History, the Past, the Present, and the Future

The constant comparison with the outcomes of modern research taken into consideration in this work brings into the focus what history according to *E.R.* is about. While modern endeavours deal with the kind of past issues related to the place, the date, the meaning of the Biblical Lamentations itself and within the historical and canonical biblical context, the rabbinic *Eikhah Rabbati*, the targum to Lamentations and the Septuagint provide claims and accounts that address the historical relevance of the Biblical Lamentations in the regard to the situation of their utterers, interpreters and translators. Inasmuch as these interpreters and translators rely simultaneously on the Biblical Lamentations and, according to

1552 R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 158.

1553P. Veyne, *Quand notre Monde est devenu chrétien (312-394)*, Paris, 2007, 267-8, German translation, *Als unsere Welt christlich wurde, Aufstieg einer Sekte zur Weltmacht*, München 2008, 175-76.

1554

Rabbinic ingenuity, on related biblical passages, it is obvious that it has to be dealt here with a complex idea of history whose components are the past, the present and the future. As such, it is an open history in regard to the future. It implied that historical processes go on¹⁵⁵⁵; that events are somewhat recurrent, can therefore be addressed within the typological framework, but also that the different meanings they receive on the basis of the Scripture are related in sense of relevance to the present of the reader-interpreter.¹⁵⁵⁶ These findings imply that there is for *E.R.* and its author (s), no direct access to history except through the language of the Biblical Book of Lamentations, and the latter itself is decoded in the light of the covenant paradigm of the common history, as it has been experienced and assessed on the basis of the requisites delivered by the present historical time of the Community of Israel.¹⁵⁵⁷ And if the historical event depends, for its access to the meaning, on this scriptural trace, the latter, that logically enjoys a sort of ontological priority in the interpretive process, is accounted for by a theory of textuality according to which its activation through orality makes it open to the historical event on whose basis its relevance for the present and therefore its meaning have to be determined. No scriptural schemes are imposed to historical challenges. The latter affect them and make them sound differently.

It is, therefore, obvious, in regard to *E.R.* findings exposed in this work, that this Rabbinic commentary provides a historically conditioned description and explanation of an historical event. There is, however, no compelling reason to disqualify its findings on the pretext that there are not genuine at all. *E.R.* propounds a all-encompassing understanding of historical event based on the Bible and to its historical reception and painstaking appropriation. The aim is obviously to account for historical conflicts

1555The interpretive means of claims (Stis), anecdote narratives (As) and *mashal* (M), account for this view of history, that is a Transformationsgeschichte as delat with in the present day Zeitgeschichte.

1556 This view of historical meaning resembles somewhat to the view on the truth expressed in the claims that “[I] would not speak about, not even for those who believe, an “absolute” truth, because absolute is something that is detached, something lacking any relationship. Now, the truth is a relationship! This is so true that each of us sees the truth and expresses it proceeding from oneself: from one’s history and culture, from the situation in which one lives, etc. This does not mean that the truth is changing and subjective. It means that it is given to us only as a way and a life (...). In other words, the truth being one with love, it requires humbleness and openness to be sought, listened to and expressed,” Pope Francisco, “An open dialogue with no-believers”, in http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/09/11/news/the_pope_s_letter-66336961/?ref=HREC1-5.

1557A. Mintz, *Hurban: Midrash and the Destruction*, 76, considers, on the basis of *E.R.* narrative to TMLam.5, 18, that “[T]hough history is not illusory, it still cannot be understood on its own terms. The meaning of history is guaranteed by Scripture; one observes an event in the historical world and discovers its meaning by understanding it as an actualization of a scriptural text. This is the shared ground between Akiva and the Rabbis; the difference between them lies in the degree of ingenuity and faith with which history is read.” Akiva does not impose scriptural schemes to history. He is ingenuous and inspired in spelling Scriptures in accordance with historical proposals.

searching for their radical origin to show the imbalance that led to violence. Is it inspiring as an approach? Echoing the ongoing efforts that aim at determining whether and how historical events of the post-biblical period may be related to and accounted for in the light of biblical claims, what appears to be the very project of the *midrash* as interpretive-creative genre,¹⁵⁵⁸ it is perhaps the place here to mention that B. Klappert's model of referential and analogical correspondences that account on the basis of theology¹⁵⁵⁹ for historical facts as related to biblical claims,¹⁵⁶⁰ is not without alluding to P. Veyne's resort to the evolutionary concept of epigenesis¹⁵⁶¹ as well as to his related notions of illusive genealogy and deceptive analogy that account for items of a modern political agenda such as the respect of human rights as allegedly originated from the Gospel. Both explanatory frameworks may help think organically history rather as an account of genealogy, what the Biblical *toledot* mean, than as an expounding of aggressive reigns destroying successively one another, and finally themselves, see below.'

4.2. For Whom May this Work Be of Interest?

The above reported findings on *E.R.* have to be ascribed to the Rabbinic midrash. The latter is , mostly as literary genre, object of a sustained attention that has led to intensive research and valuable

1558 "The ability of Midrash to create meanings that engender attitudes of relevance and relatedness to the world of Scripture" is the fourth of the five factors defining the "midrashic conditions" in I. Gruenwald, "Midrash and the 'Midrashic Condition'", in M. Fishbane (ed.), *The Midrashic Imagination*, New York, 1993, 7.

1559 It is against the so-called theological indifference when historical events, for instance foundation of the present State of Israel, are exclusively dealt with by means of the pure political rationality.

1560 According to the wording of his book, *Israel und die Kirche*, München, 1980, B. Klappert assesses his own views aiming at underlining the permanent value of God's promises to Israel and the salvation in Jesus Christ in the wake of Karl Barth's exegesis and doctrine on Israel deemed to have inspired the latter's particularly positive theological approbation of both Judaism and Christianity. The illustration question at hand is whether events like the Jewish modern settlement -*Landnahme* - and the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 have some exegetical relevance in the interpretation of Paul's statements in Rom 9-11.

1561 See P. Veyne, *Quand notre Monde est devenu chrétien (312-394)*, Paris, 2007, footnote 2, where epigenesis is ascribed to Jean-Claude Passeron. If the gene controls a particular quality in a living being carried by the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) that has passed on from its parents, epigenesis accounts for transmitted changes of characters that do not rely on the mutations of the DNA. It belies somewhat the "fatality" of the genes; see F. Rosier, "L' épigénétique, l' hérédité au-delà de l' ADN", in *Le Monde Science et Techno*, on-line, 13.04.2013. P. Veyne rejects the view that the modern respect of the human rights comes from the Gospel; he claims, instead, that there is neither fatality, nor natural development in history: "[L]a plante historique ne continue pas ses racines, ne développe pas ce qui aurait été préformé dans un germe, mais se constitue au fil du temps par degrés imprévisibles. L'inventivité historique est un des aspects de cette épigénèse," *ibidem*

works.¹⁵⁶² Its full-scale epistemological assessment¹⁵⁶³ is, however, still a matter of ongoing debate. Modern writings are labelled *midrashim*, while traditional Rabbinic literary creations continue to be used *in actu signato* as the classic source of an inexhaustible catalogue of the midrashic features. In such a context, the present work addresses the intersection of the biblical Lamentations and its Rabbinic commentary. It should be considered as an inquiry on a midrash *in actu exercito*, in working. Its proposals should therefore be of interest to students in rabbinics, mostly to refute, complete or ascertain. Otherwise, the literary and historical findings of this research should be of interest first to the scholars of literary and cultural studies. The use of different literary forms of *E.R.*, that originate mostly from folk narratives, in the accounting of the Biblical Lamentations have to be considered as a particular document and a historically contextualised literary witness. This very application of folk narratives “not merely s an amusing digression providing relief from heavier and more important matters”, as G.Hasan-Rokem puts it, but as means that helps disclose an actualized relevance of the Biblical text, will instruct those interested in the creative, cultural and historical interpretation and implementation of the Book of the Books.¹⁵⁶⁴

1562 An updated extended literature on this topic is provided in G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrash*, 9. Auflage, 2011, 257-258. The intensive dealing with this issue is shown by works and proceedings from different cultural horizons, such as G.H. Hartman and S. Budick, *Midrash and Literature*, New Haven, Conn., and London 1986, D. Banon, *La lecture infinie. Les voies de l'interprétation midrachique*, Paris 1987, that owes its mains claims to J. Derrida's findings, G. Stemberger, *Midrasch: Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, München 1988, with in its third part a 'Wirkungsgeschichte' (205 - 227) that is a detailed history of the effective presence of the midrash from its beginning until now, M. Fishbane (ed.), *The midrashic imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, New York 1993. See further the “Symposion: Narratologie, Hermeneutik, und Midrasch” organized by the department of Jewish Studies of the University of Vienna, 23 - 25 October 2011, and the lecture of P. Mandel, “Rabbinic Midrash from Instruction to Interpretation: The ‘Petiha’ as a Case Study”, Faculty of Protestant Theolgy of the same university, Vienna, 21 June 2012.

1563The expression is from I. Gruenwald in his “Midrash and the ‘Midraschic Condition’: Preliminary Considerations”, in M. Fishbane (ed.) , *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, 1993, 6.

1564 The *midrash* requires a literary competence, a creative and appropriating access common, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Bible and to every kind of literature, that O. Betz calls for: “[E]s ist verwunderlich, dass in den Predigten zwar oft der Textabschnitt nacherzählt wird (obwohl wir die in den meisten Fällen kennen), dass aber selten der Versuch unternommen wird, die Geschichte schöpferisch weiter zu erzählen und sie mit den eigenen Erfahrungen zu verbinden.”Jedes Menschen Geschichte soll eine Bibel sein”, sagt Novalis. Was wäre das für ein nachhaltiges Erlebnis, eine alte Geschichte zu hören, die plötzlich neu wird, weil ich erkennen kann: Meine Geschichte wird verhandelt!”, idem, “Die Phantasie des Lesers”, in *Christ-in-der-Gegenwart*, 5/2010. See also J.L. Ska, “La narrativité et l’ exégèse biblique, in *La Foi et le Temps*, XXIII (1993-3), 197-210 on Bible as literature, with, however, few consideration on the implication of history.

Secondly, historians not indifferent at all to issues of hermeneutics may find at first sight unusual that the Bible can generate historically contextualized meanings as this is the case in this Rabbinic midrash. This fact should further because of discomfort to those likely either to look for the historical content of the biblical books, either to reduce the latter to their literary equivalents. Besides this, one may ask how an idea of history, in which the Hebrew *zekher*, the biblical designation of remembrance, helps articulate past, present and future together¹⁵⁶⁵ without exclusion nor focus on an unique dimension of time, can be worked out on the basis of scriptural records.¹⁵⁶⁶

Otherwise, those interested in the appropriation of the Bible, of the Biblical language and images that belong to defined cultural universes should study with profit this creative, historically actualizing and responsibly discretionary dealing with the Biblical language as religious witness framed with literary features,¹⁵⁶⁷ as this has been convincingly recorded in the Aramaic targum and the Greek Septuagint above. Producing a document such as *E.R.* entails indeed a narrative competence¹⁵⁶⁸ and a creative mind

1565 In their note “Zekher: mémoire et histoire”, in *Sens* 2 (1985) 57, to the XXV. Colloque des intellectuels Juifs de langue française (1-3 December 1984), R. Grignon and F. Jacquin recall in the characterization of the *zekher*, that “[L]’événement historique réduit à ce qui a existé alors que l’événement mythique, seul digne d’être raconté, est “enceint” d’une foule de possibilités. De même que la naissance d’un être vivant est à la fois répétition et création puisque chaque individu est unique, l’histoire est récupérée comme gestation de la prochaine origine; le temps des origines est temps de fertilité, de fécondation, de naissance. On peut parler de conception du souvenir comme on parle de conception d’un enfant (...). Les commémorations ne sont pas seulement anniversaires du passé, mais aussi recommencements. Le souvenir est un processus de germination.” It has to be said, however, that the past is retrieved through a work on language under the pressure of history.

1566 R. Grignon and F. Jacquin mention that “[L]’oralité est l’axe de l’historicité d’Israël. L’histoire est la parole transmise, la narration des filiations, le haggadah qui est une autre pensée que le logos, une autre logique, logique auditive et non visuelle. La société hébraïque a son intériorité grâce au zekher,” *ibidem*, *Sens* 2 (1985) 57.

1567 R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York 1981, has listed, exposed and documented the main literary features of the biblical accounts. The Rabbinic creativity has been framed by D. Banon, *La Lecture infinie*, Paris 1987, 34-35, as following: “[L]ire la Bible, c’est ouvrir l’écrit qui, comme tel, est fermé sur lui-même au questionnement de la voix; c’est ébranler les structures rigides du texte en y introduisant le souffle de la parole: car c’est peut-être “dans la parole que se trouve le germe de tous les changements” (Ferdinand de Saussure). A condition de ne pas entendre, par parole, le concept qui lie la voix et la pensée, de telle sorte qu’on en arrive, comme l’a bien montré Jacques Derrida, à effacer le signifiant au profit du signifié. Au contraire, l’écrit ou le gramme, en brisant la ressemblance entre voix et pensée et en présentifiant cette parole, va instaurer une “différance” et permettre, de ce fait, la relance du signifiant. Si bien que, réactiver l’écrit par la parole, “c’est toujours réveiller une expression dans une indication, un mot dans le corps d’une lettre” (J. Derrida, *La Voix et le Phénomène*, Paris 1967, 91).”

1568 The stories are demanded by the reader and the audience and are also received as stories. According to J. Culler, the narrative competence is the implicit knowledge “about the basic shape of stories that enables us to distinguish between a story that ends ‘properly’ and one that doesn’t, where things are left hanging,” *idem*, *Literary Theory*, 1997, 83.

in that it requests an active participation of the interpreter that does not aim at rendering the conceptual content of the poetic units of the Biblical Lamentations.¹⁵⁶⁹ The findings of the present research document further, to put it with G. Dahan, the historically conditioned work that is carried out on the language of the biblical Lamentations. It relies as on its foothold on the sounding features of the so-called linguistic signifiers picked up from the words and phrases of the Biblical Lamentations and produces appropriating claims (Stis), anecdote narratives (As) and parables-*meshalim* (Ms) that can successfully compete, in their assertive strength, with the best findings of the pragmatics produced in the wake of the twenty century linguistic turn.¹⁵⁷⁰ And the outcome of this appropriating enterprise is not only an astonishing technical prowess of sound correspondences, but also simultaneously a rethinking of the traditional categories such the covenant, God's presence in history, in accordance with the new historical circumstances, that is based on the postulates of analogy and event recurrences.

1569According to G. Dahan, the search for a conceptual content of the biblical utterances is part of a mental change that took place in the second half of the eleventh century CE, that he explains as following: "[L']approche traditionnelle était jusque la midrashique ou aggadique: au lieu d'etre décrypté ou explicité au moyen d'une représentation directe le texte sacré suscitait, en guise d'explication, une multitude de représentations symboliques (aggadot) qui, par un jeu d'opposition structurelle, s'efforçaient de mettre au jour ses implications (...)," idem, "Présence de Rashi", ins *Sens* 8/91991, 292.

1570G. Stemberger, *Midrasch*, 1989, 226 considers that literature and linguistic theory can learn from this feature of the midrash: "Der weitgehende Verzicht des Midrasch auf allgemein gültige Antworten, auf ein begriffliches Eingrenzen der Wirklichkeit zugunsten des Erzählens ist hier wesentlich. Die eigentliche Wirklichkeit liegt für den Midrasch in der Sprache eines Textes (der Bibel), der die Welt konstituiert. Das Sein ist somit gewissermassen Spiegelbild dieses Textes, das Sprachspiel Teil der Aufgabe, seine eigene Wirklichkeit zu begreifen."

VII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. *Eikhah Rabbati* or “The Invention of a New Form of Meaning“

We undertake in this Annexe to ascertain the relationship between the Masoretic tradition and E. R. interpretative endeavour on Lamentations. This is the first and indispensable stage in the process of a typological assessment¹⁵⁷¹ in the comment. Two questions will be addressed to ascertain the status the Book of Lamentations has in *Eikhah Rabbati*: 1) Does *E. R.* carry the marks of Masoretic scanning of the Scriptures, and did the Rabbis, whose statements are reported in *E. R.*, or at least the collector (s), conform to Ibn Ezra’s recommendation reported in W. Wickes (1970)¹⁵⁷² and quoted in H. Meschonnic ([1982] 2002)¹⁵⁷³ “tout commentaire qui n’est pas sur un commentaire des te`amin tu n’en voudras pas et tu ne l’écouteras pas”?¹⁵⁷⁴ 2) What about the “midrashic principle of ‘Omni significance’”, according to which every detail in the Biblical text is significant¹⁵⁷⁵. The answer to these questions will be given at this step by means of this formal presentation, which for the organization of *Eikhah Rabbati*: the verses of the five chapters of the Biblical Masoretic of Lamentations come first; each of them is analysed into its smaller units targeted in *Eikhah Rabbati*, and assessed at the number of the pages of their interpretation. The results of this cataloguing endeavour are rapidly available as a survey at the last subdivision, I.6., of this chapter.

1571 See the generative potential of the correlation traditum - tradition for the inner-biblical exegesis, the textual versions as well as for the post-biblical traditions, in Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 6, 7.

1572 W. Wickes, *Two Treatises on the accentuation of the Old Testament, On Psalms, Proverbs and Job, On the twenty-one prose books*, New York ([1881] [1887] 1970).

1573 H. Meschonnic, *Critique du rythme. Anthropologie historique du langage*. Paris ([1982] 2002, 474.

1574 It is true that the late official acceptance of the historically late Tiberian system of the te`amim and its possible restructuring influence on the Biblical text, as argued in J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry. Parallelism and its History*, New Haven/London 1981, 111-116, do not rule out the claim that the access to the Lamentations text as to the other biblical text has been since the beginning a parsing one.

1575 See J. Bonsirven, *Exégèse rabbinique et exégèse paulinienne*, Paris 1939, 117-206; and J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry. Parallelism and its History*, 1981, 104.

1. 1. 1. LAMENTATIONS CHAPTER ONE

A statistical approach may help understand how *E. R.* is worked out. Textus Masoreticus Lamentations (henceforth TMLam) chapter 1 is made up of 22 verses; 21 verses structured as stanzas contain each 3 bicola (= the plural of bicolon), that is 6 cola, or poetical units, except the 4 bicola or 8 cola of the verse 7, and the 7 of verse 21. All the text of the Chapter One can be divided into 135 cola.

TMLam (verse 1)

EIKHAH RABBATI INTERPRETATION TARGETS

- (Verse 1. 1) = *E. R.* (א) איכה יושבה בודד “*How lonely sits*”, expounded (=>) lines 1-41 a.
(Verse 1. 2) = *E. R.* (ב) העיר רבתי עמ “*the city full of people*” => lines 41b - 77.
(Verse 1. 3) = *E. R.* (ג) היתה כאלמה “*she has become like a widow*” => lines 78-96a.
(Verse 1. 4) = *E. R.* (ד) רבתי בגוים “*(she that was) great over the nations*” => lines 96b-328a, see the expounding all the 17 *E. R.* topics between (ה) and (ז).
(Verse 1. 5) = *E. R.* (ז) שרתי במדינות “*(she that was) the princess among the provinces*” goes together with (verse 1. 6) היתה למס “*has become a payer of tribute*” on the ground of form and content, => lines 328b - 345a. All the statements made in Lamentations have been assumed to be part of *E. R.*

TMLam. (verse 2)

- (Verse 2.1) = *E. R.* (כב) בכו תבכה “*She bitterly weeps*” => in three rubrics; the first rubric, (כב), => lines 345b - 359a, relies on the Ps. 42, 4, the second rubric (כג) is made up of two paragraphs; the first, => lines 359a - 386a, is based on the Ps. 77, 7, and the second paragraph, => lines 386b - 426, is built on Ps 77, 7 - 11. The third rubric (כד) is focused on the grammatical features of this predicate, => lines 426b - 439a. And the prepositional phrase (בלילה) “*in the night*”, is however expounded separately, => lines 439b - 444a, but see also => 390b - 393a for the same utterance.
(Verse 2. 2) = *E. R.* (כו) דמעתה על לחיה “*her tears (are) on her cheeks*” => lines 444b - 450a.
(Verse 2. 3) = *E. R.* (כז) אין לה מנחם “*she has none to comfort her*” => lines 450b - 455a.
(Verse 2.4) = *E. R.* (.) מכל אהביה is wanting: it has not been integrated into the interpretative strategy of *E. R.*
(Verse 5.2/6) = *E. R.* (כח) כל רעיה בגדו בה היו לה “*all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her...*” => lines 455 - 456a.

TMLam. (verse 3)

- (Verse 3. 1) = *E. R.* (כט) גלתה יהודה “*Judah is gone into exile*” => lines 456b - 462, obviously together with the expounding of מעוני “*because of affliction*”, => lines 463 - 471.
(Verse 3. 2.) = *E. R.* (ל) ומרוב עבודה “*and because of great servitude*” => lines 472 - 473a is followed by (verses 3. 3 - 4) = *E. R.* היא יושבה בגוים לא מצאה מנוח “*she dwells among the*

nations, and she finds no rest" => lines 473b - 476a, and by (verses 3.5 -6) = E. R. כל רודפיה השיגוה בין המצרים "all her persuers have overtaken her within the straits" => lines 476b - 493a.

