

ARISE, WALK THROUGH THE LAND



Yizhar Hirschfeld (1950–2006)

# ARISE, WALK THROUGH THE LAND

Studies in the Archaeology and History of  
the Land of Israel  
in Memory of Yizhar Hirschfeld  
on the Tenth Anniversary of his Demise

Editors

JOSEPH PATRICH, ORIT PELEG-BARKAT, EREZ BEN-YOSEF



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**Aerial view of ancient Tiberias urban center.** Photo: Skyview, courtesy Yizhar Hirschfeld's Tiberias Excavations.

**Panther head,** Ramat HaNadiv Excavations. Photo: A. Avital.

**Group of dwellings in the Arab village of Deir Samit.** Photo I. Shtulman.

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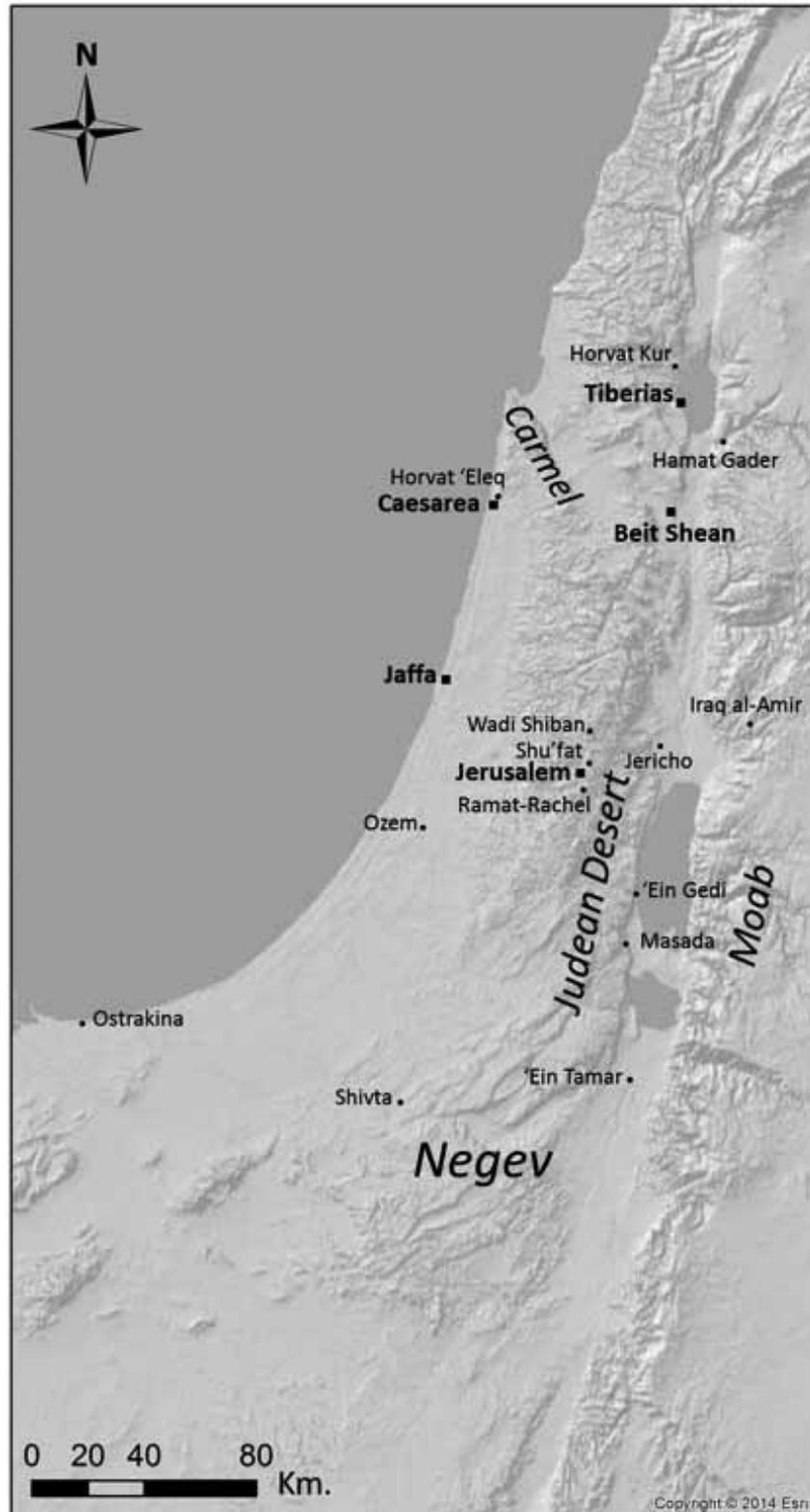
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Map of sites and geographical regions addressed in the book.



FROM *REALIA* TO MATERIAL CULTURE:  
THE RECEPTION OF SAMUEL KRAUSS’  
*TALMUDISCHE ARCHÄOLOGIE*\*

YARON Z. ELIAV

\* I dedicate the current article to the memory of my late friend and mentor Yizhar Hirschfeld, who, as will be shown in detail below, played a central role in the reception of Krauss and the dissemination of his work. In the early 1990s, working as an area manager under Yizhar at his Tiberias excavations, I took my first steps in what would become one of the main paths of my life-long scholarly quest, combining archaeological material and literary, mainly rabbinic, sources. Yizhar supported, encouraged and guided me in those nascent stages with kindness, subversive intellectual vigor and an unmatched zest for life and its joys. He will always be missed.

