3. B. Avodah Zarah Sugyot as Secondary Reworkings of Y.
Avodah Zarah Sugyot (Micro Analysis I)

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Not every sugya in b. Avodah Zarah has a Yerushalmi parallel, but examining those that do yields a pattern: b. Avodah Zarah sugyot tend to be secondary reworkings of their Yerushalmi parallels that take the Yerushalmi sugyot into account and rework them in characteristic ways. Studying this pattern is important because we cannot consider the question of y. Avodah Zarah’s influence on b. Avodah Zarah settled until we understand not only that b. Avodah Zarah appropriated materials from y. Avodah Zarah (chapter 2), but also how and why there are so many differences between the b. and y. Avodah Zarah sugyot. When we understand how the b. Avodah Zarah redactors went about their work of adapting and altering Yerushalmi sugyot to fit their new Babylonian context, the theory that the redactors of b. Avodah Zarah were aware of, and guided by, the example of y. Avodah Zarah will be considerably strengthened.

Our examination of how b. Avodah Zarah sugyot rework their Yerushalmi parallels will be divided between chapters 3, 4, and 5. In this chapter we will study five ways in which b. Avodah Zarah may be observed to rework its Palestinian parallels:

1. B. Avodah Zarah tends to add a Babylonian cultural, linguistic, or halakhic feature to a y. Avodah Zarah sugya;
2. In a related vein, b. Avodah Zarah tends to eliminate materials that are of particular and specific relevance to the Land of Israel;

3. B. Avodah Zarah tends to re-arrange y. Avodah Zarah materials in a more sensible order;¹

4. B. Avodah Zarah evaluates a source in connection with an amoraic concern that y. Avodah Zarah had viewed in connection with a tannaitic concern;² and

5. B. Avodah Zarah revises y. Avodah Zarah sugyot so as to raise a legal issue in the sugyot to a higher level of abstraction.

Our work on the mechanics of b. Avodah Zarah’s reworking of Yerushalmi sugyot will continue in chapter 4 with a sharper focus on examples that show that the b. Avodah Zarah redactors were cognizant at times of how y. Avodah Zarah had been edited. In those examples the b. Avodah Zarah redactors are aware of how y. Avodah Zarah ended its discussion of a particular point or how it left an issue unresolved; they, in turn, commence their discussion at that point or begin by taking up the unresolved issue. Finally, in chapter 5 we will consider b. Avodah Zarah’s anonymous (stam) voice and what part it plays in b. Avodah Zarah’s appropriation of y. Avodah Zarah.

We will begin with a particularly rich example from the beginning of the Avodah Zarah tractates: b. AZ 6b || y. AZ 1:1, 39b. This example is a useful starting-point because it illustrates all five of the characteristic ways in which b. Avodah Zarah reworks its Palestinian parallels. Due to the length of the texts, the reader is advised to skim them quickly before reading the analysis and to refer back later to the particular sections under discussion.

¹ What constitutes “a more sensible order” is admittedly subjective. See the analysis at pp. 125–136.

² The point is that if b. AZ, which is the later compilation, used a particular source in connection with an amoraic dispute which y. AZ had used in connection with a tannaitic dispute, b. AZ’s use is likely a secondary development beyond y. AZ. For an analysis of this argument in relation to parallel sugyot in y. Ber and GenR, see Baruch Bokser, “A Minor for Zimmun (y. Ber. 7:2, 11c) and Recensions of Yerushalmi,” AJSR 4 (1979): 1–25; and my “A Bavli Sugya and Its Two Yerushalmi Parallels: Issues of Literary Relationship and Redaction,” to be included in New Methods in Reading Rabbinic Literature: Hermeneutical Limits and Possibilities (ed. Matthew A. Kraus; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, forthcoming).
Y. Avodah Zarah 1:1, 39b

A. *It was taught:* If he transgressed and transacted [business with a Gentile in the three days before an idolatrous festival, the profits are] permitted.

B. R. Yaaqov b. Aha, R. Yose in the name of R. Yohanan: “And even on the day of his festival.”

C. *And so it was taught:* With respect to which situations [is it the case that an Israelite is forbidden to benefit from a transaction with a Gentile before or on his festival]? [If the transaction was] with a Gentile that [the Israelite] does not know. But [if the transaction was] with a Gentile that [the Israelite] knows, it is permitted, because [the Israelite] is like one who is deceptively flattering him.

D. *It was taught:* If [an Israelite] entered a city [during an idolatrous festival] and found them rejoicing, he may rejoice with them, because he is simply like one who is deceptively flattering them.

E. A certain *ducenarius* 3 honored R. Yudan Nesiah with one pouch full of *denarii.* He accepted one of them and sent the rest back [to the *ducenarius*]. [R. Yudan Nesiah] asked R. Shimon b. Laqish [whether he could accept even the one *denarius*]. [Rash Laqish] said: “He [the Patriarch] must bring the benefit [obtained from the *ducenarius*] to the Dead Sea [thus he could not accept even the one coin].” Behold [the case concerns a Gentile] whom [the Israelite] knows, behold [the case concerns a gift made] after the fact, and *Rash Laqish* says: “He must bring the benefit to the Dead Sea”?!

F. *R. Abbahu* said: “And as for me, did not R. Gamliel the son of Rabbi ask me: ‘What about [my] going down to an [idolatrous] fair,’ and I forbade him? [I forbade him despite the fact that] it was taught: [Israelites] may go to an [idolatrous] fair and buy male and female slaves from there.” *Rash Laqish* said: “Not just Israelite slaves, but even Gentile [slaves], because [the Israelite who buys them] brings them near under the wings of the Divine Presence.”

G. *What is the reason* 4 [that Rash Laqish forbade R. Yudan Nesiah to accept the *denarius* despite his general leniency on the subject of idolatrous fairs]? R. Gamliel was a minor and R. Abbahu wished to set a limit for him. But R. Yudan Nesiah was a grown man! [What, therefore, could justify Rash Laqish’s stringency?]

H. [Even so,] *Rash Laqish wished to set a limit on the matter* [so as not to have people see the Patriarch accepting gifts from idolaters].

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3. The word ידכרא is rendered as “commander” or “procurator” by Jastrow, *Dictionary,* 288, and more recently by Sokoloff, *Dictionary,* 142. The term is better rendered as *ducenarius,* meaning “an official who receives a salary of 200 sesterces per annum.” See *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertum Wissenschaft* (ed. Georg Wissowa; 24 vols.; Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Buchhandlung, 1905), 5:1571. My thanks to Prof. Seth Schwartz for assisting me with this translation.

4. I have translated the term מי הדין as “what is the reason?” per the comment of P’nei Moshe, s.v. מי דין.
I. It is understandable [that there be a prohibition] against lending [items to
Gentiles three days before their festivals].
J. But not to borrow [items] from them?
K. [The prohibition of borrowing makes sense] because [the Israelite] is like
one who raises up a name for [the Gentile. By borrowing from him, the Isra-
elite shows him honor in which the Gentile will rejoice on his festival].
L. It is understandable [that there be a prohibition] against lending him money
[three days before his idolatrous festival].
M. But not to borrow [money] from them?
N. Because [the Israelite] is like one who raises up a name for him.
O. It is understandable [that there be a prohibition] against repaying them [three
days prior to their festivals].
P. But not to be repaid by them [for a loan]?
Q. It is in order that [the Gentile] not say that his idolatry assisted it [the repay-
ment].
R. R. Ba b. Tablai said in the name of Rav: “If it was a lost [unsecured] loan, it is
permitted [to receive repayment three days prior to, or on, the Gentile’s festiva].”
S. And so it was taught: A lost [unsecured] loan [is one made] with wit-
nesses; a loan is not lost [if made] with a document. Even a loan with a
document may be lost, since a person does not always merit [being able] to pay off his debt.
T. What is the result? [What is the definition of a “lost,” or unsecured, loan?]
U. An unsecured loan is a loan without collateral; a loan is not secured with col-
lateral.
V. Then he found it [the meaning of “lost loan”] taught as in the first [baraita in
§§]: A loan is lost if made with witnesses, a loan is not lost with a docu-
ment.
W. It was taught there in a mishnah: R. Yehudah says: “A woman should not
put on cosmetic paint, because it is a disgrace for her” (m. MQ 1:7). [While she has the paint on, she looks unattractive; the cosmetic benefits
of the paint will only be apparent when she removes it. Thus R. Yehudah
holds that she should not put it on during the intermediate days of a Fes-
tival, since she will look unattractive during the Festival.]
X. R. Hanina and R. Mana [disagreed about what R. Yehudah and his oppo-
nents, the Sages, really meant]. One said: “They were arguing about a
cosmetic paint that she removes during the Festival, but a cosmetic paint
that she removes after the Festival is forbidden.” [As to the first, since she
will obtain some of the cosmetic benefit during the Festival, the Sages
permit it. Yet the Sages and R. Yehudah both agree that if she will in no
way benefit from the paint during the Festival, she is forbidden to apply
it.] And the other said: “They were arguing about a cosmetic paint that
she removes after the Festival, but a cosmetic paint that she removes dur-
ing the Festival is permitted.”
Y. And they did not know which said which and which said which [unnamed sages did not know which statement was attributable to R. Hanina and which to R. Mana].

Z. From what R. Hanina said in the name of R. Yose in the name of R. Yohanan: “R. Yehudah is consistent with his own opinion. Just as he said there [m. MQ 1:7] that temporary disgrace is considered disgrace, so he says here [m. AZ 1:1] that temporary pain is pain.” So it is [R. Hanina] who says that they were arguing about a cosmetic paint that she removes during the Festival, but a cosmetic paint that she removes after the Festival is forbidden.

Before presenting the parallel material at b. AZ 6b, let us pause to consider the structure of y. AZ 1:1, 39b. This lengthy sugya is divisible into five parts:

1. A dispute about the legal consequences of violating the mishnah’s prohibitions (§§A–D)
2. The story of R. Yudan Nesiah’s hesitation about accepting a gift from a Gentile and Resh Laqish’s advice (§§E–H);
3. Y. Avodah Zarah’s wonderment at the mishnah’s prohibition of pairs of transactions such as lending and borrowing (§§I–Q);
4. The clarification of the type of loan that is considered “lost” (§§R–V); and
5. The discussion from tractate Moed Qatan about the application of cosmetic paint during the intermediate days of an Israelite festival and the relation between that and loan repayment by a Gentile prior to his own festival (§§W–Z).

Let us keep this structure in mind as we examine b. AZ 6b.

**B. Avodah Zarah 6b**

A. They asked: 5 [If an Israelite] transacted [business with a Gentile prior to the latter’s festival], what [is the law as to whether the Israelite can profit from the transaction]?

B. R. Yohanan said: “If he transacted—[the resulting profit is] forbidden.”

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5. The issue of whether the anonymous question “They asked” (ואמרו מה מה) is of amoraic provenance or is the work of the Bavli’s anonymous voice is a thorny one that remains unresolved. David Halivni maintains that the question is amoraic; see his Sources and Traditions: Erubin-Pesahim, 249n30 96. On the other hand, Shamma Friedman has indicated both that it may be amoraic (Talmud Arukh, 1:237) and that it may be anonymous (ibid., 257). Throughout this book I have considered the uvk tghcht question to be anonymous except in those cases in which there is clear evidence that it is, in fact, amoraic.
C. Resh Laqish said: “If he transacted—[the resulting profit is] permitted.”

D. R. Yohanan raised an objection to Resh Laqish: “As to the festivals of idolaters—[if an Israelite went ahead and impermissibly] transacted, [the resulting profit is] forbidden. What, does this [baraita] not apply [to the three day period] before their festivals?” No, [runs the answer on behalf of Resh Laqish,] it applies to the exact day of their festival itself. [Thus, R. Yohanan’s challenge fails.]

E. There are those who say: R. Shimon b. Laqish raised an objection to R. Yohanan: “As to the festivals of idolaters—[if an Israelite went ahead and impermissibly] transacted, [the resulting profit is] forbidden. On their festivals—yes [the profit is forbidden]; before their festivals—no.”

F. [The response to §E on behalf of R. Yohanan:] [As for the] tanna [who taught the baraita As to the festivals of idolaters—transacted, forbidden]—he calls both these [the days before the festival] and these [the days of the festival] “their festivals” [and thus an Israelite is forbidden to keep the profits of commerce he conducts either prior to or on the idolatrous festival].

G. There is a baraita supporting Resh Laqish: When [the Sages] said that it is forbidden to transact business [with Gentiles] they only forbade [transactions in] durable goods. But as to [transactions in] perishable goods, no [there is no prohibition]. And even as to durable goods, [if the Israelite went ahead and impermissibly] transacted, [the profit is] permitted.

H. R. Zevid taught a baraita of the house of R. Hoshaya: [Israelites may] sell to them, but not buy from them, perishable goods.

I. There was a certain min who sent a Caesarean denarius to R. Yehudah Nesiah on the day of [the min’s] festival. Resh Laqish happened to be sitting before him. [The Patriarch] said: “What should I do? If I take it from him, he will go and thank [his god that the Patriarch showed him such honor]. If I do not take it from him, there will be enmity.” Resh Laqish said to him: “Take it and throw it into a pit in front of him.” He said: “How much more so will there then be enmity!” [Resh Laqish replied:] “I meant [throw it into a pit] ‘off the back of the hand’ [i.e., in an unusual way such that the min would not realize that the act was deliberate].”

J. It is understandable [that it be forbidden] to lend [items] to them, since [then the Israelite] is enriching them.

K. But by borrowing from them he is diminishing them! [so why the prohibition?]

L. Abaye said: “There was a decree [prohibiting] borrowing from them lest he lend to them.”

M. Rava said: “All of [the prohibitions of m. AZ 1:1] are on the grounds that [the Gentile] will ‘go and thank’ [his god].”

6. Cf. DS note n here, where the reading is “R. Zevid son of R. Oshaya.”

7. DS (note n) reads “of Caesar.”

8. Missing from DS.
It is understandable [that it be forbidden] to lend them money, since [the Israelite] is then enriching them.

But borrowing [money] from them, why [should it be forbidden]?

Abaye said: “There was a decree [prohibiting] borrowing money from them lest he lend to them.”

Rava said: “All of it is on the grounds that he will ‘go and thank.’”

It is understandable [that it be forbidden] to repay them, since he is then enriching them.

But by being repaid by them [the Israelite] is diminishing them!

Abaye said: “There was a decree [prohibiting] being repaid by them lest he repay [a loan he borrowed from] them.”

Rava said: “All of it is on the grounds that he will ‘go and thank.’”

And they [the prohibitions of m. AZ 1:1] are all necessary. For had the tanna taught only [that it was forbidden] to transact business with them on the grounds that he would be enriching [the Gentile, who would then] go and give thanks, one then would have thought that [he is permitted to] borrow from them, since he thereby diminishes them!

And had the tanna taught [the prohibition against] borrowing from them, [that would have been on the grounds that borrowing from the Gentile] is important to him [it makes the Gentile feel important], and he would “go and thank.” But borrowing money from them should be permitted since it would be a cause of sorrow. He would say: “The money will not return to me.”

And had the tanna taught that it was forbidden to borrow [money] from them because he would say: “Against his [the Israelite borrower’s] will I will exact repayment,” and nevertheless now go and thank, but [then I might have thought that it would be permitted] to be repaid by them, since the money would not return to them. I would say: “He is in pain, and will not go and thank”—[so all the statements in m. AZ 1:1 are] necessary.

And R. Yehudah disagrees [with the principle that] “even though [the Gentile] is upset now, he will be happy later”? [In m. AZ 1:1 R. Yehudah permits an Israelite to accept repayment from a Gentile prior to the festival because this will upset the Gentile prior to the festival. The Sages forbid the repayment because even though the Gentile is “upset now,” he will be “happy later.”]

And was it not taught in a baraita: R. Yehudah says: “A woman should not put on cosmetics during the Festival, since it is a disgrace for her.” And R. Yehudah agrees that she can apply a cosmetic paint during the Festival that she can remove during the Festival; even though she is upset now, she will be happy later.

R. Nahman b. Yitsa[q said: “Leave aside the laws of the intermediate days of a Festival, for all of them [are based on the principle of] ‘upset now, happy later’ [thus, they are not to be compared to the laws against doing business with idolaters].”

Ravina said: “When it comes to loan repayment, an idolater is always upset.”
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AC. Our mishnah [which prohibits accepting repayment from a Gentile in every case] is inconsistent with R. Yehoshua b. Qorha. For it was taught in a baraita: R. Yehoshua b. Qorha said: “We do not collect from them a loan evidenced by a document, but we do collect from them a loan made orally, because [the Israelite collecting] is like ‘one who saves [Israelite property] from their hands’” (t. AZ 1:19).

The structure of this lengthy sugya at b. AZ 6b strongly resembles y. Avodah Zarah, but with one critical difference. Once again, we see a five-step structure:

1. A dispute about the legal consequences of violating the mishnah’s prohibitions (§§A–H);
2. The story of R. Yehudah Nesiah’s hesitation about accepting a gift from a min and Resh Laqish’s advice (§I);
3. B. Avodah Zarah 6b’s wonderment at the mishnah’s prohibition of pairs of transactions such as lending and borrowing (§§J–X);
4. The discussion from Moed Qatan about the application of cosmetic paint during the intermediate days of a festival and the relation between that and loan repayment prior to an idolater’s festival (§§Y–AB); and
5. Clarification of what sort of loan is, or is not, “lost” (§AC).

The critical difference between the order of topics in the two Talmuds is that y. Avodah Zarah discusses “lost loans” prior to the sugya from Moed Qatan, while b. Avodah Zarah, as we see immediately above, does the opposite. We will have much to say about this switched order presently, but we must first perform a macro analysis of this parallel sequence of sugyot in order to ascertain that the strong similarities between them are likely due to b. Avodah Zarah’s having appropriated this sequence from y. Avodah Zarah, and not some other cause.

A. Macro Analysis of B. Avodah Zarah 6b

M. Avodah Zarah 1:1 includes three basic elements: the three-day period of commercial abstention prior to a Gentile festival, a list of prohibited

10. See Hayes, Between the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, 118–119 for discussion of the ambiguity in the mishnah: is the three-day period inclusive or exclusive of the festival day itself?
activities, and then a view of R. Yishmael that a three-day period of abstinence is required after the festival as well. Nothing in the mishnah calls for a topic like (1), above, which discusses the violations of the mishnah’s prohibitions, since presumably the authors of the mishnah expected its strictures to be obeyed. Nor does m. AZ 1:1 call for the story of R. Yudan (=Yehudah) Nesiah. Similarly, nothing calls for the juxtaposition of a discussion about the application of cosmetic paint during an Israelite festival to a discussion about the types of loans exempted from the repayment prohibition of the mishnah. Of the five topics in this sequence, only (3) is arguably called for by m. AZ 1:1—the Talmuds’ discussion of the pairing of prohibitions such as borrowing and lending. But even if the Talmuds separately chose to pursue topic (3), this one similarity could not have generated all the rest. The close linguistic and rhetorical similarity between y. AZ §§I–Q and b. AZ §§I–X makes it unlikely that b. Avodah Zarah independently formulated this sugya, and far more likely that it worked with a version of y. Avodah Zarah. Moreover, the “sandwiching” of this sugya in both Talmuds among the same set of topics that are clearly not called for by the mishnah makes it even less likely that y. and b. Avodah Zarah independently chose to pursue topic (3).