TMLam. (verse 4)

(Verse 4. 1.) = E. R. דרכי ציו אבלות (לא) "The ways of Zion do mourn" => lines 493b - 500a including (verse 4. 2) = E. R. מבלי באי מועד "without any going to the appointed feasts", and (verse 4. 3) כל שעריה שוממים "all her gates are desolate" => line 500b, (verse 4. 4) her priests sigh "כהניה נאנחזים" => lines 500c - 502a, (verse 4. 5) בתולותיה נוגות "her virgins are afflicted" => lines 502b - 505a, and (verse 4. 6) והיא מר לה "and she (is) in bitterness" => lines 505b.

TMLam (verse 5)

(Verse 5. 1) = E. R. (לב) היו צריה לראש "Her foes have become as chief" => 505c -509a, obviously together with (verse 5.2) אויביה שלו "her ennemis are at ease" => lines 509b - 573a.

(Verse 5.3/4) = E. R. (לג) כי יהוה הוגה על רוב פשעיה "for the Lord has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions" => lines 573b - 577a, together with (verses 5.5 - 6) עולליה הלכו "her children have gone away, captives before the advserary" and (verse 6.1) ויצא מן בת ציו "from the daughter of Zion has departed" => lines 577b - 579a, with (verse 6.2) כל הדרה "all her splendour" => lines 579b - 586a.

TMLam. (verse 6)

(Verses 6.1/2), see above E. R. (לג) => lines 573b - 586a.

(Verse 6.3) E. R. (לד) היו צריה כאילים "Her rulers have become like harts" => lines 586b - 592a; (verse 6.4) = E. R. (-) is wanting. (Verses 6.5/6) = E. R. (לה) וילכו בלא כח לפני רודף "and they have gone without strength before the pursuer" => lines 592b - 604a.

TMLam. (verse7)

(Verses 7.1/2) = E. R. (לו) זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודיה "Jerusalem remembered the days of her affliction and wandering" are expounded together, => lines 604b - 605a, as well as with (verse 7.3) כל מהמדיה "all her desirable things" => lines 605c - 606a, while (verse 7.4) = E. R. (-) is wanting, with (verse 7.5) בנפל עמה ביד צר "when her people fall by the hand of the foe" => lines 606b - 607, (verse 7.6) ואין עוזר לה "and there is none to help her" => lines 608 - 610a, and (verse 7.7 - 8) ראוה צרים שחקו משבתה "the foes have seen her, they have mocked at her downfall" => lines 610b - 612 can be considered as completing (the verse 7. 1-2).

TMLam. (verse 8)

(Verse 8.1) = E. R. (לז) הטא חטאה ירושלים “*Jerusalem has sinned grievously*” => lines 613 - 614a, together with (verse 8.2) על כן לנידה היתה “*therefore she has become as an object of derision*” line 614b, and (verses 8.3 - 6) היא נאנחה ותשב “*all who honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns backward*” => lines 614c - 616a.

TMLam. (verse 9)

(Verse 9.1) = E. R. טמאתה בשוליה “*Her filthiness is in her skirts*” => lines 616b - 637a without dealing with (verse 9.2) = E. R. (-) and combining with the expounding of (9.3) = E. R. ותרד פלאים “*therefore has she gone down wonderfully*”.

(Verse 9.3) = E. R. ותרד פלאים “*therefore has she gone down wonderfully*” is a continuation of E. R. (לח) => lines 637b - 648a, leaves (verse 9.4) = E. R. (-) not expounded and goes together with (verses 9.5-6) כי הגדיל אויב “*behold, O Lord, my affliction, for the enemy has glorified himself*” => lines 648b-667a.

TMLam. (verse 10)

(Verse 10.1) = E. R. (מ) ידו פרש צר “*The enemy has spread out his hand*” => lines 667b - 695a including (verse 10.2) על כל מחמדיה “*on all her desirable things*” which is only interpreted, while (verses 10.3-6) are not expounded.

TMLam. (verse 11)

(Verse 11.1) = E. R. (מא) כל עמה נאנחים “*All her people sigh*” => lines 695b - 697a, together with (verse 11.2) מבקשים לחם “*they seek bread*” => lines 697b - 704a, ruling out (verse 11.3), going on with (verse 11.4) להשיב נפש “*to revive the soul*” => lines 704b - 705a, and (verse 11.5) ראה יהוה והביטה “*see, O Lord, and behold*” => lines 705b - 709a, concluding with (verses 11.5 - 6) ראה יהוה והביטה כי הייתי זוללה “*see, O Lord, and behold, for I have become vile*” => lines 709b - 710a.

TMLam (verse 12)

(Verse 12.1a) = E. R. (מב) לא אליכם “*Let it not come to you*” = lines 710b - 711a, together with (verse 12.1 ב) כל עוברי דרך “*all you who pass by*” => lines 711b - 712a, (verse 12.2) הביטו “*behold and see*” => lines 712b - 715a, (verses 12.2 - 4) יש מכאוב “*behold and see if there is any pain like my pain which is done to me*” => 715b - 717a, and (verses 12.5 - 6) אשר הוגה יהוה ביום חרום אפו “*with which the Lord has afflicted me in the days of his burning anger*” => lines 717b - 718a.

TMLam. (verse 13)

(Verse 13.1/2a) = E. R. (מג) “From on high he has sent fire into my bones” => lines 718b - 756, followed by (verse 13.2b) וירדנוה “and subdued it” => lines 757 - 761a, (verse 13.3) פרש רשת לרגלי “he has spread a net for my feet” => lines 761b - 764a (verse 13.4) השיבני אחור “he has turned no back” => lines 764b - 765a, (verse 13.5) נתני “he has made me desolate” => line 765b, and (verse 13.6) כל היום דוה “all the day faint” => line 765c.

TMLam. (verse 14)

(Verse 14.1) = E. R. (מד) נשקד עול פשעי בידו “The yoke of my transgressions is impressed/bound by his hand” => lines 765d - 777a, together with (verse 14.2) ישרגו “they intertwine” => lines 777b - 781a, (verse 14.3) עלו על צוארי “they rise on my neck” => lines 781b - 783a.

(Verse 14.4) = E. R. (מה) הכשיל כהי “he has caused my strength to fail” => lines 783b - 787a.

(Verse 14.5/6) = E. R. (מו) נתנני יהוה בידי לא אוכל קום “the Lord has delivered me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand” => lines 787b - 791.

TMLam. (verse 15)

(Verse 15.1) = E. R. (מז) סלה כל אבירי יהוה “The Lord has trampled all my mighty ones” => lines 782 - 793a, rules out (verse 15.2), concluding with (verse 15.3 - 4) קרא עלי מועד לזבור בחורי “he has called a solemn assembly against me to crush my young men”, => lines 793b - 794, and (verses 793b - 794, and (verses 15.5-6) יהודה בת יהודה “the Lord has trodden as in winepress the virgin daughter of Judah” => line 795a.

TMLam. (verse 16)

(Verse 16.1) = E. R. (מה) על אלה אני בוכיה “For these things I weep” => 795 - 955a, including a couple of rubrics (נה, נד, נג, נב, נא, ג, מט).

(Verse 16.2) = E. R. (נו) עיני עיני יורדה מים “my eye, my eye runs down with water” => lines 955b - 958a.

(Verses 16.3/4) = E. R. (נז) כי רחק ממני מנחם משיב נפשי “because far from me is a comforter, one to revive my soul” => lines 958b - 994a.

(Verses 16.5/6) = E. R. (נח) היו בני שוממים כי גבר אויב “my children are desolate, because the enemy has prevailed” => lines 994b - 997a.

TMLam. (verse 17)

(Verse 17.1) = E. R. (נט) פרשה ציון בידיה “Zion spreads out her hands” => lines 997b / 1040a, including the rubric (o), together with (verse 17.2) = E. R. אין מנחם לה “there is none to

comfort her" => lines 1040b - 1045a (verses 17.3 - 4) ציוה יהוה ליקב סביביו צריו *"the Lord has commanded concerning Jacob that his neighbours should be his foes"* => lines 1045b - 1047a, and (verses 17.5 - 6) היתה ירושלים לנידה ביניהם *"Jerusalem has become as one unclean among them"* => line 1047b.

TMLam (verse 18)

(Verse 18.1/2) = E. R. (סא) *"The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against his word"* => lines 1047c - 1063a, leaving unexpounded (verse 18.3 - 6).

TMLam(Verse 19)

(Verse 19.1/2) = E. R. (סב) *"I called for my lovers; they deceived me"* => lines 1063b - 1079a, leaving also (verse 19.3 - 6) unexpounded.

TMLam(Verse 20)

(Verse 20.1/2) = E. R. (סג) *"Behold O Lord, for I am in distress, my inwards burn"* => lines 1079b - 1080a, together with (verses 20.3 - 4) נהפק לבי בקרבי כי (מרר מריתי) *"my heart is overturned within me"* => lines 1080b - 1081a, and (verses 20.5 - 6) מחוץ שכלה חרב בבית כמות *"on the outside the sword bereaves; in the house it is like death"* => lines 1081 - 1082a.

TMLam (verse 21)

(Verse 21.1) = E. R. (סד) *"They have heard that I sigh"* => lines 1082b - 1092a, rules out (verses 21.2 - 3), goes on with (verses 21.4) *"for that you have done it"* => lines 1092b - 1101a, and (verses 21.5 - 6) ויהיו כמוני *"you will bring the day that you have proclaimed, and they shall be like me"* => lines 1101b - 1102a.

TMLam. (verse 22)

(Verse 22.1/2) = E. R. (סה) *"Let all their wickedness come before you, and do to them"* => lines 1102b - 1104a, does not mention (22.3), leaves not expounded (22. 4), goes on with (verses 22.5-6) *"for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint"* => lines 1104b - 1137.

CONCLUSION

The main finding in this chapter is obviously that only 112 cola have been targeted by the interpretation in *Eikhah Rabbati*, and that 23 cola remain wanting. They are given as mentioned above in bold and underlined italic typefaces. This is an indication in the comment of poetical

text that the TLamentations is. It has, however, to be supported by the figures the next chapters provide.

1. 1. 2. LAMENTATIONS CHAPTER TWO

Textus Masoreticus Lamentations (TMLam) Chapter Two has like Lamentations chapter one 22 verses or stanzas; 21 verses containing each 3 bicola, that is 6 col, or poetical units, which make, together with the 4 bicola of the verse 19, the total of 134 colas in this chapter. As for the previous chapter, only the first bicola of the stanza begins with the alphabetical letter of the series.

EIKHAH RABBATI INTERPRETATION TARGETS

TMLam (verse 1)

(Verse 1.1/2) = E. R. (א/ב) איכה יעיב באפו אדני את בת ציון “*How has the Lord in his anger clouded over the daughter of Zion*” => first (א) by a poem, lines 1 - 19a, and secondly (ב), => lines 19b - 22a, followed by (verse 1.3 - 4) השליך משמים ארץ תפארת ישראל “*he has cast down from hea-ven to earth the beauty of Israel*” => lines 22b - 34a.

(Verse 1.5) = E. R. (ג) ולא זכר הדום רגליו “*he has not remembered his footstool*”, goes on together with (verse 1.6) ביום אפו “*in the day of his anger*” => 42b - 89a, that is, including E. R. (ד) => lines 43b - 89a¹⁵⁷⁶

TMLam. (verse 2)

(Verse 2.1/2) = E. R. (ה) בלע יהוה ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב “*The Lord has swallow up without mercy all the dwelling - places of Jacob*” => lines 89b - 227a.

(Verse 2.3/4) = E. R. (ו) הרס בעברתו מבצרי בת יהודה “*he has broken down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah*” => lines 227b - 230a, rules out (verse 2.5) הגיע לארץ “*he has brought (them) down to the ground*”, and goes on with (verse 2.6) חלל ממלכה “*he has defiled the kingdom and its rulers*” => respectively first, lines 230b - 240a, and secondly, => lines 240b - 241b.

TMLam (verse 3)

(Verse 3.1/2) = E. R. (ז) גדר בהרי אף כל קרן ישראל “*He has cut off in fierce anger all the horn of Israel*” => lines 242 - 261a.

¹⁵⁷⁶See a similar comment structuration in E. R. to Lam. 1.4

(Verse 3.3/4) = E. R. (ה) השיב אחור ימינו מפני אויב *"he has drawn back from them his right hand in the face of the enemy"* => lines 261b - 270.

(Verse 3.5/6) = E. R. (ט) ויבער ביעקב כאש להבה אכלה סביב *"and he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire, which consumes all around"* => lines 271 - 273a.

TMLam (verse 4)

(Verse 4.1) = E. R. (י) דרך קשתו כאויב *"He has bent his bow like an ennemy"* => lines 273b - 279a, together with (verses 4.2) נצב ימינו כצר *"standing with his right hand like an adver / sary"* => lines 279b - 280a, with a resumption of (verse 4.1) => lines 280b - 281a, and ending with (verse 4.3 - 4) ויהרג כל מחמדי עין *"and he has slain all the pride of the eye"* => lines 281b - 283a.

(Verse 4.5/6) = E. R. (יא) באהל בת ציון שפך כאש חמתו *"in the tent of the daughter of Zion he has poured out his fury like fire"* => lines 283b - 291a.

TMLam. (verse 5)

(Verse 5.1) = E. R. (יב) היה יהוה כאויב *"The Lord has become like an enemy"* => lines 291b - 296a.

(Verse 5.2/3) = E. R. (יג) בלע ישראל בלע כל ארמנותיה *"he has swallowed up Israel, he has swallowed up her palaces"* => lines 296b - 300a, omits (verse 5.4), and goes on with (verse 5.5 - 6) וירב בבת יהודה תאניה ואניה *"he has increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and moaning"* => lines 300b - 301a.

TMLam (verse 6)

(Verse 6.1) = E. R. (יד) ויחמוס כגן שכו *"And he has violated his tabernacle as if it were a garden"* => lines 301b - 304a, together with (verse 6.3 - 4) שכח יהוה בציון מועד ושבבת *"the Lord has made forgotten in Zion appointed season and sabbath"* => lines 304b - 307a, and (verse 6.5 - 6) וינאץ בזעם אפו מלך וכהן *"and he has rejected in the fury of his anger the king and the priest"* => lines 307b - 308a.

TMLam. (verse 7)

(Verse 7.1) = E. R. (טו) זנח יהוה מזבחו *"The Lord has cast off his altar"* => lines 308b - 316a, omits (verse 7.2), goes on with (verse 7.3 - 4) הסגיר ביד אויב חומת ארמנותיה *"he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces"*, followed by (verse 7.5 - 6) קול נתנו בבית *"they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as (in) the day of a meeting"* => lines 316b - 324.

TMLam. (verse 8)

(Verse 8.1/2) = E. R. חשב יהוה להשהית חומת בת ציון (טז) *"The Lord has proposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion"* => lines 325 - 327a, together with (verse 8.3) נטה קו *"he has stretched out a line"* => lines 327b - 328a, followed by (verse 8.4 - 8) לא השיב ידו *"he has no withdrawn his hand from destroying, and he has made rampart and wall lament, they languish together"* => lines 328b - 330a.

TMLam. (verse 9)

(Verse 9.1) = E. R. טבעו בארץ שעריה (יז) *"Her gates have sunk into the ground"* => lines 330b - 332, together with (verse 9.2) אבד וכבר בריחיה *"he has destroyed and broken her bars"*, followed by (verse 9.3 - 4) אין תורה מלכה ושריה בגוים *"her king and her princes are among the nations; the law is no more"* => lines 332b - 335a, and completed by (verse 9.5) גם נביאיה *"also her prophets"* => lines 335b - 336a, and (verse 9.6) לא מצאו חזון מיהוה *"obtain no vision from the Lord"* => line 336b.

TMLam. (verse 10)

(Verse 10.1/2) = E. R. ישבו לארץ ידמו זקני בת ציון (יח) *"They sit on the ground, and keep silence, the elders of the daughters of Zion"* => by means of a narrative, lines 336b - 356a, followed by (verse 10.3) העלו עפר *"they have cast dust on"* => lines 356b - 358a, (verse 10.4) חגרו שקים *"they have girded themselves with sackcloth"*, => lines 357b / 358a, and concludes with (verse 10.5 - 6) הורידו לארץ ראשן בתולת ירושלים *"the maidens of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground"* => lines 358b - 360a.

TMLam. (verse 11)

(Verse 11.1) = E. R. כלו בדמעות עיני (יט) *"My eyes are at an end with tears"* => lines 360b - 365a, rules out (verse 11.2), goes on only with (verse 11.3) נשפך לארץ כבדי *"my liver is poured on the ground"* => lines 365b - 368a.

TMLam. (verse 12)

(Verse 12.1/2) = E. R. לאמותם יאמרו איה דגן ויין (כ) *"To their mothers they say: where is corn and wine?"* => lines 368b - 369a, with (verse 12.3 - 4) כחלל ברחובות עיר *"in their fainting like the wounded in the broad places of the city"* => lines 369b - 374a, and (verse 12.5 - 6) אל חיק אמותם נפשם *"in the pouring out their lives into their mother's bosom"* => lines 374b - 375a.

TMLam. (verse 13)

(Verse 13.1) = E. R. מה אעידך מה אדמה לך (כא) *"What can I testify for you? What will I compare to you?"* is dealt with respectively => lines 375b - 388a - 391a, together with (13.2) הבת *"O daughter of Jerusalem"* => lines 391b - 392a.

(Verse 13.3) = *E. R.* (כב) ואנחמך לך מה אשוה לך “*what shall I equate to you, that I may comfort you*”
 => lines 392b - 394a, together with (verse 13.4) בתולת בת ציון “*O virgin daughter of Zion*”
 => lines 394b - 395a, and (verse 13.5) כי גדול כים שברך “*for your break is great like the sea*”
 => lines 395b - 397, (verse 13.6) מי ירפא לך “*who will heal you*” being therein interpreted,
 but not mentioned.

TMLam (verse 14)

(Verse 14.1/2) = *E. R.* (כג) שוה ותפל לך נביאך חזו לך “*Your prophets have seen for you vi-sions of vanity and delusion*” => lines 398 - 402a, together with (verse 14.3 - 4) ולא גלו על עונך “*and they have not uncovered you iniquity, to bring back our captivity*” => lines 402b - 403a, followed by (verse 14.5 - 6) ויחזו לך משאות שוה ומדוהים “*but they have prophesied for your burdens of vanity and seduction*” => lines 403b - 404a.

TMLam. (verse 15)

(Verse 15.1) = *E. R.* (כד) ספכו עליך כפים “*[All who pass by] clap their hand at you*”, together with (verse 15.3 - 4) על בת ירושלים “*they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem*”, as in contrast to (verse 15.6) “*the joy of all the earth*”, => lines 404b - 407; it is followed by (verse 15. 5) “*is this the city which they called the perfection of beauty*”, in contrast to Ezek. 27, => lines 408 - 410a, and (verse 15.6) again => lines 410b - 412a.

TMLam. (verse 16)

(Verse 16.1) = *E. R.* (כה) פצו עליך פיהם “*[All your enemies] have opened their mouth against you*” => lines 412b - 413b, rules out (verse 16, 2 - 6).

TMLam. (verse 17)

(Verse 17.1) = *E. R.* (כו) עשה יהוה אשר זמם “*The Lord has done what he had devised*” => lines 413b - 416a, together with (verse 16.2) בצע אמרתו “*he has performed his word*” => lines 416b - 417a, ruling out (verse 17.3 - 4), going on with (verse 17.5 = 6) וישמח עליך אויב “*and he has made the enemy rejoice over you, he has raised the horns of your foes*” => lines 417b - 420a, and (verse 18, 1 - 3α) “*Their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let [X] down*” => line 420b.

TMLam. (verse 18)

(Verse 18.1/2/3α) = *E. R.* “*Their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let [X] down*”, see (verse 17.1) = *E. R.* (כו).

TMLam. (verse 19)

(Verse 19.1/2) = *E. R.* (כז) קומי רוני בלילה לראש אשמורות “*Rise up, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches*” => lines 420c - 448a, ruling out (verse 19, 3 - 8).

TMLam. (verse 20)

(Verse 20.1) = *E. R.* (כח) ראה יהוה והביטה “*See, O Lord, and consider*” => lines 448b - 451a, together with (verse 20.2) למי עוללת כה “*to whom you have done this*” followed first by (20.3 - 4) אם תאכלנה נשים פרים עוללי טפוחים “*shall women eat their fruit, children dandled in their hands*” => lines 451b - 452a, secondly by (verse 20.5 - 6) כהן יהוה “*should the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?*” => lines 452b - 453 a.

TMLam. (verse 21)

(Verse 21.1) = *E. R.* (כט) שכבו לארץ חוצות וגוי “*[Young and old] lie on the ground of the plazas*” => lines 453b - 455a; (verse 21.3 - 6) are ruled out.

