

A PROPOSED GUIDE FOR CITING RABBINIC TEXTS

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The relevance and importance of rabbinic texts for NT exegesis and interpretation has been increasingly appreciated by scholars of many theological perspectives. Yet one who embarks on an investigation of this fascinating literature may soon find himself frustrated due to the imprecision that characterizes the citation of rabbinic texts in research-orientated publications. Str-B, for example, uses an internally consistent system for the notation of original rabbinic texts cited, but one who attempts to find these texts for personal consideration will often find the Str-B notation too imprecise for quick location of the source.¹ Occasionally it is not possible to find the source at all.² As our appreciation of the significance of rabbinic literature grows, so does the proliferation of rabbinic citation in published NT research. Researchers, especially those who are new to this complex literature, must spend an inordinate amount of time locating a source mentioned in a cryptic notation. Often, especially in the case of indiscriminate midrashic citations,³ the researcher is completely frustrated in attempts to locate the original document.

For assistance, one may consult various "guides" and/or "instructions" for citing rabbinic material.⁴ Fortunately, the Society of Biblical Literature published such a "guide" in 1976.⁵ This guide, however, does not attempt to offer the

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¹A positive trend in published NT research appears to be a concerted effort to get "beyond" Str-B to consider the original texts themselves. Commenting recently on future trends in NT studies, F. F. Bruce suggests that such extra effort will increasingly be the rule rather than the exception in published NT research that utilizes rabbinic material: "It should not be necessary to say that no one should undertake to compare the New Testament with any area of Judaism . . . without an adequate mastery of the relevant writings in their original language. And anyone who makes pronouncements on the rabbinic material on the basis of Strack-Billerbeck alone will swiftly expose the secondhand and limited character of his knowledge." "Charting New Directions for New Testament Studies," *Christianity Today* 24 (October 1980) 17.

²For example, the source of a reference to *Mek.* Exod 12:2 cannot be readily found. *Mekilta* is divided into tractates and chapters, not Biblical chapters and verses. In addition, the chapter of a tractate can run several pages in Lauterbach's text and translation, suggesting the need for even more precise notation. In the case of a reference to *Pesiq. R.* Exod 20:1, the source is all but impossible to locate. *Pesiqta Rabbati* is a homiletic midrash composed of 56 homilies. Structurally, these homilies are divided into 53 sections and subdivisions of those sections, not into Biblical chapters and verses.

³For example, simply referring to a midrash on Exod 16:1 is needlessly ambiguous. Is the writer referring to a Tannaitic midrash, a midrash rabbah, or a homiletic midrash? If a homiletic midrash is in view, which one? *Pesiq. R.*? *Pesiq. Rab K.*? *Tanḥuma*? If *Tanḥuma* is in view, which edition is being cited? And since Biblical divisions are not noted in the editions, which *seder* is being cited and which subdivision in that *seder*? Clearly, more precision is required in the citation.

⁴Perhaps the best "guide" available, in terms of being detailed enough to attract the serious researcher and practical enough to attract the nonrabbinic scholar, is J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969).

⁵"Instructions for Contributors," *JBL* 95 (1976) 331-346, adapted from an earlier article (*JBL* 90 [1970] 510-519).

degree of precision in the area of rabbinic notation required by the serious researcher. After consulting it, one is still unable to decipher, adequately cite, or quickly locate in text or translation many common rabbinic citations.⁶ For example, the contributor is instructed to addend "*Rab.*" after a Biblical book to denote a *Midrash Rabbah*. Further qualification is not given. Each contributor is left to his own devices for distinguishing between a citation of *Genesis Rabbah* (or should it be *Bereshith Rabbah*?)⁷ and *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* (or should it be *Koheleth Rabbah*?). Yet each Midrash is structured differently. The former is divided into 101 *parashiyoth*⁸ and subsections, while the latter is divided according to the Biblical divisions of chapter and verse with additional subdivisions of the verses. And how does the contributor distinguish the structural peculiarities of *Lamentations Rabbah*, which contains an introduction of 36 proem homilies?

