

Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered

LOUIS H. FELDMAN

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by

Louis H. Feldman



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This book is dedicated to the sacred memory of my wife's parents, Moshe Yaakov and Rivkah Blum, ז"ל, who remained steadfast in the tradition of their ancestors and died על קדוש השם in Auschwitz.

דבר אל-כל-עדת בני-ישראל ואמרת אליהם קדשים תהיו.

“Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: ‘You shall be holy.’”

(Leviticus 19:2)

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PREFACE

This book is a collection of previously published articles, together with a new introduction. I am grateful to the journals and publishers as noted here for permission to reprint them. I have made a number of additions and corrections. I have adopted a uniform method in citations and have added comprehensive indices. I am grateful to Professor John Collins for helpful advice in preparing this volume. I am deeply appreciative of the tremendous technical assistance that I have received from my devoted student, Shlomo Schwartzbard, in preparing these articles for publication in this volume.

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INTRODUCTION: THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENISM ON JEWS IN PALESTINE IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

1. THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

During the past half century the monumental works by Goodenough (1953-68) and Hengel (1969, English trans. 1974) deserve special mention in seeking to break down the cultural barrier between Palestine and the Diaspora in the Hellenistic period. But how convincing is the case that they have presented? Moreover, in a way, even though he disagreed fundamentally with Goodenough in his evaluation of Philo, Wolfson (1948) likewise saw a fundamental bridge between Philo and the Palestinian rabbis when he postulated that Philo was a bilateral branch of Pharisaic Judaism, though it is fair to say that this particular view of Wolfson has not gained general acceptance in the scholarly world.¹

Since the appearance of Martin Hengel's *Judentum und Hellenismus* in 1969 and especially since the publication of the English version in 1974, this monumental work has been the subject of a tremendous amount of scholarly attention. It is fair to say that the majority of scholars have accepted Hengel's thesis that Jews and Judaism in Palestine were already significantly influenced by Hellenism in the third and second centuries B.C.E. before the Maccabean revolt as seen in Jewish books of that era and archaeological evidence, and that the distinction between Diaspora and Palestinian Judaism, so far as Hellenization is concerned, is blurred.

Indeed, two conferences, one at Bar Ilan University in 1998, entitled "Shem in the Tents of Japhet: I: Jewish Writings in Second Temple Times" and another at Harvard University in 1999 entitled "Shem in the Tents of Japhet II: A Conference on Hellenism and Judaism," resulted in the publication of a volume of essays edited by James Kugel.² Another symposium co-sponsored by the University

¹ See Levine 1998, 8, n. 6.

² Kugel 2002.

of Chicago and the University of Notre Dame in 1999 resulted in the publication of a volume of essays edited by John Collins and Gregory Sterling.³ Both supported Hengel's thesis and carried it even further.

However, before Alexander in the fourth century B.C.E. opened up much of the Mediterranean world and beyond to Greek thought, ancient travelers, such as Hecataeus of Miletus and Herodotus, as Momigliano⁴ has pointed out, did not find it easy to go into the interior of countries; and hence we must not expect that Greeks might have attempted to go up to Jerusalem to view the way Jews celebrated their festivals. Moreover, Greeks were generally monolingual and hence would have had difficulty in speaking to Jews. Furthermore, the Greeks disturbed the peace of the Persian Empire at the very time that Jerusalem was being rebuilt under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah and would hardly have been welcomed.

To be sure, as Momigliano⁵ has noted, there are a number of developments in Judaea in the fifth and fourth centuries that parallel contemporary developments in Greece. Thus Nehemiah in some sense is a tyrant similar to Histiaeus and others who had been imposed as tyrants over Greek cities in Asia Minor by the Persians. Other parallels are the remission of debts and the law against intermarriages. Furthermore, the autobiographies of Ezra and Nehemiah remind one of the *Epidemiai* ("Visits") of their contemporary, the fifth-century B.C.E. Ion of Chios, who recounts meetings with such famous political and literary figures as Cimon, Aeschylus, and Sophocles. Moreover, Momigliano⁶ cites the parallel between the biblical Book of Chronicles as a rewritten version of the Book of Kings and the works of the historians Ephorus and Theopompus in, to some degree, rewriting the works of Herodotus and Thucydides. Finally, he notes the parallel between the Book of Job and Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* in their treatment of the problem of theodicy. However, the crucial point of difference in these parallel accounts is that no Greek mentions or attacks the Jewish parallel, and no Jew mentions or attacks the Greek parallel, and hence there is no reason to assume that either was aware of the other.

³ Collins and Sterling 2001.

⁴ Momigliano 1975, 74.

⁵ Momigliano 1975, 81.

⁶ Momigliano 1975, 81.

The Bible in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:3-5 and Deut. 5:7-9) seems to be very explicit and very inclusive in prohibiting the making of “a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” And yet, excavations at such places as Bet Alpha, Hammat Gader, Gerasa, Huseifa, Estemoa, Jericho, and Bet She’arim have revealed an extensive Jewish art and architecture. How can we explain the paintings and statues and mosaics, containing human, animal, and mythological figures found by archaeologists in Palestine in synagogues and cemeteries and even in private homes? How can we explain, for example, the frieze in the synagogue of Chorazin showing vintage scenes of the sort traditionally associated with the cult of none other than the Greek god Dionysus?

In his *magnum opus* Goodenough⁷ has presented the thesis that this artwork represents a common language of live symbols centering on a hope for mystical salvation through no less than participation in the life of a self-giving deity. His theory is that the Jews took these symbols, which are subconscious, and gave Jewish interpretations to the values that they represent. He further claims that these interpretations are akin to those found in the Jewish philosopher Philo. This art, he postulates, represents popular mystic Judaism in contrast to the Judaism of the Talmudic rabbis.

However, as Morton Smith⁸ has pointed out, Goodenough’s assumption that the value of a symbol remains essentially the same is simply not true. A red light means “stop” as a traffic signal, but in a red-light district it means “come.” To say that the Jews of Palestine, who, so far as we can tell, never heard of Plato, would have the same interpretation as the philosopher Philo, who refers to Plato as “most sacred” (*Prob.* 13), seems unlikely. Moreover, Philo is mentioned by no one, other than Josephus (who does not discuss Philo’s approach to philosophy), who lived in Palestine during this period, and indeed by no Jew until Azariah dei Rossi in Italy in the sixteenth century. Moreover, to assume that Philo best preserves Jewish interpretation of the period is begging the question. There is no evidence that Philo was the leader of a popular school that preserved the mainstream of mystic theological thought of that period. Philo’s admiration for

⁷ Goodenough 1953-68.

⁸ Smith 1967, 55.

Plato was hardly shared by the Jewish masses. In short, he may have preserved merely the mainstream of his own theology. Furthermore, to generalize about the Judaism of the Talmudic rabbis is unwarranted in view of the fact that they are constantly disagreeing with one another. Indeed, whereas earlier in his work Goodenough had generalized and claimed that all rabbis were rabbinic Jews, he later⁹ conceded that there were differences among them in their attitude toward images.

Similarly, to equate "popular" Judaism with mystic Judaism and to equate them with the attitude of Philo is likewise to oversimplify, as we see in the differences between such a work as *De Vita Mosis* and Philo's allegorical treatises. Moreover, Philo's works were apparently little read, if we may judge from the fact that, aside from Josephus, only Heliodorus (9.9.3), a non-Jew, in the fourth century, of known writers cites him, and in his case only once and in a novel and to quote Philo's remark (*Mos.* 2.195) that the Egyptians deify the Nile and regard it as a counterpart of heaven. He gives no indication that he or anyone else was fundamentally influenced by Philo's ideas or method. For such influence we must turn to Christian Church Fathers, notably Clement of Alexandria and Origen in the third century and Eusebius in the fourth century.¹⁰

If we define Hellenization as the process of acculturation by which behavior, manners, culture (literature, philosophy, art), religious belief, ethical, social, political, economic, and material norms, etc., of a person or a group might be affected by the kind of Greek culture that spread in the lands that came under the rule of Alexander the Great,¹¹ we may ask how much importance we should assign to archaeological discoveries that have come to light, especially in most recent years, and that seems to indicate that the material culture of the Jews, even in Israel, "was heavily indebted to, and in many cases totally dependent on, that of the regnant contemporary culture."¹² But this may simply indicate that the Jews, because they were not deeply influenced by the prevalent culture, lacked an architectural and artistic tradition of their own and had to turn so often to non-Jews for the design of buildings and of monuments. This

⁹ Goodenough 1965, 12:67.

¹⁰ See Runia 1993.

¹¹ Rappaport 1992, 1.

¹² Levine 1998, 5.

does not, however, necessarily mean that, after these buildings had been constructed, the Jews became interested in, let alone adopted, the *ideas* of the architects and builders. If archaeologists have found in Palestine Greek gods and heroes depicted on seals and bronzes from the Persian period (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.), we must not forget that there were many non-Jews living in the land. In any case, there is no indication that any Jew ever worshipped a Greek god during the two centuries before Alexander; and except for the brief period of Jason and Menelaus (175-162 B.C.E.) we have very little evidence of Jews who worshipped Greek gods thereafter.

But are representations, for example, of the Greek god Helios in synagogues merely decorative, like those of Cupid in Italian Renaissance *ketubot*, or are they meaningful? The rabbis (*b. Yoma* 69b, *b. Sanh.* 64a) agree that already at the time of Ezra in the fifth century B.C.E. the Jews as a group were successful in resisting the temptation of idolatry. Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap. Diod.* 40.3.4), who is clearly describing the practices of the Jews in his day (ca. 300 B.C.E.), says that Moses permitted no divine images, being of the opinion that G-d is not in human form. That the impulse to idolatry had been eradicated is manifest from the book of Judith (8:18), probably dating from the second century B.C.E.: "For never in our generation, nor in these present days, has there been any tribe or family or people or city of ours which worshiped gods made with hands, as was done in days gone by." Varro (*ap. Augustine, De Civitate Dei* 4.31) in the first century B.C.E. asserts that the ancient Romans worshipped the gods without an image and cites, in support of this, that the Jews do likewise, clearly referring to their practice in his own time, remarking that "those who first set up images of the gods for the people diminished reverence in their cities as they added to error, for he [Varro] wisely judged that gods in the shape of senseless images might easily inspire contempt." Strabo (16.2.35), in the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E., likewise praises Moses for forbidding the representation of G-d in the form of an image and declaring that "people should leave off all image-carving, and, setting apart a sacred precinct and a worthy sanctuary, should worship G-d without an image." He clearly implies that Moses' teaching on this subject was still being followed by the Jews. His contemporary Livy (*ap. Scholia in Lucanum* 2.593) is likewise impressed by the fact that there is no image to be found in the Temple in Jerusalem and generalizes that "they [the Jews] do not think that G-d partakes of any figure." Tacitus (*Hist.*

5.5.4), who, though prejudiced against the Jews, is relatively well informed about their customs and is clearly reflecting their practices in his own day, the early second century, states categorically that “they set up no statues in their cities, still less in their temples.” In the third century Cassius Dio (37.17.2), who generally seems well informed about the Jews and their history and practices, states that the Jews never had any statue of G-d and do not honor any of the usual gods. Indeed, we find that, according to Josephus (*War* 2.195), when Petronius, the Roman governor of Syria, came to place the image of the emperor Caligula in the Temple, the Jews, in a mass demonstration, protested that the setting up of a statue of a mortal man was forbidden not only in the Temple but everywhere else in the land also.

To judge from the example of Rabban Gamaliel (*m. ‘Abod. Zar.* 3:4), the rabbis had no fear that seeing a statue of a pagan goddess, such as Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, would attract Jews to pagan worship. When he was chided for going into a bathhouse that had a statue of Aphrodite, he explained that the bathhouse was not an ornament for Aphrodite but, rather, that Aphrodite was an ornament for the bathhouse. Hence the third-century Rabbi Joḥanan did not oppose mosaics with figures on them. The rabbis apparently realized that there was no danger of actual worship of pagan gods or symbols; hence they did not object to those Jews who earned their livelihood by making and marketing idols.¹³ Therefore, the proper interpretation of the appearance of such symbols or objects in Jewish homes and synagogues and cemeteries is not that they show how deeply hellenized they were but rather how confident the rabbis were that the possession of such objects would not lead to idol worship. The rabbis apparently were not fearful that if a Jewish craftsman produced idols he might be tempted to worship them; hence, they declared (*b. ‘Abod. Zar.* 19b, 52a) that an idol made by a gentile craftsman is immediately forbidden, since he must have worshipped it, whereas an idol produced by a Jewish craftsman is not forbidden, since we are confident that he has not worshipped it, and hence that it may be sold—to a gentile, of course. Indeed, the rabbis (*b. B. Bat.* 110a) quote a tradition embodied in a saying: “Earn your living by

¹³ See Urbach 1959, 236.

making idols and don't be dependent on charity." The same rabbis who were so liberal with regard to artistic representation were stringent, however, in insisting on social separation from non-Jews, especially with regard to wine and certain objects of food.¹⁴

Seth Schwartz¹⁵ suggests that the religious behavior and thought of the Jews who lived in the cities may have differed in no way from the life-style of the pagans in whose midst they lived. The rabbis, he suggests, who needed to take the Pentateuchal horror of paganism seriously in formulating their own views, also needed to develop a mechanism to allow them to live in the cities and to participate in some of the cities' public activities. Hence, he says, the rabbis defined pagan religiosity as consisting exclusively of cultic activity. This, he concludes, will explain why the rabbis permitted statues and mosaics and the like with pagan motifs. But if so, we may ask, why would the rabbis make a sweeping statement that idolatry was no longer a problem in their day? Saul Lieberman¹⁶ makes the significant observation that though the Talmudic tractate *b. 'Abod. Zar.* deals with idol worship, it does not attempt to refute the principles of idol worship, whereas the Church Fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Arnobius, and Lactantius, who were seeking to impress pagans, constantly engaged in polemics against idol worship; and the polemics against idol worship so often found in the Church Fathers are almost not found in rabbinic literature. As Urbach¹⁷ has pointed out, in all the sayings of the rabbis there is scarce evidence of the view commonly found in the Church Fathers that idols are the work of demonic powers acting through the medium of images and statues. Moreover, even though the name of Homer is mentioned by the rabbis (*m. 'Eod. 4:6*), they do not mention any of the stories about the gods found throughout the writings of Homer.

The assumption that a Jewish craftsman who produced idols would not himself worship idols would seem to be in line with the traditional saying *b. B. Bat. 110a*) that one should rather hire himself out to idol-worship than be in need of the help of his fellow creatures. A Cairo

¹⁴ Urbach 1959, 243-44.

¹⁵ Schwartz 1998, 207.

¹⁶ Lieberman 1950, 116.

¹⁷ Urbach 1959, 154.

Genizah text (*y. 'Abod. Zar.* 42b),¹⁸ declaring that “In the days of Rabbi Johanan [the most prominent rabbi in the third century B.C.E.] they began to paint on walls, and he did not prevent them” and that “in the days of Rabbi Abun [fourth century] they began to make designs on mosaics, and he did not prevent them” confirms that the rabbis were apparently not worried by such infractions. Another incident establishing this view reports (*ibid.*) that Rabbi Johanan permitted his disciple Rabbi Hiyah bar Abba to retain a pitcher having the image of the Roman goddess Fortuna, on the grounds that it was for mere decoration and was not intended for religious use. Indeed, Lieberman¹⁹ notes that the rabbis are certainly knowledgeable about mystery cults and, indeed, use the Greek word *μυστήριον* in connection with them (*m. Ned.* 2:1, *m. 'Abod. Zar.* 2:3); and yet, there is no indication in rabbinic literature of the symbols of the mysteries. If archaeologists have found numerous instances of pagan figures in synagogues, the rabbis did not regard these infractions as being very serious, though apparently, to judge from the damage inflicted by iconoclasts, there was some dispute on the matter, and that while some Jews regarded them as innocent adornment, others disapproved of them and physically removed them.²⁰ As Blidstein²¹ remarks, “The evidence so impeccably marshalled does not warrant a radical revision of the generalization that the artistic object was always peripheral to the religious experience. In language most familiar to those who created it, art was *hiddur mitzvah* (“adorning a commandment”), not more. Quite possibly, moreover, this peripheral character derives from biblical Judaism’s vigorous rejection of the mythic world-view and the subsequent demurral at absorption by an incarnational faith.” The very fact that the word “Hellenism” (*Ἑλληνισμός*) takes on a new meaning in late antiquity, in that *Ἕλληνες* sometimes means “Greeks” and sometimes means “pagans,” is surely significant, as Bowersock²² has remarked, since for a Jew to use the word *Ἕλληνες* would clearly convey a highly negative connotation. The fact that the patriarch Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel (*m. Meg.* 1:8, *y. Shab.* 16.15c) permitted the translation of the Scriptures into Greek alone would

¹⁸ Cited by Baumgarten, 1999, 76.

¹⁹ Lieberman 1950, 118-19.

²⁰ See Baumgarten 1999, 75.

²¹ Blidstein 1973, 14.

²² Bowersock 1990, 9.

appear to indicate that he felt secure that permitting this would not lead to apostasy. Gerson Cohen²³ goes so far as to say that even when there was a Hebrew equivalent the Jews used Greek, citing as an example the fact that the coffers used for the contribution of the annual half-shekel to the Temple were marked not with Hebrew but with Greek letters, asserting that this was so in order to make those coffers intelligible to all Temple personnel, and concluding that if in so insulated an area as the Temple Greek had made inroads, this is surely an indication that in more open areas of society it had triumphed over all rivals; but we may suggest that this was so since most of the half-shekels came from the Diaspora, where Greek was the majority language.

Since Jews are forbidden not merely to practice idolatry but also to have physical contact with idolatrous objects, for example to be under a roof in the building that contains an idolatrous object (*m. 'Abod. Zar.* 3:8, *m. Shab.* 9:1), as well as to derive benefit or enjoyment from such objects (*m. 'Abod. Zar.* 3:1-9), this would certainly, as Blidstein²⁴ remarks, restrict the Jew's freedom of movement, especially in cities where statues were numerous. Indeed, Jews found themselves in a situation where they might feel themselves obliged to deny themselves public services that were superficially at least connected with idolatry, such as the public water supply. Hence, Rabbi Johanan (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 58b-59a), apparently confident that Jews would not actually worship such idols, excluded such public services from the stigma of idolatry.

In any case, as Friedman²⁵ has noted, when a practice or concept is to be found in both Greek and Rabbinic cultures, there is no way of tracing a direct line of influence, since many items—crossroads as places of potential danger, an open door while a feast is in progress, seeing a guest on his way, gilding the horns of an animal to be sacrificed, and gilding the horns of a sacrificial animal—that he discusses are also found in places far from the Mediterranean world.

Moreover, as Hachlili and Levine²⁶ have remarked, the intensive use of Jewish symbols, such as the Torah shrine, menorah, shofar, lulav, ethrog, and incense shovel on the mosaic floors of synagogues

²³ Cohen 1994, 186.

²⁴ Blidstein 1974, 154.

²⁵ Friedman 1991, 47-48.

²⁶ Hachlili 1988), 347-55; Levine 1998, 155.

at Ḥammath Tiberias, Beth Alpha, Huseifa, Naʿaran, and Susiya, is much more marked in synagogues in Palestine than in those in the Diaspora. Levine²⁷ finds it amazing that Diaspora synagogues, far from being more syncretistic and Hellenized than their Palestinian counterparts, show a lesser proclivity than their Palestinian counterparts to featuring figural representations with distinctly pagan motifs. To explain this he suggests that the Jews felt more secure in their land where they were the majority. We may also add that the rabbis, being numerous and strong and watchful in their land, could afford to be more lenient in their interpretation of Jewish law. Moreover, there can be no doubt that in the third century such a city as Sepphoris in Galilee, where the patriarch resided and the Mishnah was codified and to which the seat of the Sanhedrin was transferred, attracted many rabbinic leaders and their students and was a stronghold of Jewish studies and values. In speaking of the impact of Hellenism we must also draw a distinction among the various areas of Palestine, since the impact appears to be considerably less in such areas as Upper Galilee and the Golan, whereas Hengel levels Hellenized Palestine into a single homogeneous geographical and social entity, as Harrison²⁸ remarks.

But how then can we explain the fact that the Palestinian synagogues, much more than those in the Diaspora, feature representations with distinctly pagan motifs? It was Goodenough's theory that in the days of the later Hasmoneans, of Herod, and Herod Agrippa, the Pharisees and the Sages wielded an almost absolute spiritual domination over the people. On the other hand, he notes, after the destruction of the Temple, the Patriarchs and Sages had no authority at all, and this extended even to the period of Rabbi Judah the Patriarch at the beginning of the third century. In a recent book, Schwartz²⁹ has argued that in the period before the destruction of the Temple the authority of the Torah rested not so much on the consensus of the Jews as on the might of the imperial and native rulers of Palestine. But, we may reply, the fact that masses of Jews demonstrated against the introduction of the bust of Caligula into Jerusalem (*War* 2.184-203, *Ant.* 18.240-308) and threatened the Roman governor with an uprising unless he punished the Roman

²⁷ Levine 1998, 154.

²⁸ Harrison 1994, 107 n. 1.

²⁹ Schwartz 2001, 56-57.

soldier who had cut up a Torah scroll (*War* 2.228-31, *Ant.* 20.113-17) shows that it was popular feeling and not the act of the authorities that insisted on the authority of the Torah. Schwartz notes that there is remarkably little representational decoration in post-Maccabean Judea and explains this as due to the intolerance by the authorities of radical dissent, but we must respond by noting that there is little indication that the authorities issued decrees prohibiting it.

One of Schwartz's most striking theories³⁰ is that a rabbinocentric account of the first four centuries C.E. is inadequate, that the rabbis did not have any officially recognized legal authority until the end of the fourth century, and that the patriarchs, such as Rabbi Judah the Prince, acquired much of their influence precisely by relaxing their ties to the rabbis and by allying themselves with the Palestinian city counsellors, wealthy Diaspora Jews, and prominent gentiles. The Jewish world, he says, was ruled by the patriarchs as a sort of empire in miniature. He argues that Jewish Palestine between 100 and 350 scarcely differed from any other high imperial provincial society. But if there is any truth to the large numbers of students that individual rabbis, notably Rabbi Akiva (*Ned.* 50a), had, their influence must have been great.

Schwartz³¹ asserts that "probably everywhere...the failure of the revolts [of 66-70, 115-117, and 132-135] had led to disaffection with and attrition from Judaism." But, we may remark, 4 Ezra, which he cites, reflects the gloom felt by the Jews but does not indicate that it led to defection from Judaism. Schwartz comments that the book cannot have satisfied everyone and that "those whom it failed to satisfy will have reacted with panic, despair, and finally abandonment of Judaism." Perhaps Schwartz is thinking of the reaction of some modern Jews to the Holocaust; but if we examine the writings of pagans (e.g., Dio Cassius), Christians, and the rabbis, we find no such mass defection. We may remark that the fact that apparently so few Jews converted to Christianity (so Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 53, writing in the second century) would indicate that Jews did keep their separate identity strong. Even after the conversion of the Roman emperors to Christianity in the fourth century it was paradoxically the Roman government that protected the Jews and their institutions.

³⁰ Schwartz 2001, 103.

³¹ Schwartz 2001, 108.

Yet, Schwartz admits that cities with predominantly Jewish populations in the second and third centuries issued coins with pagan gods and symbols. He explains this as due to the fact that the rabbis had a weak hold, if any, on the rest of the Jews. Goodenough³² posits that in the days of the later Hasmoneans and of Herod, the Pharisees and Sages wielded an almost absolute spiritual domination over the people, but that in the period of the second and third centuries, when Yavneh and Usha were the centers of Jewish life, the patriarchs and sages had no authority at all. However, as Urbach³³ contends, this flies in the face of all that we know about the authority of the sages in this period.

As to the coins with pagan symbols, why not say that these cities contained pagans also, that the people who governed these cities were most likely non-Jews, and that the coins were intended for circulation not only in the cities but also in surrounding areas that did contain pagans? Schwartz argues³⁴ that pagan art used by the Jews had a specifically pagan religious meaning and that this indicates a post-revolt collapse of any normatively Jewish ideological system; but if so we would have expected a tremendous outcry on the part of the rabbis of this period. Yet, even though the rabbis felt free to disagree with one another constantly, there is no such outcry. Indeed, as Sukenik remarks³⁵: "Is it conceivable that there should have been at that time such a violent deviation from traditional Judaism in Galilee, the principal center of Palestinian Jewry after the destruction of the Second Temple, the residence of the Patriarchate and the seat of the Sanhedrin?"

Schwartz³⁶ contends that the patriarchs had little impact upon the lives of Palestinian Jews, that their main interest, especially in the fourth century, was in maintaining their ties with the Diaspora, and that this enhanced their fund-raising potential there. He argues that since the rabbis had so little influence, the constitutional role of the Torah was assumed by the Roman government and that in important and surprising respects Jewish Palestine was hardly distinguishable from other eastern provinces. We may remark, however, that the

³² Goodenough 1953-68.

³³ Urbach 1959, 151.

³⁴ Schwartz 2001, 159.

³⁵ Sukenik 1947, 5-6.

³⁶ Schwartz 2001, 128-29.

government protected the Jews and apparently did not interfere with them; and the fact, as we have noted, that apparently so few Jews converted to Christianity even after Christianity became the state religion would indicate that Jews did keep their separate identity strong.

Schwartz³⁷ suggests that the rabbis' disregard of compromises with idol worship allowed them to live and work in the cities, the very places where they could most easily accumulate wealth, social ties, and influence. But, we may respond, the main reason why the rabbis lived in the cities was that this was where their places of study attracted the largest number of students.

According to Schwartz,³⁸ "A citizen of Caesarea might be a proud Roman citizen, too, but also a Jew, a Samaritan, a Christian, or a Syrian, in addition to thinking of himself as being in some sense Greek. If he took his municipal responsibilities seriously, though, his Jewishness or Christianity would necessarily have been attenuated, for the public life of the city was pagan to the core." This might have been true of Sardis in Asia Minor in the third century, where we have evidence of Jewish members of the city council, but what evidence is there that this was also true in Palestine, so holy to the Christians, after Christianity became the religion of the Empire? Schwartz himself³⁹ acknowledges that the emperors explicitly recognized the Jews as a legitimate religious organization, with a clergy whose authority and privileges approximated those of the Christian clergy; but this does not mean that Jews held positions in civic life.

The greatest paradox of all in Schwartz's work is his theory that one of the main causes of the "rejudaization" of the Jews in 350-640 was the Christianization of the Roman Empire and that a great deal of the distinctive Jewish culture was nothing less than repackaged Christianity!⁴⁰ The fourth to the sixth centuries is the period when the synagogue was reaching its maximal diffusion in the Palestinian countryside, precisely the period of maximal church construction. Schwartz's explanation⁴¹ of this coincidence is that both point to the growing importance of religion in the self-understanding of the

³⁷ Schwartz 2001, 165.

³⁸ Schwartz 2001, 175.

³⁹ Schwartz 2001, 192.

⁴⁰ Schwartz 2001, 179.

⁴¹ Schwartz 2001, 201.

villagers. This may well be an important factor, but we may also suggest that the building boom was accelerated by the economic prosperity and by the security fostered by the Empire, as well as by the rivalry between the emperor and the Church.

It is the rabbis, Schwartz contends, who rejected the widespread conception of the synagogue as a holy place. Schwartz's chief evidence is from archaeology, which, he claims,⁴² shows that the Jews, starting in the third century, especially in Palestine, experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity and demographic growth, despite the fact, we may add, that this was the century that is often thought to have been the key period in the decline of the Roman Empire. The Jews, he contends, engaged in extensive cultural borrowing from their pagan and Christian neighbors, even to the point that, he suggests, many synagogues were built with apses, a feature borrowed from the basilical church but adapted for use as a niche for Torah scrolls, and that many had chancel screens in front of the apses—another borrowing, he says, from church design. But, we may suggest, all that this last point may indicate is that the architects of the synagogues were sometimes or often the same as the architects of the churches. Schwartz⁴³ contrasts the attitude of the rabbis and of the congregants to the synagogue: the former regarded it as primarily a place of Torah and the study of Torah, whereas the latter looked upon it as a reflection of the heavenly temple and as an inherently sacred space, which is very close to the Christian conception of the sacred. However, if we examine the rules (*m. Meg.* 3:1-3 and the Gemara that follows) concerning the sale of a synagogue building one sees that the rabbis viewed it as an inherently sacred space.

Schwartz⁴⁴ stresses that the ideology of the late antique community was characterized by tension between the hierarchy of the rabbis and the egalitarianism of the populace. While the Torah and the rabbis granted special status to priests and scholars, there is little evidence for these groups in the synagogue inscriptions. But, we may counter, this may indicate not tension between scholars and laypeople but merely that the inscriptions memorialize those who gave the money. One is reminded of the story of the person who asked the tourist guide in Tel Aviv: "After whom is the Mann Auditorium named—Horace

⁴² Schwartz 2001, 182.

⁴³ Schwartz 2001, 259.

⁴⁴ Schwartz 2001, 284.

Mann or Thomas Mann?" His answer was: "Neither. It is named after the man who wrote the check."

Again, as Levine⁴⁵ admits, one cannot assume the same measure of acculturation in the lower classes as in the upper, wealthier strata of society. The upper class could travel more readily for business or political purposes, could purchase goods from foreign countries, and could afford to build more lavishly. Moreover, cities were meeting places for various peoples and ideas, more so than in isolated and insulated villages. But apparently the great majority of Jews lived in small towns, such as the 204 villages in Galilee mentioned by Josephus (*Life* 235), none of which, he says (and which he had to be in some position to know, even if he may well be exaggerating, since he was the general in Galilee at the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66), had fewer than 15,000 inhabitants.

Levine⁴⁶ assumes that the degree of Hellenization increased in the course of time, from the first to the fourth century; but he admits that in certain places, notably Egypt, we find more use of Hebrew names and of the Hebrew language as time went on. He explains this by suggesting that this was the result of severe political, social, and economic setbacks that it suffered in the first centuries. But, we may ask, why might this not also have been true in Palestine, where there were three wars with tremendous losses in lives and economic setbacks within a period of less than seventy years, coupled with successes in winning converts and "sympathizers" to Judaism?⁴⁷

2. GREEK INSCRIPTIONS IN PALESTINE

The most obvious evidence of Greek influence in Palestine during the early centuries C.E. is to be seen in the presence of Greek inscriptions. Thus Hengel⁴⁸ points to the fact that we have a number of public inscriptions in Greek dating from the period of the Second Temple, and in particular he calls attention to the two famous warning inscriptions in Greek that prohibit non-Jews from entering the precincts of the Temple (*CIG* 2.1400). But these warnings, we may note, are intended for Gentiles, whose language is most likely to be

⁴⁵ Levine 1998, 24.

⁴⁶ Levine 1998, 26.

⁴⁷ See Feldman 1993, 288-415.

⁴⁸ Hengel 1989, 9.

Greek, rather than for Jews; and hence they do not indicate primarily Hellenization of Jews. In addition, Hengel cites an honorific inscription in Greek dedicated to a donor from the Jewish community of Rhodes; but this also, we may note, is not an indication of Hellenization of Palestinian Jews but is in Greek because the honor is for a Jew coming from the Greek-speaking island of Rhodes. Furthermore, Hengel notes that Greek words occur in the copper scroll from Qumran; but here is hardly convincing evidence of Hellenization, since he cites a grand total of two Greek words.

In addition, Hengel mentions that a good third of the epitaphs are in Greek. But we may remark that of 872 tombs 644 have no writing at all in them; and he gives no indication as to how many of the epitaphs are of Jews from Greek-speaking lands outside of Palestine. Indeed, he notes that Rahmani,⁴⁹ in his catalogue of Jewish ossuaries from Jerusalem, remarks on the meager evidence from the ossuary inscriptions as to knowledge of Greek in Jerusalem and Jericho and their environments. He notes that in Nysa Scythopolis, a mere eighteen miles from Cana and Nazareth, there was a center of Dionysiac worship; but we may ask what evidence there is of Jewish knowledge of, let alone contact with or influence of this place upon Jews. He says⁵⁰ that it is amazing how many significant Greek men of letters—he cites Meleager, Philodemus, Theodore, and Oenomaus, from Gadara, six miles from Galilee—were from the Graecized cities of Palestine and Transjordan from the second century B.C.E. onwards, But the important question to ask is whether the Jews mention, let alone are influenced by, these intellectuals; and whether these intellectuals mention Jews or Jewish thought. The only one who is mentioned in rabbinic literature is the second-century Oenomaus, who was particularly friendly with Rabbi Meir, the teacher of the apostate Elisha ben Avuyah. And how much of his cynicism did Oenomaus convey to Meir or any other of the rabbis? And how many Jewish writers in Greek did Gadara produce?

3. THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENISM ON BUILDINGS IN PALESTINE

The fact that archaeological excavations have uncovered enormous numbers of ritual baths (*miqva'ot*) and strict burial practices is impor-

⁴⁹ L. Y. Rahmani, cited by Hengel 1989, 9-10.

⁵⁰ Hengel 1989, 20.

tant evidence that traditional Jewish practices remained extremely strong.⁵¹ As to the public baths, modern historians, as Stern⁵² has noted, tend to regard public baths in Late Antique Palestine as “Greek” institutions on the grounds that they were probably introduced by Hellenistic rulers; some have concluded, therefore, that public baths “reflect the influence of Hellenism.”⁵³ Midrashic sources, however, describe them as ancient Hebrew institutions. Thus King Solomon is said to have built public baths (*Mid. Eccl. Rab.* 2.8.1), as did Joab, thus providing a “livelihood” to the people of Israel. (*Mid. Sam.* 25). That bath attendance was a widespread practice is clear from the statement ascribed to the early first-century Hillel, that it is a *mitzvah* (“commandment”) to attend public baths (*Mid. Lev. Rab.* 34.3, ‘*Abot. R. Nat.* B 30).

