Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh and his Sons:
The Patriarchate before and after
the Bar Kokhva Revolt

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The emergence of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel as leader of the rabbinic centre in Usha, some time after the Bar Kokhva revolt was put down, is no simple matter. His father had probably died long before the revolt started; many scholars think that Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh did not live to witness the Jewish uprisings of 115–118. Although this communis opinio cannot be substantiated by solid evidence, Rabban Gamaliel can be assumed to have died before the beginning of the Bar Kokhva revolt, since he had seen ‘Jerusalem in its peace’ as a young person, more than sixty-five turbulent years earlier. In addition, the sources indicate that in those years sages of Rabban Gamaliel’s circle were meeting for a while in an irregular manner, in different places and different groupings each time—and in Rabban Gamaliel’s conspicuous absence—with insecurity and danger (cf. the expression: רִאְשָׁה כְּרֵמוֹת in the background.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel was a pupil at that time: according to his own testimony, he was still studying at Beitar when the Bar Kokhva revolt broke out. His ultimate succession to his father’s position can therefore

1 This study is partly based on a previous paper published in Hebrew: E. Habas, ‘Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel’, Mileit 2 (1984), pp. 143–150 (=Habas). The paper was finished while I was enjoying the hospitality of the Oxford Centre for Jewish and Hebrew Studies as visiting scholar.

2 Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh is generally assumed to have been Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel’s father, although it is never stated explicitly in the contemporary sources. We shall adopt this assumption, which seems a rather safe one, since practically no other ‘Gamaliel’ is recorded in the Yavneh period, probably indicating that there was only one prominent sage of that name at the time. Compare: D. Goodblatt, The Monarchic Principle (Tübingen, 1994) (=Goodblatt), p. 145 and note 58, and see also below.

3 All dates are C.E. unless otherwise stated.

4 The date of Rabban Gamaliel’s death is not recorded. To my knowledge, no sources connect him directly to the uprisings under Trajan. However, this argumentum ex silentio in itself is weak, since the same is true of other sages who are known to have outlived him.

5 Safrai even claims that Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh knew his name-sake grandfather, which suggests he was a grown man by 70 (or even earlier). See: Sh. Safrai, ‘The visits of the Sages of Yavneh in Rome’, Memorial Volume for Sh. E. Nakhon (Jerusalem, 1979, in Hebrew), p. 160 n. 54.

6 PT Ta’an. 4 8,69a and (less explicit) parallels in BT Sot. 49b and B.K. 83a. See: G. Alon, The History of the Jews in Eretz Israel in the Time of the Mishna and the Talmud, vol. II, Tel Aviv 1975 (in Hebrew) (=Alon, II), pp. 39–40; M. Mor, The Bar Kokhva Revolt (Jerusalem, 1991, in Hebrew), p. 220. There is no necessary conflict with M. Ber. 1:1 (and PT, BT ad loc.), since the young and unordained were not excluded from wedding feasts (which in this case could even have been the celebration of Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel’s wedding, which is mentioned in several other places, see note 62). Nor do the traditions Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel relates about Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh and in his name (such as: M. Shab. 1:9; Yad. 3:1; BT Shab. 21a; etc.,
hardly be considered as ‘inheritance’ in the direct agnicial manner which was
the normal practice with the Jews. However, he did rise to prominence several
years after the revolt had ended, when the first steps to renew the leadership
in the Galilee had already been taken by his more-or-less contemporary col-
leagues, notably Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai (who had been
ordained, according to tradition, by Rabbi Akiva, therefore before the end of
the revolt\(^7\)). Unless this prominence is attributed to a generally acknowl-
edged right, Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel’s position in the newly emerging
leadership would be very difficult to explain indeed. He was younger than
some, if not all, of his colleagues, and newly ordained.\(^8\) Moreover, he was not
the most outstanding Torah scholar among the sages, as he was the first to
admit.\(^9\) His ancestry would therefore seem to have been a decisive factor. It
is the obvious explanation of the recorded sequence of events, namely that
he arrived at the new centre in Usha, where several sages, among them the
most prominent representatives of that generation, had already been conven-
encing, and immediately became their leader. He seems to have taken up Rabban
Gamaliel’s place as leader, once it became possible, with no further delay.

The sources tell nothing of Rabban Gamaliel’s death and little about the
events following it. The hazy picture partially retained gave rise to different
theories designed to explain what became of the Yavnean leadership after
Rabban Gamaliel’s disappearance from our sources (probably because of his
death). Different scholars champion different sages as Rabban Gamaliel’s suc-
cessor (the names most frequently mentioned are Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria
and Rabbi Tarfon), others in an ‘interregnum’, a period when no
leader can be singled out, and the centre was, at least partially, disintegrat-
ing, and still others do not think it necessary to address this problem at all,
in the framework of their particular theories concerning the Jewish lead-

and compare to some Yavnean traditions he preserved, e.g.: \(PT\) Hallah 4 60b; \(PT\) RahaSh. 6 58c
[in the parallel version in \(BT\) RahaSh. 32a " أبرיל וינין כננה אבר retrieves ... אבריל וינין כננה אבר ... אבריל וינין כננה אבר ..." instead of \(" أبرיל וינין כננה אבר \) provide any evidence beyond his being at least a young
boy, capable of listening to ‘words of Torah’, when his father was still active (see previous note
for a similar case). He probably listened to Rabban Gamaliel and observed him while serving him,
as was customary, and indeed as he tells that he used to do (which, again, does not necessarily
bear on his [relative] age): “אבריל וינין כננה אבר retrieves ... אבריל וינין כננה אבר ..." (Genesis Rabbah 65:27, ed. Theodor-Albeck
p. 728 [and see also M. Sokoloff’s The Geniza Fragments of Bereshit Rabba (Jerusalem, 1982), 752, p. 150 and
1:10:1:1 on p. 22]).

\(^7\) \(PT\) Sanhedrin 1 19a and elsewhere. A different tradition is recorded in \(BT\) A.Z. 8 and \(BT\)
Sanh. 13b–14a. See the discussion and references in A. Oppenheimer, Galilee in the Mishnaic Pe-

\(^8\) The details are unknown, but he was certainly not yet an ordained scholar in 132 (see note
6).

\(^9\) In \(PT\) BM 5 5, 14b (and see the parallel in \(BT\) BM 84b) Rabban Shimon tells his son Judah
that he (=Judah) is ‘a lion, (but) son of a fox’, to which the latter remarks that his father was one of
the (most) humble ones. In the context, tact and perhaps realization of his colleagues’
greatness, and not modesty alone, were probably in the background; compare \(PT\) B.B. 10, 17d.