In another instance, the contributor is instructed merely to distinguish between *Sipra* and *Sipre*. Again, further qualification is not provided, although the two Midrashim are structured quite differently. A citation of *Sipra*, composed of only fourteen divisions, ought to indicate the pertinent division and the chapter and verse within that division—e.g., *Sipra, Ned.* 4.5. To simply refer to *Sipra* on Lev 16:6 is not sufficiently precise and unnecessarily delays the researcher in locating the source (either in text or translation) of such a notation. On the other hand, *Sipre* is composed of consecutive *parashiyoth* on Numbers and Deuteronomy. A citation of *Sipre* should reflect this structure—e.g., *Sipre, Deut* sec. 141. A general reference to *Sipre* on Deut 6:4 does not adequately reflect the structure of *Sipre* and should be replaced with a sufficiently precise notation in any research-oriented publication.

In light of this inadequate state of affairs in the area of rabbinic citation, there appears to be a need for a more complete "guide" for citing rabbinic material.⁹ The universal adoption of some standardized system for rabbinic citation, such as that suggested below, would significantly facilitate research and encourage scholarly dialogue related to this important yet complex body of literature. What follows should enable the researcher to decipher most rabbinic citations, to find them with increased efficiency and, in turn, to cite them in a sufficiently precise form. To further facilitate research the following system includes (1) a brief description of each text's structural peculiarities, (2) basic bibliographic data for both the text and its translation, and (3) examples of preferred ways to cite each text.

I. TARGUMS

Often a Targumic citation of a Pentateuchal passage omits which Targum is being cited—e.g., *Tg. Exod* 3:4. To locate such a reference is time-consuming, if

⁶The *JBL* "instructions" were subsequently republished in *JETS* 20 (1977) 57-72. See esp. p. 64, "Abbreviations of Other Rabbinic Works" (includes Midrashim).

⁷As suggested below, the researcher ought to be familiar with both the English title and transliterated Hebrew title of each Midrash Rabbah.

⁸Hebrew for "paragraphs" (singular *parashah*).

⁹Impetus for this article was provided by W. Grudem's similar endeavor in the area of intertestamental literature ("Alphabetical Reference List for Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," *JETS* 19 [1976] 297-313). He has succeeded in sorting out a confusing array of intertestamental sources, rendering them more accessible to NT researchers.

not impossible. There are no less than four different Targums on the Pentateuch that would need to be searched. Clearly the relevant Targum ought to be specified in the notation—e. g., *Tg. Neof. Exod 3:4*.¹⁰ It is also questionable whether the abbreviations *Tg. Yer. I* (*Tg. Yer[ushalmi] I*) and *Tg. Yer. II* should be retained.¹¹ These abbreviations, referring to Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and the Fragmentary Targum respectively, are helpful for recognition of existing citations, but the abbreviations *Tg. Ps.-J.* and *Frg. Tg.* are preferable as they appear to more clearly represent the peculiarities of the respective Targums.

A. Targums Onqelos and Pseudo-Jonathan and Fragmentary Targum (covers Pentateuch—alleged Babylonian recension)

1. Text: Sperber, A., ed. *The Bible in Aramaic*. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1959-1973 (Targum Onqelos).
2. Trans.: Etheridge, J. W., ed. *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch* [includes Fragmentary Targum]. 2 vols. London: Longman, Green and Roberts, 1862-1865 (reprinted in 1 vol. 1968, KTAV).
3. Note: *Tg. Onq. Exod 22:3*
Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 22:3
Frg. Tg. Exod 22:3

B. Targum Neofiti (covers Pentateuch—Palestinian recension)

1. Text: Diez Macho, A., ed. *Neophyti 1*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de investigaciones científicas, 1968 (4 of projected 5 vols. now in print).
2. Trans.: Diez Macho. *Neophyti 1* (Spanish, French, English).
3. Note: *Tg. Neof. Exod 22:3*

C. Targum Jonathan (1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Prophets—Babylonian recension)

1. Text: Sperber. *Bible in Aramaic*.
2. Trans.: Churgin, P. *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*. New Haven: Yale University, 1907.

