# *KETER* AS A JEWISH POLITICAL SYMBOL: ORIGINS AND IMPLICATIONS

## Stuart A. Cohen

*The use of the Hebrew term* keter *(lit. "crown") to describe agencies of Jewish autonomous rule is first apparent in tanna'itic texts, and especially in* Mishnah, Avot 4:13. *This article examines the reasons for that innovation, and examines the categories of rulership to which the term was applied. It is suggested that* keter *reflected an identifiable notion of "sovereignty" and its exercise. In early rabbinic usage, it became a vehicle which conveyed a unique view of the constitutionally correct ordering of Jewish political life.*

The only Old Testament references to the royal headdress designated the *keter* (lit. "crown") are to be found in the Book of Esther, where the term describes a non-Jewish (Persian) emblem of distinction. Admittedly, the root KTR is indigenously Hebrew; it occurs in Judges 20:43 (meaning "to surround") and in I Kings 7:16, 17; Jer. 52:22 (meaning "cornice"). But not until the early rabbinic period does the term appear to have been used to depict the crown as a specifically Jewish badge of office. Once that step had been taken, however, the process of semantic accommodation seems to have been both swift and extensive. For one thing, authors of early rabbinic texts frequently (although not invariably) employed the noun *keter* as a primary depiction of the royal headdress, preferring it to other crown synonyms which were of more distinguished biblical pedigree. Secondly, and more interestingly, they considerably modified and extended the application of that term itself. As early as *Mishnah, Avot* 4:13, *keter* no longer designated (as it did in Esther) exclusively royal authority. Rather, it was also applied to areas of governance which lay outside the confines of civil political rule generally associated with kingship.

Changes such as these portended far more than a linear semantic progress from biblical to talmudic usage. They reflected broader conceptual shifts, both in the significance attached to the crown symbol and in the range of its application. *Keter*, it seems, was deliberately "elevated" in status. From its original designation as an essentially foreign badge of specifically royal rank, it had become a generic symbol of political authority in diverse demesnes of Jewish government. This paper will attempt to illustrate that development and to assess its

implications. In early rabbinic usage, it will argue, *keter* became a terminological vehicle invoking distinctive notions of political authority. The various applications of the term articulated a multifaceted conception of Jewish political life; they also suggested a theoretical hierarchy among instruments of Jewish government which were otherwise considered sovereign ("crownly"). As conveyed through the symbol of the *keter*, both ideas were to play a seminal role in the subsequent development of the Jewish political tradition.

I

In order to avoid unnecessary confusion, an initial clarification is called for. It will here be suggested that early rabbinic authors imparted an original character and meaning to the term *keter*. It will not be asserted that they were the first exponents of the Jewish political tradition to appreciate the visual resonances of individual symbols of public office. That was a theme which had already been amply exploited in the Old Testament. As has often been illustrated, several books of the Bible refer (sometimes in considerable detail) to distinctive items of dress and ornamentation, possession of which was restricted to persons of only the most senior rank. Such insignia were worn by kings, priests, and even prophets. Especially when conferred at the sacred ritual of anointment (*neshihah*), they bestowed upon their owners unique badges of sanctity as well as distinction. In thus articulating holiness as well as majesty, they symbolized the notion that public office was an effluence of divine grace.[1]

Notwithstanding the richness of this literary heritage, early rabbinic applications of the *keter* symbol nevertheless remain distinctive. In the case of the crown, they cannot simply be considered mere elaborations of a biblical theme. The differences are of both emphasis and terminology. What has to be noted, firstly, is the novelty in the rabbinic concentration on the artifact of the crown itself. This is far too pronounced to be regarded as an echo of a biblical concept. The Old Testament does, admittedly, contain some scattered references to specific royal headdresses. But these seem hardly to justify von Rad's assertion (based on II Kings 11:12 = II Chron. 23:11) that the crowning with the diadem (*nezer*) and the presentation with the protocol (*edut*) was the most important moment of the ancient Israelite enthronement.[2] On the contrary, the textual evidence indicates that such claims contain a considerable dose of anachronism. As a distinctly Jewish emblem of royalty, the crown played only a minor role in the biblical lexicon of official symbols; its significance is definitely inferior to that of the throne (*kise*).[3] Most strikingly is this so when the statistical count of Old Testament crown references excludes those occurrences which

describe a distinguishing headdress worn, not by an ancient Hebrew monarch, but by a contemporary ruler of a neighboring ancient Near Eastern people (e.g., II Sam. 12:30 = I Chron. 20:2). As we now know from other sources, the latter certainly did regard the crown as a pivotal manifestation of divine selection (and, in some cases, of divine status).[4] Arguably, graphic depictions of this concept were particularly appropriate in societies which regarded the king as a Divine being (as did the Hittites) or, at the very least, the divinity's official representative on earth (as in Mesopotamia). Indeed, in each of those cases, the distinctive status of the monarch seems from a very early date to have been plainly (and persistently) depicted in the imageries of one or more crowns — some of which were considered emblems of the solar deity.[5] The ancient Hebrews, however, seem to have carefully steered clear of such notions.[6] Hence their depictions of the crown did not reflect the cultural environment of their surroundings. Neither, by the same token, can they be inferred to have entirely foreshadowed later rabbinic applications of that motif.

In some respects, this argument is substantiated by the more thorny matter of terminology. As all the standard works of reference point out, the Hebrew Old Testament does not reserve any one term for the artifact translated as "crown." Quite apart from *keter* (3 explicit "crown" occurrences, all in the Book of Esther), the biblical texts contain no less than seven other synonyms, all designating comparable headdresses of similar distinction: *tzefirah* (Is. 28:5); *tzitz* (4 occurrences, probably describing garlands); *tznif* (4 references, to turbans); *pe'er* (5 explicit occurrences in the sense of headdress, none of which are royal); *zer* (6 occurrences, all in Exodus, and all referring to adornments to articles in the tabernacle); *mitznefet* (9 occurrences; all but one explicitly referring to the priestly mitre); *nezer* (12 occurrences in the sense of crown); and — most common of all — (22 occurrences) — *atarah*. Terminological multiplicity of this order cannot be considered as an indication of the importance of the symbol. On the contrary, it seems further to underscore the comparative insignificance — in the Bible — of that emblem as a distinctive mark of governmental jurisdiction. Not until much later in the Jewish literary tradition were the various diffuse connotations of the headdress narrowed down, thus permitting the crown to attain a status of superiority within the specific context of public office.

We can only speculate why authors of early rabbinical texts might have preferred *keter* to any other of the biblical synonyms thus available to them. As even the above brief survey indicates, *keter* was certainly not the most distinguished of the known indigenous Hebrew crown terms; neither was it the most venerable. Even when *keter* was added as a noun to the Hebrew literary canon as we now have it (and the accepted dating for the composition of Esther is circa 80 BCE), it was applied only to a headdress worn at a gentile court — and not a

very august one at that. Perhaps, however, precisely therein lay its
particular attraction. Each of the other available items, after all, had
already inherited from the biblical texts an alternative linguistic con-
notation and cultural nuance. In some (very isolated) cases, a particular
term had become reserved for a distinctive sphere of Jewish ceremonial
life. (Most notably was this so in the case of *mitznefet*, which was al-
most exclusively applied to the priestly headdress). Far more com-
monly, the crown terms seem to have been deprived of whatever con-
crete dimensions they might once have possessed. Employed as
descriptions of honorific adornments to the head, they had become no
more than metaphors for any ornament which might be recognized as a
mark of private achievement.[7] Even if individual "crowns" had origi-
nally designated some distinct relationship to a particular public of-
fice, that context was now overlaid by the varnish of centuries of liter-
ary licence. *Keter*, on the other hand — precisely because it was a late
addition to the lexicon and precisely because it had hitherto been re-
served for a royal headdress (albeit a gentile one) — was unencumbered
by the shackles of any such extraneous linguistic and cultural associa-
tions. It was thus particularly suited to serve as the vehicle for an en-
tirely new Jewish crown tradition, one which could articulate the cen-
trality of that emblem as a symbol of distinctly political authority.