During the twentieth century, archaeology became a central component in the study of ancient Judaism. Today, within the broad, multidimensional scholarly endeavors to understand ancient Jews and their literature, way of life and culture, a distinct sub-field focuses on the confluence between physical remains as unearthed in archaeological excavations and the literary records preserved about them in rabbinic literature (see Fine and Koller 2014 for one recent example). But amidst the many accomplishments in this area of study today, it is easy to forget our scholarly antecedents, the previous generations of scholars who enabled and laid the foundations for present-day research on these topics. *Talmudische Archäologie* (Krauss 1910–1912; henceforth *TA*), the three-volume, seminal project of the turn-of-the-century Jewish-Hungarian scholar Samuel Krauss (1866–1948), figures prominently in all studies that combine archaeology and rabbinic material – even if today many fail to acknowledge its central role.

Krauss cast his net wide in these volumes, his goals comprehensive and far-reaching. He strove to recreate the physical world as it is depicted in the vast literature

of the Jewish scholars to whom we now refer collectively as “rabbis” – from the *Mishnah* through the *Tosefta* and *Midrashim* to the two *Talmudim* – and, although to a lesser extent, to illustrate the references in rabbinic literature with the scattered Greco-Roman archaeological remains that were known in his time. Breaking down the physical world of the ancients into topics and sub-topics, Krauss went on to collect all relevant references in rabbinic literature to a given subject, explain the particular vocabulary and terminology that rabbinic authors used to discuss it, and finally stitch the details together into a comprehensive and coherent picture, striving to make it as realistic as possible by adding references and illustrations to actual archaeological finds. The three-volume outcome was a sort of encyclopedic manual, organized thematically, a guide to the physical world (with some topical extensions; see Eliav 2014:39) in which the rabbis lived and functioned.

Krauss was not an archaeologist by any stretch of the imagination; he never studied the field or engaged in any research related to it. Rather, his interest and expertise lay in texts and in languages, and he put those to work by collecting, topically arranging and explaining all references to the physical, manmade surroundings as they appear throughout rabbinic texts (Eliav 2014:45–48). No small task, and unprecedented in scope and implementation, his achievement has had a long and lasting impact; it is no accident that the most current, authoritative collection devoted to the reconstruction of Jewish daily life in Roman Palestine begins its first sentence by paying tribute to Krauss and his work (Hezser 2010:1). In the present article I build on recent studies that have focused on Krauss’s own biography, intellectual background and scholarly output

(Hezser 2013; Eliav 2014),<sup>1</sup> but shift the attention to the generations that have followed him and his work. I chart the development in scholarly interests across the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the evolving ways that multiple generations of scholars have brought together archaeological remains and rabbinic material, and explore the various ways in which modern research has distinguished itself from – but always built on – Krauss' influence.

### Introduction

The appearance of the first volume of Samuel Krauss' *TA* in 1910 has been followed by a century of scholarship on the tangible, manmade world of the rabbis. Krauss' work has been recognized as the foundation for this research; some have even dubbed him the “founding father” of the field now called “material culture,” at least as it relates to ancient Judaism (Eliav 2014:40, n. 6). But as contemporary scholars continue to engage the topic of material culture, some questions remain unanswered. In what ways are we following Krauss' endeavors and in what ways are we departing from them? Even more importantly, why has it been so difficult to build upon his undertaking, to revise and update his books? In the past generation, for example, several nineteenth-century classics, originally written in German, have been revised and translated into English and have consequently reclaimed their pivotal role in the study of ancient Judaism, a hundred years and more after they were first published. The editions of Emil Schürer's work on Second Temple Jewish history, originally published in the late 1800s, and Hermann Strack's 1887 work on rabbinic literature, come to mind as typical examples (Schürer 1973–1987; Strack and Stemberger 1996). Even Krauss' other scholarly enterprise, on the Jewish-Christian controversy in antiquity, has gained new life in a modern format (Krauss 1995).<sup>2</sup> Yet his three-volume magnum opus, *TA*, gathers dust. Ultimately, we must raise a question, perhaps uncomfortable for his admirers: is renewing Krauss still a worthwhile undertaking, or should it be abandoned altogether in favor of other material culture projects?

In the following I respond to these questions within the broader context of developments and changes in scholarship that have taken place in the century since Krauss began to publish his work, among both scholars who focus on rabbinic material and those who study

the physical world of Roman Palestine during the High and Late Empire. I reconsider the academic landscape that Krauss helped to shape in order to gain a better understanding of both the ways in which we are still indebted to him and the ways in which we have superseded him. I argue that in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries we can identify five distinct – although connected and at times coinciding – groups of scholars that have followed in Krauss' footsteps, producing an impressive array of scholarship on the tangible, manmade world of Roman Palestine as it is depicted in rabbinic literature. The accomplishments of these groups are interrelated, both overlapping with Krauss and opposing him; all acknowledge their debt to him, while at the same time seeking to go beyond his work.<sup>3</sup>

### Early Beginnings – the Talmudists

During the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, interest in ancient Palestine, its inhabitants and the archaeological remains that those people left behind extended well beyond the confines of Jewish studies or rabbinic literature. The proliferation of nineteenth-century surveys and research institutions for the study of the Holy Land demonstrates this trend (Ben-Arieh 1979; Goren 1999), as does the torrent of early publications on geographical, archaeological and historical topics. Framed primarily by Christian perspectives, early scholarship on the Holy Land focused on the Old and New Testaments and the people and societies who produced them, as well as the wider cultural environment in which they functioned, namely the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman worlds. These projects largely passed over the relevant material in rabbinic literature, which was *terra incognita* for most European Christian explorers and researchers of the time, with language and content barriers making these texts all but inaccessible. One noticeable exception to this rule was Gustaf Dalman (1855–1941), a German-Swedish scholar who studied the material environment of ancient Palestine, paid close attention to references in rabbinic literature and used Krauss' *TA* as his main resource for these sources (Dalman 1928–1942).