¹⁰The title of J. W. Etheridge's English translation of the Targums only adds to the confusion (*The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch*). In actual fact he has translated the Targums of Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan and the Fragmentary Targum. This problem of identification arose because both the Targum on the Prophets (ascribed to Jonathan ben Uzziel) and the Jerushalmi or Palestinian Targum on the Pentateuch came to be abbreviated as *Tg. J.* The "J" was later misunderstood as an abbreviation for "Jonathan." Thus the prefix "Pseudo-" recognizes this mistake.

¹¹*JETS* 20 (1977) 63. These two abbreviations are listed as "optional."

Stenning, J. F., ed. *The Targum of Isaiah*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1949.

3. Note: *Tg. Jon.* Isa 44:3

D. Targums of the Hagiographa (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, 1-2 Chronicles, 5 Megilloth¹²)

1. Text: Sperber. *Bible in Aramaic* (does not include Psalms, Proverbs, Job).

2. Trans.: de Lagarde, P. *Hagiographa Chaldaice*. Lipsiae, in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1873.

Hübsch, A., ed. *Die Fünf Megilloth*. Prague, 1866.

3. Note: *Tg. Hag.* Ps 8:4
Tg. Ket. Ps 8:4

II. TANNAITIC MIDRASHIM¹³

References to midrashic passages are notoriously complex. Several methods of citing the same source are commonplace. A standardized system of midrashic notation does not exist, nor is it likely that any proposed system could attract a consensus of Biblical scholars. Thus the researcher, while able to standardize his own system of midrashic notation, must be familiar with other systems in order to consistently locate midrashic citations. In light of this pragmatic need, the most precise, existing form of citation is given first, followed by alternative forms in decreasing order of preference.

A. Mekilta (9 tractates, covering Exodus 12-23)

1. Text: Lauterbach, J. Z., ed. and trans. *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1933-1935.

2. Trans.: Lauterbach. *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael*.

3. Note: *Mek.* Exod 12:1, *Pisha* 1 (*Midrash Mekilta* on Exod 12:1, tractate *Pisha*, chap. 1)

B. Sipra (14 divisions, Leviticus)

1. Text: Weiss, J. H., ed. *Sifra on Leviticus*. Vienna: Jacob Schlossberg, 1862.

¹²The five "scrolls" are Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Lamentations.

¹³The distinction between Tannaitic and Homiletic Midrashim, preserved in this article, is neither contrived nor artificial. The Tannaitic Midrashim, though not exclusively confined to the Tannaitic period, are representative of this early period in rabbinic exegesis. The Homiletic Midrashim, though not exclusively designed for liturgical use in the synagogue, all incorporate either *Yelammedenu* (implied subject is "Rabbi") or proem homilies. Both types of Midrashim should be distinguished from a third type, the *Midrashim Rabboth*.

2. Trans.: Rengstorf, K. H., ed. *Tannaitische Midrashim*. Stuttgart, 1933.
3. Note: *Sipra*, Ned. 4. 5 (*Midrash Sipra*, division *Nedebah*, chap. 4, v 5)
Sipra 35b (*Midrash Sipra*, Weiss' edition, folio 35, reverse side)
Sipra Lev 16:6 (*Midrash Sipra* on Lev 16:6)

C. *Sipre* (consecutive *parashiyoth* on Numbers and Deuteronomy)

1. Text: Horowitz, H. S., ed. *Sifre debe Rab*. Leipzig, 1917 (only Numbers due to Horowitz' death).
2. Trans.: Finkelstein, L. *Sifre zu Deuteronomium*. Berlin, 1936-1939.
Rengstorf, *Tannaitische Midrashim*.
Levertoff, P. P. *Midrash Sifre on Numbers*. London: SPCK, 1926 (only certain passages in Numbers are translated).
3. Note: *Sifre*, Deut sec. 141 (*Midrash Sipre* on Deuteronomy, *parashah* 141)

III. HOMILETIC MIDRASHIM

A. *Pesiqta deRab Kahana* (31 homilies for festive year)

1. Text: Mandelbaum, B., ed. *Pesiqta deRab Kahana*. 2 vols. New York: KTAV, 1962.
2. Trans.: Wünsche, A., ed. and trans. *Bibliotheca rabbinica: eine Sammlung alter Midraschim*. 12 vols. Leipzig, Otto Schulze, 1880-1885.
Buber, S., ed. *Pesikta deRab Kahana*. L. Silbermann, 1868.
3. Note: *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 26:4 (*Midrash Pesiqta deRab Kahana*, 26th homily, 4th subdivision)