## II

That some such linguistic vehicle was indeed required is suggested
by the post-biblical intrusion of the crown headdress — in its material
form — into the public consciousness of the Jewish polity. Jewish rulers
of the Second Commonwealth (the most recent independent Jewish
society to which early rabbinic writers could relate) had altogether
invested the crown with a symbolic significance which far exceeded its
attested importance in the royal milieus of ancient Judah and Israel. In
this respect, the cultural context of the times demonstrably exerted a
preponderant influence on linguistic practice. As much is indicated by a
comparison of the biblical evidence with that which survives with re-
spect to Judaism of the period of late antiquity. The latter seems amply
to illustrate the process whereby the crown gradually became a central
image of Jewish royal office, much as it had become the prime symbol
of rulership in the gentile world. Indeed, it was the fusion of the two
cultural contexts which lent force to the Roman soldiers' placement of a
"royal crown" of thorns on the head of Jesus (Mark 15:17; Matthew
27:29; John 19:2,5). There was, arguably, more to this than mere liter-
ary affectation. The textual and numismatic evidence, although biased
and fragmentary, is sufficiently pronounced to corroborate the New
Testament implication that the irony in the substance of the headdress

worn by "the king of the Jews" would have been readily appreciated by his contemporaries. Admittedly, the royal *diadema* had been notice-ably absent from the list of governmental trinkets initially awarded to the victorious Maccabees during the halcyon days of c. 145 BCE.[8] Aristobulus I (104-103 BCE), so Josephus records, was the first member of the dynasty himself "to assume the diadem" (*B.J.* 1:70 = *Ant.* 13:301). Thereafter, however, that artifact seems to have become the most pro-nounced of all outward signs of Hasmonean rulership. Whatever its precise shape and form,[9] its possession seems to have become an indis-pensable mark of all subsequent claims to rightful succession and undis-puted sovereignty. Hence the symbolic importance (again, according to Josephus) of the occasion when Herod — with exquisite diplomatic tact — chose deliberately to refrain from displaying that emblem (cf. *B.J.* 1:393 = *Ant.* 15:195 with *B.J.* 1:387 = *Ant.* 15:187); hence, too, the significance of its usurpation by Simon the slave (*B.J.* 2:57 = *Ant.* 17:273); of its donation by Gaius to Agrippa (*Ant.* 18:237); and of the fact that Pompey forbad Hyrcanus II "to wear *the* diadem" (*Ant.* 20:244). Hence, finally, the recurrence of the crown symbol on some of the Hebrew Hasmonean coins from as early as the reign of John Hyrcanus I.[10]

There is, of course, no mere coincidence in these appearances of crown insignia as symbols of Jewish kingship concurrently with their identical exploitation by contemporary gentile rulers, both Seleucid and Roman.[11] Parallels such as these merely underscore the degree of cultural homogeneity which characterized the Middle East of late an-tiquity. The peoples of the region may sometimes have balked at the process known as "Hellenization." Nevertheless, most gradually came to share images and notions which Alexander the Great had initially plundered from the East, assimilated into his own mode of Greek thought, and then reimposed on his subjects with characteristically brilliant ruthlessness.[12] By extension, such parallels also emphasize the degree to which all Judaism of the period, whatever its sectarian bias, was affected by the Alexandrian experience. As has been amply demonstrated by (among others) Goodenough, Morton Smith, Lieberman and Hengel, the discontinuities in Jewish traditions of that time are as pronounced as are the continuities. Later rabbinic portraits of a mono-lithic stream of Jewish "normative" thinking and mores — stretching virtually unbroken from biblical to talmudic times — is, at best, a fic-tive retrojection. Second Commonwealth Judaism was quite incapable of retaining the original pristinity of ancient Israel and of preserving its cultural isolation. Rather, "from about the middle of the third century B.C.E. all Judaism must really be designated Hellenistic Judaism in the strict sense."[13] The instance of the crown — simple but nevertheless ob-trusive — serves merely to illustrate the extent to which this was so. That particular object did still possess too many pagan connotations to

be regarded as an intrinsically Jewish symbol. (This feature of the crown may or may not account for its absence from coins minted by the Jewish revolutionaries of both 66 and 135, who were otherwise blatant in their atavistic revival of distinctly Jewish national motifs.)[14] But, under Hellenistic influences, the crown had nevertheless become assimilated into literary — and perhaps colloquial — Jewish discourse as a novel, yet indispensable, image of rulership and sovereignty.

In their use of the term *keter*, it is here argued, authors of early rabbinic texts took appropriate cognizance of that development. The crown which they thus designated carried a specifically governmental meaning and was used in a deliberately Jewish context. Therein lay the distinction of their texts, not only from the books of the Old Testament, but also from those works which are conventionally lumped together as "inter-testamental." Authors of the latter books did, admittedly, refer to some sort of diadem (the Hebrew term for which, even when available, is not consistent), as one of the insignia of eschatological victory and heavenly enthronement. But, in doing so, they delayed its ultimate emplacement to some future moment of anticipated coronation, and thus transposed that headdress into an other-worldly artifact of salvic proportions and almost messianic implications.[15] Early rabbinic usage of *keter*, although undoubtedly containing traces of these notions, seems generally to have been more specific and material. Some of the surviving texts do refer to a *keter* which signifies the kingship of heaven and is hence worn by God Himself (*Tosefta, Sanhedrin* 4:2). Others do employ it as an honorific designation of virtue and good deeds (*Mishnah, Avot* 4:13). But both such categories are less typical than a third, which places this particular headdress on the designated human instrument of a public office whose claims to authority within the Jewish polity are rooted in religious sanction and historical precedent. (See, e.g., the list of diverse personalities in TJ *Pesahim* 6 [36a] and Leviticus *Rabbah* 20:2). It is in this sense that the term possesses a cognitive value, identifying the crown as symbol of governmental jurisdiction within the present and down-to-earth political framework of a divinely ordained constitution.

Certainly, the case must not be exaggerated. However careful the early rabbis may have been in their choice of terms,[16] they do not always appear to have been entirely consistent. Two striking deviations must therefore immediately be noted. *Keter*, firstly, is not the only word used to designate the crown as a symbol of public office. For that purpose, resort is often had to one of the Aramaic equivalents: e.g., *taga* (as in *Mishnah, Avot* 1:13) or *kelilah* (e.g., TB *Avodah Zarah* 44a — a commentary on II Kings 11:12; TJ *Talaniot* 4:1 [69c] — which foresees the emplacement of Hadrian's crown on the head of Simeon (Bar Kokhba); and *Targum Yonatan ben Uzziel* to Ex. 19:6).[17] Secondly, and moreover, although the use of the word *keter* is often restricted to designate

public office, that is not always the case (one frequently cited exception is TB *Shabbat* 89a, which describes God adorning His *torah* by the emplacement of *ketarim* on its letters). Nevertheless, even when these cases are duly noted, the weight of evidence remains noteworthy. Particularly is this so when the use of *keter* is compared to the rabbinic employment of other Hebrew crown synonyms. Some of the latter seem almost to disappear from early rabbinic literature.[18] Others seem deliberately to be confined to the restricted contexts in which they were originally employed in the Old Testament (*tzitz* and *mitznefet*, both reserved for the priestly mitre, are the prime examples). In yet a third case, it is possible to discern an exacerbation of the biblical technique whereby such "crowns" were almost entirely emptied of whatever public and official connotations they might once have possessed. *Atarah*, already cited as such an example in the Old Testament context, provides a remarkable case in point. Rarely in early rabbinic literature is the term used to designate a royal crown (and even then it is a gentile one; *Mishnah Avodah Zarah* 3:1 and the *beraithah* quoted in TB *Av. Zarah* 41a) or a bridegroom's laurel. Far more common is its newer, anatomical appearance as a metaphor for either the head of the penis or a nipple.[19] Compared to these flights of terminological fancy, the persistent rabbinic usage of *keter*, in its material and explicitly political form, indicates a deliberate precision which befits the weighty symbolism of the object thus designated. It also suggests an emergent sensitivity on the part of the rabbis to its public connotation in the gentile environment of their immediate acquaintance.