Nor do other tannaitic materials call for this shared sequence of sugyot. The baraitot and m. MQ 1:7 are well-integrated into the Talmuds’ discussions of these topics. The similarities between the Talmuds are clearly the cause, rather than the result, of the tannaitic commonalities.11

Now that we have established that b. Avodah Zarah likely drew this sugya from y. Avodah Zarah, we must probe further and perform micro analyses of the constituent topics in the sugya in order to understand just what the b. Avodah Zarah redactors were doing as they adapted the y. Avodah Zarah sugya for their own Talmud. Let us begin by looking at topics (1) and (2) as a unit: the legal consequences of violating m. AZ 1:1’s prohibitions and the story of R. Yudan (=Yehudah) Nesiah. Upon completion of the micro analysis, we will be better able to assess the hypothesis of early talmud in relation to this pair of sugyot.

B. B. Avodah Zarah 6b §§A–I || Y. Avodah Zarah 1:1, 39b §§A–H

M. Avodah Zarah 1:1 prohibits commercial interactions between Israelites and Gentiles in the three days prior to an idolatrous festival. Y. Avodah Zarah opens its consideration of the legal consequences of violating that prohibition with “It was taught.” B. Avodah Zarah, on the other hand,

11. We will defer our consideration of the early talmud hypothesis until the conclusion of the micro analysis.
opens with “They asked.” The significance of this change is that, by opening with “They asked,” the b. Avodah Zarah redactors fit this opening passage (as well as the entire sugya which it heads) neatly into the material preceding it at 6a, which consists of two sugyot each beginning “They asked.” Whereas y. Avodah Zarah saw this entire sugya as a new unit of material unconnected to what preceded it, b. Avodah Zarah made a clear effort to fit this inherited sugya into the natural flow of its own gemara.

Moving from structure to substance, the law that emerges from y. Avodah Zarah’s consideration of the legal consequences of violating that prohibition (y. AZ §§A–D) is that an Israelite may retain the ill-gotten gains of a transaction with a Gentile that took place either during the three days prior to, or even on, the festival day itself as long as the Israelite was acquainted with the Gentile (presumably meaning that the Gentile is known not to be an idolater). Profit earned from a transaction with a Gentile not known to the Israelite may not be retained, whether earned before or on the holiday. To y. Avodah Zarah, the key is not when the unlawful transaction occurred, but with whom. Y. Avodah Zarah carries this halakhic perspective over into its version of the story of R. Yudan (=Yehudah) Neshia in §§E–H. In §E, the story does not specify whether the ducenarius sent the gift before or on the festival, which is an unimportant detail relative to the all-important detail of whether or not the Patriarch knew the ducenarius. And, consequently, the anonymous voice is puzzled over Resh Laqish’s insistence that the Patriarch divest himself of the gift because he knows the ducenarius (the gift should therefore be permitted whether before or on the festival) and the situation is after the fact (that is, the gift has already been sent). Resh Laqish’s stance is ultimately explained as a “fence” around the Patriarch’s conduct.

B. Avodah Zarah’s recasting of this material in its §§A–F must be seen in light of the first-generation Babylonian amora Shmuel’s teaching that “only their festival day itself is prohibited” (b. AZ 7b, 11b). Shmuel’s teaching renders the three-day period of m. AZ 1:1 a dead letter, and also makes it clear that (contra y. Avodah Zarah) what is important is when the transaction occurs, not whether or not the Israelite knows the Gentile. Examining the R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute in §§A–F, we see that despite their disagreement, both implicitly agree that an Israelite may not retain profit earned on the festival day itself—as Shmuel directs—and nowhere in these paragraphs is the issue of knowing the Gentile seen as significant. Moreover, b. Avodah Zarah in §I specifically points out that the min sent his gift to the Patriarch on the festival day. Whereas y. Avodah Zarah could leave this issue vague, b. Avodah Zarah cannot do so. To b. Avodah Zarah, if the gift was sent prior to the festival, the Patriarch can keep it whether or not he knows the min. B. Avodah Zarah must specify that the gift was sent on the festival or else the story presents no issue worth discussing.
The story of R. Yudan Nesiah and Resh Laqish shows other evidence of Bavli reworking. Y. Avodah Zarah’s “ducenarius” becomes b. Avodah Zarah’s “min”\textsuperscript{12} and y. Avodah Zarah’s “disqus” (pouch) disappears completely from b. Avodah Zarah. It is hardly surprising that the Bavli would do away with the unfamiliar Greek terms, especially “ducenarius,” which refers to a political post unfamiliar to it.\textsuperscript{13} Moreover, y. Avodah Zarah related that the ducenarius sent the Patriarch this disqus of coins from which he took one and returned the rest. By eliminating the disqus, b. Avodah Zarah also eliminated this prolix detail, and simply recounts that the min sent the Patriarch one dinar.

Y. Avodah Zarah’s Patriarch is represented as simply “asking” Resh Laqish; we are not given the content of his question, and must assume (no doubt correctly) that he asked what he should do with the gift. B. Avodah Zarah’s Patriarch is represented as asking a complex question in which he proposes alternative courses of action, each unsatisfactory for some reason. This sort of question, beginning “What should I do?” and followed by the presentation of undesirable alternatives, is found only in the Bavli: here at b. AZ 6b, later at 10b, and at b. Taan 5b.\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, this sort of question—in which the Patriarch ponders and rejects alternatives—is

\textsuperscript{12} The terms מינית (in Hebrew, or מיונית here in Aramaic), מיניתות, or מינית are found at b. AZ 4a, 4b, 6b, 16b (two occurrences), 17a (nine occurrences), 26b (four occurrences), 27b (two occurrences), 28a, and 65a. These terms are completely absent from y. AZ. This lopsided finding is interesting in light of Richard Kalmin’s study of the importance of minut to the Palestinian rabbis; see his Sage in Jewish Society, 68–74. Even when we eliminate the Palestinian sources in which the terms are used from the Bavli, we still see cases—such as this one at 6b—in which the b. AZ redactors themselves added the term to a y. AZ source that did not employ it. Moreover, even though many of the occurrences of the terms in b. AZ are Palestinian, it is interesting that it was b. AZ, and not y. AZ, that elected to present those sources as part of the Talmud. This question calls for further research.

We may perhaps understand why b. AZ substituted min here when we examine y. AZ’s entire gemara to m. AZ 1:1 from the beginning to this parallel point. Y. AZ’s opening aggadah consists of three distinct traditions about the biblical king Jeroboam and his introduction of idolatry to the Land of Israel. Although y. AZ does not use the term, Jeroboam—an Israelite—is clearly portrayed as a min, or “heretic.” In adapting this material for inclusion in b. AZ, the redactors may have taken over the older Palestinian implicit introduction of minut and used it in their revision of this sugya as a replacement for the unfamiliar Greek term.

\textsuperscript{13} Nevertheless, there are cases in which Greek terms do appear in the Bavli. See, e.g., GenR 68:12 and b. Ber 56b (the story about Cappadocia).

\textsuperscript{14} For more on this, especially b. AZ’s casting of the halakhic story of 6b and the aggadic story of 10b as intertexts of each other, see my “The Power Conferred by Distance from Power: Redaction and Meaning bAZ 10a–11a.” To be included in
reminiscent of the increased turn to argumentation characteristic of the fourth Babylonian amoraic generation and later. B. Avodah Zarah has re-invented the Palestinian Patriarch as a proto-fourth-generation amora. B. Avodah Zarah’s Patriarch also conceptualizes the issue at stake in the acceptance or rejection of the gift at a higher level of abstraction than y. Avodah Zarah’s Patriarch did. B. Avodah Zarah’s Patriarch refers to “enmity” (נפרדה), which recurs as a factor to be considered in Jewish-Gentile relations at b. AZ 26a. This conceptual tag for the legal issue at stake is missing from y. Avodah Zarah.

Finally, y. Avodah Zarah’s Resh Laqish advises R. Yudan Nesiah to dispose of the coin in the Dead Sea. B. Avodah Zarah logically alters this advice, since there is no Dead Sea in Babylonia. Instead, b. Avodah Zarah’s Resh Laqish advises R. Yehudah Nesiah to toss the coin into a pit “as if off the back of the hand” (שלח יד). This term is found fifteen times, all in the Bavli, and is thus a term that could only reasonably have been added to the sugya in Babylonia.

C. B. Avodah Zarah 6b §§I–AC || Y. Avodah Zarah 1:1, 39b §§I–Z

Y. Avodah Zarah moves abruptly and without any transition from a discussion of unsecured loans (y. AZ §§R–V) to a discussion based on m. MQ 1:7 about a woman’s application of cosmetic face paint during the intermediate days of a Jewish festival (y. AZ §§W–Z). The redactors of b. Avodah Zarah effected a smooth transition to their version of the Moed Qatan material by adding the unattributed material we find in b. AZ §§V–Y, which does not exist in y. Avodah Zarah. While b. AZ §§V and W deal with issues that were not taken up in y. Avodah Zarah, §X seems repetitious, the issues at stake there having been satisfactorily resolved in b. AZ §§O–Q and S–U. The key is that while §§V and W build upon the older y. Avodah Zarah sugya, taking up issues not treated there, the redundant §X is designed to lead up to the idea of the Gentile’s being “in pain now,”

_Creation and Composition: The Contribution of the Bavli Redactors (Stammaim) to the Aggadah_ (ed. Jeffrey L. Rubenstein; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming [2005]).

15. See, e.g., David Kraemer, _Mind of the Talmud_.

16. The term is found at b. Shab 40b, 62a, 81a, 153b; b. Pes 47b, 66b (three occurrences); b. Yev 114a; b. Ket 60a (two occurrences); b. AZ 6b; b. Zev 85b; b. Hul 141b; and b. Bekh 25a.

17. Y. AZ’s Moed Qatan sugya originated at y. MQ 1:7, 80d. It was only brought over into y. AZ because of its use of R. Yehudah’s view in m. AZ 1:1 to explain m. MQ 1:7.
which in turn paves the way for R. Yehudah’s view about being “in pain now, but happy later” in §Y and then on to Moed Qatan. B. Avodah Zarah’s introduction of the redundant §X shows that it had to have known y. AZ §§I–Q (which it supplemented with its own §§V and W), as well as the already-existing juxtaposition of that material to the Moed Qatan material—to which b. Avodah Zarah created a much-needed segue by means of b. AZ §X. B. Avodah Zarah’s work here in creating this segue by means of §X caused a difference to appear in its order of materials as compared with y. Avodah Zarah’s: whereas in y. Avodah Zarah the discussion of repayment of unsecured loans precedes the Moed Qatan material, the order in b. Avodah Zarah had to be, of necessity, reversed.

When we understand how b. Avodah Zarah worked to create this segue to the Moed Qatan material, we see once again that the hypothesis of early talmud is flawed as an explanation of this case. There is no reason to assume that amoraim knew the y. Avodah Zarah sugya, or that amoraim composed the transitional §X. A proponent of early talmud may further object that the y. Avodah Zarah sugya may have become known in Babylonia during the amoraic period and revised there later in the post-amoraic period. But this hypothesis is too complicated because it requires us to posit two steps in the Babylonians’ reception of this sugya: first, the amoraim knew it—for which we have no clear-cut evidence—and second, they passed it on to post-amoraic redactors. It is much simpler to posit a one-step reception: the sugya was created in Palestine by redactors there, and the results of their work became known to Babylonian post-amoraic redactors, who appropriated and reworked it.

The b. Avodah Zarah redactors also reworked the Moed Qatan material itself. Y. Avodah Zarah presents it (beginning “It was taught there in a mishnah”) at §§W–Z. The connection between this material and m. AZ 1:1 is made only at the end, in §Z. The Moed Qatan material is obviously not directly relevant to m. AZ 1:1, and is largely taken up with the elucidation of which amora held which understanding of the dispute between R. Yehudah and the Sages in m. MQ 1:7. At b. Avodah Zarah §§Y–AA, by contrast, the Bavli eliminates those parts of y. Avodah Zarah’s Moed Qatan materials that are irrelevant to tractate Avodah Zarah, and introduces Moed Qatan in response to the anonymous question about whether R. Yehudah disagrees with the principle that “even though he is upset now, he will be happy later” (b. AZ §Y). Moreover, the interrogative formulation of R. Yehudah’s position in §Y (“And R. Yehudah disagrees [with the principle that] ‘even though [the Gentile] is upset now, he will be happy later’?”) is due to the position of this question in the sugya. In §X, a position identical to R. Yehudah’s view in m. AZ 1:1 was presented anonymously. Once “reminded” of R. Yehudah’s position, the anonymous voice logically went...
on to ask in §Y whether R. Yehudah—the holder of the anonymous view rebutted in §X—disagrees with the “upset-happy” principle. 18

Having reached the end of the micro analysis, we may summarize how the theory of early talmud fails to persuade. First, no amora in either Talmud is represented as being aware of the entire sugya qua sugya. There is thus no solid basis on which to claim that it was amoraim rather than post-amoraic scholars who transmitted it from Palestine to Babylonia. Second, one who wishes to argue that this shared sugya is early talmud must establish that amoraim did, in fact, transmit sugyot of this length, but current research does not promote confidence that they did so. Third, y. and b. Avodah Zarah are the only two rabbinic compilations in which this sugya is found. It is unclear what we gain by hypothesizing that both Talmuds drew this sequence from a hypothesized pool of shared rabbinic traditions when we can reach a conclusion based on the extant tractates we have, to wit, that b. Avodah Zarah drew the sequence of sugyot from y. Avodah Zarah. 19

The micro analysis itself, in addition to the positive evidence it yields of how b. Avodah Zarah reworked y. Avodah Zarah, also yields evidence that constitutes the strongest argument against early talmud. As a result of the micro analysis, we see that b. Avodah Zarah carefully reworked y. Avodah Zarah’s handling of the tannaitic dispute from Moed Qatan not only by streamlining that dispute itself, but also by reworking anonymous material it shared with y. Avodah Zarah in order to lay a groundwork for its change to the Moed Qatan material. It did this reworking in the context of a lengthy shared sugya in which it made other substantive changes. B. Avodah Zarah was thus not simply reworking and redeploying Palestinian rabbinic traditions also found in y. Avodah Zarah, it was reworking and re-presenting a sugya it appropriated from y. Avodah Zarah.

Having reached the end of a lengthy analysis, let us summarize. B. Avodah Zarah 6b | y. AZ 1:1, 39b is a rich example that nicely illustrates all five of the ways b. Avodah Zarah characteristically reworked its y. Avodah Zarah sources: It

18. Before leaving b. AZ 6b | y. AZ 1:1, 39b, there is one final revision of y. AZ by b. AZ that we should note: b. AZ’s deployment of Abaye and Rava in its §§L–M, P–Q, and T–U. We find another example of this in the tractate at b. AZ 62a–b | y. AZ 5:1, 44c and elsewhere in the Bavli at b. Ber 48a (| y. Ber 7:1, 11b and GenR 91:4) and b. Sanh 74a–75a (| y. Shevi 4:2, 35b). There are many more examples of the Bavli’s addition of Abaye and Rava to its version of a given Palestinian sugya, and I intend to pursue this interesting issue in further research.

19. For a similar argument as it pertains to the relationship between Toseftan baraitot in the Bavli and the Tosefta, see Shamma Friedman, “Ha-baraitot she-be-Talmud ha-Bavli ve-yahasan le-Tosefta.”
1. Introduces a Babylonian cultural or halakhic perspective or linguistic feature;
2. Eliminates materials that are too specific to the Palestinian context;
3. Re-arranges y. Avodah Zarah material in a more sensible order;
4. Combines and streamlines materials that y. Avodah Zarah had left distinct (such as the Moed Qatan and unsecured loans materials); and
5. Conceptualizes a legal issue at a higher level of abstraction.

Let us move on to consider these methods of reworking in relation to other examples in the tractates.

I

B. Avodah Zarah Reworks Y. Avodah Zarah to Introduce a Babylonian Cultural or Halakhic Perspective or Linguistic Feature

I.a. B. Avodah Zarah 8a || Y. Avodah Zarah 1:2, 39c—The Primeval Origin of Kalends and Saturnalia

As we pointed out in chapter 2, both Talmuds use an aggadic source about Adam—versions of the same aggadic source about Adam—as part of their treatments of the first clause of m. AZ 1:3: “And these are the festive-days of idolaters: Kalends and Saturnalia . . .” This example is a good illustration of how the different religious and cultural contexts in Palestine and Babylonia influenced the Talmuds’ presentations of the Adam stories.

Y. Avodah Zarah 1:2, 39c

A. Rav said: “Kalends—the First Man (Adam) established it. When he saw the long nights [of winter] he said, ‘Woe is me! Lest he [the serpent] of whom it is written (Gen 3:15): ‘he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel,’ come to bite me! If I say (Ps 139:11–12) ‘surely the darkness will surround me [and thus I will be protected, that will not be because] . . . even the darkness will not be dark to you.’

B. “Once he saw the days getting longer, he said: ‘Kalends!—kalon deo! What a beautiful (kalon) day (diem)!”
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C. And [this story] goes well according to the one who says that the world was created in Tishrei [because then Adam would not yet have had the experience of the days getting longer]. But according to the one who says the world was created in Nisan [i.e., spring], he [Adam] knew! [If the world had been created in spring, then Adam would have been aware that the natural order is to have long days and short nights, followed later by short days and long nights.]

D. R. Yose b. R. Bun said: “Who is it who holds that the world was created at the New Year [in Tishrei]? Rav; as it was taught in the [verses recited with the] shofar blasts of the house of Rav: ‘This is the day of the beginning of Your activity; a remembrance of the first day.’ So it was at New Year’s that the world was created.”

The Yerushalmi also uses this story at y. Ber 8:6, 12b to explain why a blessing must be recited over fire at the conclusion of the Sabbath. Although the context is clearly different, y. Berakhot is clearly working with y. Avodah Zarah’s version of the story:

Y. Berakhot 8:6, 12b

A. And the First Man (Adam) would gaze with it [the primordial light created on the first day of creation] from one end of the earth to the other. Since the light did not cease, the entire world began to sing [in praise] . . .