TMLam. (verse 22)

(Verse 22.1/2) = *E. R.* (ל) תקרא כיום מועד מגורי מסביב (ל) “*You have called, as in day of appointment, my terrors all around*” => lines 455b - 457b, together with (verse 22.3 - 4) ולא היה ביום “*And there is not, in the day of the anger of the Lord, an escape one or a survivor*” => lines 457b - 458a, followed by (verse 22.5-6) אשר טפחתי ורביתי אויבי כלם “*those whom I have nursed and multiplied, my enemy has consumed*” => lines 4458b - 459.

CONCLUSION

Poetical and spoken units are further the target of *E. R.* interpretation. 29 units are wanting in the comment, while 15 cola , 11 bicola and a tricola units can be interpreted as starting point of topicalized arguments.

CONCLUSION

The starting point of this first Chapter has been to account for the TMLamentations text targeted in the *Eikhah Rabbati* interpretation. An approximate statistical approach discloses that the TMLam. text is made up of 535 colas, and that 442, - respectively 112 + 105 + 115 + 71 + 39, have been interpreted in *E. R.*, while 93 colas are wanting. These are units whose meaning seems to have not been held for relevant in *E. R.* A. Mintz speaks in this regard of “strategic goals (...) to shape the Lamentations text through supplementation and subtraction to fit the classical

prophetic theology concerning national sin and punishment¹⁵⁷⁷ in accordance with the covenant paradigm. A figure reproducing the TMLam. utterances addressed by the *Eikhah Rabbati* comment will provide a clear idea of the extent of text appropriation work done in *E. R.*

1. 2. TMLAM - EXPOUNDED UNITS IN *EIKHAH RABBATI*

1. 2.1. LAMENTATIONS CHAPTER ONE

Target	Extension	Lines
TM Lam. (verse 1)		
(Verse 1.1) = <i>E.R.</i> (א) איכה יושבה בודד	<i>“How lonely sits“</i> , =>	lines 1-41a
(Verse 1.2) = <i>E.R.</i> (ב) העיר רבתי עם	<i>“the city full of people”</i> =>	lines 41b-77.
(Verse 1.3) = <i>E.R.</i> (ג) היתה כאלמנה	<i>“she has become like a widow”</i> =>	lines 78-96a.
(Verse 1.4) = <i>E.R.</i> (ד) רבתי בגוים	<i>“(she that was)” great over the nations”</i> , =>	lines 96b - 328a.
all the 17 <i>E.R.</i> topics between (ה) and (כ). (Verse 1.5) = <i>E.R.</i> (כא) שרתי במדינות		
<i>“(she that was) the princess among the provinces + with (verse 1.6) היתה למס “has become a payer of tribute” =></i>		
lines 328b-345a		
TM Lam (verse 2)		
(Verse 2-1) = <i>E.R.</i> (כב) בכו תבכה	<i>“She bitterly weeps”</i> , =>	lines 345b-439a in three rubrics ([כב] [כג] [כד]) completed by
בלילה (כה) <i>“in the night”</i> , => lines -439b-444a		
(Verse 2.2) = <i>E.R.</i> (כו) דמעתה על לחיה	<i>“her tears (are) on her cheeks”</i> , =>	lines 444b-450a
(Verse 2.3) = <i>E.R.</i> (כז) אין לה מנחם	<i>“she has none to comfort her”</i> =>	lines 450b-455a
(Verse 2.5/6) = <i>E.R.</i> (כח) היו לה רעים בגדו בה	<i>“all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her”</i> , =>	lines 455b-456
TM Lam. (verse 3)		
(Verse 3.1) = <i>E.R.</i> (כט) גלתה יהודה	<i>“Judah is gone into exile”</i> =>	lines 456b-462, together with מעוני
<i>“because of affliction”</i> , => lines 463 - 471, (Verse 3.2) = <i>E.R.</i> (ל) ומרוב עבודה		
<i>“and because of great servitude”</i> , => lines 472-473a, + by (verses 3.3-4) = <i>E.R.</i> היא יושבה בגוים		
<i>“she dwells among the nations, and she finds no rest”</i> , => lines 473b - 476a		

1577A. Mintz, *Hurban*, New York, 1984, 79.

+ by (verses 3.5-6) = E.R. כל רודפיה השיגוה בין המצרים “*all her pursuers have overtaken her within the straits*” => lines 476b-493a.

TMLam. (verse 4)

(Verse 4.1) = E.R. דרכי ציון אבלות (לא) “*The ways of Zion do mourn*” => lines 493b-500a, +including (verse 4.2) = E.R. מבלי באי מועד (-) “*without any going to the appointed feasts*”, +and (verse 4.3) כל שעריה שוממים “*all her gates are desolate*” => line 500b, +(verse 4.4) כהניה נאנחים “*her priests sigh*” => lines 500c-502a, +(verse 4.5) בתולותיה “*virgins are afflicted*” => lines 502b-505a, +(verse 4.6) והיא מר לה “*and she (is) in bitterness*” => line 505b.

TMLam. (verse 5)

(Verse 5.1) = E.R. היו צריה לראש (לב) “*Her foes have become as chief*” => lines 505c-509a, with (verse 5.2) איוביה שלו “*her enemies are at ease*” => lines 509b-573a, (Verse 5.3/4) = E.R. כי יהוה הגה על רוב פשעיה (לג) “*for the Lord has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions*” => lines 573b-577a, +with (verses 5.5-6) שבי לפני צר “*her children have gone away, captives before the adversary*” +and (verse 6.1) ויצא מן־בת־ציון “*from the daughter of Zion has departed*” => lines 577b-579a, +with (verse 6.2) כל הדרה “*all her splendour*” => lines 579b-586a.

TMLam. (verse 6)

(Verse 6.1/2), see above E. R. (לג) => lines 573b-586a, (Verse 6.3) = E.R. היו צריה כאילים (לד) “*Her rulers have become like harts*” => lines 586b-592a, (Verse 6.5/6) = E.R. (לה) “*and they have gone without strength before the pursuer*” => lines 592b-604a.

TMLam. (verse 7)

(Verses 7. 1/2) = E.R. זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודיה (לו) “*Jerusalem remembered the days of her affliction and wandering*” => lines 604b-605a, +with (verse 7.3) כל־מחמדיה “*all her desirable things*” => lines 605c-606a, +with (verse 7.5) בנפל עמה ביד צר “*when the people falls into the hand of the foe*” => lines 606b-607, +(verse 7.6) ואין עוזר לה “*and there is none to help her*” => lines 608-610a, +(verse 7.7-8) על משבתה שחקו “*the foes have seen her, they have mocked at her downfall*” => lines 610b-612.

TMLam. (verse 8)

(Verse 8.1) = E.R. חטא חטאה ירושלים (לז) “*Jerusalem has sinned grievously*” => lines 613-614a, +with (verse 8.2) על כן לנידה ויתה “*therefore she is become as an object of derision*”

=> lines 614b, +and (verses 8.3-6) גם היא נאנחה כי ראו ערותה “all who honoured her despised her, because they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns backward” => lines 614c-616a.

TMLam. (verse 9)

(Verse 9.1) = E.R. (לה) טמאתה בשוליה “Her filthiness is in her skirts” +with (9.3) = E.R. “therefore has she gone down wonderfully” => lines 616b-637a, (Verse 9.3) = E.R. “therefore has she gone down wonderfully” is a continuation of E.R. (לה) => lines 637b-648a, +with (verses 9.5-6) כי הגדיל אויב ראה יהוה את עניי “behold, O Lord, my affliction, for the enemy has glorified himself” => lines 648b-667a.

TMLam. (verse 10)

(Verse 10.1) = E.R. (מ) ידו פרש צר “The enemy has spread out his hand” includes (verse 10.2), which is interpreted, but not quoted => lines 667b-695a.

TMLam. (verse 11)

(Verse 11.1) = E.R. (מא) כל עמה נאנחים “All her people sigh” => lines 695b-697a. +with (verse 11.2) מבקשים לחם “they seek bread” => lines 697b-704a, +with (verse 11.4) להשיב נפש “to revive the soul” => lines 704b-705a, +and (verse 11.5) ראה יהוה והביטה “see, O Lord, and behold” => lines 705b-709a, +with (verses 11.5-6) כי הייתי ראה יהוה והביטה “see, O Lord, and behold, for I have become vile” => lines 709b-710a.

TMLam. (verse 12)

(Verse 12.1 a) = E.R. (מב) לא אליכם “Let it not come to you” => lines 710b-711a, +with (verse 12.1β) כל עוברי דרך “all of you who pass by” => lines 711b-712a, +(verse 12.2) הביטו הביטו וראו “behold and see” => lines 712b-715a +(verses 12.2-4) אם יש מכאוב “behold and see if there is any pain like my pain which is done to me” => lines 715b-717a, +and (verses 12.5-6) אשר הוגה יהוה ביום חרון אפו “with which the Lord has afflicted me in the day of his burning anger” => lines 717b-718a.

TMLam. (verse 13)

(Verse 13.1/2a) = E.R. (מג) ממרום שלח־אש בעצמותי “From on high he has sent fire into my bones” => lines 718b-756, +(Verse 13.2β) וירדנה “and subdued it” => lines 757- 761a, +(Verse 13.3) פרש רשת לרגלי “he has spread a net for my feet” => lines 761b-764a, +(Verse 13.4) השיבני אחור “he has turned his back” => lines 764b-765a, +(Verse 13.5) נתנני שממה “he has made me desolate” => line 765b, +and (Verse 13.6) כל היום “all the day faint” => line 765c.

TMLam. (verse 14)

(Verse 14.1) = E.R. (מד) נשקד עול פשעי בידו “*The yoke of my transgressions is impressed/ bound by his hand*” => lines 765d-777a, +with (verse 14.2) ישתרגו “*they intertwine*” => lines 777b-781a, +(verse 14.3) עלו על צוארי “*they rise on my neck*” => lines 781b-783a,

(Verse 14.4) = E.R. (מה) הכשיל כהי “*he has caused my strength to fail*” => lines 783b-787a,

(Verse 14.5/6) = E.R. (מו) נתנני יהוה בידי לא אוכל קום “*the Lord has delivered me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand*” => lines 787b-791.

TMLam. (verse 15)

(Verse 15.1) = E.R. (מז) סלה כל אבירי יהוה “*The Lord has trampled all my mighty ones*” => lines 792-793a, +with (verses 15.3-4) קרא עלי מועד לשבור בחורי “*he has called a solemn assembly against me to crush my young men*”, => lines 793b-794, +and (verses 15.5-6) גת דרך אדני לבתולת בתייהודה “*the Lord has trodden as in winepress the virgin daughter of Judah*” => line 795a.

TMLam. (verse 16)

(Verse 16.1) = E.R. (מח) על אלה אני בוכיה “*For these things I weep*” => lines 795b-955a, including a couple of rubrics (נה, נד, נג, נב, נא, נ, מט, נ).

(Verse 16.2) = E.R. (נו) עיני עיני יורדה מים “*my eye, my eye runs down with water*” => lines 955b-958a,

(Verses 16.3/4) = E.R. (נז) משיב נפשי (נז) “*because far from me is a comforter, one to revive my soul*” => lines 958b-994a,

(Verses 16.5/6) = E.R. (נח) היו בני שוממים כי גבר אויב “*my children are desolate because the enemy has prevailed*” => lines 994b-997a.

TMLam. (verse 17)

(Verse 17.1) = E.R. (נט) פרשה ציון בידיה “*Zion spreads out her hands*” => lines 997b-1040a, +including (o), with (verse 17.2) = E.R. אין מנחם לה “*there is none to comfort her*” => lines 1040b-1045a, +(verses 17.3-4) ציה יהוה ליעקב סביביו צריו “*the Lord has commanded concerning Jacob that his neighbours should be his foes*” => lines 1045b-1047a, +and (verses 17.5-6) היתה ירושלים לנידה ביניהם “*Jerusalem has become as one unclean among them*” => line 1047b.

TMLam. (verse 18)

(Verses 18.1/2) = E.R. (סא). “*The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against his word*” => lines 1047c-1063a.

TMLam. (verse 19)

(Verses 19.1/2) = E.R. (סב). קראתי למאהבי המה רמוני “*I called for my lovers; they deceived me*” => lines 1063b-1079a.

TMLam. (verse 20)

(Verses 20.1/2) = E.R. (סג). ראה יהוה כי־צר לי מעי חמרמרו “*Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress, my inwards burn*” => lines 1079b-1080a, +with (verses 20.3-4) נהפק לבי בקרבי כי מרו “*my heart is overturned within me, for I have grievously rebelled*” => lines 1080b-1081a, +and (verses 20.5-6) מחוץ שכלה־חרב בבית כמות “*on the outside the sword bereaves; in the house it is like death*” => lines 1081b-1082a.

TMLam. (verse 21)

(Verse 21.1) = E.R. (סד). שמעו כי נאנחה אני “*They have heard that I sigh*” => lines 1082b-1092a, +with (verse 21.4) כי אתה עשית “*for / that you have done it*” => lines 1092b-1101a, +and (verses 21.5-6) הבאת יום־קראת ויהיו כמוני “*you will bring the day that you have proclaimed, and they shall be like me*” => lines 1101b-1102a.

TMLam. (verse 22)

(Verses 22.1/2) = E.R. (סה). תבא כל־רעתם לפניך ועולל למו “*Let all their wickedness come before you; and do to them*” => lines 1102b-1104a, +with (verses 22.5-6) ולבי “*my sighs are many, and my heart is faint*” => lines 1104b-1137.

1.2.2 LAMENTATIONS CHAPTER TWO

TMLam. (verse 1)

(Verses 1.1/2) = E.R. (א/ב). איכה יעיב באפו אדני את בת־ציון “*How has the Lord in his anger clouded over the daughter of Zion*” first (א) by a poem, => lines 1-19a, +and secondly (ב) 19b-22a, with (verse 1.3-4) השליך משמים ארץ תפארת ישראל “*he has cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel*” => lines 22b-34a, (Verse 1.5) = E.R. (ג). ולא זכר הדם־רגליו “*he has not remembered his footstool*” => lines 34b-42a, +with (verse 1.6) ביום אפו “*in the day of his anger*” that is, including E.R. (ד) => lines 43b-89a.

TMLam. (verse 2)

(Verse 2.1/2) = E.R. (ה) ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב “*The Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling - places of Jacob*” => lines 89b-227a,

(Verse 2.3/4) = E.R. (ו) הרס בעברתו מבצרי בתי־הודה “*he has broken down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah*” => lines 227b-230a, +by (verse 2.6) חלל ממלכה “*he has defied the kingdom and its rulers*”, => lines: first, 230b-240a, and secondly, 240b-241b.

TMLam. (verse 3)

(Verses 3.1/2) = E.R. (ז) כל קרן ישראל אף גדע בהרי אף “*He has cut off in fierce anger all the horn of Israel*” => lines 242 -261,

(Verses 3.3/4) = E.R. (ח) השיב אחר ימינו מפני אויב “*he has drawn back from them his right hand in the face of the enemy*” => lines 261-270,

(Verses 3.5/6) = E.R. (ט) ויבער ביעקב כאש להבה אכלה סביב “*and he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire, which consumes all around*” 271-273a.

TMLam. (verse 4)

(Verse 4.1) = E.R. (י) דרך קשתו כאויב “*He has bent his bow like an enemy*” => lines 273b-279a, with (verse 4.2) נצב ימינו כצר “*standing with his right hand like an adversary*” => lines 279b-280a, +with a resumption of (verse 4.1) => lines 280b-281a, +with (verses 4.3-4) ויהרג כל מחמדי עין “*and he has slain all the pride of the eye*” => lines 281b-283a,

(Verses 4.5/6) = E.R. (יא) באהל בת־ציון שפך כאש חמתו “*in the tent of the daughter of Zion, he has poured out his fury like fire*” 283b-291a.

TMLam. (verse 5)

(Verse 5.1) = E.R. (יב) היה אדני כאויב “*The Lord has become like an enemy*” 291b-296a,

(Verses 5.2/3) = E.R. (יג) בלע ישראל בלע כל־ארמנותיה “*he has swallowed up Israel, he has swallowed up her palaces*” 296b-300a, +with (verses 5.5-6) וירב בבתי־הודה “*he has increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and moaning*” 300b-301a.

TMLam. (verse 6)

(Verse 6.1) = E.R. (יד) “*And he has violated his tabernacle as if it were a garden*” 301b-304a, +with (verses 6.3-4) מועד ושבת “*The Lord has made forgotten in Zion appointed season and Sabbath*” 304b-307a, +and (verses 6.5-6) כהן ו מלך “*and he has rejected in the fury of his anger the king and the priest*” 307b-308a.

TMLam. (verse 7)

(Verse 7.1) = E.R. (טו) “*The Lord has cast off his altar*” 308b-316a, +with (verse 7.3-4) חומת ארמנותיה “*he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces*”, +and by (verse 7.5-6) כיום מועד “*they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as (in) the day of a meeting*” 316b-324.

TMLam. (verse 8)

(Verses 8.1/2) = E.R. (טז) חשב יהוה להשהית חומת בת־ציון “*The Lord has purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion*” 325-327a, +with (verse 8.3) קו “*he has stretched out a line*” 327b-328a, +and (verses 8.4-8) ויאבל “*he has not withdrawn his hand from destroying, and he has made rampart and wall lament, they languish together*” 328b-330a.

TMLam. (verse 9)

(Verse 9.1) = E.R. (יז) “*Her gates have sunk into the ground*” 330b-332, +with (verse 9.2) אבד ושבר בריחיה “*he has destroyed and broken her bars*”, followed by (verses 9.3-4) מלכה ושריה בגוים “*her king and her princes are among the nations; the law is no more*” 332b-335a, +by (verse 9.5) גם־נביאיה “*also her prophets*” 335b-336a, +and (verse 9.6) לא מצאו חזון מיהוה “*obtain no vision from the Lord*” 336b.

TMLam. (verse 10)

(Verse 10.1/2) = E.R. (יח) ישבו לקרץ ידמו זקני בת־ציון “*they sit on the ground, and keep silence, the elders of the daughters of Zion*” 336b-356a, +by (verse 10.3) העלו עפר “*they have cast dust on*” 356b-357a, +(verse 10.4) חגרו שקים “*they have girded themselves with sackcloth*” 357b-358a, +with (verses 10.5-6) הורידו לארץ ראשן “*the maidens of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground*” 358b-360a.

TMLam. (verse 11)

(Verse 11.1) = E.R. (יט) כלו בדמעות עיני “My eyes are at an end with tears” 360b-365a,
+with (verse 11.3) נשפך לארץ כבדי “my liver is poured on the ground” 365b-368a.

TMLam. (verse 12)

(Verses 12.1/2) = E.R. (כ) לאמותם יאמרו איה דגן ויין (כ) “To their mother they say: where is corn and wine?” 368b-369a,
+with (verses 12.3-4) ברחובות עיר כחלל בהתעטפם “in their fainting like the wounded in the broad places of the city” 369b-374a,
+and (verse 12.5-6) אל־חיק אמתם בהשתפך נפשם “in their pouring out their lives into their mothers bosom” 374b-375a.

TMLam. (verse 13)

(Verse 13.1) = E.R. (כא) מה אעידך מה אדמה־לך (כא) “What can I testify for you? What will I compare to you?” 375b-391a, + with (13.2) הבת ירושלי “O daughter of Jerusalem” 391b-392a.

(Verse 13.3) = E.R. (כב) מה אשוה־לך ואנחמך (כב) “what shall I equate to you, that I may comfort you” 392b-394a, +with (verse 13.4) בתולת בת־ציון “O virgin daughter of Zion” 394b-395a, +and (verse 13.5) כי־גדול כים שברך “for your break is great like the sea” +with (verse 13.6) מי ירפא לך “who will heal you” 395b-397.

TMLam. (verse 14)

(Verse 14.1/2) = E.R. (כג) שוה ותפל לך נביאיך חזו לך “Your prophets have seen for you visions of vanity and delusion” 398-402a, +with (verses 14.3-4) להשיב ולא־יגלו עלי־עונך “and they have not uncovered your iniquity, to bring back your captivity” 402b-403a, +and (verses 14.5-6) משאות שוא ומדוחים “but they have prophesied or your burdens of vanity and seduction” 403b-404a

TMLam. (verse 15)

(Verse 15.1) = E.R. (כד) ספקו עליך כפים “[All who pass by]clap their hands at you”, with (verses 15.3-4) שרקו וינעו ראשם עלי־בת ירושלים “they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem”, in contrast to (verse 15.6) משובש לכל־הארץ “the joy of all the earth” 404b-406a, +while (verse 15.5) הזאת העיר שִׁיאמרו כל־לילה יופי “is this the city which they called the perfection of beauty”, in contrast to Ezek. 27.3 408-410a, +and (verse 15.6) again 410b-412a.

TMLam. (verse 16)

(Verse 16.1) = E.R. (כה) “פצו עליך פיהם [All your enemies] have opened their mouth against you” 412b-413a.