### III

However emphatically early rabbinic *keter* texts might have reflected Hellenistic emphases on the importance of the crown as a badge of office, they did not necessarily mirror contemporary gentile conceptions of the more mystical value of the image. On the contrary, what needs to be stressed is the extent to which the implications of the symbol seem to have been confined to more restricted bounds. In Hellenistic culture, the crown generally conveyed the notion of the award, in one sense or another, of divine and immortal life. As such, it became an integral manifestation of the human possession of the attributes of divine royalty. Such a conception finds no echo in early rabbinic writings. Whatever the cultural implications of the artistic materials unearthed by Goodenough, the literary evidence simply will not support the contention that *keter* proclaimed the immortality of its wearer. Still less did it signify his god-like achievement of divine wisdom and power.[20] The process of symbol-assimilation, although far-reaching, was not that thorough (at least, not at the literary level). Hence, the

crown which passed into the Jewish political lexicon as *keter* retained none of its pagan traces. Instead, it was shorn of its mythological associations and became a vehicle for concepts which were (or had become) intrinsically political.

It is in this context that particular note must be taken of the generic sense in which *keter* is employed in the early rabbinic texts. A survey of its occurrence reveals that the term was not restricted to any single human instrument of Jewish government, but was applied to several such agencies. Of these, royal rulership — referred to as the *keter malkhut* (crown of kingship) — was only one. The term also serves as a designation of the demesnes of the *torah* (hence, *keter torah*) and of the priesthood (*keter kehunah*). Each of these *ketarim* is regarded as a legitimate mediating device between God and His people. The divisions which demarcate them are of focus rather than of function. Their distinctions lie less in the needs each serve than in the perspectives which they bring to bear on Jewish public conduct. The *keter torah*, thus perceived, constitutes the vehicle whereby Divine teachings to Israel are interpreted, specified and transmitted. The *keter kehunah* is the instrument whereby God and Israel are brought into constant contact and close proximity. The *keter malkhut* is the constitutionally empowered means whereby civil relationships are structured and regulated in accordance with the covenantal stipulations of the holy commandments. Together, then, these are the agencies which encompass the plenitude of Jewish behavior in all its manifestations. As such, they constitute the very sinews of Jewish government.

Whether or not the governmental triad thus outlined was an original rabbinic concept must, for the moment, remain an open question. Some semblance of the same categorization (albeit, of course, without specific use of the term *keter*) has long been discerned in the structural arrangement of at least one Deuteronomic text.[21] It might also be inferred from the narrative content of the king-priest-prophet complex amply illustrated in the books of Kings and Chronicles. But these sources, although intriguing, are necessarily oblique. More obtrusive is the material which dates from the period of the Second Commonwealth and of late antiquity. By that time, it appears, the notion of tripartite constitutional division had fully worked its way into the Jewish political consciousness. As such, it became a recurring motif in diverse, and pre-rabbinic, literary genres of the period. It explicitly occurs in Josephus,[22] Philo,[23] and the Testament of Levi.[24] It also seems to be reflected in the eschatological literature of the Dead Sea Sect.[25] By tannaitic times, therefore, the concept might have become something of a convention. Significant in this context is the mishnaic insistence that authorized officers of each of the three separate domains combine in order to give constitutional effect to acts of political significance — comparatively minor as well as major.[26] Similarly

suggestive are aggadic reports — based on only the flimsiest of biblical props — that as early as Moses' first dialogue with God, he recognized the *torah*, the *malkhut* and the *kehunah* to be putatively separate arenas of governmental authority (Exodus *Rabbah* 2:7). Underlying such passages is the unspoken assumption that a tripartite division of agencies was intensely familiar to the rabbis. The formulary which defined them as three *ketarim* merely constituted a vivid restatement of a familiar arrangement.

To say that is not, however, to deny the intrinsic symbolic force of the term itself. The generic application of *keter* in no way dilutes its specificity as a designation of government. If anything, that use serves to reinforce and enlarge the symbol. By applying this one term to the three agencies of the *torah*, the *malkhut* and the *kehunah*, the authors of early rabbinic texts emphasized the ideally co-ordinate status of these domains in the management and administration of the Jewish polity. In so doing, they also articulated two further cardinal axioms. One was the required diffusion of political power among accredited organs of the tripartite *ketaric* system; the other was the retention of their individual autonomy. The first finds expression in those texts which deliberately juxtapose the three *ketarim* and thus treat them as co-equals.[27] In Jewish society, they proclaim, the formulation and implementation of public policy cannot be considered the exclusive concern of any individual body or group in possession of a monopoly of the attributes, prerogatives and privileges of political authority. A just governmental system requires that political power be distributed among three distinct clusters of jurisdiction, each of which acts as an individual prism on Jewish conduct, both public and private. The fact that all of these agencies share the same symbol conveys the message, just as it at the same time expresses their interdependent partnership within the framework of a constitutional arrangement which embraces them all. It is precisely their common designation as *ketarim* which transposes their relationship into a governmental system characterized by the separation of its component parts. Under the arrangement thus posited, no one agency can properly be granted exclusive propriety rights over a symbol which properly belongs to all three.

Equally implicit in the generic use of the term is the essential sovereignty of each of the three *ketarim*. Each wears, as it were, its own crown because each wields — under God — independent authority within its own sphere of jurisdiction. Accordingly, no *keter* possesses a constitutional right to impinge upon the domains of the others, still less to deprive them of their proper constitutional franchises. *Avot de Rabi Natan* (the earliest surviving commentary on *Mishnah, Avot*) makes this point by deliberately recalling the supposed historical circumstances of the separate creation of the three domains. According to this text, (Version 'A,' chap. 41, Version 'B,' chap. 48; ed. Schechter,

pp. 130-131), each *keter* originally derived its authority from a found-
ing covenant of its own with God: the revelation at Sinai established
the *keter torah*; the covenant with the descendants of Aaron called
into being the *keter kehunah* (Numb. 25:13); the covenant with the
house of David gave institutional and dynastic form to the *keter
malkhut* (Ps. 89:13; Ezek. 37:24-25). As depicted in the sources, these
original distinctions were subsequently reinforced by organizational
differences in the internal structures of each *keter*. From the first, each
possessed its own network of officers; each, furthermore, instituted its
own procedures in order to determine the manner of their legitimate
appointment and succession. The ordinances which regulated these ar-
rangements were not only designed to retain the genetic purity of the
separate offices; they were also intended to preserve their ordained
autonomy. Therein lay the impropriety, at least in Pharisaic eyes, of
Yannai's simultaneous tenancy of the high priesthood as well as the
kingship between 103 and 76 BCE. It was the fact that this authoritar-
ian Hasmonean ruler had thus usurped a second of the three crowns
which aroused the ire of his Pharisaic contemporaries, quite as much
as his rude infringements of the niceties of sacerdotal protocol or the
alleged murky circumstances of his mother's past. "Suffice yourself
with the *keter malkhut*," they are reported to have exhorted him in a
classic exposition of the power-sharing thesis, "and leave the *keter
kehunah* to the descendants of Aaron" (TB, *Kiddushin* 66a).

