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## TALMUD

The term "Talmud" (Heb. *talmûd*, teaching, learning, from the verb *lāmad*, to learn) designates the authoritative body of post-biblical Jewish laws and traditions, consisting essentially of two parts: an older nucleus, the MISHNAH, compiled toward the end of the 2d Christian century, and the commentaries on it, the GEMARAH, which has two forms—the Palestinian, compiled toward the end of the 4th century, and the Babylonian, compiled at the beginning of the 6th century. As a vast collection of various sayings of numerous RABBIS (Jewish teachers) over a period of at least six centuries, the Talmud is basically a recording in writing of traditional oral law. From the orthodox Jewish viewpoint, the "oral law" recorded in the Talmud is second only to the "written law," the Sacred Scriptures; in theory it is considered almost on a par with the Scriptures, but in practice it is, in a certain sense, regarded as superior to it. Since the Jewish concept

of oral law as found in the Talmud is so important, this article will first treat oral law before describing the origin and nature of the Talmud itself.

**Beginning of oral law.** Consideration will be given here to oral law before there was any written law, to oral law as a supplement of written law, and to the significance of the Babylonian Exile in the development of oral law.

*Oral Law before Written Law.* Modern biblical scholars have recognized that oral tradition is ordinarily to be presupposed before its various channels became stabilized in written documents. There were, for instance, from 800 to 1,300 years between the events of the patriarchal age and the written accounts of them in Genesis. Studies in the field of the ancient Near East show more and more conclusively that, despite the long pre-biblical period of predominantly oral transmission, much reliable historical material was preserved and transmitted to the authors of the documentary sources of the PENTATEUCH. This is true, not only of the historical, but also of the legal traditions, i.e., there was unwritten law based on custom before it was standardized and codified. For the time of the Patriarchs, the oral law corresponded more to legal concepts of the ancient Near East in the first half and middle of the 2d millennium B.C. than it did to the law that was later standardized in writing in the Pentateuch; for example, although in Lv 18.18 a man is forbidden to marry the sister of his wife while the latter is still alive, it is related in Gn 29.16–30 that Jacob married two sisters, Lia and Rachel. Marriage with two sisters was not considered illegal at that time in the ancient Near East [see M. Schorr, *Urkunden des altbabylonischen Zivil- und Prozessrechts* (Leipzig 1913) No. 4.5]. The way in which Abraham purchased the tomb of Machpelah (Gn 23.1–20) corresponds to the legal customs of the age of the Patriarchs, although there is nothing about this in the law set down later in the Pentateuch [see M. R. Lehmann, "Abraham's Purchase of Machpelah and Hittite Law," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 129 (1953) 15–18]. This passage, which belongs to the priestly document, the most recent Pentateuchal source, has obviously preserved a point of ancient legal custom.

*Oral Law as a Supplement of Written Law.* After the laws were stabilized in the Pentateuch, they were still supplemented by oral legal tradition. For example, it is presupposed in Ex 21.2 that there were regulations about the buying and selling of Hebrew slaves that obviously were contained only in the oral legal tradition. According to Dt 17.8–11, the highest court in Jerusalem gave decisions on questions that were not provided for in the written law. Examples of the existence of an oral legal tradition in addition to law fixed in writing can be found

also in the Prophets and the other sacred writings. In Jer 17.21–22 the law forbidding the carrying of a load from one place to another on the Sabbath is more specific than the general Pentateuchal prohibition of work on the Sabbath. In Neh 10.32 the prohibition against transacting business on the Sabbath is expressed more clearly than in the Pentateuch. This type of supplementation and interpretation of the written law is referred to in Talmudic literature as *tôrâ šebbe'al peh* (oral law) as distinct from *tôrâ šebiktāb* (written law).

*Development of Oral Law in the Exile.* After the Babylonian devastation of Judah and the deportation to Babylonia of the majority of its surviving inhabitants between 597 and 582 B.C., for people of the Jewish DIASPORA the law of God became the safeguard and the very condition of their existence. Therefore, from then on, they had an intensive concern for this law. The activity of the Pentateuchal PRIESTLY WRITERS and, in connection with this, the redaction of the whole Pentateuch were important results of this development; another was the formation of a special class of specialists in Scripture, the SCRIBES. Direct evidence of Jewish Scribes as a professional class, and indeed in Palestine itself, first appears at the beginning of the 2d century B.C. in Josephus *Ant.* 12.3.3 (for 198 B.C.) and Sir 39.1–11 (c. 180 B.C.), where they are said to be the preservers of tradition and the successors of the Prophets. Yet their profession surely went back to an earlier period. At first, in the Diaspora as well as in Palestine, the interpretation of the Law was reserved especially to men of priestly lineage; but in time the priestly element faded more and more into the background, and lay experts in Scripture came to the fore. Among the Pharisaic Scribes, priests ceased to play any role at all.