B. When the week departed [and the Sabbath began], the darkness began to roll in. And Adam was afraid and said, “Lest the one of whom it is written (Gen 3:15), ‘He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel,’ come to bite me!” If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will surround me’ (Ps 139:11) [to protect me, the darkness will not protect me because ‘even the darkness will not be dark’ (Ps 139:12)].”

C. R. Levi said: “At that hour, God prepared two flints which he struck against each other and produced fire. It is that which is written ‘And the night is lighted up for me’ (Ps 139:11). And [Adam] blessed over it [the blessing] ‘Who created the lights of fire.’”

D. Shmuel said: “Therefore we bless over fire at the ends of Sabbaths, for that was the beginning of its [fire’s] creation.”

Despite the different uses to which the two Yerushalmi tractates have put the story, the version with which both are working is the same. In both stories, Adam is frightened by the approaching darkness because of his concern that the serpent will bite him, and he expresses his fear by citing Gen 3:15 and Ps 139:11. Yet he is cheered by the coming of light—longer days in y. Avodah Zarah or God’s fire in y. Berakhot—and his renewed spirit causes him to exclaim in joy. In y. Avodah Zarah, that exclamation takes the form of a Greek outburst proclaiming the beauty of the day, while in y. Berakhot he recites a blessing over the fire. Interestingly, in both stories his joyous outburst is considered to be the establishment of a
human institution: Kalends in y. Avodah Zarah and the blessing over fire at the end of the Sabbath in y. Berakhot.

Let us now examine the Adam stories in the Bavli.

**B. Avodah Zarah 8a**

A. *Our Rabbis taught:* Since the First Man saw the day growing progressively shorter, he said, “Woe is me! Since I sinned, the world is getting dark because of me and is returning to primordial chaos. And this is the death that was imposed on me from Heaven.” He undertook to sit for eight days in fasting and prayer. When he saw the winter solstice, and saw the day growing progressively longer, he said: “This is the way of the world.” He went ahead and established eight festive days. The next year he made both these [the eight days prior to the solstice, which he had spent in fasting] and these [the eight days he had established as a festival] as festive days [the first set of eight became Saturnalia, the second Kalends]. [Adam] established them for the sake of Heaven; they [the idolaters] established them for the sake of idolatry.

B. *This works well according to the one who says that the world was created in Tishrei.* [Thus] he saw short days, [but] he still had not seen long days. But according to the one who says that the world was created in Nisan, he saw short days and long days!

C. [Yet] he still had not seen days that were especially short.

D. *Our Rabbis taught:* On the day in which Adam was created, once he saw the sun setting over him, he said: “Woe is me! Since I sinned, the world is getting dark on me, and will return to the primordial chaos, and this is the death that is imposed on me from Heaven.” He sat in fasting and cried all night, and Eve cried alongside him. Once the dawn star rose, he said: “It is the way of the world.” He got up and offered a bull whose horns stretched out beyond its hooves, as it is said: “This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hooves.” (Ps 69:32).

Sections A and D in b. Avodah Zarah are Adam stories which differ from each other, as well as from y. Avodah Zarah’s Adam stories. The story in §A fits well into the context of the mishnah as an explication of the origins of Kalends and Saturnalia. The story in §D is related to §A—since both are stories about Adam’s reaction to the approach of darkness—but not to the mishnah, since it does not provide an etiology of Kalends and Saturnalia. A version of §D also exists in version A of Avot de-Rabbi Natan (ARNA)\(^20\) as part of a collection of Adam legends, and the story’s

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picturesque reference to the bull whose “horns stretch out farther than its hooves” is also found at b. Hul 60a and b. Shab 28b.

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Toward evening, the First Man saw the world leaning toward the west. He said: “Woe is me! Since I sinned, God is darkening the world over me”—and he did not know that this is the way of the world. Toward morning, when he saw the world getting lighter and inclining east, he rejoiced with a great joy. He got up and built altars and offered a bull whose horns stretched out farther than its hooves as a burnt-offering [citing Ps 69:32].

There are, then, three versions of this Adam story: the Yerushalmi version, the version of b. AZ §A, and the version of §D, which in turn has a parallel at ARNA 1, and partial parallels at b. Hul 60a and b. Shab 28b. Interestingly, the version that b. Avodah Zarah used to explain the origin of Kalends was not the more widespread (at least judging by its frequency of appearance in the Bavli and Avot de-Rabbi Natan) version of §D, but rather, the version of §A. This may provide a clue as to why b. Avodah Zarah presented the version of §D at all. Examination of §D and its parallels shows that the issue of the sacrificial animal’s horns—whether unnaturally long or unnaturally located—is a key and picturesque feature of that version, not to mention the climax of the story. A story meant to end with the sacrifice of such an unusual animal is not the best story to adapt as an illustration of a totally different concept—the establishment of Saturnalia and Kalends. Nevertheless, the story could not be omitted; its presence in three Bavli tractates as well as ARNA shows that it had some currency. Thus the Bavli redactors, after presenting a version of the Adam story that establishes the origins of the pagan holidays, appends what was probably a better-known version of the Adam story.

Yet even the version of the story that the Bavli utilized to explicate the mishnah in Avodah Zarah differs from that found in y. Avodah Zarah, which again raises the question of whether b. Avodah Zarah’s editorial decision to use a version of the story derived from y. Avodah Zarah at all. The answer to this implicit question is a likely “yes.” Earlier, in chapter 2, we noted that both Talmuds integrate their Adam stories in very similar redactional contexts. Both Talmuds follow the stories with anonymous gemara that establishes that the story works well if one assumes that the world was created in Tishrei, but not if the assumption is that the creation took place in Nisan (y. AZ §C, b. AZ §§B–C). The placement of this shared anonymous material after the story used to establish the origin of Kalends (and Saturnalia, in b. Avodah Zarah) is found only in the Avodah Zarah tractates and in no other place in which the story appears. Moreover, both Talmuds follow the story with accounts of a dispute between R. Yohanan

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and Rav (y. Avodah Zarah) or R. Matana (b. Avodah Zarah) about whether commercial transactions prohibited during Kalends and Saturnalia are prohibited with all Gentiles (whether or not they are celebrating) or only with those in the particular place observing the festivities. Finally, nothing in m. AZ 1:3 calls for aggadah at all. The common decision to place aggadic material here—which, although not identical, deals in both Talmuds with Adam’s fear of the approaching darkness and his establishment of Kalends and Saturnalia—is more likely to have been the result of b. Avodah Zarah’s editorial reflection on the path taken by y. Avodah Zarah.

Why then did b. Avodah Zarah not use y. Avodah Zarah’s version? From a cultural perspective, the Bavli editors would have been unlikely to take over Adam’s alleged Greek exclamation, which argues in favor of conscious Babylonian reworking of the Adam source. Looking more carefully at the two Talmuds’ stories, we can see more evidence of likely Bavli reworking. Y. Avodah Zarah’s Adam establishes the holidays prior to his disobedience of the divine commandment, while b. Avodah Zarah’s Adam did so after his disobedience (“since I sinned”). B. Avodah Zarah’s sequence of events is more sensible: only after his sin, when he must leave Eden and establish human society, would Adam be likely to establish human institutions such as holidays. Also, given that Adam is establishing (albeit unintentionally) what ultimately becomes a Roman holiday, b. Avodah Zarah’s attribution of this establishment to a sinful Adam is more sensible than y. Avodah Zarah’s attribution of it to a sinless Adam. Moreover, once Adam’s establishment of Kalends and Saturnalia is placed after his sin, the nature of his fears and how he expresses them must change. While the quotation of scriptural verses attributed to Adam in y. Avodah Zarah expresses his (pre-disobedience) fear of the serpent and the darkness, Adam’s (post-disobedience) fear in b. Avodah Zarah is less the serpent and darkness, and more the cosmic consequences of his awful sin. As a result, b. Avodah Zarah’s Adam need not—and does not—quote the scriptural verses quoted by his Yerushalmi predecessor.

Yet, interesting as these differences are, they nevertheless do not (by themselves) prove that the b. Avodah Zarah redactors deliberately introduced these changes into y. Avodah Zarah. We must look for additional evidence that demonstrates the reasonableness of the assumption that y. Avodah Zarah is more likely than b. Avodah Zarah to present the image of a pre-disobedience Adam. When we examine the extant references in the Yerushalmi to אדם רשע שנין,21 we find that none of the stories discusses a sinful Adam. The closest the Yerushalmi comes to a sinning Adam is the

21. Y. Ber 8:5, 12b; 9:1, 12d; 9:1, 13c (two occurrences); y. Shab 2:6, 5b (three occurrences); and y. Naz 7:2, 56b (three occurrences).
tradition at y. Naz 7:2, 56b that Adam was created from the dust of the site of the future Temple altar, which gives him the hope of “standing” (לְמָשָׁה). In the Bavli, by contrast, seven of the forty-two references to Adam refer either to his disobedience, his punishment, or, interestingly, his heresy(!). This distinction between the Talmuds suggests that y. Avodah Zarah is indeed more likely to present the image of a sinless Adam, while b. Avodah Zarah may be more inclined to discuss his sinfulness. This distinction between the rabbinic centers may have much to do with the Palestinians’ encounter with Christianity, which takes the primordial sin of Adam to be the sinful blot on humanity that only Christ can efface. By de-emphasizing his sin, the Palestinian rabbis protect themselves from the attacks of those (Jews and Bible-reading non-Jews) who would emphasize the sinfulness of Adam and draw Christological conclusions from it. This concern is not as much of an issue for the Babylonians, whose contacts with Christianity appear to have been much more limited and infrequent.

I.b. B. Avodah Zarah 35b–36a, 37a || Y. Avodah Zarah 2:9, 41d || Y. Shabbat 1:6, 3c–d—Gentile Oil

Both Talmuds place this sugya in connection with m. AZ 2.6. The pertinent part of this mishnah reads as follows:

And these are the items of idolaters which are forbidden, but their prohibition is not a prohibition of benefit: the milk that an idolater milked without a Jew seeing him, and their bread and oil. Rabbi and his court permitted oil.

22. B. Ber 40a; b. Shab 55b; b. Eruv 18b; b. BB 75b; b. Sanh 38b, 70a, and 70b.
23. The other references are: b. Ber 31a (two occurrences), 34b, 58a (two occurrences); b. Shab 28b; b. Eruv 18b; b. Pes 54b; b. Hag 12a (two occurrences); b. Sot 46b (three occurrences); b. BB 14b, 75a; b. Sanh 37a, 38a (three occurrences), 38b (three occurrences in addition to the one mentioned), 56b, 59b (two occurrences), 70a, 100a; b. AZ 8a (three occurrences), 11b; b. Hul 60a (two occurrences), 60b; and b. Nid 45b.
24. My finding about the Yerushalmi’s “sinless” Adam versus the Bavli’s “sinful” Adam is consistent with Richard Kalmin’s findings that the Bavli and Palestinian sources often take different positions on whether various biblical figures are to be viewed positively or negatively. See his Sage in Jewish Society, 83–109.
26. Medieval scholars held that the mishnaic phrase “Rabbi and his court permitted oil” is not an authentic part of the mishnah. Rashi (b. AZ 35b, s.v. וַיִּסְגֹּר נַחֲלָתּוֹנִי) argues against the authenticity of the phrase on the ground that the lifting of the prohibition against Gentile oil is attributed at 37a to Rabbi’s grand-
Let us begin with a comparison of y. Avodah Zarah to its y. Shabbat parallel.

**Y. Avodah Zarah 2:9, 41d**

A. Who prohibited oil?
B. R. Yehudah said: “Daniel prohibited it—[as it says in Dan 1:8,] ‘And Daniel took it to heart not to be defiled with the portion of the king’s bread nor with the wine of his drinking . . .’”

C. And who permitted it?
D. Rabbi and his court permitted it. In three places R. Yehudah ha-Nasi is called “יעדנני” (our Rabbis): [with regard to] bills of divorce, and oil, and sandals. And they called him “the court that permitted [Gentile] oil.” Every court that permits three things is called a “permissive court.”

E. R. Yudan said: “[R. Yehudah ha-Nasi’s] court disagreed with him with respect to bills of divorce.”

[The Talmud goes on to illustrate R. Yudan’s contention that R. Yehudah ha-Nasi’s court disagreed with him about bills of divorce.]

F. “Shall she be permitted to marry [immediately upon learning of her husband’s death, or must she wait until 12 months had expired]?”

G. R. Haggai said: “She is permitted to marry [immediately].”

H. R. Yose said: “She is forbidden to marry [immediately].”

I. R. Aha, R. Tanhum b. Hiyya in the name of R. Hanina, and some say it in the name of R. Yehoshua b. Levi: “[Daniel refused to eat the king’s oil because he saw that] they [people sentenced to death by the king] would go up to the king’s mountain and be killed upon it.” [Consequently, Daniel refused to eat oil made from olives that had grown on such a place of bloodshed].

J. Yitshaq b. Shmuel b. Marta went down to Netsivin. He found Simlai the Southerner sitting and expounding: “Rabbi and his court permitted [Gentile] oil.”

son, R. Yehudah Nesiah; the Tosafot (b. AZ 36a, s.v. יון) make a similar argument. The Rashba, in his novellae to b. AZ 36a, made an interesting argument that Shmuel’s failure to recite that mishnaic phrase to Rav (in support of his view that Gentile oil is permitted) is a telling proof of the inauthenticity of the attribution of the permission to Rabbi. The instincts of these rishonim are borne out by the JTS ms., which does not include the phrase in the mishnah, although it does appear in the mishnah of the Leiden ms. of the Yerushalmi. See also David Rosenthal, “Mishna Aboda Zara: A Critical Edition (with Introduction)” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1971), 34 (Heb.). For a weak argument that the phrase is indeed an authentic part of the mishnah, see Martin Goodman, “Kosher Olive Oil in Antiquity,” in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (ed. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White; Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1990), 227–245. My thanks to Dr. Lisa Grushcow for providing me with this reference.
[So] said Shmuel [=Simlai recited his learning before Shmuel, who accepted it], but Rav did not accept upon himself to eat [Gentile oil].

Shmuel said to him [Rav]: “Eat, for if not, I will proclaim you to be a הרין [rebellious elder].”

He [Rav] said to him: “While I was there [in Palestine], I knew that it was Simlai the Southerner who was objecting to it [the prohibition on Gentile oil].” [Rav is saying that Simlai’s objections to the prohibition are of no account.]

[Shmuel] said to him: “Did the master [Simlai] state it in his own name? No, in the name of R. Yudan Nesiah.” [Thus, Rav cannot be more pious in this matter than the Patriarch.] He prevailed upon him and he ate.

R. Yohanan asked: “Did we not learn in the mishnah [m. Eduy 1:5]: A court cannot invalidate the words of another court unless it be greater than it in wisdom and number? And [nevertheless] Rabbi and his court permit what Daniel and his companions prohibited?”

R. Yohanan is consistent with his own opinion. R. Yohanan said: “I have received from R. Lazar b. R. Tsadoq that every decree that a court decrees and that most of the community do not accept upon themselves is not a [valid] decree.” They investigated and found with regard to his [Daniel’s] decree about [Gentile] oil and did not find that most of the community accepted it upon themselves.

Y. Shabbat 1:6, 3c–d

In y. Shabbat, this sugya is attached to m. Shab 1:4:

And these are among the laws that were stated in the upper-chamber of Hananiah b. Hezekiah b. Gurion when they went up to visit him. The House of Shamai outvoted the House of Hillel, and they decreed eighteen matters on that very day.

Among the items about which “they decreed” were Gentile bread, cheese, oil, and daughters, Gentile seminal emissions and urine, the laws of יין [Jewish] seminal emissions, and the laws of the lands of the [Gentile] nations. The Yerushalmi then proceeds to take up these items in order.

Y. Shabbat 1:6, 3d

[Bold paragraph-designations show the order of these materials within y. AZ 2:9, 41d]

A. Who prohibited oil?

27. The first half of this sentence is not found in the parallel in y. Shab 1:6, 3d. Its presence here in y. AZ is almost certainly a scribal error. The sentence should read as it does in y. Shab.
B. R. Yehudah said: “Daniel prohibited oil—[as it says in Dan 1:8,] ‘And Daniel took it to heart not to be defiled with the portion of the king’s bread nor with the wine of his drinking . . .’”

I. R. Aha, R. Tanhum b. Hiyya in the name of R. Hanina, and some say it in the name of R. Yehoshua b. Levi: “[Daniel refused to eat the king’s oil because he saw that] they [people sentenced to death by the king] would go up with him to the king’s mountain and be killed upon it.” [Consequently, Daniel refused to eat oil made from olives that had grown in such a place of bloodshed.]

C. And who permitted it?

D. Rabbi and his court permitted oil. In three places R. Yehudah ha-Nasi is called “በየቤشباب (our Rabbis): [with regard to] bills of divorce, and oil, and sandals. And they called him “the court that permitted [Gentile] oil.” Every court that nullifies three things is called a “permissive court.”

E. R. Yudan said: “[R. Yehudah ha-Nasi’s] court disagreed with him with respect to bills of divorce.”

O. R. Yohanan asked: “Did we not learn in the mishnah [m. Eduy 1:5]: A court cannot invalidate the words of another court unless it be greater than it in wisdom and number? And [nevertheless] Rabbi and his court permit what Daniel and his association prohibited?”

P. Rather, R. Yohanan is consistent with his own opinion. And R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Lazar b. R. Tsadok: “I have received [the tradition] that every decree that a court decrees on the community and that most of the community do not accept upon themselves is not a [valid] decree.”

Q. They investigated and found with regard to the decree about [Gentile] oil that most of the community had not accepted it upon themselves.

J. Yitschaq b. Shmuel b. Marta went down to Netsivin. He found Simlai the Southerner sitting and expounding: “Rabbi and his court permitted [Gentile] oil.”

K. Shmuel accepted it upon himself and ate [the Gentile oil], but Rav did not eat [the Gentile oil].

L. Shmuel said to him [Rav]: “Eat, for if not, I will proclaim you to be a תונין (rebellious elder).”

M. He [Rav] said to him: “While I was there [in Palestine], I knew that it was R. Simlai the Southerner who was objecting to it [the prohibition on Gentile oil].” [Rav is saying that Simlai’s objections to the prohibition are of no account.]

N. [Shmuel said to him]: “What, did he [Simlai] state it in his own name? No, in the name of Rabbi and his court.” [Thus, Rav cannot be more pious in this matter than the Patriarch.] He prevailed upon him and he ate.