Whatever the factual historical veracity of that particular
episode,[28] the use of the term *keter* in its literary reconstruction seems
hardly to have been arbitrary. An unmistakable whiff of the mani-
festo pervades the text, which seems designed as much to posit a gov-
ernmental program as to describe a specific event. Hence, this source
need not be treated in isolation, but perceived as a singularly graphic
link in a wider chain of documents, whose manifest purpose was to
laudify the power-sharing norm which the Hasmoneans had so bla-
tantly violated. That, at a similar level, was the constitutional thrust
of allied talmudic injunctions against the presence of a king in the
Temple and of a high priest in the Sanhedrin. Whatever other purpose
these regulations ultimately served, they were also essential compo-
nents of a political doctrine which denigrated the concentration of
power. No *keter*, is their clear implication, possesses a constitutional
right to impinge upon the domain of others, far less to deprive them of
their proper constitutional franchises.

IV

Thus perceived, early rabbinic *keter* texts did not merely adum-
brate a concept which was entirely theoretical. The purpose of their

authors was far more blatantly instrumental. Not content merely to posit a notion of power-sharing, they used the *keter* image in order deliberately to delegitimize the centralized system of government which (as the unhappy end of the Second Commonwealth had tragically demonstrated) had wrought disaster on the Jews as a people and a nation. In this sense, *keter* became a political slogan, whose resonance was heightened by the historical circumstances attendant upon its appearance. Significant, in this regard, is the literary attribution of the three *ketarim* formulary to R. Shimon bar Yohai (2nd century CE), a rabbinic figure who seems to have been particularly sensitive to the uncertainties produced by the state of constitutional liquefaction prevailing in the Jewish polity of his own times.[29] Altogether, he is said to have argued, the traditional touchstones of Jewish public life had to be restructured in order to accommodate the demise of independent Jewish royal power and the destruction of the exclusive locus of Jewish cultic practice. Bar Kochba's abject failure to revive both the *kehunah* and the *malkhut* in 135 CE[30] merely intensified the need for a constitutional reappraisal which could accommodate the earlier fall of Jerusalem to the might of Rome. What ensued, indeed, was a rigorous measure of religious stock-taking. Where it touched on matters of political philosophy, this both summarized previous governmental practice and set down guidelines for future constitutional discourse.

As several studies have pointed out, early rabbinic claimants to the "crown" of the Torah were exceptionally well-placed to initiate and direct that particular reassessment. In part, this was because they were not, in the political sense, untutored novices. Linear intellectual descendants of the earlier Pharisees, they had been fortunate enough to inherit an entire panoply of governmental ambitions and mechanisms. Admittedly, and as Neusner (in particular) has persistently pointed out, care must be taken to distinguish between the various layers of Second Commonwealth Pharisaism and its diverse stages of development prior to the hemorrhage of 70 CE.[31] By that date, however, they had certainly bequeathed to their heirs a comprehensive program of action ("Be moderate in judgement; set up many scholars-disciples; put a hedge around the Law" *Mishnah, Avot* 1:1). They had further toughened the fiber of their association by establishing a sophisticated network of recruitment centers (the various "houses" or schools of scholars); a rigorous process of accreditation (*semikhah*);[32] and an embryonic framework of government (the *anshei kenesset ha-gedolah*).[33] Above all else, they had begun to develop an entire corpus of enactments (*takkanot*) and decrees (*gezerot*) enshrined in their own independent tradition of oral law (*torah she be'al peh*).[34]

It would doubtless be an exaggeration to suggest that all this activity had originally been avowedly political in intent.[35] Pharisaic purposes were probably more strictly spiritual and, in an attenuated sense,

scholastic. What is clear, nevertheless, is that Pharisaic teachings —
many of which possessed unequivocal social overtones[36] — did generate
a clamor which was unmistakably political in implication. Not even
the conventional pieties of the immediate pre-Destruction generation
could conceal that tendency. Under the inspiration of the "sages," the
motley elements who attached themselves to the original clusters of
Pharisaic *havurot* had embarked upon a struggle for control of the sub-
stance of the Jewish polity as well as its soul. They were not yet mate-
rially equipped — nor were they morally prepared — to challenge the
legitimacy of either the royal court or the Temple, even though both
were under Sadducean control.[37] They were prepared, however, to at-
tempt to infiltrate both bastions. Indeed, by the time of R. Yohanan ben
Zakkai (at the latest), and hence some time before 70 CE, the
Pharisees had begun persistently to proclaim their own right to inter-
fere in the day-to-day affairs of even so sacrosanct a domain as the
Temple service. The sons of Aaron, they maintained, were still entitled
to enjoy a cultic monopoly within the Sanctuary; but the procedures
whereby they exercises their priestly offices had to be in strict accor-
dance with the ordinances regulated in the extra-priestly councils of
the Pharisaic seats of learning.[38]

Early rabbinic use of the *keter* symbol served to enunciate these
claims with even greater force and clarity. For one thing, the literary
metaphor expressed the belief that the *torah* (a catch-all term which
encompassed the entirety of the oral law)[39] possessed an identity and a
presence as perceptible as were the domains of the *malkhut* and the
*kehunah*. Indeed, it was because all three franchises were similar in
form that they deserved to be treated in tandem. The symbol itself
dismissed possible counter-arguments to the effect that the *torah*
lacked the venerable pedigrees of the kingship and priesthood, as well
as their developed institutional cultures. On both scores, doubts could
swiftly be allayed. If the *torah* seemed to lack the historical creden-
tials necessary for the legitimization of its claims to political author-
ity, then those could be fabricated (most blatantly by the mishnaic re-
construction of an unbroken chain of constitutional tradition from which
representatives of other domains were pointedly excluded).[40]
Similarly, if the *torah* did not yet possess the ramified bureaucratic
infrastructure necessary for the consolidation of political rule, then the
required official trappings and agencies could be created (most obvi-
ously by the installation of ordained sages in a judiciary-cum-legisla-
ture-cum-executive body which deliberately adopted the originally
secular title of *Sanhedrin*).[41] The terminological device which
incorporated the *torah* into an independent *keter* merely complemented
such actions, adding to them a vivid nuance. It proclaimed the readi-
ness of early rabbinic Judaism to move towards the very center of the
stage of national power. From that position it could challenge the

hegemony hitherto enjoyed by the older agencies of civil rule and cultic ritual.

It is a measure of the restraint of early rabbinic *keter* texts that their authors never took their own argument to its logical extremes. Even at their most forceful, their claims that the *torah* possessed inherent constitutional authority remained essentially limited; accordingly, the other two domains were never denied some measure of similar constitutional jurisdiction. If anything, post-Destruction rabbinic writings tended to endow the *malkhut* and the *kehunah* with a theoretical resilience which patently belied their contemporary practical impotence. Admittedly, the attested failure of individual priests — even High Priests — to live up to the demands of their calling did occasion much caustic comment. What is more, the equally unhappy memory of the Hasmonean kingship did also generate intricate debates on required monarchic lineage.[42] But these discussions did not presage an incipient movement to dismantle either of these two agencies in their entirety. What has to be noted, rather, is that early rabbinic works are replete with detailed ordinances regulating the precise functions of the civil authorities and — more pronouncedly — the priesthood.[43] They are also suffused with explicit (and undoubtedly sincere) aspirations for the speedy resumption of their plenitude of functions. Hence both could justifiably be referred to as *ketarim*.