Also, several rulings were passed by Rabbi, Rabban Shimon’s son, in accordance with
his own opinion and in flagrant contradiction to his father’s, which is unusual, e.g.: \(PT\) Ma’as.
2 1, 49c; \(PT\) Ma’as Sh. 1 1, 52c; \(PT\) Gitt. 4 2, 45c etc.
ership. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel's special position, starting approximately twenty to thirty years later, is left unexplained in any of the hypotheses suggested, just as his own stature, or status, among his colleagues, cannot account for it.

A different reconstruction of the events leading to Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel's rise to power can be presented, if an additional factor is taken into account. Indeed, the existence of other sons of Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, a factor seldom dealt with so far, seems to be of great importance. We will argue that Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel was the one designated to succeed his father, as Rabban Gamaliel's eldest son (and also an excellent scholar). His disappearance from the sources before the Bar Kokhva revolt probably indicates that he was no longer alive. However, the dynastic aura of the family was now strong enough for his younger brother to be accepted as the leader in Usha decades later.

The wider issue of the fortunes of the so-called Hillelite family (Goodblatt, p. 144, suggests the term 'Gamalielian') on the verge of, during, and in the aftermath of the Bar Kokhva revolt (which bears on some general assumptions concerning the Jewish leadership in the first and second centuries) may also be thus illuminated from a new angle. The present study aims at providing a possible missing link in the chain of succession, and thus to help clarify the circumstances of the Jewish leadership in Eretz Israel between Yavneh and Usha.

**Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel**

A tanna named Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel is well attested in the sources.


The names Hanina and Hananya are interchangeable throughout the talmudic literature, and are known in a number of orthographic variants as well. In the context of the present discussion there is no need to discuss those variants or comment on them.

אַלְמָנָּה הַיָּוֵב is a variant of בֵּן גַּמָּלִיָּה in a few cases. Hyman (note 11) and others regard Hanina ben Gamala as a different person, which is unnecessary. Compare the name of the high priest בֵּן גַּמָּלִּים as recorded in the sources. In the Mishna (Yeb. 6b, 6a, and see Albeck's comments ad loc. on p. 336), *PT* (Yoma 54b) and *BT* (Yoma 18a; Yeb. 6a; B. Batra 21a) his name is אַלְמָנָּה הַיָּוֵב, and so in Josephus' *Bellum* (iv 160: תַּגְּלוּם וְנָא יַעֲשֵׂהוּ and *Vita* (193: יָשָׁרְוּ וְנָא יַעֲשֵׂהוּ) and *Vita* (193: יָשָׁרְוּ וְנָא יַעֲשֵׂהוּ). However, in the *Antiquities*, when mentioned by his full name (sometimes he appears as Jesus only), he is named 'son of Gamaliel' (*Ant. xx 213: יָשָׁרְוּ וְנָא יַעֲשֵׂהוּ ibid. 223: יָשָׁרְוּ וְנָא יַעֲשֵׂהוּ). Gam(a)la is a rare but
He is mentioned more than eighty times in different talmudic compilations.\(^{13}\) Whenever a piece of evidence concerning Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel can be chronologically identified at all, it belongs in Yavneh.\(^{14}\)

As we shall see, Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel was an active scholar. He laid down ordinances, discussed rulings, expressed opinions and handed down traditions. These traditions link him to the family of the Patriarchs,\(^{15}\) a connection indicated in his father's name as well (see note 2). The name Hanina was a common one in those days, but the name Gamaliel was extremely rare. To be precise, at least until the late third century the name Gamaliel is not found among the sages, except in the Patriarchal family.\(^{16}\) We shall therefore assume that Gamaliel the father of the tanna Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel was indeed the Patriarch Gamaliel of Yavneh, the only chronologically compatible person among the sages recorded in the existing sources attested by this name.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{13}\) Notably in the Mishna itself: *Kil. 9:9* (attributed to him in the parallel Tosefta, *Kid. 5:22*; *Kid. 3:4*; B. *Bat. 10:1*; *Mak. 3:16*; *Bekh. 6:9*). See also below. Compare: Goodblatt, p. 145 and note 59.

\(^{14}\) Compare: Goodblatt, *ibid.* In the note, Goodblatt refers to some evidence to the contrary collected by Epstein. This evidence consists of two cases of manuscript variations, where there is interchange between the tannaitic name אֶזְרָאֵל and אֶזְרָאֵל. On these (with their parallels), see: J. N. Epstein, *Mavo Le-Nosah Ha-Mishna* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1964\(^{2}\)), in Hebrew, pp. 1206, and compare Habas, p. 144 n. 13.

Among the eighty-odd references to a Hanina ben Gamaliel, a few seem to be possibly better placed with an amora (e.g. *BT San. 111a* [where *var.* אֶזְרָאֵל], and compare: Mekh. [R. Ishma'el], *Amalek*, ed. Horowitz and Rabin, p. 202). Rabbi Krispa quotes Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel in four places in the *PT*. Among them, in *PT Shem. 6* 37a and *PT Ned. 7* 39d (where: אֶזְרָאֵל). The context seems to suggest a post-Rabbi (Judah ha-Nasi) sage, although the *Talmud* marks these places as barayot (ם ט) and מהיינו, respectively; but although it does seem that the Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel mentioned here by a late third–early fourth century Palestinian amora, is not our tanna, the text, concerning the import of agricultural products (ם ט) into the Holy Land (ם ט), is too vague to allow any decisive conclusion to this effect (and compare *BT Ned. 53a–b*). Rabbi Krispa also relates in Rabbi Hanina’s name in *PT Shem. 3* 34d (ם ט ש) and again possibly quoting, through Rabbi Yohanan, an amora and not the tanna) and *PT San. 10* (ed. Vilnius: 3) 21b, where there is no chronological indication of the identity of the Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel mentioned. See also appendix, and Epstein, *ibid.*, note 1 on p. 1206.

\(^{15}\) See discussion below and notes 52, 53, 54.

\(^{16}\) See some relevant undated inscriptions from Beit She'arim, which need further study: N. Avigad, *Beth She'arim*, vol 3: *The Catacombs 12–23* (Jerusalem, 1971, in Hebrew), inscriptions 9 (1. 1. 2 [in Greek]) from cat. 14, p. 175; 15/2 and 4, 261 from cat. 20, pp. 74, 79.

The name Hillel merits a separate discussion. It is relatively rare, and is hardly found in this period outside the Patriarchal family (but see *ibid.*), inscriptions 161, 281 from cat. 20, pp. 73, 186, and also several references [Hebrew and also Greek transcription] in documents from the Judaean desert [where other rare Jewish names are found]). It seems that the slowly growing number of sages named Gamaliel—and Hillel—in the late third and fourth centuries reflects a growth in the extended Patriarchal family rather than a wider distribution of this name. A full prosopographical study of the sages in the third and fourth centuries, which I have started to prepare, is needed in order to substantiate this impression. For some of the relevant points see my forthcoming paper: "Jouli(u)—a Jewish Name in Late Antiquity?"