B. *Pesiqta Rabbati* (56 homilies divided into 53 *pisqas*¹⁴ for festive year)

1. Text: Friedmann, M., ed. *Pesikta Rabbati*. Vienna: Selbstverlag der Herausgebers, 1880.
2. Trans.: Braude, W. G., ed. *Pesikta Rabbati*. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University, 1968.
3. Note: *Pesiq. R.* 22:3 (*Midrash Pesiqta Rabbati*, *pisqa* 22, 3rd subdivision)
Pesiq. R. 35a (*Midrash Pesiqta Rabbati*, Friedmann's edition, folio 35, front side)

¹⁴Aramaic for "section," "paragraph."

C. *Tanhuma* (158 homilies for triennial cycle; grouped under present-day seder divisions of annual cycle)

1. Text: Buber, S., ed. *Midrasch Tanchuma*. 4 vols. Wilna: Wittwe and Gebruder, 1885.
2. Trans.: Buber, *Midrasch Tanchuma*.
3. Note: *Tanḥ. Mish.* 6 (*Midrash Tanḥuma*, seder *Mishpatim*, 6th subdivision)
Tanḥ. B. 10b (*Midrash Tanḥuma*, Buber's edition, folio 10, reverse side)
Tanḥ. B. III, 14 (*Midrash Tanḥuma*, Buber's edition, vol. III, p. 14).

IV. MIDRASHIM RABBOTH

The transliterated Hebrew title for each of the following *Midrashim Rabboth* is supplied below, as many older works exclusively employ such titles when citing these texts. However, the English title allows quicker recognition and is gradually becoming the predominant form in citing a *Midrash Rabbah*. The retention of small-case Roman numerals after an abbreviation is to be encouraged. They serve to denote midrashic *parashiyoth*, not Biblical chapters.

A. *Genesis Rabbah* (101 *parashiyoth*)

1. Text: Hallevy, E. *Midrash Rabbah*. 8 vols. Tel Aviv, 1956-1963 (includes all *Midrashim Rabboth*).
2. Trans.: Freedman, H., and Simon, M., eds. *The Midrash Rabbah*. 5 vols. London: Soncino, 1977 (includes all *Midrashim Rabboth*)
3. Note: *Ber. R.* xci.8 (*Bereshith Rabbah*, *parashah* 91, subsection 8)

B. *Exodus Rabbah* (52 *parashiyoth*)

Note: *Shem. R.* iv.2 (*Shemoth Rabbah*, *parashah* 4, subsection 2)

C. *Leviticus Rabbah* (37 *parashiyoth* based on 37 homilies for the triennial cycle)

Note: *Wayy. R.* iii.1 (*Wayyikra Rabbah*, *parashah* 3, subsection 1)

D. *Numbers Rabbah* (23 *parashiyoth* divided into two sections—second section [sec. 15-23] contains 30 homilies)

Note: *Bem. R.* iii.4 (*Bemidbar Rabbah*, *parashah* 3, subsection 4)

E. *Deuteronomy Rabbah* (11 *parashiyoth* containing 27 homilies of triennial cycle)

Note: *Deb. R.* ix.5 (*Debarim Rabbah*, parashah 9, subsection 5)

F. *Esther Rabbah* (8 parashiyyoth with a proem introduction)

Note: *Esth. R.* iii.6 (*Esther Rabbah*, parashah 3, subsection 6) (sometimes *Megillat Rabbah*)

Esth. R. II (*Esther Rabbah*, proem intro., #2)

G. *Song of Songs Rabbah* (follows Biblical divisions)

Note: *Cant. R.* 2:4, sec. 3 (*Song of Songs Rabbah*, chap. 2, v 4, paragraph 3) (sometimes *Shir Rabah*)

H. *Ruth Rabbah* (follows Biblical divisions)

Note: *Ruth R.* 2:4, sec. 3 (*Ruth Rabbah*, chap. 2, v 4 (paragraph 3))

I. *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* (follows Biblical divisions)

Note: *Koh. R.* 2:4, sec. 3 (*Ecclesiastes Rabbah*, chap. 2, v 4, paragraph 3)