Nevertheless, the *keter* texts did not simply posit the atavistic restoration of a utopian equipoise between the three domains. To have done so would have been uncharacteristically naive. As the political gyrations of the First and Second Commonwealths had amply demonstrated, the triangular relationship was far too fragile to promise a permanent parity among its component segments. Especially was this so in the circumstances prevailing during the early rabbinic period, with the Temple destroyed and the independent polity crushed. Under these circumstances, neither the *kehunah* nor the *malkhut* then constituted fully articulated entities, capable of exercising whatever political autonomy the Jews were still allowed. As an operational franchise, only the *torah* remained. Was it too far-fetched (from the rabbinic perspective) to make a virtue out of this necessity? For all immediately practical purposes, could not the other two "crowns" be left in the abeyance to which they had been so cruelly condemned by an angry Providence? Would it not be more comforting to future aspirations (and, of course, more consonant with present realities) to posit the ability of the *keter torah* to assume the full weight of the constitutional burden which it had theoretically to share with the other two *ketarim*?

These were questions to which early rabbinic spokesmen addressed themselves with some relish. As has been pointed out elsewhere, they had for some time been bracing themselves (and their publics) for precisely this type of challenge. Specifically, they had gone some way

towards both denying the inviolate exclusivity of the *malkhut* and the *kehunah*. By way of contrast, they had propagated the populist character of the heritage of the *torah*. One indication of these teachings is discernible in the rabbinic elevation of the study of the Law to a level of sanctity which had formerly pertained solely to cultic activities.[44] Another is to be found in the tannaitic debates on the *halakhic* imperatives of a monarchical establishment.[45] Yet a third is provided by their emphasis on the innate right of every Jew to aspire to mastery of the *torah*, whatever his genetic pedigree (the essential prerequisite for membership of the *kehunah*) and/or material advantage (the ultimate touchstone of success in the *malkhut*).[46]

The supreme political value of the *keter* symbol lay in its provision of a highly convenient form for the encapsulation and transmission of all of these doctrines. The term was not only pungent and pithy; as has been seen, it had also come to possess specifically Jewish constitutional resonances which were quite detached from its biblical linguistic origins. It could thus serve as a political slogan of the highest value. As much was appreciated by the authors of the 4th century *Sifre*, who employed the image in a passage (Numbers, chap. 110, ed. Horowitz, pp. 144-145) of remarkably extended metaphor. That source opens with a conventional bow in the direction of an idealized tripartite division of power between the domains; it closes with a brief dissertation on the ranking order of the *kehunah* and the *malkhut*. The intervening matter, however, is a pungently tendentious pronouncement on the manifest seniority to them both of the *keter torah*, which in effect turns the initial separation of powers doctrine inside out. The *torah*, it is now taught, is not to be regarded merely as an equal partner in government, but the principal of the three crowns. This status, quite apart from being sanctified by the sublime content of the *torah*, is also inherent in its distinction as the public property of an open society. Its ranks can be joined by all who aspire to scholarly merit and spiritual avocation. Hence, the *keter torah* is not merely one of a number of checks and balances; it is the final arbiter of constitutional interpretation. Senior functionaries in other domains hold office only by virtue of the *torah*, upon whose faithful observance (as interpreted, we must assume, by the sages of that *keter* itself) ultimately depends both their incumbency and succession.

> It has been found to be said: there are three *ketarim* — the *keter kehunah*, the *keter torah*, and the *keter malkhut*. Aaron merited the *keter kehunah* and took it; David merited the *keter malkhut* and took it; but behold the *keter torah* is not apportioned. This in order not to give an excuse for people to say: "Were the *keter kehunah* and *keter malkhut* still available, I would have merited them and taken them." Behold the *keter torah*; it is an admonition

to everybody. For anyone who merits it is considered by God as though he had merited all three. Conversely, anyone who does not merit it is considered by God as though all three *ketarim* were available and he had forfeited them all. And should you say: "Which is the greater, he who anoints the ruler or he who rules (*ha-mamlikh o ha-molekh*)? Obviously the former..." The entire essence of the other two *ketarim* is derived solely from the strength of the *keter torah* as it is said: "By me kings reign...by me princes rule" (Prov. 8:15-16). The Covenant which God entered into with Aaron is greater than that He entered into with David.

<div align="center">V</div>

Thus expressed, the doctrines conveyed by the *keter* symbol were effectively inverted. The process, it has here been argued, was the expression of a fundamental political transformation. To the extent that the crown image had originally carried any official connotation in early Israelite political traditions, it had ostensibly been circumscribed to the sphere of civic government. Not until the final centuries of the common era was it employed to enunciate a doctrine of power-sharing between three essentially co-equal domains; and only on that basis were early rabbinic authors able to use it as an almost exclusive symbol of the magistry of the *torah*. But the transformation, once set in motion, seems to have been remarkably resilient. That, at least, is the unmistakable inference of later Jewish depictions of the *keter* motif, artistic as well as literary. Even when they do somehow squeeze in a reference to the *keter malkhut* and the *keter kehunah* — and often those domains are simply dropped from view — they invariably cast them in a subsidiary role.[47] Whether or not such representations constitute authentic portraits of the framework of government universally desired by all Jews in all ages and locations might, for the moment, be left an open question. What seems beyond doubt, however, is that such depictions do faithfully reflect the degree to which the *keter*, in its early rabbinic guise and interpretation, had come to exercise a singularly powerful hold on articulate segments of the Jewish public.

# Notes

1.  The ornaments and attire of the priests (and especially of the High
    Priests) are described in great detail in Exodus, chap. 28. The
    Pentateuch contains no reference at all to items of royal dress (Deut.
    17:14-20). It is left to other Old Testament books to attest to their
    existence. The relevant texts are summarized, and placed within the
    Near Eastern context (a fact which perhaps tends to overplay the lat-
    ter's importance) in O. Keel, *The Symbols of the Biblical World:
    Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York,
    1978), pp. 259-280. On the prophet's staff *(mateh)* and mantle
    *(aderet)* see *Encyclopedia Mikra'it*, vol. 4 (Jerusalem, 1962), clmns.
    825-832.

2.  "The Royal Ritual in Judah" (1947) in *The Problem of the Hexateuch
    and Other Essays* (trans. B.W. Trueman Dicken; New York, 1966), pp.
    222-231. Still less does the data warrant A.M. Hocart's blanket asser-
    tion that "the crowning" constituted an obviously central portion of
    all biblical royal installation ceremonies. *Kingship* (Oxford, 1927),
    p. 86.

3.  See, e.g., the summary in T. Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient
    Israel* (Berlin-New York, 1977), pp. 104-106.

4.  See the entry "*Keter ve-Atarah*" in *Encyclopedia Mikra'it*, vol. 4
    (Jerusalem, 1962), clmns. 405-408.

5.  For a summary of the relevant literature, see: H. Frankfort, *Kingship
    and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the
    Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago, 1948); the articles on
    "Authority and Law in the Ancient Orient," in the *Journal of the
    American Oriental Society*, Supplement no. 17 (1954), by J.A. Wilson
    (Ancient Egypt); E.A. Speiser (Mesopotamia); and H.G. Guterbock (the
    Hittite Kingdom). Also, *The Sacral Kingship: Contributions to the
    VIIIth International Congress for the History of Religion* (Rome,
    April 1955), ed. G. Widengreen, *et al.*, Leiden, 1959; and I. Engnell,
    *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (2nd ed.; Oxford,
    1967).