\(^{17}\) See note 2. The evidence concerning Rabbi Hanina seems to bear out this assumption. And the sources place him firmly in the centre in Yavneh.
The same Rabban Gamaliel was also, almost certainly, the father of the Shimon who later became Patriarch. Judah and Hillel, sons of Rabban Gamaliel, may have been his sons too.  

Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel may well provide us with indispensable clues towards the understanding of the changing fortunes of the Jewish leadership in Palestine in the decades that passed between the death of Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, some time before the Bar Kokhva revolt, and the acknowledgement of his next known son, Shimon, as leader in the renewed centre in the Galilee, some time after the revolt was put down.

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We shall now turn to the sources, from which a rather interesting picture of Rabbi Hanina as a scholar and a person emerges.

**Chronology**

The sources portray Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel as belonging in general to the generation of Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai, but he was slightly older or at least more senior, which places him among the younger scholars in Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh’s generation (=the ‘second Yavneh generation’). He may have been a student of Rabbi Tarfon, but he also disputed with Rabbi Akiva, who was the teacher of his two colleagues mentioned above, and with Rabbi Yose the Galilean, another older and senior sage. This unconventional behaviour indicates that the young Hanina enjoyed a special status, and this is best explained by his being the son of Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh. Hanina was possibly a little older than the other young pupils in the ‘second Yavneh generation’ (his father was probably older than Rabbi Akiva, their mentor), and was ordained long before them. Although

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18 See also: Sh. and Z. Safrai, ‘Beit Anat’, Sinai 78 (1976), esp. pp. 21–22. For possible doubts, see below. Little is known about the daughter(s?) of Rabban Gamaliel, mentioned in several passages. Since the contexts are possibly legendary and no name is ever mentioned, she may be a non-historical figure.

19 As colleague of Rabbi Meir: T.Nid. 4:5 (compare BT Nid. 23a—Rabbi Hanina ben Antignos ibid., a variant attested elsewhere too, is corrected in the margin); PT Ber 5 9b (and see BT Nid. 8a–b); M. Kid. 3:4 (see also BT Kid. 61a–b). Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: T.Par 4(3):9 (also see: BT San. 56a–b; PT Shek. 6 49d could be another case). Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai were among the older pupils of their generation, and, according to tradition, were ordained during the war; indeed, they are later among the central figures in Usha. However, Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel is recorded disputing with their teacher Rabbi Akiva (n. 21). This and his being ordained in Yavneh shows him to have been their elder and senior (see also note 23).

20 The evidence for this is rather slight (see appendix), although chronologically plausible. It would be reasonable for someone of Rabbi Tarfon’s school to dispute with Rabbi Akiva. Still, for a pupil of Rabbi Tarfon to dispute with his master’s colleague, as in this case, bars of age and seniority needed to be overcome, in a manner that was not standard.

21 BT Nid. 8a–b (see tosfor ibid., s.v. מנה). See also T.Neg. 2:10–11.

22 M. Men. 5:8.

23 One should bear in mind that the ‘generations’ of sages did not fall into neat and rigid chronological blocks (although this artificial modern division might occasionally prove useful for practical purposes).
younger than his father’s colleagues, he may have been able to attach himself to them; but in the academy of Yavneh, by then well-established, the special status of being the Patriarch’s son (to which we shall return later) would not suffice, unless he also distinguished himself as a scholar. On the other hand, scholarly distinction in itself could not explain his unusual conduct, since several of Hanina’s contemporary colleagues were excellent scholars as well. Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai, for example, later became scholars of the first rank.

**Halachic Activities**

Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel, though young, was nevertheless an active sage and scholar in Yavneh. He disputed with individual sages (see above), and also with “המאמרים”, namely, the general view or the accepted ruling.24 He ruled on various subjects (ההויא בלול),25 his rulings sometimes becoming halacha.26 On a few occasions, he determined which view should be accepted as correct (הﾐ�יא בלול).27 On some other occasions Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel explained and expounded rulings,28 and in one case he is actually reported to have acted (repeatedly) upon his own view, against the definite ruling of the

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24 E.g.: BT Men. 53b–54a; Tractate Avadim 1 pp. 53–54 ed. Hieger (Seven ‘Small Tractates’).

25 M. BB 10:1 (compare: T. BB 11:1; PT Gitt. 8 49d; BT BB 10:17c; BT Kidd. 49a; BT BB 160a; ibid. 164a–b); M. Makk. 3 15 (and BT ad loc.); M. Bekh. 6:9 (and BT ad loc.); T. Shabb. 10(11):4 (and compare: BT Shab. 100a); T. Kil. 5:22 (and compare: Sifre Deut. 232, p. 265 ed. Finkelstein); T. AZ 4(5):12 (and BT ad loc.); ibid. 8(9) 6 (and BT San. 56a–b, 59a); T. Nidd. 7:5; Mech. R. Ishm. Naz. 9, p. 279 ed. Horowitz and Rabin; PT Ber. 5 9c; PT Orla 1 61a; BT Ber. 21a; BT AZ 34b; BT Men. 53b–54a; Avadim 1 (Hieger, pp. 53–54); and several other uncertain references.

26 Explicitly: T. Kil. 5:22. Compare M. Kil. 9:9, where this ruling is quoted anonymously, namely as the accepted halacha. In several other cases it seems that rulings were decided according to Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel, but it is not explicitly stated (see, for example, the references in the former note). Rabbi Yohanan (who is noted for his exacting traditions) says in two Babylonian references to the baraita cited in Hanina ben Gamaliel’s name (בראשית קדושי) that Hanina’s colleagues dispute with him (הREDENTIALéal), but gives no further explanation. The baraita brings Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel’s opinion alone, probably indicating that his opinion prevailed so that objections to it were not noted in the baraita. I wish to thank Mr. M. Sperber, from whom I learnt this many years ago.

27 T. Nid. 4 5 (compare BT Nid. 23a—Rabbi Hanina ben Antignos ibid., a variant attested elsewhere too, is corrected in the margin); PT Ber. 5 9b (and see BT Nid. 7a–b). Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel decides (יידיים) between Rabbi Meir and (anonymous) sages. Rabbi Meir was probably ordained during the Bar Kokhba revolt, and in any case, is not recorded as an ordained sage before Usha. See more above and below on the chronological considerations concerning Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel. This specific source may perhaps be dated to the years of the revolt, when Rabbi Meir had already (just) been ordained and Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel was possibly still active (his date of death is not recorded; Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel simply disappears from the sources, like his father).