The most visible signs of Greek influence are the theatres, amphitheatres, and hippodromes.⁵⁴ To be sure, Herod did establish athletic contests in honor of the Roman Emperor, celebrated the most lavish and savage spectacles, and indeed built a theatre and an amphitheatre near Jerusalem. But, we are told (*Jos., Ant.* 15.277), the reaction of the populace was *unanimously* opposed to these spectacles, which, we are informed, the Jews regarded as an open break with their ancestral customs. If we ask why Herod, who was a realist and well aware of Jewish sensibilities, should have introduced such amusements, we may surmise that he did so to please the large non-Jewish minority in his realm.

4. HELLENIZATION IN THE ESSENES AND THE DEAD SEA SECT

A number of scholars—Zeller,⁵⁵ Lévy,⁵⁶ Cumont,⁵⁷ Carcopino,⁵⁸ Dupont-Sommer,⁵⁹ and Hadas⁶⁰—have argued that the Essenes were influenced by the model of Pythagoras and the Pythagorean

⁵¹ So Meyers 1992, 88.

⁵² Stern 1994, 172-73.

⁵³ E.g., Schürer 1973, 2:55.

⁵⁴ Goodman 1994, 169.

⁵⁵ Zeller 1903, 307-77.

⁵⁶ Lévy 1927.

⁵⁷ Cumont 1930, 99-112.

⁵⁸ Carcopino 1956.

⁵⁹ Dupont-Sommer 1953.

⁶⁰ Hadas 1963, 194-97.

brotherhood, since the latter also had a communal organization with special restrictions with respect to diet, sex, and dress, and were governed by a strict rule marked by absolute discipline under a leader with emphasis on study and on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Lévy goes so far as to argue that the avenue of this influence was a legendary life of Pythagoras that is now lost but that influenced not only Essenism but also Alexandrian Judaism, Pharisaism, and the Gospels as well. He argues that midrashic stories of Moses' descent to the Lower World are adaptations of Pythagoras' descent. In support of this theory we may remark that Josephus (*Ant.* 15.371) says that the Essenes are a group "who follow a way of life taught to the Greeks by Pythagoras," but, we may comment, we should not believe on this basis that the Essenes borrowed from Pythagoreanism any more than that we should posit that the Pharisees borrowed from Stoicism because Josephus (*Life* 12) says that they are very similar to the Stoic school. Molin^{60a} has noted that the parallels are more apparent than real and that there are basic differences between the Pythagoreans and the Essenes. We may suggest that the true forerunners of the Essenes are the Nazirites and the Rechabites (Jer. 35) of the Bible and that parallels with such apocryphal books as Enoch and with certain rabbinical dicta are closer. Finally, if indeed there are parallels, why not argue that Pythagoras and his followers were influenced by Jewish sources, as we see in the tradition in Hermippus of Smyrna (ca. 200 B.C.E., *Ap.* 1.164-65) that in practicing and repeating the warning not to pass a certain spot on which an ass had collapsed, to abstain from thirst-producing water, and to avoid all calumny, Pythagoras was imitating and appropriating the doctrines of Jews and Thracians. and that Pythagoras introduced many points of Jewish law into his philosophy? Likewise the first-century Antonius Diogenes (*ap.* Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae* 11) says that Pythagoras learned the exact knowledge of dreams from the Jews among others.

There is general agreement that the Dead Sea Sect, whether or not it is to be identified with the Essenes, in its strict interpretation of Jewish law, as they understood it, was strongly opposed to foreign influence. Yet, Levine⁶¹ insists that the sect in ideology and practices

^{60a} Molin 1955, 244-81.

⁶¹ Levine 1998, 20.

was heavily influenced by Greek ideas, though he adds that it was also influenced by Eastern ideas. He declares that among the sect's fundamental beliefs and practices—determinism, dualism, the solar calendar, communal property, angelology, celibacy, the desire to create a utopia, and many organizational patterns—most have little, if any, roots in earlier Jewish tradition, whereas they are well attested in the Hellenistic and Eastern worlds of the third and second centuries B.C.E. But, we may reply, is it true that they have few roots in earlier Jewish tradition? The Essenes, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 13.172), who states that he spent some time living as an Essene (*Life* 10-12), were completely deterministic, believing that Fate is the mistress of all things. Although Josephus (*Ant.* 13.171) first speaks of the Essenes in his account of Jonathan the Hasmonean, who ruled in the second century B.C.E., he says that the Jews from the most ancient times (ἐκ τοῦ πάνυ ἀρχαίου τῶν πατρίων) had three philosophies—Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist.* 5.73) similarly reports that they have existed through thousands of ages (*per saeculorum milia*).

As for the rabbinic point of view with regard to free will, while it is true that it is based on the biblical statement (Deut. 30:15-19) that man has a free choice to do good or to do evil, the rabbis constantly stress the apparent paradox that everything is foreseen, as the great Rabbi Akiva (*m. 'Abot* 3:15) insists. Indeed, we read (*Hul.* 7b), in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: “No man bruises his finger here on earth unless it is so decreed against him in heaven, for it is written, ‘It is of the L-rd that a man’s goings are established’ (Ps. 37:23). ‘How then can man look to his way?’ (Prov. 20:24).” There is no indication that the Greeks influenced the biblical statements in Psalms and Proverbs or Rabbi Ḥanina’s interpretation.⁶²

As for dualism, there are a number of passages in the Bible that clearly refer to a celestial Satan, in opposition to G-d: Job 1 and 2, Zech. 3:1-2, and 1 Chron. 21:1. In Job 1 and 2 Satan actually converses with G-d. In Zech. Satan is rebuked by G-d. In 1 Chron. Satan is referred to without a definite article, indicating that this is his personal name. There is no indication that any of these references was influenced by Greek thought. Moreover, the dualism of the

⁶² We find the same deterministic attitude in *b. Yoma* 38b, *b. Soṭah* 2a, *b. Nid.* 16b, *Mid. Eccl. Rab.* 10:11, among other places.

Scrolls is parallel to the Iranian doctrine, as Winston⁶³ has noted.

As to angelology, most of the beliefs about the angels are expansions of older beliefs, for example Ezekiel's vision of angelic destroyers, watchdog-like destroyers, and Zechariah's angels restructuring the entire world.

As for the desire to create a utopia, one need only recall what is found in Isa. 2:4: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift sword against nation, and they will no longer study warfare."

To be sure, Moshe Weinfeld⁶⁴ has presented a point-by-point examination of the organization of the Qumran community and has noted congruences with the rules of seventeen religious associations (θῖᾱσοι) and guilds of the Hellenistic-Roman world, notably those of Ptolemaic Egypt, ranging from the third century B.C.E. to the second century C.E. However, though he finds a certain amount of similarity between these associations and the Qumran community, especially in disciplinary matters, he stresses that the Qumran sect differs from the pagan associations in its distinctly Jewish character. He convincingly concludes that no direct influence of one on the other can be proved. Moreover, we know of no adequate Jewish or Israelite precedent for the laws of organization of the Qumran community because we have no Jewish or Israelite writings of this genre that might be expected to deal with such subjects. We may guess that if we knew more about the Rechabites, the monastic-like group mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah (chapter 35), we might well find that the Qumran sect had modeled itself on them.

5. THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENIZATION ON THE HASMONEANS AND HEROD

Levine⁶⁵ cites as an example of Hellenization in Palestine the fact that the Hasmoneans signed treaties with Rome. But this, in itself, is not an example of the influence of Hellenization. It was due to political necessity, since the Syrian Greeks were far more powerful

⁶³ Winston 1966, 205.

⁶⁴ Weinfeld 1986.

⁶⁵ Levine 1998, 40.

than the nascent Hasmonean state. The treaties in themselves had apparently little influence on the Jewish people.

Levine⁶⁶ remarks that while only inscriptions in ancient Hebrew script appear on the coinage of Hyrcanus I and Aristobulus I (end of the second century B.C.E.), Greek inscriptions begin to appear regularly from the time of Alexander Jannaeus (first century B.C.E.) onward. But, we may reply, this is due not to increased influence of Hellenization but to the fact that the land conquered by Alexander Jannaeus included areas that had sizable non-Jewish populations, and hence the inscriptions on the coinage had to be intelligible to them.

Levine⁶⁷ adds that Herod's political loyalty was matched by his fascination with the readily accessible cultural and social world of his time, both in its Hellenistic and Roman versions. Nicolaus of Damascus,⁶⁸ Herod's close adviser and teacher, takes note of Herod's enthusiasm for philosophy, rhetoric, and history. Herod's personal commitment in this regard was reinforced by the people of his court, many of whom were non-Jewish, but all of whom bore either Greek or Latin names, a clear indication of their cultural proclivities. But, we must remark, these were not the cultural proclivities of the Jewish *inhabitants* of Herod's kingdom, who despised him.

Levine,⁶⁹ citing Acts 2:9-11, notes that the Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost spoke each in his own native language: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia; Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans, and Arabians. But there is no indication that they were all speaking Greek, let alone that they were influenced by Greek culture, let alone that the Jews native to Palestine were influenced by Greek culture.

⁶⁶ Levine 1998, 42.

⁶⁷ Levine 1998, 46-48.

⁶⁸ Nicolaus of Damascus, *De Vita Sua*, ap. Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta de Virtutibus et Vitiis*, 1.

⁶⁹ Levine 1998, 52.

6. THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENIZATION ON THE RABBIS

Daube⁷⁰ contends that rabbinic methods of interpretation and reasoning were directly borrowed from Greek rhetoric. Similarly, Lieberman⁷¹ argues that the rabbis had good knowledge of Greek language, literature and culture, and that they were tolerant towards Hellenism and its adoption. But, as Sacha Stern⁷² has noted, Gedaliahu Alon⁷³ challenges Lieberman's evidence and suggests that Hellenism had only a marginal impact on the rabbis and their writings. Twenty years after he wrote his book highlighting Greek influence on the rabbis, Lieberman himself⁷⁴ largely retracted his earlier claims, finding no evidence that rabbinic Judaism was influenced by Greek philosophy, religion and law in any significant manner. Similarly, Sandmel⁷⁵ concludes: "Hellenization could be both extensive and intensive, but still it was a tenacious Judaism...being hellenized, this without any loss of identity or loss of essential characteristics."

But we must also note not only the similarities but also the differences between Greek and Jewish ideas. Thus, as we see notably in Pythagorean and Jewish doctrine, there is a sharp distinction between body and soul, whereas in Judaism they are inseparable. Again, whereas the Greeks emphasized the immortality of the soul, Jewish doctrine stresses the after-life.

As to the possible influence of Greek philosophy upon the rabbis, we may note the significance of the fact that the three greatest names in Greek philosophy—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—are nowhere mentioned in the entire rabbinic corpus. We may well wonder about the Greek philosophic influence on people who regard Oenomaus of Gadara (ca. 120 C.E.) as the greatest Gentile philosopher of all time (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 68.20, *Pesiq. Rb. Kah.* 15.5).⁷⁶ We may suggest that when the Talmud (*b. B. Qam.* 82b, *b. Sof.* 49b, and *b. Men.* 64b) imposes a curse on those who instruct their sons in Greek wisdom (*ḥokmah yevanit*), a good guess is that this wisdom is philosophy, *ḥokmah*

⁷⁰ Daube 1949, 239-62.

⁷¹ Lieberman 1942.

⁷² Stern 1994, 171.

⁷³ Alon 1943-44, 76-95.

⁷⁴ Lieberman 1963, 123-41.

⁷⁵ Sandmel 1978, 258.

⁷⁶ See Luz 1992, 42-80.

being a translation of σοφία. That the rabbis were strongly opposed to the study of philosophy may be inferred from the fact that in the Talmudic passage noted above Greek wisdom leads to a gift of swine and that its teaching is cursed together with swine-herding, and hence is associated with the antithesis of Judaism.⁷⁷ Some light may be shed on this question by an intriguing passage in the Talmud (*b. Hag.* 14b): “Four men entered *Pardes* (Paradise, the Garden), namely Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma, Aḥer (Elisha ben Abuya), and Rabbi Akiva. The fact that we learn that it was Aḥer (Elisha ben Abuya) alone⁷⁸ who (*b. Hag.* 15b) was led astray by “Greek song” and who mutilated the shoots (the implication being that he entered into a fundamental investigation of the topic and apostasized) may be a clue. On the other hand, we are told, Rabbi Akiva departed unhurt (the implication being that he was so strong in his faith that an investigation of the topic did not weaken his faith).

Daube⁷⁹ contends that the seven principles of logic employed by Hillel in interpreting texts are of Alexandrian Greek origin and are parallel to principles employed by Aristotle; but Lieberman⁸⁰ argues that there is no reason to conclude that the hermeneutic methods were borrowed from the Greeks; rather it is merely the terminology that was borrowed. Indeed, as Towner⁸¹ has pointed out, the rabbis employ natural and primitive logical devices that are found all over the ancient world. In particular, Jacobs⁸² refutes the view that the rabbinic *qal vehomer* (*a fortiori* reasoning) is identical with the Aristotelian syllogism.

If, indeed, Bickerman and Hengel are correct in postulating that Judaism was so thoroughly Hellenized in the Hasmonean period, we may well ask, with Meyers,⁸³ why so many essential elements of Judaism were yet to be articulated? How is it that the Pharisees and

⁷⁷ Lieberman 1950, 100, has argued that in this ruling the study of Greek wisdom is not forbidden *per se*, but only because it leads to the neglect of Torah study. However, this does not account for the fact that this ruling refers specifically to Greek wisdom rather than to general extraneous studies. This may suggest that the cultural integrity of Israel is somehow at stake.

⁷⁸ On Elisha ben Abuya see now Goshen-Gottstein 2000, 21-229, for a critical investigation of the traditions attributed about him.

⁷⁹ Daube 1949, 239-64, and 1953, 27-44.

⁸⁰ Lieberman 1950, 55-68, esp. 61.

⁸¹ Towner 1982, 101-35.

⁸² Jacobs 1961, 3-8.

⁸³ Meyers 1992, 85.

the Rabbis and the Qumran sectaries incorporated such conservative Semitic elements of Judaism into their movements? How can we explain, for example, the view of resurrection, so different from the Greek view, that came to be dominant in Judaism? Is it not ironic that while Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine were for five centuries undergoing a physical face-lifting architecturally and artistically under the political domination of the Hasmoneans and Herod and the Romans, the Jewish people themselves, and especially their rabbinic leaders, experienced an intensification of traditional Jewish education and values? The idea of developing a canon of biblical books and a special system of biblical interpretation is unique with the Palestinian Jews, so little impact did the ruling family and the Romans have on internal religious developments.

7. THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENISM ON JEWISH CULTURE

How much Greek influence was there on Jewish literature in Palestine? As Martha Himmelfarb⁸⁴ has noted, the corpus of extant Jewish literature in Greek is considerably larger than that of any other subject people of the Hellenistic empires. But since the great majority of ancient literature is lost, this does not give us a definitive answer. Moreover, we are focusing on the Jewish literature produced in Palestine; and since we have evidence that the First Book of Maccabees was originally written in Hebrew⁸⁵ and since Josephus wrote his *Jewish War* originally in Aramaic (*War* 1.3) and translated it into Greek in Rome with the help of assistants (*Ap.* 1.50) and wrote his other works in Rome, the only works by Jews that we definitely know were written in Greek in Palestine were the translation of Ben Sira into Greek ca. 180 B.C.E., additions to the book of Esther,⁸⁶ and the history written by Justus of Tiberias.⁸⁷ But the dependence of Ben Sira on Greek sources has been much exaggerated, as Sanders⁸⁸ in his criticism of Middendorp⁸⁹ has shown. It is a mistake to look only for Greek parallels with Ben Sira's aphorisms, since he is perhaps

⁸⁴ Himmelfarb 1998, 199.

⁸⁵ See Goldstein 1976, 14-16.

⁸⁶ Moore 1992, 632.

⁸⁷ Holladay 1983, 371-89.

⁸⁸ Sanders 1983, 29.

⁸⁹ Middendorp 1973, 8-24.

also indebted to Egyptian wisdom,⁹⁰ though it would appear more likely that he is indebted to the Book of Proverbs, e.g., 8:22-26, where wisdom speaks in praise of itself. It is particularly important to note that none of the rabbis wrote in Greek.

Hengel⁹¹ states that the first Palestinian author, Pseudo-Eupolemus, known to us who wrote in Greek, the anonymous Samaritan, was writing in the second century B.C.E. at the time of Ben Sira. But if he is a Samaritan he is not a Jew, as we see from Josephus (*War* 2.232-46 and *Ant.* 20.118-36), as confirmed by Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.54). And, in view of the strained relations between Jews and Samaritans during the Hellenistic period, how could a Jew have spoken so favorably of Mt. Gerizim as the mount of the Most High G-d? How could a Jew have included in the genealogy of Genesis 10 Belus, Kronus, and the augur Asbolus? How could a Jew have identified Atlas with Enoch? And if he is a Samaritan, how could a Samaritan have spoken of Saul, David, and Solomon as legitimate Israelite kings, Eli as high priest, and Samuel, Elijah, and Jeremiah as prophets?⁹²

Indeed, foreign cultures may be attacked most strongly precisely by those most under their influence, such as the deeply hellenized aristocrat Cato the Censor, who launched bitter attacks on Greek culture in Rome in the middle of the second century B.C.E.⁹³ As Goodman⁹⁴ has noted, no one has ever asked whether Jewish writers such as Ezekiel the Tragedian or the philosopher Philo thought of themselves as introducing Greek culture into Jewish education or whether Jews like the sectarians at Qumran consciously rejected the same culture.

Indeed, when Philo, even though he prefaces his biography of Moses with a statement, apparently intended for both Jews and non-Jews, that he intends to answer those who refuse to treat him as worthy of memory (*Mos.* 1.2), he is not all apologetic about the extra-biblical remark that in his youth (*Mos.* 1.21) Moses was taught by teachers who came from various countries, including Egypt and Greece. In fact, as Goodman⁹⁵ remarks, the most striking aspect of

⁹⁰ Skehan and Di Lella 1987, 449-53.

⁹¹ Hengel 1989, 21.

⁹² See Holladay 1983, 162 n. 13; 185-86 nn. 30-31.

⁹³ See Astin 1978, 157-81.

⁹⁴ Goodman 1994, 168.

⁹⁵ Goodman 1994, 168.

Jewish references to the prevalence of Greek culture among Jews, especially in Palestine, is their rarity. Indeed, Goldstein⁹⁶ has noted that whereas the Greeks had a word (ἑλληνίζειν) for “acting like a Greek,”⁹⁷ and whereas the Romans had a word, *pergraecari*, for “acting Greek,” there is no Hebrew word in antiquity for “acting Greek.” Moreover, as Goodman adds, the hostility of Ben Sira is to non-Jews generally; and he does not mention the Greeks specifically. Again, when he mentions Jews who forsake the covenant (Sir. 41:8-9) he does not mention Greek culture specifically. Furthermore, the concept of a biblical canon owed nothing to the Greeks, since the word “canon” was not used in classical antiquity in the sense of a list of chosen “best authors,” but rather in the sense of the standard of a genre.⁹⁸

As for Jews who had contact with Greek thinkers or writers, we have an account in Josephus (*Ap.* 1.176-83), who quotes Clearchus of Soli (ca. 300 B.C.E.), who, in turn, quotes Aristotle as saying that he met a Jew in Asia Minor who had come to converse with him and other scholars to test their learning and who was entertained by a large circle of friends. Aristotle was quite impressed with this Jew, who, he says, not only spoke Greek but also had the soul of a Greek, and, generalizing from the case of this one Jew, he gives the Jews the supreme compliment of remarking that they are descended from the Indian philosophers. But we are not told the name of this Jew; and the fact that the story is told not in a work of Aristotle or in an extant work of Clearchus but third-hand in Josephus raises questions as to the historicity of the incident. Moreover, it would seem to be dangerous to generalize from one person, and one, at that, who had had this experience not in Palestine but in Asia Minor.

One specific way in which Hellenism might have influenced Judaism was through the institution of the educational instrument known as the gymnasium. Indeed, we hear (1 Macc. 1:14-15) that in the 170s B.C.E., “the wicked left the ancient laws, joined themselves to the gentiles, and built a gymnasium according to the customs of the nations.” As we see from the parallel account in 2 Macc. 4:7-13, the symbol of the gymnasium was the wearing of the broad-brimmed

⁹⁶ Goldstein 1981, 70-71.

⁹⁷ See the fourth-century Libanius, *Orations* 11.103: ἑλληνίζειν τὴν βάρβαρον, “Hellenize the barbarian.”

⁹⁸ See Easterling 2003, 286.

hat in the gymnasium. There can be no doubt that the gymnasium was a distinctly Greek phenomenon.⁹⁹ But there is no indication in 1 Maccabees or 2 Maccabees that the gymnasium built by the Hellenizers in Jerusalem had any previous history or background in Palestine or that after the Hellenizers were overthrown it had any later history. In the pages of Josephus, though he covers the period of the Hellenizing high priests Jason and Menelaus and the Hasmoneans, Herod, and his successors in great detail, there is no mention of a gymnasium or gymnasiarch anywhere in Palestine. Significantly, despite his ambitious building projects, Herod did not build any gymnasia in Palestine.

In a revealing statement, Levine¹⁰⁰ admits that indications that religious, literary, and philosophical influences were absorbed would certainly suggest an advanced degree of Hellenization, but he admits that such instances are relatively rare. Having been frustrated in establishing influence in this all-important area, he then proceeds to broaden the definition of Hellenization to include influence in the economic, social, political, and material realm, where he finds the evidence of influence to be much more common. But it is precisely the religious area that was the most important influence on the everyday lives and everyday feelings of Jews where he finds so little direct impact. But aside from attacks on athletics and theatrical performances, the Jews write remarkably little—and nothing in Ben Sira and Jubilees—about the dangers of Greek culture. When Josephus (*Ap.* 1.7) does mention Greek culture he speaks of it with contempt, especially compared with the antiquity of Jewish culture: “In the Greek world everything will be found to be modern, and dating, so to speak, from yesterday or the day before: I refer to the foundation of their cities, the invention of the arts, and the compilation of a code of laws.” As for the celebration of Hanukah, the Jews stress the repurification of the Temple and the wickedness of the Syrian king Antiochus more than the wickedness of renegade Jews.

Bickerman¹⁰¹ argues that the Jews borrowed from the Greeks, especially Plato, the belief in the power of education to achieve wisdom. It was the Greeks, according to Bickerman, who introduced

⁹⁹ Goodman 1994, 168-69.

¹⁰⁰ Levine 1998, 18.

¹⁰¹ Bickerman 1962, 204.

to the world the belief that membership in a civilization could be achieved by education rather than by birth. The reformers similarly introduced the idea that membership in a civilization could be achieved by education rather than by birth. He contends that it was from the Greeks that the Pharisees learned this idea; but the fact is that the Pentateuch itself, which surely dates from before the time that the Jews had contact with the Greeks, declares (Deut. 6:7) that you [Jews] are commanded “to teach them [i.e. the words of G-d] diligently to your children.” There is no evidence in rabbinic literature or in Greek literature that as a result of contact with the Greeks, Simeon ben Shetach (*y. Ket.* 8.11.32c) early in the first century B.C.E. made the first attempt to create a school system, and that a comprehensive scheme toward this end was carried out by Joshua ben Gamala shortly before the destruction of the Temple in the first century C.E., whereby teachers were appointed in every province and children were required to be sent to these schools from the age of six or seven (*B. Bat.* 21a).

Goodman¹⁰² admits that most of the major changes that took place in Judaism during this period could have occurred regardless of the spread of Hellenism. In particular, it is unlikely that the concept of a biblical canon could have been influenced by the Greek canons, for example of the ten Attic orators, since the canon was not always the same ten or ten at all.¹⁰³ Moreover, the pagan list of authors were certainly less authoritative than the biblical authors, and the term “canon” owed nothing to the Greeks. Rather, as Goodman¹⁰⁴ suggests, the emergence of distinct sects, trends, and philosophies during this period owed more to the adoption of divergent calendars and different ways of interpreting biblical texts than to the influence of Hellenism.

Goodman¹⁰⁵ is surprised that there is so little expression in the literature of this period of opposition to Hellenization. That the Dead Sea Scrolls have no criticism of the Hellenizers is, however, not surprising, inasmuch as the Dead Sea Sect was so far removed from Greek ideas that they were apparently not deemed worthy of comment. As to the fact that there is no criticism of the Jewish

¹⁰² Goodman 1994, 168.

¹⁰³ Easterling 2003, 286.

¹⁰⁴ Goodman 1994, 168.

¹⁰⁵ Goodman 1994, 169.

king Aristobulus I for calling himself “philhellene” (*Ant.* 13.318), this may have been his way of seeking to ingratiate himself to the many non-Jews in his realm, and in any case his reign of one year (104–103 B.C.E.) was too short to warrant conclusions.

The ultimate, and by far the most important, test is how much intermarriage there was. Ezra (1 Esdr. 8:96) enjoins against mixed marriages, but he does not mention Greeks at all. Levine himself¹⁰⁶ cites the example of the intermarriage of Alexander the Great and of his soldiers with Persian women and their adoption of various Persian customs. But there is remarkably little evidence in the writings of Josephus and the rabbis, numerous and far-ranging and filled with digressions as they are, that intermarriage was frequent in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.¹⁰⁷ Levine’s conception of the Hellenistic world is of “a veritable potpourri of cultural forces, a marketplace of ideas and fashions from which one could choose.”¹⁰⁸ He is perhaps thinking of certain poems of Herodas and of Theocritus describing conditions in Alexandria; but how far did this penetrate Jewish circles in Palestine? The one rabbi, the second-century Elisha ben Abuyah, who was, indeed, influenced by Greek song (*b. Hag.* 15b), that is, presumably poetry, remains an isolated example in rabbinic literature.

8. THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENIZATION ON JEWISH LANGUAGES

One key area of the influence of Hellenization is on the languages used by Jews. In the early contact between Greeks and Jews, namely in the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek, Naomi Cohen¹⁰⁹ has commented on the influence not of Greek on Hebrew but of Hebrew on Greek in the Septuagint. She cites the case of *Νόμος*. What has changed is not the meaning of Torah but that of *Νόμος*, which in Greek means “Law,” but in Judeo-Greek has metamorphosed to include the entire contents of the Pentateuch—stories, poetry, etc.

Inasmuch as the everyday language of the Jews in Palestine was Aramaic, one would expect, if the influence of Greek was as great

¹⁰⁶ Levine 1998, 19.

¹⁰⁷ See Feldman 1993, 487 n. 169.

¹⁰⁸ Levine 1998, 19.

¹⁰⁹ Cohen 2002, 34.

as some have suggested, a considerable number of Greek words in the Aramaic texts that are extant from this period. But the number of Greek words that have been found in first and second century Aramaic texts is minuscule.

It is remarkable, as Wasserstein¹¹⁰ has noted, that there are practically no Greek loanwords in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This cannot be sheer chance, since the Qumran sectaries were very deliberate in everything that they did or said or wrote. Indeed, Wasserstein¹¹¹ suggests that the rabbis borrowed these words not directly from Greek but rather from the Aramaic *koine*, which the Jews shared with their non-Jewish neighbors. As for the Aramaic manuscripts found at Qumran, only five isolated words and one formula are clearly due to Greek influence. Moreover, as Lewis¹¹² has pointed out, the influence of the native Aramaic is so strong that in the Greek documents in the second-century Bat Babatha archive the individual letters of words are written separately, as is true in the writing of Aramaic. Furthermore, we find a number of Semiticisms in these documents,¹¹³ such as direct discourse after λέγω, omission of the definite article, the occurrence of the nominative absolute, the reference first to east and then to west in mentioning boundaries, and the phrase πάντα κύρια καὶ βέβαια, which is a literal translation of the Aramaic formula, וכלא שריר וקים. When a letter is found in Greek in the Bar Kokhba collection, Yadin explains that this is because no scribe knowing Hebrew or Aramaic was available,¹¹⁴ the clear implication being that normally such a letter would have been written in Hebrew or Aramaic.

Josephus (*Ant.* 20.264-65), writing in the first century, says that “our people” do not favor those persons who have mastered the languages of many nations, the most popular of which, in the Mediterranean world, was Greek. Those funerary inscriptions that are in Greek are at a very elementary stage. It is not until the second century that we find, in the Bar Kochba correspondence, private letters that are in Greek. Sevenster¹¹⁵ and Levine,¹¹⁶ referring to

¹¹⁰ Wasserstein 1995, 119.

¹¹¹ Wasserstein 1995, 124.

¹¹² Lewis 1989, 6.

¹¹³ Lewis 1989, 13.

¹¹⁴ Yadin 1971, 130.

¹¹⁵ Sevenster 1968, 70.

¹¹⁶ Levine 1998, 78-79.

Josephus' statement (*Ant.* 20.264) that skill in languages is common to ordinary freemen and even slaves, conclude that the knowledge of Greek was common among the Jews of Palestine; but Josephus says only that such skill can be acquired irrespective of social class.¹¹⁷ Moreover, as Wasserstein¹¹⁸ has noted, a very high proportion of the Greek loanwords in rabbinic literature are also found in other Aramaic dialects, notably Syriac, so that it is most likely that they were borrowed not from Greek directly but only indirectly from these other dialects; and these borrowed words share the results of certain internal Aramaic developments. Thus these Aramaicized Greek words should, paradoxically, be seen not as deliberate adoption of Greek ways but as an indication that the Jews in Palestine felt at home within the Aramaic Near East. Therefore, the question of Greek influence on the Jews in Palestine is to be viewed in the way the Greek language and traditions were adapted to their own native and distinctive and time-honored background. Indeed, so strong is the Aramaic tendency in rabbinic Judaism that the rabbis went so far as to claim that Ezra receive the revelation of the Torah in Aramaic (*b. Sanh.* 21b); and Rabbi Judah in the name of the third-century Rav was able to assert that Adam, the first man, spoke in Aramaic (*b. Sanh.* 38b). The question thus becomes how did the Jews manage to maintain their indigenous character and unique self-definition and time-honored culture and values while adapting to contact with the Greek language and culture?

As for Greek loan-words in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Copper Scroll, written in Mishnaic-like Hebrew, contains four words derived from Greek;¹¹⁹ In the Aramaic papyri from Murabba'at and Naḥal Ḥever there are ten Greek words.¹²⁰ Cotton¹²¹ has noted that the Qumran texts evince a deliberate and conscious avoidance of Greek words, and that the Greek that they do use shows the influence of the local Aramaic language of the writers. She remarks that certain linguistic features in the Scrolls reflect the local spoken Aramaic language of the writers and that the pervasive Semiticisms in the papyri

¹¹⁷ So Lewis 1969, 588.

¹¹⁸ Wasserstein 1995, 124.

¹¹⁹ ἐξέδρα, περιστύλιον, ἄλῳη, and στατήρ.

¹²⁰ ἀσφάλεια, ξίφος, ἐπίτροπος, Ῥωμαῖοι, ὑπατεία, αὐτοκράτωρ, Καῖσαρ, Σεβαστός, ἐπαρχεία.

¹²¹ Cotton 2000, 324.

from the Judean Desert stand in sharp contrast to the resistance of the Greek language to native influences in the Greek papyri from Egypt. Indeed, certain lexicographical features of these texts from the Judean Desert are either not attested at all in the Greek papyri from Egypt or occur in them only at a much later period.

Furthermore, why are we so sure that the Jewish art of this period was influenced by Hellenism rather than by Oriental currents? Indeed, Rachel Hachlili¹²² has written: "A distinctive feature of Jewish art is the antithetic composition, which occurs in almost all figurative and decorative subjects, and which is one of the basic elements of Oriental art." She remarks that Jewish art is one of the best examples of an Oriental art in Late Antiquity in that it projects the spiritual value of a subject rather than a realistic conception such as, we may remark, was a hallmark of Greek art. An example of this Orientalizing may be seen in the famous depiction of the sacrifice of Isaac in the Beth Alpha synagogue. She notes that the hands of the figures are placed in front of the objects that they are supposed to be holding in defiance of the laws of perspective and that objects are set one above the other without regard for distance.¹²³ The absence of individual characterization and the exaggeration in the dimensions of the head and eyes are clearly due to Oriental rather than to Greek influence. Other Oriental and non-Greek features are the effort to express artificially the picture of a living being into a pattern as well as richness of effect. She suggests that these non-Hellenic features can be found in ancient Assyrian and Hittite and in contemporary Parthian art.¹²⁴

9. NON-GREEK INFLUENCE ON JUDAISM

As Winston¹²⁵ has indicated, the notion of an eschatological judgment by fire, as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls is found in the Iranian *Yasna* 31.3. The doctrine of a world conflagration, so common in Greek literature, is likewise found, as he indicates, in Iranian literature.¹²⁶ And why speak only of the influence of the Greeks upon the Jews?

¹²² Hachlili 1988, 376.

¹²³ Hachlili 1988, 366-68.

¹²⁴ Hachlili 1988, 368.

¹²⁵ Winston 1966, 205-9.

¹²⁶ Winston 1966, 207.

It is also possible that the Jews had influence upon the Greeks. The new stylistic form combining prose and poetry that was introduced by Menippus of Gadara, a short distance east of the Jordan River, evidently has Semitic roots.¹²⁷

Moreover, Hengel¹²⁸ admits that the “mythological geography” of the Ethiopian Enoch and its demonology may go back to a Near Eastern environment as reflected in authors such as Hesiod and that the doctrine of two spirits, found among the Essenes, is ultimately Iranian.