6.  Possibly because, in ancient Israelite society, "the transcendentalism
    of Hebrew religion prevented kingship from assuming the profound
    significance which it possessed in Egypt and Mesopotamia"
    (Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 337-344); "on the whole," the
    king "represented the people to God rather than God to the people"
    (C.R. North, "The Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship," *ZAW*, vol.
    50 [1932], pp. 6-38). On the differences between Israel and Judah in
    this regard, A. Alt, "*Das Koningtum in den Reichen Israel und Juda*,"
    *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 1 (1951), pp. 2-22; and T.C.G. Thornton,
    "Charismatic Kingship in Israel and Judah," *Journal of Theological
    Studies*, vol. 14 (1963), pp. 3-11. For the contrary view (i) that the

Hebrew king "was the incarnation of God's commands, their personal-
izing and active force," see E. Goodenough, "Kingship in Early
Israel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 48 (1929), pp. 169-205;
(ii) that "even in the official Israelite conception of the King, the
idea which is central and fundamental is that he is a superhuman, di-
vine being," see S. Mowinkel, *He That Cometh* (trans. G.W. Anderson,
Nashville, 1954). Also A.R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient
Israel* (2nd ed., Cardiff, 1967) and idem. "Hebrew Conceptions of
Kingship" in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship* (ed. S.H. Hooke, Oxford,
1958), pp. 204-235.

7.  This phenomenon, while perhaps muted in the case of *nezer* (see Prov.
    27:24 and Zech. 9:16), is explicit in the case of *atarah* — the most
    common of all the terms. Quite apart from being worn by persons of
    rank (the queen — Jer. 13:18, or nobles — Esth. 8:15), an *atarah* is also
    worn by a bridegroom at his wedding (Song of Songs 31:11). In poetic
    books, it is also used metaphorically with regard to gray hairs (Prov.
    16:13); grandchildren (Prov. 17:6); a large and prosperous city (Isa.
    28:1); a bountiful harvest (Ps. 65:11); wisdom or, ironically, folly
    (Prov. 14:24); and the steadfast love of God, or even God Himself (Ps.
    103:4, Is. 28:5). As J. Liver has emphatically pointed out, not even the
    *atarot* of Ezekiel 21:31 and Zechariah 6:11 refer explicitly to the
    royal crowns of Israel (if, indeed, any such item ever existed). *Toldot
    Bet David* (Jerusalem, 1959), pp. 99-100.

8.  I Maccs. 10:89 and 14:44 speak only of a "golden broach" and "purple
    robes," not a diadem (cf. 6:15 and 10:20-21). On the entire subject of
    royal Seleucid ornamentation and ritual, see E. Bickerman,
    *Institutions des Seleucids* (Paris, 1938), esp. pp. 17-24 and 236-257.

9.  Josephus never actually describes the royal *diadema* of which he
    speaks, whereas he does provide a literary portrait of the High
    Priestly mitre (e.g., *Ant.* 3:76). Moreover, some confusion is caused by
    his occasional coupling of the diadem with a "crown" (e.g., in the de-
    scription of Herod's funeral cortège: "a diadem encircling the head
    and surmounted by a crown of gold": B.J. I:671 = *Ant.* 17:197).
    Nevertheless, the correlation between the *diadema* and the royal
    headdress designated *keter* in the Hebrew sources would appear to be
    substantiated by two sets of sources: (i) The conventional application
    of the Greek term *diadema* to this emblem as, e.g., in Lucian *Pisc.*, 35;
    Polybius, V 57:4; I Macc. 1:9; 11:13; 13:32; and Revs. 12:3; 13:1. See
    R.C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (8th ed., London, 1908),
    pp. 74-75. (ii) A linguistic comparison of the rabbinic reports of at
    least one of the legends recounted by Josephus. The former, when de-
    scribing the manner in which the infant Moses reached out for
    Pharoah's *diadema* (*Ant.* 2:233), specifically use the term *keter* (Ex.
    *Rabbah* 1:26).

10. A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Jewish Coins* (Jerusalem, 1949), nos. 9-13a, 20;
    W. Wirgin, *On Charismatic Leadership: From Simon Maccabaeus Until
    Simon Bar Kochba* (Leeds, 1964), p. 8; and M. Grant, *Herod the Great*
    (London, 1971), p. 205. In his "prolegomena" to the 1967 reprint of

F.W. Madden's *History of Jewish Coinage and Money in the Old and New Testaments* (originally published in 1864), Prof. M. Avi-Yonah noted that Yannai's coin symbols also included a star which "stands for the radiate crown used by the Seleucid kings on their coin-portraits; although Jannaeus fought bitterly with the Pharisees, he did not venture to use his image on the coins and had to use the star symbol instead" (p. xxi). In general, see U. Rappaport, "The Emergence of Hasmonean Coinage," *Association of Jewish Studies Review*, vol. 1 (1976), pp. 171-186.

11. Here, too, the numismatic evidence is particularly relevant. As early as the third century BCE, it was customary for Greek rulers to strike coins which displayed their own portraits crowned by a wreath. For a discussion of this development, with particular reference to the probable influence exerted on it by the precedent of the Persian royal tiara, (*kitaris*), see E.F. Schmidt, *Persepolis* (Chicago, 1953), esp. p. 163 and S.K. Eddy, *The King is Dead* (London, 1961). Also, M. Robertson, *A History of Greek Art* (Cambridge, 1975), I, pp. 516-527 and sources; C. Preaux, "L'image du roi a l'epoque hellenistique," in *Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought* (Melanges G. Verbeke; Leiden, 1976), pp. 53-75; and the summary of more recent works by J. Mordzejewski in *Revue Historique du Droit Francais et Etranger*, vol. 59 (1981), pp. 494-495.

Roman interpretations and uses of the same symbol are discussed in A. Alfondi, "The Main Aspects of Political Propaganda in the Coinage of the Roman Republic," *Essays in Roman Coinage presented to Harold Mattingly*, (ed. R.A.G. Carson and C.H.V. Sutherland, Oxford, 1956), pp. 63-95, and M. Henig (ed.), *A Handbook of Roman Art* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 168-173. On the particular taint of Seleucid Hellenism, M. Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism and the East: Contacts and Interrelations from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Microfilm, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1978).

12. This process is argued in C.W. McEwan, *The Oriental Origins of Hellenistic Kingship* (Chicago, 1934) and F. Dvornick, *Early Christian and Byzantian Political Philosophy: Origins and Background* (Washington, 1966), esp. vol. I, pp. 216 and 232. On the earlier republican Macedonian tradition, see F.E. Adcok's 1953 Raleigh Lecture, "Greek and Macedonian Kingship," *British Academy: Proceedings*, vol. 39 (1954), pp. 163-180.

13. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (London, 1974), vol. I, p. 104.