28 M. Kid. 3:6 (and BT ad loc.); M. Makk. 3:15 (and parallel passages); T. Yom Kip. 1:4; T. AZ 8(9) 6 (and compare: BT San. 56a–b); Sifre Deut. 232, p. 265 ed. Finkelstein; PT San. 3 21b (?; see end of note 14); BT Men. 42b; etc.
majority: ... את אמוני שמעוה אנה דיברabal אמוני על 'ר ותני בן מליאא שמעיה אמוני שמעוה אנה דיברabal.

Hanina's *halachic* record as a young scholar in a centre crammed with extremely brilliant sages, most of whom were older and more senior than himself, is impressive. It may be added, that among the variety of subjects upon which he commented we see several which were dealt with by other members of the Patriarchal family too: firstborns, prayers and blessings, and different legalistic matters.

**Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel and his Brothers**

Several of Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh's children are known by name. Hanina is well-recorded, and so is Shimon, who later led the centre in Usha. A 'Judah' and a 'Hillel', sons of Gamaliel, are also recorded. In a few of these references, *amoraim*, probably Judah and Hillel, the grandsons of Rabbi Judah 'ha-Nasi' by his elder son Gamaliel, seem to be meant. Some scholars thus regard all the passages in which these sons of Gamaliel are mentioned as references to *amoraim*. Although this cannot be ruled out, it would be just as reasonable to assume that in the various passages more than one pair of brothers, named 'Judah' and 'Hillel', and both sons of a Gamaliel, happen to be recorded, since the repeated use of these names in the Patriarchal family is well-attested throughout its history. Moreover, while some of the passages do seem to reflect an amoraic background, others seem to indicate a close relation to Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, and suggest that they are concerned with his sons (see below).

Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh was a well-travelled leader who visited many Jewish communities both in Palestine and abroad. His visit (or perhaps visits?) to the Galilee is recorded in various places in the talmudic compilations, since rulings were laid down as a result of queries and questions put to him in the different places he visited, and various deeds (*מנשה*) which occurred dur-

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29 *BT Mo'ed. Kat.* 22b–23a. See *Dik. Sof. ad loc.* for variants. Compare *PT Ber.* 2 5b, which indicates that his ruling was accepted at least in 'the South'.

30 The issues traditionally addressed by the Patriarchs are discussed briefly in my dissertation (E. Habas [Rubin], *The Patriarch in the Roman-Byzantine Era—the Making of a Dynasty*, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, 1991, in Hebrew) (=Habas, dissertation), esp. pp. 164, 168–169.

31 *M. Bekh.* 6:9.

32 *PT Ber.* 5 9b and c; *BT Pes.* 3a; *Nid.* 8a–b. See Alon, I, pp. 166 ff. for Rabban Gamaliel's activities concerning these matters.

33 E.g. *מַקָּקָה* (*M. Kidd.* 3:4 and see *BT ad loc.*); divorce (*M. B. Batra* 10:1 and parallels); lashes (*M. Makk.* 3:15 and parallels); perhaps also vows (*BT Ned.* 53a–b but compare *PT Ned.* 6 39d). For other references to Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel by Rabbi Abbahu, see appendix.

34 There are also a couple of references to 'a daughter of Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh'. The historicity of this anonymous daughter(s?) is of no importance in the framework of the present discussion. See also note 18. In a few places a 'son of Rabban Gamaliel' is mentioned, for which see below. The 'sons of Rabban Gamaliel' who consulted their father when returning from תּוֹב דְּרֵא (M. Ber. 1:2 and *PT, BT ad loc.*) cannot be identified, although chronological considerations seem to point to the elder among them.

35 Usually together, which is probably an indication that they were twins, or near in age (the twin sons of Rabbi Hiyya come to mind), but see also note 37.
ing this journey (or journeys) were recited, being considered as instructive.\textsuperscript{36} Judah and Hillel, sons of Gamaliel,\textsuperscript{37} are mentioned in connection to which occurred in the Galilee.\textsuperscript{38} Hanina ben Gamaliel visited the Galilee,\textsuperscript{39} and perhaps Shimon ben Gamaliel too.\textsuperscript{40} The context of the different references seems to indicate a joint visit of the Patriarchal family, namely, Rabban Gamaliel and his sons. For example, in \textit{T.M. Kat.} and in \textit{PT} and \textit{BT Pes.} (see note 38), the ‘deeds’ relating to Rabban Gamaliel (=of Yavneh) in Acre, and to Judah and Hillel ‘sons of Rabban Gamaliel’, in Kavul (ביבלי) and Biri (בורי),\textsuperscript{41} are recorded in sequence, and in a similar manner, which suggests that they belong to the same general context (namely, the said journey to the Galilee). The unordained Judah and Hillel laid down a ruling during this journey,\textsuperscript{42} and the young Hanina (who was ordained) ‘performed a deed’ (=עשוה הבש).\textsuperscript{43} This is rather peculiar, and best explained on the assumption that Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh was indeed their father, and therefore his own authority and status were extended to his sons in their performance. The picture unfolding is that of an ‘official’ visit of the Patriarch Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, with his sons, in the Jewish Galilee.\textsuperscript{44}


\textsuperscript{37} The tanna Hillel is always mentioned with his brother, never alone, and never as an ordained sage. As for Judah, he is mentioned also alone, and then as an ordained sage (=Rabbi Judah ben Gamaliel), several times. For Hanina’s rulings and the saying he conveyed see note 45. The identity of Rabbi Hillel, mentioned in several tannaitic texts, is not yet fully established, and needs to be studied elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{38} בתי והריבי: \textit{T. Shabb.} 7(8), 17; \textit{T. M. Kat.} 2 15–16; \textit{PT Pes.} 4 30d (where: ברי)； \textit{BT Pes.} 51a； \textit{Sem.} 8:4 (Hieger 150). \textit{עפרל: T. H. Ehl. 17:12. See also: Sh. and Z. Safrai, ‘ Beit Anot’ (note 18).}

\textsuperscript{39} In בתי והריבי: \textit{T. Meg.} 3(4):35 (variant: בתי וברי), and parallel in \textit{BT Meg.} 25b; in Sidon: \textit{T.Parah} (4:3):9. This Sidon is not necessarily the famous Phoenician city, but could well be Seidin (Beit Seida) on the Lake of Galilee. See: Sh. Safrai, ‘The Decision According to the House of Hillel in Yavneh’, \textit{Acta of the 7th World Congress of Jewish Studies} 3 (Jerusalem, 1981, in Hebrew), p. 42 with note 49, and see also note 50 below. Hanina ben Gamaliel visited the Galilee, but is never recorded in connection with Usha and the Centre. Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai was a Galilean, and spent some time in the Galilee even when still a pupil of Rabbi Akiva (see: \textit{T. Nidd.} 6:6； \textit{BT Nidd.} 52b). It would therefore seem that this evidence need not necessarily be dated later than the Bar Kokhva revolt, and could be safely placed earlier (and see Safrai, \textit{ibid.}).