Other than Dalman, the first group that picked up where Krauss left off consisted of Jewish talmudic scholars who immigrated from Europe to Israel (and the United States) in the first half of the twentieth century. Although the vast majority of research into ancient rabbinic texts

during this span showed no interest in matters physical, a few scholars did engage in this type of inquiry. They were concerned mainly with the explanation and clarification of difficult passages in rabbinic literature. Some of these interpreters/commentators of the early twentieth century realized that many rabbinic discussions hinge on physical aspects of the ancient world, and that tangible objects, both large and small, feature prominently in rabbinic works. Some, albeit only a few, of these scholars therefore attempted to gain insight into the material environment of ancient times and to utilize the physical realm to decipher the meaning of specific words and statements in rabbinic literature.

No one represents this trend better than Saul Lieberman (1898–1983) who, in his many commentaries to and studies on the *Tosefta* and the *Yerushalmi*, consistently discussed and strove to illuminate the tangible objects mentioned in the texts. Quite critical of Krauss' philological competence, Lieberman's appreciation for his overall project remained ambivalent at best (Lieberman 1937, reprinted in Lieberman 1991:555–565). Time and again, in both his historical and exegetical oeuvre, Lieberman referred, even if critically, to Krauss' early, two-volume dictionary of Greek loanwords in rabbinic literature – known as the *Lehnwörter* (Krauss 1898–1899) – but practically never to his magnum opus, *TA*.<sup>4</sup> Accentuating this neglect are Lieberman's occasional references to other scholars who produced works similar to those of Krauss but on a much more limited, modest scale, people like Ludwig Blau, Immanuel Löw and Julius Preuss, as well as up-and-coming younger scholars such as Raphael Patai and Yehoshua Brand (more on them below).<sup>5</sup> It is as if Lieberman chose to leave *TA* outside his research library.

Despite this subtle, if glaring, dismissal, in his treatment of rabbinic references to physical surroundings, Lieberman followed the same methodological route as Krauss.<sup>6</sup> Like Krauss, he focused on rabbinic terms and phrases representing objects, toiling to clarify philologically their correct textual version and then pairing the mentioned artifacts with what could be gleaned from Greek and Roman texts as well as from archaeological findings. Hardly ever, however, did Lieberman refer to actual and specific physical remains, and even more rarely did he apply any analytical concern to the physical realm. Rather, his attention centered entirely on the segment of rabbinic literature that he was striving to interpret; the physical realm intrigued

Lieberman only as an afterthought and in its utility for deciphering a rabbinic passage.

Similarly to Lieberman, Jacob Naḥum Epstein (1878–1952), mainly in the notes to his edition of the commentary of the Geonim to *Seder Toharot* (translated and published *post mortem* as Epstein 1982), pays close attention to physical elements in the text. For both of these renowned modern talmudic scholars, the primary objective remained, as it was for their *Wissenschaft des Judentums* predecessors, to understand the rabbinic text; their interest in material aspects, in turn, stems from this objective. Archaeology serves here as an exegetical tool for modern academic commentaries of rabbinic texts, and little else.

#### **Mid-Century Developments – Talmudists With Archaeological Training**

A second Krauss-related development occurred around the middle of the twentieth century, when scholarship in Jewish studies began looking at the relationship between physical artifacts and rabbinic literature in an entirely different and more elaborate manner. While still focused on rabbinic literature, this new type of research was for the first time carried out by talmudists who had also acquired real and substantial archaeological training. The first among this group, to my knowledge, was Yehoshua Brand, who studied at the Hebrew University and wrote his PhD dissertation in the 1940s under the talmudist Epstein and the archaeologist Eliezer Lipah Sukenik.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Krauss, who strove to cover the entire physical spectrum of ancient life as it is depicted in rabbinic sources, Brand concentrated on the more confined area of vessels and utensils, first ceramic (Brand 1953) and then glass (Brand 1978). He also devoted studies of smaller scope to other aspects of the physical world, such as clothing (Brand 1978:176–185). Brand articulates two primary objectives: first (a) to find matches between the items found in excavations and those mentioned in rabbinic literature, and then (b) to reconstruct this dimension of life, namely, the ways people engaged with the vessels that populated their surroundings (Brand 1953:11). By presenting such a framework for his research, Brand elaborates and advances the role of archaeology beyond the merely illustrative role that it played in Krauss' work, or its minimal exegetical function in commentaries such as those of Lieberman and Epstein.

Brand also stresses his departure from the

philologically focused inquiry of his predecessors, such as Lieberman and Epstein; according to Brand, clarifying the exact wording of a certain term, and matching it with similar terms in other ancient texts, can bring you only somewhat closer to the world of the ancients. Understanding their physical surroundings through archaeological excavations, mainly in the regions where they lived, is of no less and probably greater importance (Brand 1953:15–17). Brand thus moved resolutely away from the philological commitment – not to say obsession – of Krauss and even more so of Lieberman and his colleagues. (It comes as no surprise that the latter indeed criticized Brand harshly for this departure from the standard norms of the field.) Unlike Krauss, Brand differentiated between Palestinian and Babylonian material in rabbinic literature, which was a step forward in methodology. However, at the same time he shared Krauss' ultimate goal: to reconstruct, in its entirety, a certain aspect of the physical world depicted in the Talmud, in Brand's case that of vessels and utensils.