The Hebrew term for Scripture scholar is *sōpēr* (writer, scribe). The first to be mentioned with this title is EZRA; in Ezr 7.6 he is called “a Scribe skilled in the Law of Moses.” Although his title, “Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven” (Ezr 7.12, 21), in the Aramaic document of Ezr 7.12–26 refers primarily to his official rank in the bureaucracy of the Persian Empire, it was rightly understood by the Jews to mean an expert in Scripture, since an official had to be familiar with specifically Jewish laws as well as the laws of the Persian Empire.

The rise of professional Scribes was furthered also by the gradual formation of the OT canon in the postexilic period. The Scribes were, first of all, what their title signifies, professional copyists, occupied in producing faithful transcripts of the sacred text of the Scriptures. In *Kiddushin* 30a (unless otherwise specified, tracts cited here refer to the Babylonian Talmud), there is an allusion



*Rabbi studying the Talmud.* (©Bettmann/CORBIS)

to this function of the Scribes: “The ancients were called Scribes [*sōpērîm*] because they used to count [*hāyû sōpērîm*] the number of letters in the Law”; in typical Talmudic fashion this statement is based on a pun, *sōpēr*, meaning both writing and counting. With the function of copying was naturally joined that of interpreting the teachings and applying the traditional legal material to the new temporal circumstances.

The later houses of study and those of the synagogal service, the two centers of the developing oral tradition in Judaism, had their origins also in the Babylonian Exile. Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles was addressed particularly to the elders, priests, and Prophets among them (Jer 29.1). Moreover, religious meetings of Ezekiel with the elders in Babylonia were referred to (Ez 8.1; 14.1; 20.1). Details are unfortunately lacking on the development from these hypothetical beginnings to the well-known rabbinical academies of Babylonia in the Christian Era. It is certain, however, that the study of law was cultivated by the Jews in Babylonia, nor is it by accident that the two most decisive figures of Judaism in the period of the Second Temple, Ezra and Hillel, came to Palestine from Babylonia.

**Significance of oral law in Judaism.** The concept of oral law belongs specifically to Pharisaism. It is true that other Jewish groups also (e.g., the Essenes of Qum-

ran) were in possession of legal tradition derived from the OT that had been stabilized in writing since the 2d century B.C.; unequivocal and stricter interpretations of OT laws are found for instance in the Book of Jubilees and the Dead Sea Scrolls. While the latter, because of the proximate eschatological expectation of the priestly apocalyptic circle that sponsored them, contain extraordinarily severe laws, the Pharisaic legal interpretation is distinguished by much greater mildness. Thus, for example, in the Qumran-Essene Damascus Document (11.16.17) it is forbidden to use any instrument in saving a drowning man on the Sabbath, whereas in the Mishnah (*Yoma* 8.6) it is stated: "Any danger to life supercedes the Sabbath laws." In contrast to the apocalyptic groups, the Pharisaic understanding of the Law had a characteristic sense of what was within the realm of the possible [see K. Schubert, "Die Jüdischen Religionsparteien im Zeitalter Jesu," *Der historische Jesus und der Christus unseres Glaubens* (Vienna 1962)].