14. See L. Kadman, *The Coins of the Jewish War of 66-73 CE* (Jerusalem, 1960) and H. Mantel, "Coins of the Bar Kochba Revolt," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 58 (1968), pp. 279-80. Equally striking is the absence of any reference to *keter* in the collection of articles edited by M. Avi-Yonah, *Art in Ancient Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1981). E.E. Goodenough did, of course, devote an entire chapter to "Victory and

her Crown" in *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, (vol. 7, New York, 1958, pp. 135-171; see also his "The Crown of Victory in Judaism," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 28 [1946], pp. 139-159); but his citations of literary sources contain not a single reference to *keter*. Indeed, there is a decided lack of precision about the artifact which he is describing. Telling, in this respect, is the rather off-hand remark in vol. 12 of *Jewish Symbols* (p. 139): "Crowns (or wreaths if you will) appear in various parts of synagogue carvings and on many ossuaries."

15. The most prominent proof texts in this regard are: Jubilees 16:30; Odes of Solomon 20:7ff (both of which are analyzed in M. Smith, "The Image of God," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 40 [1958], pp. 510-511); The Testament of Levi 8:1-12 (discussed in H. Ludin Jansen, "The Consecration in the Eighth Chapter of Testament Levi," in *The Sacral Kingship*, pp. 356-365); and Ecclesiaticus, 45:6-12 (see P.E. Schramm, "Herr schaftzeichen und Staatssymbolik," *Schriften der MGH*, vol. XIII [1956], i, pp. 57-59). Note also the apocalyptic emplacement of wreaths on the 24 elders of Revs. 4:4.

16. A point emphasized by L. Ginzburg, *Perushim ve-Hidushim ba-Yerushalmi*, vol. 3 (New York, 1941), p. 211-212.

17. *Kelilah* is also used as a term for the "coronation" tax imposed on Jews and as a description of the garland worn by bridegrooms. Hence the suggestion that the word may be derived from KLAL, the root also of *kelulot* ("marriage"). For the contrary argument, that *kelilah* is a Persian loan word of Parthian origin, see G.W. Widengren, "Heavenly Enthronement and Baptism," in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity* (Leiden, 1968), p. 555.

18. Such is the case, e.g., with *nezer*, whose meaning in fact has to be elucidated in the TB (*Av. Zarah* 44a). Note also that the term does not once appear in Ecclesiaticus.

19. A complete listing of these uses in the TB is provided in B.Y. Kasovsky, *Otzar Leshon ha-Talmud*, vol. 28 (Jerusalem, 1972), p. 324. See also the incipient discussion, written in 1867, in L. Low, "*Kranz und Krone*," *Gesammelte Schriften* (Szegedin, 1893), vol. 3, pp. 407-437.

20. C.f. E.E. Goodenough: "The word 'King' meant to any son of the East in Philo's day a claim to divine rank," *The Politics of Philo Judaeus* (Yale, 1938), p. 27. The general argument was propounded in Goodenough's "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *Yale Classical Studies*, vol. 1 (1928), pp. 65-78. Its possible application in a school of "mystic" Judaism was posited in his *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven, 1935). It has been suggested that, by transmission, the same attributes were ascribed in Samaritan literature to Moses, whose *keren orah* (Ex. 34:29) was regarded as God's own "crown of light." See W.A. Meeks, "Moses as God and King," *Religions in Antiquity*, pp. 354-371. For a

summary of the criticism of Goodenough's work, see M. Smith, "Goodenough's Jewish Symbols in Retrospect," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 86 (1967), pp. 53-68.

21. Most notably the governmental provisions ordained in Deuteronomy, chaps. 17 and 18. There, after a general introduction (17:8-13), separate paragraphs are allotted to the appointment and prerogatives of the *melekh* (17:14-20); the *kohanim* and *levi'im* (18:1-8); and the *navi* (18:9-22). For an explicit exegetical application to these passages of the conceptual "ketaric" framework, see the sixteenth century commentary *Torat Mosheh* to Deut. 18:1 by Moses Alshekh of Safed, especially para. 6: "Here are the three *ketarim*...."

22. Who describes John Hyrcanus I as "the only man to unite in his person three of the highest privileges: supreme command of the nation (*keter malkhut*); the high priesthood (*keter kehunah*); and the gift of prophecy (*keter torah*)" (*B.J.* I:68=*Ant.* 13:300).

23. Malchizedek was "the great combination of king, priest and logos"; *Legum Allegoria* 2:82.

24. 8:11-15; "Levi, thy seed shall be divided into three offices": ruler, priest, prophet of the Most High.

25. Whose principal figures are referred to as *doresh ha-torah; mashiah aharon; mashiah yisrael.* See succinct discussion of this literature in the revised edition (by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Blank) of Schurer's *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 553.

26. Thus, on the *yom ha-kahal* (at least, in one description), the Scroll of Law was handed by the High Priest to the King, who read it in the presence of the sages (*Mishnah, Sotah* 7:8). Also, any extension of the city limits of Jerusalem, or of the boundary of the Temple, was said to require the joint sanction of king, priest and prophet (*Mishnah, Shavu'ot* 2:2).

27. The most succinct and probably best known is *Mishnah, Avot* 4:13. For commentaries on this source, see *Avot de Rabi Natan*, "A," chap. 41 and "B," chap. 48; and *Sifrei* Numbers 119.

28. Which is sometimes attributed to John Hyrcanus I. For analyses of the incident, on an ascending scale of utility, see: M.J. Geller, "Alexander Jannaeus and the Pharisaic Rift," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 30 (1979), pp. 202-211; B.Z. Luria, *Mi-Yannai ad Hordus* (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 104-105; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1954), pp. 259-260; Y.L. Levin, "*Ha-Ma'avak ha-Politi bein ha-Perushim la-Tzedukkim Bitkufat ha-Hashmonaim*," *Perakim be-Toldot Yerushalayim Bimei Bayit Sheni* (eds. U. Oppenheimer, *et al.*, Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 71-74; Y. Efron, "*Shimon ben Shetah ve-Yannai ha-Melekh*," *Sefer Zikkaron le-Gedalia Alon*, (eds. M. Duran, *et al.*, Tel Aviv, 1970), esp. pp. 86-88. For comments on the early language of the passage, see M.H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 72-74 and P. Kieval, "Talmudic View of the

Hasmonean and Early Herodian Periods in Jewish History," unpub. Ph.D. (Brandeis, 1970), pp. 48-53.

29. The attribution is explicit in Exodus *Rabbah* 34:2. For evidence of R. Shimon's statements on allied matters of political import, see the sources quoted in K. Konovitz, *Rabi Shimon bar Yohai: Osef Shalem shel Devarav u-Ma'amarav ba Sifrut ha-Talmudit ve-ha-Midrashit* (Jerusalem, 1965), and the discussion in M. Ber, "Har ha-Bayit ve-ha-Mikdash Etzel RSB'Y," *Perakim be-Toldot Yerushalayim Bimei Bayit Sheni* (eds., U. Oppenheimer, *et al.*, Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 361-375; and *idem*. "Shimon bar Yohai Virushalayim," *Yerushalayim Bitkufat ha-Bayit ha-Sheni* (ed., U. Oppenheimer, Jerusalem, 1980).

30. The extent to which Bar Kokhba might have intended to restore both domains is indicated by those coins which couple his own name and title ("ha-Nasi") with one "Elazar *ha-Kohen*," Mantel, "Coins...," *op. cit.* For Elazar's possible identity, J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London, 1969), p. 97, n. 33. In general, G. Alon, *Ha-Yehudim be-Eretz Israel bi-Tekufat ha-Mishnah ve-ha-Talmud*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv, 1953), pp. 268-269; and L. Finkelstein, *Akiba* (2nd ed., New York, 1970), pp. 217-232.