When we compare the two Yerushalmi versions of this sugya, we see that it is composed of distinct sources about Gentile oil that have been skillfully combined into one lengthy sequence. Y. Shabbat is clearly the better-organized of the two. Y. Avodah Zarah leaps back and forth in §§A–I between the original prohibitor of Gentile oil (Daniel in §§A–B), the one
who permitted it (Rabbi in §§C–D), a digression from Gentile oil (§§E–H),
and a return to Daniel’s reason for the prohibition (§I). Y. Avodah Zarah
also appends R. Yohanan’s discussion of m. Eduy 1:5 (which also relates
to the weighing of the relative authorities of Daniel and Rabbi) to the Rav
and Shmuel conflict, to which it is unrelated. Y. Shabbat, by contrast,
groups together all the materials that discuss Daniel’s prohibition of the
oil before moving on to discuss Rabbi’s lifting of the prohibition. In addi-
tion, y. Shabbat minimizes the digression from Gentile oil (§D), and places
R. Yohanan’s discussion of m. Eduy 1:5 where it belongs—at the spot in
the sugya at which we see the conflict between the authority of Daniel and
that of Rabbi.

Using the better-organized y. Shabbat version, we can discern four
sources within this lengthy sugya:

1. §§A, B, and I (Daniel is the original prohibitor of Gentile oil);
2. §§C–E (R. Yehudah ha-Nasi permitted Gentile oil and was
called the “court that had permitted oil”);
3. §§O–Q (R. Yohanan wondered on the basis of m. Eduy 1:5 how
the Patriarch could have overturned Daniel’s decree; investiga-
tion revealed that the decree about oil had not spread); and
4. §§J–N (the Rav and Shmuel dispute about Gentile oil).

Y. Avodah Zarah §§F–H is a fifth source explaining more about the dis-
pute between Rabbi and his court about divorces. As was pointed out,
y. Shabbat logically omitted this since it is not at all relevant to the main
subject, Gentile oil.

Looking beyond its constituent parts to its overall message, y. Shab
1:6, 3d presents conflicting views about Patriarchal authority, with the ab-
rogation of the prohibition of Gentile oil being merely the issue through
which the conflict is expressed. Although the prohibition is traced back to
biblical times, the Patriarch overturns it, which argues for his authority.
Yet the sugya also claims that the Patriarch’s rescission of the prohibition
causes him to be tagged as the “court that permitted oil,” which is not a
positive appellation. Moreover, the sugya undercuts Patriarchal authority
by pointing out that the permissive ruling is ultimately grounded not in
any action of his, but in the people’s refusal to accept the prohibition of
Gentile oil. Yet the sugya ends on the note that one major Babylonian sage
accepted the Patriarch’s ruling and even compelled another to do so by
threatening him with “rebellious elder” status—which again strongly re-
asserts Patriarchal authority. From a literary point of view, the sugya ends
at exactly the opposite point from which it began: it opened with the ex-
iled Daniel in Persia prohibiting Gentile oil, and ends with the Babylonian
sages living under Persian hegemony accepting the Patriarch’s reversal of that prohibition.

Which (if either) is the original version of the sugya: y. Shabbat or y. Avodah Zarah? Y. Avodah Zarah’s inferior organization is a convincing argument in favor of its being the original version. An editor would have had little to gain by incorporating the y. Shabbat version into y. Avodah Zarah and rearranging it so as to make it flow less smoothly; on the other hand, an editor would have had much to gain by incorporating the y. Avodah Zarah version into y. Shabbat and rearranging it so as to make it flow more smoothly.

**B. Avodah Zarah 35b–36b**


B. As to the whole world—are they eaters of purities? Rather, [Shmuel said]: “The oozing of [residues of] forbidden [liquids from oil] vessels made it [oil] forbidden.”

C. Shmuel said to Rav: “It works out well according to me, who says that the oozing of [residues of] forbidden vessels made it [oil] forbidden. That is [consistent with] when R. Yitshaq b. Shmuel b. Marta came and said: ‘R. Simlai expounded in Netsivin [concerning Gentile oil], ‘Oil—R. Yehudah and his court voted on it and permitted it.’ He [R. Yehudah and his court] holds ‘רץות יסוחים זוגי מותר’ [taste imparted by a forbidden food item which does not improve the dish into which the taste was imparted is permitted].

D. “But according to you [Shmuel continues], who said that Daniel decreed about it [Gentile oil]—Daniel decreed and R. Yehudah the Prince and his court came and invalidated it? Is it not taught in a mishnah [m. Eduy 1:5]: One court cannot invalidate the words of another court unless it be greater than it in wisdom and in number?”

E. He [Rav] said to him: “Simlai the Lodite, you said? The Lodites are different, for they make light [of rabbinic prohibitions].”

F. He [Shmuel] said to him: “I will send for him” [i.e., Simlai; presumably to tell him what Rav had said].

G. He [Rav] was embarrassed. He said: “If they [R. Yehudah ha-Nasi and his court] did not expound [a scriptural verse in order to permit Gentile oil], shall we not expound [a scriptural verse in order to support the prohibition of Gentile oil]? And was it not written [Dan 1:8]: ‘And Daniel set it on his heart not to pollute himself with the portion of the king’s bread nor with the wine of his drinking’? The verse is talking about two ‘drinkings’ [משותה, which is in the plural]; one is a משותה of wine, and one a משותה of oil.”
H. Rav holds that [Daniel] "placed" [וֹא, from the verse] on his heart, and ruled for all Israel that Gentile oil is prohibited. And Shmuel holds that [Daniel] "placed" on his heart, but did not rule for all Israel.

[The Bavli now questions whether Daniel was really the source of the prohibition, and posits that perhaps Gentile oil was among the eighteen items forbidden by the students of Hillel and Shammai. It resolves that Daniel forbade Gentile oil in the city, while the students of Hillel and Shammai forbade it even outside. The Bavli then questions how R. Yehudah ha-Nasi could have permitted something forbidden by these students in light of m. Eduy 1:5 and in light of a tradition of R. Yohanan that the eighteen prohibited items can under no circumstances be permitted. We now continue.]

I. R. Mesharshya said: “What is the reason [that the eighteen items forbidden by the students of Hillel and Shammai can never be permitted]? Because their prohibition spread throughout [i.e., was accepted by] most of Israel. The prohibition of [Gentile] oil did not spread throughout most of Israel.”

J. As R. Shmuel b. Abba said in the name of R. Yohanan: “Our Rabbis sat and checked concerning [Gentile] oil that its prohibition had not spread throughout most of Israel. And our Rabbis relied on the words of R. Shimon b. Gamliel and on R. Eleazar b. Tsadoq who said: ‘We do not decree a decree on the community unless most of the community can abide by it.’”

[A scriptural derivation of this principle in the name of R. Ada b. Ahavah follows.]

We will first compare b. Avodah Zarah to y. Avodah Zarah to note the similarities, beginning with overall structural similarities in the way the constituent parts of the sugya are arranged. B. Avodah Zarah opens with a Rav/Shmuel dispute about the origin of the prohibition, with Rav taking the position attributed in y. Avodah Zarah to his disciple, R. Yehudah; to wit, that Daniel is the source of the prohibition. What is interesting is that b. Avodah Zarah has taken over y. Avodah Zarah’s editorial decision to juxtapose m. Eduy 1:5 to the Rav/Shmuel dispute, rather than place it prior to it, as y. Shabbat did. B. Avodah Zarah also resembles y. Avodah Zarah in placing R. Eleazar b. Tsadoq’s (=R. Lazar b. R. Tsadoq) teaching that a decree that does not gain acceptance is not a valid decree after the Rav/Shmuel dispute, rather than before it, as y. Shabbat did.

Yet we must also analyze some similarities between b. Avodah Zarah and y. Shabbat. As in y. Shabbat, b. Avodah Zarah has excised the extraneous discussion about Rabbi’s disagreement with his colleagues about divorce, dealing with that at b. AZ 37a. But it is just as likely that the y. Shabbat and b. Avodah Zarah redactors independently decided to excise this
material in the interest of creating a smooth sugya. This alone does not demonstrate b. Avodah Zarah’s reliance on y. Shabbat—there is a stronger potential link between the two: b. Avodah Zarah demonstrates awareness of the connection between Gentile oil and the “eighteen matters” of m. Shab 1:4. This is clear not merely from the fact that b. Avodah Zarah considers the issue of the “eighteen matters” right after its conclusion to the Rav/Shmuel dispute, but also from the fact that most of b. AZ 36b is taken up with the issue of who prohibited sexual relations with Gentile women on what basis, which y. Shab 1:6, 3d takes up right after the conclusion of the Rav/Shmuel dispute.

B. Avodah Zarah’s similarity to both y. Avodah Zarah and y. Shabbat would seem to militate in favor of a theory that b. Avodah Zarah was influenced neither by y. Avodah Zarah nor by y. Shabbat, but by a sugya now unavailable to us that was similar to and yet distinct from both. However, b. Avodah Zarah’s interest in the “eighteen matters” could have come from within itself, and need not have come from a (now non-existent) version of the Palestinian sugya on Gentile oil that was set within the “eighteen matters” context. At b. AZ 36a the Bavli places the scholar Bali’s tradition about the eighteen matters after the Rav and Shmuel dispute. Bali’s tradition is found at b. Shab 17b—and, significantly, \textit{not} at y. Shab 1:4, 3d—where it is part of a larger sugya about the “eighteen matters” attached to m. Shab 1:4. Bali’s tradition and the sugya of which it is a part build directly on m. Shab 1:4, and thus are called for by that mishnah. From there, b. Avodah Zarah could easily have imported the tradition into b. AZ 36a, utilized it in a larger “eighteen matters” discussion, and then re-quoted it for use as the basis of a large sugya on intermarriage at 36b–37a. Thus b. AZ 35b–36b’s similarity to y. Shabbat in respect of the “eighteen matters” can reasonably be construed as the result of the work of b. Avodah Zarah’s redactors within their own Talmud.

B. Avodah Zarah differs from both y. Avodah Zarah and y. Shabbat as well. First, it defers to 37a not only its consideration of Rabbi’s argument with his colleagues about divorce, but also the notion that Rabbi was called “י뻐,” that his court was the one that had “permitted oil,” and that a court that permits three things is “permissive.” Whereas y. Shabbat and y. Avodah Zarah had placed their considerations of these matters within the sugya on Gentile oil, directly before the Simlai tradition (y. AZ §§D–H and y. Shab §§C–D), b. Avodah Zarah improved on this arrangement by moving these issues out of the sugya completely, thus allowing for an uninterrupted treatment of the subject of Gentile oil.

The other major difference between b. AZ 35b–36a and y. AZ 2:9, 41d is the differences in the Rav/Shmuel dispute. The version in b. Avodah Zarah differs in five ways from y. Avodah Zarah’s version of this dispute.
First, Shmuel’s relaxation of the prohibition against Gentile oil in y. Avodah Zarah is based solely on R. Yehudah ha-Nasi’s having permitted it, as related by Simlai. By contrast, Shmuel’s opinion in b. Avodah Zarah is that the oil should be permitted because the prohibition was due only to the rabbinic prohibition of “the oozing of [residues of] forbidden [liquids from oil] vessels,” and that, moreover, R. Yehudah ha-Nasi had held (as demonstrated by his relaxation of the prohibition as per the Simlai tradition). By recasting Shmuel’s opinion in this way, b. Avodah Zarah has implicated him (and R. Yehudah ha-Nasi) in the thorny issue of מותר טעם א.userService12442.execute(), a major issue of concern later at b. AZ 67a–b. Moreover, b. Avodah Zarah has attributed to them the view it seems to prefer at 67b—מותר טעם אuserService12442.execute().

Second, the anonymous voice challenges the initial presentation of Shmuel’s view (§B) by asking: “As to the whole world—are they eaters of purities?” The expression I have translated as “as to the whole world” is נוטש תעם מותר. This expression appears six times in the Bavli, but neither it nor an equivalent appear in the Yerushalmi. B. Avodah Zarah has thus added a uniquely Babylonian expression to y. Avodah Zarah, which of course makes b. Avodah Zarah look different from its predecessor.

Third, Shmuel discomfits Rav in y. Avodah Zarah, y. Shabbat, and b. Avodah Zarah. In y. Avodah Zarah he threatens to have him declared a “rebellious elder,” while in b. Avodah Zarah Rav ends his encounter with Shmuel feeling “embarrassed” (אUserService1456.execute()). Interestingly (if unsurprisingly), both Talmuds have expressed Rav’s discomfiture in culturally specific ways. Of seven occurrences of the term מותר טעם אUserService1456.execute() in the Bavli, none involve one sage using the term against another, while of six occurrences of the phrase in the Yerushalmi there are four occurrences (two stories and their parallels) in which one sage uses the term against another. As to Rav’s “embarrassment” in b. Avodah Zarah, Jeffrey Rubenstein has recently discussed the importance of honor and shame among the post-amoraic Bavli redactors. In reworking the Palestinian “oven of Hakhinai”

28. In addition to b. AZ 36a, it also appears at b. Ber 18b, b. Shab 85a, b. BB 88b, b. Mak 5b, and b. Hul 15a.
29. See Jeffrey Rubenstein’s discussion of this phenomenon in Talmudic Stories, 196.
30. Recent studies exploring the culturally specific nature of portrayals of rabbis in the Talmuds are Kalmin’s Sage in Jewish Society and Rubenstein’s Talmudic Stories.
31. b. Sot 25a and 45a; b. Sanh 16a, 86b, 87a, and 88b (two occurrences).
32. y. Shab 1:4, 3d ( y. AZ 2:9, 41d); y. Yev 10:5, 11a ( y. Git 8:7, 49c); y. Sanh 8:6, 26b, y. Sanh 11:3, 30a.
tradition into the famous story we now know as the “oven of Akhnai” (b. BM 59a–b), as well as others such as that of Honi the Circle-Drawer (b. Taan 23a) and R. Kahana (b. BQ 117a–b), the Bavli redactors emphasized the protagonists’ feelings of shame or disgrace. To Rubenstein, this emphasis on shame is directly related to the Bavli editors’ emphasis on the sharp give-and-take of dialectical argumentation in their academies and the intense, public shame that a scholar could suffer if he failed to hold his own in such encounters. B. Avodah Zarah’s imputation of such “embarrassment” to Rav at b. AZ 36a could thus be a conscious revision of y. Avodah Zarah to make the older source conform to the cultural norms of the redactors responsible for fixing the sugya into its place.

The fourth difference between the Talmuds’ accounts of the Rav/Shmuel dispute is that whereas y. Avodah Zarah’s Rav yields to Shmuel and eats the Gentile oil, b. Avodah Zarah’s Rav offers an interpretation of Dan 1:8 that justifies his continued avoidance of the oil. Rav’s refusal to yield to Shmuel in b. Avodah Zarah certainly makes sense in light of the greater decentralization of the Babylonian amoraic movement and the differences between Babylonia and Palestine on the issue of the diversity of practice and/or opinion. As Richard Kalmin has pointed out, Babylonian rabbis “presided over their own ‘fiefdoms,’” and on the rare occasions when dominant rabbis encountered each other and their different views, conflict and confusion tended to result.34

Finally, b. Avodah Zarah reworks and eliminates the pro-Patriarchal polemic we had noted in our discussion of y. Shabbat. I pointed out earlier that the Palestinian sugya, particularly in the y. Shabbat version, presented a polemic against the prohibition of Gentile oil that emphasized the Patriarch’s authority to rescind the prohibition. One Babylonian sage (Shmuel) willingly acquiesced in the Patriarch’s action, while the other (Rav) did so unwillingly. While b. Avodah Zarah does not dispute the validity of the rescission of the prohibition, there is clearly no polemic supporting the Patriarch’s authority. In b. Avodah Zarah, Shmuel believed the prohibition to be merely of rabbinic origin. Therefore, he does not quite yield to the Patriarch’s authority; rather, he assumes that the Patriarch had agreed with him about the source of the prohibition, which could then justify its abrogation. Whereas y. Avodah Zarah/y. Shabbat’s Rav can be a “rebellious elder” for refusing to obey the Patriarch, b. Avodah Zarah’s Rav does not eat the Gentile oil. B. Avodah Zarah’s muting of the pro-Patriarchal polemic is clearly a conscious re-working of the older source

34. See Kalmin, Sage in Jewish Society, 11–12; idem, Sages, Stories, Authors, and Editors, 213–215.
that better reflects its own cultural environment, in which the Palestinian Patriarch played little if any direct role.35

1. c. B. Avodah Zarah 67a–b || Y. Avodah Zarah 5:3, 44d
   || Y. Orlah 2:6, 62b—The “Imparting of Taste”

There is a halakhic link between this example and the previous one. In the previous example, we noted that one of the ways b. Avodah Zarah reworked y. Avodah Zarah was by introducing into Shmuel’s permissive argument regarding Gentile oil the notion that the Patriarch had permitted the oil because רְעֵי נַגְנּוּ (renoynu), meaning, “if [a forbidden food item which falls into permitted food] imparts [a bad] taste [the effect of which is] to blemish [the permitted food into which it falls], it [that resulting mixture] is permitted.” B. Avodah Zarah’s interest in that halakhic principle is apparent in this example as well, where we see b. AZ 67a–b reaching into y. Orlah to find material that will support it. B. Avodah Zarah must reach out to another Yerushalmi tractate to find such material because the local parallel at y. AZ 5:3, 44d does not display an interest in this halakha. B. Avodah Zarah has thus introduced new material from within the Yerushalmi itself to the inherited y. Avodah Zarah material in order to further a halakhic agenda it does not share with that tractate.

At b. AZ 67a–69a, the Bavli discusses a general principle set out in m. AZ 5:2:

A. . . . This is the general principle: every [forbidden food item which has fallen into a permitted item and] imparts taste [to the permitted item] in which there is pleasure [for the eater], is forbidden.

B. Every [forbidden food item which has fallen into a permitted item and] imparts taste [to the permitted item] in which there is no pleasure, is permitted—like the vinegar which fell onto the pounded grains.

At the risk of redundancy, let us note again that if the forbidden item imparts an enjoyable taste to the food, the resulting mixture is forbidden, while if the imparted taste is deleterious to the food, the resulting mixture is permitted.

As part of its overall discussion of “the imparting of taste,” b. Avodah Zarah presents a sugya reminiscent of one found at y. Orl 2:6, 62b.

35. For fascinating evidence of the Bavli’s negative attitude toward the Patriarchate, see b. Sanh 5a. There the Bavli makes clear that while rabbinic ordination by the Exilarch is effective in Palestine, ordination by the Patriarch is ineffective in Babylonia. See Isaiah Gafni’s discussion of the Sanhedrin sugya in *The Jews of Babylonia in the Talmudic Era: A Social and Cultural History* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1990), 100–101 (Heb.).
B. Avodah Zarah 67a–b

A. Resh Laqish said: “[The] ‘imparting of taste’ of which they spoke—it is not that they say [of a pot of food into which a forbidden item fell], ‘this pot lacks salt [or has] too much salt, lacks spices or has too many spices,’ but rather [it is] any [pot of food] that lacks nothing but is not eaten because of this [the taste of the forbidden item that had fallen in].”