Another example of this mid-century trend comes in the work of Yehuda Feliks, published a decade or so after Brand, on the agriculture of Palestine in the days of the Mishnah and Talmud (Feliks 1963). It adds the botanical perspective to Brand's archaeological viewpoint but otherwise reflects similar tendencies in both methodology and scope.<sup>8</sup>

To signal their departure from the exegetical-philological path of most rabbinic scholars of the time, Brand and his students coined the term “*realia talmudit*,” half Latin and half Hebrew, for this new type of inquiry. When in the 1950s the newly established Tel Aviv University hired Brand, his title bore a close resemblance, whether intentional or not, to the title of Krauss' work – Brand became a professor of *arkheologia talmudit* (talmudic archaeology; Aminah in Brand 1978:388–401; Lieberman 1991:383). But the use of the same term, archaeology, by both Brand and Krauss should not blur the development in the meaning assigned to it; whereas for Krauss “archaeology” meant “antiquity” (Altertümer; Eliav 2014:45–46), for Brand, half a century later, “archaeology” referred to the scholarly discipline of uncovering the past through excavations. This shift in meaning reflects the broader development across this half-century in the role that archaeology, as an academic discipline, could and should play in the study of ancient Judaism. Krauss highlighted the opportunities offered by the study of the material world

but was in no position to engage archaeology seriously in his endeavor. However, by Brand's time archaeology had become a well-developed discipline in its own right among scholars of Judaism and was now making its first significant contributions to the field of rabbinics.

This strand of scholarship by talmudists with an archaeological background reached its highest point in the work of Daniel Sperber. Beginning in the 1970s, and after studying for several years at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, among other institutions, Sperber's research advanced with eerie similarity the path that Krauss had paved. Like Krauss' *Lehnwörter*, his early studies focused on lexicographical matters, mainly concerned with Greek words embedded in the rabbinic corpus, and culminated in a mini-lexicon of Greek legal terms used by rabbinic scholars (Sperber 1982a; 1984). Some years later, in a similar vein to Krauss' *TA* as well as to the works of Brand and Feliks, Sperber published more comprehensive studies that aimed to reconstruct certain facets of the material world, based in their entirety on details extracted from rabbinic texts and meshed with archaeological evidence: first a study on ships and shipping and then a second, more ambitious project devoted to the physical structures of the Roman city in Palestine (Sperber 1986; 1998). During this time he also published two monographs related, although not exclusively, to tangible artifacts, one on monetary issues and another on land (Sperber 1974; 1978). Other research by Sperber resembles the exegetical approach of his teacher, Saul Lieberman, but with a much stronger focus on matters physical. In these, Sperber relies on philology, lexicography and linguistics in order to clarify obscure terms in the Talmud and shed light on difficult literary segments (*sugyot*), producing either a fully fledged commentary on a rabbinic text or smaller-scale, commentary-style studies devoted to the explication of passages and terms relating to the physical environment as reflected in rabbinic literature (Sperber 1982b; 1993–2006).

All three scholars, Brand, Feliks and Sperber, go beyond the mere explanation of certain passages (although they do plenty of that as well) to the reconstruction of the physical dimension of life, or a certain portion of it, as experienced by Jews in the Roman world. By doing so they all model their work on the paradigm created by Krauss, in which rabbinic material stands at the core of inquiry and archaeology adds the realistic flavor of lived experience. At the same time, they all strive, successfully

to a large extent, to expand the role of archaeology both in their training and then in their research. The discipline of archaeology for these scholars, even if secondary to rabbinics and functioning only as an auxiliary tool for understanding rabbinic material, nevertheless receives serious attention and professional handling. For the most part, the topics that these scholars pursue resemble those of Krauss: an attempt to reconstruct the physical world – what they call *realia* – based on the data preserved in rabbinic literature, but this time with more in-depth treatment of the archaeological dimension.

### **The Second Half of The Twentieth Century – Archaeologists Interested in the Talmud**

In the second half of the twentieth century, the small trickle of scholars devoting their research to archaeology and the Talmud turned into a small flood. In the decades following the Second World War and the establishment of the modern state of Israel, wide interest in ancient history in general and archaeology in particular swept through the young Israeli society as well as its older counterparts in Christian Europe and North America (and to a large extent in Australia as well). Extensive expeditions, surveys and excavations, which had begun earlier in the twentieth century, reached their peak in those decades, revealing an unknown world in the Judean Desert and Masada, as well as the many ornamented ancient synagogues in Galilee. Thus the Jews of the Greco-Roman world came to the forefront of public attention. The surviving physical artifacts, unearthed by archaeological digs, captured the imaginations of Israelis as well as Jews and Christians around the world. Zionist youth movements, and a variety of popular societies for the study and exploration of the past, generated a great demand for information.<sup>9</sup> Rabbinic literature, together with the writings of Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospels of the New Testament (as well as the Hebrew Bible and its related texts for earlier periods), offered a wealth of such data.