J. *Lamentations Rabbah* (follows Biblical divisions—introduced by proem introduction of 36 homilies)

Note: *Eik. R.* 2:4, sec. 3 (*Eikah Rabbati*,¹⁵ chap. 2, v 4, paragraph 3)

V. MISHNAYOTH

A. Mishna (6 orders and 63 tractates)

1. Text: Blackman, P., *Mishnayoth*. 7 vols. New York: Judaica, 1964.

2. Trans.: Blackman. *Mishnayoth*.

Danby, H., ed. *The Mishnah*. Oxford: University Press, 1933.

3. Note: *M. Giṭ.* 4:6 (*Mishna*, tractate *Giṭṭin*, chap. 4, mishna 6)

B. Tosepta (all 6 orders and 57 of 63 Mishnaic tractates)

1. Text: Lieberman, S., ed. *The Tosefta*. 13 vols.

2. Trans.: Neusner, J., *The Tosefta*. 6 vols. projected. New York: KTAV, first 3 vols. appeared in 1979.

3. Note: *t. Ber.*1:1 (*Tosepta*, tractate *Berakot*, chap. 1, *halakah* 1)

¹⁵*Eikah Rabbati* transliterates the Hebrew terms found in the first verse of Lamentations: "How [lonely sits the city that was] full [of people]." Thus the term *Rabbati* has nothing to do with the term *Rabbah* ("great" or "large"). The latter term simply denotes that a particular midrash belongs to the larger body of *Midrashim Rabboth*.

VI. TALMUDS

With Bowker, it makes good sense to abbreviate the Palestinian Talmud with a "p" instead of a "y" or "j"¹⁶—the latter two letters inaccurately indicating a Jerusalem origin for this work. In addition, the suggested form of citation for a passage in the Palestinian Talmud—e.g., *y. Mak. 2.31d*.¹⁷—is somewhat misleading. It is sufficiently close to the form of notation for the Babylonian Talmud to suggest to less-informed researchers that the numerals 2.31 somehow refer to the page or folio number of the Talmud. In actual fact they refer to the Mishnaic passage being commented on by the Talmud.¹⁸ Thus a slightly different and less ambiguous method of notation is suggested—i. e., *p. Mak. 4d (2:31)*. With this form, the folio number and column are given in the form that they assume in a Babylonian Talmud citation, and the Mishnaic reference is clearly set apart in parentheses.

A. Palestinian Talmud (only first 4 orders of *Mishna* and tractate *Niddah*—39 tractates in all)

1. Text: Krotoshin edition of 1866 (repr. Jerusalem, 1969).
2. Trans.: Schwab, M., ed. and trans. *Le Talmud de Jérusalem*. 11 vols. Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie., 1871-1890 (very paraphrastic according to Bowker; original folio and column references are omitted).
3. Note: *p. Meg. 10c (2:4)* (Palestinian Talmud, tractate *Megillah*, folio 10, column 3, commenting on *m. Meg. 2:4*)

B. Babylonian Talmud (37 tractates—first and last orders most heavily slighted)

1. Text: Epstein, I., ed. *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud*. 9 vols. London: Soncino, 1960-1972 (covers 9 tractates).
Venetian edition of 1520-1523 (published prior to the "censure").
2. Trans.: Epstein, I., ed. *The Talmud Babli*. 35 vols. London: Soncino, 1935-1952 (reissued in 18 vols., 1961).
3. Note: *b. Sukk. 55a* (Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sukka*, folio 55, front side)

¹⁶Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 67 n.5: "J and Y stand for Jerushalmi; J in English transliteration represents Hebrew Y. The name 'Jerushalmi' is misleading, since Tiberias was the centre of Palestinian study, not Jerusalem, and for that reason some prefer to indicate the Palestinian Talmud with the initial P."

¹⁷*JETS* 20 (1977) 63.

¹⁸Unfortunately the standard translation of the Palestinian Talmud by M. Schwab omits the folio and column numbers of the original Krotoshin edition. Thus a researcher attempting to find either folio 2 or folio 31 of tractate *Makkot* in Schwab's edition would be unable to do so.