*Oral Law in Pharisaic Judaism.* In the last pre-Christian centuries, oral tradition was of special importance because the Pharisees were of the opinion that after the death of the last three of the Minor Prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Spirit, i.e., the gift of prophecy, had departed from Israel (*Tos. Sottah* 13.2; *Yoma* 9b; *Sottah* 48b; *Sanh.* 11a). According to the opinion of the rabbis, oral tradition was part of the heritage of prophecy as well. Thus, in the Mishnah (*Avoth* 1.1) it is stated: "Moses received the Law on Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets handed it on to men of the great Sanhedrin." The concept of oral tradition enabled the rabbinical scholars to establish a continuous link between Moses and themselves. For them, even their own interpretations and additions to the Law had already been given orally to Moses on Sinai (*Berakhot* 5a). According to a haggadic (see HAGGADAH) tradition, the only reason why the Mishnah had not been given to Moses in writing was so that it might not be translated into Greek and thus fall into the hands of the Gentiles. After the latter appropriated the written Law of Moses, God could recognize His chosen people only by their possession of the Mishnah, that is, the oral tradition incorporated in the Mishnah [*Pesikta rabbati* 14b, ed. M. Friedmann (Vienna 1880)]. Similarly, the well-known Palestinian teacher of the 3d century, Johanan bar Nappaha, said, "The Holy One, praised be He, made the covenant with Israel solely for the sake of the orally handed-on word" (*Gittin* 60b). For the rabbis, oral law was a necessary supplement to the written law and in their eyes of no less value than the latter. Certain precepts that the rabbis considered very old but for which no point of reference could be found in the Bible were given a special designation as "Halakot [plu-

ral of HALAKAH] given to Moses on Sinai" (Mishnah *Peah* 2.6; Mishnah *Eduyyot* 8.7; Mishnah *Yadayim* 4.3).

*Prohibition against Writing New Religious Books.* Closely connected with the idea of oral law was the so-called writing prohibition, regarding whose nature and continuance rabbinical tradition itself was not of one opinion. It probably meant no more than that the legal material was to be presented only orally, and originally it was only orally handed down, although there were not lacking defenders of the opinion that originally also the Haggadah would have fallen under the writing prohibition (*Temurot* 14b; *Gittin* 60b; for more details, see Strack, 9–16). Had the latter been the case, the full force of the writing prohibition would have been clearly directed against the various apocalyptic groups and their writings. The specifically Pharisaic character of the writing prohibition is evidenced by the fact that Sirach at the beginning of the 2d century B.C. and the authors of two Books of Maccabees wrote their works apparently without any scruples, but these works were not included in the Pharisaic canon. Likewise, Sirach's grandson, who translated his grandfather's work into Greek, either must not have known about a writing prohibition or else must have ignored it. Since the Book of Sirach did not stand in opposition to Pharisaism, which as such did not come into being until at least a generation after it was written, this book could still be cited on occasion by rabbinical scholars with as much reverence as the hagiographa (the last books in the Hebrew Bible) were cited (as, e.g., Sir 13.15 is quoted in *Baba Kamma* 92b). The collections of laws, however, that were drawn up independently of Pharisaism and in opposition to it, for example, those from the QUMRAN COMMUNITY, were undoubtedly rejected by the Pharisees [see K. Schubert, *The Dead Sea Community* (New York 1959)]. Opposition to the writing of religious works in general was typical of early Pharisaism. The literary products of the apocalyptic groups were called apocryphal (hidden) books, and the reading of them was strictly forbidden (Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 10.1). Pharisaism was thereby able to prevent Judaism from breaking up into numerous groups and to make its own doctrine that of normative Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70.

Toward the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2d Christian century, when the legal material that had been handed down orally in Pharisaic circles became so vast that it had to be organized in writing, obviously no writing prohibition stood in the way. As the so-called Fasting Scroll shows, even in the period before the destruction of the Temple, there was a written list of certain feast days on which there was to be no fasting or mourning. It is suspected, however, that the Fasting Scroll originated among the ZEALOTS and not in Pharisaic circles

[see M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden 1961) 19]. In any case, it was severely forbidden to draw the oral law from written sources.

*Purpose of Oral Law.* The concept of oral law was to make a permanent fixation of Judaism's external form of life impossible. Each generation was to adapt its particular life to the new circumstances in keeping with the Mosaic Law. Two examples may serve to show this: the modification of the Ketuba (marriage document) prescriptions by Simeon ben Shetaḥ and the prosbul of Hillel. By prescribing that the money a husband had to pay his wife in the event of a divorce or his death was fixed as a mortgage and surety on his estate, Simeon ben Shetaḥ succeeded both in limiting, in practice, the possibility of a divorce and in protecting a widow against her husband's heirs, who might be unwilling to pay her (*Ke-tubbot* 82b). In this, Simeon ben Shetaḥ reflected the finer moral sense of his time (the beginning of the 1st century B.C.). Hillel the Elder, a contemporary of Herod the Great, had to take account of the transition from a purely agrarian to a largely capitalistic economy. According to Dt 15.1–11, a creditor was obliged to remit a debt in the SABBATH YEAR; in fact, the creditor was to lend money even when the Sabbath year was near and thus had little prospect of recovering his loan. Despite the idealistic purpose of this precept, it was unrealistic in a time of more highly developed finance. The one who was really harmed by it was the poor man for whose good the law was meant but who now had little chance of getting a loan. Hillel's prosbul (πρός βουλῆ βουλευτῶν, at the council of the councilors) was to put an end to this situation. According to Hillel's enactment, the creditor could declare publicly in court that he would collect the debt, and in this way he was released from the duty of having to cancel it in the seventh year (Mishnah *Shebi'it* 10.3, 4; *Gittin* 36a).