This heightened interest in archaeology led to a third Krauss-related development, this time from the opposite direction: rather than academic scholars of the Talmud who utilized the physical world to help them interpret rabbinic texts, now archaeologists and investigators of tangible objects, such as vessels or tools, turned to the Talmud for help in interpreting and contextualizing the finds of excavations. The fruits of

this trajectory vary in nature, quality and scope. They range from serious scholarship to popular and semi-academic works intended mainly to satisfy the growing interest of the general public, such as the travel guides and encyclopedias produced by Zeev Vilnay, where rabbinic references pepper the presentation of sites and artifacts from the ancient world.<sup>10</sup> The harbingers of this scholarly tendency include the research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s by Yigael Yadin on military weapons depicted in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Yadin 1962) and by Shmuel Avitsur on the technological machinery of the ancient world (Avitsur 1976). Both Yadin and Avitsur approached rabbinic literature from the outside and neither had any formal academic training in the study of this corpus, but they recognized the importance of including rabbinic references to the physical items that they investigated. In accessing rabbinic material they both heavily rely on Krauss.<sup>11</sup> Thus the pendulum of research swung to the opposite side: Krauss and Lieberman, each in his own way, focused entirely on rabbinic texts and used archaeology to provide illustration for rabbinic material but not much more, while Yadin and Avitsur, by contrast, investigated archaeological material and used rabbinic sources to illustrate their archaeological discussions.

Yadin and Avitsur were followed in the 1970s by other archaeologists and archaeologically oriented scholars such as Lee Levine (see below) and Eric Meyers (Meyers 1975; 2014). But in my view the fullest expression of this trend of archaeologists who engaged talmudic literature while lacking substantial training in rabbinics came in the 1980s, in the work of Yizhar Hirschfeld on the Palestinian house (originally in Hebrew in 1987; English translation Hirschfeld 1995). Hirschfeld boldly strode into mostly unfamiliar territory when he incorporated systematic references to rabbinic sources in his effort to reconstruct ancient housing, a research project based primarily on both excavations and surveys of contemporary dwellings in Arab villages. Hirschfeld's limited knowledge and scholarly training in the Talmud resembles Krauss' inadequate background in archaeology. Indeed, both rely on secondary sources. Krauss consulted archaeological encyclopedias and reference works, genres that had become very common by the time he conducted his work at the turn of the century (Eliav 2014:51–52); Hirschfeld, in turn, took many of his talmudic references from Krauss' *TA* (Hirschfeld 1995:10). Despite their opposite starting

points, both works share the same goal: to recreate a portion of the physical environment of the ancient world. Whereas Krauss began with the Talmud and added second-hand archaeological knowledge, Hirschfeld started with archaeological data and added second-hand rabbinic knowledge.

### **Closing the Century – Interdisciplinary and Material Culture Models**

With academia's general shift toward interdisciplinary research during the closing decades of the twentieth century, a fourth Krauss-related development began to take shape (followed a little more recently, as shown below, by a related fifth development). Certainly, earlier trends continued with archaeologists like Hirschfeld who attempted a systematic, though second-hand, engagement with the rabbinic corpus, as well as with talmudically centered scholars who attempted to fuse analysis of rabbinic literature with archaeological awareness, if not training (see, for example, on the archaeology side, Patrich 1980; 1994; Magness 2011; on the talmudic side, Safrai et al. 2007–). In addition, a new brand of scholarship has started to emerge: archaeologists who are also talmudic experts and talmudic experts who are also formally and at times fully trained in the field of archaeology. This new orientation toward interdisciplinary research does not favor one discipline over the other, but rather promotes an equal use of both to understand the ancient world in general and the material environment of the Jews in particular.

Lee Levine, perhaps the first in this line of dual-discipline scholars, began publishing in the 1970s.<sup>12</sup> This multidisciplinary trend has produced numerous studies on a rich array of topics, including but not limited to theaters, *miqvaot*, tombs, games, pottery vessels and utensils, jewelry, stoves, limekilns, statues, bathhouses and military apparatus,<sup>13</sup> and above all synagogues. The latter was already a favorite subject with Krauss, who wrote two books on the subject, one published after his death (Krauss 1922; 1955), and became an ever more popular topic as archaeologists continued to unearth more such remains in the decades following Krauss' *TA*. Although many of these topics had already received ample attention in *TA*, more recent scholars, while almost always recognizing their debt to Krauss (e.g., Patrich 1994:190 n. 1; Levine 2000:10; Hezser 2010:1), were now equipped with fresh data and more

nuanced methodology, and consequently approached the old research topic anew, this time with a fully fledged archaeological agenda and training.

Furthermore, within this fourth group of interdisciplinary scholars another dimension of research has started to take shape, a shift from *realia* to material culture. Despite the opposite starting points of the above four scholarly trends – and regardless of their disparate methodologies and divergent approaches – most of them (all but the commentators of the school of Lieberman and Sperber) share a common goal: to reconstruct the physical reality of ancient Jews (and at times of ancient Palestine) in the Greco-Roman world. They all also limit themselves to precisely that, namely to answering a (seemingly, but only ostensibly so) simple question: what was the physical world, or a facet of it, like? The ultimate product of such an inquiry resembles a type of reconstruction, an attempt to recreate, to draw a picture, of the tangible, manmade world of the ancients. Largely absent from the majority of these works across the last century is the cultural dimension of the physical world of the Jews. These valuable works of scholarship provide little insight into what people thought about the physical artifacts that filled their world, or of how these artifacts created meaning for people's lives and contributed to the social dynamics of the time. We learn little about the anxieties and hopes that they associated with the physical world, what stories they told about their manmade environment, and what these tales reveal about their inner lives; and more generally, how these objects functioned in the broader social and cultural milieu of the ancient world. Indeed most scholars, both past and present, follow Sperber and define "material culture" as synonymous with "*realia*": namely (and merely) as the actual physical setting in which ancient Jews lived; or, in his words, "*realia Talmudit* means the material culture of the people during the period of the Mishnah and the Talmuds" (Sperber 1993:3).