One possible indication of non-Greek influence may perhaps be seen in the statement of Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap.* Diodorus 40.3.8) that after Moses, “as a result of becoming subject to foreign rule and mingling with other nations (both under Persian rule and under that of the Macedonians who overthrew the Persians) many of their traditional practices were disturbed.” In a similar vein Strabo (16.2.37) says: “His [Moses’] successors for some time abided by the same course, acting righteously and being truly pious toward G-d; but afterwards, in the first place superstitious men were appointed to the priesthood, and then tyrannical people.” But that Hecataeus and Strabo are not referring to the inroads of Hellenization is clear from the fact that Hecataeus speaks of changes under both the Persians and Macedonians. Moreover, Hecataeus speaks of changes in religious practice rather than changes of ideas.

In the last analysis we must explain the triumph of the rabbis and the Talmud. Why would Christian emperors, who generally were not eager to seek a confrontation with the Christian clergy, have permitted this, though Justinian in the sixth century forbade the Deuterosis, that is the Mishnah? And if the Jews were so indebted to Christian institutions, why do the Church Fathers, who are often so eager to belittle and to denounce the Jews, not make a point of this? One thing does seem clear: the masses seem to have remained true to the Jewish tradition and to have become more and more immersed in the study of the rabbinic tradition. Moreover, most importantly, if the triumph of the rabbis is due to the Christian emperors, how can we explain the triumph of the rabbis in Babylonia under the Parthians and Sassanians, who were not Christians? Is it that the presence of a predominantly Jewish population and strong, confident

¹²⁷ So Hengel 1980, 118.

¹²⁸ Hengel 1989, 46-47.

rabbinic leadership allowed the Palestinian Jewish population much more latitude in this regard than we find in the Diaspora?

10. THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENIZATION ON OTHER NATIONS

According to Levine,¹²⁹ ancient sources themselves testify to the impact of Greco-Roman culture on the lives of conquered nations. He notes that Josephus (*Ant.* 1.121), in considering the names of cities, regions, and peoples, as well as political institutions, has the following to say about the pervasiveness of Hellenistic influence: “Some of the nations [descended from Noah’s progeny] preserve the names given by their founders, but some changed them, in order to make them appear more intelligible to their neighbors. The Greeks are the ones who are responsible for this.” But we may note that Josephus cites only the influence of the Greeks in getting *nations* in the Near East descended from Noah to change their names. He says that it is the Greeks who set this precedent, embellishing the nations whom they conquered with names they could understand. This, we may remark, is for matters of international relations. It is the Greeks, he says, who imposed on the peoples whom they conquered forms of government, as though they were descended from themselves. He does not say that the Jews, under the influence of Hellenization, imposed changes of forms of government.

¹²⁹ Levine 1998, 29.

PART ONE

JUDAISM AND HELLENISM

CHAPTER ONE

HOMER AND THE NEAR EAST: THE RISE OF THE GREEK GENIUS

1. INTRODUCTION

In his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford in 1936, E. R. Dodds urged classicists to learn “something at first hand of that world background against which Greek culture arose and from which it was never completely isolated save in the minds of classical scholars.”¹ In a recent letter to me, Martin Bernal writes that he looks upon Cyrus Gordon, who pioneered in composing seminal works connecting the Greek and Near Eastern world, as “one of the greatest and most original scholars of the twentieth century.” As Saul Levin has remarked, Professor Gordon’s insight into Ugaritic mythical poetry has supplied something unique to Hellenists: he has shown how this poetry is more akin to Greek epic than any other Semitic literature—and, for that matter, more akin than what has come to light of Anatolian literature in Indo-European languages.² While other scholars have pursued mainly the relationship of the rediscovered Ugaritic corpus to the Bible, Professor Gordon has sensed the greater affinity of spirit between Ugaritic and Homeric poetry. It is interesting to note that classicists have now come around to his view of the Bronze Age East Mediterranean, without, in most cases, fully acknowledging him. Most significantly, in the preface to the second edition of his *Early Greece*, Oswyn Murray has written prophetically: “Finally, an observation about the future of my subject, which is the formation of Western culture. Each year it become more obvious that there is no such thing as Greek history, as distinct from Roman history, or the history of the Phoenicians or the Etruscans. Seas unite more often than they divide, and the Greeks discovered themselves when they discovered their sea and the peoples which surround it. It is not Greece but the Mediterranean world which possesses a history and a destiny of its own.”³

¹ Dodds 1936, 11.

² Letter to the author, November 13, 1994.

³ Murray 1983,

The two outstanding examples of this new trend in classical studies pioneered by Professor Gordon are Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* and Sarah Morris, *Daedalos and the Origins of Greek Art*.⁴ Most recently Ludwig Koenen, in his presidential address in 1993 to the American Philological Association, warned that we can no longer look at early Greece in isolation from the Near East but admitted that “what is known to researchers, however, does not always reach the classroom, and the general public is hardly aware that our picture of ancient cultures and, in particular, of early Greek culture, has undergone dynamic changes.”⁵ The fact that the Gilgamesh epic has been found not only in Mesopotamia but also, to be sure in fragmentary form, in Asia Minor and in Palestine, and that it was translated into Hurrian and Hittite, should have been a clue for us of the unity of the East Mediterranean world.

What has, I believe, revolutionized the subject of East Mediterranean influence upon Greece are four hypotheses that are increasingly gaining the day. One is the thesis that the eighth century B.C.E. marked a Greek renaissance and the speculation as to the role played by the Near East in that renaissance. Second is the thesis that the Greeks acquired the alphabet from the Phoenicians not in the eighth century B.C.E. but as early as 1100 B.C.E. Third is the challenge to Milman Parry’s theory of Homer as an oral poet and the impact of a Near Eastern written tradition of epic upon Homer. Fourth is the increasing recognition that Hesiod, Homer’s alleged younger contemporary, was influenced by Near Eastern motifs. At last, literary scholars, who generally do not work as easily across national frontiers as do archaeologists, are beginning to catch up. I wish here to comment on recent scholarship pertaining to the four theories that have challenged the *communis sensus* with regard to the connection of the Near East with the rise of the Greek genius.

2. ESTABLISHING INFLUENCE

First, a word about method. We must avoid falling into the trap of parallelomania, the neologism introduced by Samuel Sandmel.⁶ If we

⁴ Burkert 1992; Morris 1992.

⁵ Koenen 1994, 1.

⁶ Sandmel 1962, 1-13.

wish to assert the likelihood of influence, it is important to establish that it was chronologically possible for commercial contact to have occurred and that such contact was considerable and over a period of time, the implication being that cultural contact generally follows trade routes. This has surely been established; for example, we know that many Achaean merchants and craftsmen lived at Ugarit. Secondly, the literary material must have existed at the time of the commercial contact. The argument goes that since there are striking similarities between the art, architecture, and administration of the Achaean palaces and the non-Greek centers of the second millennium B.C.E., such as Mari on the Euphrates and Ugarit in Syria, the cultural influence may well have included poetry.⁷ Thirdly, the actual literary and other cultural parallels must be sufficiently unique to fulfill a rigorous set of relevant criteria. Fourthly, the parallels, both in the realm of ideas and in actual language, must be sufficiently numerous, complex, and detailed, and must involve central features of the material being compared, so as to rule out sheer chance.⁸ One important caveat: to show influence is not to show origin; and to show origin is not to show fundamental influence.

The works, above cited, by Burkert and Morris, go far toward establishing the fulfillment of these four criteria. Indeed, as early as the Mycenaean period (2000-1200 B.C.E.), we find that a number of Near Eastern words have already entered the Greek language: Linear B *ki-tōn*, "tunic," Phoenician *ktn*; Linear B *ku-ru-so*, Greek χρυσός, Phoenician *hrš*; Linear B *e-re-pa*, Greek ἐλέφας, "ivory," Hittite *lahpa*; Linear B *ku-mi-no*, Greek κύμινον, "cummin," Hebrew כמון; Linear B *sa-sa-ma*, Greek σήσαμον, "sesame," Phoenician *śsmn*. In Homer we find a number of words that appear to be derived from the Near East: λῆξ (*Iliad* 15.275), "lion," Hebrew לֵשׁ; γαστήρ (*Odyssey* 9.223), "bowl," "bucket," Ugaritic *gl*, Hebrew גַּל; κῆρυξ (*Iliad* 9.217), "basket," and κῆρυξ, "shield-grip" (*Iliad* 13.407), Ugaritic *qn*, Punic and Royal Aramaic *qn'*, Hebrew קנה; κρόκος, "saffron" (*Iliad* 14.348), Hebrew כרכם, Akkadian kurkanū; ὀδόνη, "fine tissue" (*Odyssey* 7.107), Hebrew אֶטָּן. In particular, we may note that Phoenician craftsmen had apparently settled in Crete, Euboea, Attica, and Sardinia⁹ as early as the ninth century B.C.E.; and Greeks, in turn, were trading

⁷ Kirk 1962, 106.

⁸ Penglase 1994, 7.

⁹ Balmuth 1992, 215-27.

with settlements on the coast of Syria.¹⁰ How is it that Near Eastern motifs and scientific and mathematical information could have been transmitted to the Greeks when there was an obvious language barrier? It would appear that some of the Near Eastern settlers were bilingual poets, just as in the Near East itself there were bilingual poets who, in the second millennium B.C.E., had been able to translate from Akkadian to Hurrian to Hittite. Indeed, there were bilingual experts already in the third millennium, translating from Sumerian to Eblaite and from Sumerian to Akkadian, among other languages; and some of them may have been poets, as Hallo has suggested.¹¹

3. THE GREEK RENAISSANCE

In 1981 a ground-breaking symposium was held in Athens, the theme of which was the Greek renaissance of the eighth century B.C.E.¹² The participants of that symposium agreed that the so-called Dark Ages in Greek history between the twelfth and eighth centuries B.C.E. were hardly as dark as they are generally regarded. Still, the eighth century marked important new developments, which, indeed, form the background of the great Greek civilization with which we are all familiar. This is the century marked by a rapid growth of population that led to the founding of colonies and the expansion of commerce beyond the Aegean. There was a revival of representational art, a marked program in sacred and domestic architecture,¹³ the alleged introduction of the alphabet, a revival of interest in the heroic age that culminated in the development of epic poetry, and, most probably, the formation of the polis. Was Homer the cause or the effect of these developments? A clue may be found in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*, which tells of Menelaus' wanderings to Cyprus, Phoenicia, Egypt, North Africa, and the western Mediterranean. Moreover, Burkert¹⁴ has called attention to the passage in Homer (*Odyssey* 17.383-85) which mentions craftsmen (δημιουργοί), including carpenters, seers, and singers, noting striking resemblances with Sumero-Akkadian

¹⁰ Braun 1983, 5-14.

¹¹ Letter to author, December 6, 1994.

¹² Hägg 1983.

¹³ Snodgrass 1971, 416.

¹⁴ Burkert 1983a, 115-20.

incantation texts. In particular, he notes one special technique of seers, namely hepatoscopy, which originated in Mesopotamia and which spread to the West in remarkably similar form and terminology. The impetus for the eighth-century B.C.E. renaissance, indeed, may have been contact with Near Eastern culture, including epic literature, just as contact with the East may have served as one of the catalysts for the Renaissance in the fourteenth century C.E.

4. WHEN WAS THE ALPHABET BORROWED?

Anyone who has tried working with the clumsy syllabic script of Linear B will recognize how great a handicap it must have been to the development of literature. The usual view is that it was in the eighth century B.C.E. that the Phoenicians introduced the Greeks to the Phoenician alphabet, the so-called Cadmean letters. Not only the names of the letters and their order but also the forms of the earliest Greek letters are clearly indebted to West Semitic.¹⁵ An eighth century B.C.E. date for this borrowing seems to be confirmed by the fact that no Greek inscriptions using the alphabet have been found from before that period.¹⁶ However, if Joseph Naveh is correct, a comparative analysis of the characteristic traits of the West Semitic script and those of the earliest Greek inscriptions indicates that the Greeks borrowed the alphabet approximately three centuries before the earliest known Greek inscription. This is a classic case of the danger of the *argumentum ex silentio* and reminds one of the story about the Greek and the Jew who were comparing notes. The Greek said: "The other day they were digging in the Acropolis in Athens, and do you know what they found? Wires. And do you know what that proves? It shows that 2500 years ago, in the age of Pericles, the Greeks had telephones." Whereupon the Jew said: "The other day they were digging in the old city of Jerusalem; and do you know what they found? Nothing. And do you know what that proves? It

¹⁵ Naveh 1982. For a slightly different view on the earliest West Semitic letter names and their order see Hallo 1958, 324-38.

¹⁶ Carpenter 1933, 27. Barry B. Powell (1991, 19-20) concludes that the Greek alphabet was created about 800 B.C.E. But even he admits that a parallel to the lack of inscriptions prior to this date may be found in Cyprus, where, within a certainly continuous tradition, there are no examples of Cypriote writing between the eleventh and eighth centuries B.C.E.

shows that 3000 years ago, in the age of King Solomon, the Jews already understood the principle of the wireless.”

De nihilo nihil fit. We may, in fact, note that though it is generally conceded that the Hebrews adopted the alphabet in the twelfth or eleventh century B.C.E., only one Hebrew inscription—the Gezer Calendar (which may, in fact, be Phoenician)—definitely dates from a period (the tenth century B.C.E.) earlier than the eighth century B.C.E. The fact that the earliest Greek writing is from left to right or boustrophedon (alternating from left to right and from right to left) indicates that it is in accord with the proto-Canaanite script of the late twelfth century, that is, before right-to-left writing became standard ca. 1050 B.C.E.¹⁷ Moreover, on these earliest Greek inscriptions the *sigma* has the shape of the thirteenth- and twelfth-century vertical *shin*; the *mu*, with five equal strokes, is like the pictographic *mem* resembling water; the *omicron*, with a dot in the center, resembles the pictographic *ayin*, an eye with the pupil, which is found in the eleventh-century Proto-Canaanite inscriptions.¹⁸ The Phoenician script was a uniform one, whereas there are considerable local variations in the Greek script, which would seem to be due to its development over a period of time. Most of the writing materials, notably wax tablets and leather rolls, were not durable; hence, we have no Greek alphabetic inscriptions before the eighth century B.C.E. Writing, in all probability, was in the hands of a very small number of specialists, as it was in the Near East, and thus inscriptions did not appear on pottery.

5. HOMER AS LITERATE POET

If this dating of the borrowing of the alphabet is correct, the so-called Dark Age of illiteracy in Greece must be revised. The fact that Phoenician inscriptions dating from the ninth century have been found in Cyprus and Sardinia and that there was a Greek settlement in Phoenicia in the ninth century indicates that the two

¹⁷ Naveh 1982, 177-78.

¹⁸ Naveh 1982, 181. Other close parallels between the earliest Greek letters and the proto-Canaanite are the box-shaped *theta*, the I-shaped *zeta*, the *delta*, *epsilon*, *nu*, *xi*, *pi*, *qoppa*, and *rho*. The variations in the shapes of the earliest Greek letters would be explained as due to the fact that the Proto-Canaanite alphabet which they adopted was then in the process of evolution from pictographic to linear forms.

peoples lived side by side during the so-called Dark Age. An inscription recently found at Qubur el-Walaydah in the Negev, dating from ca. 1200 B.C.E.;¹⁹ an ostrakon found at 'Izbet Šarṭah, east of Tel Aphek, dating from the twelfth century B.C.E.;²⁰ and an inscription found on a bowl unearthed in Crete near Knossos, dating from the late eleventh century B.C.E.,²¹ have led Cross to conclude that they give added support to Naveh's theory. All of this gives us reason to dispute Muhly's conclusion that during the period from 1000 to 700 B.C.E. there was no direct involvement of Greece in the Near East and that the Homeric epics developed in a period of virtual isolation from the eastern world.²²

Moreover, Albright²³ has noted that the word βύβλινος ("papyrus"), which appears in Homer's *Odyssey* (21.391) and which is derived from the name of the Phoenician city Byblus, was most probably borrowed at a time when Byblus was the most important city and port on the Canaanite coast, namely from the early third millennium to the early eleventh century B.C.E. After that date, Byblus lost its preeminence to Sidon and Tyre. If this is so, as Albright concluded, we need no longer hesitate to admit the continuity of the tradition of writing in the Greece of the early Iron Age.²⁴ If the alphabet was borrowed by the Greeks from the Phoenicians as early as the eleventh century B.C.E., Homer or his syndicate or his scribes may well have used it. Since the epoch-making articles by Milman Parry (1971), the prevalent view has been that Homer, genius though he was, was an illiterate bard, operating as an oral poet who manipulated various formulaic expressions by numerous permutations and combinations. If so, we may ask, what was his genius? He was nothing more than an expert card player. Indeed, H. T. Wade-Gery, troubled by this, conjectured that the Greeks adopted the alphabet for the express purpose of recording the Homeric poems (1952). Albert Bates Lord, Parry's co-worker in Yugoslavia, suggested that the very idea of

¹⁹ Cross 1980, 2-4.

²⁰ Naveh 1978, 31-35.

²¹ Cross 1980, 15-17.

²² Muhly 1970, 19-64.

²³ Albright 1950, 165.

²⁴ Likewise, as Albright (1950, 165) points out, the fact that the initial letters of the Greek names for Tyre (Τύρος) and Sidon (Σίδων, *Odyssey* 13.286 etc.) go back to the time when the two initial sades were still differentiated, namely in the Bronze Age, indicates that they were borrowed by the Greeks during the Mycenaean period.

recording the Homeric poems, as well as the Cyclic epics and the works of Hesiod, came from observation of or from hearing about similar activity going on in the Near East.²⁵ Lord theorized that Homer dictated his poems to a person who could write.²⁶ But, as Lloyd-Jones has remarked, these theories raise more difficulties than they resolve.²⁷ In the first place, the new invention would have been intelligible only to the inventor and his immediate circle.

It is more likely that alphabetic writing had been in existence for some time and that poets realized its advantages. It is no longer heresy to ask whether the importation of the Phoenician alphabet influenced Homer in more than merely providing the letter forms. In the story of Bellerophon in the *Iliad* (6.169), Burkert²⁸ notes that the fatal letter is written on a folded tablet.²⁹ It is not written in clay; but this is perfectly consonant with a wooden tablet, such as was used by the Phoenicians. Muhly observes that all early Greek inscriptions down to approximately 550 B.C.E., with only two possible exceptions, are in dactylic hexameter verse, indicating that the epics were well known.³⁰ Even Parry's son, Adam Parry, had come to the conclusion that the Homeric poems could not have been composed without the aid of writing.³¹ Indeed, several studies have shown that the epithets used by Homer are not meaningless formulas, as one finds in oral poetry, but rather deliberately and carefully chosen.³² Moreover Jasper Griffin notes important differences between the style and language of the speeches of characters in the *Iliad* and the direct words of Homer himself.³³ Furthermore, in a highly sophisticated study, Shive criticizes Parry for working from lexica of Homer rather than from the text itself. Shive concludes that far from being thrifty (as an oral poet would be expected to be), Homer has been profuse, naming Achilles, for example, in the dative case alone in thirty-two ways. He concludes that "the underestimated factor is

²⁵ Lord 1960, 156.

²⁶ Lord 1953, 124-34. Lloyd-Jones 1992, 56.

²⁷ Lloyd-Jones 1992, 56.

²⁸ Burkert 1983b, 52.

²⁹ For Near Eastern antecedents of the Bellerophon story see Hallo 1994.

³⁰ Muhly 1990, 93.

³¹ Parry 1966, 177-216.

³² Whallon 1975; Austin 1975.

³³ Griffin 1986, 36-57.

whose meaning is suitable in the particular context.”³⁴ Recent critics have increasingly demonstrated the brilliance of Homer’s metrical and formulaic effects, his patterns of imagery and theme, his use of simile,³⁵ and his narrative strategies.³⁶ Finally, a glance at the extensible sheet at the end of Whitman’s book on Homer³⁷ indicates, most remarkably, that the six major episodes of Book 24 of the *Iliad* correspond precisely to the six major episodes of Book 1, except that they are in precisely inverse order. This hardly seems like the work of an illiterate oral poet.

6. HOMER AND NEAR EASTERN EPICS

On the contrary, the Homeric poems, in their deliberate organization, seem to have much more in common with the epics of Mesopotamia, all of which were written, and with traditions of writing and schools of scribes. Even in epithets there are parallels, as noted by Burkert,³⁸ between the characteristic epithets of the chief characters in the Akkadian epics—for example, the hero Enlil in *Atrahasis* 1.8 (= *Gilgamesh* 11.16) and Utnapishtim “the far-away” (*Gilgamesh* 10-11)—and in the Ugaritic epic where Baal is “the rider of clouds.” Epithets such as “knowledgeable in battle” (*Gilgamesh* 4.6.30) and “good in shouting” (*Gilgamesh* 11.117) are surely reminiscent of Homer.³⁹ Like Zeus in Homer, the moon-god Nanna in the Sumero-Akkadian prayer to the moon god⁴⁰ is referred to as “father, begetter of gods and men.” Characters in *Gilgamesh* as in Homer “speak to their own heart” (*Gilgamesh* 10.1.11 ff.).⁴¹ There is a similar verbal parallel between command and performance of an act.⁴² Likewise, *Gilgamesh* and Homer have similar stereotyped formulas for sunrise and sunset.⁴³

³⁴ Shive 1987, 130.

³⁵ Scott 1974.

³⁶ Hobka 1991, 472.

³⁷ Whitman 1958.

³⁸ Burkert 1992, 115-16.

³⁹ Burkert 1992, 116.

⁴⁰ Pritchard 1955, 385-86.

⁴¹ Burkert 1992, 116.

⁴² Burkert 1992, 116-17.

⁴³ Burkert 1992, 116.

7. PARALLEL MOTIFS

Furthermore, there are parallel motifs between Near Eastern epics and Homer. In the first place, as Professor Gordon, followed by Considine and Walcot,⁴⁴ has noted, there are eight striking parallels between the Baal-Anath text 137, where Baal is restrained from doing violence to the envoys by the goddesses Anath and Ashtoreth, and the scene in the *Iliad* (1.188-222), when Achilles is about to slay Agamemnon, but is restrained by two goddesses, Athena and Hera. Again, the very lines with which the Akkadian story of Gilgamesh begins might well apply to Odysseus: "He who saw everything (to the end) of the land, (who all things) experienced, (considered) all! The (hidden) he saw, (laid bare) the undisclosed. He brought report of before the Flood, achieved a long journey, weary and worn."⁴⁵ It was not until 1969, seven years after the publication of Professor Gordon's *Before the Bible*, that the text of the Akkadian epic, *Atrahasis*, was for the first time published in anything approaching its entirety. (This epic dates from a few generations after the time of Hammurabi in the seventeenth century B.C.E.) One such striking parallel between Near Eastern epic and Homer, as noted by Burkert,⁴⁶ is the casting of lots by the gods and the division of the universe into heaven, earth (including the underworld), and sea (*Atrahasis* 1.11-16, *Gilgamesh* 11.15-18). Similarly, in the *Iliad* (15.187-93), Poseidon declares that as a result of the casting of lots, he received the sea, Hades received the underworld, and Zeus received the sky. In both cases it is lots, rather than war (as is usually the case) or inheritance, that determines the division. Likewise, as Burkert⁴⁷ remarks, the oath that Hera is made to swear, by heaven and earth, and the waters of the underworld (*Iliad* 15.36-38 and *Odyssey* 5.184-86), is paralleled in an Aramaic treaty text dating from the eighth century.⁴⁸ Again, the scene (*Iliad* 5.330-431) in which Aphrodite has been wounded by Diomedes and complains to her father Zeus and mother Dione and earns a mild rebuke from her father is paralleled in *Gilgamesh*

⁴⁴ Gordon 1962, 180-81; Considine 1969, 85-159; Walcot 1970, 273-75.

⁴⁵ Hallo 1991, 173-81.

⁴⁶ Burkert 1992, 90. On lots and games cf. Hallo 1983, 19-29; 1993b, 83*-88*.

⁴⁷ Burkert 1992, 93.

⁴⁸ Pritchard 1969, 659; Fitzmyer 1967.

6.1-9). There Ishtar, rebuked by Gilgamesh, complains to her father Anu and her mother Antum and is rebuked by Anu.⁴⁹ Similarly, as Albert Bates Lord has noted,⁵⁰ the closest parallel to the Patroclus narrative is to be found in the Gilgamesh epic. In both epics the gods decide that the friend of the hero must perish for the hero, and the companion's death is followed by a lament by the hero.⁵¹ Another striking parallel is to be seen in the scenes (*Iliad* 18.318-22 and *Gilgamesh* 8.2.17-19) in which Achilles and Gilgamesh, respectively, while mourning over their slain companions, are compared to lions grieving over lost cubs.⁵² Lions, we may remark, are not frequent in Greece, and similes are most likely the work of the author, since no one asked the author to introduce them. Burkert⁵³ has pointed to the parallel between the opening lines of the *Odyssey* and the opening of *Gilgamesh*: in both instances the hero wanders far and wide and sees many things, while his name is not mentioned. Again, as Gresseth⁵⁴ has noted, there is a parallel between Utnapishtim and the *Odyssey*'s Alcinous in that both have a transport service, consisting of a magical ship, to take stranded mortals back home. In both cases their respective islands can be approached only across difficult and dangerous waters. Furthermore, there is good reason to believe that roots of the portrayal of Circe in the *Odyssey* lie in Anatolia or Mesopotamia, especially in the Gilgamesh epic, where we find a goddess, Ishtar, who turns her lovers into animals, and in the Akkadian myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal.⁵⁵ Likewise, as Crane has pointed out, Lesky's suggestion that Atlas was descended from the Hurro-Hittite figure Upelluri is attractive because by looking at Upelluri we may render intelligible the Homeric passage describing Atlas.⁵⁶ Again, there is a striking similarity in language between the *Odyssey*:

⁴⁹ Burkert 1992, 98. Burkert (1992, 98) notes the further parallel that Antu is the feminine form of Anu; hence they, as Mr. and Mrs. Heaven, correspond to Zeus and Dione (the feminine form of Zeus).

⁵⁰ Lord 1960, 197.

⁵¹ Pritchard 1969, 86.

⁵² On lions cf. also the parallel between the chameleon ("lion of the earth") and the "earth-lion" of *Gilgamesh* 11.296; cf. now Sjöberg 1984, 217-25.

⁵³ Burkert 1992, 117. Withholding the name of the protagonist (or of the deity apostrophized) is standard in Sumerian poetry.

⁵⁴ Gresseth 1975, 8).

⁵⁵ Crane 1988, 61-85.

⁵⁶ Crane 1988, 63.

“Of such a kind is the insight of mortal men, as the day which the father of gods and men brings in” (18.136-37), and the Akkadian “I Will Praise the L-rd of Wisdom”: “Their insight changes like day and night. When starving they become corpses; when replete they vie with their gods” (1.43-45). Likewise, Mondī⁵⁷ cites the parallel between the Homeric shield of Achilles: “And upon it he made the earth and the sky and the sea, the tireless sun and the waxing moon, and all the constellations that wreath the sky” (*Iliad* 18.483-85), and Psalm 136:5-9: “to him who made the heavens,...the earth upon the waters,...the great lights,...the sun,...the moon and the stars.”

Furthermore, the scenes on the shield of a city of peace in which the leaders are dispensing justice, repelling aggression, and harvesting, while the king stands by watching happily, correspond to the description in Psalm 72. Furthermore, Burkert⁵⁸ has pointed to the beginning of the *Enuma Elish*, where we read that when above the heavens did not exist nor the earth below, Apsu was there, the fresh water ocean, “the first, the begetter,” and with him Tiamat, the salt-water sea, “she who bore them all.” Parallel to this is the Homeric passage (*Iliad* 14.201) where Hera declares that she wishes to go to Oceanus, “origin of the gods,” and Tethys, the “mother.” Tiamat is also written as *tiamtu*, “the sea,” as well as *tawtu*, of which Tethys is an exact transcription. Furthermore, Professor Gordon has pointed out the parallels between Ugaritic guilds and the Homeric *δημιοεργοί* (*Odyssey* 17.381-86), masters of some craft, whether prophets, physicians, builders, or bards, and who are specifically mentioned as being “strangers,” that is, foreigners.⁵⁹

Shortly after the passage in the *Iliad*, where Hera says that she wishes to go to Oceanus, we find the incident (*Iliad* 14.214-23) in which Hera asks Aphrodite for “love and desire” so as to bring together Oceanus and Tety, who had been contemplating divorce. Thereupon Aphrodite gives Hera a *κεστός ἱμάς*, usually translated as an “embroidered girdle.” Brenk plausibly suggests that we have here a reference to a saltier, running across the chest, such as we find in descriptions of Ishtar in the *Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld*, and that the parallel is to the quarrel between Apsu and Tia-

⁵⁷ Mondī 1990, 187.

⁵⁸ Burkert 1992, 92-93.

⁵⁹ Gordon 1956, 136-43.

mat, who had been “separated a long time from bed and love.”⁶⁰

Moreover, the visit to the underworld is a central motif in both *Gilgamesh* and Homer (*Odyssey*, Book 11). Still another striking parallel with the *Odyssey* is to be found in the Hittite tale of King Gurpanzah, who shoots many princes at a banquet with his magic bow and thus wins back his wife.⁶¹

8. HESIOD AND THE NEAR EAST

The increasing recognition that Homer’s younger contemporary Hesiod was influenced by the Near East makes it more likely that Homer was similarly influenced.⁶² Indeed, in his already standard commentary on Hesiod’s *Theogony*, West goes so far as to conclude that Greece is part of Asia; Greek literature is a Near Eastern literature.⁶³ Walcot⁶⁴ has shown how similar the Babylonian epic *Enuma Elish* is to Hesiod’s *Theogony* in its portrayal of an all-powerful and just king of the gods. Walcot⁶⁵ has also noted a close parallel between the Babylonian epic of Era and an autobiographical passage in Hesiod’s *Theogony*. Moreover, there is a striking parallel between Hesiod’s account of the Five Ages (*Works and Days* 106-201) and the extant portion of the Akkadian *Shulgi’s Prophecy*, probably dating from the end of the second millennium B.C.E., though pretending to be much earlier.⁶⁶ Another parallel is with the Akkadian *Atrahasis*, which, like Hesiod, divides all history into five periods.⁶⁷ In particular, there is a striking parallel between the succession myth, which recounts the emasculation of Ouranos by Kronos and the overthrow of Kronos by the storm-god Zeus (which is so fundamental to Hesiod’s work),

⁶⁰ Brenk 1977, 17-20; Pope 1970, 178-96.

⁶¹ Kirk 1962, 107; Hallo 1993a, 183-92.

⁶² See, for example, Walcot 1966, 1: “It is not an exaggeration to say that the publication of texts and translations of the Hittite Kumarbi and Ullikummi myths has revolutionized our knowledge of the Near Eastern background of Hesiod’s *Theogony*.” As Walcot notes, the fact that scholars increasingly accept the hypothesis of Near Eastern influence on Hesiod is largely due to the work of Hans G. Güterbock (1946).

⁶³ West 1966, 31.

⁶⁴ Walcot 1966, 32-49.

⁶⁵ Walcot 1966, 51-53.

⁶⁶ Koenen 1994, 20-21.

⁶⁷ Koenen 1994, 20-21.

and the version in the Phoenician-Hurrian-Hittite-Akkadian cosmological myths of Anu the sky god (whose very name corresponds to Ouranos, and who likewise is castrated), Kumarbi, and the storm-god. The parallel also exists in Herennius Philo's translation of the Phoenician *History of Sanchuniathon*.⁶⁸ In both the Near Eastern and Hesiodic versions the parents beget children who are confined within their mother; the father hates them, but the mother does not. The first god is castrated by the second, births result from the blood or seed of the castrated god, the father swallows the children because they are dangerous, and stones are substituted for the children.⁶⁹ Moreover, Burkert⁷⁰ has noted an independent tradition, namely the Near Eastern parallel in the Kumarbi myth, to the Titans, the Titanomachia, and the banishment of the Titans to Tartarus. The fact that parallels in Homer are to be found concentrated in the Διὸς ἄπατη ("guile of Zeus") (*Iliad* 14.200-79) has not been satisfactorily explained, unless we suggest that there is here direct borrowing. There is likewise a parallel between Hesiod (*Works and Days* 799), where we find the phrase "to eat one's heart" and the Sumerian and Egyptian statement, "do not eat your heart," that is, worry.

Some would say, as they did with Professor Gordon's "Homer and Bible" (1955) and *Before the Bible* (1962), that several of these parallels are commonplaces; but the total effect is what counts. There is now fairly general agreement that the Near East did influence Homer's alleged younger contemporary, Hesiod, increasing the likelihood that it also influenced Homer.

⁶⁸ See Güterbock 1948, 123-34; Walcot 1966; West 1966, 19-31; Pope 1955, 55-58; and Pope 1987, 219-30. The four generations of gods according to Philo of Byblos (Hypsistos, Ouranos, Kronos, Zeus) are confirmed as ancient by the Canaanite-Hurrian-Hittite myths of Kumarabi and Ullikummi, which are roughly contemporary with the Ugaritic myths. There is reason to think, as Pope suggests, that the Ugaritic myth knew of the tradition that the weather-god had displaced his predecessor El as king of the gods, just as Zeus did Kronos. The Ullikummi myth tells how Kumarabi attempted to regain the throne by using the diorite giant Ullikummi as his champion, just as Kronos used the Titans in a vain effort to displace Zeus. West (1988, 171) admits that in his youthful edition of the *Theogony* he argued that the succession myth was of Mycenaean origin, but that he later came to the view that it was influenced by the Near Eastern version. He concludes, moreover, that the theogonic allusions in Homer's *Iliad* (1.396-406, 14.201-7, 15.187-93), while differing from Hesiod's account, are equally oriental in origin.