TMLam. (verse 17)

(Verse 17.1) = E.R. (כו) עשה יהוה אשר זמם “The Lord has done what he has devised” 413b-416a, +with (verse 17.2) בצע אמרתו “he has performed his word” 416b-417a, +with (verses 17.5-6) וישמח עליך אויב הרים קרן צריך “and he has made the enemy rejoice over you, he has raised the horn of your foes” 417b-420a, +and (verse 18.1-3a) צעק לבם אל־אדני חומת בת־ציון הורידי וגוי “their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let (X) down” 420b.

TMLam. (verse 19)

(Verses 19.1/2) = E.R. (כז) קומי רוני בלילה לראש אשמורות “Rise up, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches” 420c-448a.

TMLam. (verse 20)

(Verse 20.1) = E.R. (כח) ראה יהוה והביטה “See, O Lord, and consider”+with 20.2) למי אמ־תאכלנה “to whom you have done this”, 448b-451a, +(verses 20.3-4) נשים פרים עללי טפחים “shall women eat their fruit, children in their hands” 451b-452a, +and (verses 20.5-6) כהן ונביא “should the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?” 452b-453a.

TMLam. (verse 21)

(Verse 21.1) = E.R. (כט) שכבו לארץ חוצות וגוי “Young and old] lie on the ground of the plazas” 453b-455a.

TMLam. (verse 22)

(Verses 22.1/2) = E.R. (ל) מגורי מסביב “You have called, as in day of appointment, my terrors all around” 455b-457a, +with (verses 22.3-4) ולא היה “and there is not, in the day of the anger of the Lord, an escaped one or a survivor” 457b-458a, +and (verses 22.5-6) אשר - טפחתי ורביתי “those whom I have nursed and multiplied, my enemy has consumed” 458b-459.

CONCLUSION

The analysis carried out above has focused on the main interpretive units targeted in E.R. These units are neither the text nor the stanza, but units based on the colon 98, that is

26+15+20+17+20 colas have been used as heads of the interpretation rubric, which seem to be a relevant category, against 87, which occur within the rubric. The next units are bicola, which are 45 as heads and 62 within the interpretative rubric. Tricola and units made up of more than three cola are 14. All these units preserve the poetic character of the present TMLamentations text,¹⁵⁷⁸ which forms the basis of literary forms of quite different nature. It will be demonstrated that *E. R.* relies on a theory of text and of text reading, which aims to target, select and address interesting text utterances, which help “release these meanings, especially those which the pressures of contemporary events made it most necessary to release¹⁵⁷⁹”. It is obvious that the literary and rhetorical structuration of all the five Chapters of the Book of Lamentations are taken into consideration. [See the appendix to next Chapter

¹⁵⁷⁸It is obvious with regard to the dealing of Eikhah Rabbati with the Biblical Book of Lamentations that the Massoretes codified later ancient traditions related to the division of this text.

¹⁵⁷⁹A. Mintz, *Hurban*, 49 - 50.

APPENDIX 2

Eikhah Rabbati Accounts of The Biblical Lamentations

The targeted colon, bicolon and tricolon of the Biblical Lamentations in *Eikhah Rab-bati*, see annex 1, are the head in the expounding procedure; the latter is completed by the claims (Sti), the anecdotes (A) and the *mashal(-im)* (M) related to the dependent colon, bicolon, and tricolon. The somehow irregular combination of these claims, anecdotes and *mashal(-im)*, due also to the fact that they are ascribed to the same or to different interpreter(s) and related or not to the same item, account for the compositional argument structure, symbolized by (+), of this *midrash*.

2.1.1. TMLam. 1, 1 - 11

Verse:

1. 1. איכה ישבה בדד : $Sti1 + M + Sti2 + Sti3 + M + S + Sti4 + Sti5$,
1. 2. העיר רבתי עם. : $A1 + A2 + M + *Sti1 + St2$,
1. 3. היתה כאלמנה : $Sti1 + S + M + *Sti2 + *Sti3$,
1. 4. רבתי בגוים : $A1 + A2 + A3$,
1. 5. שרתי במדינות : $Sti1-4$.
2. 1. בכו תבכה : $Sti1-16 + M + 17-24 + Sti1 + Sti2 + A$,
2. 2. דמעתה על לחיה : Sti ,
2. 3. אין לה מנחם : Sti ,
2. 5/6. כל רעיה בגדו בה היו לה לאיבים : Sti
3. 1. גלתה יהודה : $Sti + Sti1-6$,
3. 2. ומרוב עבודה : $Sti + /Sti + Sti1 + A + Ati2 + Sti1 -2 - A1 + A1-2^{1580}$
4. 1. דרכי ציון אבלות : $Sti1-3 + Sti + Sti1-3$.
5. 1. היו צריה לראש : $Sti1 + Sti2 + A$,
5. 3/4. כי יהוה הוגה על רוב פשעים. : $Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti1-5$.
6. 3. היו שריה כאילים : $Sti1-3$,
6. 5/6. וילכו בלא כח לפני רודף : $Sti1-2 + Sti3 + Sti4$.
7. 1/2. זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודה : $Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3-4 + Sti5-6 + Sti7-9$.
8. 1. חטא חטאה ירושלים : $Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3-4$.
9. 1. טמאתה בשוליה : $Sti1 + Sti2 + A + M + Sti1$,
9. 3. ותרד פלאים : $Sti2 + Sti1-2 + Sti3-4 + Sti5$.
10. 1. ידו פרש צר : $Sti1 + M + Sti2 - 5$.
11. 1. כל עמה נאנחים : $Sti1 + A + Sti2 - 3 + Sti1 - 2 + A$

2.1.2 TMLam. 1, 12 - 22

Verse:

12. 1a לא אליכם : $Sti + Sti + Sti + Sti$.

1580This *E. R.* heading has been differently worked out.

13. 1/2a. ממרון שלח אש בעצמותי : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti4 + Sti5 + Sti6 + Sti7 + Sti9 + Sti10 + Sti11 + Sti + Sti1-2 + Sti + Sti.
14. 1. נשקד עול פשעי בידו : Sti1-5 + Sti1-2 + Sti,
14. 4. הכשיל כחי : Sti1,
14. 5/6. נתנני אדני בידי לא אוכל קום : Sti1 + Sti2.
15. 1. סלה כל אבירי אדני : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3.
16. 1α. על אלה אני בוכיה : A1 + A2 + A3 + A4 + A5 + A6 + A7 + A8 + A9,
16. 1β. על אלה אני בוכיה : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti4 + Sti5 + Sti6,
16. 2. עיני עיני יורדה מים : M,
16. 3/4. כי רחוק ממני מנחם משיב נפשי : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti4 + A + Sti5 + Sti6 + Sti7 + Sti8 + Sti9.
16. 5/6. היו בני שוממים כי גבר אויב : Sti1 + Sti2.
17. 1. פרשה ציון בדידה : Sti + Sti + M1 + M2 + Sti1-7 + M + Sti + Sti + Sti.
18. 1/2. צדיק הוא יהוה כי פיהו מריתי : Sti.
19. 1. קראתי למאהבי המה רמוני : Sti1 + Sti2.
20. 1/2. מעי חמרמרו : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti + Sti + Sti.
21. 1. שמעו כי נאנחה אני : Sti1 + Sti2 + M + Sti.
22. 1/2. תבא כל רעתם לפניך ועולל למו : Sti1-2 + Sti.

2.2.1 TMLam. 2. 1 - 10

Verse:

1. 1. Proem. Job 30, 15: Sti1-4 + Deut. 8, 20a: Sti1-5,
1. 1/2. איכה יעיב בעפו אדני את בת ציון : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + M1 + M2,
1. 5. ולא זכר הדום רגליו : Sti1 + M + Sti2 + Sti.
2. Ez. 9, 5/6.1: Sti1 + Sti2 + Ez. 9, 2: Sti + Sti + Sti + Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Ez. 2, 4: Sti 1-5 + Ez. 9, 5-6.1.: Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti4 + Sti5,
2. 1/2. בלע אדני ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti + A1 + A2 + A3 + A4 + A5 + Sti4 + A6 + Sti5 + Sti6 + Sti7 + Sti8 + Sti9-10 + Sti 11 + A7 + A8 + Sti12-13 + Sti14-15 + Sti16-17,
2. 3/4. הרס בעברתו מבצרי בת יהודה : Sti + Sti + Sti1 + Sti2 + A + Sti.
3. 1/2. גדע בהרי אף כל קרן ישראל : Sti1 + Sti2,
3. 3/4. השיב אחור ימינו מפני צויב : Sti,
3. 5/6. יבער ביעקב כאש להבה אכלה סביבו : Sti.
4. 1. דרך קשתו כאויב : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti1 + Sti3 + Sti1 + Si2,
- 4.5/6. באהל בת ציון שפך כאש חמתו : Sti.
5. 1. היה אדני כאויב : Sti.
5. 2/3. בלע ישראל בלע כל ארמנותיה : Sti + Sti.
6. 1. ויחמוס כגן שכו : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti + Sti.
7. 1. זנה אדני מזבחו : M + Sti + Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti4.
8. 1/2. חשב יהוה להשחית חומת בת ציון : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti1 + Sti.
9. 1. טבעו בארץ שעריה : Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti + Sti1-2.
10. 1/2. ישבו לארץ ידמו זקני בת ציון : A-Sti + Sti + Sti.

2.2.2. TMLam. 2, 11 - 22

Verse:

11. 1. כלו בדמעות עיני : Sti1 + Sti2 + A + A.

Sti,

12. 1/2. לאמותם יאמרו איה דגן ויין : $Sti1 + Sti2 + A + Sti$.
13. 1. מה אעידך מה אדמה לך : $Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3 + Sti4 + Sti5 + A - Sti +$
13. 3. מה אשוה לך ואנחמך : $Sti1-2 + Sti + Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti3$.
14. 1/2. נביאיך חזו לך שוה ותפל : $Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti + Sti$.
15. 1. ספקו עליך כפים : $Sti + Sti + Sti + Sti$.
16. 1. פצובעליך פיהם : Sti .
17. 1. עשה יהוה אשר זמם : $Sti1 + Sti2 + Sti + Sti$.
19. 1/2. קומי רוני בלילה לראש אשמורות : $Sti1 + Sti2$.
20. 1. ראה יהוה ובהביטה : $A + Sti + Sti$.
21. 1. שכבו לארץ הוצות וגוי : Sti .
22. 1/2. תקרא כיום מועד מגורי מסביב : $Sti + Sti + Sti$.

APPENDIX 3

EIKHAH RABBATI INTERPRETATIVE FORMS OF THE BIBLICAL LAMENTATIONS

The units of the Biblical Lamentations taken from *E.R.* and outlined in Annexe I are interpreted by means of composite literary units. A striking feature of *E.R.* accounting for these units is that these units resort to the symbolic, which is either simply linguistic or elaborated and well delimited literary resources. There is no use of concepts or of other generalizing categories in order to deal with the meaning of the Biblical Lamentations. A simple and non-in-depth examination of the *E.R.* records readily detects different kinds of literary materials whose number varies from one quoted Lamentations verse to another, which mostly belongs to any of the three types of literary forms, which we briefly present here. Old Testament and Traditional statements, which are integrated in claims about the history of Israel as well as about the various issues related to religious and national matters, (hence known as **Sti** claims about “scripture - and - tradition - based interpretation claims”),¹⁵⁸¹ as well as anecdotic narratives (**A**)¹⁵⁸² and *meshalim* (**M**)-parables are all present in *E. R.*. They all, although different in their frames, bring their contribution to *E. R.* interpretative endeavour.

The identification criterion of a statement (**Sti**) is formally either (i) a simple Rabbi X says/said + “direct speech”, or (ii) the juxtaposition of statements, X says/said + “direct speech”, Rabbi Y says/said + direct speech”, etc. Generally, an anecdotic narrative (**A**)¹⁵⁸³ is introduced by the word “*ma`aseh*” in Hebrew, and “*ubeda*” in Aramaic. An anecdotic narrative appears sometimes as a more or less short story that elaborates upon a biblical text.

1581 This kind of explicative unit does not exhaust the use of the Thanak in *E.R.*, because all the other unit kinds rely more or less on the same scriptural basis, which assumes, however, different status!

1582 The homiletic - exegetical narrative, which is a mixture of homiletic units, exegesis and story, is dealt with as a composite of claims (**Stis**).

1583 The category ‘anecdote narrative’ (**A**) will include for reason of resemblance of form, content and rhetorical intent, the ‘*ma`aseh*’, called ‘*ubeda*’ in Aramaic, which is often entitled as such in the *E. R.* text, as well as the ‘homiletic-exegetical narrative’, all a little bit differently characterized in D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 237-246. Noteworthy is that J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narrative: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Four, *The Precedent and the Parable in Diachronic View*, Leiden/Boston 2003, 225 holds correctly *ma`aseh* and *mashal* as narratives, reducing the first to the natural halakhic programme of the earlier Rabbinic halakhic documents, such as Mishnah and Tosefta, while the second is deemed more appropriate to the aggadic-exegetical agenda of the late documents. We will see that they maintain a lot of their distinctive and specific features in *E. R.*.

A *mashal* (**M**)-parable is recognizable in most cases by its introductory formulae such as *mashal le, mashal lemah haddavar domeh le, le*, (i.e., “it is like”), *melekh basar wedam* (i.e., “a king of flesh-and-blood”, or “a mortal king”), or *benohag sheba`olam, minhago shel`olam*, (i.e., “custom of the world”). A *mashal* is generally constituted of (i) a fictionalized and symbolic story, the *mashal* - proper, followed by (ii) a comparative narrative, which is introduced by the particle *kakh* (i.e., “similarly”, “likewise”, “so”), and in which the *mashal* - proper is somewhat retold, compared to (*nimshal*),¹⁵⁸⁴ and better applied to an *ad hoc* situation. The similes (**S**)¹⁵⁸⁵ are related to parables mentioned earlier in the paragraph above. However, the simple formula “X is comparable to” used for similes, defines specifically their characteristic form.

The object of this appendix is (i) to expose, in a material fashion, the catalogue of the different literary forms used, and (ii) to present the first, and quasi-organic evidence of the complementary and strategic relationships that exist between these different literary forms, when expounding the Biblical Lamentations. The apparently sketchy frame which characterizes such a scheme does not give, at first glance, any insight into the semantic relationship that the different explanatory components hold to each other within the same unit. A semantic coherence does exist in this scheme, owing to the perceptive contiguity and the sequential arrangement of the components, which give to *E. R.* the characteristic *midrashic* literary traits that distinguish it in the form, for instance, from a *targum* that is related to the same Lamentations book.¹⁵⁸⁶

In the present work, we will (i) search for these literary forms in the five chapters of *E. R.* resulting from the expounding of the Book of Lamentations, and (ii) examine, study and catalogue the concerned forms in this Chapter, prior to discussing their contribution to *E. R.* conception of history.

3.1 *Eikhah Rabbati* And Chapter One Of Lamentations

¹⁵⁸⁴See extended data below, and detailed information in D. Stern, “Rhetoric and Midrash: The Case of the Mashal”, in *Prooftext* vol 1 (1981), idem, *Parables in Midrash*, 8, 22f.

¹⁵⁸⁵They are in really negligible amount.

¹⁵⁸⁶These facts do not override the common traits the *midrash* has with the *targum*, such as the Bible as God’s revelation valid for all the times, the methods and the concept of the biblical text, mentioned briefly in the Introduction.

This Chapter will have the same character of a findings register as this is reported in Annexe I. The intent is to come close to the object of this research. The first main divisions of the *E. R.* text, which will be defined hereafter, rely on G. Stemberger's presentation of the components¹⁵⁸⁷ of some selected *midrashim* texts, except that we do not translate our specimen, neither describe their content, all issues, which will be dealt with below. The very interest of the work carried out in this heading consists in displaying the typical feature of the rabbinic *midrash* that history is also made by various interpreters belonging to different times that account not without alluding to their backgrounds with often varying means und contrasting understandings for the same biblical text.

TMLam.1, Verse 1

Verse 1.1: *E.R.* (א) איכה יושבה בודד “*How lonely sits*”, is expounded from line 1 to line 41a. This *E.R.* explanation is made up of the following units:

1. A series of Scripture- and tradition-based interpretations (**Sti1**) recorded by *E. R.* in statements ascribed to Moses (Deut 1, 12), Isaiah (Is. 1,21) and Jeremiah on *eikhah* (Lam. 1,1), (lines 1-3),
2. R. Levi (A3)'s *mashal*¹⁵⁸⁸ (**M1**) on a matron, (lines 4 - 8a),
3. Ben Azzai (T2)'s interpretation on the basis of the numerical value of *eikhah* (**Sti2**) (lines 8b-10a), and R Levi (A3)'s finding on the numeral value of *eikhah* and *badad* (**Sti3**), (lines 10b-11a),
4. R. Berekhyah (A5)'s *mashal* (**M2**) in the name of R. Abdimi of Haifa (A/third century)¹⁵⁸⁹ on the double (mis-)treatment of a son by his king-father adds another interpretation to “*How does the city sit alone - badad*”, (lines 11b - 17a), R. Simai (T5/A1)¹⁵⁹⁰ intervening, line 15,
5. Rab Nachman (bA3)'s report of Samuel (bA1)'s likeness - simile (**S**) in the name of R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1), on a king's mourning because his son is dead (lines

1587See G. Stemberger, *Midrasch. Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel*, 1989, 44 - 204, for *E. R.* 1, 1 - 5. 109 - 116.

1588The *mashal* will be described as sketched above and for heuristic reason on the basis of its concept propounded by D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 1991, 8: it is made up of a fictional narrative, the *mashal*-proper, and of the narrative's application, the *nimshal*. “Both the *mashal*-proper and the *nimshal* begin with formulaic phrases: “it is like” (*mashal le* or a variant), and “similarly” (*kakh*).” Noteworthy is that Aristotle, *The “Art” of Rhetoric*, Cambridge/London ([1926] 1975), II, xx. 3-5, 275-6 reports a fable of Stesichorus and another of Aesop as examples, which exhibit this frame of the *mashal*.

1589He was, indeed, an amora of the third century, see W. Bacher, *Die Aggada der palästinen-sichen Amoräer. III.*

1590W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten. Zweiter Band: Von Akiba's Tod bis zum Abschluss des Mishnah*, 534 - 546 reports on the tannaite - but for Frankel, footnote a, one of the first amoras Simai. See also J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia. II. The Early Sasanian Period*, Leiden 1966, 160.

17 - 30a). R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A/third century)¹⁵⁹¹ explains just a word, (lines 26 - 27).

6. Supplementary claims (**Sti4**) on “*eikhah* does the city sit solitary” are made by 1. Jeremiah’s rebuking Israel for idolatry (lines 30 - 35), 2. R. Yehudah (T3) (lines 36b - 37a) and R. Nehemiah (T3) (lines 37b - 39a) make statements, warning or Lament (**Sti5**), on the very nature of the Book of Lamentations. This debate goes on with R. Yehudah (T3) (lines 39c - 40a) and R. Nehemiah (T3) (lines 40b - 41a) discussing the moment the Lamentations Book was composed, to give support to their claims. It is obvious that this confrontation addresses the accusation of idolatry.

Verse 1.2: *E.R.* (ב) העיר רבתי עם “*the city full of people*” is expounded in lines 41b - 77 as follows:

0. R. Samuel (T2)¹⁵⁹²’s tannaitic narrative unit (**A1**) on the populous human geography of Jerusalem, (lines 42 - 45a).
1. R. Eleazar (A3)¹⁵⁹³’s narrative ‘*ubeda*’ (**A2**) on commercial wealth of Jerusalem, lines 45b - 61a),
2. R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1)¹⁵⁹⁴’s *mashal* (**M**) (lines 61b - 66) preceded by the Compiler’s rhetorical question on the multitude of people in Jerusalem (lines 61b - 62a).
3. It is followed by a claim (**Sti1**) (line 67) from a mishnaic tradition supported by two illustrative *baraitot* on the religious praxis in Jerusalem (lines 68 - 74a), with a supplement of information brought by R. Chijja (T5)¹⁵⁹⁵ and by Bar Qappara (T5),¹⁵⁹⁶ lines 71b - 74a. These *baraitot* are structurally part of the *Mashal*??, but they will not be dealt with along with it for reasons of formal differences.
A Compiler’s unit (**Sti2**) on the abundant fertility in Israel ends all this range of units (lines 74b - 77) used in the accounting for this colon.

Verse 1.3 : *E. R.* (ג) היתה כאלמנה “*she has become like a widow*”, lines 78 - 96a:

1591According to W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensichen Amoräer*. III, Anhang.

1592It is thought of the tannaite Samuel the Small, although the amora Samuel cannot be ruled out. It is rather the amora who quotes a tannaitic tradition (a tanna would not have to say that his own saying is tannaitic).

1593We can assume that this is the amora Eleazar ben Pedat (A3), “usually without the patronym”, according to Stack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. 1996, 89.

1594This is the translator’s amendment to the Hebrew ריב"ל ר' יהושע דסכנין בשם ריב"ל R. Yehoshua of Siknin in the name of R. Yehoshua b. Levi.