\textsuperscript{40} Shimon ben Gamaliel is mentioned in connection with Sidon in several places. In one of them at least, the affair might have antedated his patriarchate, and if so, could be relevant to the journey mentioned before; see: \textit{PT Tu'an}. 4 69a and parallels in \textit{Sot.} 49b and \textit{BK} 83a. See also \textit{PT Hallah} 4 60b: \textit{אָמַר רְכִּבְשׁוּת בַּמָּעָל אַרְאֵה אֶרֶץ אָתָה שְׁמֵעִית} בַּמָּעָל אַרְאֵה רְכִּבְשֹׁת יִשָּׂרָאֵל \textQuoteRight...

\textsuperscript{41} A Jewish village in Upper Galilee, recorded in various orthographic forms, such as ברי ספָּעָת בַּמָּעָל or ברי ספָּעָת, and even, unusually, ברי (\textit{PT Pes.} 3 30d).

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{T. H. Ehl.} 16:12 (following \textit{ibid.}, 11).


\textsuperscript{44} A discussion of the widespread view concerning the ‘different’ character of Galilean Jewry in the Roman period cannot be undertaken here. It will suffice to state that it is compatible with neither the evidence of the sources, when properly read and analyzed, nor with the archaeological evidence. Moreover, when local halachic variations are discernable, the Galilean rulings are stricter and more conservative, and do not reflect a tendency to break off from the norm. Sources
Most significant is the fact that some of Hanina's rulings are conveyed by two of his brothers. Judah ben Gamaliel, who records three of his rulings, is probably his brother. In any case, the identity of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, who also cites him, is firm. In one case, he presents the opinions of both 'the Sages', namely, the majority of sages, which would usually become the official halacha, and his own (minority) view. But then he proceeds—most unusually—to rule according to a third opinion, the one expressed by Hannina ben Gamaliel. In other cases Rabban Shimon supplements Hanina's rulings. It can be concluded that Hanina was older than his brothers, and greatly respected by them. It is especially important to state that Hanina was older than Shimon, who later became Patriarch in Usha. As a matter of fact, all of Shimon's career took place in Usha after the Bar Kokhva revolt. Hardly anything is known of him before it; he tells that he was a pupil in Beithar during the revolt. However, of the several passages which tie him to Sidon (or Seida, Beit Seida), at least one may refer to the days before he became Patriarch, possibly to the above-mentioned journey of his father and brothers to the Galilee, in the heyday of the Yavnean centre, long before the Bar Kokhva revolt.

Family Traditions

Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel refers to his family, or his family's traditions, several times.

which indicate close religious, social and political ties between Galilee and Judea are abundant. For an example of a refutation of an attempt to prove estrangement between the Jews of Galilee and Judea from an 'external' source see my former paper: 'The Jewish Origin of Julius Africanus', JJS 45 (1994), pp. 86–91.

45 T. AZ 4(5):12 (compare: BT AZ 39b; for Rabbi Abahu ibid. see appendix; see also: Sifra Lev. 14, ed. Weiss 12b; BT Ber. 22a; AZ 34b (but see PT AZ 3 42a; however, in this case the Babylonian tradition, reflected also in the Tosefta, should be preferred).

46 The possibility that this Judah ben Gamaliel was a later relative can not be ruled out. It does seem, however, more likely that Hanina’s words were passed on by his younger brother, rather than his brother's great-grandson (the next Judah recorded in the Patriarchal family), or some other, unrecorded, member of the family. See also above, and notes 35, 36, 38.

47 Introduced thus: רָאוּ הַאָנָא אֲתָא בַּר הָא לֵין בֵּין בֵּין מִלְיָאָל מִרְבָּר וּמוֹדִירָם שָׂדוֹת (T Nidda 7:5 (compare BT Nidda 58b; for the variant ‘Rabbi Hanina ben Antigonus’ ibid. see below, and note 9 for Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel’s habit of citing and accepting the college’s rulings). The phrase שָׂדוֹת אֲלָם probably indicates that Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel was no longer alive.

48 B. Bat. 10:1: רַבּ הַגִּנְא בֵּין מִלְיָאָל אָלָם מִרְבָּר שָׂדוֹת שָׂדוֹת מִרְבָּר כַּהֲנִי מִלְיָאָל סְלַי בֵּין מִרְבָּר I=S’1731; for the variant 'Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel' ibid. see appendix, and also: רַבּ הַגִּנְא בֵּין מִלְיָאָל אָלָם מִרְבָּר שָׂדוֹת I=S’1731 (compare BT Nidda 58b). But see also: T. AZ 3 42c; compare: T. AZ 5(6):2. An analysis of this tradition's variants is not necessary here. Rabban Shimon's remark clearly relates to Hanina's statement as well as to that of Rabbi Liezer ben Rabbi Shimon or Rabbi Eliezer bar Zadok [in the Tosefta, probably the better version].

49 See p. 21 and note 6.

50 These names often get mixed, and sometimes it is difficult to determine whether the Phoenician city or the town by the Lake of Galilee is meant. See Alon II, p. 257 and also the short summary in Oppenheimer, p. 154 and note 34.

51 See PT Shek. 6 50a.
The very existence of such family traditions in the Patriarchal family at this early stage (and there are others\textsuperscript{55}) is striking, and needs to be explored elsewhere. It certainly illuminates the status of Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel as belonging to an illustrious family. The type of traditions this family already had on record at his time indicates wealth and an aristocratic aura, as well as *halachic* status, at the end of the Second Temple era, all these being important traits in contemporary Jewish society. Thus the emerging picture of an excellent young scholar whose place in the centre was secured primarily by his descent is further demonstrated.

\textit{Indications of Prominence}

The sources portray Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel as a rather important member of the Yavnean college. At the very least, his position and status were much beyond what his age would dictate, even more so in view of the fact that many sages of his father’s generation (and for most, or all, of the relevant period, his father himself too) were still very active in his day. His special standing cannot be explained by his being a brilliant scholar alone, since at least two of his (rather) contemporary colleagues, Meir and Shimon Ben

\textsuperscript{52} *PT AZ* 3:42c. This seems to be a tradition about pre-destruction times, see the continuation, and compare *T. AZ* 5(6):2, which may be the better version (see also Habas [note 1 above], n. 38 on p. 148).

\textsuperscript{53} *BT Pes.* 3a (also: *BT Yoma* 87b). For variants see *Dik. Sof.* \textit{ad loc.}, and compare: *M. Ber.* 4:3 (see also Habas [ibid.], note 6 on p. 144 for the variants and parallel versions). As for Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel on blessings and prayers, compare: *PT Ber.* 5:9b; *BT Nid.* 8a-b. אַבְדַּתי indicates a tradition which must go back further than Yavneh (at least two generations back), namely, a tradition from pre-destruction times.