[Rashi points out that this is a strict understanding of “the imparting of taste as a blemish is permitted.” Should a forbidden item have fallen into the pot, imparting a good taste, the cook cannot add salt or spices and then claim that the resulting bad taste is attributable to those and not to the forbidden item. Should the cook do that, the resulting mixture is forbidden. Rather, only if the bad taste is solely attributable to the forbidden item is the mixture permitted.]

B. And there are those who say: Resh Laqish said: “The ‘imparting of taste’ of which they spoke—they do not say, ‘This pot lacks salt or has too much salt, lacks spices, or has too many spices,’ rather, now, behold, [the forbidden item] damages [the taste of the food in the pot].”

[Rashi points out that this is a lenient understanding of the principle. Should a forbidden item have fallen into the pot, the cook cannot claim that the reason it is imparting a bad taste is because the pot still needs to be properly seasoned. Rather, since the taste of the forbidden item is bad right now, given the state of the pot as it is, we say its taste is ruined and permit it.]

C. R. Abbahu said in the name of R. Yohanan: “Every [forbidden food item] the taste of which [in a mixture] and its [physical] substance [even by itself, outside of a mixture] are forbidden, we lash [the person who ate this forbidden thing], and [the measurement of the minimum amount of the forbidden item which must be present in the pot in order for the eater to be lashed] is an olive’s worth [of the forbidden item per] piece of bread-[sized amount of the food in the pot. If the forbidden item’s] taste [is present in the mixture, but] its [physical] substance is not, it [the mixture] is forbidden, but we do not lash him. And if it [the forbidden item] added taste to the detriment of the mixture ( tatsm), it [the mixture] is permitted.”

D. And let it say, if it imparted [登入] rather than “added” taste to the detriment [of the mixture], it is permitted?

E. Behold, this [the fact that R. Abbahu teaches “added” rather than “imparted”] teaches us that even though there were other things that damaged [the taste of the mixture] along with it [the forbidden item] [the mixture is nevertheless permitted. This is a lenient position. R. Abbahu is saying that even though the taste of the mixture had already been ruined by other means, so that the addition of the forbidden item really makes no difference to the taste, the mixture will still be permitted if the forbidden item added in some way to the bad taste].
A. R. Abbahu in the name of R. Yohanan: “There are three ‘impartations of taste.’ Everything that [if a] nonspecialist tastes it and says: ‘This pot lacks nothing,’ and this [forbidden thing] fell in, this is [a case of] נותן טעם למשם אפור [B. Avodah Zarah goes on to explore R. Meir’s isolated view, which is that נותן טעם למשם אפור].”

Y. Orlah 2:6, 62b

B. R. Abbahu in the name of R. Yohanan: “All imparters of taste [meaning all forbidden foods which impart taste to permitted foods into which they were dropped]—we do not lash [those who ate them] on their account unless he [the eater] tastes the actual taste of the physical substance of the forbidden item” [meaning that the forbidden item had to have been physically present in some quantity].

E. R. Hama b. R. Yose raised an objection before R. Yohanan: “Behold, meat in milk! Behold [even if the eater] did not taste the physical substance of

36. A sugya with no parallel at b. AZ 67a–b has been omitted.
the forbidden item, [but simply its taste, the milk having disappeared
into the meat,] you say he should be lashed!”

F. And he [R. Yohanan] accepted it.

G. And what is “he accepted it”?

H. [He accepted it] like a man who heard the words of the man with whom he is lit-
igating, and accepted them.

The variant views presented by Resh Laqish concerning
in b. Avodah Zarah (§§A and B), are attributed in y. Orlah to R. Abbahu in
the name of R. Yohanan.38

In y. Orlah, R. Abbahu presents three scenarios—two with nonspe-
cialists and one with an expert—involving a pot into which forbidden
food falls. The existence in Palestine of these multiple scenarios involving
the pot may account for the existence of the variant versions of Resh La-
qish in b. Avodah Zarah. Thus, this may be an example in which an “אנוכי
אמרו” (“there are those who say”) is created in Babylonia because of the
prior existence of multiple scenarios presented by an amora in Palestine.

Of greater importance is the fact that in b. Avodah Zarah, the Resh Laqish
statements and that of R. Abbahu in the name of R. Yohanan concerning
lashing for tasting a forbidden item (§§A–C) are juxtaposed. At y. Orl
2:6, 62b, these differing teachings are also presented in the same order
(§§A–D), but with two other, unrelated sugyot placed between them. The
first omitted sugya was perhaps deliberately excised by the b. Avodah Za-
rah redactors due to its irrelevance to the subject that interested them
here—“the imparting of taste.” The omitted sugya begins with another
statement by R. Abbahu in the name of R. Yohanan, that

all forbidden [food] items [that were cooked with permitted items of the
same variety such that the taste of the forbidden item cannot be distin-
guished]—we measure them [the forbidden items] as if they were
the size of an onion or a leek [so that if an onion- or leek-sized amount of the
forbidden item could impart taste to something else, then the whole mix-
ture should be forbidden].

37. Material without parallel at b. AZ 67a–b is omitted.

38. A careful look at Resh Laqish’s statement in b. AZ shows that he is not repre-
sented as speaking in his own name at all. Rather, he purports to be quoting some-
one else (§A), and Abaye himself later emphasizes this (§H). Thus b. AZ is perhaps
representing Resh Laqish as being the tradent through whom the teaching of oth-
ers—whom we know from y. Orl to be R. Abbahu in the name of R. Yohanan—was
reported in Babylonia. Yet this hypothesis is problematic because there is only one
instance in the two Talmuds (y. Bik 1:6, 64a) in which Resh Laqish appears to be
quoting R. Yohanan.
Although omitted by b. Avodah Zarah, R. Abbahu’s teaching about the “onion-” or “leek-sized” measure of forbidden items is found at b. Hul 97b, which shows that it was known in Babylonia. It may have been deliberately excised from here.

The second of the y. Orlah sugyot omitted by b. Avodah Zarah begins with yet another statement by R. Abbahu, this time about the “imparting of taste” in relation to a Nazirite’s dietary restrictions. Y. Orlah’s introduction of the Nazirite into the discussion is sufficiently beyond the scope of b. Avodah Zarah’s exploration of m. AZ 5:2 that its omission is unsurprising.

What remains to be considered is how b. Avodah Zarah has actually used the material it has taken from y. Orl 2:6, 62b. B. Avodah Zarah 67a–b has inserted this material between two sources derived from y. AZ 5:3, 44d.

Y. Avodah Zarah 5:3, 44d

A. R. Yohanan said: “That which [the mishnah] said [that if the forbidden item does not impart an enjoyable taste to the permitted item, it is permitted] only applies [to the case of vinegar that fell on] boiling [pounded grains]. But with regard to cold [pounded grains], it is forbidden [because the resulting food item is edible]. For so do the people of Sepphoris make, and they call it ‘cress-dish.’”

B. If they [the pounded grains] were boiled and cooled? [This is a question concerning the view of R. Yohanan. Are the cold, pounded grains forbidden only if they had never been hot, or even if the vinegar fell on them after they had cooled down from a boiling state?]

C. From here [i.e., on the basis of your question], even if they are boiled they should be forbidden, since it is their nature to cool!

D. For it was taught in a baraita: All imparters of taste, whether for the benefit or detriment [of the food into which they fell] are forbidden—the words of R. Meir. But the Sages say: “For the benefit [of the dish] is forbidden, for the detriment [of the dish] is permitted, just like [the case of] vinegar that fell on pounded grains” (t. Ter 8:9).

B. Avodah Zarah 67a–b

A. And R. Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: “They [the mishnah] taught only [that if the forbidden item does not impart an enjoyable taste to the permitted item, it is permitted] only if [the vinegar] fell onto boiling grains. But if it fell onto cold grains and he heated them . . . forbidden.”

B. And likewise when Rabin came, he said in the name of Rabbah b. Bar Hanna in the name of R. Yohanan: “They [the mishnah] taught only [with respect to the case in which the vinegar] fell onto boiling grains. But if it fell onto cold grains and he heated them . . . forbidden.”
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C. And likewise when R. Dimi came . . . And so do they make [a dish like
this, consisting of vinegar and pounded grains] on Sabbath eves in
Sepphoris, and call them “cress-dishes.”

[B. Avodah Zarah 67a–b §§A–I, translated above (pp. 117–118), should be
inserted here.]

D. For was it not taught [in a baraita]: “נוהי טעם להמס and נוהי טעם להמס are
both forbidden”—the words of R. Meir. R. Shimon said: “למס is for-
bidden, but להמס is permitted.”

B. Avodah Zarah has thus placed the material it took from y. Orlah be-
tween the sugya and Toseftan baraita it inherited from y. AZ 5:3, 44d. The
Orlah material helps b. Avodah Zarah fix the definition of נוהי טעם להמס
and whether it is permitted or forbidden. Indeed, it is likely that b. Avodah Zarah
consciously altered its text of the baraita so as to emphasize this abstract con-
cept over and above the specific case of “vinegar that fell on pounded
grains.”39 Indeed, b. Avodah Zarah’s overall discussion at 67a–b—unlike y.
Avodah Zarah’s—is much more focused on this halakhic issue, thanks
in large part to the use of y. Orl 2:6, 62b. And, as we saw in the previous
example (b. AZ 35b–36a, 37a || y. AZ 2:9, 41d), this halakhic issue is of de-
monstrable interest to b. Avodah Zarah, not to y. Avodah Zarah.

II

B. Avodah Zarah Tends to Eliminate Materials of
Particular Relevance to the Land of Israel or
Its Roman Cultural Context

There is a sense in which this type of Babylonian reworking of y. Avodah
Zarah can be seen as simply the flip side of the previous: to the extent that
b. Avodah Zarah adds a Babylonian cultural or halakhic perspective to a
y. Avodah Zarah sugya, it stands to reason that this addition may replace
a uniquely Palestinian cultural or halakhic reference. We have seen evi-
dence of this in the examples we have already studied in this chapter: in
b. AZ 6b || y. AZ 1:1, 39b, the Bavli removed y. Avodah Zarah’s references

39. See Friedman, “Ha-baraitot she-be-Talmud ha-Bavli ve-yahasan le-Tosefta”
for evidence that the Bavli does consciously alter the texts of baraitot.
to the Dead Sea and to the ducenarius, a Roman official who was likely little known (if at all) to the Babylonian redactors; in b. AZ 8a y. AZ 1:2, 39c, the Bavli removed the Greek and Latin exclamation attributed to Adam in y. Avodah Zarah;\(^40\) and in b. AZ 35b–36a y. AZ 2.9, 41d, the Bavli eliminated the unique Palestinian amoraic use of the “rebellious elder” epithet for an opponent, as well as the pro-Patriarchal polemic we observed in y. Avodah Zarah.

But there is more to b. Avodah Zarah’s elimination of uniquely Palestinian cultural and halakhic perspectives than these adjustments to sugyot that b. Avodah Zarah appropriated from y. Avodah Zarah. B. Avodah Zarah tends—and again, “tends” does not imply an immutable rule—to excise aggadot that are of particular relevance to the Land of Israel or that reflect Greco-Roman myth or epic. This type of b. Avodah Zarah reworking of y. Avodah Zarah is admittedly more difficult to establish firmly than the others because one must argue that b. Avodah Zarah’s complete elimination of a y. Avodah Zarah text, or its replacement of one text with a completely different one, is conscious and dispositive of b. Avodah Zarah’s reliance on y. Avodah Zarah. Such a claim is difficult to establish convincingly, unlike the other cases in which we can observe b. Avodah Zarah’s reworkings of what are demonstrably parallel y. Avodah Zarah texts. Nevertheless, despite its circumstantial nature, this evidence is important because of what it suggests when taken together with the other evidence, and also because of the promise it holds as an avenue of future research into the literary relationship between the Talmuds.

II. a. B. Avodah Zarah 2a–3b y. Avodah Zarah 1:1, 39a–b—

The Opening Aggadic Sequences of the Tractates

The Avodah Zarah tractates stand out from most others in that both open with lengthy sequences of aggadic materials. Although b. Avodah Zarah is faithful to this structural feature of y. Avodah Zarah, it reworks the content of the aggadot so as to better reflect its own religious and cultural concerns.

After a short interrogation of the three-day period of commercial abstention of m. AZ 1:1, y. Avodah Zarah moves into stories about the biblical King Jeroboam and his introduction of idolatry to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.\(^41\) The Jeroboam materials are arranged in three large sec-

\(^40\) In this parallel pair of sources b. AZ also removed y. AZ’s discussions of the “taxes,” or “offices of the civil governor,” of Caesarea and Duqim.

\(^41\) Y. AZ effects a nice transition between these materials: it begins by having R. Hama b. Uqba ground the three-day prohibition of the mishnah in Amos 4:4. R. Yose objects to this derivation on the grounds that if that verse is really the
tions. According to the first, Jeroboam begins to entice Israel to idolatry immediately upon assuming the throne by insisting to them that the way of idolatry is easy and permissive, unlike the more demanding way of Torah. In the second section the tables are turned: the people try to entice a drunken Jeroboam into idolatry at his coronation celebration, but he puts them off until the next day. He also expresses fear of the Sanhedrin, which the people neutralize either through murder or (according to another opinion) by removing the members of the Sanhedrin from their position. In the third section, Jeroboam’s revolt against Torah is the result of his anxiety about potential humiliation in Jerusalem in the presence of Solomon’s successor Rehoboam. In order to keep his own people away from the Jerusalem Temple, he set up golden calves as border markers and even invented his own religious festivals to fill the cultic gap created by the prohibition of pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

Taken together, the Jeroboam aggadot explain that the pervasive presence of what we might call “state-sponsored idolatry” in the Land of Israel is originally attributable to the biblical-era revolt of an Israelite king. We cannot determine whether the Palestinian sages had paganism or Christianity in mind, but they were clearly focused on idolatry in the Land.

B. Avodah Zarah’s opening aggadah is entirely different. B. Avodah Zarah opens with an immensely rich narrative about God’s judgment of the nations, their attempts (particularly Rome and Persia) to justify their non-observance of Torah and alleged efforts on behalf of Israel, God’s willingness to give them a “second chance,” their inevitable failures, and God’s laughter.42 B. Avodah Zarah’s focus is on the theological implications of the relationship between Israel and the nations, of God’s relationship to the nations, and of where the other nations stand vis-à-vis divine revelation (the Noahide laws). These three themes recur throughout the tractate. Stories illustrating different perspectives on the relationship between Israel and the nations are found at, inter alia, 8b (the Roman Empire candidly admits its dependence on Israel in acquiring world mastery); 10a–11a (encounters between Rabbi and Antoninus, the Roman martyr

source of the prohibition then even the Diaspora should observe it, which t. AZ 1:1 shows is not the case. Y. AZ asks how R. Yose interprets the verse, and the response on R. Yose’s behalf is that Amos 4:4 pertains to the reign of Jeroboam. The subject of Jeroboam having been raised, the Yerushalmi then moves into a lengthy sequence of Jeroboam materials. It is unclear whether the response attributed to R. Yose is simply the assertion that the verse refers to Jeroboam, or whether we are to assume as well that R. Yose is also the source of the first of the Jeroboam aggadot.

Qetia b. Shalom and the convert Onqelos b. Qalonymos); 43, 16b–17a and 17b–18a (R. Eliezer’s and R. Hanina b. Teradyon’s encounters—the latter a martyrdom—with Rome); 54b–55a (polemics against idolatry); and 65a (Rava’s encounter with the Gentile hegemon Bar Shishaq). With one exception, these stories do not appear in y. Avodah Zarah. The interest in the Noahide laws we observe in this aggadah (2b–3a) also appears at 5b–6a, 24b (b. Avodah Zarah makes the biblical character Aravnah the Jebusite a ger toshav, unlike y. Avodah Zarah), 51a, and 65a. Taken together, all of this evidence strongly suggests that the absence from b. Avodah Zarah of an opening aggadah that explains the coming of idolatry to the Land of Israel, and the replacement of this material with texts that touch on broader themes b. Avodah Zarah develops throughout the tractate, was a deliberate choice of the redactors. In sum, b. Avodah Zarah remained faithful at the macro level to y. Avodah Zarah’s placement of aggadah at the beginning of the tractate, while feeling free to rework it in accordance with its own interests.

II.b. Greco-Roman Mythical Allusions Are Missing from B. Avodah Zarah

At y. AZ 1:2, 39c, R. Yohanan explains the origins of Kalends as resulting from the contest between the Egyptian general and the Roman general Yanobris (=Januarius), who agrees to kill himself so that Rome can attain world mastery. Yanobris’ sacrifice prompted the cry “Qalendas Yanobris!” and the day of mourning on the second day of Kalends, which y. Avodah Zarah notes is known as the “black day” (Greek: melani ’imera). The Romans considered the “black day” unlucky for warfare, and in y. Avodah Zarah R. Yudan Antodria observes that lentils planted on that day will not flourish. This particularly Roman cultural and religious allusion is missing from b. Avodah Zarah.

Later on the same page, R. Levi reports that when the biblical king Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, the angel Gabriel planted a reed in the sea onto which sediment piled, eventually becoming the foundation of

43. See my “The Power Conferred by Distance From Power.”
44. The exception is the story of R. Yehudah Nesiah’s encounter with the min at b. AZ 6b, which has a parallel at y. AZ 1:1, 39b and interesting intertexts in b. AZ at 10b and 65a.
45. See the translation and discussion above, on pp. 43–50 and 149–151.
47. For the Roman references to the contest of Yanobris and the Egyptian general and the perception of the “black day,” see Peter Schäfer, “Jews and Gentiles in Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah,” 340 and sources cited.
the “great city” of Rome. Rome’s urban development was enhanced when Jeroboam set up his golden calves, at which time “Romulus and Remus” built two huts there. These traditions are found juxtaposed at b. Shab 56b (and not at all in b. Avodah Zarah), where the particularly Roman reference to “Romulus and Remus” is missing.