1595Probably R. Chiyya the Elder (Ruba or Rabba) bar Abba (T3/A3), see H. L. Stack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 82.

1596This is R. Eleazar ben Eleazar ha-Qappar, also R. Eleazar ha-Qappar be Rabbi, in Strack/ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 82.

1. R. Abba b. Kahana (A3)'s 'lexical'¹⁵⁹⁷ claims (**Sti1**) in search for a status, widow or not, for Israel, (lines 78b - 85a),
2. R. Chama b. Uqba (A/third century')¹⁵⁹⁸s simile (**S**) on widow's mild demand (lines 85b2 - 87a), followed by the Rabbis' *mashal* (**M**) on the king's capricious provision in regard to his wife (lines 87b - 93b1),
3. R. Aqiba (T2) (**Stib2**) and the Rabbis' claims (**Stib3**) on the very widowhood of Israel (lines 93b2 - 96a). These claims are, formally and on the basis of their content, extended part of the explanation of the *mashal*. They will be handled there

Verse 1.4: *E. R.* (ה) רבתי בגוים “(she that was) great over the nations” is expounded lines 96b - 328a in seventeen topics, all dealt with between *E.R.* (ה) and (כ):

1. An Introduction claim (**Sti**) made by the Compiler propounding a new semantic content: the verse 2.1 העיר רבתי עם is said to be expounded as רבתי בדעות / רבתי בגוים “great among the nations / great in wisdom”, to avoid repeating the meaning of Lam 1,1.2 עם רבתי “the city full of people” of (lines 96b - 97a),
2. R. Huna (A4)¹⁵⁹⁹s eleven ‘riddling narratives’ (Ben-Amos) (**A1**)¹⁶⁰⁰ in the name of R. Yose (T2/T3¹⁶⁰¹/A3,¹⁶⁰² numbered lines 97b - 230a, in which Jerusalemite (s) competes on matters pertaining to wisdom with inhabitants from the province (lines 97b - 133a)¹⁶⁰³ and from Athens (133b - 230a), with R. Yochanan (T1)¹⁶⁰⁴ making some claims, lines 192b - 197a.
3. Narratives accounting for seventeen dreams (**A2**) come next (lines 230a - 303a), and are successively interpreted as follows: nine (lines 230b - 263a) by a Samaritan and by R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (T4),¹⁶⁰⁵ three (lines 262b - 273a) by

1597The Hebrew כ “like” is a preposition of comparison, and we know that for being inert, prepositions are not held by modern linguists for lexical categories, see D. J. Napoli, *Linguistics*, New York/Oxford 1996, 178. Lexical claim means however a claim which focuses on a preposition as a word.

1598His name is reported on a list of the third century Amoraim annexed to W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensichen Amoräer*. III. Strasburg, 1899, reprinted Hildesheim, 1965.

1599There is, however, no evident indication in the text, that all the riddle narratives and the dream records which follow, have to be ascribed to R. Huna (A4). The latter, for instance, are overloaded with interpretive performances ascribed to different Rabbis.

1600All the symbols A1, A2, A3 have to be considered as collective and composed entities.

1601See Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 76: “R. Yose ben Chalafta, in M always simply R. Yose”.

1602Yose (Assi) or another Yose (A4) about whom it is said that he was with the aforementioned R. Huna (A4) one of the leading authorities of the school of Tiberias, see Strack/ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 94.

1603It is accounted for by means of an unique narrative.

1604A least according to the Buber edition.

1605It is about R. Ishmael b. R. Yose ben Chalafta (T4).

R. Ishmael (T2/T3),¹⁶⁰⁶ two (lines 273b - 282a) by R. Yochanan (A2), one (lines 282b - 288a) by R. Yose b. Chalafta (T3), two (lines 288b - 291a) by R. Eleazar (T3/T3), one (lines 291b - 297a) firstly by R. Eleazar's students, secondly by R. Eleazar himself who closes this rubric, together with claims from R. Yochanan (A2) and R. Abbahu (A3) (lines 297b-305a), on a theory of dream interpretation.

4. Narrative (*ma'aseh*): R. Yehoshua (T2)'s odyssey¹⁶⁰⁷ (A3) can be considered as building the conclusion to this narrative series, (lines 305b - 328a).

Verse 1.5 : E. R. שְׂרָתִי בַּמְדִּינוֹת (כא) “(she that was) the princess among the provinces” goes together with (verse 1.6) הִיָּתָה לִמָּס “has become a payer of tribute”. Both are expounded in two parts, firstly, by means of claims, lines 328b - 345a and, secondly, on the ground of the form and the content, lines 360b - 388a¹⁶⁰⁸:

1. R. Yochanan (A2), R. Ishmael b. Nachman, R. Berekhyah (A5) and the Rabbis' claims (Sti1) based on the paronomasia and the numeral value of *Lamas*, lines 328b - 333a,
2. R. Uqba (A?)¹⁶⁰⁹'s finding (Sti2) on the basis of Jer. 11, 15 and Prov. 17,5 lines 333b - 341a,
3. R. Yehudah (T3)'s claim (Sti3) on the use of alphabetical acrostic in the composition of the Book of Lamentations, lines 342b - 344a, followed firstly by R. Nechemyah (T3)'s proof (Sti4) claiming that Isaiah has already healed the curses that will be prophesied by Jeremiah by means of alphabetical acrostic, lines 344b - 360a, secondly by R. Yehudah b R. Simon (A4), R. Aibo (A4), and the Rabbis, who prove the same claim, lines 360b - 386a, as announced lines 341-342

TMLam.1, Verse 2

¹⁶⁰⁶This name holds for R. Ishmael ben Elisha (T2), according to Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 71 and for R. Ishmael (T3), son of Yochanan ben Broqa, ibidem, 78. But the parallel version of these dreams in Yerushalmi, *Maaser sheni iv*, 9 [26a - 27b] has R. Ishmael b. R. Yose (ben Chalafta) (T4).

¹⁶⁰⁷This term is from the English version of G. Hasan-Rokem, *The Web of Life-Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, 191; the Greek Odysseus came to mean a return back home, while nothing similar is said on R. Yehoshua's journey. Noteworthy is the fact that the same *ma'aseh* narrative, a bit different in the frame, is ascribed in *b Er. 53b* to R. Yehoshua b. Chananyah, see below.

¹⁶⁰⁸The fact of the two parts in the explanation is, however, artificial, as it can be seen in S. Buber (edit.), *Midrasch Echa Rabbati*, 1899, 56 - 58. Formally, the list of alphabetically ordained sentences starting in line 360 has been announced in line 344. For the content, see further.

¹⁶⁰⁹See in this regard W. Bacher, *Tradition und Tradenten in den Schulen Palästinas und Babyloniens*, 502: “Aussprüche der babylonischen Amoräer werden im palästinensischen Talmud oft angeführt (...). Und zwar, sind es zunächst folgende palästinensische Amoräer, die Sätze im Namen des dortigen Gelehrten tradieren: Ukba...”

Verse 2.1: *E.R.* בכי תבכה (כב) “*She bitterly weeps*” is expounded in three rubrics; the first rubric, (כב), lines 345b-353a, relies on the Ps. 42,4, the second rubric (כג) is made up of two paragraphs; the first paragraph, lines 359a-386a, is based on the Ps.77,7, and the second, lines 386b-426, is built on Ps. 77, 7 - 11. The third rubric is focused on the grammatical features of this predicate, lines 426b-439a. And the prepositional phrase (כה) (בלילה) “*in the night*”, is however, expounded separately, lines 439b-444a, but see also lines 390b-393a for the dealing with a similar utterance.

1. The issue of tear as food and hardship is rendered by means of Ps.42, 4 first by R. Acha (A4) (**Sti1**) and Rabbis claims (**Sti2**), lines 346b-348a, and secondly, on the basis of Ezek 12,3, explained by R. Chiyba b. Abba (T5)¹⁶¹⁰ (**Sti3**) and R. Simeon b. Chalafta (T5)¹⁶¹¹ (**Sti4**), lines 348b - 359a.
2. The pain which causes the weeping of the Community of Israel is reflected upon on the basis of Ps. 77,7.1α by R. Aibo (A4) on Israel being broken (**Sti5**),¹⁶¹² (lines 387b-389a), by R. Yehudah (A4)¹⁶¹³ on Israel’s songs in the nights of the past (**Sti6**)¹⁶¹⁴ (lines 389b-390a), and by the Compiler in reference to three successful nights (**Sti**) to expound לילה “*night*”, lines 390b-393a,
- 2.2. Ps. 77,7.1β -8 by the Compiler questioning on God’s appeasement will (**Sti8**), lines 393b-398,
- 2.3. Ps. 77, 9.1 by R. Reuben (A4)¹⁶¹⁵’s claim (**Sti9**), by R. Chanina b. Pappa (A3) (**Sti10**) and by R. Simon (A3) (**Sti11**) repeating the same questioning, lines 399-402a.
- 2.4. Ps. 77,10.1 by the Compiler carrying on the questioning of God’s grace (**Sti12**), lines 402b-403,
- 2.5. Ps. 77,10.2. by the Compiler insisting on God’s grace (**Sti13**), lines 404-405,
- 2.6. Ps. 77,11.1 interpreted in connection with Ps. 77,11.2 a) by R. Alexander (A2) (**Sti14**) and R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) by means of lexical explanation (**Sti15**), lines 406b-408a, b) by R. Simon (A3) who produces an allegory on the revolution of the sun (**Sti16**), lines 408b-409a, c) by R. Isaac (A3) by means of a *mashal* (M), lines 409b-413a,

1610It should be thought of this one, because of the next tannaite, see footnote, although an amora of the third generation (A3) does exist.

1611”Chiyba’s friend”, according to Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 82.

1612This seems to be the very intent of quoting Gen 14, 20; see the translator’s comment *ad. loc.*

1613It is about R. Yehudah bar Simon (A3), son of Simon ben Pazzi (A2), as said in Strack/-Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, p. 94, appearing in *PT* in the short form Yehudah ben Pazzi, “and frequently just R. Yehudah”, see W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästiniensichen Amoräer*. III. Strassburg 1899, reprinted Hildesheim 1965, 160-220.

1614The claims (Stib1 and Stib2) are made on the basis of a paronomasic relationship with גִּיתָי in Ps 77,7.

1615W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästiniensichen Amoräer*. III. Strassburg ([1899] 1965), 79-86.

- 2.7. Ps. 77,11.2 by R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) in the name of and together with R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) on a undeniable message of hope (**Sti17**), lines 413b-416.

The double quality, either frivolous or real, of the weeping (**Sti18**), is spelled out by R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3), who illustrates the frivolous weeping (**Sti19**), while R. Aibo (A4) (**Sti20**) and R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) (**Sti21**) instanced the real weeping, held according to R. Aibu to be rewarded (**Sti22**), lines 417-426a.

3. The grammatical structure made of the Hebrew infinitive absolute (בכו) and of its following finite תבכה is expounded by means of mentioning the three uneven pairs of reason Israel wept in the past (**Sti23**), lines 426b-428a.

The same item בכו תבכה is eventually expounded (**Sti24**) by the Compiler on the basis of the grammatical frame בכו ומבכה (one time (i.e. 1x)), בוכה ומבכה (3x) and בכו בוכה ומבכה, used in the enumeration of the seven protagonists involved in the process of weeping, with the comments of R. Zeira (A3/A5),¹⁶¹⁶ R. Berekhyah (A5), R. Pinchas (A5), R. Huna (A4 in the name of R. Nechemyah (T3)), lines 428b-439a.

The autonomous unit (verse 2.1β) E. R. בלילה (כה) “in the night” is expounded by means of the Compiler and R. Aibu (A4)’s claims (**Sti1-2**), as well as of a narrative (A) which explains with the support of Rabban Gamaliel (T2/T5)’s case why the phrase “in the night” is mentioned in the context of “weeping”, lines 439b-444a.

Verse 2.2 : E.R. (כו) דמעתה על לחיה “her tears on her cheeks” is the occasion for the interpreter to make a claim (**Sti**) in which four categories of privileged victims¹⁶¹⁷ of the catastrophe, are mentioned, lines 444b-450a.

Verse 2.3 : E.R. (כו) אין לה מנחם “*she has none to comfort her*” deserves also only an optimistic claim (**Sti**) made by R. Levi (A3), which is based on its grammatical structuration, lines 450b-455a. That (verse 2.4) מכול־אהביה is wanting in E.R. (= E.R. (-)) is possibly due to the fact that love as such was not possible at that time!

Verse 2.5/6 : E.R. (כה) היו לה כל־רעיה בגדו בה “*all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her...*” is expounded by R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A 3rd century) on the basis of a traditional claim (**Sti**), lines 455b-456a.

¹⁶¹⁶See data and literature on the two amoras in Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 90.

¹⁶¹⁷This is the result of a conscious choice, when we recall that לחי “jaw” occurs at least seventeen times in the Tanak, see for indication Peultier, Etienne, Gantois (ed.), *Concordantiarum universae scripturae sacrae thesaurus*, 1939, 716, col. 2-3, “maxilla”.

TMLam.1, Verse 3

Verse 3.1 = *E.R.* גלתה יהודה (כט) “*Yehudah is gone into exile*” is held by the Compiler as presenting the harsh conditions of Judah’s travelling into exile (**Sti**), lines 456b-462. The immediate following expounding of מעוני “*because of affliction*”¹⁶¹⁸ focuses on five biblical dispositions, the fifth being explained by R. Bibi (bA3) and Rab Huna (bA3) in the name of Rab (bA1), and on one rabbinic ordinance. The latter is held by R. Acha (A4) and R. Yehudah (A4) in the name of R. Yose (A3)¹⁶¹⁹ with a biblical support (**Sti1-6**) whose transgression is said to be the cause of the Community of Israel going into exile, lines 463-471.

Verse 3.2 : *E.R.* ומרוב עבודה (ל) “*and because of great servitude*” is expounded by means of R. Acha (A4)’s claim (**Sti**) that not liberating the Hebrew slaves has to be counted among the causes of exile, lines 472-473a, while R. Yudan b. R. Nechemyah (A4)¹⁶²⁰ explains in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (2) (**Sti**) why the verse 3.3-4 : *E.R.* היא יושבה בגוים “*she dwells among the nations, and she finds no rest*” is right, lines 473b-476a. The explanation of the verse 3.5-6 : *E.R.* כל־רדפיה השִׁיגוּהָ בֵּין הַמַּצְרִים “*all her pursuers have overtaken her within the straits*” is made first, of the reference to the geographical place provided by Ben Nannus (T2)¹⁶²¹ in the Mishnah (**Sti1**) (lines 476b-477a), and secondly, of Ketheb Meriri’s encompassing narrative (A)¹⁶²² presented on the basis of Ps. 91,6 by the Compiler (lines 477b-479a), by R. Abba B. Kahana (A3) and by R. Levi (A3) (**Sti2**), lines 479b-482a, while R. Yochanan (A2) and R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2)’s claims (**Sti1-2**), an anecdote (*ma’aseh*) (A1) and reports (**A1-2**) related to R. Abbahu (A3), R. Yochanan (A2) and R. Samuel b. Nachmani, (A3) describe the demon Ketheb Meriri and his destructive actions, lines 482b-493a.

TMLam.1, Verse 4

Verse 4.1 : *E.R.* דרכי ציון אבלות (לא) “*The ways of Zion do mourn*” is expounded by R. Huna (A4), R. Ammi (A3) and R. Abdimi of Haifa (A/third century) by means of three claims (**Sti1-3**), which document a situation of disbandment, the last claim being supported by the verse 4.2 : *E. R.* (-) מבלי באי מועד “*without anyone going to the appointed feast*” and by the verse 4.3 כל שעריה שוממין “*all her gates are desolate*”, lines 493b-500a. The immediate following verse 4.4 כהניה נאנחים “*her priests sigh*” is explained by the

¹⁶¹⁸The translation of מעוני in “because” is a discussed issue. See below.

¹⁶¹⁹Usually, R. Yose (A3) for R. Assi, but also Assa, Assi or Issi, in Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 90.

¹⁶²⁰W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III*, 237, footnote 3 claims indeed that nothing related to the origin and to the familial relationship of the amora of the fourth century is known.

¹⁶²¹A tannaite, whose complete name is “Simeon b. Nanos”, see numerous quotations in *Mishnah, (The)*, transl. by H. Dandy, Oxford 1989, Appendix III, 799.

¹⁶²²The category ‘encompassing narrative (A)’ helps maintain distinct the claim and narrative components ascribed to different utterers, and which make the unique narrative, see below.

mention of the biblical law (**Sti4**) that has been allegedly neglected, lines 500b-502a, while the related verse 4.5 בתולותיה נוגות “*her virgins are afflicted*” is the occasion of three claims (**Sti1-3**) made by R. Isaac b. R. Simon (A),¹⁶²³ R. Samuel (A4) in the name of R. Isaac (A3), and by the Compiler, who specify the suffering persons, the last category being supported by the verse 4.6 והיא מר לה “*and she (is) in bitterness*”, lines 502b-505a.

TMLam.1, Verse 5

Verse 5.1 : *E.R.* (לב) היו צריה לראש “*Her foes have become as chief*” is expounded (i) by R. Hillel b. Berekhyah (A5)¹⁶²⁴ s claim (**Sti1**) on the status enhancing effect the destruction of Jerusalem has had on its performers as well as on the concurrent cities, lines 506b-509a, (ii) in connection with the verse 5.2 אויביה שלו “*her enemies are at ease*”, by the indication of the two pairs of the military leaders who carried out the first and the second destruction of Jerusalem (**Sti 2**), lines 509b - 510a, and (iii) by a series of anecdotes (A) which show R. Yochanan b. Zakkai (T1)’s spiritual ascendancy on Jewish rebels and on Roman generals during the Second Jewish war, lines 510b - 573a.

Verses 5.3/4 : *E.R.* (לג) כי יהוה הוגה על רוב פשעיה (לג) “*for the Lord has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions*” gives the reason (**Sti 1**) for Zion being afflicted, lines 573b - 574a, while R. Yehudah (A4) finds in the verse 5.5 / 6 שבי לפני צר “*her children have gone away, captives before the adversary*” the comforting claim (**Sti 2**), supported, as demonstrated by R. Acha (A4) and by the verse TMLam.1, 6.1 ויצא מן בת ציון “*from the daughter of Zion has departed*”, by the fact that the *Shekhinah* accompanied the children of the Community of Israel into exile, lines 574b - 577a. The same R. Yehudah (A4)’s claim (**Sti 2**) is repeated with the support of the same proof-text, this time as the fifth expounding item (**Sti 1-5**)¹⁶²⁵ to the verse 6.2 כל הדרה “*all her splendour*” with, lines 577b - 586a.

TMLam.1, 6.1/2) is interpreted above in *E. R.* (לג) lines 579 - 588a.

TMLam.1, Verse 6.3f

Verse 6.3 : *E.R.* (לד) היו שריה כאילים “*Her rulers have become like harts*” is expounded by means of three claims (**Sti 1-3**), the first two made by R. Yehudah (A4) with the support of the Scriptures are related to the opposite qualities ‘tender versus hard-hearted’; the third is a rabbinic one. It is ascribed to R. Simon (A3) that held it in the name of R.

¹⁶²³W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III*, Anhang xxiii counts him among the Amoraim “from undetermined time”.

¹⁶²⁴He belongs to the Amoraim of the fourth century, see W. Bacher, *Die Agada der paläst-nensischen Amoräer. III*, Anhang xxii.

¹⁶²⁵It is part of a series made of the Holy One, blessed be He, the Sanhedrin, the disciples of the Sages, and the priestly watches.

Simeon b. Abba,¹⁶²⁶ and to Simeon b. Laqish (A2) in the name of R. Yehoshua (T2), commenting about the irresponsibility of the Leaders of Israel for not having cared when the law was transgressed, lines 586b - 592a.

Verse 6.5/6 : *E.R.* (לה) “and they have gone without strength before the pursuer” is said, (i) by R. Azaryah (A5) in the name of R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) and by the latter in the name of R. Levi b. R. Tarfon (A3), to be the consequence of Israel transgressing the will of the Omnipresent (**Sti 1-2**), (ii) by R. Huna (A4), R. Acha (A4), R. Simon (A3) in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2), and the Rabbis in the name of R. Chanina (T1/A1/3), to be due to Israel neglecting the teaching of the Scriptures and the traditional Mishnah (**Sti 3**), while R. Acha (A4) draws from an orthographic spelling feature the promise of complete redemption (**Sti 4**), lines 592b - 604a.