⁶⁹ Barnett 1945, 100-1.

⁷⁰ Burkert 1984, 90.

9. CONCLUSION

In summary, I believe that whereas Professor Gordon's conclusions concerning the relationship of Homer and the Near East were greeted by many with skepticism and disbelief, the evidence, of which we have given a mere sample, keeps accumulating to vindicate him. Indeed, he was a full generation ahead of his time. To appreciate him adequately would require another scholar with the breadth of knowledge and versatility of a Professor Gordon. One is, indeed, reminded of Livy's encomium of Cicero (120.50): *Vir magnus, acer memorabilis, et in cuius laudes persequendas Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit*. "A great man, keen, remarkable, and for expounding whose praises there would have been need of a Cicero to praise him."⁷¹

⁷¹ I am grateful to William W. Hallo and Marvin H. Pope for a number of helpful suggestions in connection with this essay.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SEPTUAGINT: THE FIRST TRANSLATION OF THE TORAH AND ITS EFFECTS

1. INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF ALEXANDRIA

Surely one of the greatest reformers in Jewish history was a non-Jew, Alexander the Great, who, in his brief lifetime in the fourth century B.C.E., did much to spread the Greek language and Greek thought among the various peoples that he conquered. From a Jewish point of view, the most significant thing that he did was to establish cities, the most important being Alexandria in Egypt, where he invited Jews to settle (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.35) and where, according to at least one papyrus fragment (*Papyri Giessen University* 5.46) dating from the first century C.E. the Jews numbered 180,000 in a total population of perhaps 500,000 to 600,000—30 to 36 per cent of the whole.¹ Moreover, the Jews were either citizens or were granted isopolity (equal rights) with the Greeks (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.38),² though they were, in any case, to a considerable degree self-governed. Indeed, Josephus (*Antiquities* 14.188) says explicitly that Julius Caesar in the first century B.C.E. set up a bronze tablet for the Jews in Alexandria declaring that they were citizens, though, admittedly, there is good reason for disputing Josephus' motives in making such a statement.³ Inasmuch as Alexandria within a century after its founding apparently displaced Athens as the cultural center of the Mediterranean world, the Jews, who until the fourth century B.C.E. had been largely farmers in Eretz Israel and Babylonia, rather suddenly found themselves in

¹ See Delia 1988, 286-88.

² The matter is disputed. See Kasher 1985, 233-61. Gruen 2002, 73, convincingly calls attention to the statement in the *London Papyrus 1912* (*Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* 153, lines 94-95) in which the Emperor Claudius advises the Jews of Alexandria not to aim at more rights than they have previously had, the implication being that they did not possess the rights of citizenship.

³ See Barclay 1996, 70.

large numbers in the midst of the leading center of Greek culture. In effect, Alexandria was the New York City of its day.

2. THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SEPTUAGINT

Our earliest papyri pertaining to the Jews of Egypt are in Aramaic, presumably reflecting the language that they brought with them from Eretz Israel; but within two generations, certainly by 270 B.C.E., the papyri are no longer in Aramaic but rather in Greek. It was approximately in that year, according to a number of sources—the Pseudepigraphic *Letter of Aristeas*; Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 2.25-44; Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.12-118; Talmud, *Megillah* 9a-b, *Soferim* 1.7—that Ptolemy II Philadelphia is said to have commissioned a translation on the island of Pharos off the coast of Alexandria by seventy or seventy-two (hence Septuagint) Jewish elders from Jerusalem of the Torah into Greek for the huge library that he was establishing in Alexandria. As Bickerman,⁴ who is not addicted to exaggeration, points out, this is the most important translation ever made; “it opened the Bible to the world and the world to the Word of G-d. Without this translation London and Rome would still be heathen, and the Scriptures would be no better known than the Egyptian Book of the Dead.” Whether Ptolemy’s purpose in doing this was to show favor to the Jews, whose backing he needed inasmuch as he and his Macedonian and Greek followers amounted to no more than perhaps ten per cent of the population of Egypt and hence he needed the support of the Jews as middlemen in administration and as soldiers in his army, there is certainly significance in the fact (*Letter of Aristeas* 308) that the translation, when completed, was presented first to the Jewish community and only thereafter (*Letter of Aristeas* 312) to King Ptolemy. Whether the translation was needed by the Jews to combat anti-Semitism, such as that embedded in the work by Manetho of about the same period, or to combat the Samaritan claims to the priority of their Torah, or perhaps to win converts to Judaism, certainly the translation was particularly useful, since apparently the great majority of the Jews in Egypt by that time had forgotten their Hebrew and Aramaic.

⁴ Bickerman 1988, 101.

3. THE NATURE OF THE TRANSLATION

In order to appreciate the effect of this translation we must realize that even if we are reading a document in the original there is a vast gap between the thought behind the language and the language itself. Just as no two people will play the score of a musical composition in exactly the same way, so also when we are translating a text, especially one which has so many different levels of meaning—and even containing a musical score (*trop*) as well. The Italians have a phrase: “traduttore traditore”—“a translator is a traitor.” The translator is always in a dilemma. If the translation is literal, one is avoiding the issue of translation. Rabbi Judah bar Ilai (*Kiddushin* 49a) says that he who translates a verse literally is a liar and he who adds thereto is a blasphemer.

In our own day we may somewhat mitigate the problem by presenting alternate translations in parentheses, or we may explain the translation in a footnote. In any case, we may place the original on a page facing the translation so that one may compare the two. In antiquity this was not done; and if a person did not know the original word in a text his only contact with the text was with the word used by the translator. What is particularly important about the Septuagint is that, according to Philo (*De Vita Mosis* 2.37), who, himself being an Alexandrian, certainly knew the traditions about the translation, the translators “became, as it were possessed, and, under inspiration, wrote, not each several scribe something different, but the same word for word, as though dictated to each by an invisible prompter.” Philo (*De Vita Mosis* 2.39) compares the translation to a work of geometry, in which the sense does not admit of variety of expression. Indeed, he says (2.38), the Greek words corresponded literally with the original Hebrew.⁵ He even goes to the extent of speaking of the translators as prophets and priests of the mysteries, “whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enabled them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses” (*De Vita Mosis* 2.40). Indeed, the Talmud (*Megillah* 9a) presents the translators as divinely inspired. As a result, although Ptolemy placed

⁵ Philo (2.38) speaks of the original as being in Chaldean, that is, Aramaic. Indeed, Azariah dei Rossi, *Me'or Enayim* 1.9, explains the changes in Philo's version of the Pentateuch by stating that he was translating not from the Hebrew but from a Chaldean (that is, Aramaic) version.

the elders in separate rooms, G-d prompted each of them so that independently they emerged with the same translation, even making certain deliberate changes, some of which are noted there, in order to avoid ambiguities or contradictions or theological problems or seeming insults to the royal family. It is not surprising, in view of such a remarkable tradition, that the leaders of the Jewish community (*Letter of Aristeas* 310-11) declared that since the translation was “in every respect accurate, it is right that it should remain in its present form and that no revision of any sort take place.” When this was unanimously agreed to, a curse was pronounced upon any one who should add to or subtract from or modify the translation. Apparently, the Alexandrian Jews looked upon the translation as one is required to look upon the commandments in the Torah (Deuteronomy 4:2; cf. 12:32): “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it.” Indeed, there is very good reason to believe that Philo, though writing treatise after treatise on the Torah, had little or no knowledge of the Hebrew original.⁶ In fact, so far as we can tell, the Torah was read in the synagogue in Greek, if we may judge from the Cairo scroll of the Septuagint of Deuteronomy (*Papyrus Fouad* 266), dating from the first century B.C.E., which indicates that the reading was according to a triennial cycle. One would have thought that at least the leaders of the Jewish community in Alexandria would have realized the limitations and even dangers of a translation and would have done their best to encourage the study of Hebrew in their schools. On the contrary, aside from the translator of the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, who rendered it into Greek in 132 B.C.E. and who, in his prologue admits that “things originally spoken in Hebrew have not the same force in them when they are translated into another tongue,” there is no indication in Philo or any other writer who might have emanated from Alexandria that the Jews lamented the loss of their ability to read the Bible in the original language. In fact, they celebrated the completion of the translation as an annual holiday (Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 2.41).

Who were these translators, and what was their attitude toward their Jewish heritage and toward the Greek language and culture?

⁶ See Feldman 1993, 55. If Philo had known the Hebrew original one would have expected him to cite it, especially where it differed from the Septuagint. Moreover, despite his voluminous writings, he never cites the name of even a single rabbi of the time.

According to the *Letter of Aristeas* (121), they were men of excellent education, thanks to their distinguished parentage, chosen by the high priest himself; and they had not only mastered Jewish literature but had also given considerable attention to the literature of the Greeks.⁷ According to the *Letter of Aristeas* (235, 296), at the banquet honoring the translators not only the king, but especially the philosophers who were present, expressed admiration for the translators. Indeed, the king is represented (*Letter of Aristeas* 321) as accounting it a privilege to be associated with such “cultured” men.

4. THE CHOICE OF VOCABULARY BY THE TRANSLATORS

To be sure, the translators did, in some instances, make an effort to use distinctive vocabulary in referring to the Jewish religion as against paganism. In fact, whereas Scripture uses the same term, מִזְבֵּחַ, for a Jewish and pagan altar, the Septuagint uses the word βωμός with reference to heathen worship, whereas it uses the word θυσιαστήριον, a rare term in Greek cults, in referring to the altar of G-d. Significantly, also, the Septuagint uses the word μάντις in referring to heathen soothsayers, whereas it reserves the word προφήτης when speaking of Hebrew prophets. Again, whereas the usual Greek word for a votive offering is ἀνάθημα, the Septuagint translated the Hebrew קָרָבַן as δῶρον. Likewise, whereas in pagan religious terminology εὐφημία is used to indicate words of good omen, prayer, and praise, the Septuagint uses the word εὐλογία, which in Greek usually means simply “praise” and does not belong to cultic language, to translate the religious term בִּרְכָּה. Furthermore, the Greek word ἅλσος, which in pagan terminology means “sacred precinct,” is used in the Septuagint only with the reference to the pagan ἡψα, some kind of cult object made of wood. Moreover, when speaking of images of pagan deities the translators never use the common Greek terms ἄγαλμα or εἰκών but rather use the word εἶδωλον (our English word “idol”), which really means “phantom.” Finally, one would have expected the translators to use the word μόνος, “alone,” frequently in referring to a monotheistic religion;

⁷ Similarly, Philo (*De Vita Mosi* 2.32) asserts that the high priest, in selecting the translators, sought those “who had received an education in Greek as well as in their native lore.”

yet, it is found only once (Deuteronomy 32:12). Presumably, the reason why this word is avoided is that it commonly occurs in Greek prayers referring to the superiority of the god in question to other deities. Likewise, although one would have expected the translators to use the word *πρῶτος*, “first,” in referring to G-d, they never use it, most likely because the pagan Greeks use it often in their hymns in referring to their gods; rather, they prefer *εἷς*, “one.” Moreover, the Septuagint distinguishes between pagan peoples, whom it refers to as *ἔθνη*, and the Jewish people, whom it refers to as *λαός*. Additionally, the Septuagint distinguishes between a resident alien (*גר תושב*), whom they refer to by the common Hellenistic term of *πάροικος*, and a stranger (*גר*) in Israel, whom they refer to by a term that they invent, *προσήλυτος*. Yet, they use the same word, *θυσία*, for both pagan and Jewish sacrifice.

Nevertheless, the translators did introduce foreign concepts in their translation of certain major terms. In particular, they usually render the word “Torah” by *νόμος*. The literate Greek, reading this word and not aware that it stands for Torah, would think of the passage in Herodotus (3.38), the popular father of history, in which the Persian king Darius asked the Greeks what price would persuade them to eat their fathers’ dead bodies (the custom of the Indians) and asked the Indians what price would persuade them to burn their fathers’ dead bodies (the custom of the Greeks). Each was horrified, whereupon Herodotus quotes from an otherwise unknown poem of Pindar, “Custom (*νόμος*) is king.” Again, the popular Greek playwright, Sophocles, presents in his *Antigone* a contrast between *νόμος*, man-made law as espoused by Creon, and *φύσις*, natural law espoused by Antigone. Bickerman⁸ calls attention to the fact that Josephus (*Against Apion* 2.155) states that Homer does not use the word *νόμος*,⁹ since there was no such thing in his day, and “the masses were governed by maxims not clearly defined and by the orders of royalty, and continued long afterwards the use of unwritten customs.” It would seem to be significant that Josephus is here contrasting *νόμος* and “unwritten customs” (*ἔθεςιν ἀγράφους*). This would appear to be similar to the contrast between *νόμος* and *φύσις*. But Torah is not

⁸ Bickerman 1988, 115.

⁹ It is, to be sure, the reading of *Odyssey* 1.3, in place of *νόον* (“mind,” “way of thinking”), according to the third-century B.C.E. grammarian Zenodotus in his Scholia on Homer.

custom and is not man-made. It is “instruction” or “direction” in the broadest sense. It includes both halakhah (law) and haggadah (lore). The Torah includes much more than commandments; significantly, it includes history as well. Indeed, when the Psalmist (78:1) says “Give ear, O my people, to my Torah,” what follows is a history of the Jewish people focusing on the Exodus and the entrance into Eretz Israel. We may sense the influence of this Septuagint view of the Torah as law in the antinomianism implicit in Philo’s preference for allegorical interpretation of the Torah, for, he says (*De Josepho* 28), “broadly speaking, all or most of the law-book is an allegory.” Nevertheless, to be sure, he is critical of those (*De Migratione Abrahami* 89), who are overpunctilious about seeing symbolism in the laws while they treat the literal sense of the laws with easygoing neglect. It is clear that he has these excessive allegorists in mind when he excoriates (*De Migratione Abrahami* 91) those who violate the rules of the Sabbath by lighting fires, tilling the ground, carrying loads, instituting proceedings in court, acting as jurors, and demanding the restoration of deposits or recovering loans. It is not surprising that Paul can speak of the abrogation of the Nomos, thus giving it a narrow and pejorative connotation as a legalistic religion. A law can be repealed; the Torah is eternal. Bickerman, to be sure, protests that four centuries after the Septuagint Aquila, whose objection to the Septuagint was that it was not sufficiently literal, nevertheless could find no closer equivalent to תורה than νόμος.¹⁰ But all that this proves is that there is no Greek word that is really an equivalent to תורה in all its range of meaning. Sometimes, as Franz Rosenzweig put it, history is made in a dictionary.

To be sure, one may also argue that there is considerable evidence of the divine origin and nature of the concept of νόμος in Greek literature. Thus Antigone, in a famous speech (Sophocles, *Antigone* 451-55) strongly insists that Justice, who lives with the gods below, did not mark out such laws as those tyrannically issued by Creon to hold among mankind, and that such decrees could not overrule the gods’ unwritten and unfailing laws. But here, we may respond, there is a sharp contrast between Creon’s man-made laws, referred to as νόμους and the unwritten laws that supersede them, referred to as νόμιμα (“usages,” “customs”), which, in effect, are thereby equated

¹⁰ Bickerman 1988, 115.

with φύσις, which is identified with the gods below the earth. If we read (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 1.121, fragment 537, ed. Hans F. von Arnim) that the third century B.C.E. Stoic philosopher Cleanthes states that Zeus controls the world through νόμος, this is merely to state that the anthropomorphic Zeus is an all-powerful ruler who controls the world like a similarly all-powerful human king. It is not to state that Zeus' decrees are of a different order than human decrees.

Again, in rendering the word אמונה by πίστις, the Septuagint is using a word that in Plato's *Republic* (7.533E-534A), the most influential of philosophical works during the Hellenistic Age,¹¹ refers to a mere opinion about real things and is, in fact, the next to the lowest degree of human knowledge. Moreover, as Martin Buber points out,¹² πίστις is faith that something is, in intellectual belief, whereas אמונה is faith and unconditional trust in. Indeed, for the Greeks to believe in the gods is for them to be convinced intellectually that they exist.

For the word רחם, which combines the concepts of pity and piety, the Greek really has no equivalent. The Septuagint usually renders this by the word ἐλεημοσύνη, "pity." But this word generally has negative connotations, as we see notably in Aristotle's *Poetics* (13.1452B30-32), where it is an undesirable emotion that is purged out of one's system by watching tragic drama. For Spinoza pity is *muliebris misericordia*, "womanish pity," clearly disparaging to both women and pity. On the other hand, mercy (רחמים, Exodus 34:6) is one of the attributes of G-d. Indeed, the Tetragrammaton itself is said to connote mercy (*Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 33.3). According to the prophet Micah (6:8), one of the three qualities that G-d requires of humans is to love mercy. The Hebrew word רחמים is said to be derived from the word רחם, "womb," as if to say that the womb generates pity. In contrast, the Greek word for "womb," ὕστερα, generates not pity but hysteria. To render the word רחם, as the Septuagint usually does, by the Greek word ὅσιος, "religious," "devout," "holy," loses the connotation of kindness and mercy and reduces religion to performing religious duties as such.

In Hebrew the word נפש has a wide range of meaning: soul, life,

¹¹ See Hadas 1958; 1959, 72-82.

¹² Buber 1951.

vital spirit, mind, self, person, living creature, anyone. It may even refer to a dead being. The Septuagint consistently translates the word by the Greek *ψυχή*, which, to be sure, also has a wide range of meaning: breath, life, spirit, ghost, soul, mind, reason, understanding. However, we must try to put ourselves in the mindset of readers in the Hellenistic period. Inasmuch as Socrates and Plato were the most popular and most influential of Greek philosophers during this period, when seeing the word *ψυχή* the reader would think of its contrast with the word *σῶμα*, especially as discussed in Plato's *Phaedo*. According to Plato, the body is the prisonhouse of the soul, and death is to be welcomed as an opportunity for the soul to flit free from that confinement. In Jewish thought, however, the body and the soul form a harmonious unity; at the resurrection G-d will judge body and soul as one (see *b. Sanhedrin* 91a-b). When Philo (*De Migratione Abrahami* 26) uses the image of athletic combat to express the fight of the soul against the body and its passions, he is reflecting the Platonic view implicit in the Septuagint's translation.

Again, in rendering the word *צדק* by the Greek word *δικαιοσύνη*, the translators were introducing a concept that relates, on the one hand, to social customs and institutions, as seen in the popular definition of *δικαιοσύνη* as "rendering every man his due" (Plato, *Republic* 1.331E3-4) and, on the other hand, to an abstract epistemological principle, as Plato defines it in the *Republic* as a Form or Idea that is the harmony of wisdom, courage, and temperance. For the Greeks it is an abstract intellectual idea; for the Jews it is righteousness, the humanitarian virtue par excellence, benevolence that goes beyond one's legal obligations.

The translation of *ברית* in the Septuagint by *διαθήκη* is similarly misleading. The Hebrew word, at least initially, does not mean "agreement" or "covenant" or "alliance." Rather, it refers to the relationship of a master to his subject, through which he protects the latter unilaterally. The Greek word originally meant "promise" or "pledge." It later came to mean "disposition of property by will" or "testament"; and, indeed, in the Talmud (e.g., *b. Baba Meṣia* 152b) *דיאיתיקי* refers to a disposition of property, especially by will and testament.

Moreover, in rendering the Hebrew Tetragrammaton by the Greek word *Κύριος* ("L-rd") the translators were employing a word that is common in the mystery religions, so popular among the Greeks. Again, in translating *עליון* ("Highest") with reference to G-d by the

Greek word ὕψιστος, “highest,” they were applying to G-d the epithet that was applied particularly to Zeus (Pindar, *Nemean Odes* 1.60, etc.). Moreover, the term is used of the deity Sabazios.¹³ And yet, we have even found an inscription (*Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 2.1443), dating from the second or first century B.C.E., recording that a synagogue in Egypt was dedicated to G-d the Most High (ὕψιστος). Indeed, in the Letter of Aristeas (15-16), the alleged author, Aristeas, who is represented as a non-Jew but whom scholars generally regard as actually a Jew, is quoted as telling King Ptolemy Philadelphus that “the same G-d who has given them their law guides your kingdom also, as I have learned in my researches. G-d, the overseer and creator of all things, whom they worship, is He whom all men worship; and we, too, your Majesty, though we address Him differently, as Zeus and Dis; by these names men of old not unsuitably signified that He through whom all creatures receive life and come into being is the guide and lord of all.” Hence Zeus and G-d are equated as a single divine principle. In fact, the Septuagint goes further in rendering לא תקלל אלקים (Exodus 22:27) as θεοὺς οὐ κακολογήσεις, “You shall not curse gods,” whereas the rabbinic tradition (*Sanhedrin* b. 66a) understands this to mean “You shall not curse judges.” Indeed, and very significantly, both Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus* 1.53) and Josephus (*Antiquities* 4.207, *Against Apion* 2.237), who adopt the Septuagint’s translation here, explain that the reason for this injunction is that the very word “G-d” is sacred. In contrast to this liberalism, we may note that the Torah itself (Deuteronomy 7:25) requires that Israelites burn the graven images of the Canaanites.

5. ALLEGED PLATONIC INFLUENCE IN THE TRANSLATION

In particular, we may note the importance of the Septuagint’s translation of the admittedly obscure name of G-d as אהיה אשר אהיה (“I am that I am,” Exodus 3:14) by ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (“I am the One who is”). In Philo (*De Somniis* 1.230) this becomes τὸ ὄν, “that which is,” thus converting the personal G-d of Judaism into the Platonic Absolute of philosophy.¹⁴

We may perhaps perceive Greek philosophical influence in the

¹³ See Feldman 1993, 74.

¹⁴ See Smith 474.

Septuagint's translation of the opening words of the Torah. For **בראשית** the Septuagint has ἐν ἀρχῇ, which, to be sure, means "in the beginning." But the word ἀρχή has a very special significance in the history of Greek philosophy, since Thales, the first Greek philosopher, and his successors were all concerned with the question "What is the ἀρχή?", that is, what is the prime substance of which everything in the universe is a variation? His answer "water" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.27) is the beginning of a whole series of speculations on this subject. It is possible that the danger in such speculation may be alluded to in the mysterious Talmudic passage (*Hagigah b.* 14b) about the four great sages who entered **פרדס** (Paradise), one of whom, Rabbi Akiba, the greatest of all, said to the others, "When you arrive at the stones of pure marble [that is, giving the illusion of water], do not say 'Water, water.'" One of these sages was Elisha ben Abuyah, who later became an apostate, of whom it is said (*Hagigah b.* 15b) that "Greek song did not cease from his mouth," presumably an allusion to the influence the Greek culture, including philosophy, had upon him. In this connection, we may note that Aquila, in his translation of the Bible, avoided the translation of **בראשית** as ἀρχή and instead rendered it as κεφαλαίω, that is, "in essence," "in sum," deriving **בראשית** from ראש, "head."

Moreover, we may note that the Septuagint renders **ברא** with ἐποίησεν, which implies *creatio ex aliquo*. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, in their versions, render it as ἔκτισεν, implying *creatio ex nihilo*, using a word which is employed with reference to founding a city, planting a grove, establishing a worship, or inventing anew. Josephus (*Antiquities* 1.27), in his account of creation, likewise uses ἔκτισεν. To be sure, Josephus elsewhere (*Against Apion* 2.121) refers to the G-d who made heaven and earth and uses the verb ποιήσαντα, but there, significantly he is citing the statement of Apion, who, he says, asserts that the Jews swear by the G-d who made (ποιήσαντα) heaven and earth and sea not to show goodwill to any foreigner.

We may surmise that the Greek reader of the Septuagint would perceive Platonic influence in the translation of **תהו ובהו** (Genesis 1:2, "without form and void") as ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος ("unseen and unformed"), the implication being that prior to the creation of the visible world was the creation of the invisible world, a key Platonic doctrine. Indeed, Philo (*De Opificio Mundi* 29, 36-37) thus explains the so-called two accounts of creation in the opening chapters of Genesis.

There may also be a Platonic allusion in the translation of *ἡ γαστήρ* (“your belly,” Genesis 3:14) by *τῷ στήθει σου καὶ τῇ κοιλίᾳ* (“upon your chest and belly”) with reference to the curse placed upon the serpent; the reference may be, though admittedly problematic, to the Platonic division of the human faculties into the rational, spirited, and appetitive, assigned respectively to the head, chest, and abdomen.

The heart of Platonism is the method of dialectic. The key statement of Socrates is *ὁ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ* (Plato, *Apology* 38A5), “the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being.” This examination (or cross-examination or criticism) that Plato elsewhere (e.g., *Phaedrus* 276A) refers to as *ἔλεγχος*, requires a readiness to question all facile assumptions. It is, therefore, particularly significant that the Septuagint translates *וְכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ* (Leviticus 19:17), “You shall surely rebuke your neighbor” as *ἐλεγμῶ ἐλέγξεις τὸν πλησίον σου* (“You shall cross-examine your neighbor with cross-examination”).

Perhaps the most important consequence of the elevation of the Septuagint is that it was regarded by the most influential Jewish thinkers of Alexandria, Aristobulus (second century B.C.E.) and Philo (ca. 20 B.C.E.-40 C.E.) as being consonant with Plato. The former (cited by Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 13.12.1) asserts that it is clear that Plato followed the tradition of the law that we use, and “he is conspicuous for having worked through each of the details contained in it.” Realizing that the question might arise as to how Plato could have known the Torah before the Septuagint, he presents the thesis (*ibid.*) that there had been translations even before the Septuagint and, in fact, even before the Persian conquest (525 B.C.E.),¹⁵ As for Philo, who declares (*De Mutatione Nominum* 223) that he philosophizes “according to Moses,” he describes Plato as “most sacred” (*Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 13), and he never openly disagrees with him. Indeed, it became proverbial that “either Plato philonizes or Philo platonizes” (Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 11). Plato’s alleged indebtedness to the Greek Bible likewise became proverbial (e.g., Numenius of Apamea cited by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.22.150.4): “What is Plato but Moses speaking in Attic Greek?”

¹⁵ A papyrus from Oxyrhynchus (41.2944) suggests that at least some biblical themes were known to the Greeks even before the death of Plato. See Modrzejewski 1995, 66. However, we have not a single fragment of any translation before the Septuagint.

6. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SEPTUAGINT

How much of an influence did the Septuagint, whether directly or through Philo, have upon the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria and elsewhere? We may sense the influence of the Septuagint, as reconciled with Plato, upon Philo's nephew, Tiberius Julius Alexander, who, as a young man, appears in one of Philo's philosophical treatise, *De Providentia* (fragments 1 and 2), and asks why, if G-d created the world, just four elements were taken and how one can maintain the existence of Providence when there is so much injustice in the world. Apparently, the uncle's answers proved unsatisfactory, inasmuch as we find that the nephew, who eventually reached the high offices of procurator of Judaea (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.100-103), governor of the most important province of the Roman Empire, Egypt (Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.309), and second in command to Titus at the Roman siege of Jerusalem (*Jewish War* 5.45-46, 510; 6.237-42), "did not remain faithful to his ancestral customs," as Josephus (*Antiquities* 20.100) puts it.

In fact, Philo's popularity with the early Christian Church is due, in part at least, to the fact that he was regarded as the interpreter *par excellence* of the allegorical interpretation of the Septuagint version.¹⁶ Philo himself (*De Migratione Abrahami* 89-93) castigates those who treat the literal interpretation of the laws with easy-going neglect and instead interpret them allegorically. Philo's reply is that one should give attention to both the literal and allegorical; but if there were some Jews who were excessive allegorists it is not because they found this allegorizing built into the Septuagint version. In any case, it would seem remarkable that Paul, who traveled to a number of cities in the Mediterranean world where Jews were concentrated, does not appear to have visited by far the largest Jewish community in the Diaspora, Alexandria, where it would seem that Philo, with his concept of the Logos as the first-born son of G-d (*De Agricultura* 51), the man of G-d (*De Confusione Linguarum* 41), and a second G-d (*Quaestiones in Genesin* 2.62), should have been particularly appealing to Paul. Why did he not go to Alexandria, the greatest prize of all from the point of view of the sheer number of Jews? One guesses that a, perhaps the, reason may have been that the Jewish community

¹⁶ See Runia 1993.

of Alexandria was well organized as a *πολίτευμα* (Letter of Aristeas 310), with magistrates (*ἄρχοντες*) who formed a senate (*γερονσία*) of elders (*πρεσβῦται*) (Philo, *In Flaccum* 73-85), headed by an ethnarch (*ἐθνάρχης*), who, at least in the time of Strabo, who lived in the latter half of the first century B.C.E. and at the beginning of the first century C.E., and who visited Alexandria, was very powerful, if we may judge from Strabo's comment (*ap.* Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.117) that the ethnarch "governs the people and adjudicates suits and supervises contracts and ordinances, just as if he were the head of a sovereign state." Such an independent community and under such strong leadership may well have been able to exclude undesirable visitors.

A letter of Clement of Alexandria discovered by Morton Smith¹⁷ records a tradition that Mark arrived in Alexandria from Rome and composed his Gospel there. The one first-century Jew from Alexandria who, we hear in the New Testament (Acts 18:24-19:7), was converted to Christianity and who sought to convert others is Apollos, who, significantly enough, apparently did none of his eloquent missionary activity in his native Alexandria (though Codex D of Acts 18:25 states that he was "instructed in his own country in the word of the L-rd") but rather traveled to Ephesus and Corinth in Greece. One may guess that the powerful leadership of the Alexandrian Jewish community prevented him from preaching what was to them a heresy, and hence he left for communities that were not under such strong leadership. According to Acts 18:25, though he spoke and taught accurately the traditions concerning Jesus, he knew only the baptism of John. According to Acts 18:26, Priscilla and Aquila had to correct his theological views. Paul (Acts 19:1, 1 Corinthians 1:12) apparently had contact with Apollos and with his teaching, but there is no indication in these passages that Apollos had been influenced by Philo's allegorical interpretation of the Bible. Though the *argumentum ex silentio* is inconclusive, the fact that the Church Fathers during the first three centuries, including Clement of Alexandria, do not mention conversion of Jews to Christianity in Alexandria at all would seem significant, especially in view of the fact that the city of Alexandria had by far the largest Jewish community in the world at that time.

The first definite indication of direct influence of Philo on Chris-

¹⁷ Smith 1973, 446-52.

tian writers is to be found in Clement of Alexandria (ca. 160-215), who was born a century after the death of Philo. One may guess, though there is no direct evidence anywhere, that just as the revolt of Bar Kochba (132-135) was a watershed in the relations of Jews and Christians in Palestine, since Christians could not accept Bar Kochba as the Messiah, so the revolt of Lukuas-Andreas (115-117) a few years earlier may have marked a watershed in relations between Jews and Christians in Egypt, since the Christians presumably could not accept the king (called Lukuas in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.2.4; called Andreas in Cassius Dio 68.32) proclaimed by the Jewish rebels in Cyrene, Egypt, and Cyprus, who gives the appearance of a messianic figure and who at first was enormously successful.

Ancient Alexandria apparently had many synagogues (Philo, *Legatio at Gaium* 132), including one that was so large and so beautiful that the Talmud (*Sukkah* b. 51b) quotes Rabbi Judah as saying that one who has not seen it has never seen the glory of Israel. But Alexandria apparently had no yeshivot. Nevertheless, intermarriage was not a major problem; when Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus* 3.29) does mention it, he speaks of its consequences not in his own day but at some vague time in the future. Presumably, the sheer number of Jews and their concentration in certain areas, together with the virulent anti-Semitism that pervaded Egypt at this time, made such unions less likely.¹⁸ Apostasy was also apparently infrequent.¹⁹ It is significant that when non-Jewish writers, though, to be sure, the number of such writers is not great, mention Jews and their observances they speak of the Jews as if all Jews observe the practices demanded by their religion; and they never refer to Jews who are negligent in their observance of the Sabbath or dietary laws or any other aspect of Jewish observance. Apparently, the more common method of expressing deviation from the Jewish tradition was probably simply non-observance.²⁰ We may find a clue in Philo's comment (*De Specialibus Legibus* 1.186) that the fast of the Day of Atonement is carefully observed not only by those

¹⁸ Among the by now many thousands of papyri that we have there is only one unambiguous mention, dating from the second century B.C.E., of an intermarriage between a Jew and a non-Jew (Berlin Papyrus no. 11641 [unpublished]). See now Barclay 1996, especially 107-8.

¹⁹ See Feldman 1993, 79-83; Modrzejewski 1995, 56-61; and Barclay 1996, 104-6.

²⁰ See Barclay 1996, 108-12.

who are zealous for piety but also by those who never act religiously in the rest of their life.

The Rabbis themselves apparently had second thoughts about the Septuagint translation, especially after it became the official version of the Christian Church, so that a Church Father, such as Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho*), regarded it as more authentic than even the Hebrew original. Whereas in *Megillah b. 9a*, the Rabbis speak of the translators as being divinely inspired, in *Soferim 1:7* they compare the day when the translation was completed to the day when the Golden Calf was built. No one can doubt the beauty of the Greek language and of much of Greek literature. Indeed, this would seem to be acknowledged in the Torah itself (Genesis 9:27): “May G-d enlarge Japheth” (the ancestor of the Greeks), a passage quoted by the Talmud (*Megillah b. 9b*) shortly after relating the story of the translation. But the blessing is “may he [Japheth] dwell in the tents of Shem,” rather than the reverse. The main question is: which is primary, the Hebrew or the Greek Philo. Philo read Plato in the original but the Torah in Greek. Maimonides read Aristotle in translation but the Torah in the original.