31. See, e.g., the form-critical examination of the rabbinic sources in J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (3 vols., Leiden, 1970). In *From Politics to Piety. The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (New Jersey, 1973), pp. 45-66, Neusner has argued that the Pharisees, who had been politically active under the Hasmoneans, withdrew from politics in the time of Herod. Moreover, they remained so withdrawn until the Destruction, when they renewed their bid for political power. This view has been contested, most recently by D. Schwartz, "Josephus and Nicolaus on the Pharisees," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 14 (1983), pp. 157-171. See also E. Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. ed., Edinburgh, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 381-414.

32. On which see, e.g., H.D. Mantel, "Ordination and Appointment in the Period of the Second Temple," *Harvard Theological Review* 57 (1964), pp. 325-346.

33. On which see H.D. Mantel, "The Nature of the Great Synagogue," *Harvard Theological Review* 60 (1967), pp. 69-91.

34. On *Torah she be'al peh*, see G. Blidstein, "*Lekorot ha-Munah 'Torah she be'al peh,'*" *Tarbitz* 42 (1973), pp. 496-498. On the possible origins of the development of the Jewish scholastic tradition during the early Hellenistic period, see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, esp. pp. 78-82 and 153-174. The extent to which this tradition could be regarded as an extension of biblical prophecy, and was by the early rabbis so regarded, is discussed in M.N. Glatzer, "A Study in Talmudic Interpretations of Prophecy," *Review of Religion*, vol. 10 (1946), pp. 115-137 and E.E. Urbach, "Halakhah u-Nevuah," *Tarbitz*, vol. 18 (1947), pp. 1-27.

35. Although it must be noted that Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, comes close to saying as much; E. Rivkin, *A Hidden Revolution: The Pharisees' Search for the Kingdom Within* (Nashville, 1978), is far more explicit — but probably to the point of distortion.

36. "The interpretations of the Law given respectively by priests and scribes were necessarily colored by their diametrically opposed social connections. The priest in his decisions followed the patrician precedents and sympathies of the Temple, the scribe the inherited ideas of his plebian class." L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of their Faith* (3rd ed., New York, 1962), p. 265. See also W.H. Buehler, *The Pre-Herodian Civil War and Social Debate* (Basel, 1976).

37. "Just as the holiness of the Temple was not impaired in the estimation of the Sages by High Priests who were unworthy of officiating, so it never entered their minds to repudiate the institution of the Sanhedrin, or to set up a rival to it in the form of a competing court, even if they did not approve of its composition and even if they opposed the High Priests and their entourage. They endeavored rather to exercise their influence, and to introduce their rulings and views even into the ritual of the Temple service and into the Sanhedrin's method of operation." E.E. Urbach, "Class Struggle and Leadership in the World of the Palestinian Sages," *Israel Academy of Science, Proceedings*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1968), p. 52. See also G. Alon, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 190-195.

    On early Pharisaic membership, see: J. Neusner, "The Fellowship (*Haburah*) in the Second Jewish Commonwealth," *Harvard Theological Review* 53 (1960), pp. 125-142; and J. Spiro, "Who was the *Haber*? A New Approach to an Ancient Institution," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 11 (1980), pp. 186-216.

38. Such encroachments are stressed in J. Neusner, *A Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai ca 1-80 CE* (2nd ed., Leiden, 1970), pp. 70-92, and treated with more caution in S. Safrai, "Behinot Hadashot le-Ba'ayat Ma'amado u-Ma'asav shel *RYBZ* le-Ahar ha-Hurban," *Eretz Israel ve-Hakhamehah* (Tel Aviv, 1984), pp. 181-208. One striking testament to the Pharisaic demonstration of political power in its most naked form is the retrospective Mishnaic account contained in Yoma 1:5. There, the *kohen gadol* (on the night of *Yom ha-Kippurim*, no less) is admonished that he in effect constitutes no more than a "delegate" of the (Pharisaic) *bet din*.

39. On the different meanings which were attached to the term *"torah"* in rabbinic literature, see E.E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem, 1975), chap. 12. The manner whereby *"torah"* concepts are embodied in *halakhah* and *aggadah* is traced in M. Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind* (3rd ed., New York, 1972).

40. Most pointedly in *Avot* 1:1, "Moses received the *torah* from Sinai, and handed it to Joshua; from Joshua it passed to the elders; from the elders to the prophets; from the prophets to the *anshei kenesset ha-gedolah*." On the absence of the priests from this chain, and others, see M.D. Herr, "Ha-Retzef Sheba-Shalshelet Mesiratah shel ha-Torah," *Zion*, 44 (1979), pp. 43-56.

41. On the history of this council, whose changing composition itself can be seen to have reflected the shifting tides of political fortune, see: H. Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961); Y. Efron, "Ha-Sanhedrin ba-Hazon u-va-Metziut Shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni," *Doron sive Commentationes de antiquitate docto viro Benzioni Katz...dedicatae* (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 167-304; and E. Rivkin, "Beth Din, Boule, Sanhedrin: A Tragedy of Errors," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46 (1975), pp. 181-199.

42. For summaries of these comments, see: G. Alon, "Did the Jewish People and its Sages Cause the Hasmoneans to be Forgotten?," *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 1-47; Liver, *Toldot Bet David*; and B.E. Luria, "Be-Sodom shel ha-Kohanim," *Bet Mikra*, 22 (1977), pp. 283-290.

43. Which is one justification for the view that the Mishnah took up "the perspective of the work of priests and levites. In theme and focus it is mainly, though not solely, a priestly document." J. Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago, 1982), p. 224.

44. E.g., *Avot de Rabi Natan* (ed. Schechter) 4:18. "The study of the *Torah* is more beloved of God than burnt offerings. For if a man studies *Torah* he comes to know the will of God...(Prov. 2:5)...hence when a sage sits and expounds to the congregation, Scripture accords it to him as though he had offered up fat and blood on the altar." See also the exegisis on Deut. 11:13 in *Sifrei* chap. 41 (ed. Finkelstein, pp. 87-88).

45. A comprehensive survey of the sources may be found in G. Blidstein, "The Monarchic Imperative in Rabbinic Perspective," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 7-8 (1983), pp. 15-40.

46. G. Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World*, p. 437. Later sources which emphasize that the *keter torah*, unlike the other domains, is essentially republican and hence open to all men of talent, are listed in M.M. Kasher, *Humash Torah Shelemah*, vol. 20 (New York, 1957), p. 25, no. 94; commentary to Exod. 25:10. See also *Mekhilta* on Exod. 12:1 (ed. Lauterbach, pp. 3-11).

47. For surveys of artistic depictions of this motif, usually restricted to the *keter torah*, see: S.S. Kayser (ed.), *Jewish Ceremonial Art* (Philadelphia, 1959), which notes as exceptional the three *ketarim* placed on an ark curtain from Frankfort-am-Main, 1713 (p. 28, no. 8); C. Roth (ed.), *Jewish Art. An Illustrated History* (New York, 1961), which notes the unique nature of a three-crowned *Torah* headpiece from Italy, no date (p. 317); also F. Lansberger, "The Origins of European *Torah* Decorations," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 24

(1953), pp. 133-150. The only exception to the artistic supremacy of
the *keter torah* which I have personally encountered is located in the
Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.A. There, above the
ark, three crowns (deliberately designed to look very much like the
headpiece placed on the head of a British monarch) are arranged in
triangular design, with the *keter malkhut* (designated by the Hebrew
letters *kuf, mem*) placed above those of the *torah* (kuf, taf) and *kehu-
nah* (here designated *keter leviyah*, hence *kuf lamed*). This may, of
course, have been a scribal error; but one is intrigued by the thought
that the placement may have been a deliberate, if somewhat arcane,
expression of Empire loyalism.