TMLam.1, Verse 7

Verse 7.1/2 : *E.R.* (לו) “Jerusalem remembered the days of her affliction and wandering” is expounded by the interpreter by means of the reorganization of the syntax of this Biblical colon, making the first coordinated direct object “ימי עניה ומרודיה” “the days of her affliction” become an indication of time “in the days of her affliction” to conform to the new and guilty semantic content (**Sti 1**), the accusation of “rebellion”, of the second coordinated direct object (מרודיה understood as “rebellion”, not “wandering”). This culpability relies (**Sti 2**) on the new content of the verse 7.3 כל מחמדיה “all her desirable things”, that is “the words of the Torah”. This context of guilt allows the Babylonian and Palestinian Rabbis to explain the verse 7.5 “when her people fall by the hand of the foe” as describing Israel’s punishment (**Sti3 - 4**) and the verse 7.6 ואין עוזר לה “and there is none to help her” as picturing Israel, bride and son, in troubles (**Sti 5-6**), lines 604b-610a. It is within the same ideologically marked context that four claims (**Sti7 -10**), two based on the Bible, and two on the rabbinic tradition, are made to expound the verse 7.7 - 8 ראוה צרים שחקו “the foes have seen her, they have mocked at her downfall”, lines 610b - 612.

TMLam.1, Verse 8

Verse 8.1 : *E. R.* (לז) “Jerusalem has sinned grievously” is the occasion for the interpreter to characterize Israel’s sin (**Sti1**) as leading to consequences illustrated, for instance, (i) paronomastically by the vagabondage, rendered (**Sti2**), verse 8.2: על כן “therefore she has become as an object of derision”, and (ii) in the fact (**Sti3-4**), verses 8.3-6: כי ראו ערותה “all who honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns backward”. These verses are said to mean the loss of priesthood and kingship, lines 613 - 616a.

¹⁶²⁶He was the presumed brother of R. Chiyya b. Abba (A3), with whom he belonged to the narrow circle of R. Zochanan (A2) in Tiberias, according to W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensichen Amoräer*, II, 201.

TMLam.1, Verse 9

Verse 9.1 : *E.R.* (לח) טמאתה בשוליה “*Her uncleanness was in her skirts*” is explained by R. Berekyah (A5)’s general claim in the name of R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) on the priests in the days of king Zedekyah (**Sti1**), which is followed by a specifying claim (**Sti2**), both of which are based on Scriptures, whereas the third is a *baraita*, i.e., a traditional narrative (**A**) on the idolatry of Israel, lines 616b - 632a. The same topic is further expounded in the following *mashal* (**M**) uttered by R. Yudan b. R. Simon (4/third century)¹⁶²⁷ in the name of R. Levi b. Partha (A/3rd century),¹⁶²⁸ lines 632b - 637a. The subsequent verse 9.3 *E.R.* ותרד פלאים “*therefore has she gone down wonderfully*”, held for syntactically related to the previous *mashal*, is interpreted by a claim (**Sti 1**) in which the sufferings of Israel are surprisingly considered as trials, line 637b.

The above same verse 9.3 : *E.R.* (לט) ותרד פלאים “*Therefore has she gone down wonderfully*” is expounded once again, and this time in connection with Deut. 28, 59 and Isa. 29, 14, by an old man when R. Yochanan (A2) and R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) went to pay their last respects to R. Yose of Milchaya (A2). The claim of this old man (**Sti2**) appears to introduce the verse 9.5-6 עניי כי הגדיל אויב “*behold, O Lord, my affliction, for the enemy has glorified himself*”, lines 638-648a. The latter verse is interpreted, on its side, on the basis of Ps. 119, 85, by means of two claims of R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) (**Sti1 -2**), lines 649b - 653a, two claims of R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) (**Sti 3-4**), lines 653b - 658a, and by a concluding claim of R. Berekyah (A5) (**Sti5**), lines 658b - 667a. All these claims are based on identical motifs, see following chapter below.

TMLam.1, Verse 10

Verse 10.1 : *E.R.* (מ) ידו פרש צר “*The enemy has spread out his hand*” is expounded first by means of a claim (**Sti1**),¹⁶²⁹ thematically identical to content of the rubric (לט), made by the Interpreter, lines 667 - 670a. Next, follows the *mashal* (**M**) ascribed to R. Yehudah b. Simon (A4) in the name of R. Levi b. Partha (A 3rd century), lines 670b - 674a; this *mashal* is related to the same topic. Sixteen biblical quotations divided in three series to support four claims (**Sti2-5**) address afterwards the very controversial nature of the relationship between Abraham and Lot, that is, between their descendants, Israel, Ammon and Moab, lines 674b - 695a.

TMLam.1, Verse 11

1627See W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. III. Anhang xxi:” Verschiedene Amoräer des dritten Jahrhunderts.”

1628 W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. III. Anhang xxi.

1629J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Narratives: A Documentary Perspective*. Volume Four, Leiden/ Boston, 2003, analyzes it as a narrative (A).

Verse 11.1 : *E.R.* (מא) כל עמה נאנחים “*All her people sigh*” is expounded by the Interpreter on the basis of Jer 52, 6 by means of a claim (**Sti1**) on the victims of hunger, and by means of a narrative (**A**) on the significance of the said hunger, lines 695b-704a. The topic of hunger is further explained by two claims (**Sti 2-3**) made by R. Yehudah b. Signa (A5) in the name of R. Acha (A4). They will be dealt together with this preceding story. R. Chananyah (T1/2/ A3/5) and R. [Yehudah-ha Nasi] (T4) start from the following verse 11.2β: להשיב נפש “*to bring back the soul*” to make claims (**Sti-2**) on the required food, lines 704b-705a, while R. Pinchas (A5)’s *ubedah-ma`aseh* (**A**) accounts for the verse 11.3: ראה יהוה והביטה כי הייתי זוללה “*see, O Lord, and behold, how abject I am*” as an instance of the physical and moral damages caused by hunger, lines 705b - 710a.

TMLam.1, Verse 12

Verse 12.1a : *E.R.* (מב) לא אליכם “*Let it not come to you*” is expounded by the Interpreter as a claim-request (**Sti**) of the Community of Israel comparing its fate to the fate of idolatrous nations, which are deemed as addressed and characterized in (**Sti**), verse 12.1β: כל עוברי דרך “*all you who pass by*”. Next verse 12.2: הביטו וראו “*behold and see*” is, however, considered by the Interpreter as illustrating, on the basis of a *mishnaic* tradition,¹⁶³⁰ the greater pain (**Sti**) done to Israel, as supported by the paronomasic interpretation of the verse 12.2 - 4: לי: “*behold and see if there is any pain like my pain which is done to me*” (**Sti**), lines 710b - 717a. The reason is that Israel did not repent even one day (**Sti**), as R. Acha (A4) puts it in his comment of verse 12.5-6: ביום חרון אפו “*with which the Lord has afflicted me in the day of his burning anger*”, lines 717b - 718a.

TMLam.1, Verse 13

Verse 13.1/2a: *E.R.* (מג) ממרום שלח אש בעצמותי “*From on high he has sent fire into my bones*” is expounded by means of a homiletic - exegetical narrative¹⁶³¹ made of (i) two rubrics focused on Ps 71, 19a, מרום עד מרום “*Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heights*” and (ii) by means of a series of simple and homiletic claims. The first rubric begins with R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3)’s claim (**Sti1**) that it is necessary for the beings of the celestial world to practise righteousness one to another as lower creatures do; this is in response to R. Ammi (A3)’s request of an *aggadah* on Ps. 71, 19a, lines 719 - 722a. This move of R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3) is followed by a proof claim (**Sti2**) propounded by R. Yochanan (A2) in the name of R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) on Ez. 10, 2.7b. R. Isaac (A3) adds a lexical explaining claim (**Sti3**) on the same Ezechiel’s colon.

¹⁶³⁰See M. Ed. II, 10 (Danby, 426).

¹⁶³¹This characterization is provided by D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 238 - 240, where it is pre-sented as one of the three, with the *marshal* and the *ma`aseh*, most used narratives in Rabbinic literature. Its very features, a mingling of exegesis, story and homiletic considerations, make that this narrative is dealt with as a sum of claims.

Then, R. Yehoshua of Siknin (A/fourth century)¹⁶³² intervenes with an homiletic claim (**Sti 4**) in the name of R. Levi (A3), with the focus on Ez. 10, 8. R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) concludes this first explanatory unit on Ps. 71, 19a with a claim (**Sti5**) in the name of the same R. Levi (A3), lines 722b - 734a

The following three claims support R. Yochanan (A2)'s view in the name of R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) exposed above. In other words, the first claim (**Sti6**), anonymous, is based on 1 Kgs 20, 28; the second claim (**Sti 7**) is made by Rab (bA1) in the name of R. Eleazar (T4)¹⁶³³ on Esth. 7, 5, and the third (**Sti8**), also anonymous, is on Lev. 21, 1, lines 734b - 747a.

The second rubric further deals with the explanation of the Ps. 71, 19a. It starts once again with R. Samuel b. Nachman¹⁶³⁴'s claim (**Sti 9**) on Ps. 71, 19a. It is then followed by an homiletic claim (**Sti 10**) on Ps. 71, 19c, with Lam 1, 13.1/2a as proof text. This rubric is concluded by an homiletic claim (**Sti11**) propounded by R. Yehoshua (T2) also with the proof text of Lam 1, 13.1/2a, lines 747b - 756.

The following interpretation of the verse 13. 2ב: וירדנה “*and subdued it*” underlines the same view (**Sti**) in three lexical meanings deduced from the Scriptures, a Tannaitic source,¹⁶³⁵ and an Aramaic-based statement by R. Bebai of Sergunieh (A3)¹⁶³⁶ (lines 757 - 761a). Two claims (**Sti 1-2**) by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) and R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) to expound the verse 13.3: פרש רשת לרגלי “*he has spread a net for my feet*” announce a paradoxical hope (wordplay with פרש), in spite of the disaster, which is confirmed in the Compiler's interpretation of the verse 13.4: השיבני אחור “*he has turned me back*” (**Sti**) as well as of the verse 13. 5 נתנני שממה “*he has made me desolate*” (**Sti**), lines 761b - 765a

TMLam.1, Verse 14

Verse 14.1 : E. R. (מג) “נשקד עול פשעי בידו” *The yoke of my transgressions is impressed by his hand*” is expounded by the Compiler by means of five claims (**Sti1 - 5**) based on different meanings of שקד that describe the Lord's punishing actions, lines 765b - 777a. Two reinforcing claims (**Sti 1-2**) are propounded interpreting the verse 14.2: ישתרגו “*they intertwine*”, lines 777b - 781a, in a very strong contrast to the claim made (**Sti**) to account for the verse 14.3: עלו על צוארי “*they rise on my neck*”, lines 781b - 782a.

Verse 14.4 : E. R. (מה) הכשיל כחי “*he has caused my strength to fail*” is explained by R. Tanchum b. R. Yirmeyah (A/fourth century)¹⁶³⁷ listing on the basis of scriptural references four

1632This information is provided by W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. III. Anhang xxii: “Verschiedene Amoräer des Vierte Jahrhunderts”, with the comment that this Rabbi was the “tradent” of Levi's aggadah.

1633The translator deduces from the logic of tradition that only the tannaite R. Eleazar b. Simeon (T4) is to be taken into account here.

1634This is according to D. Stern's proposal, *ibidem*, *ad locum*.

1635See *p. Ta'an*. IV, 5 (69), according to the translator, footnote *ad loc*.

1636This is a translator's proposal, instead of the cryptic רגניא that occurs in the text.

1637It can be conjectured on the basis of the fact that R. Yirmeyah belongs to the fourth generation that R. Tanchum b. Yirmeyah is to be ascribed to the fifth century! W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. III. Anhang xxii, calls this Tanchum a student of Mani (A5).

factors among which the kingdom of Babylon, which are likely to cause weakness (**Sti**), lines 783b-787a.

Verse 14.5/6: *E. R.* (מ) “*the Lord has delivered me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand*” is presented by the Rabbis (**Sti1**) as quoting the husband bound by heavy *ketubah*, and by R. Huna (A4) said to report R. Chanina (T1/A1/2/3/4)’s view (**Sti2**), which refers to Adam prisoner of his own needs created by God, lines 787b - 791.

TMLam.1, Verse 15

Verse 15.1 : *E. R.* (מ) “*The Lord has trampled all my mighty ones*” is understood by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) (**Sti1**) as describing God reducing the mighty ones to waste, and by R. Levi (A3) (**Sti2**) as related to the same divinity torturing them, while the verse 15.3 - 4: קרא עלי מועד לשבור בחורי “*he has called a solemn assembly against me to crush my young men*” is said to assess together with the verse 15.5-6: נת לבתולת בת יהודה “*the Lord has trodden as in winepress the virgin daughter of Judah*” the equivalence of the victims of the same destructive action (**Sti3**), lines 792 - 795a.

TMLam.1, Verse 16

Verse 16.1 : *E. R.* (מח) על אלה אני בוכיה “*For these things I weep*” is expounded as a starting point in a series of narratives (A), which occur in this *editio princeps* of *E.R.* as follows:

(מח) Roman conquerors’ cruelty during the Jewish War: (i) Vespasian and the suicide of eminent men and women of Jerusalem (**A1**), lines 796b - 806a, (ii) Hadrian’s persecution (**A2**), lines 806b - 816a, (iii) Jewish cannibalism under Hadrian’s persecution (**A3**), lines 816b - 825a, and (iv) Trajan’s punitive liquidation of Jews in devotion (**A4**), lines 825b - 838a,

(מט) Reversal of fortune: the two children of Tsadoq, the priest (**A5**), lines 838b - 853a,

(נ) Reversal of fortune discussed in rabbinic terms in a couple of *ma’asim* by R. Chiyya b. Abba (T5/A3), R. Yechezqiyah, R. Abbahu (A3) in the name of R. Yochanan (A2), R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1), and by R. Eleazar b. R. Tsadoq (T2/T3): Miriam, the daughter of Boethus, compelled to run with her hair bound to tails of horses (**A6**), lines 853b - 864a,

(נא) Reversal of fortune assessed by R. Acha (A4) and R. Eleazar (T2/3/ A3): Miriam, the daughter of Naqdimon gathers barley from beneath horses’ hoofs in Acco (A7), lines 864b - 870 a,

(נב) Reversal of fortune: Miriam, the daughter of (Boethus) Nachtum gets her shirt back from sea after having justified the heavenly collector of debts (**A8**), lines 870b - 874a,

(נג) Reversal of fortune: Miriam, the daughter of Tanchum, died with her seven sons who refused to prostrate themselves before the emperor’s image (**A9**), lines 874b - 931a,

(נד) Reversal of fortune: the story of Doeg b. Joseph’s son slaughtered and eaten by his mother once Jerusalem was besieged (**A10**), lines 932b - 937a.

(נה) The same verse 16.1: *E.R.* (מח) על אלה אני בוכיה “*for these things I weep*” is further the occasion of six claims that are made to account for it: (i) R. Yehudah (T3) mentions (**Sti1**) the loss of sense and the departure of the *Shekinah*, lines 938b - 941a, (ii) R.

Nehemiah (T3) (**Sti2**) speaks of the cessation of the priesthood and the kingship, lines 941b - 944a, (iii) R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) (**Sti3**) mentions the cessation of the Torah, lines 944a - 945a, (iv) R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) (**Sti4**) speaks of the ongoing idolatry, lines 945b - 946a, (v) R. Zebedia b. Levi (A1) (**Sti5**) recounts the cessation of the sacrifices, lines 946b - 947a, and (vi) the Rabbis and R. Chiyya b. Abba (T5/A3) (**Sti6**) relate the cessation of the Levitical watches, lines 947b - 955a.

Verse 16.2 : *E. R.* (נ) עיני יורדה מים “*my eye, my eye runs down with water*” is explained by a *mashal* (**M**) uttered by R. Levi (A3) that accounts for the repetition of עיני “*my eye, my eye*”, lines 956b - 958a.

Verse 16.3/4 : *E. R.* (ג' נפי) “*because far from me is a comforter, one to revive my soul*” is the occasion of a dispute about the name of the King Messiah: (i) R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) relying on R. Levi (A3) (**Sti1**) calls him the Lord, lines 959b - 963a (ii) R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) (**Sti2**) calls him the Shoot, lines 963b - 964a, (iii) R. Yuan (A4) in the name of R. Aibo (A4) (**Sti3**) calls him the Comforter, lines 964b - 965a, while (iv) R. Chanina (T1/A1/3/4) comments (**Sti4**) that the two latter are identical on the basis of the numeral value of their letters, lines 965b - 966a. (v) R. Yuan (A4)’s claim is supported by an “*bekah-ma`aseh*” (**A**), lines 966b - 985a, to which R. Abu (A4/5)¹⁶³⁸ prefers a scriptures-based proof-text, lines 985b - 987a; additional claims are made on the Messiah’s name by: (vi) the school of R. Shyla (bA1) (**Sti5**), lines 987b - 988a, (vii) the school of R. Chanina (T1/A1/3/4) (**Sti6**), lines 988b - 989a, (viii) the school of R. Yannai (A1) (**Sti7**), lines 989b - 990a, (ix) R. Biba of Sanguine (A3) (**Sti8**), lines 990b - 991, and (x) R. Yehudah b. R. Simeon (A4) in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac (A3) followed by a comment of R. Ancohuma (A5) (**Sti9**), lines 991b - 994.

Verses 16.5/6 : *E. R.* (נח) כי גבר אויב “*my children are desolate, because the enemy has prevailed*” is explained by a claim (**Sti1**) of R. Aibo (A4) followed by R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4)’s grammatical similar view (**Sti2**), lines 994b - 997a.

TMLam.1, Verse 17

Verse 17.1 : *E. R.* (נט) פרה ציון בידיה “*Zion spreads out her hands*” is expounded in three rubrics.

He first two rubrics are dealt with under the present heading.¹⁶³⁹ The first of these two contains an explanation based on Jer. 8, 23 דמעה “*Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears*” that consists of a couple of proposals outlined as follows: (i) a claim is made (**Sti**) on the Author - said to be the Lord - of this utterance, lines 998b - 1000; this claim is followed by Gen. 1,9 quoted and expounded (ii) (**Sti**) by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) in the name of R. Levi (A3), lines 1001 - 1002a, (iii) R. Chagas (A4)’s *mashal* (**M1**) in the name of R. Isaac (A3) on the same issue, lines 1002b - 1014a.2.2), and by (iv) R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4)’s *mashal* (**M2**) which ends with Jer. 8, 23, lines 1014b - 1019.

¹⁶³⁸He is also called Abin and Bun; nothing can help make a difference between Abin I (A4) and Abin II (A5), see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 93. 96.

¹⁶³⁹S. Buber (edit.), *Midrasch Echa Rabbati*, Vilna 1899 uses on the page 78 the present *editio princeps* comment to TMLam. 17.1 in the expounding of the previous Lam. 1, 16.1, see below.

The second rubric comprises a comment based on Ps. 42, 5 *אלה אזכרה ואפכה עלי נפי* “*these things I remember and I pour out my soul within me*” which introduces and concludes a textual unity made of seven Compiler’s claims (**Sti1** - **7**) related to the Community of Israel on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. All seven claims rely on common word patterns as a leitmotiv, as outlined here: (i) *אלה אזכרה* “*these things I remember*”; (ii) *למעבר* “*in the past*”; (iii) *עכו* “*but now*”: (a) **Sti1**, lines 1020b - 1022a, (b) **Sti 2**, lines 1022b - 1023a, (c) **Sti3**, lines 1023b - 1024a, (d), lines 1024b - 1027a, (e) **Sti5**, stated by R. Berekhyah (A5), lines 1027b - 1032a, (f) **Sti6**, lines 1032b - 1033a, (g) **Sti7**, made further explicit by R. Levi (A3), lines 1033b - 1036a.

The third rubric, qualified *דא* (for *אחר*) “*another word*”, is made up of a *mashal* (**M**) uttered by R. Yehoshua of Sinking (A/fourth century) in the name of R. Levi (A3), lines 1036b - 1040a. This comment is followed by the verse 17.2: *E. R. אין מנחם לה* “*there is none to comfort her*” expounded by R. Levi (A3) himself by means of a claim (**Sti**) of hope which is illustrated by three additional instances, lines 1040b - 1045a. The latter claim is in contrast with (i) the situation described in the verses 17.3-4: *צווה יהוה ליעקב סביבו* “*the Lord has commanded concerning Jacob that his neighbours should be his foes*” (**Sti**), and (ii) the justification given in the verse 17.5-6: *היתה ירושלים לנדה ביניהם* “*Jerusalem has become as one unclean among them*” (**Sti**), lines 1045b - 1047a.

TMLam. 1, Verse 18

Verse 18.1/2 : *E. R. צדיק הוא יהוה כי פיהוק מריתי* (סע) “*righteous is the Lord, for I have rebelled against his word*” is expounded by the Compiler by means of a narrative-claim (**Sti**) based on 2 Chr. 35, 20-23 and related to the identification of its utterer by the Compiler and by R. Mani (A2/5),¹⁶⁴⁰ lines 1047b - 1063a.

TMLam.1, Verse 19

Verse 19.1 : *E. R. קראתי למאהבי* (סב) *“I called for my lovers; they deceived me”* is explained by the Rabbis, who focus on *מאהבי* “*my lovers*”, as an allusion to the false prophets (**Sti1**), lines 1063b - 1066a. R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3), who makes the second claim (**Sti2**), says that it is about the true prophets, for these have acted to keep the exiled Israelites faithful to the precepts of their religion. This claim is supported by Jer. 31, 21 expounded by R. Chiyya (T5)¹⁶⁴¹ and by the Compiler, lines 1066b - 1079a.