And yet, the changes from the original Hebrew in the Septuagint, whether or not they are Platonizing, and the influence, potential or actual, of the writings of the philosopher Philo were of little effect, so far as assimilation, let alone intermarriage, is concerned. If losses to the Alexandrian Jewish community occurred, it was due to riots such as occurred in the year 66 (Josephus, *War* 2.497), when the renegade Jewish governor Tiberius Julius Alexander let loose the Roman soldiers upon the Alexandrian Jews and killed 50,000 of them; and when the Jews two generations later sought independence under a messianic-like leader, Lukuas-Andreas (115-117 C.E.). In the latter case, the fact that the Jews, at the beginning of the revolt, were able to kill 220,000 of their opponents in Cyrene and 240,000 on the island of Cyprus (Cassius Dio 68.32.1-3) would appear to indicate that when the revolt was finally suppressed two years later the losses suffered by the Jews must have been tremendous. If there were some Jews, such as Dositheos the son of Drimylos (3 Maccabees 1:3, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* 127) in the third century B.C.E.,²¹ who was fully integrated into the political and religious affairs of state

²¹ See Modrzejewski 1995, 56-61.

and who abandoned his ancestral beliefs, such Jews were apparently few in number and there is no indication that they were led to their apostasy by the changes made in the Septuagint. The case of Philo's nephew Tiberius Julius Alexander is, like that of Dositheos, apparently exceptional. As governor of Egypt he must have participated in pagan cults; but Josephus (*Antiquities* 20. 100) says only that he did not abide by the practices of his people. Apparently, there were Jews who sought to be integrated culturally with non-Jews; and we may guess that in his famous letter (*Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* 153) the Emperor Claudius was addressing himself to such Jews, since he orders Jews not to aim at the acquisition of new rights but to enjoy quietly "in a city not their own" all the good things it could give them, but that they should not participate in gymnastic contests, a goal which some of them apparently sought and that would have given them social status. The fact that he specifically prohibited them to send two embassies to Rome would apparently indicate that the community itself was split, presumably on political matters and on the question of cultural integration with the non-Jewish community. If, however, there was little assimilation and intermarriage, perhaps the main reason was that there was a great deal of anti-Jewish feeling; and this apparently was to a great degree responsible for continued strength, in numbers at least, of the Jewish community of Alexandria.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW MUCH HELLENISM IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL?

Review of: John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling, eds., *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001). Pp. ix + 343.

Occasionally, perhaps once in a century, a work appears that becomes the point of departure for all further works in that field. There can be little doubt that in the field of the response of Judaism to Hellenization that work is the monumental two-volume study by Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2 Jh.s v. Chr.* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1969; second revised and enlarged edition, 1973), English translation by John Bowden: *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols. (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974). An enormous discussion, of which this volume is the latest and most significant, has centered around Hengel's thesis¹ that "from about the middle of the third century B.C.E. all Judaism (i.e. Palestinian, as well as Diaspora) must really be designated 'Hellenistic Judaism' in the strict sense." It is important to bear in mind, as Fergus Millar has noted,² that "his thesis is that of a Christian theologian: that the early Hellenistic period saw a significant process of mutual assimilation and comprehension between Judaism and Paganism, which was brought to a halt by the nationalistic reaction under the Maccabees, and was only resumed and brought to fruition in the preaching of Christianity to the Gentiles." Like Erwin Goodenough, who sought to find the bridge in art,³ Hengel seeks to understand the triumph of Christianity as due to the fact that its way had been paved by Hellenistic Judaism. But we may well ask why, if the process of Hellenization had begun so early, it took so long for Christianity to prevail.

¹ Hengel 1974, 1:104.

² Millar 1978, 1.

³ Goodenough 1953-68.

The most important essay in this volume is that by Hengel himself,⁴ which begins with the statement, “May I make a small addition to the title of my article: ‘Judaism and Hellenism Revisited’—*yes, but not revised*” [italics his]. In this article Hengel remains convinced that his thesis has not only been confirmed but indeed strengthened “by new archaeological discoveries, excavations, inscriptions, coins, and also by new texts, for example from Qumran. Almost all the essays in this volume agree with Hengel. Significantly, however, Hengel, neither here nor elsewhere, has attempted systematically to reply to, let alone refute, the questions and objections raised by a number of scholars.”⁵

To show the influence of Hellenism on the Jews of Palestine even prior to Alexander Hengel⁶ points to the story, found in Clearchus of Soli and cited by Josephus (*Ap.* 1.179-83), of Aristotle’s meeting before Alexander in Asia Minor (ca. 347-345 B.C.E.) with a Jew who “not only spoke Greek but had the soul of a Greek.” But what does this passage tell us about the Hellenization of the Jews of Palestine? It speaks rather about the Hellenization of *one* Jew. Moreover, while it is true that this Jew came originally from Coele-Syria, he became Hellenized because, as Bar-Kochva has shown in his interpretation of this passage,⁷ he was a guest (ἐπιξενούμενος, “was entertained as a guest,” “had hospitable relations,” “was intimate”) [over time] with many [Greeks] and because he would go down from the high places [in Asia Minor] to the coastal places. It is the coast of Asia Minor that was the cradle of Greek civilization, and it is there that he presumably came into contact with Greek intellectuals. Moreover, there is good reason to think that the whole incident is imaginary, since, according to Aristotle in this anecdote, the Jews are descendants of the Indian philosophers called Kalanoi, whereas we know of no such Indian group. And even if the incident really occurred, Aristotle speaks of the Jews as descended from Indian philosophers; he does not say that the Jews generally are Hellenized as this one Jew was. In fact, he seems to be surprised that the Jew knew Greek

⁴ Hengel 2001, 6-37.

⁵ In particular, we may note Momigliano 1970, 149-53; Herr 1977-78, 20-27; Millar 1978, 1-21; Stern 1991, 3-21; Feldman 1977, 371-82; *idem* 1986, 83-111; *idem* 1992, 3-44.

⁶ Hengel 2001, 11.

⁷ Bar-Kochva 1997, 435-81, and 1999, 241-50.

and was so deeply imbued with Greek culture.

Hengel⁸ finds in the work of the Chronicler clear allusions to Hellenistic warfare, Greek money and large-estate economy; but these are external accouterments rather than the key to Hellenization, which must be cultural and in the realm of ideas and attitude toward life. When, indeed, Hengel asserts that the clue to the Chronicler's history is the idea of divine retribution and personal responsibility, we must point out that this is hardly original with the Chronicler, since divine retribution is spelled out in the Pentateuch, particularly in the blessings for fulfilling the commandments (Deut. 28:1-14) and the curses for failing to fulfill them (Deut. 28:15-69); and personal responsibility is spelled out in Deut. 24:16: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin." We find very similar language in Jer. 31:29: "Every man will die for his own sin, and the man who eats the sour grapes, his own teeth will be set on edge" and very similarly and at length in Ezek. 18.

Hengel⁹ insists that the theme of Judaism and Hellenism has a long history even before Alexander and cites the fact that the prophets remember that the Philistines came from Crete and the western islands. But the important question is what Greek ideas and attitudes the Philistines brought to Palestine and which of these ideas and attitudes did the Israelites borrow from them. If the Philistines came from Crete did they bring the Cretan Linear A method of writing with them? Thus far no Linear A tablets have been found in Palestine. And if they did bring Linear A tablets the question would remain, even when those tablets will be deciphered, what cultural content those tablets contained.

Hengel¹⁰ notes that the concept of conversion to Judaism and, in fact, the very neologism *προσήλυτος*, are not to be found in pagan literature. Judaism, he says, with its universal claim of religious truth, became attractive to the Greeks because it had more affinity to the teaching in the philosophical schools than to the local pagan cults. But this is the very reverse of Greek influence upon the Jews; it is

⁸ Hengel 2001, 11.

⁹ Hengel 2001, 12.

¹⁰ Hengel 2001, 13.

the influence, and indeed, the profound influence, of Judaism upon the Greeks. And, in any case, we have no statement of anyone of the masses¹¹ who were converted to Judaism that he was influenced by that person's perception of an affinity between Judaism and the teaching of the philosophical schools.

Hengel¹² notes that Nicholaus of Damascus, the most learned scholar of his time and a Peripatetic philosopher, philosophized with King Herod the Great during a sea trip to Rome.¹³ But even if this trip is not a fiction, as some have believed,¹⁴ this will tell us about the Greek influence upon Herod; it does not tell us about the Greek influence upon the masses of the Jews.

Hengel¹⁵ cites the astonishing degree of Greek influence seen in recently published Samaritan bullae and coins which antedate Alexander. But this will tell us about the Hellenizing of the Samaritan rulers; it does not tell us about the attitude toward the Greek language, let alone toward Greek thought, of the masses of the Samaritans. As for the influence of the anonymous Pseudo-Eupolemus upon Jews,¹⁶ it does seem highly likely that he was a Samaritan,¹⁷ inasmuch as he speaks of Abraham as having been received as a guest at "the temple Argarizin, which is interpreted 'mountain of the Most High,'" a clear complimentary reference to the sacred mountain of the Samaritans.¹⁸ Moreover, the fact that he cited, without challenge, the Greek belief identifying Enoch, who is depicted as so pious in the Bible (Gen. 5:21-22), with the Greek mythical Atlas, makes it unlikely that he would influence the Jews. Moreover, in view of the strongly negative attitude of the Jews toward the Samaritans,¹⁹ it seems hardly likely that such Hellenization would have had an influence upon the Jews; in fact, it is more likely that the Jews would have been particularly revolted by such Hellenization. Again, if, indeed, Theodotus,²⁰ author

¹¹ On the tremendous success of proselytism by Jews in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods see Feldman 1993, 288-341.

¹² Hengel 2001, 14.

¹³ Nicholaus of Damascus, *De Vita Sua*, ap. Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta de Virtutibus et Vitiis*, 1, cited by Stern 1974, 1:248-49.

¹⁴ See Stern 1974, 1:250.

¹⁵ Hengel 2001, 14.

¹⁶ Hengel 2001, 15.

¹⁷ Holladay 1983, 1:158-59.

¹⁸ *Ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.17.5.

¹⁹ See Anderson 1992, 941-43.

²⁰ See Hengel 2001, 15.

of a poem in Greek, with its central focus on Shechem, which he refers to as a sacred city,²¹ and with its reference to Sikimius as the son of the mythical Hermes,²² was, as most scholars believe,²³ a Samaritan, it would seem unlikely that such a writer would have influenced the Jews.

Hengel²⁴ vigorously reiterates his view, derived from Bickerman,²⁵ that Hellenistic reform in Jerusalem from 175 to 164 B.C.E. was not the idea of Antiochus Epiphanes but that it was the high priestly reformers Jason and Menelaus who inspired Antiochus. He argues that what happened under Antiochus was both an exception to an undeniable general pattern and a break with the established relations between the Seleucid kings, notably Antiochus III, and the Jews of Judea, and hence that the motivation for suppression of Judaism must have come from within the Jewish ranks. Collins²⁶ is the one author in this volume who challenges Hengel on this point and convincingly notes²⁷ that all our primary sources (1 and 2 Macc., Dan., as well as pagan sources) ascribe primary responsibility to Antiochus. Moreover, he sought not merely to reform Jewish observance but to suppress it.

Hengel²⁸ draws attention to a whole series of significant Greek philosophers and other learned men in the second and first centuries B.C.E. in Phoenician coastal cities as well as in Gadara in Transjordan and concludes that Jewish aristocrats must have been aware of their ideas. Hence, he concludes, it would be extremely improbable if the reformers Jason and Menelaus could not have grounded their criticism of the law in the intellectual sphere and possibly even have put it into writing. The problem, however, is that, according to our major sources of the revolt, 1 and 2 Macc. and Jos., the motives of Jason and Menelaus were not intellectual but desire for power and wealth. Cities such as Gadara, to be sure, had a significant tradition of Greek education, but, as Collins²⁹ notes, there is no indication

²¹ *Ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.1.

²² *Ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.1.

²³ See Holladay 1989, 2:58-60, 84-85, n. 13.

²⁴ Hengel 2001, 16-22.

²⁵ Bickerman 1937.

²⁶ Collins 2001, 38-61.

²⁷ Collins 2001, 51.

²⁸ Hengel 1974, 1:299.

²⁹ Collins 2001, 44.

that there was any such tradition in Jerusalem prior to 175 B.C.E.

Momigliano³⁰ has raised a crucial point when he says that Hengel talks about the degree of Hellenization of third-century Judaism without asking himself in a preliminary way what we know about that Judaism. Hence, he says, Hengel's book really deals with the Hellenization of an unknown entity. The fact is that the Jewish texts that we can safely date between 300 and 180 B.C.E. are insufficient to give us a clear picture of contemporary daily life in Judea. However, to judge from the observations of Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.5-6), the Jews as a community are structured in a fundamentally non-Greek fashion and show utter obedience to the high priest when he expounds the commandments to them. As Millar³¹ has remarked, it is precisely the nature of the start of the Hellenizing movement after 175 B.C.E., which was instituted by elements within the Jewish community, that shows how un-Greek Jerusalem had remained up to that point and how novel were the Hellenistic ways of life that were introduced. There had been no previous gymnasium in Jerusalem, and even the wearing of the Greek broad-brimmed felt hat (πέτασος) was regarded as an outrageous novelty (2 Macc. 4:7-14). To judge on the basis of alleged Hellenistic influence on Jewish literary works of a few writers and to conclude from this that Judaism had become Hellenistic in its views and attitudes is to ignore the private views and practices of the Jewish masses. In minimizing the role of Antiochus Epiphanes and in stressing the role played by the Jewish Hellenizers, Hengel³² has built a case based on a few bits of evidence, mostly from Josephus, who, being a proud priest and a descendant of the Hasmoneans (*Life* 2), had a personal stake in discrediting the usurpers Jason and Menelaus and who, through his own personal career in going over to the Romans and throughout his *Antiquities*, is eager to establish the importance of being obedient to the powers that be.³³ It is to ignore the fact that the prohibition of Jewish observances was enforced by Antiochus' orders and by his employees. That the alleged Hellenization was not deep-seated would seem to be indicated by the fact that Antiochus Epiphanes' successor, Antiochus V, quickly and suddenly agreed to allow the Jews to live in accordance with their

³⁰ Momigliano 1970, 151.

³¹ Millar 1978, 9.

³² See Millar 1978, 20.

³³ See Feldman 1998b, 74-90.

ancestral laws (Jos., *Ant.* 12.382). If, indeed, the Hellenization had started so much earlier and was so deep-seated, how can we explain, as Hengel³⁴ admits, the fact that political-religious identity of the Jews became stronger and that idol-worship, certainly an integral element in Hellenization under Antiochus Epiphanes, ceased to be a danger. The most prominent institution of Hellenization in the Greek world was the gymnasium; yet, we do not hear of any gymnasium in Jerusalem or anywhere else in Judea after the abortive attempts of the Hellenizing high priests at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Indeed, as Collins³⁵ insists, the most striking thing about the Jewish encounter with Hellenism, both in the Diaspora and in Palestine, was the persistence of Jewish separatism in matters of worship and cult.

Bickerman³⁶ had seen an analogy between the reformers such as Abraham Geiger in the first half of the nineteenth century in Germany, who had been influenced by the non-Jewish milieu of the Enlightenment in which they found themselves and who had been impressed by Protestant critical biblical scholarship; but, we may respond, the problem with this analogy is that there is no indication in 1 and 2 Macc. that Jason and Menelaus were intellectuals who had been influenced by any Greek philosophical or theological or other ideas, whereas the Jewish religious reformers of the nineteenth century were serious religious thinkers who were deeply influenced by earlier and contemporary philosophical currents. Hengel³⁷ says that it can hardly be doubted that the Hellenistic reformers had their own religious "ideology." But what was that ideology? To illustrate this ideology he³⁸ cites the views of Aristobulus, who compares the universal G-d of Israel with the religious opinions of the Greek philosophers. But Aristobulus was not a Palestinian. Hengel says that perhaps he was already influenced by the negative experiences in Jerusalem, but there is no evidence that Aristobulus had any contact with Palestinian Jews. He cites the equation of G-d and Zeus in the Letter of Aristeas, but this work is clearly not Palestinian but Alexan-

³⁴ Hengel 2001, 24.

³⁵ Collins 2001, 55.

³⁶ Bickerman 1979, 87-88.

³⁷ Hengel 2001, 20.

³⁸ Hengel 2001, 21.

drian. Collins³⁹ notes that some have argued that this identification represents the view of a non-Jew in the *Letter of Aristeas*, but Collins argues that we have an almost identical formulation in Aristobulus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 13.12). However, we must note that Aristobulus was not a Palestinian. Hengel says that it is unthinkable that a considerable part, even a majority, of the Jewish upper class did not engage in religious reflection, but where is the evidence for this statement? How can he generalize about *the* Jewish upper class? How big was this upper class? Hengel⁴⁰ dismisses the argument that we have no texts about the religious self-consciousness of the radical Hellenists in Jerusalem, since, he says, the defeated party in ancient Judaism has seldom left its own testimonies. But we do know a good deal about the views of the Sadducees, even though they were the defeated party; and Josephus has recorded at some length the views of the revolutionaries against Rome even though he had utter disdain for them. Similarly, one would expect that the views of the opponents of the mainstream Judaism in the Hellenistic period would be recorded in order that they might be thoroughly refuted or, at the very least, ridiculed.

Hengel⁴¹ speaks of the necessity of the Hasmonean kings to be Hellenized, since they could exist politically as states only if they had “an army trained and equipped in the Greek manner, with Greek fortress- and palace-building, with an efficacious economy and tax-collecting in Greek style and the use of Greek language at least in all foreign affairs with other city-states and kingdoms.” But all these are external matters; there is no necessary contradiction, for example, between adopting Greek methods of warfare and maintaining distinctive Jewish religious beliefs and attitudes in day-to-day living. The fact that the Hasmonean kings themselves adopted Greek attitudes, so that Aristobulus I, notably, came to be known as Φιλέλλην (*Ant.* 13.318), did not extend to the masses. The fact that the Hasmonean kings preferred foreign, that is Greek, bodyguards was, it would seem, due to their distrust of the Jewish masses for such sensitive positions. Thus Josephus, who certainly knew what Hellenism was, reports (*Ant.* 15.267) that more than a century after the Antiochus’

³⁹ Collins 2001, 40.

⁴⁰ Hengel 2001, 22.

⁴¹ Hengel 2001, 22.

attempt at Hellenizing the Jews Herod corrupted the ancient way of life, which had hitherto been inviolable, so that those things were neglected that had formerly induced piety in the masses. Hengel⁴² suggests that the Hasmoneans for economic reasons sought to attract pilgrims and visitors and that the growing influx of pilgrims from Greek-speaking towns in Palestine and from the Diaspora, especially at the time of the three pilgrimage festivals each year, brought with them not only the Greek language but also Greek ways. But one guesses that because of difficulties and danger in traveling the number of Jews from the Diaspora was not great; thus, so far as we know, Philo (*Prov.* 2.64), who was very wealthy, came only once.⁴³

Hengel's survey of Jewish literature written in Greek in the Macabean era yields only three authors—Jason of Cyrene, Eupolemus, and Pseudo-Eupolemus. But, as Collins⁴⁴ notes, Jason of Cyrene was not a Palestinian, since he came from Cyrenaica. We have already noted that Pseudo-Eupolemus was most probably a Samaritan and hence would have been viewed with abhorrence by the great majority of Jews.

Collins⁴⁵ disagrees with the view that Jews were antagonistic to Hellenistic culture and cites Philo and the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* as writers who are vehement in their denunciations of idolatry while at the same time embracing Greek philosophy. But, we must remark, they are not Palestinians, and the title of this book is *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*. Collins notes that synagogues were dedicated to pagan Ptolemaic kings; but, in all probability, this was because the Jews were particularly eager to proclaim their loyalty, especially since they could not share in the state religion. In any case: this is not Palestinian. He⁴⁶ remarks that the author of 4 Maccabees wrote good Greek. But again this is not Palestinian.

Gruen,⁴⁷ convinced of Hengel's thesis, cites⁴⁸ the Hellenization

⁴² Hengel 2001, 25.

⁴³ Hengel 1974, 25, says that the annual temple tax of a half shekel was a custom probably introduced by the Hasmoneans as a universal bond to link up the whole Diaspora with the Temple in Jerusalem. However, in 2 Chronicles 24:5, we read that King Joash told the priests and the Levites to collect from all Israelites every year.

⁴⁴ Collins 2001, 45.

⁴⁵ Collins 2001, 41.

⁴⁶ Hengel 2001, 41-42.

⁴⁷ Gruen 2001, 62-93.

⁴⁸ Gruen 2001, 71-74.

in the writings of Aristobulus and Artapanus, but neither of these is a Palestinian. He also cites⁴⁹ the alleged kinship of the Jews and the Spartans (1 Macc. 12:23), but, we may comment, this is not Hellenization of Palestinian Jews but an attempt at Judaization of the Spartans. As for Gruen's citation⁵⁰ of Cleodemus-Malchus, who mentions that Heracles married a granddaughter of Abraham, there is a real question as to whether he was a Jew or Samaritan or pagan. We may suggest that if the title of his work was *Concerning Jews*, a Jew would most probably not have given such a title. Moreover, if the existing fragment (Jos., *Ant.* 1.239-41) comes from his *Concerning Libya*,⁵¹ it was most probably not composed by a Palestinian Jew. Gruen⁵² mentions Tacitus' speculations concerning the origin of the Jews, one of which derives them from Crete, and another of which derives them from the Solymoi of Asia Minor. But these are Tacitus' theories; there is no indication that Palestinian Jews shared such views.

Doran⁵³ focuses⁵⁴ on the curriculum of the gymnasium that Jason established in Jerusalem. It was, he suggests, a military school and a school of civic preparation that attempted to inculcate piety toward the gods. We know about Greek gymnasia in general, but what evidence do we have as to the curriculum of Jason's gymnasium? Doran⁵⁵ notes that we do find instructions regarding education in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QSa 1:6-9), but it hardly seems likely that the pattern here specified for the ultra-pietistic Dead Sea Sect would be at all similar to that of Jason's departure from the Jewish tradition. Doran⁵⁶ cites at length Ben Sira as the one teacher of whom we have evidence of what he was teaching around the time of Jason's gymnasium. But Ben Sira identifies Wisdom and Torah and the importance of keeping the commandments. He suggests that Ben Sira's emphasis on proverbs and maxims is also found in the Greek poet Theognis. Moreover, the study of proverbs and figures is part of the training in argumentation among the Greeks, notably in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and Doran suggests that Ben Sira was aware of

⁴⁹ Gruen 2001, 77-78.

⁵⁰ Gruen 2001, 79-80.

⁵¹ See Jacoby 1954-69, 273, fragments 32-47.

⁵² Gruen 2001, 80-81.

⁵³ Doran 2001, 94-115.

⁵⁴ Doran 2001, 96.

⁵⁵ Doran 2001, 97.

⁵⁶ Doran 2001, 98-102.

Greek rhetorical style. This is reminiscent of the later Greek manuals of *Progymnasmata*. But we may well ask what evidence we have that Jason would have adopted Ben Sira's methods or curriculum.

Next Doran⁵⁷ suggests that the questions raised by the chronographer Demetrius might parallel those raised in the textual studies of the Alexandrian scholars Zenodotus, Callimachus, Eratosthenes, and Aristophanes of Byzantium. But we may remark that Demetrius was not a Palestinian, and there is no evidence that any Palestinian knew his work, let alone was influenced by it, unless the Demetrius of Phalerum mentioned by Josephus (*Ap.* 1.215) is to be identified with him.

Doran⁵⁸ raises the question whether once invited to the games, Judeans were allowed to participate in sacrifices to Heracles. According to 2 Macc., Jason thought so. Doran suggests that there was a debate present in Judaism about this issue. He notes that Eupolemus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.34.18) says that Solomon sent to Souron at Tyre the golden pillar that was later set up in the temple of Zeus in Tyre. He notes that immediately after this statement Theophilus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.34.19), another historian, is quoted as saying that Solomon sent to the king of the Tyrians the left-over gold, and that the king made a lifelike likeness of his daughter and put the golden pillar as a covering on the statue. From this Doran concludes that Theophilus wants to say that Solomon did not send a golden pillar and that there was a debate, similar to what the epitomist (2 Macc.) reports concerning Jason's intentions as to what is appropriate behavior for Judeans. However, Theophilus, in the extant fragment, does not indicate who sent the golden pillar. He says only that Solomon sent the gold that was left over. It is therefore quite possible that Solomon had previously sent the pillar. Moreover, there is no indication that when Solomon sent the pillar he knew that the king of Tyre would set it up in the temple of Zeus. Doran would have us think that Solomon's sending the pillar to the king of Tyre was a precedent for compromising the concept of monotheism. However, there is no indication in 2 Macc. that Jason sought to justify his religious reform by citing the action of Solomon as a precedent. Indeed, the Bible itself (1 Kings 11:1-13) sharply condemns Solomon's idolatry, and G-d tells him that his kingship will be torn away from him. Doran

⁵⁷ Doran 2001, 103.

⁵⁸ Doran 2001, 109.

cites the Septuagint's version of Exod. 22:27 ("You shall not revile gods"), as interpreted by Philo (*Mos.* 2.203-4, *Spec.* 1.53, *QE* 2.5; we may add *Jos.*, *Ant.* 4.207, *Ap.* 2.237), as suggesting that a debate was taking place within Judaism as to the permissibility of worshipping other gods. However, we must counter that the Septuagint's translation and the interpretation given by Philo and Josephus do not permit polytheism; all that they say is that one is not permitted to speak ill of other people's religion because of the very word "G-d." Doran then proceeds to cite other passages in Philo, notably *Opif.* 27-28, which speaks of "the most holy dwelling-place of manifest and visible gods (θεῶν). He suggests that this allows for some recognition of other deities, while recognizing the supremacy of the Jewish G-d—i.e. a kind of henotheism. Surely, however, if we read Philo, *Dec.* 52-65, we see that he specifically and clearly denounces polytheism, and in particular the worship of the heavenly bodies. Hence, the translation of θεῶν here should be "divine powers," a view that Doran himself mentions but with which he is not satisfied. Doran concludes by suggesting that Jason's reforms were not as radical as has been painted and that Hellenization is too amorphous a term to describe what was happening in pre-Maccabean Jerusalem; but, we must remark, there is no hint of this in our major sources—1 and 2 Macc. and *Jos.*

Van Henten⁵⁹ compares the honorary decree for Simon and his sons transmitted in 1 Macc. 14:25-49 in the light of four honorary decrees for Ptolemaic kings composed by Egyptian priests and some other officials: the Canopus decree of 238 B.C.E., the Memphis decree of 217 B.C.E., the Memphis decree of 196 B.C.E. (Rosetta Stone), and the Alexandria decree of 186 B.C.E. (usually called the Second Philae decree). He compares the structure of these four decrees with that of Simon's in five respects: date, reference to the assembly of those who issued the decree, motivation for the decision, the decision itself, provisions for the publication of the decree. He concludes that the basic structures of all five documents seem to be rather similar. In them the ruler personifies the state. This presentation of rulership suggests that this view is typical of the Hellenistic ideology of rulership. His conclusion that the decree in 1 Macc. 14 is an innovation in the Jewish context is confirmed by the analysis of the earlier usage of a sample of the relevant vocabulary. But, we may remark, the wording

⁵⁹ Van Henten 2001, 116-45.

of this decree does not tell us about the degree of Hellenization of the Jewish *people* in Palestine in this period. It tells us about the leaders, who clearly were influenced, and influenced deeply, by Hellenization, perhaps because they realized that their *political* position, which was weak, depended on keen bargaining and alliances with the Seleucids, whose language and outlook was, of course, Greek. Simon wanted to impress his contemporary rulers: hence he hired people who could word his decree in a way that they would appreciate. Once Simon decided to draw up the decree in Greek, which he did for political reasons, his scribes naturally turned to Greek models, and this will explain the parallels in order of topics, vocabulary and style. On the basis of a comparison between 1 Macc. 14:27-49 and the priestly decrees from Ptolemaic Egypt Van Henten argues that the legitimization of Simon's leadership is a new development in Hellenistic Judaism, corresponding to a trend in depicting the ruler's image in Ptolemaic Egypt as presented in the priestly decrees. He adds that this view of Simon as ruler may have been articulated because of the interaction of Jewish and non-Jewish elites in Egypt and Judea. He suggests, quite convincingly, that the decree was issued in order to legitimize his position and power, which were still disputed by some of the Jews. But, we must remark, this tells us about Simon's aims; it does not tell us about the attitude of the rank and file of Jews in Palestine toward Hellenization at this time.

Krenz⁶⁰ comments on Van Henten's essay. He supplements it by citing other texts from the same era drawn from laws and decrees from Syria and Asia Minor. He concludes that the five recurrent components are the standard structure in Ptolemaic, Syrian, and Asian inscriptions, as well as in 1 Maccabees. He does, however, note some problems and some differences: in 1 Macc. the people are credited with taking the initiative in the enactment; in the Egyptian decrees it is priests. Furthermore and most important, he notes that the semantic field of honorific decrees remained the same for eight centuries from Homer to the flowering of Hellenistic Christian communities. Here he should have remarked that this shows that the author of the decree in 1 Macc. did not necessarily draw upon Hellenistic models, since he would have found the same semantic field in much earlier decrees. Krenz adds that the translator of 1 Macc. (from the original in Hebrew) shaped the Greek text to sup-

⁶⁰ Krenz 2001, 146-53.

port the heirs of Simon's claim to the hereditary kingship. However, he notes another difference between the decree in 1 Macc. and the other four decrees, namely that the text in Macc. does not include the formula for legal enactment. Also, and more important, there is nothing that corresponds to the ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ wish or invocation of a god before the decision is reported; hence, though the decree follows the traditional Greek format, Simon did have regard for Jewish sensibilities with regard to polytheism. But, again, the parallels with other decrees tell us only that Simon sought legitimization as a ruler; the form and language of the decree tells us nothing about the degree of Hellenization of the masses of Jews.

Van der Horst⁶¹ cites an inscription from the first half of the third century that is the epitaph of a boy with a Latin name, Justus, the son of a father with a Greek name and of a mother with a Greek name, written in Homeric hexameters. It actually mentions Hades and Moira, two utterly pagan concepts. Yet, it is Jewish. It was found in Beth She'arim, where famous rabbis were buried. Yet, as van der Horst admits, a complete corpus of all the epigraphic material from Palestine covering the period from Alexander to Muhammed is still in the planning stage. He suggests that more than half of the Jewish epigraphic material from the period between Alexander and Mohammed is in Greek, but he wisely declines to conclude from this that for majority of Jews in Palestine their native language was Greek. In particular, he cites Josephus' statement (*Ant.* 20.264) that the Jews do not favor those who have mastered the languages of many nations. Since the great majority of inscriptions are epitaphs, he deserves credit for admitting that this raises a question as to how representative these inscriptions are for the population as a whole. However, he admits, following Lee I. Levine,⁶² that the only area in which the influence of Hellenistic culture upon the Jewish people can be more or less quantified is in epigraphy. If, he says, we take our period, from Alexander to the Muslim conquest, spanning almost a thousand years, (but, we must remark there are surely vast differences within this period) as comprising about thirty-three generations, and if we take a generation to average one million Jews in Palestine (but this is surely a low estimate for the majority of this period),⁶³ we have

⁶¹ Van der Horst 2001, 154-74.

⁶² Levine 1998, 180.

⁶³ See Baron 1952, 1:370-72, n. 7.

nine hundred inscriptions from thirty-three million Jews, that is one for every 37,000 Jews. If we take the estimated 1800 inscriptions of the projected *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palestinae* as our basis, we would reach .025 per cent, i.e. 18,500 Jews. Do these inscriptions belong to a very tiny upper class? Van der Horst concludes that this is not so, since there are numerous very simple and poorly executed tombstones with inscriptions in poor Greek that undeniably stem from lower strata of Jewish society. But, we must remark, the fact remains that we have a very, very small sample of what ordinary Jews in Palestine felt about the Greek language, let alone Greek culture. Van der Horst admits that the texts on the tombstones were generally incised by professional stonecutters who had a large number of stock phrases to provide their clients with examples, and he admits that a majority of the inscriptions were found in urban cities. He notes the paucity of Greek inscriptional data in Upper Galilee; hence, we must distinguish various areas in Palestine.

Van der Horst⁶⁴ also cites fourteen Samaritan inscriptions, but he does not indicate their date. But, we must ask, what does *Samaritan* evidence tell us about *Jewish* evidence, since the two communities had so little to do with one another, despite their living in such close proximity, and, in fact, hated and even fought one another. Van der Horst⁶⁵ declares that papyri, coins, and literary sources suggest strongly that many (but, we must ask, how many?) Jews in Judea and Galilee were able to speak or understand Greek, even if they did not belong to the upper class. Certainly, van der Horst would have to admit, coins and literary sources were from the upper class. As to papyri, he admits that ninety per cent of the thirty in the Bar Kochba archive are in Hebrew and Aramaic. From the fact that there are three documents in Greek he concludes that for many (but he himself asks how many?) Palestinian Jews, Greek, the lingua franca of the Near East in the Roman period, had become the language of their daily life. Needless to say, this hardly seems warranted. He notes that a letter from the Bar Kochba archive bristles with errors and hence was not written by cultural elite;⁶⁶ but again we must ask how representative one letter is. To be sure, however, he notes that of the thirty-six documents in the Babatha archive twenty-six are in

⁶⁴ Van der Horst 2001, 160.

⁶⁵ Van der Horst 2001, 160.

⁶⁶ Van der Horst 2001, 160-61.

Greek. But, we must remark, this is a single archive.