\textsuperscript{54} *Sifra Emor* 2:1 (ed. Weiss, p. 94c-d, and so in the printed [Venice] edition, p. 187 [except for the added punctuation of the words בְּתֵיבוּ הָאָבֶדֶי]. Compare: *T. Yoma* 1:6; and see S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah* \textit{ad loc.}, p. 728. See also G. Alon, ‘The Sociological Method in the Study of halacha’, *Studies in the History of Israel*, II (Tel-Aviv, 1970\textsuperscript{2}, in Hebrew), pp. 218–19. This tradition testifies to an interesting early marriage-tie between the Patriarchal family and a priestly family (probably not among the most distinguished of them, but certainly not impoverished). This last high priest, who was indeed selected by lot (against his will, Josephus says). More should be said both about the person and high priesthood of Phineas and about the marriage connections of the Patriarchal family. For the time being, see Habas, dissertation, especially pp. 149–53.

\textsuperscript{55} Reported by his brother Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel as well; for a few examples, see note 6.
Yohai (with whose mentor, Akiva, he disputes) became very prominent sages only at a later and more appropriate stage of their careers.

Several indications of Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel’s prominence were discussed above: his disputes with ‘the sages’ on several different recorded occasions, where the young Rabbi Hanina’s minority view was deemed worthy of recording; his disputes with Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yose the Galilean, both his elders and seniors; his laying down rulings on various matters—in fact, it seems that sometimes the ruling was set according to his opinion, against others, even against the majority view. Thus, Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel expounded, explained and analyzed several halachot, and even decided the ruling (הרי ההלכה) in several cases. In the case of a particular halacha concerning mourning, he acted, or rather was in the habit of acting, against the general ruling, which was quite exceptional. To these we may add the tradition in the Babylonian Talmud, which refers to Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel as: ‘a great man’ (רבי י니다), a very unusual manner of referring to a junior sage.

‘The son of Rabban Gamaliel’

One of the main activities in the centre in Yavneh was the collection and compilation of testimonies; the best example is the tractate Eduyoth. Two witnesses were needed for each testimony. In the following case, only one person testified, and his testimony was not accepted:

In the parallel version in BT AZ 32a (see also PT ibid. 2, 41b), the sugya presents two opposite versions of a similar baraita:

The Babylonian Talmud text (both versions) has רבי י니다 as the source of the precedent, while in the Tosefta it is רבי י니다 אֲדָמָה דוהל. Moreover, in the Babylonian Talmud Rabban Gamaliel ‘drank’ in Acre during a visit which left

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56 *BT* Git. 7a; compare: *PT AZ* 1.39b. See also: G. Alon, ‘These who are ordained for money’, *Studies in the History of Israel* II (Tel Aviv, 1970, in Hebrew), note 10 on p. 17.


58 See the discussion in the sugya itself, in the tosfof *ad loc.* (ואל דא) and רכש רכש רכש (דא) *ad loc.*

59 No variants in both these places, see ed. Zuckermandel and Dik. Sof. [Rabinowitz], respectively, *ad loc.*
a definite halachic mark (including other precedents), see pp. 27–28 and note 36. If the creator of the precedent was indeed Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, the testimony, with its implications, must have occurred after Rabban Gamaliel’s death, and his ‘son’, whom we identify with Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel, was probably not present in Acre when his father ‘drank’, or he could have served as the second necessary witness to the ‘deed’ (משה) which would become a halachic precedent. Shimon ben Goda (or Guda) himself is otherwise unknown.60 The testimony, according to all the versions, was presented in a formal manner to ‘the son of Rabban Gamaliel’, who therefore acted in this specific capacity in the presence of the sages, who participated in the ceremony, by either yielding or not yielding (in the plural form, בהוא או בהוא or ר’ לואו ור’ לואו) to Shimon ben Goda (or Guda). In other words, an unnamed son of Rabban Gamaliel acted in his stead at least once in Yavneh, on a formal occasion where a public formal process took place. This could have happened either in Rabban Gamaliel’s lifetime or, if the Babylonian two versions of the barayta are preferred in this particular case, after his death, which would mean that Rabban Gamaliel’s son was accepted by the sages of Yavneh as their leader at least for some formal functions before the Bar Kokhva revolt.

Rabban Gamaliel himself was very dominant in the process of assembling testimonies. He was the authority, or the leader of the authoritative body which received and assessed the testimonies as to customs, deeds, traditions and halachot which needed to be officially recorded so that future generations would not forget the Torah, or seek after it in vain. A relatively detailed example for the procedure is found in M. Yeb. 16:7, describing how a second ‘witness’ was found, in Babylon, to a ruling of Rabban Gamaliel the elder, and the halacha was then ratified by Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh.61

We also hear of the wedding feast of an unnamed ‘son of Rabban Gamaliel’,62 and of a serious illness, from which he recovered after Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, an old man in Yavneh, prayed. These two occasions occurred in the lifetime of Rabban Gamaliel.63

60 For the name שדוע see P. Benoit, J. T. Milik and Rabbi de Vaux, DJD II (Les grottes de Murabba‘at) (Oxford, 1961), p. 220.
61 Rabbi Akiva concludes the narrative thus: ‘... and when I came and narrated the matter [=the testimony] before Rabban Gamaliel [and] he was happy with my words and said: we have found a friend [=a second] to Judah ben Bava ...’. This description is reminiscent of the one cited above. Especially we can note the similar formulae in: ...lecovat pehuisin davarim lefs. ... ידוע שמישה נו משם לYPES בר בר מקילא. In the first case the testimony concerned a ruling of Rabban Gamaliel the elder; in the second case the ruling was given by either Rabban Gamaliel the Elder or Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, see above.
62 M. Kerit. 3:7; Sifre Deuteronomy, Ekev 38 (ed. Finkelstein and Horowitz, p. 74).
63 Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was older than Rabban Gamaliel, and therefore this tradition, recorded in PT Ber. 5:9d and a parallel paragraph in Ber. 34b, would favour as old a son of Rabban Gamaliel as possible as candidate for the story of the recovery of a ‘son of Rabban Gamaliel’ from mortal illness, namely: Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel. This is not to say that it reflects a fully historical occurrence (see the parallel reference in the BT). The expression בר בנו is found in other places in talmudic literature (compare the rare expression in PT Bikk. 3:65c: בר בר מילא), but cannot be chronologically fixed with certainty in its context. M. Ber. 1:2 (and PT, BT ad loc.) record a בר בר מילא which also happened in Rabban Gamaliel’s lifetime.
Who was this ‘son of Rabban Gamaliel’? If we accept that Rabban Gamaliel probably died long before the Bar Kokhba revolt, Shimon, Hillel and Judah are ruled out: they were still young, unordained students even when the revolt broke out, and therefore were not able to receive testimonies. Hanina, on the other hand, although not an old man, was already ordained and enjoying a high status in Yavneh according to many different sources. The assumption that Rabban Gamaliel had yet another son, of whom we know nothing else although he became even more important than Hanina in Yavneh, is rather far-fetched; it seems that a cautious identification of the ‘son of Rabban Gamaliel’, who stood in for his father and received a testimony in his place at least once, with Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel, may be suggested. Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel is also the best candidate among Rabban Gamaliel’s sons to have married and to have suffered mortal sickness (not necessarily in this order) in the heyday of Yavneh. A further argument for our suggested identification is, that the son who was ill and recovered did so in the lifetime of the very old Hanina ben Dosa (but see note 63).