Lastly, at y. AZ 3:1, 42c, R. Yonah reports that “Alexander the Macedonian” (Alexander the Great) wished to ascend high into the sky, and he saw the earth as a sphere and the sea as a dish (therefore his statues represent him as holding a sphere). This Alexander the Great legend, well known in the Roman cultural context, is not found in the Bavli.48

III

At Times B. Avodah Zarah Organizes Materials in a More Sensible Order Than Y. Avodah Zarah

At times b. Avodah Zarah demonstrably improves upon the order of presentation of materials found in y. Avodah Zarah, either by excising materials from a given sugya or sequence of sugyot and placing them elsewhere in a more appropriate context, or by re-arranging materials within the context of the same sequence of sugyot. We have already seen examples of this at b. AZ 6b || y. AZ 1:1, 39b; b. AZ 35b–36a, 37a || y. AZ 2:9, 41d; and b. AZ 67a–b || y. AZ 5:3, 44d || y. Orl 2:6, 62b, which we had analyzed for other purposes. What follows are four additional examples of this b. Avodah Zarah tendency.

III.a. B. Avodah Zarah 2a || Y. Avodah Zarah 1:2, 39c—

Versus ﴾ועידות﴾

Y. Avodah Zarah opens its treatment of m. AZ 1:3 (“and these are the festivals [ועידות] . . .”) with a short sugya containing Rav’s and Shmuel’s variant readings of three words in the Mishnah that are spelled with either “ח” or “ט.”

48. For a discussion of this legend, see Karin Luck-Huyse, Der Traum vom Fliegen in der Antike (Palingenesia LXII; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997). But see b. Ned 9b, in which the Bavli presents an agгадah which is clearly a version of the Narcissus legend. One explanation for the different treatment of the Narcissus-type myth is that both y. Ned 1:1, 36b and tannaitic sources thoroughly “judaized” it as an agгадah about an anonymous young man and the venerable Shimon ha-Tsadiq. Thus, the myth is not readily recognizable as such, unlike the cases of the “black day,” “Romulus and Remus,” and “Alexander the Great,” which were not—and perhaps could not be—so thoroughly judaized. The issue requires further research.
A. [From the mishnah:] And these are the festivals (אידיתות) of the nations.

B. Rav said: “[The mishnah should read] "עידיותיה,"” and Shmuel said: “[The mishnah should read] "יאיריתן."”

C. [The rationale of] the one who said [that the mishnah should read] “עידיותיה” [is that it is found in Isa 44:9]—“and they are their witnesses (איןיהם) today.” [The rationale of] the one who said [that the mishnah should read] “יאיריתן” [is that it is found in Deut 32:35]—“for their day of disaster is near (יכ קרב ויהי אריסט).”

D. Rav said: “[M. Eruv 5:1 should read] ‘יבכת,’” and Shmuel said: “[M. Eruv 5:1 should read] ‘יטביכר.’”

E. [The rationale of] the one who said [that the mishnah should read] “יטביכר” [is that] we are adding a limb (איבר) to it. [That is, we are extending the boundary of the city from which we wish to measure and mark out the Sabbath boundary. First, we add areas to the city, and then measure the Sabbath boundary from those newly added areas.] [The rationale of] the one who said [that the mishnah should read] “יבכת” [is that the city is like a pregnant woman [whose belly extends out farther than it usually does, although it is still a part of her. Thus, per m. Eruv 5:1, we are extending the usual boundary of the city, although the extension is still to be considered part of it].

F. Rav said: “[M. Ber 8:6 should read] ‘_udp,’” and Shmuel said: “[M. Ber 8:6 should read] ‘ימע,’” [The rationale of] the one who said [that the mishnah should read] “UpDown” [is that it is consistent with Gen 34:15]—“only on this condition will we agree with you (וכל יראה לך ואמר).” [The rationale of] the one who said [that the mishnah should read] “ימע” [is that it is consistent with Isa 50:4]—“to know the word that sustains the tired (לידעו את יעף דבר).”

There are parallels to this sugya at y. Ber 8:7, 12c and y. Eruv 5:1, 22b. In both parallels, the sugya begins by first presenting Rav’s and Shmuel’s divergent readings of the local mishnah, and introduces the other two differences with “We learned there in a mishnah.” In addition, both parallels include a question about Rav’s and Shmuel’s different readings of the Avodah Zarah mishnah which is missing from y. AZ 1:2, 39c: “And how does Shmuel interpret Rav’s verse ‘and they are their witnesses (איןיהם היום)’? [Shmuel interprets the verse as meaning] that they [the idols worshiped by the nations] will in the future embarrass their worshipers at the day of judgment.”

B. Avodah Zarah’s version of this sugya is attached to the very first mishnah at 2a (“three days before the festivals of idolaters . . .”):
B. Avodah Zarah 2a

A. Rav and Shmuel: One teaches [that the mishnah should read] "ivhsht," and one teaches [that the mishnah should read] "ivhshg." The one who teaches "ivhsht" is not mistaken, and the one who teaches "ivhshg" is not mistaken.

B. The one who teaches "ivhsht" is not mistaken, for it is written (Deut 32:35), "For their day of disaster is near (קָרָ֣בְתָהּ הַיּוֹכָלָ֥הּ) ..." And the one who teaches "ivhshg" is not mistaken, for it is written (Isa 43:9), "Let them bring their witnesses to justify them (וְהָעְשֵׁנָהּ יִצְרֵהֶיתָם)."

C. And the one who teaches "ivhsht," what is the reason he does not teach "ivhshg"? He will say to you: "Disaster is preferable [as the notion that should be expressed in the mishnah]." And the one who teaches "ivhshg," what is the reason he does not teach "ivhsht"? He will say to you: "What is it that will lead to their disaster? The testimony that they will give about themselves. Therefore, ‘testimony’ (עשנ) is preferable [as the notion that should be expressed in the mishnah]."

D. And this "let them bring their witnesses to justify them," is it written about idolators? [No!] It is written about Israel! As R. Yehoshua b. Levi said: “In the world to come, all the commandments that Israel fulfilled in this world will come and testify about them, as it is said (Isa 43:9): ‘Let them bring their witnesses to justify them’—these are Israel; ‘Let them hear and say, ‘It is true’” (Isa 43:9)—these are the idolaters.”

E. Rather, R. Huna b. de-Rav Yehoshua said: “The one who said ‘ivhshg’ [is deriving that version] from here: ‘All who make idols—all of them are nothing, and the things they value cannot help, and they [the idols] are their witnesses (Isa 44:9).’”

Both y. AZ 1:2, 39c and b. AZ 2a present Rav’s and Shmuel’s disagreement over whether to teach “אָסָּר” or “סְדָר” and provide scriptural justifications for their respective positions. Yet the Talmuds associate their respective sugyot with different mishnayot: y. Avodah Zarah uses its sugya to launch its discussion of m. AZ 1:2, while b. Avodah Zarah places its sugya right at the beginning of the tractate. Is this different placement the result of b. Avodah Zarah’s conscious decision to move the sugya, or is it simply the result of b. Avodah Zarah’s having received the sugya attached to a different mishnah than y. Avodah Zarah?

Looking more closely at this and other differences between the y. and b. Avodah Zarah sugyot, we can observe a pattern of difference that points to b. Avodah Zarah’s conscious intervention in moving the sugya. First, b. Avodah Zarah’s linkage of the Rav and Shmuel dispute to the first mishnah of the tractate is logical since that is the first time the problematic word “אָסָּר” appears. By linking the dispute to the first mishnah, therefore, b. Avodah Zarah has improved upon y. Avodah Zarah’s linkage of this dispute to the tractate’s second mishnah. Second, b. Avodah Zarah
omits the references—found at y. AZ 1:2, 39c and the two Yerushalmi parallels—to Rav’s and Shmuel’s disagreements about m. Ber 8:6 and m. Eruv 5:1. B. Avodah Zarah’s omission of this part of the y. Avodah Zarah sugya makes sense since it is irrelevant to the Avodah Zarah mishnah. We have already observed b. Avodah Zarah’s tendency to excise materials irrelevant to a main issue or context in our analysis of the Talmuds’ treatments of Gentile oil at b. AZ 35b–36a, 37a || y. AZ 2:9, 41d, where b. Avodah Zarah excised y. Avodah Zarah’s discussion of Rabbi’s conflict with his colleagues about divorce in order to allow the sugya on oil to flow more smoothly. We will examine other instances of this tendency shortly.

Of greater importance are the differences between the sugyot that result in b. Avodah Zarah’s serving as a smooth introduction to the long sequence of aggadic materials stretching from b. AZ 2a to 5b. As Jeffrey Rubenstein has pointed out, b. Avodah Zarah initially points to Isa 43:9 as the source for “יהיהו,” and, after a bit of dialectic, settles on the “correct” (or, the “original”) scriptural source at Isa 44:9.49 The choice of Isa 43:9 as the verse that was destined to be rejected was probably due (as Rubenstein suggests) to its pivotal role in the eschatological aggadah at 2a–3b, and by quoting it early “the redactors create a neat segue to the story [about the judgment of the Gentile nations at 2a–3b].”50 Thus, the presence of Isa 43:9 in b. Avodah Zarah alone is not due to b. Avodah Zarah’s having received a sugya similar to, yet different from, that of y. AZ 1:2, 39c as part of a shared stratum of early talmud. Rather, b. Avodah Zarah deliberately introduced the verse in furtherance of a literary purpose particular to itself: creating a segue to the sequence of aggadic materials at the beginning of the tractate. Moreover, b. Avodah Zarah’s proposal of a verse that is ultimately rejected in favor of the “correct” verse is, as Rubenstein and Shamma Friedman have pointed out, a characteristic feature of Bavli sugyot generally.51 It thus seems reasonable to conclude that b. Avodah Zarah consciously chose to place this sugya at the beginning of the tractate.

III.b. B. Avodah Zarah 11b || Y. Avodah Zarah 1:2, 39c—Rearranging Lists of Idolatrous Festivals

M. Avodah Zarah 1:3, it will be recalled, listed the Gentile festivals subject to the three-day restrictions of m. AZ 1:1. These festivals were Kalends, Saturnalia, Kratesis, the coronation-days of emperors, their birthdays, and the anniversaries of their deaths. After discussion of Kalends and Saturna-
Avodah Zarah discusses Gentile festivals other than those mentioned in m. AZ 1:1:

A. R. Ba in the name of Rav: “There are three times [i.e., idolatrous festivals] in Babylonia, and three times in Medea. The three times in Babylonia: Muhrin, Kanony, and Kanvatta. The three in Medea: Nosreday, and Turyski, and Muhrneki.”

B. R. Huna in the name of R. Nahman b. Yaaqov: “Naroz falls on the second of Adar in Persia, and on the twentieth of Adar in Medea.”

C. “Saturnalia” [means] “hidden hatred” (שאטנה). [It is also an acrostic:] “He hates” (והן); “he avenges” (ונסק); “he holds a grudge” (והב). This is just as you say: “And Esau held a grudge against Jacob” (Gen 27:41).


E. And Kratesis . . . [further discussion in y. Avodah Zarah omitted].

Y. Avodah Zarah had been discussing Kalends and Saturnalia immediately prior to listing Babylonian and Medean holidays. Y. Avodah Zarah interrupts that discussion to list these holidays in §§A–B, and then returns in §C to Saturnalia, moving on to Kratesis in §E and in what follows. The odd point about y. Avodah Zarah’s list of the Babylonian and Medean holidays is that it interrupts an ongoing discussion of the Roman festivals mentioned in m. AZ 1:3. By contrast, b. Avodah Zarah puts off its own list of the Persian and Babylonian festivals until after it has concluded its discussion of the Roman holidays of m. AZ 1:3.

These [the festivals just discussed] are [the festivals] of the Romans. And what are those of the Persians? Mutardi, Turyski, Muhrneki, and Muhrin, these are [the holidays of] the Persians and the Romans. And what are those of the Babylonians? Muhrneki, and Aknaya, Balmani, and the tenth of Adar.

Once again, b. Avodah Zarah has improved upon the presentation of materials found in the earlier Talmud.

III. B. Avodah Zarah 22b–23a || Y. Avodah Zarah 2:1, 40c—Leaving Animals in the Custody of Gentiles

The pertinent part of m. AZ 2:1 rules that “We do not house beasts in the inns of idolaters because they are suspected of bestiality.” Both Talmuds place the following similar sugyot early in their treatments of this mishnah.

52. It is unclear whether §C is a continuation of R. Huna, or whether it belongs to the editorial voice of the Yerushalmi.

As we will see, b. Avodah Zarah reworks y. Avodah Zarah’s sugya to eliminate a logical problem and thereby create a much smoother sugya.

Y. Avodah Zarah 2:1, 40c

A. R. Zeirah, R. Abbahu in the name of R. Yose b. R. Hanina; R. Ba, R. Yonah [said]: “Resolve [that m. AZ 2:1, which says that Israelites must not leave their animals in Gentile inns, is] like [the view of] R. Liezer54 [in m. Parah 2:1, where he forbids all animal purchases from Gentiles. The Sages in Parah permit it. R. Liezer is seen as being concerned about Gentile bestiality, while the Sages are apparently unconcerned about it]. For R. Liezer said: ‘It [a beast] is not [to be] bought from Gentiles’ (m. Par 2:1).”

B. R. Yonah asked: “And why do we not resolve [the mishnah as reflecting] the views of everyone [R. Liezer and the Sages who disagree with him]?” As R. Lazar55 said in the name of Rav: ‘And even according to the one who said that it is permitted to sell [a beast to Gentiles], it is forbidden to leave [animals] alone with them.’ [Thus m. AZ 2:1 represents the views of both R. Liezer, who forbids animal sales to Gentiles, and the Sages who permit it, since neither permits leaving animals alone with Gentiles.]

C. “If [the Israelite] transgressed [and] left [his beast] alone [with a Gentile], all agree56 [that we must be concerned about the possibility of bestiality].” [Thus, neither R. Liezer nor the Sages makes a distinction between behavior that is ideally preferred (לַחֲמָתִיהּ) and that which is acceptable only after the fact (רֵמָעָב). R. Yirmiyah will implicitly challenge the assumption that the Sages make no such distinction.]

D. R. Yirmiyah said: “Let’s derive [whether we are supposed to make distinctions between לַחֲמָתִיהּ and רֵמָעָב] from this: The woman who was trapped in the hands of Gentiles: for purposes of collecting money—she is permitted to her husband; for purposes of life and death [the kidnappers threaten to kill her]—she is forbidden to her husband (m. Ket 2:9).” [This example shows that we do distinguish between לַחֲמָתִיהּ and רֵמָעָב-thinking. Although m. AZ 2:1 says, “A woman must not be alone with them,” we see from m. Ket 2:9 that if she is trapped alone with Gentiles for purposes of money, she is nevertheless permitted to her husband.]

54. This is the tanna R. Eliezer.
55. This is the amora R. Eleazar b. Pedat.
56. R. Yonah is explaining his view that the mishnah represents the views of both R. Liezer and the Sages by refuting an implicit argument against that view. That implicit argument is that perhaps m. AZ 2:1 represents R. Liezer’s view, but only represents the Sages’ view לַחֲמָתִיהּ, that is, in the first or ideal instance. By contrast, m. Par 2:1 would represent the Sages’ view רֵמָעָב, that is, after the fact. Were this argument to be accepted, then it could not be claimed—as R. Yonah wishes to do—that m. AZ 2:1 in fact represents the views of both R. Liezer and the Sages in their entirety.
E. R. Yose said: “A woman is different, because it is her way to scream.” [That is, m. Ket 2:9 has nothing to tell us about לָטָהוּלָה and רְדֵי עִבֵּרָה thinking. The woman of m. Ketubbot is permitted to her husband because she will scream if attacked; fearing this, the Gentile will stay away from her so as not to jeopardize his collection of the ransom money, which is his real goal.]

F. Tell yourself that she was a deaf-mute [who cannot scream. On this assumption, R. Yirmiyah’s reading that m. Ket 2:9 is dealing with לָטָהוּלָה and רְדֵי עִבֵּרָה must be correct].

G. [If so,] it is her way to hint! [i.e., with hand gestures; thus R. Yose’s objection to R. Yirmiyah still stands.]

H. What is the result? Resolve [that m. AZ 2:1 is] like [the view of] R. Liezer, for R. Liezer said: “It [a beast] is not [to be] bought from Gentiles” (m. Par 2:1).

Y. Avodah Zarah develops its argument to this point in the following steps:


2. R. Yonah challenges this and proposes that m. AZ 2:1 may actually reflect the views of both R. Liezer and the Sages. R. Yonah points out that neither R. Liezer nor the Sages makes a distinction between behavior that is “ideally” forbidden but nevertheless permitted after the fact (מַעַשֵּׂה) (§§B–C).

3. R. Yirmiyah points out on the basis of m. Ket 2:9 that the Sages do, in fact, make a distinction between רְדֵי עִבֵּרָה and לָטָהוּלָה, contra R. Yonah (§D).

4. This issue is discussed through §G. R. Yose ultimately objects without refutation to R. Yirmiyah, which vindicates R. Yonah’s conclusion in §C. Logically, then, the Talmud’s conclusion should be that m. AZ 2:1 reflects the views of both R. Liezer and the Sages.

5. Y. Avodah Zarah concludes that m. AZ 2:1 reflects only the view of R. Liezer as seen in m. Parah 2:1 (§H)—which is unexpected in light of step 4.

B. Avodah Zarah 22b–23a

A. They raised an objection [to m. AZ 2:1 from t. AZ 2:1]: We buy from them beasts for sacrifice and are not concerned about male or female bestiality, nor are we concerned about “setting aside” [the possibility that the beast had been set aside prior to sale as a future idolatrous offering], nor about worship [the possibility that the animal had been worshiped].
B. It works well [not to be concerned about] “setting aside” and “worshiped,” for if he [the Gentile] had set it aside or if he had worshiped it, he would not sell it! Rather, let us be concerned about male and female bestiality.

C. Ravina said: “There is no conflict [between m. AZ 2:1, which forbids leaving beasts alone with Gentiles, and t. AZ 2:1, which permits purchasing beasts from them]. This one [m. AZ 2:1] refers to ideally preferred behavior (ל👨‍👩‍👧‍👦), while this one [t. AZ 2:1] refers to action after the fact (בראשון).”

D. And from where do you derive that there is a distinction between לטרון and דרייבור? From that which was taught in a mishnah [m. AZ 2:1]: A woman must not be sequestered with them, because they are suspected of sexual immorality. And they raised an objection [from m. Ket 2:9]: A woman who was trapped in the hands of idolaters: for purposes of [collecting] money—she is permitted to her husband; for purposes of life and death—she is forbidden to her husband.

E. Rather, no—learn from this that we do make a distinction between לטרון and דרייבור.

F. From where? Perhaps I will truly say to you that even after the fact (בראשון) [a beast bought from Gentiles is] also not [permitted]. And here, this is the reason that she [the woman of m. Ket 2:9] is [nevertheless permitted to her husband]; for [the Gentile kidnapper] is fearful for the loss of his money. Know this, from that which it teaches at the end [of m. Ket 2:9]: For purposes of life and death—she is forbidden to her husband. [Thus, the only reason she could be permitted to him is if her kidnapping was only for purposes of collecting ransom money.] And there is nothing more to say about this.