Van der Horst notes “the observation in rabbinic literature that in Caesarea Maritima (and certainly also elsewhere) synagogue services were conducted in Greek.”⁶⁷ This leads him to the same conclusion [that Greek for many Jews in Palestine had become the language of their daily life]; and this in turn, he adds, is confirmed by the famous Justinian Novella 146 of 553 c.e. But the Justinian Novella applies to the entire Byzantine empire: how effective would it be in Palestine? Note the late date. The Jerusalem Talmud (*Sot.* 7.1.21b) has preserved a revealing anecdote about two rabbis who entered a synagogue in Caesarea around the turn of the fourth century and found Jews reciting the most basic of prayers, the Shema, in Greek. When one of the sages, *astounded* by the scene, wished to stop the service, the second replied that it was preferable for the congregation to recite these prayers in Greek than not at all!

Van der Horst says that there is no sign that the acquisition of Greek was felt as very difficult.⁶⁸ But we may recall Josephus’ remark (*Ant.* 20.263) that he labored strenuously to partake of Greek prose and poetry, after having gained a knowledge of Greek grammar, although the habitual use of his native tongue prevented his attaining precision in the pronunciation.

Van der Horst⁶⁹ admits, following Levine,⁷⁰ that the degree of Hellenization was clearly of a different order in the first to fourth centuries than in third to first centuries B.C.E. Here, we must remark, we should be careful about generalizing. He does note, but does not comment on, the fact that the production of Jewish literature in Greek in Palestine seems to have decreased after 70. We may conjecture that this may reflect a reaction among intellectuals against Hellenization. On the other hand, van der Horst notes that the proportion of Greek inscriptions as compared to Hebrew and Aramaic increases. Because the inscriptions are so few and perhaps unrepresentative, we should hesitate to suggest that this indicates an increased Hellenization among the people as a whole.

Van der Horst⁷¹ concludes that the burden of proof is on the shoulders of those who want to maintain that Greek was not the

⁶⁷ Van der Horst 2001, 161.

⁶⁸ Van der Horst 2001, 61.

⁶⁹ Van der Horst 2001, 162.

⁷⁰ Levine 1998, 26.

⁷¹ Van der Horst 2001, 166.

lingua franca of many Palestinian Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman-Byzantine period, in view of the fact that more than 50 per cent, maybe even 65 per cent, of the public inscriptions are in Greek. But, as he himself admits, the public inscriptions are very few in number and may indicate only the use of Greek for official purposes by the administrators. If the Talmud (*b. B. Bat.* 21a) is correct in stating that Joshua ben Gamla in the first century introduced an ordinance requiring elementary education for boys [but: compulsory elementary education of males in Palestine was surely not in Greek]. He ends with statement: that the degree of use and understanding of Greek probably varied strongly according to locality and period, social status, and educational background, occasion and mobility. Van der Horst⁷² mentions several Greek words even in the Copper Scroll from Qumran. But Vanderkam, in this volume,⁷³ speaks only of individual Greek letters.

Vanderkam⁷⁴ notes that of the 850 or so manuscripts at Qumran 27 Greek manuscripts have been identified. He concludes that Greek was sufficiently widely used and accepted to make its presence felt even among an unusual, traditional, and learned group like the one at Qumran. But the fact that nineteen of these Greek manuscripts come from cave 7, where all the surviving texts are in Greek would indicate that Greek was confined to a small group in that cave.

VanderKam⁷⁵ starts his essay with the statement that the combined literary, numismatic, and inscriptional evidence shows that Greek was widely used in Palestine and indicates that this was not considered objectionable. In the first place, we may respond, what is true in the fourth century B.C.E. may not be true in the first century B.C.E. and may not be true in the third century C.E. In the second place, the literary evidence, as we have already indicated, is extremely limited, and this will tell us about a small percentage of the population; and, again, one must distinguish among various periods of time. Moreover, in the case of the Greek Additions to Esther, the views expressed, far from showing the influence of Hellenism, are more conservative than those found in the Hebrew version.⁷⁶ As for the numismatic evidence, one must not forget that there was a large

⁷² Van der Horst 2001, 161.

⁷³ VanderKam 2001, 178.

⁷⁴ VanderKam 2001, 177.

⁷⁵ VanderKam 2001, 175-81.

⁷⁶ So Leaney 1976, 291.

non-Jewish population in Palestine throughout this period; and coins in Aramaic and Hebrew would have been unintelligible to them. As for inscriptions, we have already indicated what a small sample we have of these inscriptions, most of which are epitaphs.

As for the Greek texts at Qumran, we have already commented on the fact that they constitute an extremely small percentage of the texts that have been found thus far. This assumes that there was a single sect in all of the caves at Qumran. Since they are found in only two of the caves, we suggest that they may be the product of a very small group of dissidents, or if all of the caves are of a single sect, they may be the product of a small group who happened to have found refuge in those particular caves. It is surely significant, as Cotton has noted,⁷⁷ that the Qumran texts that are not in Greek evince a deliberate and conscious avoidance of Greek loanwords. Moreover, as she remarks, the Greek of these texts is filled with Semiticisms and reflects the local spoken Aramaic language of the writers. Furthermore, the texts have certain lexicographic features that are not found at all in Greek papyri from Egypt or from the rest of the Near East or occur only at a much later period; and, as Cotton⁷⁸ conjectures, this may reflect the influence of the Aramaic world in which they were written.

The fact that in the Copper Scroll scattered individual Greek letters are found at the ends of lines and at the end of the description of a particular treasure is surely no more an indication of literacy in Greek than is the use of Greek letters in modern mathematics.

Freyne⁷⁹ poses a number of interesting and important questions, in pursuance of Fergus Millar's programmatic study of the Roman Near East, based on regional variations.⁸⁰ To what extent were Galilee's cultural affiliations shaped by Phoenician encroachment or Iturean expansion? Did they express themselves as vestiges of an older Semitic lifestyle or as mediums of Greek language and culture? How did the emerging Judean state view such developments? What, if any, contributions to the later cultural mix did the various dynastic changes make? Freyne is to be commended for resisting the temptation to give simple answers to these complex questions.

⁷⁷ Cotton 2000, 324.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Freyne 2001, 182-215.

⁸⁰ Millar 1993.

As to the Phoenicians, Freyne⁸¹ notes that the fact that the Phoenician language continued to be used in inscriptions and coins indicates a certain cultural conservatism, even when Greek had increasingly become the language of administration and commerce in the region generally. Furthermore, he notes that the Phoenician religion continued to be practiced from the pre-Hellenistic to the Hellenistic Age. The encounter with Hellenism was not a new or threatening experience; it was rather an enrichment of native qualities.

As to the Itureans, Freyne notes that they had a less developed sense of both territory and culture that goes with a strong assertion of identity. They were in a relatively undeveloped state when they first encountered the Greek way of life. He cites their local conservatism in religious matters, although eventually a distinctive Iturean culture, because of their precarious life-style as brigands, virtually vanished under the weight of Greek and Roman presence in the East.⁸² He concludes that neither the Phoenicians nor the Itureans were the agents of an active Hellenization process in Galilee.

As to Galilee, though it did not preclude the adoption and adaptation of Greek ways in terms of trading, ceramic production, architectural forms, and even language, the extent of the mingling was both selective and limited.⁸³ But, we may remark, manufacturing and trading are superficial, not real, Hellenization of attitude, thought, religion, and culture. Thus, Galilee resisted full participation in the Greek way of life. Freyne⁸⁴ agrees with Millar in emphasizing the importance in Galilee of a distinctive sacred literature, in establishment and maintenance of a separate identity in a way that not even the Phoenicians could aspire to. He argues that the issue of Hellenism becomes a question of how the Hasmoneans dealt with the region, as seen in coinage, architecture, and military organization. But these aspects, as we have remarked, tell us how the rulers, in their administration, reacted to Hellenism; they do not tell us how the masses felt about it. On the basis of coin patterns and pottery Freyne argues that with respect to Hellenization there was a considerable difference between Upper and Lower Galilee;⁸⁵ but these

⁸¹ Freyne 2001, 185.

⁸² Freyne 2001, 194.

⁸³ Freyne 2001, 209.

⁸⁴ Freyne 2001, 210.

⁸⁵ Freyne 2001, 202.

are relatively superficial matters, and we would have to know more as to the relative size of the Jewish and non-Jewish population to determine the degree of Hellenization of the Jewish population.

Cohen⁸⁶ has clearly written the most ingenious of all the essays in this volume. He discusses three places where we would not expect to find evidence for Jewish Hellenism: Qumran (4Q339, 4Q340), the revolutionaries in the Jewish war of 66-73, and rabbinic literature.

As to Qumran he notes that there are fragments containing lists of the false prophets and of the Netinim (temple slaves or royal merchants) mentioned in the Bible. He suggests that such collections of names are works of scholarship and constitute Hellenization of Judaism, since it is scholars of the Hellenistic Age who first drew up lists of all sorts of things.⁸⁷ Such lists are frequently found in rabbinic lore. We may, however, remark that there is no particular cultural significance in such lists, since it is a mechanical matter to draw up lists. If the lists included explanatory matter that included distinctively Greek ideas, we could speak about the influence of Hellenism. Moreover, one guesses that the drawing up of lists is simply the work of teachers. Once universal compulsory elementary education for boys was instituted, according to tradition by Joshua ben Gamla in the first century, who is also said to have established sound pedagogical principles (*b. B. Bat.* 21a), we may guess that teachers compiled lists. They did not have to be reminded by Hellenistic scholars to do so.

As to rebels against Rome, Cohen⁸⁸ suggests that the war itself, its course, its leadership, and its ideologies are a manifestation of Jewish Hellenism. He notes, in particular, the participation by non-Judean Jews and non-Jews in the war, who were predominantly Greek-speaking; and he suggests the possibility that some of the things that the revolutionaries said and did can be explained by appeal to a hellenized Judaism. Josephus, the historian of the war, says Cohen, does not want to give the impression that the rebels enjoyed broad support; he has every reason to deny any connection between the rebels and an ideology that could endow legitimacy on them. But, we may respond, he does give legitimacy to Eleazar ben Jair at Masada by putting Platonic arguments about the immortality of the soul

⁸⁶ Cohen 2001, 216-43.

⁸⁷ Cohen 2001, 221.

⁸⁸ Cohen 2001, 224-30.

into his mouth (*War* 7.344-48). Cohen notes that Simon bar Giora, the leader of the revolutionaries, was the son of a proselyte and a native of Gerasa, a hellenized city. But Cohen himself admits that Josephus (*War* 4.487) mentions another Gerasa, a village in Judea not far from Jerusalem, just before he mentions that Simon came from Gerasa (*War* 4.503); and this is not the hellenized city of the Decapolis.⁸⁹

Cohen remarks that if despite his gentile origins, Bar Giora could make himself the leader of the revolutionaries, the movement must have been a variegated phenomenon. But, we must remember, this was precisely the era of large numbers of converts, and most of the rabbis stress the importance of treating them as equals. Moreover, Simon himself was not of gentile origin: only his father was, as Cohen recognizes. Cohen is right in noting evidence that some Romans did desert to the revolutionary cause who may have brought their Hellenism with them, but there is no indication as to the number of such deserters, let alone the nature of Greek ideas that they might have brought with them. In particular, Cohen notes the statement of some of the revolutionaries that the world is a better temple for G-d than this one (*War* 5.458-59: these are the retorts of the revolutionaries to the exhortations of Titus). Cohen finds the source of this statement in Zeno the founder of Stoicism,⁹⁰ but more likely this is Josephus' view, like the Platonic thoughts in Eleazar ben Jair's speech at Masada (*War* 7.344-48). Since Gentiles joined the revolutionaries, of course the latter noticed what the Gentiles said and did; but did this influence their Weltanschauung? Rather, it was an alliance of necessity or convenience.

As for Hellenism in rabbinic literature, Cohen cites *b. Ber.* 8b, which quotes Rabbi Aqiva and Rabban Gamaliel in their admiration for certain practices of Medes and Persians. He also cites Rabbi Joseph's hostile comments about Persians and claims that such ethnographic interest comes from the Greeks. In particular, he suggests that these statements reflect a Herodotean view of the world.⁹¹ However, Cohen⁹² admits that the Bible itself condemns

⁸⁹ Cohen 2001, 225-26.

⁹⁰ Cohen 2001, 230.

⁹¹ Cohen 2001, 235.

⁹² Cohen 2001, 234.

the *ways* of the Canaanites, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians [add the Amorites]. He admits that explicit appreciation for the customs of Gentiles is not found in any other passage by ancient Jews and is uncommon even in Jewish texts written in Greek. We may ask why? If there had been Hellenic influence in this area, why only here? Wouldn't we expect to find it in Philo and Josephus, both of whom were certainly exposed to Hellenism? Cohen⁹³ can find only one passage in Philo (*Prob.* 74: praise of Magi and Gymnosophists as researchers) and one passage in Josephus (*War* 7.351-57: praise of Indians' readiness to die). This, we may remark, is a typical sermon device, to tell your followers that they should be ashamed to be inferior to their opponents in certain respects.

The various essays in this book deal with the impact of Hellenism upon the Jews. Only Rajak⁹⁴ raises the point whether there was a counterattack, namely the attraction of non-Jews to Judaism or to Jewish practices. She then adds⁹⁵ that that would be to enter a new discussion. But, we may remark, surely that discussion is relevant in a book dealing with Hellenism in the Land of Israel. She⁹⁶ raises the question whether in connection with one of Josephus' favorite phrases, "both Greeks and barbarians," Jews were to be counted as one or the other or sometimes one and sometimes the other. We may comment that since Josephus' primary audience, at least for the *Antiquities* and *Against Apion* was non-Jews,⁹⁷ for non-Jews barbarians means non-Greeks. Thus, we may note that Philo actually includes the Jews among barbarians (*Mos.* 2.12). Indeed, Josephus says (*War* 1.3) that the *War* was directed to the barbarians up-country: this must be Jews.

Rajak⁹⁸ notes that the sense of difference of Judaism from Hellenism was more significant politically, sparking off both small conflicts and large-scale revolts. She adds that historical hindsight lends significance to the uniquely Jewish, since Judaism triumphantly survived through its distinctive form, rabbinism, rather than its more obviously Hellenized manifestations. But then she adds that neither of these points undermines Hengel's argument. We may ask why not? If

⁹³ Cohen 2001, 243 n. 91.

⁹⁴ Rajak 2001, 244-62.

⁹⁵ Rajak 2001, 259.

⁹⁶ Rajak 2001, 244.

⁹⁷ See Feldman 1998, 46-49.

⁹⁸ Rajak 2001, 248.

Hellenism started at such an early period (i.e. pre-Maccabean) and was so deep-seated and manifested itself in so many ways, why did it not triumph?

Rajak⁹⁹ proposes that Greeks were regularly urban citizens of some polis, while Syrians tended to be rural, or at least to be people living in villages and towns without either formal constitutions or official Roman standing. Yet, in his account of the flare-up in the city of Caesarea which precipitated the revolt in 6 C.E., Rajak admits that Josephus (*War* 2.266) says that the Jews took up arms against the Syrians. Rajak¹⁰⁰ explains that the opponents of the Jews are not designated “Greeks” because the point at issue for the Jews (with whom Josephus sympathizes) is precisely that this was no Greek city. Yet, the self-designation of the non-Jews is precisely as Greeks, and they are so characterized when Josephus in the next sentence sets out their side of the argument. But, we may add, Josephus is speaking in his reportorial or editorial comment immediately thereafter (*War* 2.268) when he appraises the two sides and says that the Jews had the advantage of superior wealth and physical strength, whereas the Greeks had the support of the military. One guesses that the non-Jewish inhabitants of Caesarea are called Syrians because they spoke a Syrian (i.e. Aramaic) language. They are also called Greeks because they spoke Greek. One recalls that the sole criterion of admission to the Eleusinian Mysteries was that the initiates had to speak Greek. Apparently, they were not excluded if they spoke another language also.

Rajak¹⁰¹ says that on at least one occasion in the *War* (1.17) Greeks are “us” to Josephus. But, we may comment, here Josephus says that it would be superfluous to narrate the ancient history of the Jews, “seeing that many of the Jews before me have accurately recorded the history of our ancestors, and certain of the Greeks have translated (μεταβαλόντες) these records into their native language without going completely astray (διήμαρτον) to a great degree from the truth (οὐ πολὺ τῆς ἀληθείας).” Rajak says that Josephus “can only be referring to the Hellenistic Jewish authors whose work was based on the Greek Bible, writers such as those whom he himself, many years later, identified in a similar assertion in *Against Apion* (1.218).

⁹⁹ Rajak 2001, 253.

¹⁰⁰ Rajak 2001, 253.

¹⁰¹ Rajak 2001, 257.

Not only were these writers manifestly Jews, but it is extremely hard to believe that Josephus, even at an early stage in his career, was so ignorant as to believe otherwise.”¹⁰² But we may remark that according to *Ap.* 1.215, “Our antiquity is sufficiently established by the Egyptian, Chaldaean, and Phoenician records, not to mention the numerous Greek historians.” Josephus then enumerates eight historians who “have made more than a passing allusion to us. The majority of these authors have misrepresented the facts of our primitive history, because they have not read our sacred books, but all concur in testifying to our antiquity....Demetrius of Phalerum, the elder Philo, and Eupolemus did not go completely astray (διήμαρτον) to a great degree from the truth (οὐ πολὺ τῆς ἀληθείας). It is clear from the identity of the language used that Josephus is referring to the same historians here as in *War* 1.17; and yet, in 1.17 he refers to them as “certain of the Greeks” and contrasts them with many of the Jews. It is true that many, indeed most, scholars believe that the reference in *Against Apion* to Demetrius is not to Demetrius of Phalerum but to Demetrius the chronographer, that the reference to Philo is to Philo the author of an epic *On Jerusalem*, and that the reference to Eupolemus is to the historian whose fragments are cited by Clement and Eusebius. It is clear that in *Against Apion* he regards Demetrius of Phalerum, Philo the Elder, and Eupolemus as non-Jews, since his whole point is that Greek (i.e. non-Jewish) historians have referred to the antiquity of the Jews, his comment being that most of these Greek authors have misrepresented the facts of Jewish history, whereas a few others (clearly Josephus, at least, thought of Demetrius, Philo the Elder, and Eupolemus as non-Jews) did not. Rajak says that the passage in *Against Apion* shows that Josephus is able to deploy a linguistic and cultural rather than an ethnic definition of what is Greek.¹⁰³ She concludes that we can now see how Jews could perfectly well have been classed among the Hellenes, and that in the *War* Josephus saw no disgrace in the Jews being classed as barbarians, but that in the later works (she cites only one passage in one work, *Ap.*) the overt barbarian identification has fallen away, whereas the context of the passage in *Ap.* makes it clear that Josephus looks upon the writers whom he names as being non-Jews.

¹⁰² Rajak 2001, 257.

¹⁰³ Rajak 2001, 257.

¹⁰⁴ Sterling 2001, 263-301.

Sterling¹⁰⁴ tests Hengel's hypothesis that Palestinian Judaism had been as thoroughly hellenized as the Diaspora by comparing Jerusalem and Alexandria from c. 175 B.C.E. to 135 C.E. He chooses them because they are two of the most important communities in Second Temple Judaism and because we have enough information about the two communities to permit a comparison.¹⁰⁵ However, we may remark, this would be like comparing present-day China and France through comparing Beijing and Paris. In the first place, we may ask what per cent of the Jews of Egypt lived in Alexandria. According to Philo (*Flacc.* 43), who was closer to such matters than we are, especially since he was in a position of leadership of the Alexandrian Jewish community, there were no fewer than a million Jews in Egypt in 37. The number of Jews in Alexandria in 37 has been estimated, based upon a fragment of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* as reconstructed and interpreted by Von Premerstein, Koenen, and Delia,¹⁰⁶ as 180,000. So also Sterling. The latter figure does not seem unreasonable, if we are to give any credence to Josephus' statement (*War* 2.497) that in the year 66 the Roman soldiers, unleashed by the governor Tiberius Julius Alexander, massacred 50,000 Jews in Alexandria. It would seem likely that the economic, cultural, and religious attitudes of the Jews of Alexandria differed considerably from those of the Jews of the rest of Egypt, but Sterling neglects to consider this.

Various estimates have been given as to the population of the Jews of Jerusalem in 66.¹⁰⁷ Broshi¹⁰⁸ estimates that it was 82,500, Sterling conjectures 75,000. The Jewish population of Palestine at that time has likewise been variously estimated,¹⁰⁹ but at least some credence should be given to Josephus, who as commander in Galilee at the beginning of the war against the Romans, should have had some idea as to the number of Jews there, and who states that in Galilee there were 204 towns and villages (*Life* 235), of which the smallest had 15,000 inhabitants (*War* 3.43). Again, it would seem likely that the economic, cultural, and religious attitudes of the Jews of Jerusalem differed considerably from those of the Jews of the rest of Pales-

¹⁰⁵ Sterling 2001, 264.

¹⁰⁶ Delia 1988, 286-87.

¹⁰⁷ See Feldman 1984, 366-69.

¹⁰⁸ Broshi 1975, 5-14.

¹⁰⁹ See Baron 1952, 1:370-72.

tine. Sterling neglects to consider this. He compares Jerusalem and Alexandria in three respects: the political-social situations, including the population and revolts; linguistic practices; and social-religious practices. He is, however, aware that conditions changed tremendously during this long period of time. He realizes that Jerusalem was a Jewish city, whereas Alexandria was a Greek city. He notes the vast difference between the Jewish revolt in Jerusalem against the Syrians and later the Romans, on the one hand, and the refusal of the Alexandrian Jews to revolt against the Romans in 70, whereas they did revolt in 115. The big issue in Alexandria was citizenship, but not in Jerusalem. He concludes that resistance to Hellenism fueled nationalism in Jerusalem, while exclusion from Hellenism fueled nationalism in Alexandria. He neglects, however, to consider the factors of messianism, independence, mistreatment by Roman procurators, etc. in Jerusalem. Moreover, it was not Hellenism but privileges (though, admittedly, not exclusively) connected with citizenship, notably exemption from poll tax and exemption of landed property from taxation that were key factors in Alexandria.

Sterling comments on the linguistic situation by comparing the writings of each community, but, we must note, this will tell us about a very small percentage of the population. He has charts comparing the literary works produced in both places but admits that there are many question marks. Thus, the first chart, which lists texts that were likely either composed or translated in Jerusalem, lists Philo the Epic Poet's *On Jerusalem* with a question mark. Indeed, he admits that it might have been composed in Jerusalem or in Alexandria or somewhere else. In his discussion, though not in his chart, he mentions the Tobiad romance and admits that it might have been composed in Jerusalem, Transjordan, or Egypt. Indeed, even Hengel¹¹⁰ concludes that this work was not composed in Palestine but in Egypt. Moreover, how many manuscripts do we have of this work? None. It is merely assumed that Josephus had such a work as his source. Sterling lists Eupolemus with a question mark: as we have noted, Josephus (*Ap.* 1.218) lists him as a pagan. He lists the Alexander Romance. How many manuscripts do we have of this work? None. It is merely assumed that Josephus had such a work as his source. He lists the Greek translation of Ruth, Song of Songs, Lamenta-

¹¹⁰ Hengel 1974, 1:88.

tions, Ecclesiastes, and some Psalms, but there is no evidence that the translation was made in Jerusalem. He lists *Lives of the Prophets* with a question mark. Most likely, as Schermann postulated,¹¹¹ the original language was Hebrew; what we have is a Greek translation; and some of the Greek manuscripts are clearly Christian products. Sterling cites Aquila with a question mark; according to tradition, he was born a pagan, converted to Christianity, and then to Judaism. Hence, to cite him as an example of the influence of Hellenism on Judaism is stretching a point; rather, the literalism of his translation is a reaction against the Septuagint. All in all, of the eight works that Sterling cites as Graeco-Jewish literature produced in Jerusalem, six have question marks after them.¹¹² He omits the Greek translation of Ecclesiasticus by the grandson of Ben Sira, the history of Justus of Tiberias, possibly the historical work of Jason of Cyrene (which is summarized in 2 Maccabees), and possibly the translation of 1 Maccabees. In sum, there are too many question marks to make for an effective comparison.

In his epilogue Goodman¹¹³ says that while it has seemed obvious to some that Jews living as a minority in Diaspora communities were more likely to imbibe the surrounding culture than those in the homeland, on reflection it is evident that an embattled minority might in theory have rejected Greek mores more vigorously than the relaxed community in the land of Israel, where cosmopolitan culture was brought to Jerusalem by pious pilgrims whose use of Greek did not impede their devotion to Judaism. To this we may comment that we know that there were a tremendous number of pilgrims. Josephus (*War* 6.425) gives a figure of 2,700,000 for Passover in 66, but we do not have the diary of even a single Diaspora Jew indicating what cosmopolitan culture he brought to Jerusalem. Philo (*Prov.* 2.64) tells us that he went once to offer prayers and sacrifice, but all that he tells us about that trip is that while in Ascalon in Palestine on his way to Jerusalem he asked why there were so many pigeons at the crossroads and in each house, and he was told that it was not lawful to catch them for food.

¹¹¹ Schermann 1907.

¹¹² Sterling 2001, 279.

¹¹³ Goodman 2001, 302-5.

Goodman raises the interesting question why no Graeco-Jewish literature has survived from the period after 100 C.E. to match the writings from before that time, and he answers that the Christians, who were responsible for preserving the earlier literature had their own literature after 100, and rabbinic Jews had no interest in writing down what Greek Jews wrote.¹¹⁴ In this connection we may remark that whereas the rabbis initially had a very positive view of the Septuagint translation, indicating that the translators miraculously, even though placed in separate rooms, emerged with precisely the same translation (*b. Meg.* 9a), later (*Sof.* 1:7) they compared the day when the translation was made with the day when the Israelites built the golden calf. We may guess that the change of attitude was influenced by the fact that the Christians adopted the Septuagint as their version of the Pentateuch. One should add, moreover, that the rabbis' influence became greater and greater, especially after the destruction of the Temple, through the establishment of schools of learning.

Furthermore, in no fewer than four passages in the Talmud, we read that during the civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus (67-63 B.C.E.), the rabbis forbade the study of Greek wisdom (*b. Men.* 64b and 99b, *b. Sof.* 49b, *b. B. Qam.* 82b) and even, during the war of Quietus (115 C.E.), the Greek language (*m. Sof.* 9:14). This refutes Goodman's statement that there is curiously little evidence that any Jews saw Greek culture—that is, Hellenization—as any sort of threat to Jewish society after the rhetoric surrounding the Maccabean revolt. Goodman makes an excellent point that it is curious that no claims are generally made about the impact of Aramaic on Jewish culture comparable to the claims so often made about Hellenization.¹¹⁵ After all, the vast literature of the Gemara in its commentary on the Mishnah and of the multitude of midrashim is written in Aramaic, since that was clearly the language that people spoke and in which instruction and sermons were given. Goodman concludes with the statement that in the end it was precisely the triumph of Hellenism that deprived it of its sting.¹¹⁶ He says that in the course of time Hellenism became simply the normal mode of discourse in the modern age, and the notion that Jews might wish to fight against it

¹¹⁴ Goodman 2001, 303.

¹¹⁵ Goodman 2001, 305.

¹¹⁶ Goodman 2001, 305.

would have been as bizarre as to suggest to an orthodox American Jew today that religious devotion might be prejudiced by the use of the English language. But the fact is that at the present time an increasing number and probably by the time you hear or read these words a majority of orthodox American Jews today (who happen to be Hasidim and whose language of discourse is not English but Yiddish) do believe that their religious devotion *is* prejudiced by the use of the English language. If, indeed, Hellenism had triumphed and if the language of speech became increasingly Greek, why is it that none of the great Talmudic rabbis, who certainly were sound enough teachers to know that one communicates best in the language best understood by one's audience, translated a single classical work into Greek or wrote a commentary in Greek or an original homiletical or halachic work in Greek?

In summary, if the culture of Hellenism did not penetrate into Jewish Palestine as deeply as Hengel and his many followers in this volume would indicate, it is not due to the immunity of the Jews to foreign influence, because, after all, they had often succumbed to it during the biblical period. However, during the Hellenistic Period, except for the brief episode of the Hellenized high priests Jason and Menelaus, we hear of no instances where Jews (and we do not know their numbers) worshipped Greek gods or combined them with the Jewish G-d. Apparently, it was the Samaritans who were more deeply influenced by Hellenism; and the fact that the Jews had so little contact with the Samaritans meant that a minimum of Greek culture came to the Jews from the Samaritans.

The key to the process of Hellenization was surely syncretism with Greek religion and culture. If, as Hengel claims, the process of Hellenization had started long before 175 B.C.E., one would have expected it to continue. And yet, that the masses strongly resisted paganism two centuries later can be seen from the passion with which they resisted the attempt of the procurator Pontius Pilate early in the first century C.E. to introduce busts of the emperor into Jerusalem, so that even Pilate was astonished at the strength of the devotion of the Jews to their laws and straightway removed the images (*War* 2.169-74, *Ant.* 18.55-59). Similarly (*Ant.* 18.263), many tens of thousands of Jews came to the Roman governor Petronius at Ptolemais asking that he slay them rather than set up the image of Caligula in the Temple. Moreover (*Ant.* 18.270), many additional

tens of thousands faced Petronius at Tiberias, so that he wrote the emperor asking him to revoke his orders (*Ant.* 18.278). As late as the third century C.E., Johanan ben Nappaha, who taught in Sepphoris and Tiberias in Galilee, is quoted (*y. Pe'ah* 1.1.15c) as stating that one may have one's daughter taught Greek, for it serves her as an ornament, whereas one may not teach one's son Greek, according to the Mishnah (*Soṭ* 9:14). Similarly, in the third century, admittedly in a polemical passage, Origen (*Against Celsus* 2.34) declares that Jews are not very well [or at all] versed in Greek literature.

As to the adoption of the Greek language, it is not aversion to adopting the language of a conqueror that led the Jews to retain their ancestral language so stubbornly. After all, Aramaic itself was the language of a conqueror in the 6th century B.C.E. Moreover, within two centuries after the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs in 640, Arabic displaced Aramaic as the chief language of the Jews.

Letters, contracts, documents, Dead Sea Scrolls, rabbinic works—all indicate that the predominant language of the Jews of Palestine throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods—in fact, from the time of the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C.E. until approximately two centuries after the Arab conquest of Palestine—was not Greek but Aramaic, though Hebrew continued to be spoken certainly through the Mishnaic period. When Titus sought to convince the Jews to surrender Jerusalem, he sent Josephus to speak with them in their “ancestral language,” presumably Aramaic (*War* 5.361). Likewise, Paul (Acts 21:40, 22:2) addresses the Jews in Jerusalem in Hebrew (or Aramaic), not Greek. It is the masses, not the rabbis, that Josephus and Paul choose to address in Aramaic (or Hebrew), and it is the masses, not the rabbis, whom Judah the Prince berates for using Aramaic. At the end of the second century, Rabbi Judah the Prince recognized the predominant place of Aramaic as the language of the Jews when he asked rhetorically, “Why use the Syriac [i.e. Aramaic] language in the Land of Israel? [Use] either the Holy Language or Greek (*b. B. Qam.* 82b-83a, *b. Soṭ* 49b). Bear in mind that the Talmud mentions the patriarch Rabban Gamaliel II (*b. B. Qam.* 83a, *b. Soṭ* 49b) as an exception in that he was permitted in the first century to teach Greek culture to his students. Further, the rabbis challenge the patriarch himself for teaching Greek, implying the strength of their discontent.

In sum, Professor Hengel's monumental work, truly a magnificent milestone of scholarship, deserves the attention that it has been given, even if it also deserves to be challenged.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESHAPING OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Review of: Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 30; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

This book starts with two premises—that Judaism and Hellenism were not competing systems or incompatible concepts, and that adaptation to Hellenism did not necessarily require compromise of Jewish precepts or practices. Moreover, Gruen contends that the Hellenism with which Jews came into contact was actually a mongrel entity, with a different blend in various parts of the Mediterranean world. He likewise insists that Hellenistic Judaism was a complex entity, which experienced changes over time and in various regions. He argues that Jews engaged actively with Greek traditions; they adapted genres and transformed traditional legends to accord with Hellenistic modes. In particular, they recreated their past and retold biblical and extra-biblical stories not only in the Greek language but also in Greek literary forms. The Jewish authors, often anonymous or pseudonymous, thus enhanced the exploits of ancient heroes. In so doing they exhibited features generally unnoticed by previous scholars, namely a mischievous sense of humor and a pointed irony that poked fun not only at Gentiles but also at the foibles of the Jews themselves. Thus the distinction between history and fiction is blurred.

Gruen does not pretend to present a comprehensive survey of Hellenistic Jewish literature. Rather, he selects a representative sample. Inasmuch as the seven substantive chapters are only loosely connected with one another, it will be best for this reviewer to summarize and to comment briefly on each individual essay before commenting at greater length on the book as a whole.