The Social Context

Among the Jews, inheritance in the direct agнатic line was practiced as a rule. This practice was adhered to not only in the context of royalty or priesthood. It is interesting to see its gradual emergence—against proclaimed ideals—in the circles of the sages, as noted and discussed by Alon and other scholars, until eventually a sub-class of sorts, of ‘sons of sages’, developed. Although a general discussion of the sages as a dominant factor in the Jewish elite of the time, and particularly the special status of the Patriarchal family, cannot be undertaken in this framework, I should like to join those who think—for various and even conflicting reasons—that Rabban Gamaliel’s special status among his peers had to do with his family background. I think the same can be claimed in connection with his sons, first Hanina and later Shimon.

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64 Either before or after his death; see above.
65 The tradition in the tosfor to BT AZ 32a, starting with (ритע) רבי, identifies ‘the son of Rabban Gamaliel’ with Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel. Such traditions are—sometimes—based on old manuscripts which did not survive to our times, and therefore worth noting. See also BT Yeb 48b (and so also in the parallels): ... הניא רב חניא בן שמעון מיילא אומר После нее, unlike the normal manner of reference for all of Rabban Gamaliel’s sons (including Hanina)—שם ימיילא אומר.
67 Though never completely. Epiphanius’ much later observation in his Panarion: ‘... ὁ δὲ ἐν τούτων κατετριβεται, ἀδρόνεται ὁ παῖς ὁ καταλευθεῖς ὑπὸ Ἑλλῆν εἰς πατριαρχῶν τρεφόμενος ὁδεῖς γὰρ ἄλλος ἀρχιάς τοῦ Ἱουδαίου, ἀλλὰ όσο πατέρα διαδέχεται’ (Panarion, Haer. xxx., 7, ed. K. Holl, GCS, xxv, pp. 341–342) is given in the context of a very young and unsettled son succeeding his father as Patriarch upon his death. Alon (ibid., pp. 68–69) suggests that Epiphanius may have referred to the Patriarchate in particular, and not to a general Jewish tradition for succession in any office, although he admits to the existence of such a tradition.
Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh was the leader of the centre in Yavneh for a long time. He was a dominant scholar, who left a strong imprint on contemporary halacha. He clashed with his colleagues time and again, sometimes acrimoniously, and yet they did not feel that they could dispense with his leadership. Even when they eventually tried to depose him after a series of extreme demands for 'halachic monarchy', he was soon called back, although there were in Yavneh other excellent sages—very learned, of fine lineage and wealthy—who were available to take his place (as one of them may have temporarily tried to do). Rabban Gamaliel was not forced to many concessions; he only needed to show more respect and politeness towards his colleagues, and recognize a 'second' with a symbolic status. His continued dominance, however, comes through crystal clear by the sheer number of his rulings and sayings in the various talmudic compilations, and by the prominent part he played in the most important processes of the first generations after the Destruction: the collection and preservation of testimonies; the shaping of prayer and ritual in general; the first stage of compiling the future Mishnah.

There are many further indications and hints concerning Rabban Gamaliel's special position in Yavneh, and the acknowledgement by the sages of his status. I believe that, apart from Rabban Gamaliel's unique personality and his great learning and wealth, his lineage was also a consideration, and that there was general recognition of some dynastic claim of his family; its application may have been enhanced by Rabban Gamaliel himself. In any case, I believe that the meteoric rise to power of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, a late arrival at Usha, and neither the best scholar nor the eldest among the sages already assembled there, two decades or more after his father's death, cannot be explained without taking into account the dynastic aspect.

For the problem of the leadership of the sages after Rabban Gamaliel disappears from the sources (i.e. was no longer active, probably by reason of his death) scholars have offered different solutions, as mentioned above, but none of them has proven satisfactory. The bare facts, as recorded in our sources, are very simple: Rabban Gamaliel was a strong leader; he disappears from the sources (as Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai before him) and he must have died long before 132; no single leader emerges in his stead, though some meetings of those days are known. These meetings were always of partial attendance, sporadic, in various places and with different sages attending in small groups, usually said to be held 'in danger'. I think it can be safely assumed that no one took Rabban Gamaliel's place as leader until his son did, almost a generation and a devastating war later. We can now add another fact: Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel was Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh's second son. His elder brother

69 For a different view and analysis of the relevant sources, compare: R. Goldenberg, 'The deposition of Rabban Gamaliel II: an Examination of the Sources', JJS 23 (1972), pp. 167–190.
70 For example, the traditions of 'לְדֵי אָבֵד מַשָּה אָבָדָא, בֵּית רבּ רַבּ בֵּית נָעָלָא' etc., which merit a separate study.
71 For chronological considerations, see p. 21 and notes 4, 5.
showed all the signs of being groomed for leadership, for succeeding his father. Chronologically, he belonged firmly in Yavneh, having been ordained, and married (therefore beyond childhood, at the very least a young man), in his father's lifetime. However, he too disappears from the sources and is never mentioned in connection with the Bar Kokhva revolt or its aftermath, while his brother Shimon says that he himself was still a student when the revolt broke out, and his own eldest son was not born before the later part of the war.72

If these facts are our starting point, the picture unfolding is that of a succession of the leadership. When Rabban Gamaliel died, something went wrong: the 'heir apparent' was not available. We do not have the details, but his disappearance from the sources suggests his early death, or incompetence by severe illness (and one such illness is recorded). However, no one else was acknowledged as leader by the sages until, almost a generation later, Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, the second son, by now ordained (and probably a father), came to Usha and successfully claimed his place. This means that the dynastic principle was not only present, but also strong and probably well established in regard to this family already before the Bar Kokhva revolt.