Such a definition of material culture, however, with its sole emphasis on physical reality, on the objects themselves, is significantly at odds with the way most scholars understand it outside of Jewish studies. *The Handbook to Material Culture*, for example, published in 2006 and summarizing current intellectual developments in the field, begins with a basic premise: "this field of study centers on the idea that materiality is an integral dimension of culture" (Tilley et al. 2006:1). It goes on to define the goals of this discipline as "the manner in

which *things* relate to conscious ideas and intentions held by persons or subjects,” as well as “the manner in which *things* relate to unconscious structures of thought and affect, unacknowledged conditions, habits, or experiences... and social life” (Tilley et al. 2006:4; see also Hicks and Beaudry 2010). This prominence of cultural aspects, targeting the inner world of people as they encounter and use physical objects, extends well beyond the focus on the mere objects themselves – what they looked like, what they were made of, or how they operated – that characterizes most of the work carried out by Jewish studies scholars surveyed thus far.

Nevertheless, these new intellectual currents and shifting methodological formulations have already permeated the study of Jewish physical reality as well. The interdisciplinary members of the fourth group discussed above have broadened their scope beyond the old paradigm, already formulated by Krauss, that sought to reconstruct the manmade environment per se. Similarly, and in many instances modeled on the new definitions of material culture discussed in the previous paragraph, scholars of ancient Judaism too strove to include wide-ranging cultural considerations within the discussion of material artifacts. Still in its nascent stages and building upon Krauss and his four groups of twentieth-century heirs, this line of inquiry should be considered as a fifth development in the fields of Talmud and archaeology, one that places culture as its central goal and thus can be considered a new field, which we might call Jewish material culture in antiquity (but which is quite different from Sperber’s definition of material culture).

Though this kind of research is quite new, a precursor can already be seen in the first half of the twentieth century in the works of another Hungarian Jew, Raphael Patai, who combined an interest, and later significant training, in anthropology with a talmudic foundation very similar to that of Krauss (Sanua 1983:11–53). Patai emigrated from Hungary to British Palestine in the 1930s and is credited with writing the first ever PhD dissertation at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His early works on shipping in ancient Jewish societies (Patai 1938) and then on men and land (Patai 1942–1943) integrate a Krauss-style inquiry into the physical environment as portrayed in rabbinic literature with some anthropological awareness and methodology that looks beyond the physical item to the people who use it. Patai eventually moved to the United States and

his rich career and research, which grew to encompass anthropology, ethnology and folklore, moved in other directions; the seeds of his early investigation into rabbinic material culture never germinated. With his shifting interest, an early opportunity to incorporate anthropology, a central component of modern material culture studies (Hicks and Beaudry 2010:25), into the study of rabbinic literature went unrealized.

It took another half century until Lee Levine’s work on the synagogue paved the way for culturally oriented studies of the tangible, manmade world of the Jews in antiquity (Levine 2000). The scope of Levine’s work is vast, encompassing all physical aspects of the topic, the building and its architecture, and everything from the furniture inside to the art on the walls and floors. In doing so he employs both rabbinic literature and archaeological remains to their full extent, with equal training in each and equal comfort in using and critically assessing both. But alongside his archaeological focus, he also devotes considerable attention to the cultural dimensions of this structure and provides a thorough study of how the building, in itself a merely physical structure, functioned in multiple realms of ancient Jewish experience and consciousness.

In a similar vein, the emphasis on cultural aspects of the material world reverberates through the studies produced by the research group organized by Peter Schäfer in the 1990s at the Freie Universität in Berlin, as manifested by its very title, “The Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture” (Schäfer 1998–2002). From this consortium came three volumes of essays; some concentrate on altogether non-physical topics, while others deal with the physical dimension of Jewish life but do not limit themselves solely to the reconstruction of that material world. Rather they strive to shed light on the manifold facets of the physical world and their impact on public imagination, religious practice and social hierarchy. In short, the Schäfer group endeavored to unpack the cultural dynamics of the relations between people and the objects that filled their world. My own research dating back to the mid-1990s on Jews and Roman bathhouses (Eliav 2000; 2002) and on the sculptural environment of Roman Palestine (2008) goes in the same direction; so do, despite differences and disagreements, recent works by Steven Fine (2005), Zeev Weiss (2005), Catherine Hezser (2010) and Stuart Miller (2010).

In these studies, archaeology no longer operates

as a mere background, as in the early books of Krauss, nor is it the ultimate goal, as in the works of Hirschfeld and other archaeologists. The research carried out in these projects also departs from the rabbinic-centered model of Lieberman and the early talmudists. Within this fifth development, both corpora of sources – rabbinic literature and the physical realm as unearthed in archaeological excavations – function simultaneously, and with equal intellectual status, as tools that serve a broader objective: the reconstruction of Jewish culture. Consequently, the definition of “material culture” also acquires new meaning, not correlating solely with the physical world within which Jews lived, and thus moving beyond Sperber’s widely accepted definition of “*realia*.” Instead, these most recent works trace the dynamics of culture among Jews – their thoughts, perceptions, views, attitudes, fears, observations, opinions and experiences – in their interactions with the physical, tangible realm that surrounded them.