In the first chapter (“Hellenism and the Hasmonaeans” [pp. 1-40]) he deals with the Jewish rebellion against Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria and the establishment of an autonomous state under the Hasmonean dynasty. The Hasmoneans, he argues, did not spurn Hellenism and promote a purity of faith. Moreover, the adoption

of Greek ways by the later Hasmoneans did not represent a reversal of the ideals that motivated Maltathias and Judah the Maccabee. In fact, the victory of the Hasmoneans depended upon co-operation with the Syrian Seleucids. They adopted Greek names and recruited non-Jewish mercenaries and even went so far as to convert whole conquered nations, the Idumaeans and Ituraeans, to Judaism, thus elevating Jewish prestige. The data that Professor Gruen has assembled to support his position is certainly impressive, but it represents the position of a very small group of Jews, namely the political leaders, the Hasmoneans, who for pragmatic reasons, especially in view of their own inherent political and military weakness, came to terms with the Syrian Greeks and, in the process, themselves became increasingly Hellenized. The fact that the Hasmonean coins bear legends in both Greek and Hebrew may mean only that the rulers realized that the coins would be handled not only by Jews but also by non-Jews, who definitely were numerous in the land ruled by the Hasmoneans. The presence of gymnasiums does not mean that Jews attended them; indeed, there is no evidence that they did, except during the brief period of the high priesthood of Jason (2 Macc. 4:9-12). That the masses strongly resisted paganism can be seen, to be sure at a somewhat later period, from the passion with which they resisted the attempts of the procurator Pontius Pilate early in the first century to introduce busts of the emperor into Jerusalem, so that even Pilate was astonished at the strength of the devotion of the Jews to their laws and straightway removed the images (Jos., *War* 2.169-74; *Ant.* 18.55-59). We see similar zeal on the part of large numbers of Jews a few years later when, we are told (*Ant.* 18.263), many tens of thousands of Jews came to the Roman governor Petronius "asking that he slay them rather than set up an image of the Emperor Gaius Caligula in the Temple in Jerusalem. As for Greek influence on the rabbis, none of the rabbis composed works in Greek; and while they recognized the beauty of the Greek language (*b. Meg.* 9b), they proscribed the teaching of Greek culture (*b. Soṭ.* 49b, *b. B. Qam.* 82b).¹

In the second chapter ("The Use and Abuse of the Exodus Story" [pp. 41-72]) Gruen presents the highly original and, indeed, startling thesis that pagan writers, such as Manetho, Lysimachus, Chaeremon, and Apion did not invent the biblical account of the Exodus

¹ For further discussion of alleged Hellenization among Jews during this period see Feldman 1993, 18-44.

in order to advance their anti-Jewish cause, since few would have had any familiarity with the biblical story even after the composition of the LXX. He asks whether Jews would have propagated a narrative that highlighted their flight from Egypt at a time when they sought to establish their credentials as residents. He suggests that Jewish writers sought to bolster their self-esteem by setting up their forefathers as conquerors who overthrew false Egyptian idols, and that it was these accounts upon which the anti-Jewish writers drew. However, according to the Letter of Aristeas (310-11), when the translation of the Pentateuch was completed, supposedly in the third century B.C.E., the Jewish community unanimously agreed that it was perfectly accurate, and a curse was placed upon anyone who should modify the translation. That the translation was well known among non-Jews seems likely in view of the fact, according to Philo (*Mos.* 2.41), that a general assembly was held every year where not only Jews but multitudes of others came to commemorate the translation.² And why would Jews have presented Moses as an Egyptian priest, the Jews as afflicted by leprosy, etc.? And how can we explain the divergent views of the Exodus in the anti-Jewish writers, including the name of the Pharaoh, his date, the number of Israelites who left, and the name of the Israelite leader?

In the third chapter ("The Hellenistic Images of Joseph" [pp. 73-109]), Gruen illustrates how Hellenistic Jewish writers exploited the biblical material about Joseph at will, taking and rewriting what they liked, omitting and freely adapting what they found unpalatable. Whereas, however, such writers as the authors of Jubilees, Ecclesiasticus, 1 Macc., Pseudo-Philo, and the Testament of Joseph, present a one-sided view as a model of purity and integrity, other writers, such as Demetrius and the author of *Wisdom* present a much broader view as a figure of eminence in whom Diaspora Jews could take pride. In particular, Artapanus emphasizes his economic genius. The Pseudepigraphic Joseph and Aseneth owes much to post-biblical and Hellenistic fiction and serves to heighten the pride of Hellenistic Jews. The tales of the Tobiads, as related by Josephus (*Ant.* 12.154-236), though they involve historical persons, emphasize cunning and

² In a seminal article, Tcherikover 1956, 169-93, has denied that widespread Jewish literary propaganda among the pagans was technically possible, and he challenges the view that the distribution of books in the ancient world was similar to that in modern times. I have challenged this thesis in Feldman 1977-78, 230-41.

cleverness without passing critical judgment. Gruen explains the self-contradictory picture of Joseph in Philo's works by remarking that for Hellenistic Jews the ambiguities of Joseph's personality and achievements made him readily malleable to serve a variety of purposes. But Gruen does not explain how these contradictions would serve to heighten the pride of Hellenistic Jews, and I shall deal with this issue at greater length in the course of this essay.

The fourth chapter, "Scriptural Stories in New Guise" (pp. 110-136), shows how Hellenistic Jewish writers, with judicious additions, subtractions, and modifications, enhanced the significance of the scriptural tradition for Jews conversant with Hellenic culture. Thus Demetrius, through his rationalizations, aimed to silence skeptics. Aristaeas, through omitting the ambiguities in the story of Job, made the story more palatable. Theodotus, in his version of the rape of Dinah, made the behavior of the Hebrews less criminal. Philo the Elder, in his epic, heightened Jewish pride in the patriarchs. Ezekiel, in his drama of the Exodus, likewise glorified the Jews in a manner that Hellenistic Jewish readers would appreciate. All this, however, presupposes that these authors were writing for Jewish readers. While it is probably true that Jews did read these works, the authors also, and perhaps primarily, intended them apologetically for non-Jewish readers. In Egypt where many, and more probably most, of these works originated, if we may judge from Philo, who, as the prestigious head of the Jewish community, was certainly in a position to know what the attitude of the non-Jews in Egypt was toward the Jews, the question of relations of Jews with the Egyptians was urgent. In an important essay concerning the attack by the Alexandrian non-Jews upon the Jews in the year 38, Philo makes the very significant remark (*Legat.* 120) that the hatred of the promiscuous and unstable rabble of the Alexandrians had been smoldering from long ages past ἐκ μακρῶν χρόνων. In Josephus we can certainly see the apologetic motif not only in the *Contra Apionem* but also throughout the *Antiquities*.³ Moreover, this was a period during which the Jews were successful in converting large numbers to Judaism, and several of these works might well have been used toward that end.⁴

The fifth chapter, "Embellishments and Inventions" (pp. 137-88),

³ See Feldman 1998a, 132-62.

⁴ See Feldman 1993, 305-24.

finds humor in various Hellenistic Jewish texts. This did not imply irreverence but rather an open attitude toward sacred texts that encouraged elaboration rather than shut off imagination. Again, it was the self-esteem, according to Gruen, that provided the stimulus for such creations. As examples of such humor Gruen cites Solomon's gift of a golden column to grace the temple of Zeus in Tyre (Eupolemus, *ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.34.18), Abraham's progeny participating in the conquests by Heracles (Cleodemus-Malchus, *ap. Jos., Ant.* 1.240-41), Moses introducing animal worship to Egypt and circumcision to Ethiopia (Artapanus, *ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.9-10), the identification of Moses with Hermes and Mousaios (Artapanus, *ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.3, 6), Zerubbabel twitting Darius for his infatuation with a concubine (1 Esdr. 4:28-33), Daniel mocking the Persian king and irresolute public opinion among Jews (Bel and the Dragon, Susanna and the Elders), and Mordecai and Esther clumsily explaining away their lapses (Additions A-F in the Greek Esther). As we shall remark later, there is good reason for thinking that Eupolemus, Cleodemus-Malchus, and Artapanus were not Jews in the first place. Moreover, if self-esteem provided the stimulus for this humor, why do we not find much humor in the voluminous works of the two Hellenistic Jewish intellectuals whose works have come down to us in bulk, namely Philo and Josephus? As for the humor in the Greek version of Esther, the rabbis (*b. Meg.* 18a) permitted the book of Esther to be read in Greek; and it is hard to believe that they would have permitted this if Mordecai were to be viewed there as clumsy.

In the sixth chapter, "Kings and Jews" (pp. 189-245), Gruen asserts that adjustment to life under absolute rulers and in the setting of a Greek cultural environment led Jewish writers to build the confidence of their fellow Jews with a series of fictive stories. Thus Alexander the Great is depicted as prostrating himself before the Jewish high priest (*Ant.* 11.331), and Alexandrian Jewish writers elevated the exploits of Jewish soldiers, scholars, and counselors. Again, there are, according to Gruen, comic touches, such as Mosollamos' exposure of Greek seers (Pseudo-Hecataeus, *ap. Jos. Ap.* 1.201-4). The Letter of Aristaeas, especially in the table talk of the symposium, he says, certainly demonstrates the superior wisdom of the Jews. In the case of Alexander, Gruen is on firm ground; but as to Jewish writers' elevation of Jewish soldiers and others, there is no reason to deny that this may reflect actual fact, as we find in the evidence of the

Jewish papyri from Egypt.⁵ As to the evidence from Pseudo-Hecataeus, one must admit that Bar-Kochva has made a convincing case for concluding that the story of Mosollamos was written not by a knowledgeable Greek but by a Jew.⁶ As for the Letter of Aristaeas, Gruen makes much of the point that the vocabulary closely parallels that of the LXX; but if Pseudo-Longinus is at all typical, a non-Jew might also have appreciated the sublime style of the LXX. Moreover, one wonders how the author might have been a Jew when the translators of the Pentateuch are presented in their speeches in the banquet in their honor as never mentioning Moses or the Bible or any practices peculiar to Judaism.

The seventh chapter, "Pride and Precedence" (pp. 246-91), notes that in their search for ways to heighten their self-esteem, Jewish writers sought to show that the Greeks had derived their ideas from Jewish sources. Thus Aristobulus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 13.12.1, 3-4) in the second century B.C.E. claims that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato followed in the path laid out by Moses. As to Aristobulus, however, while there is no doubt that he was a Jew, there is no necessary reason for thinking that he originated such views, since we find, for example, that Hermippus of Smyrna, who lived a generation before Aristobulus, asserts (*ap. Jos., Ap.* 1.162-65) that Pythagoras pronounced and practiced certain precepts that he had appropriated from Jews and Thracians and that he introduced many points of Jewish law into his philosophy. Gruen also claims that Jews invented the fiction that they were related with the Spartans (1 Macc. 12:20-23); *Jos., Ant.* 12.225-27). As to the claim that the Jews have a kinship with the Spartans, this rests upon documents quoted in 1 Maccabees and Josephus, and most scholars conclude that they are authentic;⁷ and it is unlikely that the idea of kinship was invented by Hellenistic Jews. Nevertheless, admittedly, whether invented or not, it did serve to heighten the prestige of the Jews. Furthermore, the Third Sibylline Oracle, which is definitely of Jewish origin and which dates from the second century B.C.E., extends to the Greeks a promise of divine deliverance. The fact, we may add, that the Sibyl claims to be the daughter-in-law of Noah would be interpreted by Jews as an indica-

⁵ See the extensive discussion of this evidence by Tcherikover 1957, 1:1-111.

⁶ Bar-Kochva 1996, 61-71.

⁷ See the bibliography cited by Katzoff 1985, p. 485, n. 1.

tion that she is a Noahide, that is, one who is obligated, according to Jewish tradition as later codified in the Talmud (*b. Sanh.* 56a), to observe the seven laws incumbent upon all peoples. The work is clearly intended, as Gruen himself admits, to convince non-Jews to partake of the values of the Jews.

Professor Gruen's decision to enter into the enormously important, fascinating and complex field—perhaps minefield is a more descriptive word—of Hellenistic Judaism is surely one of the greatest blessings that have come to the field in recent years. Gruen comes with an incredibly broad and deep background in both the Greek and Latin languages, the full gamut of Greek and Latin literature, and especially Greek and Hellenistic and Roman history generally from its beginnings to its fall. And to this is added an enormous respect for the text, a keen, analytical mind, an uncorrupted intellectual honesty, and a freshness and originality in whatever he touches. *Quid plura?* If I here express a divergent point of view, it is with deep appreciation of the tremendous and utterly admirable challenge that Gruen has given the entire field of Hellenistic Jewish scholarship.

Gruen convincingly concludes that Jewish intellectuals in the Hellenistic period had a free hand in reshaping, excerpting, expanding, or even ignoring the biblical narrative. He gives numerous examples from Hellenistic Jewish authors, Pseudepigrapha, and the like. I myself have noted that Josephus promises his readers that he will throughout his work set forth τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς (“the precise details of the Scriptures”), each in its place, οὐδὲν προσθεὶς οὐδ’ αὖ παραλιπὼν (“neither adding nor omitting anything” (*Ant.* 1.17). But while I have noted a host of instances⁸ where Josephus parallels rabbinic midrashim in his expansions and deletions, there are far fewer that qualify as Hellenizations.

Rappaport cites 299 instances where Josephus parallels midrashic traditions that are not recorded until a later, often a much later, period.⁹ To these may be added numerous other instances dealing with Josephus' portrayal of various biblical personalities. For example, we may note that Josephus was apparently aware of the equation of Esau and Rome (hinted at in *Ant.* 1.275), which is later found also in rabbinic tradition (*Midr. Gen. Rab.* 65.26). Josephus is well aware

⁸ See Feldman 1998 and 1998a.

⁹ Rappaport 1930, 1-71.

of the tradition, also found in the rabbinic aggadah (Tg. on 2 Kings 4:1); *Midr Exod. Rabbah* 31.4; *Tan. Mishpatim* 9, that Obadiah, the steward of Ahab, supported prophets with the money that he had borrowed (*Ant.* 9.47). He likewise is aware of the tradition identifying the widow for whom Elisha performed the miracle with the jar of oil as the wife of Obadiah (*Ant.* 9.47; cf. *Tan. Kī Tissa* 5, *Midr. Mishle* 31.27. The Church Fathers, if we may judge from Eusebius (*Demonst. Ev.* 6.18.34-42), were aware of Josephus' knowledge of the oral tradition, since Eusebius there calls attention to the fact that though the earthquake that occurred in the time of King Uzziah (Zech. 14:5) is not mentioned in the Book of Kings, Josephus, apparently writing on the basis of an oral tradition, not only mentions it but describes additional details in connection with that incident (*Ant.* 9.225).

Actually, Josephus has added numerous details and even whole episodes, notably the account of Moses' campaign in Ethiopia and his marriage to the Ethiopian princess (*Ant.* 2.238-53), while omitting such passages as certain incriminating details in connection with Jacob's deception of his father in order to obtain his blessing (Gen. 27), the cunning of Jacob in connection with Laban's flock (Gen. 30:37-38), the Judah-Tamar episode (Gen. 38), Moses' slaying of the Egyptian (Exod. 2:12), the building of the golden calf (Exod. 32), the grumbling and doubting before the second miraculous feast of quails (Num. 11:11-23), Miriam's leprosy (Num. 12), the story of Moses' striking the rock to bring forth water which speaks of Moses' disgrace (Num. 20:10-12), the story of the brazen serpent (Num. 21:4-9) whereby Moses cured those who had been bitten by the fiery serpents, the account of Gideon's smashing of the Baal altar (Judg. 6:25-32), the story of Micah and his idolatry (Judg. 17-18), several passages (1 Sam. 20:6, 21:4-7, 26:19) which seem to cast a shadow upon David's reputation for piety, the identification of Elijah as a zealot (1 Kgs. 19:9, 19:14), which would have aroused the antagonism of the Romans in view of the role of the Zealots in the great uprising of 66-70, Elisha's cursing of the little boys who had jeered him in referring to his baldness (2 Kgs. 2:23-24), as well as his cursing of his disciple Gehazi for accepting gifts from Naaman (2 Kgs. 5:27), Jehu's conversion of the Temple of Baal into an outhouse (2 Kgs. 10:27), which would have aroused charges of intolerance, Jonah's extreme anger with G-d because He had forgiven the Ninevites after they had repented (Jonah 4:1), Hezekiah's ingratitude to G-d (2 Chron. 32:25) when he became sick, the charge (Neh. 2:19-20, 6:6) made by

the neighbors of the Jews that the Jews were rebelling against the Persian king, the statement (Neh. 8:14,17) that the Jews had failed to observe the commandment to dwell in sukkoth since the days of Joshua, the infighting among the Jews in the days of Nehemiah (Neh. 5:6-7, 5:12, 13:4-11), and the gathering of the virgins in the Esther narrative (Esth. 2:19).

But these are matters of mere addition or subtraction. And yet, how can we explain so notable a change as the case of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah), where Josephus seems to change the biblical text completely, so that instead of characterizing Jehoiachin, as does the Bible, as one who did what was evil in the sight of the L-rd (2 Kgs. 24:9, 2 Chron. 36:9), he is described as being *χρηστός* ("kind") and *δίκαιος*; ("just") (*Ant.* 10.100)?

As to Josephus' modification of the biblical text with regard to Jehoiachin, we might perhaps explain that in omitting the phrase that Jehoiachin "did what was evil in the sight of the L-rd" Josephus is simply omitting a formula frequently found in the Bible in connection with the various kings of Judah and Israel. Alternatively, we may say that the reference in this stock phrase may be to idolatry and that it does not mean that the king to whom it is applied mistreated his subjects. However, an examination of how Josephus deals with this phrase, which in the Bible occurs in connection with 25 kings,¹⁰ indicates that he never reproduces it as such, whereas he specifies in various ways the nature of a given king's evildoing. In some cases Josephus explains that the evil consisted of impiety (Zimri, Omri, Jehoahaz of Israel, Ahaz); in others he says it consisted of both impiety and wickedness (Nadab, Baasha, Jehoram of Israel, Jehoram

¹⁰ Rehoboam (1 Kgs. 14:22, 2 Chron. 12:14; *Ant.* 8.251), Nadab (1 Kgs. 15:26; *Ant.* 8.287), Baasha (1 Kgs. 15:34, 16:7; *Ant.* 8.299), Zimri (1 Kgs. 16:19; *Ant.* 8.309), Omri (1 Kgs. 16:25; *Ant.* 8.313), Ahab (1 Kgs. 16:30; *Ant.* 8.316), Ahaziah of Israel (1 Kgs. 22:52; *Ant.* 9.18), Jehoram of Israel (2 Kgs. 3:2, *Ant.* 9.27), Jehoram of Judah (2 Kgs. 8:18, 2 Chron. 21:6, *Ant.* 9.95), Ahaziah of Judah (2 Kgs. 8:27, 2 Chron. 22:4, *Ant.* 9.18), Jehoahaz of Israel (2 Kgs. 13:2, *Ant.* 9.173), Jehoash of Israel (2 Kgs. 13:11, *Ant.* 9.178), Jeroboam II (2 Kgs. 14:24, *Ant.* 9.205), Zechariah (2 Kgs. 15:9, *Ant.* 9.215), Menahem (2 Kgs. 15:18, *Ant.* 9.232), Pekahiah (2 Kgs. 15:24, *Ant.* 9.233), Pekah (2 Kgs. 15:28, *Ant.* 9.234), Ahaz (2 Kgs. 16:2, 2 Chron. 28:1, *Ant.* 9.243), Hoshea (2 Kgs. 17:2, *Ant.* 9.258), Manasseh (2 Kgs. 21:2, 2 Chron. 33:2, *Ant.* 10.37), Amon (2 Kgs. 21:20, 2 Chron. 33:22, *Ant.* 10.47), Jehoahaz of Judah (2 Kgs. 23:32, *Ant.* 10.81), Jehoiakim (2 Kgs. 23:37, 2 Chron. 36:5, *Ant.* 10.83), Jehoiachin (2 Kgs. 24:9, 2 Chron. 36:9, *Ant.* 10.100), Zedekiah (2 Kgs. 24:19, 2 Chron. 36:12, *Ant.* 10.103).

of Judah, Jeroboam II, Hoshea, Manasseh, Amon); in still others it is a matter of impiety and lawlessness or corruptness (Pekah, Jehoahaz of Judah). Again, in some cases it is left unspecified whether the king's wickedness was against G-d or toward man (Ahaziah of Israel, Ahaziah of Judah); in others it is wickedness toward G-d (Ahab); in still others one hears of wickedness and injustice, presumably toward man (Jehoiakim); and finally, there are instances involving perverseness and cruelty toward man (Menahem, Pekahiah).

Similarly, we may note that in the eight cases where the Bible states that a king did what was right in the eyes of the L-rd, Josephus never reproduces this phrase as such but spells out in various ways what the goodness involved. Thus in some cases he indicates that it consisted of piety (Jehoash), in others he identifies it with justice (presumably toward his subjects) (Amaziah), in other cases it is a matter of piety and justice (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah), while finally, Uzziah's righteousness lay in his goodness and justice.

A close parallel is to be found in Josephus' comments about Jehoash (Joash), the king of Israel. The Bible uses the familiar formula that "he did what was evil in the sight of the L-rd," and, as if this is not enough, it adds that "he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, but he walked in them" (2 Kgs. 13:11). The fact that he seized all the gold and silver and all the vessels of the Temple in Jerusalem would, we might expect, have led Josephus, who was so proud of his status as a priest, to condemn him utterly. Yet, Josephus has the very opposite view of Jehoash, remarking that he was ἀγαθός ("good") and in no way like his father Jehoahaz in character (*Ant.* 9.178). It is possible that Josephus has confused the Israelite Jehoash with the king of Judah of the same name, who, indeed, is described as having done what was right in the eyes of the L-rd (2 Kgs. 12:2). But that this is unlikely is seen from the fact that Josephus praises Jehoash the king of Judah for his zealotry in the worship of the L-rd (*Ant.* 9.157). Another possibility is that Jehoash the king of Israel may have repented, as did his father Jehoahaz, who is labeled as impious (*Ant.* 9.173) but then is described as repentant (*Ant.* 9.175); but against this is the fact that there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that Jehoash was repentant. The most likely explanation would seem to be that Josephus had an independent tradition indicating that Jehoash was actually a good king.

We may perhaps find another parallel in the way in which the Talmudic rabbis treat the incident of David and Bathsheba. Although the prophet Nathan in the Bible seems to say very clearly that David, in smiting Uriah the Hittite and taking Uriah's wife to be his wife, had "despised the word of the L-rd, to do what is evil in His sight" (2 Sam. 12:9), and although David himself admits, "I have sinned against the L-rd" (2 Sam. 12:13), Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani, in the name of the third-century Rabbi Jonathan, directly contradicts the Bible by stating that whoever says that David sinned himself errs (*Shab.* 56a).¹¹

Granted that there are numerous instances where Hellenistic writers, such as Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, take liberties with their biblical source, when Gruen comes to Philo he has still another problem, namely how to explain that the same author presents contradictory views of biblical characters and events. Hence, I want to concentrate on one example of this, namely, the contradictions to be found within Philo's comments about Joseph. Goodenough remarks that the portrayal of Joseph in Philo's essay *De Josepho* is so contradictory to everything that Philo says in several of his other essays that he wonders why no one has yet claimed that it comes from a different author.¹² Thus, on the one hand, Philo remarks that Joseph's dreams of the sheaves and the stars reveal the vainglorious nature of Joseph's character (*Somn.* 2.5-7, 30-33, 42, 78, 93-99, 105, 110-16, 138; cf. *Agr.* 56) and makes other disparaging comments about those dreams. It is Joseph's brothers who are spoken of as virtuous, modest, and pious, whereas Joseph himself is termed ruthless (*Somn.* 2.79). Again, in the essay *De Migratione Abrahami* (19) Philo gives Joseph credit for saying that G-d is the author of interpretations of dreams, whereas in *De Cherubim* (128) the same Philo blames Joseph for saying that the interpretations are through G-d rather than by Him. To Philo, who so admired Plato,¹³ particularly his portrait of the philosopher-king in the *Republic*. Joseph is the politician in the worst sense (*Leg.* 3.179), always prepared to compromise (*Migr.* 158, *Somn.* 2.14-15)

¹¹ Interestingly, however, Josephus himself does not cover up David's sin but candidly declares that although David was by nature righteous and G-d-fearing, nevertheless he fell into this grave error. For a suggested explanation of Josephus' attitude see Feldman 1989, especially pp. 171-74.

¹² Goodenough 1938, 43.

¹³ Note, for example, Philo's reference (*Prob.* 13) to Plato as "most sacred."

and to subordinate truth to expediency and falsehood (*Det.* 7, *Somn.* 1.220), accommodating himself to both body and soul (*Migr.* 159). He is termed the personification of the body (*Her.* 256, *Somn.* 1.78), as opposed to the mind. His association with the sons of Jacob's concubines (Gen. 37:2) is deemed fitting, inasmuch as his concern is with lower things (*Deus* 119-21) and with those who honor spurious goods (*Sobr.* 12-15). He is depicted as a veritable sophist (*Somn.* 2.11, *Conf.* 71), with a keen desire for outward, worldly things and with a consequent instability of character. His coat of many colors represents the robe of the very antithesis of the philosopher-king, since its variety stands for falsehood and sophistry (*Somn.* 1.219-25). He is furthermore depicted as self-opinionated (*Leg.* 3.179), presumptuous (*Somn.* 2.99), filled with arrogance (*Somn.* 2.46), and swollen-headed with vanity (*Conf.* 72). His very name, meaning "addition," is explained (*Somn.* 2.47) as signifying that empty opinion is always adding the spurious to the genuine, falsehood to truth, and arrogance to life. The very fact that Egypt is the scene of his activity leads Philo (*Somn.* 1.78) to remark that his political stance is connected with the physical preoccupations for which the ancient Egyptians were notorious. He is said to have inherited from his mother the irrational strain of sense perception (*Somn.* 2.16). It is most remarkable that Joseph, who so steadfastly withstands the temptation of Potiphar's wife, is, nevertheless, in Philo depicted as having a love of bodily pleasure (*Somn.* 2.16).

In Philo's essay *De Josepho* (37-124), however, we have a very different and indeed positive portrayal, with only the mere hint of a flaw in his character (*Jos.* 34-36). He is second only to his three great forbears (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) in directing his life toward the ideal good (*Jos.* 1). He is the very model of self-control, decency, and chastity, particularly in resisting the advances of Potiphar's wife (*Jos.* 40-53). Whereas his dreams, as we have seen, are viewed disparagingly in *De Somniis*, they are given a positive interpretation in the essay *De Josepho* (5-11, 95). In other essays as well, Philo occasionally finds positive things to say about Joseph. Thus, in *De Somniis* (2.106-7) he praises him for his rejection of bodily pleasures as represented by Potiphar's wife and for his continence and zeal for piety while he was in exile in Egypt. In *De Migratione Abrahami* (17) he speaks of Joseph as a soul untouched by corruption and worthy of perpetual memory. In particular, he praises Joseph for his confidence that G-d would visit the race that has vision and not hand it over to ignorance,

for his discernment between the mortal and incorruptible portions of the soul, and for his avoidance of bodily pleasures and passions (*Migr.* 18-22).

Goodenough explains the apparently blatant contradiction by postulating two different audiences for Philo's treatises.¹⁴ The *De Josepho*, according to this view, is addressed to Gentile readers, praising Joseph as the ideal politician who had done so much for Egypt, whereas in the other treatises, such as *De Sobrietate* 12-15 and *De Somniis* 2.11, addressed to Jews, he is depicted as the champion of materialism to which they were so prone. He suggests that the depiction of Joseph is a clever piece of double entendre, "a fierce denunciation of the Roman character and oppression, done in a way and in a document that would give it fairly wide currency among Jews, but would seem quite innocuous if, as was unlikely, it fell into Roman hands."¹⁵ But, we may reply, this was a very dangerous gamble for a person to take who was so prominent in the Jewish community and who represented that community to the Romans. Bassler concludes¹⁶ that the discrepancies in Philo's portraits of Joseph result from different perspectives, namely literal interpretation plus political allegory vs. allegory of the soul, and that the two scenes involving Potiphar's wife are on both the literal and allegorical levels. Tobin¹⁷ explains the discrepancies by asserting that at the literal level his portrait is an encomium drawn from Hellenistic Jewish sources, whereas at the non-literal level Philo uses material from Greek philosophical traditions on the superiority of the sage over the unstable world of sense-perception.

One explanation of the contradictory views about Joseph may be that Joseph was identified with Egypt, toward which Philo himself, who was born there, had ambivalent feelings, on the one hand being proud of Joseph's achievements for the Egyptian pharaoh, and on the other hand being negative toward Joseph's identification toward the country that had produced such anti-Jewish authors as Apion and had been guilty of the terrible pogrom of 38 c.e. But the very fact that in such a treatise as *De Migratione Abrahami* he can have both positive and negative things to say about Joseph calls such a thesis into question. More likely, as Gruen indicates, Philo truly

¹⁴ Goodenough 1938, 42-63.

¹⁵ Goodenough 1938, 21.

¹⁶ Bassler 1985, 240-55.

¹⁷ Tobin 1986, 271-77.

felt ambivalent about Joseph, and this apparent self-contradiction did not really bother him; or, we may add, the differing views may represent sermons or comments made at different times.

To this self-contradiction in the treatment of Joseph we may add a parallel in Philo's attitude toward Jethro. What is striking about it is that it is almost completely negative.¹⁸ Presumably, the basis for this is his Midianite origin. The most severe criticism that Philo, the Platonist, can make of anyone is that he prefers seeming to being, conceit to truth; and that is precisely the charge that he makes against Jethro, deriving these traits from the very name of Jethro, which, he says, means "uneven" (περισσός) (*Agr.* 43).¹⁹ Jethro, consequently, stands for variability and inconsistency. Jethro, he says, "values the human above the divine, custom above laws, profane above sacred, mortal above immortal, and in general seeming above being" (*Mut.* 104). It is hard to imagine a more devastating attack, coming as it does from a Platonist. Again, he declares that Jethro corresponds to the "commonwealth peopled by a promiscuous horde, who swing to and fro as their idle opinions carry them" (*Ebr.* 36). Indeed, he declares that the mythical Proteus, constantly changing form as he did, is most clearly typified by Jethro (*ibid.*). He bows down to the opinions of the multitude and will undergo any manner of transformation in order to conform with the ever-varying aspirations of human life. To a Platonist such as Philo this is well-nigh the ultimate sin.

Indeed, Philo completely transforms the biblical account of Jethro's visit to Moses. It is almost as if Philo's text of the Bible ended with the statement, "What you are doing is not good" (*Exod.* 18:17). According to Philo's version, Jethro suggests to Moses that "he should not teach the only thing worth learning, the ordinances of G-d and the law, but the contracts which men make with each other, which as a rule produce dealings where the partners have no real partnership." He is accused of trying to convince Moses "to give great justice to the great and little justice to the little" (*Mut.* 104).²⁰ Rather

¹⁸ Baskin 1983, 62, notes only the unfavorable comments about Jethro in Philo; she neglects to cite *De Specialibus Legibus* 4.173-74, which speaks of the ἄριστα ("excellence") and συμφέροντα ("useful") advice given to Moses by Jethro.

¹⁹ This is the most common epithet applied to Jethro. Its meaning is "superfluous," "overwise." Colson 1929 translates it as "worldling" in *Sacr.* 50 and as "worldly-wise" in *Gig.* 50; Whitaker 1930 translates it as "uneven" in *Agr.* 43; Colson 1934 renders it as "superfluous" in *Mut.* 103.

²⁰ Here Philo seems to have completely perverted the biblical account of Jethro's

than praise Jethro for giving such excellent advice to Moses, as we find in the Bible (Exod. 18:17-23), namely, to appoint subordinate judges to handle minor matters rather than to handle personally all matters, great and small, Philo here (*Mut.* 105) and elsewhere (*Ebr.* 37) describes him as δοκησίσοφος (“seeming wise”) and as being concerned with little else than things human and corruptible. In enumerating four classes of children—one who obeys both parents, one who obeys neither, one who obeys only the father (that is, right reason), and one who obeys only the mother (that is, mere variable and unstable convention)—Philo says that the last, which, he explains, symbolizes the one who bows down to the opinions of the masses, is most clearly typified by Jethro (*Ebr.* 35-36). Indeed, Jethro, who in the Bible is depicted as dispensing excellent advice to Moses on how to administer his judicial system (Exod. 18:17-23), is described by Philo as having seven daughters who represent the unreasoning element (*Mut.* 110). Philo undoubtedly has in mind Plato’s allegory of the ship (*Rep.* 6.488) when he condemns Jethro as playing the demagogue (*Ebr.* 37). Instead of welcoming Jethro’s statement, “Now I know that the L-rd is greater than all gods” (Exod. 18:11), Philo vehemently condemns Jethro as a blasphemer, first because the word “now” implies that he had never previously understood the greatness of G-d and secondly because he dares to compare G-d with other gods (*Ebr.* 41-45).

And yet, Philo is not completely negative in his portrayal of Jethro. We do see a favorable side of Jethro in the gratitude that he exhibits toward Moses for having aided his daughters when they were driven away by some shepherds when they were drawing water at a well. Indeed, Philo elaborates considerably on the scene. Jethro shows real exasperation that his daughters did not bring the stranger along so that he might be thanked for his kindness. “Run back,” he tells them, “with all speed, and invite him to receive from me first the entertainment due to him as a stranger, secondly some requital of the favor which we owe to him” (*Mos.* 1.58-59). This overwhelming concern with showing hospitality to the stranger would surely have endeared Jethro to a Greek audience that worshipped Ζεὺς Ξένιος (“hospitable”).

advice. Consequently, as Colson 1934, 194-95, has commented, attempts have been made to emend the text. However, as he remarks, the Greek as it stands accords with Philo’s goal at this point of discrediting Jethro.

table Zeus"). Again, in the treatise *De Specialibus Legibus* (4.173-74), Philo compliments Jethro for having given Moses "excellent advice" (ἄριστα συνεβούλευσεν) which was συμφέροντα ("useful"), namely, to choose others to adjudicate less important matters while keeping the greater matters for himself and thus giving himself time to rest. But such favorable comments are few. In particular, we may note that Philo nowhere refers to Jethro, as do the rabbis, as a proselyte to Judaism. In any case, the two sides of Jethro may reflect his two names, Jethro having negative associations, and Reuel (Raguel), meaning "the shepherding of G-d," having positive associations (*Mut.* 105).