TMLam.1, Verse 20

Verse 20. 1/2 : *E. R. ראה יהוה כי צר לי* (סגד) *“Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress, my inwards burn”* is expounded by means of a claim by R. Chiyya b. Chanina¹⁶⁴² (**Sti1**) and a claim by R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) (**Sti2**) based on similarity of words, while the following verse 20.3: *נהפך לבי בקרבי* “*my heart is overturned within me*” is simply quoted by the Compiler as a claim made by the utterer (**Sti**) supported (**Sti**) by the verse 4.02 *כי מררו מריתי* “*for I have grievously rebelled*”. The next abruptly juxtaposed verse 20.5/6: *מחוץ כלה חרב בבית כמות* “*on the outside the sword bereaves; in the house it is*

¹⁶⁴⁰In spite of the fact that it is often thought of R. Mani (A5), it cannot be overlooked that R. Mani (A2), R. Yochanan’s contemporary does exist, see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1996, 87, 96.

¹⁶⁴¹This designation will be often propounded, when no further specification is provided.

¹⁶⁴²The lack of records makes hard his assignment to a precise generation.

like death” is stated (**Sti**) by the Compiler as the fulfilment of Deut. 32. 25, lines 1079b - 1082a.

TMLam.1, Verse 21

Verse 21.1 : *E. R.* (סז) מאז כי נאנחה אני “*They have heard that I sigh*” is referred by R. Yahushua (T2) to Israel being attacked when Aaron died (**Sti1**), while the Rabbis think of the hostility Israel had to face after the Temple was destroyed (**Sti2**), lines 1082b - 1092a. The following verse 21.4: כי אתה עיט “*for that you have done it*” is expounded by means of a *meshal* (**M**), which addresses the same issue from the perspective of Israel. Similarly to the preceding verse 21.4, the last verse 21.5-6: ויהיו כמוני: הבאת יום קראת “*you will bring the day that you have proclaimed, and they shall be like me*” does also deal with the same issue from Israel’s perspective (**Sti**), lines 1092b - 1102a.

TMLam.1, Verse 22

Verse 22.1/2 : *E. R.* (סה) תבע כל רעתם לפניך ועולל למו (סה) “*Let all their wickedness come before you; and do to them*” is the occasion for Israel to make two request-claims (**Sti1-2**), presented by the Compiler. The second request-claim is focused on the verse 22.2, lines 1102b - 1104a, while the expounding of the verse 22.5-6: ולבי דווי: כי רבות אגחותיי “*for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint*”, which ends this chapter, is aimed- based on scriptural records related to parts of the body, to some deictics and various other items - to illustrate the view that the triad “sin-punishment-comfort” characterizes the historical march of Israel (**Sti**), lines 1104b - 1137.

CONCLUSION

The data gathered from the first chapter of the Biblical Lamentations, summarized and presented here, are of an indicative character. They are based on an approximation categorization. Therefore, they only suggest the kind of tools used by the Compiler to account for his own and the Rabbis’s understanding of this first chapter of the Biblical Lamentations. We have established that about one hundred-seventy claims had been made on the basis of the Scriptures and/or of tradition (**Stis**), twenty-eight narratives (**As**) and twelve *meshalim* (**Ms**) are used to deal with the task of interpreting this Biblical Book. This statistical treatment of our *E.R.* findings will be pursued and extended to other chapters of interest. The issue of the meaning of these claims and of what kind of history is found behind these records is discussed in the next chapters of the work.

3.2. Eikhah Rabbati And Chapter Two Of Lamentations

TMLam. 2, verse 1

The expounding of Lam, 2,1 is introduced by a proem based on Job 30, 15 and on Deut. 8, 20a.

Job 30, 15 *וְכַעַב עֲבָרָה יִשְׁעֵי תִרְדֵּף כְּרוּחַ נִדְבָתִי וְיִשְׁלֵךְ עָלַי בְּלֵהוּת תִּרְדֵּף כְּרוּחַ נִדְבָתִי וְיִשְׁלֵךְ עָלַי בְּלֵהוּת תִּרְדֵּף כְּרוּחַ נִדְבָתִי* “*terrors are turned on me; (they) you pursue my free-will offering like the wind, and my salvation is passed away like a cloud*”, is explained by four claims (**Sti1-4**) made by R. Chanina (T1/A1/3/4) (**Sti1**), by R. Acha (A4)¹⁶⁴³ (**Sti2**), and by the Compiler (**Sti3-4**) on the victims of God’s punishing action.

Deut. 8, 20a *כְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה מַאֲבִיד מִפְּנֵיכֶם כֵּן תֵּאֲבֹדוּן* “*as the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so you shall perish (...)*”, is reinforced by R. Pinchas (A5) and by R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4)’s explanation of Isa. 17, 9 as source of five claims (**Sti1-5**) on the manner God’s punishing action has to be carried out, lines 1 - 19a.

Verse 1.1/2 : *E. R. (ב) איכה יעיב באפו אדני את בת ציון* “*How has the Lord in his anger clouded over the daughter of Zion*” is expounded by means of three claims on the identity of the meaning made by R. Chama b. R. Chanina (A2) (**Sti1**), by R. Samuel b. R. Nachmani (A3) (**Sti2**), and by the Rabbis (**Sti3**), lines 19b - 22a. The following verse 1.3-4: *הַשִּׁלִּיךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרֶץ תִּפְאֶרֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל* “*he has cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel*” is expounded in two rubrics, each of which made of a *mashal*. The first *mashal* (**M1**) focuses on the rise and the fall of Israel. It is uttered by R. Huna (A4) and R. Acha (A4)¹⁶⁴⁴ in the name of R. Chanina b. R. Abbahu (A4), lines 22b - 28. The second (**M2**) belongs to the second rubric. It brings additional antecedents and is propounded by R. Yeshoshua b. R. Nechemyah (A4),¹⁶⁴⁵ lines 29 - 34a.

Verse 1.5 : *E. R. (ג) ביום אפו ולא זכר הדום רגליו* “*he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger*” is also expounded in two rubrics as follows. The first contains a claim (**Sti1**) made by R. Chanina b. Isaac (A4) on the blood wordplay with דום of circumcision. This claim is followed by a *mashal* (**M**) held by R. Yudan (A4) on the blood of Exodus, lines 34b - 40. An anonymous claim (**Sti2**) related to the Lord’s sanctuary is proposed in the second rubric, lines 41 - 42a. The next immediate verse 1.6 *ביום אפו* “*in the day of his anger*”, is the occasion to repeat a claim (**Sti**) by R. Acha (A4) to Lam. 1, 12 on one day of conversion, lines 42b - 43a.

TMLam.2, Verse 2

E. R. (ד) ויקרא באזני קול גדול לאמר קרבו פקודות העיר ואיש כלי משחתו בידו “*Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying: Let the visitations of the city draw near, each man with his destroying weapon in his hand*” is, as such, the first component of Ezek. 9, 1.2; 2, 4; 9,4. 5- 6. 1 which is the textual basis of the proem which Cohen correctly attributes to

¹⁶⁴³This is in fact a claim based on a comparison introduced by the *mashal* formulaic להוֹלִיז 'The matter may be compared to the piece of a ...'

¹⁶⁴⁴The Buber’s edition has ‘R. Huna bar Acha’, *ad locum*.

¹⁶⁴⁵R. Yehoshua of Siknin (A/fourth century) is said in the Buber’s edition to be the author of this *mashal*, *ad locum*. D. Stern, *Parables in the Midrash*, 1991, 305, footnote 15, ascribes him to the third generation.

the following verse 2, 2: *E. R.* (7).¹⁶⁴⁶ The following are the introducing claims, which are then unfolded in the said proem:

1. Ezek.9.1 is related to the duration of the consequences of the sin of the golden calf, and is dealt with by a claim made by R. Berekhyah (A5) - the same claim made also R. Nechemyah b. Eleazar (**Sti1**)- on the two calves of Jeroboam, and by another claim due to R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) (**Sti2**) in the name of R. Yochanan (A2) on the destruction of the Temple, which is based on Ez. 9,1 and Ex. 32, 34, lines 43b - 50a.
2. Ez. 9. 2.1α1.2 ואיש כלי מפצו בידו / והנה ששה אנשים באים מדרך שער העליון אשר מפנה צפונה / *And, behold, six men came from the way of the upper gate, which faces north/each with his shattering weapon in his hand*".
- Ez. 9. 2.1β1.2 ואיש אחד בתוכם לבוש בדים / וקסת הסופר במותניו / *and one man in the midst of them clothed in linen, with a writer's ink horn at his loins*"
- Ez. 9. 2.2α *And they went in, and stood* "ויבאו ויעמדו"
- Ez. 9.2.2β *beside the bronze altar* "אצל מזבח הנחשת".

This verse, which is the main expounded piece of this proem, is the object of the following additional claims:

- 2.1. Ezek. 9,2 is introduced and expounded by the Compiler with the support of Ezek. 9, 5. 6, with a claim (**Sti**) on the destruction in general, lines 50b - 55a,
- 2.2. Ezek. 9, 2.1β1.2 is explained by a claim by R. Yochanan (A2) (**Sti**) on the identification of the main destroyer, lines 55b - 60a,
- 2.3 Ezek. 9, 2.1α2 is dealt with by the Compiler with a claim (**Sti**) on the instruments of destruction, lines 60b - 63a,
- 2.4 Ezek. 9, 2.2 is object of claims made by R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) (**Sti1**), by the Rabbis (**Sti2**), and by R. Pinchas (A5) (**Sti3**) on the cause of destruction, lines 63b - 67a.
3. Ezek. 9, 4 ויאמר יהוה אלו/עבור בתוך העיר // בתוך ירושלים /// והתוית תו על מצחות האנשים הנאנחים בתוכה *And the Lord said to him: Pass through in the midst of the city, in the midst of Jerusalem// and set a mark on the foreheads of the men who are groaning and are mourning over all the abominations that are done in her midst*" is expounded first with a focus on אלו by R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) with a claim (**Sti**) on the agent of destruction, and afterwards by means of five claims (**Sti1-5**) made on והתוית תו by R. Nachman (bA3 /A5) (**Sti1**), by the Rabbis (**Sti 2**), by Rab (bA1) (**Sti3**), by R. Chanina b. Isaac (A4) (**Sti4**), and, with the support of Ezek. 9, 5, by R. Hoshaya (A1/3) in debate with R. Simon (A3) (**Sti5**), on the kind of targeted persons, lines 67b - 74a.
4. Ezek. 9,5-6.1 (5) ולא לה אמר באזני / עברו בעיר אחריו והכו // על תחס עיניכם ואל תחמלו . 9,5-6.1 (5) *and concerning these he said in my hearing: Pass over in the city after him, and strike// do not let your eye spare, and do not have pity.(6) Slay utterly the old man, the young man and the maiden, little children and women, but to every man who has the mark on him, do not come near, and begin from my sanctuary*" is the basis for R. Eleazar (T3/A3)'s claim (**Sti1**) on the Holy One' s dealing, which is contradicted by a Compiler or prosecution's claim (**Sti2**), lines 74b - 81a. R. Aibo (A4) (**Sti3**), R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) (**Sti4**), and R. Tanchuma b. Abba (A5) in the name of R. Abba (A3), with

¹⁶⁴⁶In *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, transl. by A. Cohen, London ([1939] 1961), 152, footnote 4.

the support of Ezek. 9,6.2-82b (**Sti5**), complete the claims on the quality of the targeted victims, lines 81b - 89a.

Verse 2. 1/2 : *E. R.* (ה) בלע אדני לא חמל את כל נאות יעקב “*The Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob*” is expounded by means of a mixture of narratives (A) and claims (Sti). Particularly noticeable is the fact that literary forms are found hereafter, which cannot be either part of narratives (A) or Scriptures-based statements (Sti). They are, however, numeral sayings and part of traditional statements of obvious hyperbolic nature (Sti). Different places are mentioned, but persons and events related to the fall of Bethar are the topic of this explanation. The said explanation can be subdivided in three rubrics, as outlined in the following paragraph.

The first rubric is made up of a claim (**Sti1**) of R. Pinchas (A5) in the name of R. Hoshayah (A1/3) on the number of synagogues in Jerusalem, lines 89b - 92.

The more extended second rubric contains, on one hand, a claim (**Sti2**) on the metaphorical meaning of נאות “*dwelling places*” as the ten martyred Rabbis named: (i) R. Ishmael (ben Elisha?) (T2), (ii) Rabban Gamaliel (T1/2/5), (iii) R. Yeshebab, (iv) R. Yehudah b. Baba (T2), (v) R. Chutsapith, (vi) R. Yehudah ha-Nahtum, (vii) R. Chananyah b. Teradion (T2), (viii) R. Aqiba (T2), (ix) Ben Azzai (T2), (x) R. Tarfon (T2), or Eleazar Charsanah,¹⁶⁴⁷ and, on the other hand, a Compiler’s claim (**Sti3**) on R. Yochanan (A2) and Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4)’s performance to account for Lam. 2, 2.1 quoted above. This rubric is also made of a claim introduced by R. Yochanan (A2)’s reporting (**Sti1**) the Rabbi’s expounding of Num. 24, 17ba כוכב מיעקב “*a star shall step out of Jacob*”, a Compiler’s statement on R. Aqiba (T2)’s view (**Sti2**) related to this very issue and its refutation by R. Yochanan b. Torta (T2) (**Sti3**), and a claim (**Sti1**) uttered by R. Yochanan (A2) interpreting Gen. 27, 22ba קול יעקב “*the voice is the voice of Jacob*”, lines 93 - 103.

The third rubric makes verse 2, 1/2 : *E. R.* (ה) בלע אדני ולא חמל את כל נאות יעקב “*the Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the dwelling places of Jacob*” one of the verses most expounded by the Rabbis. This verse comes next with the following forms: (i) a narrative (**A1**) about the Sages ‘view on Bar Kariba’s army and strategy, lines 103b - 110a, (ii) R. Eleazar of Modem (T2)’s involvement in the capture of Betar and Bar Kariba’s death (**A2**), lines 110b - 134a, (iii) the aftermath of the capture of Betar (**A3**): R. Huna (A4)’s claim on the blessing ‘Who is kind and deals kindly’, lines 134b - 137a, (iv) reason of the destruction of Betar (**A4**), lines 137b - 148a, (v) destruction of Bethan: R. Yochanan (A2)’s report on the dashed brains and the baskets of capsules of phylacteries (**Sti4**),¹⁶⁴⁸ lines 148b - 150a, (vi) destruction of Betar (**A5**): R. Gamaliel (T1/2/5) on the five hundred schools destroyed and the cruel death of their numerous pupils, lines 150b - 155a, (vii) the two brothers of Kefar Cherub moving against the Romans (**A6**), lines 155b - 162a.

Furthermore, there are (viii) the two cedars and the four stalls for birds for purification ritual on Mount of Olives (**Sti5**), lines 162b - 164a; (ix) the barrels of thin cakes distributed by Mount Simeon that was destroyed, as recounted by R. Huna (A4), for a ball game

¹⁶⁴⁷The Cohen’s translation *ad locum* has “b. Charsum”.

¹⁶⁴⁸This number is related to the claims made on the (verse 2.1) in the second rubric.

on Sabbath (**Sti6**), lines 164b - 167a, (x) the King's Mount cities, the thousand cities of R. Eleazar b. Char sum and the taxes to be paid (**Sti7**), lines 167b - 170a, (xi) the changed fortune, according to R. Yochanan (A2), because of destruction of Temple and three once populous cities in the South (**Sti8**), lines 170b - 178a; (xii) the three hundred sellers' stalls of birds for ritual of purification in Mandala of the Dyers and the same number of stalls of curtain weavers in Kefar Nimrod, according to Rib Huna (T5/bA1), (**Sti9-10**), lines 178b - 180a.

Finally, let us mention (xiii) R. Yirmeyah (A4)'s report, in the name of R. Chiyya b. Abba (T5/A3)' on the numerous marriages of brothers that were priests, sisters of priestly families and others (**Sti11**), lines 180b - 183a, (vex) R. Yuan (A4)'s story, in response to R. Acha (A4), on the slaying of eighty thousand priestly novitiates and of many others to avenge Zechariah's murder (**A7**), lines 183b - 204a, (xv) the mistreatment of eighty thousand escaped priestly novitiates by the Ishmaelite's (**A8**), lines 204b - 220a, (xvi) R. Yochanan (A2)'s statements on sixty myriads of towns between Gibbet on and Antipatris and on Bethshemesh, the smallest of all cities (**Sti 12-13**), lines 220b - 223, (xvii) claims of two teachers on Hadrian's battles (**Sti 14-15**), lines 224a, and (xviii) R. Yochanan (A2)'s cursing of Palmyra, for reason discussed by R. Yudan (A4) and R. Huna (A4) (**Sti16-17**), lines 224b - 227a.

Verse 2. 3/4 : E. R.(ה) יהודה "he has broken down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah" is interpreted by a claim (**Sti**) made by R. Yudan (A4) - and reviewed by R. Pinchas (A5)- on the solidness of the strongholds of Jerusalem and the consecutive devastating effect of sins on their destruction, as described in the verse 2.5 הגיע לארץ "he has brought (them) down to the ground" (**Sti**), lines 227b - 230a. The following verse 2.6 חלל ממלכה ושריה "he has defiled the kingdom and its rulers" is explained by the Compiler in two rubrics as follows. The first rubric contains two claims both related to the identification of ממלכה "kingdom" (**Sti1**) and of שריה "her princes" (**Sti2**). The second claim is extensively expounded by means of a narrative (A), lines 230b - 240a. The second rubric has only a new claim (**Sti**) on ממלכה "kingdom" while the repeated שריה "her princes" has nothing at all, lines 240b - 241.

TMLam.2, Verse 3

Verse 3.1/2 : E. R. (ז) קרן ישראל "He has cut off in fierce anger all the horns of Israel" is dealt with by the Compiler with (i) the citing and quoting ten, that is, eleven verses in which קרן does occur (**Sti1**), lines 242 - 254a, and (ii) the describing of their situation without קרן because of sins and of their repentance (**Sti2**), lines 254b - 261a.

Verse 3. 3/4 : E. R. (ח) השיב אחור ימינו מפני אויב "he has drawn back from them his right hand in the face of the enemy" is expounded by means of R. Azaryah (A5)'s claim (**Sti**) in the name of R. Yehudah b. R. Simon (A4) on the implication of the Holy One, blessed be He in the trouble of Israel, lines 261b - 270.

Verse 3.5/6 : E.R. (ט) יבער ביעקב כאש להבה אכלה סביב "and he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire, which consumes all around" is the occasion of a claim (**Sti**) by R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2) on Patriarch Jacob, lines 271 - 273a.

TMLam. 2, Verse 4

Verse 4.1 : *E. R.* (י) דרך קשתו כאויב “*He has bent his bow like an enemy*” is explained in three rubrics. In the rubric, R. Aibo (A4) repeats the import of כ “like” propounded by R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) accounting for Lam. 1, 1.2α before stating it himself, below, for Lam. 2, 5.1α (**Sti1**), lines 274 - 278.

The second rubric has claims which are based on different kinds of identification, דרך קשתו כאויב (**Sti2**) and which put together the verse 4.2 נצב ימינו כצר “*standing with his right hand like an adversary*” (**Sti1**). The same identification procedure is used in the third rubric with דרך קשתו כאויב (**Sti3**) being followed by the verse 4, 3-4 ויהרג כל מחמדי עין “*and he has slain all the pride of the eye*” which is interpreted with the focus on מחמדי עין “*the pride of the eye*” first by R. Tanchum b. Yirmeyah (A/fourth century)¹⁶⁴⁹ (**Sti1**), and afterwards by the Rabbis (**Sti2**), lines 279 - 283a.

Verse 4,5/6 : *E. R.* (יא) באהל בת ציון שפך כאש חמתו “*in the tent of the daughter of Zion, he has poured out his fury like fire*” is expounded by the Compiler by the quotation of four verses - in which the outpouring of fire is for good- in contrast to four other verses, among which the present verse 4, 5/6), in which this fire outpouring is said to be for evil (**Sti**), lines 283b - 291a.

TMLam.2, Verse 5

Verse 5.1 : *E. R.* (יב) היה אדני כאויב “*The Lord has become like an enemy*” is expounded by R. Aibo (A4) as above, for Lam. 1,1.2α and Lam. 2, 4.1α, (**Sti**), lines 291b - 296a.

Verse 5. 2/3 *E. R.* (יג) בלע ישראל בלע כל ארמנותיה “*he has swallowed up Israel, he has swallowed up her palaces*” has an explanation provided on the basis of the accounting of this verse in *j. Sanhedrin*. 29c. The claim (**Sti**) made by R. Berekhyah (A5) reporting what R. Chelbo (A4) said in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachman (A3) is about three exiles and the return from three captivities experienced by Israel. The following verse 5. 5-6: וירב בבת יהודה תאניה ואניה “*he has increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and moaning*” is the occasion of a Compiler’s claim (**Sti**) emphasizing the topic of sufferings, lines 296b - 301a.

