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On the interpretation of the Mishnah, see Jacob Neusner, *The Modern Study of the Mishnah* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973). Neusner argues that each document within the rabbinic canon must be interpreted as an independent work, and that the Mishnah is a philosophical response to the destruction of the temple; see his *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). On the interpretation of the Mishnah by the Talmudim, see Jacob Neusner, *Midrash in Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1983).

Glossary of Technical Terms

amoraim: Literally "speakers," the rabbis of the third to fifth centuries C.E. in Israel and Babylonia who composed the two Talmudim.

Apocrypha: Literally "things hidden away," Apocryphal books are books of uncertain or disputed canonicity; they are to be "hidden away," that is, not read in public. The Apocrypha is the collection of Jewish books that are included in the Greek or Latin Old Testament of the church but not in the Hebrew Tanak of the Jews.

apocalypse: Literally "revelation," a work that reveals, usually through the intermediation of an angel, some secret of nature or history. Most apocalypses of the second temple period treat eschatological themes, and probably were written in the expectation that the end time was imminent.

Aristeas, Letter of: A pseudepigraphic treatise or epistle, attributed to a gentile courtier of Ptolemy Philadelphus, but written by a Jew probably in the last part of the second century B.C.E. Its story is the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, but its theme is the easy coexistence of Judaism with Hellenism.

Ben Sira: A teacher in Jerusalem who, in about 200 B.C.E., wrote a wisdom book now contained in the Apocrypha. (The book is sometimes called Sirach or Ecclesiasticus.)

bet midrash: Literally "house of study," a school or academy.

Chapters of the Fathers: A tractate of the Mishnah which, because of its exclusive focus on ethical and moral exhortations and its complete neglect of legal matters, is unlike any other tractate. Its opening two chapters are a chain of tradition depicting the transmission of the Torah from God to Moses, and from Moses ultimately to the rabbis of the Mishnah.

cult: System of worship.

diaspora: The "scattering" of the Jews throughout the world outside the land of Israel.

Enoch, book of: A collection of pseudepigraphic works attributed to the antediluvian figure of Genesis 5. The earliest of these works is the product of the third century B.C.E.

eschatology: Doctrine of the end (or end times). Eschatology includes the notions of life after death, resurrection, the final judgment, national restoration, messianic deliverance, etc.

Fourth Ezra: Also called Second Esdras, an apocalypse now in the Apocrypha written shortly after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E.

haburah: Literally "fellowship" or "association," a group of pietists whose regulations are detailed in rabbinic literature. The members of the group punctiliously observed the laws of purity and tithes, and may have had a connection with the Pharisees.

Hellenistic period: The period from 334 B.C.E., the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great, to the rise of the Maccabees in the 160s B.C.E.

Josephus: A Jewish historian of the first century C.E., whose works are our major sources for the history of the latter part of the second temple period. The *Jewish War*, completed in the early 80s C.E., treats Jewish history from the rise of the Maccabees to the fall of Masada in 73/4 C.E. The *Jewish Antiquities* was completed in 93/4 C.E.; its first part paraphrases the Bible, its second surveys the second temple period from Hellenistic times to the eve of the revolt of 66 C.E. The *Against Apion*, completed around 100 C.E., is an apology for Judaism and an attack on anti-Judaism.

Maccabees: The dynasty founded by Mattathias the Hasmonean and his son Judah the Maccabee, which ruled the Jews from the 160s B.C.E. to 63 B.C.E., when the Romans entered Jerusalem.

Mishnah: Literally "repetition," a book of legal statements on various topics produced by the rabbis of the second century C.E. and edited by Judah the Patriarch. The book is arranged in six divisions; each division contains tractates. Any individual paragraph of the Mishnah is also called Mishnah.

Palestine: Literally, "the land of the Philistines," the name given by the Romans to the land of Judea after the defeat of Bar Kokhba in 135 C.E. In this book, "Palestine" and "the land of Israel" are synonymous.

Persian period: From 539 B.C.E., the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, until 334 B.C.E., the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great.

Philo: An Alexandrian Jew of the first half of the first century C.E., best known for his numerous and lengthy commentaries and essays on the Torah, especially Genesis.

politeuma: An autonomous ethnic community within a Greek city.

purity or ritual purity: The avoidance of sources of pollution: corpses, impure animals, sexual discharges, etc. The regulations are contained primarily in Leviticus, but are greatly elaborated in many of the works from Qumran and in rabbinic literature.

Pentateuch: See Torah.

Pseudepigrapha: Works that bear "false ascriptions," i.e., works that claim to have been written by someone other than their true author. Modern scholars speak of "the Pseudepigrapha" as if there were a single corpus of such works, but such a corpus did not exist until modern scholars created it. Many works included by modern scholars in "the Pseudepigrapha" are not pseudepigraphic.

Ptolemies: The Macedonian (or Greek) rulers of Egypt, from the end of the fourth century B.C.E. to the end of the first century B.C.E.

Qedushah: The prayer that features the recitation of the *Sanctus* ("Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts," from Isaiah 6:3).

rabbi: A title of respect (literally "my master"), originally used only in the second person but later used in the third person as well. The noun "rabbi" and the adjective "rabbinic" are usually used as technical terms for the persons and culture of the society that produced the Mishnah and related works.

Roman period: From 63 B.C.E., the entrance of the Romans into Jerusalem, until the early seventh century, when the East was conquered by the Persians and, later, the Arabs. (Most scholars use the term "Byzantine" to refer to the Roman empire after the fourth century.)

sect: A small organized group which separates itself from a larger religious body and asserts that it alone embodies the ideals of the larger group because it alone understands God's will.

Seleucids: The Macedonian (or Greek) rulers of Syria and Asia, from the end of the fourth century B.C.E. to the early first century B.C.E.

Shema: The paragraph beginning "Hear, O Israel" from Deuteronomy 6:4-9. According to the Mishnah this paragraph is combined with Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41 to form a single prayer.

statutory prayer: A prayer that is recited to fulfill an obligation to pray. The prayer is not occasioned by any special need or event, but is seen as a religious obligation in itself.

Talmud (plur. Talmudim): Literally "study," the commentary on the Mishnah, which because of its size and discursive character, is not really a commentary but an independent work. The rabbis of Israel in the third to fourth centuries C.E. produced the Palestinian Talmud, or Jerusalem Talmud, while the rabbis of Babylonia in the third to sixth centuries produced

the Babylonian Talmud. Sometimes the word is used to designate rabbinic literature as a whole (which includes more than just the Mishnah and the Talmudim).

Tanak: An acronym for Torah, Nebiim (Prophets), and Ketubim (Writings). The Hebrew Bible or Old Testament.

tannaim: Literally "teachers" (or "repeaters"), the rabbis of Palestine in the second century C.E. whose statements are contained primarily in the Mishnah but also in other rabbinic works.

Targum (plur. Targumim): A translation of scripture into Aramaic.

theodicy: Literally "divine justice," the doctrines that seek to explain why a good and powerful God allows evil to exist in the world.

Torah: Literally "instruction," the first five books of the Bible. In second temple times, Greek-speaking Jews referred to it as "the Law." The church fathers coined the name Pentateuch, literally "the five rolls." In rabbinic texts Torah is often a synonym for Judaism.

Yavneh (or Jamnia): The town west-northwest of Jerusalem where the rabbis first gathered after the destruction of the temple.

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