#### **Stabilization of oral law in the written Talmud.**

After the Romans destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), Pharisaic Judaism simply became normative Judaism. The other groups were eliminated by the new political circumstances. The members of these groups either were assimilated into Pharisaism or left the ranks of Judaism and joined Judeo-Christian or Gnostic groups. Under these circumstances, it became necessary for Pharisaism to collect, sift, and compile in writing the legal traditions that were scattered within its framework and had hitherto been handed down only by word of mouth. Halakah (moral teaching) and the interest awakened in it were now more in the foreground than ever before. The common bond of Judaism was secured through halakah, even though, as was the case with the Hekhalot mystics (who sought to ascend in spirit to the heavenly *hēkālōt* or palaces), themes and traditions were taken over from the apocalyptic groups that originally were in competition

with Pharisaism (see Gnosticism, Jewish). Thus it came about that, by the beginning of the 2d Christian century or even earlier, the legal material, which had already swollen in bulk, was organized and edited. This compilation bore the title *mishnâ rîshônâ*, or first mishnah (see e.g., in Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 3.4). Further Mishnah compilations were made in the course of the 2d century A.D. by Rabbi AKIBA BEN JOSEPH (on whose method, see *Avoth de Rabbi Natan*) and Rabbi Meir. However, the Mishnah that forms the basis of the Talmud is the compilation made by Rabbi JUDAH HA-NASI, who probably completed his work shortly after A.D. 200. Judah ben Samuel ha-levi (*Kusari* 3.67) dates its completion as 219–220. This date could be approximately correct, because Judah ha-Nasi probably died in 217 [see A. Guttmann, "The Patriarch Judah I: His Birth and His Death," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 25 (1954) 239–261].

*The Mishnah.* Medieval Jewish scholars were not in agreement whether the Mishnah of Judah ha-Nasi had been committed to writing by him. Despite denial by such an authority as RASHI (see his comments on *Shabbat* 13b and on *Eruvin* 62b), it is taken for granted that the Mishnah was recorded in writing by Judah ha-Nasi himself, to prevent this immense collection of legal material from being forgotten. Also that the teachers who are quoted in the Gemarah adhere very closely to the text of the Mishnah is evidence that it must have been available to them in writing, although in the rabbinical academies it continued to be handed down orally. In doubtful cases, however, a written text could be consulted (see K. Hruby, 116–117). In the generation following Judah ha-Nasi, his Mishnah received some additions. Such are the passages where he himself is quoted as holding a certain opinion or where teachers who were active after his time are quoted.

The Mishnah consists of six *s'dārîm*, or "orders," each of which contains several *massēkōt* (weavings), or tracts, and these in turn are divided into *p'erāqîm* (sections), or chapters. As divided in the printed editions, the whole Mishnah contains 63 tracts with a total of 525 chapters. The names of the orders and their contents are (1) *Zera'im* (seeds), containing 11 tracts, the first of which, BERAKHOT, deals with blessings and prayers. In this way reverence for God is given the primary position among the various laws. The other tracts deal principally with the religious laws connected with agriculture in Palestine. (2) *Mo'ed* (feast), containing 12 tracts that deal with religious FEASTS. (3) *Nashim* (women), containing 7 tracts that treat marital and family law. (4) *Neziqin* (damages), containing 10 tracts that deal with civil and criminal law. Included in this division of the Mishnah are the *Pirke Avoth* (chapters of the fathers), which summarizes the ethical doctrine of Pharisaic Judaism from a cen-

tury before Christ to the time of Judah ha-Nasi. (5) *Kodashim* (sacred things), containing 11 tracts on the nature of the various sacrifices, on food regulations, and on the directions for the ritual slaughter (*šehitā*). (6) *Tohorot* (clean things), containing 12 tracts on the special laws for ritual purity.