TMLam.2, Verse 6

Verse 6.1 : *E. R.* (יד) ויהמוס כגן שכו “*And he has violated his tabernacle as if it were a garden*” is expounded by means of three claims made by R. Chama b. R. Chanina (A2) (**Sti1**), R. Simeon b. Nachmani (**Sti2**), and by R. Abbahu (A3) (**Sti3**). The first two claims are related to the situation of desolation after the destruction, while the third claim focuses on the Holy One, blessed be He’s reaction, lines 301b - 304a. The following verse 6. 3-4: שכח יהוה בציון מועד ושבט “*the Lord has made forgotten in Zion appointed season and Sabbath*” is seen by the Compiler as referring rather to Jeroboam’s festivals and Sabbaths (**Sti**), while the verse 6. 5-6: וינאץ בזעם אפו מלך וכהן “*and he has rejected in the fury of his anger the king and the priest*” completes the claim of Israel’s sins identifying the king and the priest (**Sti**), lines 301b-308a.

TMLam.2, Verse 7

¹⁶⁴⁹See W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer III*. Anhang xxii, in which he is presented as a student of Mani the Elder.

Verse 7.1 : *E. R.* (טו) “*The Lord has cast off his altar, disowned his temple*” is expounded by R. Chaggai (A4) in the name of R. Isaac (A3) using directly a *mashal* (M) similar to R. Yehoshua b. R. Nechemyah (A4)’s *mashal* to Lam. 2, 1.2 on the Holy One, blessed be He’s rebuking action, lines 308b - 313a, while the following verse 7. 3-4: חומת בת ציון: “he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her *palaces*” is held by R. Berekhyah (A5), R. Chelbo (A4), and R. Aibo (A4) in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) as a proof of an historical claim (Sti) on the Romans entering the Temple of Jerusalem, lines 313b - 316a. The following verse 7. 5-6: כיום מועד קול: “*they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as (in) the day of a meeting*” is explained by R. Chanina, R. Acha (A4), and R. Measha (A2) in the name of R. Yannai (A1) as referring to the circumstances of the fall of Babylon (Sti1); however, R. Berekhyah (A5), R. Chelbo (A4), and R. Aibo (A4) in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3) think obviously of Rome (Sti2); R. Chanina,¹⁶⁵⁰ R. Acha (A4), and R. Measha (A2) in the name of R. Yannai (A1) repeat the claim of the fall of Babylon applied this time to Rome (Sti3), as R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) does (Sti4), lines 316b - 324.

TMLam.2, Verse 8

Verse 8. 1/2: *E. R.* חשב יהוה להשחית חומת בת ציון: “*The Lord has made the purpose to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion*” is expounded by a claim of R. Yochanan (A2) on the moment the Lord decided to take action (Sti1) and by a similar but reinforcing claim (Sti2) made by R. Ilas. The following verse 8.3: נטה קו: “*he has stretched out a line*” which comes next is presented (Sti) as a contrast to the “line” in Zech. 1, 16, lines 325 - 328a. The following verse 8. 4-8: לא השיב ידו מבלע//ויאבל חיל וחומה יחדיו אומללו: “*he has not withdrawn his hand from destroying, and he has made rampart and wall lament, they languish together*” is understood by R. Huna b. R. Acha (A4)¹⁶⁵¹ with the focus on היל וחומה as an indication of the extent of the disaster (Sti), lines 328b - 330a.

TMLam.2, Verse 9

Verse 9.1 : *E. R.* (י) טבעו בארץ שעריה “*Her gates have sunk into the ground*” is interpreted by R. Huna (A4) in the name of R. Yose (A3) (Sti1) in opposition to the content of the verse 9.2: אבד ושבר בריחיה: “*he has destroyed and broken her bars*” (Sti2), lines 330b - 332a. The following verse 9. 3-4: מלכה ושריה בגוים אין תורה: “*her king and her princes are among the nations; the law is no more*” is the occasion for the Compiler to enhance Israel’s specificity in possessing the Torah (Sti), while the expounding of the verse 9. 5: נביאיה: “*her prophets*” and גם נביאיה “*also her prophets*” (Sti1-2) completes the picture of the overwhelming confusion, lines 332b - 336a.

TMLam.2, Verse 10

Verse 10.1/2: *E. R.* (יח) ישבו לארץ ידמו זקני בת ציון: “*They sit on the ground and keep silence, the elders of the daughters of Zion*” is expounded by R. Eleazar (T3/A3) with a narrative-claim (A-Sti) on the danger of taking the vows. The consequences of not keeping the

¹⁶⁵⁰This is with the translator *in loco*, instead of R. Huna in the *E.R.* text, see the same reading, line 217.

¹⁶⁵¹W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III*, 282, col. 2, provides, in the register, the rare “Huna b. Acha”, but the informations referred to, pages 273 first, and from there 107, footnote 1 and 108, are about Huna as student of Acha!

vows are presented in the verse 10.3: העלו עפר על “they have cast dust on” (Sti), the verse: 10.5-6 חגרו שקים “they have girded themselves with sackcloth” (Sti) as well as in the verse 10.5-6: הורידו לארץ ראשן בתולות ירושלים “the maiden of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground”, lines 336b - 360a.

TMLam.2, Verse 11

Verse 11.1 : E. R. (יט) פלו בדמעות עיני “My eyes are at an end with tears” is interpreted by means of a claim made once again by R. Eleazar (T3/A3) (Sti1) on the limit of tears. This claim is followed by the enumeration of four beneficial and four harmful tears (Sti2), lines 360b - 363a. The next explanation propounded in a narrative-*ma'aseh* (A) deals with the tears, lines 363b - 365a. Their effects can be irreparably dangerous, as demonstrated in the next *ma'aseh* (A), which expounds the verse 11.3 נשפך לארץ כבדי “my liver is poured on the ground”, lines 365b - 368a.

TMLam.2, Verse 12

Verse 12.1/2 : E. R. (כ) לאמה דגן ויין / איה דגן ויין “To their mothers they say: where is corn and wine?” is disclosed by means of identification made first by R. Chanina (T1/A1/3/4) (Sti1), and, with a change, by R. Simon (A3) (Sti2). The following verse 12.3-4: בהתעטפם כחלל ברחובות עיר “in their fainting like the wounded in the broad places of the city”, interpreted by a narrative (A) on death from starvation, is confirmed by the explanation of the verse 12. 5-6 אל חיק אמתם / בהשתפך נפשם “in their pouring out their lives into their mothers’ bosom” (Sti), lines 368b - 375a.

TMLam.2, Verse 13

Verse 13.1 : E. R. (כא) מה אעידך / מה אדמה לך “what can I testify for you? what will I compare to you?” is expounded concentrating first on the component מה אעידך, by means of four claims on the different uses and the meanings of עיד made by (i) Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4) (Sti 1) and R. Nathan (T4) (Sti2) for the first use, (ii) R. Jonathan (T3/A1)¹⁶⁵² (Sti3) for the second use spelled out by R. Levi (A3), (iii) an anonymous (Sti4) for the third use, (iv) Rabbi [Yehudah ha-Nasi] (T4), R. Yochanan (A2), R. Abba b. Kahana (A3) in the name of R. Yochanan (A2), and R. Huna of Sepphoris (A/third century)¹⁶⁵³ (Sti5) for the fourth use, lines 375b - 388a. The second component מה אדמה לך is explained by a narrative-claim (A-Sti) held by the Lord himself. The following verse 13.2 הבת ירושלים “O daughter of Jerusalem” is interpreted by the Compiler as a call-request (Sti), lines 388b -392a.

Verse 13.3 : E. R. (כב) מה אשוה לך / ואנחמך “What shall I equate to you, that I may comfort you” is expounded by two claims (Sti1-2) made by R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A/third century) as having been uttered by God, lines 392b - 394a. The following verse 13.4: הבת ירושלים “O virgin daughter of Zion” is seen as a claim (Sti) for the sons of Zion, while the verse 13.5 כי גדול כים שברך “for your break is great like the sea” is interpreted in connection with the non -verbatim expressed verse 13.6 מי ירפא לך “who will heal

¹⁶⁵²Although we cannot rule out R. Jonathan (T3) of the school of Ismael, see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and to Midrash*, 75 -76.

¹⁶⁵³W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*. III. Anhang xxi.

you”, by R. Chilfai (A/third century)¹⁶⁵⁴ (Sti1), R. Abin (A4/5) (Sti2) and R. Yehoshua b. Levi (A1) (Sti3), lines 392b - 397.

TMLam.2, Verse 14

Verse 14.1/2 : E. R. (כג) “Your prophets have seen for you visions of vanity and delusion” is expounded by means of a claim of R. Eleazar (T3/A3) (Sti1) on the prophets of Samaria and of Jerusalem. It is followed by R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3)’s claim (Sti2) on the prophets of Jerusalem and on the house¹⁶⁵⁵ of Israel. The verse 14.3-4: “and they have not uncovered your iniquity, to bring back your captivity”, which comes next, is considered by the Compiler as reporting what the aforementioned prophets did (Sti) so that they caused the exile, which is thought to have been meant (Sti) in the verse 14. 5-6: “but they have prophesied for you burdens of vanity and seduction”, lines 398 - 404a.

TMLam. 2, Verse 15

Verse 15.1 : E. R. (כד) “[All who pass by] clap their hands at you” is interpreted by R. Yochanan (A2) in the name of R. Simeon b. Yochai (T3) (Sti), together with the verse 15.3-4: “they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem” (Sti), as alluding to the ancient grandeur of Jerusalem, that no longer exists. The same grandeur is said to be accounted for in (verse 15. 5) “is this the city which they called the perfection of beauty” (Sti) and in the verse 15.6 “the joy of all the earth” (Sti) by R. Nathan (T4), lines 404b - 412a.

TMLam. 2, Verse 16

Verse 16.1 : E. R. (כה) “[All your enemies] have opened their mouth against you” is introduced by the Compiler into the interpretative endeavour by means of a claim (Sti) on letter פ preceding letter ע, an odd fact contrary to the order of the Hebrew alphabet, lines 412b - 413a.

TMLam.2, Verses 17 - 18

Verse 17.1 : E. R. (כז) “The Lord has done what he has devised” is expounded together with the verse 16.2: “he has performed his word” by R. Ahaba b. R. Zera (A4) (Sti1) and by R. Jacob of Kefar Chanan (A/third century) (Sti2) on a line reflecting their view of the historical situation under examination, while the following verse 17. 5-6: “and he has made the enemy rejoice over you, he has raised the horn of your foes” is seen by R. Acha (A4) as propounding a claim (Sti) somewhat different and whose consequence is the verse 18. 1-3a: “their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let [X] down etc.” (Sti), lines 413b - 420a.

TMLam.2, Verse 19

1654W. Baker, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III. Anhang xxi*, has ‘Chilfai b. Karuja’ as a Rabbi of the third century.

1655It is amended by the editor in “prophets”.

Verse 19. 1/2 : *E. R.* (כז) קומי רוני בלילה לראש אשמורות “*Rise up, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches*” is interpreted with the focus on the adverbial phrase “*at the beginning of the watches*.” Two claims related to the correlated issue of the number of the night watches made by R. Yehudah ha-Nasi (T4) together with R. Berekhyah (A5), in the name of R. Chelbo (A4), by the Rabbis and R. Samuel (T2/A3),¹⁶⁵⁶ on the one hand (**Sti1**), and by R. Nathan (T4) (**Sti2**), on the other hand, are extensively discussed by R. Zeriqa (A3), R. Ammi (A3) in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish (A2), by R. Chizqiyyah (A5), or R. Zeriqa (A3), by R. Abba (A3),¹⁶⁵⁷ R. Pinchas (A5) in the name of R. Eleazar b. Menachem (A/fourth century),¹⁶⁵⁸ by R. Levi (A3), R. Huna (A4) and R. Manni (A5), lines 420b - 448a.

TMLam.2, Verse 20

Verse 20.1 : *E. R.* (כה) ראה יהוה והביטה (כה) “*See, O Lord, and consider*” is expounded by the Compiler repeating one of the *ma’asim* (A) used to deal with Lam. 1, 16. 1 על אלה אני בוכה “*for these things I weep*,” together with the following verse 20. 2-4: למי עוללת כה // אם תאכלנה נשים פרים עוללי טפוחים “*to whom you have done this; shall women eat their fruit, children dandled in their hands*” as a compelling lament (**Sti**), while the last bicolon, verse 20. 5-6: כהן ונביא אדם יהרג במקדש אדני “*should the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?*” is presented as an opposite reaction (**Sti**), lines 448b - 453a.

TMLam.2, Verse 21

Verse 21.1: *E. R.* (כט) שוכבו לארץ חוצות וגו’ “*[Young and old men] lie on the ground of the plazas*” is expounded further by the Compiler as the fulfilment of the announcement made in Jer. 6, 11 (**Sti**), lines 453b - 455a.

TMLam.2, Verse 22

Verse 22.1/2 : *E. R.* (ל) מגורי מסביב “*You have called, as in day of appointment, my terrors all around*” is explained by means of a claim on the extension of the meaning specified by R. Eleazar b. R. Marinus (A/fourth century)¹⁶⁵⁹ (**Sti**). The following verse 22. 3-4: ולא היה ביום אף יהוה פליט ושריד “*and there is not, in the day of the anger of the Lord, an escaped one or a survivor*” is expounded by R. Chiyya (T5), this time as a claim on the targets of the aimed action (**Sti**). Similarly, the same issue is also dealt with by the last verse 22. 5-6: אשר טפחתי אויבי כלם “*those whom I have nursed and multiplied, my enemy has consumed*” which, however, adds some specification (**Sti**), lines 455b - 459.

¹⁶⁵⁶There is no decisive criterium to decide if we deal here with the Tannaite R. Samuel the Small (T3), or simply, with one of the Amoraim, R. Samuel b. Nachmani (A3), Samuel b. Isaac (A3), R. Samuel b. Ammi (A4), see Strack/Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and the Midrash*, 71. 89, 90, 93.

¹⁶⁵⁷This is a proposal of the translator, *in loco*.

¹⁶⁵⁸The mention is provided in W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III. Anhang xxii*.

¹⁶⁵⁹He may be R. Eleazar bar Merom we find in W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer. III. Anhang xxii*.

CONCLUSION

It is once more stressed here that the approximation approach used earlier has been further utilized in this section of our work. One evident observation to be drawn here is that *Eikhah Rabbati*'s dealing with Chapter Two of the Biblical Lamentations results in fewer interpretive instruments in comparison to the document's Chapter One. Concretely and in terms defined in this research, we have from Chapter Two (i) one hundred thirty - one Scriptures- and /or Tradition-based claims (**Stis**), (ii) eleven narratives (**As**), and (iii) four *meshalim* (**Ms**). It is very instructive to note the significantly reduced number of the last two instruments use (**As** and **Ms**).

CONCLUSION

Eikhah Rabbati Chapter Five contains *circa* (i) thirty-six claims made on the basis of Scripture and/or of tradition (**Stis**), (ii) four narratives (**As**) and (iii) only one *mashal* (**M**). That there is only one *mashal* (**M**) in *Eikhah Rabbati* Chapter Five is another feature worth noting. Furthermore, no other interpretative devices have been observed.

The gathered data are in good agreement with the observed continuous in number of verses. Indeed, there is not a single triptych verse in this chapter. This is further in good agreement with the observed trend in the decreasing number of interpretation devices from one chapter to another.

The findings gathered thus far are significant for our research which is wholly focused on *Eikhah Rabbati*¹⁶⁶⁰ text, for these findings provide us a genuine overview of this Rabbinic commentary.

In summary, we have catalogued, in whole *Eikhah Rabbati* to account for TMLamentations, (i) four hundred eighty-three (483) claims (**Stis**), (ii) seventy-five (75) narratives (**As**), (iii) twenty-two (22) *meshalim* (**Ms**), and (iv) two (2) similes. If it is true that these three kinds of interpretive forms, which define the texture of *E. R.*¹⁶⁶¹, are syntactically,

1660As H. A. Fischel, *Essays in Greco-Roman and related Talmudic literature*, New York, 1977 puts it correctly, "Sound method requires (...) the tracing of the dimensions of a literary pheno-menon, i. e. its statistical properties."

1661A. Auerbach, *Mimesis. La représentation de la réalité dans la littérature occidentale*, (Col-lection Tel), Paris 1968 26, has seen in a somehow similar sketchy trait in the text of the Old Testament, in difference to the

that is, horizontally loosely connected one to another, the following inquiry will attempt to demonstrate that paradigmatically, that is, vertically , each of these interpretation devices brings its own contribution to the concept of several layers in the meaning, and that all these interpretative instruments express a unique idea of history. This is ultimately the subject of our research which will be examined, analyzed and discussed in the next chapter of the work.

abundant exposure of means in the composition in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, as a properly biblical art to deal with historical figures.

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X. Abstract

English

This work is a contribution based on the Rabbinic Commentary *Eikhah Rabbati* of the Biblical Book of Lamentations to the debate on history in relation to the Biblical texts in general. The answer to the question whether or not the content of a biblical book is historical is passionately debated and variously provided. In contrast to various researches on this issue, the Rabbinic Commentary *Eikhah Rabbati*, the object of the present work, strikes instead by the number of historical claims that it provides. These are related to the Biblical Book of Lamentations as well as to the period following the Roman conquest of Palestine and the Second Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

To account for the idea of history of Rabbis whose views and assertions are reported in the respective commentaries ascribed to them, we needed a theoretical framework stating that the use of language in general and linguistic statements in particular are related to the speakers' mind and time. It was on the basis of this assumption that we have carried out a thorough analysis of the linguistic content of the two first chapters of *Eikhah Rabbati*. First, we dressed a catalogue of verses of Lamentations which are accounted for in *Eikhah Rabbati*. Second, investigation was carried out on how these forms of Lamentations are accounted for by the Rabbis. Work carried out on these linguistic forms results in claims, anecdotes, narratives and parables-*meshalim*. These data are reported in the Appendices. These interpretive forms are respectively partly in the first two chapters in their linguistic stamp analysed. The historical setting of these forms, as supported by ancient sources, is examined in the two following chapters. The said historical setting is reflected in parables-*meshalim*. The latter are examined in chapter five. Our research indicates that history is an issue of records of the past as well as of researches dealing with these records.

Deutsch

Die folgende Arbeit ist ein auf dem rabbinischen Kommentar *Eikhah Rabbati* des biblischen Buches Klagelieder basierter Beitrag zu der Debatte über Geschichte in Bezug zu den biblischen Texten im Allgemeinen. Die Antwort auf die Frage, ob der Inhalt eines biblischen Buches historisch ist oder nicht wird immer noch leidenschaftlich diskutiert und unterschiedlich beantwortet. Im Unterschied zu mancherlei Forschungen, die sich mit diesem Problem beschäftigen, fällt das rabbinische Kommentar *Eikhah Rabati*, der Gegenstand dieser Arbeit, durch die Menge von Geschichte treffenden Aussagen auf. Diese Aussagen beziehen sich auf das biblischen Buch Klagelieder sowie auf den Zeitraum, der der römischen Eroberung von dem Palästina und der Zerstörung des Tempels von Jerusalem im 70 C.E. folgt.

Um uns mit dem Begriff der Geschichte von den Rabbinen, deren Ansichten und Aussagen in den ihnen zugeschriebenen Kommentierungen, auseinanderzusetzen, haben wir einen theoretischen Rahmen nötig gehabt, der uns erlaubt, Aussagen zu treffen, nach denen der Gebrauch der Sprache im Allgemeinen und besonders die sprachlichen Äußerungen in Verbindung mit dem Geist und der Zeit des Sprechers zu setzen sind. Es ist ausgehend von dieser Annahme, dass wir eine ausführliche Untersuchung des sprachlichen Inhalts der ersten zwei Kapitel von *Eikhah Rabbati* durchgeführt haben. Wir haben zuerst eine Liste von den Versen aus dem biblischen Buch Klagelieder, die im *Eikhah Rabbati* ausgelegt werden, aufgestellt. Dann wurde untersucht, wie die Rabbis von *Eikhah Rabbati*, diesen sprachlichen Formen aus dem Klagelieder Rechnung getragen haben. Die Arbeit, die auf diesen sprachlichen Formen durchgeführt wurde, ergab Aussagen, Anekdoten, Erzählungen und Gleichnisse-*Meshalim*. Dieses Material haben wir in Register zusammengestellt. Diese rabbinischen Kommentare wurden nun von uns reihenweise in ihrer sprachlichen Formulierung zum Teil in den ersten beiden Kapiteln untersucht. In den zwei folgenden Kapiteln wird ihr historisches *Setting* anhand von alten Quellen eruiert. Dieses historische *Setting* ist in den Gleichnissen-*Meshalim*, die wir im fünften Kapitel bearbeiten, wiederhergegeben.

Unsere Untersuchung kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Geschichte eine Angelegenheit ist, die die Dokumente aus der Vergangenheit so wie die Beschäftigung mit diesen Dokumenten betrifft.