It follows that there was no connection whatsoever between the dynasty whose leadership was recognized in the sages' circles and the leadership of Shimon ben Kosiba; he did not usurp their position and they did not follow in his footsteps (two popular theories).73 Thus, a sage of Rabbi Akiva's importance could belong in the world of the sages, and accept the authority of Rabban Gamaliel, though in opposition to him in different matters and though Rabban Gamaliel did not mince his words with him on several (recorded) occasions—and yet at the same time be an admirer of Ben Kosiba and probably his follower.

Discussion and Conclusions

The problem of partial information is not particular to the issues addressed in this paper, but applies to the history of the Jews in late antiquity in general. The studies dedicated to offering theories on the general aspects of Jewish history, and in particular, the history of the Jewish leadership, have to grapple with the paucity of evidence, and the particular nature of some of the data which have survived. We are attempting to illuminate one corner, which may offer insight into basic ideas and processes in the Jewish society, by using some data ignored so far.

The reconstruction of the outline of the Patriarchal family's history in the

72 Rabbi was Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel's eldest son (PT Pes. 10 37b). There are many legends about Rabbi's birth, all of which connect it to the Bar Kokhva revolt or its aftermath, adding legendary details. The general dating of Rabbi's birth to the late 130s or early 140s seems perfectly reasonable in comparison to other details known of his life. There are, of course, very few absolute dates in the talmudic literature, and chronologies based on talmudic data (such as: father-son, or master-pupil relations) are necessarily comparative and not absolute.

73 There are further arguments in favour of this statement, see my forthcoming paper 'Shimon ben Kosbah and the Title Kא' (in Hebrew, English abstract).
first half of the second century suggested here is admittedly less than fully proven, mainly because so much evidence is missing. However, it seems to offer reasonable solutions to some of the problems concerning the development of the Jewish leadership in the critical period starting with Rabban Gamaliel’s death, through the ‘interregnum years’, when apparently no single leader emerged, the Bar Kokhva revolt and the following ‘dark years’, when the results of its failure were being taken in and gradually accepted, while, by the middle of the second century, a new leadership was forming. Furthermore, if one does not insist upon accepting time-hallowed truisms (not facts) concerning Rabban Gamaliel’s family, this reconstruction does not seem to raise new questions while dealing with the old ones. The factor which clinches together an explanation to a basic difficulty concerning the Jewish leadership in the second quarter of the second century is the person, and personality, of Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel, as revealed by about eighty references in the different tannaitic and amoraic compilations (and probably to be identified with the anonymous son of Rabban Gamaliel mentioned in several sources with Yavneh as the background). Most notably, he probably stood in for his father on at least one formal occasion, with the sages cooperating in the procedure performed. He therefore seems to have been accepted by the sages of Yavneh as Rabban Gamaliel’s heir. But then, as sometimes happens, everything went wrong: both Rabban Gamaliel and his son Hanina died (or were otherwise disabled) soon after one another, the situation in Erets Israel deteriorated and finally war broke out, while the next known son Shimon was still young and unordained. When the picture clears again, the war is over, with catastrophic results, a new fledgeling centre has risen from the ashes in Usha and Shimon, now Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, is joining it as its leader. He himself was succeeded by his son Judah, who was succeeded by his son Gamaliel. A stable dynasty of leaders was created, or, if a less minimalist view is taken, continued and consolidated.

APPENDIX: RABBI TARFON, RABBI HANINA BEN GAMALIEL AND RABBI ABBAHU

Rabbi Abbahu relates traditions (כתובות) in the name of Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel and about him several times. This sage is the tanna discussed above, while Rabbi Abbahu studied with Rabbi Yohanan, and was active in the second third of the third century. It is therefore impossible to connect him chronologically to the Yavnean tanna Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel, even as a very young pupil. This fact, however, raises no difficulty, since Rabbi Abbahu preserved and related halachot and traditions not only of his various teachers and other amoraim, but also of a number of tannaim, such as Rabban Gamaliel’s colleagues in Yavneh, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria,

74 Compare: Goodblatt, pp. 259 f.
75 PT Shev. 4 35b; BT Gitt. 7a; BT Ned. 53a–b; ibid. 62a; Kid. 81b; AZ 39b.
76 This is practically certain in the traditions which connect this Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel to Rabbi Tarfon (PT Shev. 4 35b [and parallel in BT Ned. 62a] and Kidd. 81b, see below). In the other references, it is highly unlikely that an amora of this name is quoted: in BT Gitt. 7a Rabbi Abbahu refers to him as a ‘great man’ (גדול דרכו), which is not likely in the case of an unknown sage, be he tanna or amora; the context in BT AZ 39b is a reference to a halacha quoted by Rabbi Judah ben Gamaliel, who is probably the tanna of this name, see p. 29 and notes 44, 45.
and Rabban Gamaliel himself.77

Of these sources, the case of *PT Shev.* 4 35b (and parallel in *BT Ned.* 62a) and *Kidd.* 81b ought to be mentioned separately. In these references, Rabbi Abbahu quotes Hanina ben Gamaliel relating certain traditions concerning Rabbi Tarfon. These traditions' personal nature would suggest personal contact between these two sages, and the possibility that Hanina may have been Tarfon's pupil comes to mind. There may be two additional factors which could contribute to the plausibility of this assumption. The first one is Rabbi Tarfon's (moderate) inclination to some of the rulings and 'ways' of the house of Shammai (e.g. *PT Shev.*, *ibid.*), an inclination shared by Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel's father, Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, though not recorded explicitly as to Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel himself.78 The second one is Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel's halachic disagreement with Rabbi Akiva (note 21, see also note 20), which does not seem to be a natural case of dispute because of Rabbi Akiva's explicit seniority in age and experience over Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel. Rabban Gamaliel, his father, disagreed himself with Rabbi Akiva on several occasions, sometimes in quite strong terms. Their relationship seems to have been a tense and complicated one, although Rabbi Akiva accepted Rabban Gamaliel's authority, and even mediated between him and other sages.79 A connection with Rabbi Tarfon seems plausible with these data in the background.80

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77 In *PT Ber.* 2 5d. Rabbi Abbahu's principal teacher and master, Rabbi Yohanan, too, is well-known for his sense of tradition and the numerous sayings and halachot he transmitted, some of them old tannaitic traditions.

78 Compare also: *PT Ber.* 5 9b, where a firm double amoraic tradition, concerning a certain matter of prayers, records Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel as ruling that halacha (on this particular point) is always according to Rabbi Eliezer (whose Shammaite tendencies were well-known).

79 This is not the place to discuss the relevant references and their value as historical sources, although I am well aware of the problems raised by various scholars concerning different aspects of the talmudic descriptions of the Centre in Yavneh (and, indeed, the very existence of such a centre). The subject, though, is in my opinion far from closed.

80 On the traditions related in Hanina's name by Rabbi Krispa, another pupil of Rabbi Yohanan, and their possible implications, see note 14. These traditions need further study.