The word “Mishnah” (repetition, study, from the verb *šānā*, to repeat) signifies both the individual points of doctrine and the collection of these doctrines; the latter is now the usual meaning of the term. In its present form, the Mishnah consists of numerous *mišnāyôt*, Mishnah precepts. The Mishnah teachers are called Tannaim (literally repeaters, from the Aramaic root *tny* corresponding to the Hebrew root *šny*). There were altogether five generations of Tannaim.

*Other Tannaitic Literature.* Not all of the teachings of the Tannaim were incorporated into the official Mishnah of Judah ha-Nasi. Originally there were other collections of Tannaitic teachings, as can be seen, e.g., in *Yerushalmi* tractate *Horayot* 48c. In this passage there are mentioned, along with the Bible and the Mishnah, the Tosephta and “large Mishnah collections, such as the *Mishnah rabba* of Rabbi Ḥiyya, the *Mishnah rabba* of Rabbi Hosha‘yah, and the *Mishnah* of Bar Kappara.” R. Ḥiyyah and Bar Kappara were students and friends of Judah ha-Nasi, and R. Hosha‘yah was a student of the former two. These Mishnah compilations, therefore, were drawn up by men having scholarly connections with Judah ha-Nasi. Of the above-mentioned works, only the Tosephta has been preserved. The compilations of Tannaitic teachings outside the Mishnah of Judah ha-Nasi were regarded as Baraita (Aramaic for outside thing, i.e., excluded from the Mishnah), and therefore they were not passed on with the same care as the official Mishnah. In both Talmuds, however, Baraitot (plural of Baraita) are frequently quoted as authorities in order to give special weight to the arguments of the Amoraim in their controversies. Other Tannaitic material is contained in the Tannaitic Midrashim (see MIDRASHIC LITERATURE).

The Tosephta (addition, supplement) is a work in a class by itself; like the Mishnah, it contains six orders. In its presentation, the Tosephta is more diffuse than the Mishnah. [It has been edited by M. S. Zuckerman (Pasewalk 1881) and S. Lieberman (New York 1955).] Although the Tosephta consists principally of Tannaitic teachings, it acquired also, as did the Mishnah, various additions in the early Amoraic period. As a kind of Tosephta to the Mishnah tract *Pirke Avoth* (Chapters of the Fathers) is the collection called the *Avoth de Rabbi Natan* (The Fathers according to Rabbi Nathan).

*The Gemarah.* The scholars who followed the Tannaim are called Amoraim (Hebrew plural of Aramaic

*‘āmōrā*, speaker, explainer). The Amoraim were limited to interpreting the Tannaim, and they could not explain away any Tannaitic doctrine as invalid. They therefore endeavored, by way of interpretation, to make the Tannaitic teachings fit their own ideas. If an Amora held a doctrinal opinion differing from that of his colleague, he endeavored to prove his point by quoting from the Mishnah or the Baraita. His colleague would then try on his part to propose an interpretation of the quotation that would neutralize the other’s objection. In Palestine there were five, and in Babylonia, seven, generations of Amoraim who occupied themselves with the teachings handed down by the Tannaim. The disputes and teachings of the Amoraim are called Gemarah (completion). Whereas the Mishnah is in a late form of Hebrew (Mishnaic Hebrew), the Gemarah is mostly in Aramaic, a western dialect of it being used by the Palestinian Amoraim, an eastern one by the Babylonian Amoraim. The Mishnah and the Gemarah that rose in Palestine form what is inaccurately known as the Jerusalem (Heb. *yerūšalmī*) Talmud; the Mishnah and the Gemarah that rose in Babylon is called the Babylonian (*bablī*) Talmud.

The most important rabbinical academies in Palestine were in Tiberias, Sepphoris, Caesarea, and Lydda. The Palestinian Gemarah is much less extensive than the Babylonian. Therefore the Jerusalem Talmud was not regarded in Judaism as highly as the Babylonian, although it contains much old and important material. The shorter compass of the Palestinian Gemarah was a result, in part, of the political condition in Palestine. The 3d century was a century of soldier emperors, and, consequently, a period of inflation and impoverishment for wide sections of the Roman Empire. The decreasing standard of living in Palestine brought about a decline in halakic study. This, in turn, resulted in the increased importance of the Eastern Diaspora of the Jews, which, under the strong Sassanid rulers, enjoyed on the whole, despite a few reverses, a period of increasing prosperity.