G. R. Pedat said: “There is no difficulty [between m. AZ 2:1 and t. AZ 2:1]: this one, [m. AZ 2:1, reflects the view of] R. Eliezer, and this one, [t. AZ 2:1, reflects the view of] the Rabbis. As it was taught in a mishnah about the red heifer [m. Par 2:1]: R. Eliezer says: ‘It is not bought from idolaters, and the Sages permit.’ ”

B. Avodah Zarah develops its argument as follows:

1. Ravina draws a contrast between m. AZ 2:1’s לטרון orientation as contrasted with t. AZ 2:1’s דרייבור orientation (§C).

2. The anonymous voice continues the discussion of לטרון and דרייבור in §§D–F, comparing m. AZ 2:1 to m. Ket 2:9.

57. Further discussion of this baraita, as well as a lengthy digression on the subject of Gentile bestiality, has been omitted.
3. R. Pedat claims that m. AZ 2:1 reflects the view of R. Eliezer (§G).

Before analyzing how b. Avodah Zarah has reworked y. Avodah Zarah, we must establish that it is, in fact, a version of y. Avodah Zarah and not independently based on m. AZ 2:1, on other tannaitic sources, or on early talmud. Although m. AZ 2:1 raises the suspicion of Gentile bestiality, it alone does not call for the similar sugyot in the two Talmuds. Nothing in the mishnah calls for the common citation of m. Par 2:1, which says nothing at all about bestiality. Nor does m. AZ 2:1 call for any discussion about whether it reflects the view of R. Eliezer and/or the Sages. That discussion is, in fact, called for neither by m. AZ 2:1 nor by m. Parah 2:1, but reflects an exegetical move made by the Talmuds themselves as they pondered the two mishnayot in relation to each other. Nothing in m. AZ 2:1 requires an excursus into הביע 학 and alumnos-thinking, and nothing in the mishnah requires that this examination be conducted with reference to m. Ket 2:9.

Nor do the similarities between the sugyot stem from the other tannaitic sources cited. First, they are drawn from different places—m. Ketubbot, m. Parah, and (in b. Avodah Zarah) t. Avodah Zarah—and so do not form a sequence of related tannaitic sources on which both Talmuds may have drawn independently. Second, these tannaitic sources are well-integrated into the discussions in which they appear; the common list of tannaitic sources is more likely a result, rather than the cause, of the overall similarity in the sugyot.

Finally, the hypothesis of early talmud fails to persuade because there is no evidence that amoraim either juxtaposed all these materials or were aware of the juxtaposition. Moreover, when we focus specifically on both Talmuds’ concern with הביע 학 and alumnos-thinking, we find this concern only in the Talmuds—none of the tannaitic sources cited deal with this issue. It strains credulity therefore to imagine that there was some other early talmud source that also discussed this issue, and which left its mark only in the two Talmuds and nowhere else. The more reasonable inference is that b. Avodah Zarah is derived from y. Avodah Zarah.

Armed with that inference, we are now ready to study just how it is that b. Avodah Zarah reworked the y. Avodah Zarah sugya. Looking back on y. Avodah Zarah and on the outline of its argument, we notice an oddity: R. Yose objects without refutation to R. Yirmiyah (§G), which has the effect of vindicating R. Yonah’s conclusion in §C that neither R. Liezer nor the Sages distinguish between הביע 학 and alumnos-thinking. This means that m. AZ 2:1 should be understood to represent the views of both. Yet,
inexplicably, y. Avodah Zarah asserts in §H that m. AZ 2:1 only represents R. Liezer’s view!

B. Avodah Zarah, on the other hand, creates a smoother sugya by quoting t. AZ 2:1 and conducting its discussion of vkhj,fk and scghsc on the basis of a comparison between m. AZ 2:1, t. AZ 2:1, and m. Ket 2:9—without reference to m. Parah 2:1, R. Eliezer, and the Sages. B. Avodah Zarah concludes its discussion of vkhj,fk and scghsc in §F just as y. AZ did in §G—there is no distinction between vkhj,fk and scghsc. And just as y. Avodah Zarah had asserted in §H that m. AZ 2:1 represented R. Liezer’s view, b. Avodah Zarah asserts the same in §G. But the critical difference between the Talmuds is that while y. Avodah Zarah’s conclusion in §H was unexpected and problematic after its conclusion in §G, b. Avodah Zarah’s is not. By separating the treatment of vkhj,fk and scghsc from the question of which tanna(im)’s view lies behind m. AZ 2:1, b. Avodah Zarah can have its cake and eat it too—it can assert that there is no distinction between vkhj,fk and scghsc and that m. AZ 2:1 represents the view of R. Eliezer—as b. Avodah Zarah demonstrates by a comparison with m. Parah 2:1. Once again, b. Avodah Zarah has improved upon the presentation of materials in the earlier Talmud.

III.d. B. Avodah Zarah 27b–28b || Y. Avodah Zarah 2:2, 40d–41a—Israelites, Gentiles, and Medicine

In chapter 2 we analyzed y. and b. Avodah Zarah’s versions of the story of the hapless Eleazar b. Dama, who died of snakebite because R. Yishmael did not allow him to be healed by a min. We saw there that b. Avodah Zarah’s version of the story is more similar to y. Avodah Zarah’s than to t. Hullin’s. Our task now is to consider y. Avodah Zarah in its larger context and assess how b. Avodah Zarah sensibly reworked that context in order to better adapt the story for its own use.

In y. AZ 2:2, 40d–41a, the Eleazar b. Dama story is the fourth in a sequence of four sugyot. The sequence opens with R. Yaaqov’s declaration in the name of R. Yohanan that “We may heal ourselves by means of everything except for idolatry, sexual immorality, and bloodshed.” That is, medicines derived from idolatry, sexual immorality, or bloodshed are forbidden for use. The Yerushalmi unpacks this list by taking up the issues of idolatry, sexual immorality, and bloodshed in order. It opens its consideration of medicines derived from idolatry by considering the issue of leaves derived from an asherah-tree (which is worshiped), and R. Aha’s and R. Yonah’s possibly differing attitudes toward healing waters derived from the “source” (lit. the “maleness”) of Duhi (which was presumably an idol in Palestine). This sugya is followed by R. Huna’s declaration that he will quote a source that prohibits healing by means of sexual immorality,
and a lengthy sugya exploring the intersection of healing and sexual immorality. A third sugya follows which opens with R. Hanina’s declaration that he is about to quote a source that interdicts healing by means of bloodshed, and an equally lengthy sugya that builds on m. Ohal 7:6 (which explores when the life of either a mother or a fetus should take precedence). The story of Eleazar b. Dama is the fourth sugya in this sequence.

This perusal of the sequence of sugyot shows that the first and fourth sugyot (both dealing with idolatry) are the only ones directly relevant to the Avodah Zarah tractates. B. Avodah Zarah logically eliminates the second sugya (sexual immorality) and the third (murder), which the Bavli places elsewhere in thematically more appropriate places: b. Pes 25a–b, b. Yoma 82a–b, and b. Sanh 74a–75a. B. Avodah Zarah also logically eliminates the first sugya which, although it deals with idolatry, includes the Palestinocentric reference to R. Aha’s and R. Yonah’s encounters with the waters of Duhi. As we have seen, such Palestinocentric references are a type of source that b. Avodah Zarah tends to omit.58

B. Avodah Zarah places its reworked version of the Ben Dama story (27b) immediately following a baraita that forbids a person to have dealings with or accept healing from a min even if only temporarily to stave off an inevitable death. B. Avodah Zarah thus juxtaposes the Ben Dama story—which is about minut—and a source that has already called the student’s attention to that theme. Further, b. Avodah Zarah added to y. Avodah Zarah the unattributed observation that “heresy is different because it pulls, and he [the one who falls in with heresy] will come to be pulled after them [the heretics].” This addition is unsurprising in light of b. Avodah Zarah’s greater interest in the theme of minut. B. Avodah Zarah continues to develop the minut theme at 28a, where R. Abbahu is described as taking violent exception to the medical ministrations of a certain “Yaaqov mina.”

Moreover, let us consider b. Avodah Zarah’s ending to the Ben Dama story, which it added to the y. Avodah Zarah version:

And [according] to R. Yishmael, these words [Lev 18:5] apply in private [a person may choose transgression over death if the transgression will take place in private], but in public, no. As it was taught in a baraita: R. Yishmael would say: “From where do we know that if they say to a person ‘Serve idols and do not be killed’ that he may serve and not be killed? The verse teaches ‘and he shall live by them’—and not die by them. Is that true even in public? The verse teaches ‘And do not desecrate My holy Name [in public]’” (Lev 22:32) (Sifra to Leviticus, Aharei Mot, pereq 13).

58. Even at b. Pes 25a, where the Bavli deals with R. Yohanan’s tradition about healing, it eliminates the Palestinocentric story about the “source” of the waters of Duhi.
This additional passage introduces the issue of sanctifying versus desecrating God’s Name. Dying rather than worshiping idols publicly sanctifies God’s Name; choosing public worship over death is a desecration. The concern about public desecration of God’s Name in this passage presages the redactors’ mention of this concern at 28a in the context of R. Yohanan’s public disclosure—without permission—of a Gentile woman healer’s remedy for a gum ailment.

B. Avodah Zarah has thus eliminated material found in y. Avodah Zarah that was not directly connected to the subject matter of the tractate, placed the material it did take from y. Avodah Zarah (the Ben Dama story) in a context that highlighted the theme of that material (minut), and continued even after the Ben Dama story (28a) to develop the two themes of minut and desecration of God’s Name which it highlighted in its reworking of y. Avodah Zarah’s story. B. Avodah Zarah thus not only improved upon y. Avodah Zarah’s original contextualization of the Ben Dama material, but worked to connect its reworked version tightly into its new b. Avodah Zarah context.

IV

B. Avodah Zarah Views a Source in Connection with an Amoraic Concern That Y. Avodah Zarah Had Viewed in Connection with the Mishnah

IV.a. B. Avodah Zarah 11b–12a || Y. Avodah Zarah 1:4, 39d—Israelites and Idolatrous Fairs

M. Avodah Zarah 1:4 rules that even if an idolatrous festival is going on within a city, Israelites may do business with Gentiles outside the city and vice-versa. In its second clause, the mishnah rules that traveling to a city in which there is an idolatrous festival is forbidden if there is only one road leading to the city (for then people might think that the Israelite is going there in order to celebrate), but is permitted if there are multiple roads. Finally, the mishnah rules on the basis of a case in Bet Shean that an Israelite may only do business during festival time with “unwreathed” stores. Let us now examine the relevant texts:

Y. Avodah Zarah 1:4, 39d

A. Behold, is the “interior of it” (הבחנה) [i.e., of the city in which there is an idol] forbidden [for Israelite commercial interaction with Gentiles]? [Just] because there is one image in it, should the interior of [the city] be forbidden [in its entirety to Israelite business]?
B. Resh Laqish said: “They [the sages of the mishnah] taught [that a city in which there is an idol, the outside is permitted]—implying that the interior is forbidden only with respect to a fair [in honor of the idol]. [He goes on:]”

C. “And what is the difference between ‘the interior of it’ and ‘outside of it’? [The city-dwellers in] ‘the interior of it’ benefit from the tax [imposed by the city in honor of the idol and thus commerce with them is] forbidden; ‘outside of it,’ which does not benefit from the tax, is permitted.’ And if ‘outside of it’ benefits from the tax, even [that] is forbidden.”

D. And was it not taught in a baraita [t. AZ 1:8]: We go to a fair, and buy from there male and female slaves and beasts. Resh Laqish said: “Not just Israelite slaves, but even Gentile slaves, for [the Israelite buyer] brings them close under the wings of the Divine Presence.”

E. And was it not taught in a baraita: If [an Israelite] bought from there [the idolatrous fair] clothing—it should be burned; a beast—it should be hamstrung; monies—he should bring them to the Dead Sea?! [This contradicts t. AZ 1:8.]

F. [This latter baraita] goes well with [t. AZ 1:8 with respect to] clothing—it should be burned; monies—he should bring them to the Dead Sea [there is no conflict between the baraitot on these points because t. AZ 1:8 does not discuss these things. But] a beast—it should be hamstrung?! [This contradicts t. AZ 1:8.] for was it not taught in the baraita: We go to a fair and buy from there male and female slaves and beasts? [Didn’t] Resh Laqish say, “Not just Israelite slaves, but even Gentile slaves, since [the Israelite buyer] brings them close under the wings of Heaven”?

G. You may resolve [the conflict by assuming that the purchaser of t. AZ 1:8 was an] Israelite [buying a beast from an] Israelite [and thus there is no need to hamstring].

The key point to note here is that y. Avodah Zarah uses t. AZ 1:8 as part of its explication of the mishnah. The mishnah rules that Israelites may not do business with Gentiles in a place in which there is an idol, and, typically, y. Avodah Zarah quotes a baraita in connection with that mishnah which is inconsistent with it.50 T. Avodah Zarah 1:8’s inconsistency with the mishnah lies in its assumption that Israelites may attend fairs, which were presumably somehow connected to idolatry. Before examining how b. Avodah Zarah uses t. AZ 1:8, there is more y. Avodah Zarah material we must set out. This material does not follow immediately in the text, but is separated from the preceding by material without parallel in b. Avodah Zarah.

59. Zuckermandel, 461.
60. See, e.g., m. AZ 1:1 and the discussion of that mishnah beginning at y. AZ 1:1, 39b.
H. With what were they [the stores mentioned in m. AZ 1:4] wreathed (מעיטרין, a word in the mishnah)?


J. On the view of R. Yohanan, all of them [all stores wreathed with myrtle] are forbidden [since it is presumed that the wreathing is in honor of the idol]. On the view of Resh Laqish, all that is forbidden is the addition [that is, any additional species added to what already adorned the store. The addition is presumed to be in honor of the idol].

K. How does he [the Israelite] act [on the view of Resh Laqish]? If the storekeeper was accustomed to bring out five baskets [of decorative fruit to fix up the store for the idol] and he brought out ten—if it is said [that the extra five are for the sake of] “wreathing,” [then they are forbidden]; if it is said they are for business [additional decorations to attract customers], then those fruits are permitted.

Now, let us examine b. AZ 12b–13a:

A. R. Shimon b. Laqish said: “They [the sages of the mishnah] only taught [that wreathed stores are forbidden if they are] wreathed with roses and myrtle which give pleasure with their smell, but [if they are] wreathed with fruits, these are permitted” [the Israelite may buy from them even though the sale will indirectly benefit idolatry].

B. What is the reason [that Resh Laqish allows the Israelite to buy]? For the verse says: “And not one bit of the condemned [property] will stick to your hand (Deut 13:18).” It is benefiting from [idolatry] which is forbidden, but causing benefit [to idolatry] is permitted.

C. And R. Yohanan said: “Even if [the stores] are wreathed with fruits, it is also forbidden [for the Israelite to buy from them].” Inference from minor to major. If benefiting from the idolatry is forbidden, isn’t causing benefit to the idolatry that much more forbidden?

D. They raised an objection: R. Natan says: “On the day that idolatry provides tax relief, they [the local authorities] announce and say: ‘Whoever picks up a wreath and places it on his head and on the head of his ass in honor of the idol—the tax will be forgiven him. And if not—the tax will not be forgiven him.’ An Israelite who happens to be there, what does he do? If he places [the wreath on his head], he will benefit [from the tax relief], if he does not place [a wreath on his head], he will be

61. I consider this part of Resh Laqish’s statement to be an anonymous interpolation for two reasons: (1) it is missing from the y. AZ parallel; and (2) this interpolation is in Aramaic, while the rest of Resh Laqish’s statement is in Hebrew. See Shamma Friedman, “Yevamot X,” 277–321, wherein he lists criteria for determining whether or not a Talmudic statement is in fact “attributable” to the Talmud’s anonymous voice.

62. Further, by benefiting from the tax relief granted in honor of the idol the Israelite is impermissibly deriving benefit from an idol.
benefiting [the idol by paying the tax]. From here they said: ‘[The Israelite who] buys and sells in the marketplace of idolatry—[if he bought] a beast, it should be hamstrung; fruits, clothing, and vessels must be allowed to rot; monies and metal vessels must be taken to the Dead Sea.’ And what is hamstringing? Cutting the tendons of its hoofs beneath the ankle.’ It is nevertheless taught: If the Israelite places the wreath, he turns out to be benefiting from the idolatry; if he does not, he is causing benefit to the idolatry. [This conflicts with Resh Lajish’s view, which is that there exists a situation in which the Israelite can buy, although that will indirectly benefit the idolatry].


F. *And they do not argue? But was it not taught in a baraita: We go to a fair of idolaters, and buy beasts, male and female slaves, houses, fields, and vineyards from them . . . (t. AZ 1:8; Sem 4:25); and R. Yohanan says: “The law is like R. Yose.”* [By emphasizing that the law is like R. Yose, R. Yohanan implies that the law is not like the Rabbis, who disagree with R. Yose. So if R. Yohanan disagrees with the Rabbis here and agrees with R. Natan earlier, then the Rabbis and R. Natan must themselves disagree.]

G. Consequently they [the Rabbis and R. Natan] argue!

H. R. Yohanan says to you: “In reality they do not argue, and there is no difficulty [between R. Natan’s baraita and t. AZ 1:8]. Here, [R. Natan’s baraita, which forbids buying at the fairs, deals with an Israelite] who buys from a traveling vendor from whom the city exacts the tax. Here, [t. AZ 1:8, which permits the purchases, deals with an Israelite] who buys from a private householder from whom they do not exact the tax.

Unlike y. Avodah Zarah, b. Avodah Zarah explicates t. AZ 1:8 in connection with the amoraic dispute about what the mishnaic term “wreathing” means. We therefore see y. Avodah Zarah using the baraita in direct connection with the mishnah, and b. Avodah Zarah using it in connection with an amoraic dispute about the mishnah.

Baruch Bokser analyzed another example of this phenomenon in connection with b. Ber 47b–48a || y. Ber 7:2, 11b, where y. Berahkhot deployed a teaching of Shmuel in connection with m. Ber 7:2, while b. Berakhot deployed it in connection with the Palestinian amoraic dispute about whether a minor child could be an “adjunct” to a zimmun for recitation of the Grace after Meals.63 As in the case studied by Bokser, b. Avodah Zarah’s deployment of t. AZ 1:8 in connection with an amoraic dispute likely

63. See Baruch Bokser, “A Minor for Zimmun,” and my “A Bavli Sugya and Its Two Yerushalmi Parallels.”
marks its sugya as a diachronic development beyond the y. Avodah Zarah sugya.