To summarize: it is far too easy to assume that more is better – that because the practitioners of the current “fifth development” utilize more fields of training and consider a wider number of research topics, they are doing better work than Krauss did. Needless to say, the truth is not so simple. It would be reductive to chart an upward trajectory based on my discussion from more limited forms of scholarship earlier in the twentieth century to a more advanced, “enlightened” or just plain better scholarship today. Krauss, Lieberman, Epstein and others were among the giants of Jewish scholarship and their achievements continue to resonate and make possible our growth today. On the one hand, it may be true that a culture-centered approach adds more to our collective understanding of humanity; such an approach may also increase the public’s curiosity about the ancient world as well as our sense of empathy for people who lived very differently from us. On the other hand, much has been lost along the way, starting with the rigorous mastery of the sources that characterized figures such as Krauss, and their impressive grasp of languages, both ancient and modern. But above all we should acknowledge the visionary ability of these earlier scholars to transcend the common notions of their own day and to pave new

paths – not to mention their overwhelming dedication to their field of study, their astonishing productivity, the heartbreaking sacrifices that were demanded of them and their sheer love for what they accomplished. The goals of the current article are less to evaluate earlier forms of scholarship than to unpack the tangled and at times misconstrued developments of the last century and in the process to honor these achievements while dispersing some misconceptions that have gained ground about them.

Krauss inaugurated a very busy century of academic investigation into the physical world of the Jews in the Greco-Roman world. Analyzing the developments that ensued offers a reminder of both the limits of our field and how far we have come. Hence it is impossible to disparage Krauss’ achievements; all of us who work in the field that combines rabbinics and archaeology still labor in his shadow. At the same time, we must also acknowledge the limitations of his work. Perhaps the reason why his three-volume opus has not been revised is that it should not be, since the expectations of our scholarship are so different than those of a century ago.

During this busy century, Jewish material culture in antiquity has evolved into a separate, independent scholarly field, a testament to the rising relevance of archaeology and its integration (albeit slow) into Judaic studies.<sup>14</sup> In the early stages, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, archaeology merely provided the background for literary scholarship, whether for commentaries on rabbinic texts or for *realia*, the reconstruction of the physical landscape as it is depicted by those texts. Gradually, archaeology in its relation to the Jewish world of antiquity became an independent field of inquiry, one that stood on its own. Eventually, scholarly trends moved to the opposite extreme, with archaeologists using rabbinic literature as mere background for archaeological reports, or as a literary source for the interpretation of physical findings. From these pendulum swings, the most current generation has created a hybrid line of research, in which the investigation of literature and the study of physical remains share an equal role in the wider pursuit of Jewish culture.