The most important academies in Babylonia in the 3d century were in Sura, Nehardea, and Pumbedita; in these cities the greatest Jewish scholars of the century taught. Thus the reputation of these academies soon surpassed that of the Jewish schools in Palestine. This explains the passage in *Ketubbot* 111a: “Rab Judah [bar Ezechiel] said in the name of [i.e., quoting] Samuel, As it is forbidden to go from Israel to Babylonia, so is it forbidden to go from Babylonia to other countries. . . . Rab Juda said [in his own name], ‘If one lives in Babylonia, it is just as if he lived in Israel.’” In the 5th century, the persecutions of the Jews in the Sassanid Empire caused a serious crisis in the academic life of the rabbinical academies. Since it was feared that the merely oral presentation of the Amoraic teaching would be lost to memory,

a compilation known as the Babylonian Gemarah, containing the teachings and elaborate discussion of the Babylonian Amoraim, was made in the 5th century. This editing of the Babylonian Talmud was due primarily to the efforts of Rab Ashi, an Amora of the sixth generation, who was head of the rabbinical academy of Mate Maḥseya, where he carried on his work under circumstances that were still politically favorable. In the following, last generation of the Amoraim and under the Saboraim (Hebrew plural of Aramaic *sābōrā*, "thinker, opiner") of the 6th century, the Babylonian Talmud received its final form.

**Characteristics.** The Mishnah itself, despite certain basic attempts at orderly arrangement, is not a digested corpus of law, but rather a collection of opinions by the various rabbis on questions that are more or less connected with the matters under discussion. The much larger Gemarahl are far more disorderly; one point leads to another on some extraneous matter that is then discussed at length, although it may have nothing at all to do with the main topic under discussion. About one third of the Babylonian Gemarah is not even on legal matters but contains digressions full of folklore, legends, history (usually of only little value), midrashic interpretations of biblical passages, moralizing sermons, etc. The style makes no pretense of being literary; short incomplete phrases abound. On the whole, the Talmud is like the notes and jottings made by students at rambling lectures or round-table discussions.

**Later fate.** Because of its obscurities and seeming inconsistencies, numerous commentaries on the Talmud were written throughout the centuries by rabbinical scholars. Official decisions on obscure points in the Talmud or adaptations of its teaching to changed conditions were given in the *RESPONSA* by the Geonim (plural of Gaon), the leaders of the Jewish community in the first post-Talmudic period (6th to 11th centuries). For practical use by ordinary Jews simplified summaries of Talmudic law were drawn up by various Jewish scholars, such as *Mishneh Torah* (repetition of the Law) by MAIMONIDES and the authoritative *Shulḥan Arukh* (set table) by Joseph CARO. Throughout the Middle Ages and, in certain parts of the world, even in recent times all aspects of Jewish life were regulated by the teachings of the Talmud; its influence on Judaism has been enormous.

Since non-Jews understood the important place that this work held for Jewish life, many of the outbreaks of anti-Semitism were accompanied by public burnings of the Talmud; e.g., 24 cartloads of Talmud MSS are said to have been burned in a Paris square on June 17, 1242. This is one of the chief reasons why only one complete MS of the Babylonian Talmud (the Munich Codex of

1369, Heb. MS no. 95) and only one complete MS of the Palestinian Talmud (the Leiden Codex) have been preserved, although several MSS of parts of the Talmud, especially the Babylonian, survive. The Babylonian Talmud was first printed by Daniel Bomberg (Venice 1520); several editions have since then been published. Although critical editions of particular portions of it have been issued, a critical edition of the whole Talmud is still badly needed. An English edition, *The Babylonian Talmud*, unabridged, with introductions, annotations, and index has been edited by I. Epstein (35 v. London 1938–52).

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[K. SCHUBERT]

## TAMARON Y ROMERAL, PEDRO

16th bishop of Durango; b. Villa de la Guardia, Toledo, Spain, c. 1695; d. Bamao, Sinaloa, Mexico, Dec. 21, 1768. In 1719 he went to America as a companion of Bishop Escalona, who had been named to the see of Caracas, and he completed his studies there at the University of Santa Rosa, receiving a doctorate in Canon Law. Subsequently he taught at the university. He remained in Caracas, holding a number of important ecclesiastical posts, until he was named bishop of Durango, New Spain, by Benedict XVI on December 21, 1758. He arrived in Durango in March 1759 and that autumn began his first general visitation of the diocese. He was more than 60 at the time, but his age did not handicap him; he inspected his