We must also consider the presence in both Talmuds of the R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute. The mishnah clearly calls for discussion of what “wreathing” means, which both Talmuds provide. But nothing in the mishnah, nor in other tannaitic sources, requires that both Talmuds discuss wreathing in connection with this particular amoraic dispute.

The hypothesis that b. Avodah Zarah’s recourse to this amoraic dispute is due to a shared stratum of early talmud is appealing in this case because b. Avodah Zarah presents the fifth-generation R. Mesharshya b. de-R. Idi’s comment (§E) on how the older amoraic dispute relates to the baraitot the Bavli quotes in §D. It thus certainly looks as though R. Mesharshya was familiar with the R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute and with non-Toseftan baraitot that bear upon the interpretation of that dispute. But a closer look at y. Avodah Zarah §§H–K and b. Avodah Zarah §§A–E casts doubt on the reliability of the attribution to R. Mesharshya and, by extension, on the identification as early talmud of the shared R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute. B. Avodah Zarah altered the presentation of Resh Laqish’s view in §A to refer to the “pleasure” the plants used for wreathing provide. The anonymous voice in §B questions Resh Laqish’s ruling that an Israelite may buy from a store adorned with a non-fragrant wreath, but concludes on his behalf that while benefiting from idolatry is forbidden, causing benefit to it is not. B. Avodah Zarah also altered R. Yohanan’s view in §C to include a qal va-homer argument that mentions “benefiting from” idols and “causing benefit to” idols. The language of “benefiting” appears as well in R. Natan’s non-Toseftan baraita in §D, which also, interestingly, refers to wreaths. These non-Toseftan baraitot are missing from y. Avodah Zarah, with the exception of the middle portion that discusses how an Israelite should destroy items he purchased at an idolatrous fair. Putting all these data together, it seems that Bavli editors working with y. Avodah Zarah’s versions of the R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute added the references to “benefiting” and also emended (or perhaps even created) the non-Toseftan baraitot attributed to R. Natan that also mention “benefiting” idolatry and wreathing. The question is: Who were these editors? Was R. Mesharshya one of them? Were they amoraim who preceded or followed him, or perhaps post-amoraic redactors? The sugya itself yields no evidence that the scholars responsible for altering the older dispute were amoraim who preceded or followed R. Mesharshya, let alone that he himself was responsible for it.

Reading b. Avodah Zarah over carefully, we see that an editorial hand has reworked the old R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute about wreathing into a dispute about something else. That “something else” is a dispute at
a higher level of abstraction: a dispute about receiving benefit from, or
confering benefit on, idolatry. This reworking of the amoraic dispute is
carried right through §§A–H, and is the agenda at stake in the unfolding
of the sugya. This concern about receiving benefit from or causing benefit
to idolatry is also a thematic concern we see elsewhere in b. Avodah Za-
rah: at 6a, the Bavli suggests that a reason for m. AZ 1:1’s prohibitions is to
prevent an idolater from profiting, and at 6b, R. Yehudah Nesiah worries
about the consequences (which in his case are the psychic benefits con-
ferred) of accepting a min’s gift. All this being so, the likely source for the
reworking of y. Avodah Zarah in b. Avodah Zarah is the post-amoraic red-
dactors, who alone have the sort of view of the whole that accounts for
this consistency of theme.

Nor can the hypothesis that early talmud is responsible for the Tal-
muds’ common deployment of the R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute de-
rive support from the fact that the fifth-generation R. Mesharshya appears
to know and respond to it. R. Mesharshya is represented as knowing the
emended amoraic dispute, and, as we have concluded, the emendations are
likely the work of the redactors. This leaves us with two possibilities: (1)
The attribution to R. Mesharshya is pseudepigraphic; or (2) R. Me-
sharshya was aware of the R. Yohanan/Resh Laqish dispute more or less
as it appeared in y. Avodah Zarah, but the b. Avodah Zarah redactors al-
tered the entire sugya, thus making it appear that R. Mesharshya knew the
emended older amoraic dispute. Whichever possibility is correct, it is
clear that R. Mesharshya’s presence in b. Avodah Zarah’s sugya is no im-
pediment to the logical conclusion that the b. Avodah Zarah redactors re-
worked y. Avodah Zarah, yielding the sugya we now have.

Another important point—which forms a nice segue to section V, be-
low—is that b. Avodah Zarah reworked y. Avodah Zarah so as to high-
light a legal concept of interest to it, and unknown to y. Avodah Zarah.
Y. Avodah Zarah’s R. Yohanan held that the storekeeper’s wreathing of
his store with myrtle (presumably in any amount) renders his store off-
limits to Israelites, while Resh Laqish held that the particular species used
is not as important as the fact that the storekeeper added flora to the out-
side of his store. We may presume that the additional flora were placed in
honor of the idol. In y. Avodah Zarah, then, the dispute was over whether
it is the species of plant (R. Yohanan) or the motivation for the placement
of any plant or fruit (Resh Laqish) that matters. By contrast, b. Avodah Za-
rah’s anonymous voice explains that stores wreathed with roses and myr-
tle are prohibited to Israelites because they will benefit from the nice
smell—a benefit that comes about because of the decoration in honor of
idolatry. This explanation implicates this Palestinian amoraic dispute in
the larger Bavli dispute (b. Pes 76b; b. AZ 66b) as to whether or not “smell
is consequential” (והא לא מתלה זה או רוחא מתלה זה). If smell is consequential, then a person may be punished for enjoying a forbidden smell; if not, he will not be. This discussion of smell is directly related to b. Avodah Zarah’s larger concern here at 12b–13a: the issue of benefiting from, or conferring benefit upon, idolatry. By smelling the fragrant wreath placed in honor of the idol, the Israelite benefits from idolatry, according to b. Avodah Zarah’s reworking of Resh Laqish. The Israelite thus may not purchase from stores bearing fragrant wreaths, but may purchase from stores that do not, even though he may nevertheless be indirectly conferring a benefit on idolatry. According to b. Avodah Zarah’s reworking of R. Yohanan, the Israelite may not buy from any store bearing a wreath—fragrant or otherwise—for if benefiting from an idol is forbidden, isn’t conferring a benefit all the more forbidden? B. Avodah Zarah’s introduction of a legal concept of interest to it elsewhere in this and another Bavli tractate and its recasting of the amoraic dispute in light of that concept are additional evidence of the b. Avodah Zarah redactors’ reworking of the older y. Avodah Zarah sugya.

V

B. Avodah Zarah Reworks Y. Avodah Zarah Sugyot in Order to Raise Legal Issues to a Higher Level of Abstraction

Scholars have long recognized that the Bavli exhibits a greater interest in abstract legal conceptualization than the Yerushalmi.\(^64\) That is, the Bavli tends to rework legal concepts to express them as abstract notions not directly tied to the casuistic, case-specific contexts in which the concepts may have originated. There are a number of examples in the Avodah Zarah tractates of b. Avodah Zarah reworking y. Avodah Zarah sugyot in order to highlight legal issues raised in the older sugyot and reformulate them at a higher level of abstraction. We will begin with a fairly simple example in which b. Avodah Zarah, faced with a y. Avodah Zarah sugya that seems unrelated to the local mishnah, searches for a higher level of legal conceptualization that includes both the mishnah and the ill-fitting y. Avodah Zarah sugya accompanying it. In this case, b. Avodah Zarah employs legal conceptualization as a tool to rework the y. Avodah Zarah sugya and make it fit better with the local mishnah.

\(^{64}\) See Leib Moscovitz, Talmudic Reasoning: From Casuistics to Conceptualization (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 14 and sources cited. Moscovitz himself cites the example of b. AZ 48b, which employs the principle zeh ve-zeh gorem; see 6, 331–333.
A. R. Bun b. Hiyya asked: “Is even a large beast in dispute? [Can the Israelite] sell [it] to [the Gentile] on the condition that he slaughter it?”

B. It was found [to have been] taught [in a baraita] that even a large beast is in dispute. R. Yehudah says: “He sells to him on the condition that he slaughter it” [compare t. AZ 2:163].

B. Avodah Zarah 20b

A. They asked: “[If an Israelite sold a Gentile] a beast on the condition that he slaughter it, what [is the law]?”

B. There [in the mishnah] what is the reason that R. Yehudah permits [the conditional sale]? [Is it] because [the trees or other items attached to the land] are not in [the Gentile’s] domain and he cannot delay [fulfilling the condition to cut] them [down], but [as to] an animal, since it is in the domain of the idolater, he can delay [fulfilling the condition to slaughter] it? Or perhaps there is no difference [between the two cases]?

C. Come and hear that which was taught in a baraita: [An Israelite may sell to a Gentile] an animal on the condition that he slaughter it and he [the Gentile] slaughters, the words of R. Yehudah. R. Meir says: “We only sell [to Gentiles that which is already] slaughtered” [compare t. AZ 2:1].

The pertinent part of the mishnah (m. AZ 1:8) provides that Israelites may not sell to Gentiles crops that are attached to the ground, but may do so once they have been cut. R. Yehudah dissents, and rules that an Israelite may sell attached crops to a Gentile on the condition that the latter cut them.

The mishnah is talking about crops; it does not call for a sugya such as the one we find here in both Talmuds, which discuss whether or not an Israelite can sell an animal to a Gentile on the condition that he slaughter it. Nor does the Talmuds’ shared Toseftan baraita, t. AZ 2:1, call for the sugya. The baraita is not the starting-point of the discussion; rather, it is cited as the answer to the question attributed either to R. Bun b. Hiyya (y. Avodah Zarah) or the anonymous voice (b. Avodah Zarah). The similar form of the question and answer in both Talmuds points to b. Avodah Zarah’s having adopted the question and answer raised earlier in y. Avodah Zarah.

Y. Avodah Zarah does not explain how the mishnah, which deals with land and crops, calls for a question about the sale of a beast. B. Avodah Zarah, by contrast, supplies the conceptual missing link between the

65. Zuckermandel, 462.
mishnah’s “crops” and the Talmudic question about beasts by looking for a higher level of abstraction that encompasses both. B. Avodah Zarah does this by raising the larger issue of whether or not the Gentile’s purchased property is in his own domain. Will R. Yehudah rule the same way in both cases, despite the fact that the purchased trees or crops are not in the Gentile’s domain but the animal is? Or will this difference cause R. Yehudah to rule differently? B. Avodah Zarah thus clarified a difficulty it did not create and forged a link between the sugya and the mishnah for which it was an ill-fit.

V.b. B. Avodah Zarah 32a ∥ Y. Avodah Zarah 2:3, 41b—

Desiring the Existence of a Forbidden Item

Y. Avodah Zarah 2:3, 41b

A. And Hadrianic pottery? R. Zeirah in the name of R. Yirmiyah: “The law is like R. Meir, as it was taught (t. AZ 5:866): Hadrianic pottery is forbidden, and its prohibition is a prohibition of benefit—the words of R. Meir. But the Sages say, “Its prohibition is not a prohibition of benefit.”

B. R. Yirmiya asked R. Zeirah: “We learned in the mishnah (m. Orl 3:1) that a garment [which was sewn with forbidden orlah materials must be burned]. Here [with respect to Hadrianic pottery], what [is the law]?“67

C. And [R. Zeirah] was angry before him [R. Yirmiyah]. He [R. Zeirah] said to him: “Even according to the one who says there [that Hadrianic pottery] is permitted [i.e., the Sages, would agree that] here [the garment] is forbidden. There [with Hadrianic pottery], the forbidden item is not recognizable [because the libation-wine has soaked into the clay], but here [with the garment], the forbidden item is recognizable.”


B. Avodah Zarah 32a

A. What is Hadrianic [pottery]? R. Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: “Pottery of Hadrian Caesar.” When R. Dimi came, he said: “There was virgin soil that no man had ever cultivated. He [Hadrian] cultivated it, planted it [with grapes], and put the [resulting] wine into white earthenware vessels that would absorb the wine. They [the soldiers] would break them

66. Zuckermandel, 466.

67. According to that mishnah, a garment sewn with forbidden orlah materials must be burned. Comparing that case to the case of Hadrianic pottery, which is a matter of forbidden idolatrous materials, how can the Sages allow an Israelite to benefit from Hadrianic pottery?
into potsherds and carry [the pieces] with them. [In whatever place] they 
would come to, they would dissolve [the pieces in water] and drink.”

B. R. Yehoshua b. Levi said: “Our first [mixing of wine with water, which is 
quite strong,] is like their third [mixing].”

C. They asked: What about [using the Hadrianic pottery] to support the legs of a 
bed? Is it permitted to desire the [continued] existence [of a forbidden item] 
by means of something else, or not? [That is, if the forbidden item will be 
used for something other than its intended purpose, as with Hadrianic 
pottery being used to support a bed.] Come and hear, for [this is a dispute 

Our focus is on y. Avodah Zarah §D and b. Avodah Zarah §C. B. Avodah 
Zarah has taken the simple question and (disputed) answer about 
whether or not Hadrianic pottery can be used to support a bed, and has 
interpolated the legal concept it sees as underlying the question: Is an Israel 
elite permitted to desire the continued existence of a forbidden item (and 
allow it to exist), if he intends that forbidden item to be used for a purpose 
other than its normally intended use? By recasting y. Avodah Zarah’s 
question in this way, b. Avodah Zarah makes it appear as if the Palestinian 
amoraim R. Eleazar and R. Yohanan disputed this larger issue, which we 
know from y. Avodah Zarah they did not.

The Bavli deploys this notion of “desiring the [continued] existence 
of a forbidden item” later at 63b and again at 64a. In both cases we can see 
clearly how the b. Avodah Zarah redactors reworked the simpler y. Avodah 
Zarah sugyot to reflect the legal concept they saw implicit therein:

**Y. Avodah Zarah 5:1, 44c**

R. Yirmiyah asked: “What about [if] his wage is for smashing barrels of li 
bation-wine?” [Is it then permitted?] Even so [i.e., even though the worker 
is being paid to destroy the offending wine], his wage is forbidden.

**B. Avodah Zarah 63b**

R. Nahman, Ulla, and Abimi b. Papi were sitting together, and R. Hiiyya 
b. Ami was sitting with them. They sat and asked: “What about [if] his 
wage is for smashing [barrels of] libation-wine?” Do we say that since he 
the worker] desires its [the wine’s] continued existence [for a period long 
ought for him to destroy it and be paid for doing so], it is forbidden, or is 
anything the purpose of which is to diminish nonsense acceptable?68 [Meaning 
that permitting the continued existence of the prohibited wine is permit-

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68. I am assuming that this part of the question is anonymous by comparison 
with y. AZ, in which this part of the question does not exist.
R. Nahman said: “Let him smash, and may a blessing come upon him.”

In this case, the concept “desiring the [continued] existence of a forbidden item” was deployed in order to explore the case of an Israelite who was owed a wage for smashing barrels of libation-wine. The Israelite clearly would desire the continued existence of the barrels for as long as it would take for him to smash them and earn his wage, and ultimately R. Nahman permits him to do so. The final deployment of this concept appears shortly after this one, at 64a.

**Y. Avodah Zarah 5:1, 44c–d**

A. Asi said: “The monies [obtained through the sale] of libation-wine in the hands of a Gentile are forbidden. The monies [obtained through the sale] of an idol in the hands of a Gentile—R. Yonatan said ‘Permitted,’ and R. Yohanan said ‘Forbidden.’”

B. A baraita supports this one and a baraita supports that one. The baraita that supports R. Yohanan: A Gentile that owed money to an Israelite—he [the Gentile] should not say, “Wait [for payment] until I sell libation-wine, wait until I sell an idol, and I will give you [what is owed].” I say [that were the Gentile to do so the monies would be forbidden] lest he have exchanged [the libation-wine or idol directly for the monies with which he repaid the Israelite] (t. AZ 8:1669).

C. The baraita that supports R. Yonatan: A Gentile who owed money to an Israelite—behold, this one [the Gentile] may sell libation-wine and give [the proceeds] to him; an idol and give [the proceeds] to him.

**B. Avodah Zarah 64a**

A. They were again sitting and asking:70 “What about the monies of a Gentile [obtained through the sale of] an idol? Does it [the idol] hold its monies in the hands of the Gentile or not?”

B. R. Nahman said to them: “It makes sense that the monies [obtained through the sale of an idol] in the hands of a Gentile are permitted . . .” [An initial unsuccessful attempt to derive this conclusion is here omitted.]

C. Rather, derive it from here: An Israelite who was owed a maneh by an idolater, and [the Gentile] sold an idol and brought him [the money, or sold] libation-wine and brought him [the money], it is permitted. But if he [the Gentile] said to him: “Wait until I sell an idol and I will bring you

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69. Zuckermandel, 472.

70. The reference is to the same amoraim who were “sitting and asking” at 63b.

71. I am assuming that this part of the question is anonymous by comparison with the parallel question in y. AZ. Another point in favor of the anonymity is that the issue of “holding its monies” is raised anonymously at b. AZ 62a.
[the money, or sell] libation-wine and I will bring you [the money], it is forbidden” (t. AZ 8:16).

D. What is the difference between the beginning and the end [of the baraita]?
R. Sheshet said: “[The wage is forbidden at] the end because he [the Israelite creditor] is like one who desires its [the idol’s or libation-wine’s] continued existence” [and thus is penalized for so desiring].

[Further discussion of the concept is omitted].

In all three cases—32a, 63b, and 64a—b. Avodah Zarah reworked the parallel y. Avodah Zarah sugyot to include the legal concept “desiring the [continued] existence of a forbidden item.” B. Avodah Zarah’s introduction of a higher level of legal conceptualization to capture what it saw as being at stake in the Yerushalmi is the fruit of its reflection upon the work of the Yerushalmi.

VI
Conclusion

In this chapter we studied examples that show how the b. Avodah Zarah redactors reworked materials they appropriated from the earlier Talmud. These examples show that b. Avodah Zarah parallels to y. Avodah Zarah sugyot are often secondary reworkings of y. Avodah Zarah, and that these reworkings can be categorized under five principal headings:

1. Adding characterically Babylonian cultural, linguistic, or other features to y. Avodah Zarah sugyot;
2. Excising materials that are of specific relevance to the Land of Israel and/or the Greco-Roman cultural context of the Land of Israel;
3. Re-arranging materials in a more sensible order, including the creation of segues between materials that lacked such transitions in y. Avodah Zarah;
4. Deploying sources that y. Avodah Zarah had utilized to explore tannaitic issues in the exploration of amoraic issues; and

The evidence of this chapter shows that the differences between y. and b. Avodah Zarah sugyot should not be attributed to the Talmuds’ having somehow received similar, yet different, versions of these sugyot as part of a shared pool of early talmud. Rather, it is more likely in these cases that b. Avodah Zarah worked with and emended the y. Avodah Zarah source.