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## Preface

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## PREFACE

The aim, scope and method used in this study will be explained in the first, introductory chapter. Before beginning that discussion we shall clarify some abbreviations, peculiarities of the texts being studied and methods of reference. The following abbreviations will be used for the texts which are the main object of study:

PA - Pirke Abot, The Chapters of the Fathers.

ARN - Abot de Rabbi Nathan, The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan.

ARNA - Abot de Rabbi Nathan, Version A.

ARNB - Abot de Rabbi Nathan, Version B.

PA will ordinarily refer to the Tractate Abot as found in the Mishna. Since ARNA and ARNB, which comment on PA, have each a different version of the text, PA will sometime refer to the version of the text found in one or another version of ARN. This usage will be explicitly noted. When all versions agree, PA refers to the whole tradition. Since Abot de Rabbi Nathan comes in two versions, the abbreviation ARN will refer to both versions together when they have common characteristics. It will be a shorthand for referring to two documents which should most properly be referred to separately.

PA will be referred to in the text by chapter and mishna number. Each version of ARN will be referred to within the text by chapter number, thus eliminating numerous footnotes and page references to both text and translation. References to the rest of Rabbinic literature will be according to standard practice. The following abbreviations will be used:

m. - Mishna followed by the name of the tractate.

t. - Tosefta followed by the name of the tractate.

b. - Babylonian Talmud followed by the name of the tractate.

p. - Palestinian Talmud followed by the name of the tractate.

The text generally used for the Mishna is that by H. Albeck and H. Yalon. The text of both versions of ARN is by S. Schechter and referred to as Schechter, ARN. The standard texts of the Talmuds and Midrashim have been consulted. The translations of PA and ARNA are by J. Goldin. The former is found in Goldin's book *The Living Talmud*; the latter is referred to in the notes as Goldin, ARNA. Both translations have been modified occasionally to eliminate the older English second person (thee, etc.) and to

reflect differences of interpretation. The translation of ARNB is by the author and referred to as Saldarini, ARNB. Danby's translation of the Mishna and the Soncino translation of the Talmud have been consulted.

The transliteration of names into English varies greatly in the secondary literature. What seems to be the most common form of familiar names has been retained. Hebrew and Aramaic words have been precisely transliterated either with or without vowels as required by context. Inconsistencies in transliteration found in the bibliography reflect the different transliteration systems found on the English title pages of Hebrew books. The notes refer to secondary literature by author and abbreviated title. Full references are found in the bibliography. Standard abbreviations for periodicals, Biblical books, etc. have been used.

This study often speaks of the author(s) and editor(s) of PA and ARN. In the following chapters we argue that PA and the versions of ARN resulted from a long process of transmission whose exact stages and forms cannot be recovered with precision. The organization of each document and their coherent themes show that at crucial stages each of the three documents was formed by people who may properly be called authors. Numerous other smaller changes and revisions argue that the long process of transmission was aided by the work of less influential figures who may be called editors. Except for Judah the Prince's work on the Mishna we know nothing about who might have produced these traditions and texts except what we can infer from the content of the works themselves. The vagueness of the texts produces the vagueness of the references to author(s) and editor(s) in this study.

I thank Boston College which granted me a Sabbatical semester in Fall, 1980 during which I completed the research on PA and ARN which has occupied me the last few years. I also thank Professor Jacob Neusner of Brown University for accepting this study into the Brown Judaic Series.

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