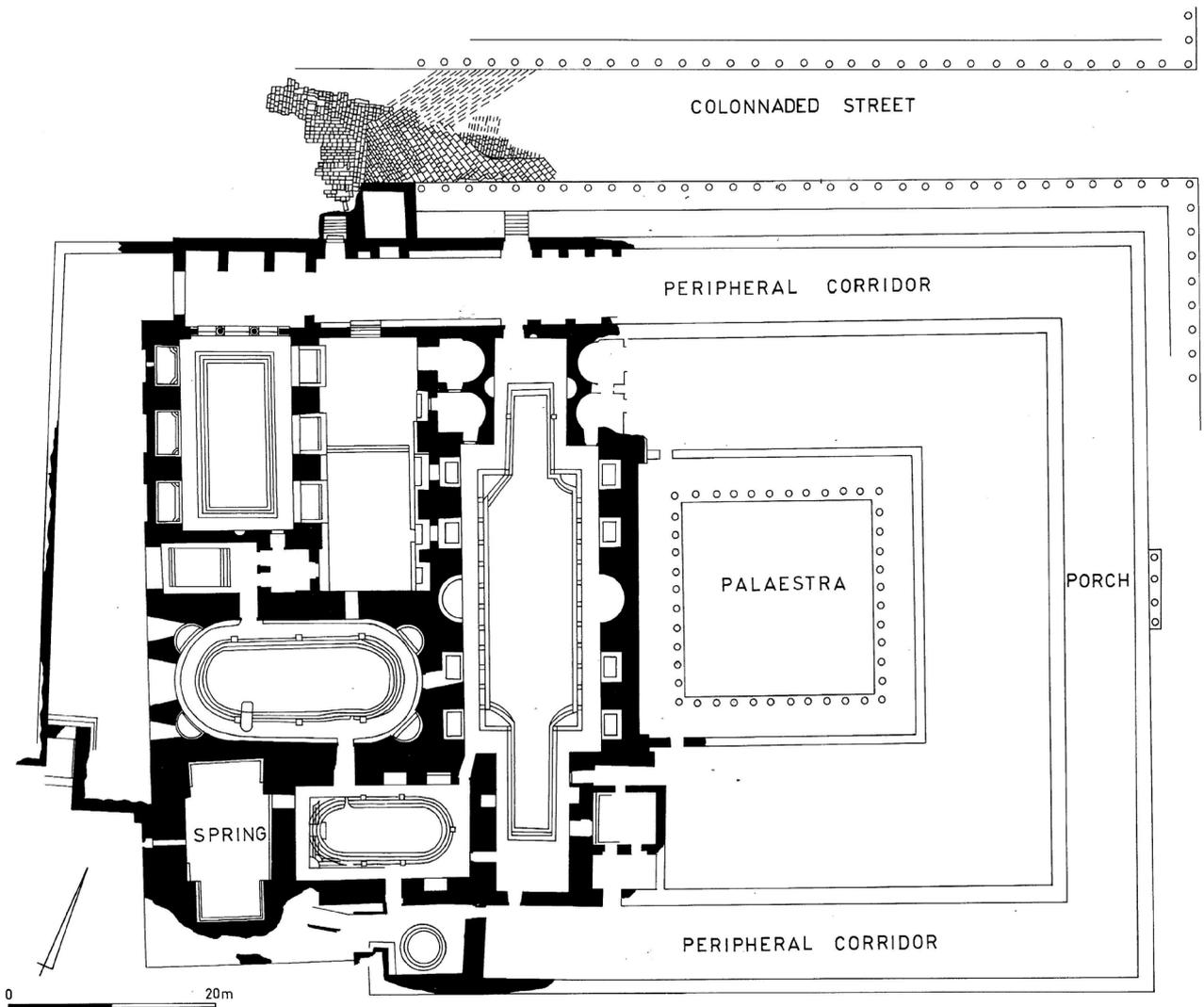
## ENDNOTES

- 1 The current article is the second part of my study devoted to the work of Samuel Krauss. For the first part, which deals with the evolution of Krauss' interest in the physical world and places him within the scholarly trajectories that evolved in Europe of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Eliav 2014.
- 2 This work was completed a few months before Krauss died in Cambridge, England, in 1948 and remained unpublished until it was translated into English from the German manuscript, revised and updated by William Horbury.
- 3 We must also keep in mind that the interest in the physical world, as it is embedded in rabbinic literature, certainly predated the nineteenth century. Both Talmuds pay careful attention to references to the material world made by the Tannaim. Later, geonic works such as the commentary to the order of *Toharot* (Epstein 1982) as well as medieval commentators, particularly the eleventh-century Rash"i and Nathan b. Jehiel of Rome, composer of the *Arukh* lexicon, continued to inquire into physical references, aiming to clarify them (even if misled by their own, rather different environment). All these early engagements with the physical realm of the rabbis deserve separate treatment. See also Fine and Koller 2014:v–viii.
- 4 I base this assessment on the following representative sample of Lieberman's multifaceted work: Lieberman 1934, 1942, 1955, 1962, 1974, 1988, and all the material collected in Lieberman 1991. In these hundreds of pages of scholarship, which include numerous discussions of physical elements as they are depicted in rabbinic literature, I found only two references to *TA*, in Lieberman 1991:379 n. 43, 383. The former mentions that Krauss "erred in some details" and the latter is followed by Lieberman's assertion that Krauss "frequently did not understand at all the Talmudic passages (on the topic)." The *Lehnwörter*, by contrast, is cited repeatedly (Lieberman 1942:9, 74 n. 65, 94; 1962:3, 133 n. 53; 1974:58 n. 4, 62 n. 35, 88 nn. 201 and 203, 89 nn. 206 and 209, 102 n. 64, 165 n. 1; 1988:394 n. 74, 363 n. 32, 361; 1991:377 n. 34, 440–456, 475 n. 31). On the *Lehnwörter*, see Eliav 2014:42–44.
- 5 E.g., Ludwig Blau (Lieberman 1942:3 n. 10; 1962:22 nn. 14 and 15); Immanuel Löw (Lieberman 1962:180; 1974:174 n. 68; 1988:388); Julius Preuss (Lieberman 1962:180); Raphael Patai (Lieberman 1988:369 n. 3); Yehoshua Brand (Lieberman 1988:330, 334 n. 32).
- 6 On Krauss' methodological principles and his lack of training and interest in what we call today the discipline of archaeology, see in detail Eliav 2014.
- 7 For a biographical sketch of Brand, written after his death by his student Noah Aminah, see Brand 1978:388–401.
- 8 For more on Feliks' biography and research, see his *Festschrift*: Friedman, Safrai and Schwartz 1997. More than a few scholars have applied to the study of the ancients their personal interests and knowledge gained from non-scholarly pursuits in areas related to the physical world. Feliks' background in farming and his studies in botany resonate prominently in his scholarship. An earlier example of this trend may be seen in the works of Abraham Herschberg (1858–1943), who combined his knowledge as a textile manufacturer in Bialystok, Poland, with studies on fabrics and weaving in the days of the Talmud; see Herschberg 1924.
- 9 This process has received much attention (and debate) among modern scholars; see, for example, Zerubavel 1995. Meticulous research on these subjects that documents and details the developments all the way back to the nineteenth century may be found in the vast work of Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, published mainly in Hebrew (see, for example, Ben-Arieh 2001). On synagogue excavations earlier in the twentieth century and on the way in which their findings contributed to the emerging interest in archaeology in Jewish circles, see Fine 2005:22–34.
- 10 On the life of Vilnay and his extensive publications, see the summaries in his two-volume *Festschrift*: Shiller 1984–1987.
- 11 E.g., Yadin 1962:115 n. 1, 116 n. 2, 122 n. 6, 124 n. 2, 280; Avitsur 1976, in the bibliography, 252–253.
- 12 On Lee Levine and his scholarly output, see the summary and bibliography offered in his *Festschrift*: Weiss et al. 2010.
- 13 For a good sample of the wide array of topics and methods that have developed within this trend in the last decades of the twentieth century and into the new millennium, as well as a vast bibliography, see the articles collected in Hezser 2010. See also the summary in Schwartz 2006.
- 14 Even today, general introductory books to rabbinic literature can neglect archaeological matters completely; see, for example, Fonrobert and Jaffee 2007. Other, similar books, however, take such issues more seriously; for a recent example, see Goodman and Alexander 2011, where they devote a chapter to "Material Culture and Daily Life."

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Plan of the Hammat-Gader baths complex (Hirschfeld 1997: 166, Fig. 253).