In viewing a biblical personality inconsistently we may find a parallel in Josephus. For his portrait of Zedekiah, Josephus (*Ant.* 10-102-54) appears to have consulted a number of passages in the Bible (2 Kgs. 24:17-25:12, 2 Chron. 36:10-14, Jer. 34:1-22, 37:1-39:10, 52:1-16).²¹ Here, however, he was confronted with a stark dilemma. On the one hand, the Bible asserts that Zedekiah did what was evil in the sight of the L-rd, like all that Jehoiakim had done (2 Kgs. 24:19), that he did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah (2 Chron. 36:12), and that he hardened his heart against turning to the L-rd (2 Chron. 36:13). On the other hand, Zedekiah shows pity for Jeremiah in instructing Ebed-melech the Ethiopian to rescue him from the cistern into which he had been lowered (Jer. 38:10). Furthermore, he makes a covenant, quite clearly approved of by Jeremiah, with all the people in Jerusalem that everyone should set free his Hebrew slaves (Jer. 34:8-11).

The rabbinic tradition likewise contains contradictory traditions about Zedekiah. Thus, on the one hand, he is criticized for the egregious crime of swearing falsely, inasmuch as we are told that despite the fact that he had sworn fealty to Nebuchadnezzar on a Torah scroll, as demanded by him, he nevertheless rebelled against him (*Pesiq. Rabbati* 26.3). He is likewise condemned for his faithlessness in not abiding by an oath by the name of Heaven which Nebuchadnezzar had made him take not to reveal that he had seen the latter eat-

²¹ I have approached this study of Zedekiah independently of Begg 1989a, 96-104, who presents a fine, systematic comparison of Josephus' version with the actual text of the various biblical passages that he is paraphrasing but who is less concerned with the rationale of Josephus' modifications.

ing flesh from a living hare (*Ned.* 65a, *Tan. B.* 5.8, *Exod.* 33).²² Thus Nebuchadnezzar could justify his punishment of Zedekiah because, as he put it, Zedekiah had sinned against the laws of both G-d and the state (*Pesiq. Rabbati* 26.6). There is a tradition of unknown origin reported by the eleventh-century commentator Rashi (on 2 Kgs. 25:4) that because of his unfaithfulness to his oath Zedekiah was punished in a most unusual way: while he was attempting to escape through a cave that extended from his house in Jerusalem to Jericho, G-d sent a deer into the Babylonian camp; and while pursuing that animal the Babylonian soldiers came to the opening of the cave precisely when Zedekiah was leaving it.²³

On the other hand, the rabbinic tradition also recalls Zedekiah's virtues. Thus, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah is quoted as saying that because he had arranged to have the prophet Jeremiah lifted from the mire (*Jer.* 38:10), he was deemed worthy to be rewarded by dying in peace (*Jer.* 34:5) and to outlive Nebuchadnezzar himself (*Mo'ed Q.* 28b). Much more positive is the statement, in connection with the discussion as to whether a given generation follows its leader or vice versa, that Zedekiah is an example of the leader who was virtuous, whereas his generation was not (*Arak.* 17a). The third-century Rabbi Johanan declares, on the authority of the second-century Rabbi Simeon ben Yoḥai, that so wicked was the generation of Zedekiah that G-d was determined to reduce the world to formlessness and emptiness, but that when he considered Zedekiah his anger subsided (*Sanh.* 103a). To be sure, the Talmud notes an apparent contradiction by citing the passage that Zedekiah did what was evil in the sight of G-d (2 Kgs. 24:19); but Rabbi Johanan explains this by remarking that he could have stemmed the evil of others but did not (*Sanh.* 103a).²⁴ Indeed, the Talmud refers to him as the righteous

²² According to the version in *Ned.* 65a, Zedekiah had arranged to have himself absolved of his oath before disclosing that Nebuchadnezzar had eaten flesh from the living hare. The Talmud then presents a scenario in which Nebuchadnezzar, after learning that he was being derided, had the Sanhedrin and Zedekiah brought before him. When the Sanhedrin declared that Zedekiah had been absolved of his oath, Nebuchadnezzar asked whether one may be absolved of an oath when the object of the oath is not present. Thereupon the Sanhedrin, its legal incompetence thus revealed, was deposed.

²³ Jeremiah is likewise presented in a negative light in a Jeremiah apocryphon. See Mingana and Harris 1927, 329-42, 352-95, and Kuhn 1970, 93-135, 291-350.

²⁴ Indeed, there is a tradition that the reason why the Jews went into captivity

Zedekiah and asks what he could have done on behalf of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar (*b. Shab.* 149b). Likewise, he is listed as one of the eight princes among men, together with Jesse, Saul, Samuel, Amos, Zephaniah, the Messiah, and Elijah (*Suk.* 52b). To be placed in such company is surely a high compliment. Great was the mourning when he died, and the elegy over him was: “Alas, that King Zedekiah has died, he who quaffed the lees that all the generations before him had accumulated” (*S. Olam Rab.* 28).

This same positive portrayal of Zedekiah appears to be reflected in several fragments discovered at Qumran near the Dead Sea and soon to be published jointly by John Strugnell and Erik Larson (4Q470).²⁵ One of these fragments describes the making of a covenant, through the agency of the angel Michael, between G-d and a certain Zedekiah, whom the editors identify, most persuasively, with the last king of Judah. The fact that the covenant involves both observing the Torah and causing others to observe it is an indication that the fragment looks most favorably upon the figure of Zedekiah.

But the problem still remains: how do we explain that the same author contradicts himself? In this connection, it may be significant that in his essay *Contra Apionem* Josephus uses, it would seem, every mode of argument in order to refute calumniators of the Jews and shows considerable acquaintance with Aristotle’s methods of refuting an opponent, notably pointing out contradictions in the statements made by the opponent himself (*Rhetorica* 2.23.1400A23-28). Indeed, Josephus (*Ap.* 1.219) promises to expose “the fictitious nature of the accusations and aspersions cast by certain persons upon our nation, and to convict the authors of them out of their own mouths.” And yet, only once does Josephus (*Ap.* 1.226) refer to his calumniators as contradicting themselves. “Some of them [the calumniators],” he says, “carried their folly and narrow-mindedness so far that they did not hesitate to contradict their ancient chronicles; nay, in the blindness of their passion, they failed to perceive that in what they wrote they actually contradicted themselves.” But when we examine this statement we see that Josephus is not saying that Manetho contradicts Manetho or that Apion contradicts Apion. What he is saying

was that they had no excuse for their sinfulness, inasmuch as their king was so pious (2 Bar. 1:3).

²⁵ For a summary see Larson 1994, 210-28.

is that Manetho contradicts the chronicles on which he claims to be basing his charges, and that Chaeremon contradicts Manetho, as, indeed, he does say in his refutation (*Ap.* 1.293-303) over and over again, and that Lysimachus contradicts Manetho, as he says at the beginning of his refutation of that writer (*Ap.* 1.312).

Moreover, there are numerous places where the *Antiquities* (Books 12-20) contradicts the *War* (Books 1-2); where the *Life* (17) contradicts the *War* (2.562-68), notably in the account of the purpose of Josephus' mission when he is appointed as general of Galilee; where there are contradictory lists of delegates sent to Josephus (*War* 2.628 and *Life* 197); where the builder of towers in *War* 4.580-82 is contradicted by the builder in *War* 6.377;²⁶ and where the encomium of the high priest Ananus in *War* 4.319-21 is contradicted by the very unfavorable picture of him in *Ant.* 20.199-203. It is surely significant that Josephus, who is elsewhere so defensive about his actions, nowhere indicates that he has been criticized for these contradictions and offers no explanation for them, let alone apologizes for them, nor is there any independent evidence that there was any such criticism.

Again, numerous examples may be cited from the Talmud where a rabbi makes a statement and the charge is made that he is contradicting what he had said elsewhere. How often, for example, do we have (*b. Ber.* 3a) such a statement as that there is a contradiction between Rabbi Meir in one Baraita and the same Rabbi Meir in another Baraita, almost immediately followed by the statement that there is a contradiction between the statement of Rabbi Eliezer in a Baraita and the same Rabbi Eliezer in a Mishnah. An Aristotle and the rabbis, too, may be troubled by this, but it frequently recurs, especially in a society where the learning was predominantly oral and where a person might forget what he had previously said or might be persuaded by someone else to change his mind or might himself upon reflection have changed his mind. And as to self-contradiction, Walt Whitman ("Song of Myself," 50) says, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself: I am large; I contain multitudes."

In his preface (p. xv) Professor Gruen writes: "Jews [he cites Eupolemus, Pseudo-Eupolemus, Artapanus, and Cleodemus-Malchus]

²⁶ See Ilan and Price 1993-94, 189-208, who suggest that these inconsistencies are to be explained by tendentiousness, carelessness, ignorance, or lack of interest on the part of Josephus.

engaged actively with the traditions of Hellas, adapting genre, and transforming legends to articulate their own legacy in modes congenial to a Hellenistic setting.” This was true of Eupolemus, Pseudo-Eupolemus, Artapanus, and Cleodemus-Malchus; but there is a real question as to whether these writers, of whom we have only fragments, were Jewish at all. It seems to me that the burden of proof rests with those who claim that they were. At the very beginning of his essay, Josephus (*Ap.* 1.2-3) notes that a considerable number of persons have attempted to prove that the Jews are a modern people through citing the fact that they have not been thought worthy of mention by the best known Greek historians. Josephus then declares that he considers it his duty to disprove their claims. He then declares (*Ap.* 1.5) that he will explain why the Jews are mentioned by only a few of the Greek historians. A major concern of the essay *Against Apion*, as we see in Josephus’ programmatic statement (*Ap.* 1.58), is to answer those critics who try to establish the late origin of the constitution of the Jews from the silence of the Greek historians concerning the Jews. Here, as elsewhere in the essay, whenever he refers, as he does frequently, to the Greek historians, they are contrasted with the Jews. Shortly before his mention of Eupolemus, Josephus (*Ap.* 1.213) again refers to the omission of some historians to mention the Jews and explains that this is due not to ignorance but to envy. These historians are clearly non-Jews, since it would be unlikely that Jews would be mentioned as envious of Jews in general. Josephus then goes on (*Ap.* 1.215) to remark that the antiquity of the Jews is mentioned by the Egyptian, Chaldaean, and Phoenician records and by numerous Greek historians. The statement that the Greek historians establish the antiquity of the Jews would lose its point if they included Jews, certainly after mention of Egyptians, Chaldaeans, and Phoenicians. He then enumerates eight historians and states that these are “in addition to those already mentioned.” All of those historians previously mentioned in this essay are non-Jews, and so we expect that these eight additions—Theophilus, Theodotus, Mnaseas, Aristophanes, Hermogenes, Euhemerus, Conon, and Zopyrion—are likewise non-Jews. “The majority of these authors, says Josephus (*Ap.* 1.217), “have misrepresented the facts of our primitive history because they have not read our sacred books.” Why would Josephus declare that Jews had misrepresented their own history and would not have read their own books? He then adds the names of three more historians—Demetrius of Phalerum,

the elder Philo, and Eupolemus. The point that he is trying to make is that they also testify to the antiquity of the Jews. They are clearly similar to the eight previously mentioned, since Josephus wishes to state that they are different in one respect alone, namely, that they are exceptional in their approximation to the truth. He then adds that their errors "may be excused on the ground of their inability to follow quite accurately the meaning of our records." The contrast is between them and our records; hence they are not Jews.

This passage is quoted by Eusebius (*Pr. Ev.* 9.42.3), and significantly with no disclaimer of the pagan origin of Eupolemus. Indeed, the quotations from Eupolemus included by Eusebius in Book 9 are all taken from Alexander Polyhistor, whom Eusebius cites as a Greek, obviously pagan, and bear witness to the antiquity of the Jews. Elsewhere, to be sure, Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.13.7) includes Eupolemus with other Jewish writers, but he may mean people who write about the Jews. In any case, the passage where he actually quotes from Eupolemus and does not identify him as a Jew is surely more significant.

Moreover, it is hard to believe that a Jew would have made such elementary errors as to identify David as Saul's son (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.30.3) and Eli as the high priest at the time of Solomon's accession (9.30.8). And would Solomon, having just completed, as Gruen acknowledges (p. 145), the most monumental act of piety, namely the building of the Temple, actually send a pillar of gold to stand in the pagan temple of King Souron of Tyre, as Eupolemus asserts (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.34.18)? To be sure, the Bible (1 Kgs. 11:4-5) admits that Solomon's wives swayed his heart after the gods of others, including Ashtoreth, the god of the Sidonians; but the biblical text explicitly declares that he sent a pillar of gold to the pagan temple when he grew old, whereas in Eusebius he did so immediately after erecting the Temple.

Eupolemus, according to Alexander Polyhistor as quoted by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 1.23.153.4) and Eusebius (*Pr. Ev.* 9.26.1), says that Moses was the first wise man and gave the alphabet to the Jews first, and that he was the first to write down laws. Gentile readers, says Gruen (p.154), "would hardly be persuaded. But Jewish intellectuals would take some satisfaction in imagining that Moses' delivery of the Tablets constituted a milestone in the history of letters." But why must we assume that only a Jew would have complimented the Jews thus? Pythagoras, who, according to

Cicero (*Tusculan Disputations* 5.3.8-9), was the actual inventor of the word “philosopher,”²⁷ was, according to the historian Hermippus of Smyrna (ca. 200 B.C.E.), an ardent admirer of Jewish institutions (*ap. Jos., Ap.* 1.162-65).²⁸ Numenius of Apamea (*ap. Clement, Strom.* 1.22.150.4), the Neo-Pythagorean philosopher, in the second century writes expressly “For what is Plato but Moses speaking in Attic?” Aristotle (*ap. Clearebus of Soli, ap. Jos., Ap.* 1.179) praises the Jews as descended from the Indian philosophers. Aristotle’s disciple, Theophrastus (*ap. Porphyry, De Abstinencia* 2.26), describes the Jews as being “philosophers by race.” What could be a greater compliment than to have four of the greatest thinkers of antiquity speak so highly of Jews? And what could be a greater compliment than for the most celebrated literary critic after Aristotle, Pseudo-Longinus (*On the Sublime* 9.9), whom almost all would identify as a non-Jew, to cite a passage from Genesis (1:3, 9-10) as an example of the most sublime style?²⁹ The fact that he does not refer to Moses by name but rather as “the lawgiver of the Jews” implies that he expects his readers to know who this was. It was not necessary for a Jew to embellish the biblical narrative when Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap. Diod., Bibliotheca Historica* 40.3.3) ca. 300 B.C.E. refers to Moses as greatly outstanding both in his wisdom and in his courage and praises him for selecting men of the utmost refinement and greatest ability to head the entire nation (40.3.4). Varro, in the first century B.C.E., who for breadth of scholarship is hardly surpassed in Latin literature, is quoted (*ap. Augustine, De Civitate Dei* 4.31) as citing the testimony of the Jews in support of his view that if the Romans, as they had originally done, had continued to worship gods without an image, as do the Jews, their worship would be more devout.³⁰ The historian Pompeius Trogus (*ap. Justin, Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum* 36.2:6-10), praises the biblical Joseph for his extraordinary ability, notably in establishing the science of interpreting dreams, and says that his knowledge was such that his admonitions seemed to proceed not from a mortal but

²⁷ On the (legendary) Pythagorean origin of the term (and concept) “philosopher/philosophy” see the seminal article by Burkert 1960, 159-77.

²⁸ On Pythagoras as an admirer of Jewish institutions according to Josephus, see Burkert 1962, 91 (with n. 28) and 138, n. 262; English translation by Minar 1972, 102 (with n. 28) and 57, n. 204.

²⁹ On Pseudo-Longinus’ citation of Genesis see Ziegler 1915, 572-603; Mutschmann 1917, 161-200; Norden 1966, 286-313; and Gager 1972, 56-63.

³⁰ On Varro about Moses see Norden 1921, 292-301.

from a god. Hence it was not necessarily Hellenized Jews, but also non-Jews, who revised and embellished the picture of Joseph. This is not to say that there were not pagans who disparaged the Jews; but if the aim was a rewriting and an embellishment of Jewish history and lore it might also have emanated from a non-Jewish source.

The fragment of Pseudo-Eupolemus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.17.1-9) focuses particularly on Abraham, who is said to have discovered both astrology and Chaldaean science (9.17.3) and to have taught the Phoenicians the movements of the sun and moon and everything else as well. Gruen (pp. 147-50) thinks that Pseudo-Eupolemus is a Jew and that his creative rewriting of the Bible can only reinforce a sense of cultural superiority for Jewish readers. But one wonders how a Jew could identify Enoch, especially the Enoch who walked with G-d and was taken by G-d (Gen. 5:22-24), with the mythical Atlas (9.17.9). And one wonders how a Jew, in view of the long-standing strife between Jews and Samaritans, could have written that Abraham was received as a guest at the temple "Argarizin, which is interpreted 'mountain of the Most High'" (9.17.5), when Argarizin, i.e. Har Gerizim ("Mount Gerizim"), written as a single word, is the way the Samaritans write Mount Gerizim.³¹

As for Artapanus, Eusebius (*Pr. Ev.* 9.18.1, 9.23.1-4, 9.27.1-37) and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 1.23.154.2-3), who cite him at length, nowhere mention that he was a Jew. Philo never mentions him at all. Josephus never mentions him; and while there are some parallels with his account of Moses as general in Ethiopia, there are considerable differences as well. It seems hard to believe that a Jew, however liberal he might have been, could have stated, as Artapanus (*Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.4) says, that Moses became the teacher of Orpheus, that he established the worship of cats, dogs, and ibises (9.27.4, 9.27.9, 9.27.12), and that he was deemed worthy of divine honor by the priests and was called Hermes because of his ability to

³¹ Talmon 1989, 283-84, has published a papyrus fragment in Samaritan handwriting which was found in a room near the synagogue at Masada and which refers to Mount Gerizim in a single word, as the Samaritans write it. This, however, has been disputed by Pummer 1987-88, 18-25. As to whether the split between the Jews and Samaritans had occurred by the time of Pseudo-Eupolemus, the Elephantine papyri (Cowley 1923, 30) include letters requesting help from both the Samaritan and Jewish priests to build a temple, implying an already existing schism; and Ezra (4:4-5 and 17-24) reports opposition by the Samaritans to the building of the Temple, as well as to the building of the walls of Jerusalem.

interpret the sacred writings (9.27.6). If he was Jewish and presumably acquainted with the Bible it is hard to understand how he could have said (9.27.20) that the Pharaoh Chenephres died because he had ordered the Jews to be clothed with linen and not to wear woolen clothing and that he did this so that once they were so marked they could be harassed by him, whereas the Bible prohibits wearing cloth that combines wool and linen (Lev. 19:19, Deut. 22:11).

As to Cleodemus-Malchus, neither Alexander Polyhistor, nor Josephus, who quotes him (*Ant.* 1.239-41), nor Eusebius (*Pr. Ev.* 9.20.2-4), who quotes Josephus, indicates that he was a Jew. He refers to Moses (*Ant.* 1.240) as *their* own lawgiver, which would seem to indicate that this is written from the point of view of one who was not a Jew. Moreover, Cleodemus is referred to as “the prophet,” whereas Josephus (*Ap.* 1.41) speaks of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets in the reign of Artaxerxes, presumably an indication that Josephus, like the Rabbis (*S. ‘Olam Rab.* 21, regarded Esther, who lived during the reign of Artaxerxes, whom Josephus identified as the biblical Ahasuerus, as a prophetess—the last to compose a biblical book under prophetic inspiration. Might a Jewish Cleodemus-Malchus have chosen to adopt, selectively, only the image of Heracles as a positive cultural hero, which also existed among the Greeks? However, in view of the fact that Heracles was the most popular hero in all of Greek mythology and in view of the fact that his exploits were so well known, it is hard to believe that a Jew would record (*Ant.* 1.241) that a granddaughter of Abraham was married to the pagan Heracles, who, despite his heroic status, was so widely known as a mad murderer.³²

But, in conclusion, we must express to Professor Gruen our admiration for this challenging book, so full of original and provocative insights. His thesis that Jewish writers, notably Philo and Josephus,

³² In a recent essay, Gruen 2001, 62-93, notes perceptively that while much scholarly attention has been given to the influence of Hellenism upon the Jews, little scrutiny has been applied to a related but quite distinct issue, namely, the Jewish perception of the Greeks. He cites Cleodemus-Malchus as an example (pp. 79-80); but there is a real question as to whether he was a Jew or a Samaritan or pagan. We may suggest that if the title of his work was *Concerning Jews* or *Concerning Hebrews*, as Freudenthal 1875, 215, proposed, a Jew would most probably not have given such a title. Moreover, if the existing fragment comes from his *Concerning Libya*, as Holladay 1983, suggests, it was most probably not composed by a Palestinian Jew.

sought to aggrandize their biblical heroes in order to heighten their self-esteem is certainly valid, but he should have added that not only Hellenistic Jewish writers but also the rabbis, especially in their midrashim, have a similar goal; and he should likewise have added that one major purpose in their aggrandizing biblical heroes was to win non-Jews to Judaism. His thesis, moreover, that Judaism and Hellenism were not competing or incompatible systems rests, in large part, upon the attitude of Jewish rulers, who were practical politicians in coming to terms with the political powers of that world—the Seleucids, the Ptolemies, and the Romans—and with a sizable percentage of their subjects, who were pagan and Greek-speaking. It likewise rests upon the evidence of the only two major surviving Jewish writers in Greek, Philo and Josephus; but there is a real question as to how much impact these writers had upon their fellow Jews. In any case, neither of them is as much as mentioned even once in the vast rabbinic literature. It is the rabbis of that era who had large numbers of students and who, as Josephus (*Ant.* 18.15) notes, were extremely influential among the masses; and they are clearly opposed to “Greek wisdom,” as we have noted. “Our people,” says Josephus (*Ant.* 18.264), “do not favor those persons who have mastered the speech of many nations,” where the “speech of many nations” most probably refers to Greek, the lingua franca of that era. We hear of only one of the vast number of rabbis, Elisha ben Abuyah, who was attracted to Greek culture (*b. Hag.* 15b), nor is there a single mention anywhere in the vast corpus of rabbinic literature of Socrates or Plato or Aristotle.³³

³³ I am grateful to Professor Wolfgang Haase and Mr. Eric Parks for their meticulous attention to detail in the checking of bibliographical data and style and for their many fine suggestions of additional works of classical as well as other scholarship pertinent to this review essay. Thanks also go to Teresa Munisteri of the English Department at Rice University for her editorial assistance in reading this essay.

CHAPTER FIVE

DID JEWS RESHAPE THE TALE OF THE EXODUS?

Erich Gruen's essay, "The Use and Abuse of the Exodus Story,"¹ is truly a fresh and challenging approach, full of innovative insights. If I take issue with some of it, it is only after admiring it for these qualities.

First of all, I agree completely with Gruen's view that it is simplistic and indeed misleading to divide the comments of pagan writers about the Jews into those that are pro- or anti-Jewish or even neutral. Writers such as Hecataeus² and Strabo, who are usually classified as pro-Jewish, actually contain some negative comments; likewise, there are a number of pro-Jewish intimations in the remarks of Apion and Tacitus, both of whom are generally regarded as being viciously anti-Jewish.³ As any good rhetorician—and in antiquity rhetoric was a field that was very carefully cultivated—or lawyer or writer of letters of recommendation knows, a statement that has nothing but utter praise is actually less effective, since it is less credible, than one that is more carefully balanced.

Gruen asks an excellent question: "Would Jews have propagated a narrative that highlighted their flight from Egypt at a time when they sought to establish their credentials as residents?" The answer, however, might well be "Yes." In the first place, the Israelites escaped from the Egypt of the Pharaohs, not the Egypt of the Ptolemies or the Romans, neither of whom were Egyptians at all and, in fact, were interlopers. Moreover, to sunder themselves from the Egyptians would have enhanced the status of the Jews, since the Egyptians were apparently generally regarded with hatred and

¹ Gruen 1998a, 93-122.

² See now Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997) 17, who is not convinced that there is an overall pro-Jewish attitude in Hecataeus' version of the Exodus tradition and concludes that he has an anti-Jewish bias with regard to the expulsion of the Jews and the fact that their customs are different from those of all other nations.

³ See Feldman 1987-88, 187-251; and 1991, 331-60.

contempt, as we can see from Juvenal's fifteenth satire, for example.⁴

Gruen remarks that Egyptians might have had grounds for annoyance if they were aware of the story, but then he asks: "How far is it likely to have spread outside the synagogues?" In reply, we may note that, according to Philo (*Mos.* 2.41), writing in the first century, a feast and general assembly was held every year on the island of Pharos—where the translation known as the LXX was said to have been produced—where "not only Jews but multitudes of others" came to commemorate the translation. Moreover, the first-century Pseudo-Longinus (9.9), the most celebrated literary critic in antiquity after Aristotle, not only paraphrases Gen. 1:3 and 1:9-10 but cites it as an example of the most sublime style. Furthermore, we know of at least seven writers—Alexander Polyhistor, Apollonius Molon, and Teucer of Cyzicus in the first century B.C.E., Apion of Alexandria, Damocritus, and Nicarchus in the first century C.E., and Herennius Philo of Byblus in the second century—who wrote whole monographs on the Jews; and it is hard to believe that they would not have availed themselves of a major source of information about the Jews, namely the LXX.

That the LXX was read by Gentiles is implied by Josephus, when he quotes Nicolaus of Damascus as stating in his address to the Roman Marcus Agrippa (*Ant.* 16.43) that the Jews do not "make a secret of the precepts that we use as guides in religion and in human relations." A clue that the LXX was used for proselyting purposes and even was successful toward that end, may be seen in Philo's remark (*Mos.* 2.26) that in ancient times the laws (that is, the Pentateuch) were written in the Chaldean tongue (here presumably Hebrew is meant) and remained thus for many years, "so long as they had not yet revealed their beauty to the rest of mankind," the implication being that eventually action was taken in order to reveal the beauty of the Torah to the Gentiles, that is, at least in the ultimate sense, to convert them to Judaism. Additional evidence that the LXX was used for proselyting purposes may be seen in Philo's statement (*Mos.* 2.36) that the translation was made so that "the greater part, or even the whole, of the human race might be profited and led to a better life" by the Torah's wise and admirable ordinances. That Philo had great hopes that the LXX would lead non-Jews to adopt Judaism is clear from his statement of belief (*Mos.* 2.44), put into immedi-

⁴ For other examples of the contempt with which the Egyptians were viewed, see Balsdon 1979, 68-69.

ate juxtaposition with his account of the translation of the LXX, that "each nation would abandon its peculiar ways and, throwing overboard their ancestral customs, would turn to honoring our laws alone."

Gruen asks another excellent question: "How urgent was it for Greeks and Egyptians to refute a Jewish legend that could safely be ignored or dismissed?" If, as I have indicated, the Jews were particularly successful in converting non-Jews to Judaism, as we may see from the demographic and literary evidence, from resentment against proselytism, and from expulsions of Jews as evidence of proselytism,⁵ and if Jews, whose resettlement of Egypt dated primarily only from the fourth century B.C.E., had risen to such prominent positions as commanders-in-chief of the armies of the Ptolemies (Onias and Dositheus: Jos., *Ap.* 2.49; Helkias and Ananias, Jos., *Ant.* 13.284-87, 349) and governor of Egypt (Tiberius Julius Alexander: Jos., *War* 2.309), one can readily imagine how the Egyptian natives would have resented these interlopers. It is Gruen's contention that few of the pagans would have had the occasion, interest, or motivation for reshaping or misshaping the account of the biblical Exodus; but if the attempted massacres of the Jews by Ptolemy Philopator in 217 B.C.E. (3 Macc. 5-6) and by Ptolemy Physcon in 145 B.C.E. (Jos., *Ap.* 2.53) and the pogrom in Alexandria in 38 C.E. (Philo, *Flacc.*) actually took place, there is a history of continuing hostility against the Jews.

If, as Gruen asserts, Jews played a large part in reshaping or misshaping the biblical Exodus for polemical purposes, why would they have presented Moses as an Egyptian priest, the Jews as afflicted by leprosy, etc.? Josephus, who takes the greatest liberty in his rewriting of the Bible, does not present Moses and the Jews thus. And how can we explain the divergent views of the Exodus, including the name of the Pharaoh, his date, the number of Israelites who left, the name of the Israelite leader, as found in Hecataeus, Manetho, Lysimachus, Chaeremon, Apion, and Tacitus?

According to a pagan historian, Manetho (*Ap.* 1.249), an Egyptian priest named Osarseph, whom he identifies with Moses, enjoined upon his polluted followers to sacrifice and feast upon all the animals sacred to the Egyptians. Gruen asserts that Manetho is not talking here about Jews at all; we may add that Osarseph is merely said (λέγεται) to be identified with Moses. But why would a Jew invent

⁵ See Feldman 1993, 288-341.

a story about the suppression of the Egyptians and their religion by foreigners and the foreigners' subsequent expulsion? Indeed, such motifs are common in native Egyptian literature. Gruen's solution is to assert that Manetho's account is not concerned with the Exodus at all but that, nevertheless, it was Jewish sources, proud of the humiliation visited by the Jews upon the Egyptians, that are responsible for the introduction of the Jews into Manetho's narrative. To support his view Gruen cites a fragment (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.21) of Artapanus, who is generally regarded as a Jew, stating that a divine voice told Moses to wage war against Egypt. But Artapanus identifies Moses with the Musaeus, the teacher of the pagan Orpheus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.3-4); and it seems hard to believe that a Jew would have stated—and with pride—that Moses assigned cats, dogs, and ibises as gods (9.27.4). Gruen also notes instances where the Maccabees, for example, smashed pagan shrines; but this was in Palestine, and it seems hard to believe that Jews, living under a foreign power, the Ptolemies, would have invented stories of their committing such massacres in Egypt. To be sure, the Jews did execute more than 300 in Egypt in a single day, but these were Jewish apostates, and the Jews did so only after obtaining special permission from King Ptolemy IV (3 Macc. 7:10-15). As for the Jews who killed thousands in the Persian Empire according to the Book of Esther (8:9-12, 9:1-16), they did so after seeking permission from the king; and we read that the king allowed them to gather and defend their lives and to annihilate any armed force of any people that might attack them. As to the 75,000 whom they slew (Esth. 9:16), we read specifically that they gathered to defend their lives and got relief from their enemies. That is very different from what the polluted Egyptians and their allies from Jerusalem are said to have done in the passage ascribed to Manetho, namely that they set cities and villages on fire, pillaged temples, and mutilated the images of the gods (*Jos., Ap.* 1.249).

I note that in his article Gruen has only two very brief passing references to Philo; and yet Philo, as the prestigious head of the largest community in Egypt, Alexandria, and as the head of the delegation of the community in negotiations with the Roman Emperor Caligula in 40 c.e. concerning Jewish rights, was certainly in a position to know what the attitude of the non-Jews in Egypt was toward the Jews. As a diplomat and as a polemicist Philo had to be careful about his facts lest he be laughed out of court. Surely, to judge from Philo, the question of relations of Jews with the Egyptians was urgent. In

an important essay concerning the attack by the Alexandrian non-Jews upon the Jews in the year 38, Philo (*Legat.* 120) makes the very significant remark that the hatred of the promiscuous and unstable rabble of the Alexandrians had been smouldering from long ages past (ἐκ μακρῶν χρόνων). Hence, we might well expect a reshaping of the Exodus story by Alexandrian non-Jews.

The most controversial aspect of Gruen's thesis is his suggestion that the Diaspora Jews themselves might have had a hand in molding the non-traditional parts of the story of the Exodus. On the surface, this is not an improbable hypothesis. We may note how often Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, and the rabbis, in their retelling of the biblical narrative, add to, subtract from, and modify it.⁶ Thus Josephus portrays Moses as a combination of a Jewish Pericles and a Platonic philosopher-king,⁷ clearly going far beyond the biblical portrayal.

Gruen asserts that Jews in the Diaspora and particularly those dwelling in Egypt had strong incentive to reshape the tale of the Exodus. But, to judge from the inscriptions and the papyri, they knew the Bible only in the Greek translation. According to the Letter of Aristeas (310-11), when the translation was completed, the leaders of the community declared that since it was "in every respect accurate, it is right that it should remain in its present form and that no revision of any sort take place." When this was unanimously agreed to, a curse was pronounced upon anyone who should add to or subtract from or modify the translation. One of the verses in this translation (Exod. 22:27), in rendering *Elokim lo tekallel*, states that "Thou shalt not revile gods." Very significantly, both Philo (*Spec.* 1.53) and Josephus (*Ant.* 4.207, *Ap.* 2.237), who adopt the LXX's translation here, explain that the reason for this injunction is that the very word "G-d" is sacred. If the Jews in the Diaspora held the LXX in such high regard, they would hardly have invented stories about the desecration of other peoples' religion.

⁶ See Sandmel 1956; Feldman 1971, lviii-lxiv; Feldman 1974, 306-7; Feldman 1998; Feldman 1988b, 455-518; and Amaru 1994.

⁷ See Feldman 1991-92, 285-328; 1992-93, 7-50, 301-330.

CHAPTER SIX

STUDIES IN THE ANCIENT JEWISH MEDITERRANEAN DIASPORA

Review of: John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 B.C.E.-117 C.E.)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996)

This volume, originally published in hardcover in 1996 by T. and T. Clark in Edinburgh, is the first comprehensive survey of the Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan and is distinguished by the fact that it combines a study of the political, social, and cultural history of Jewish communities in five geographical areas—Egypt, Cyrenaica, Syria, Asia Minor, and Rome—where we have sufficient information to warrant more detailed analysis. What is particularly novel is an attempt to examine the various levels of assimilation of the Jews in these areas. Barclay is especially to be commended for examining afresh in the original the whole range of Diaspora Jewish literature. This is a seminal work and deserves an extended critical review.

Barclay¹ asserts that the five areas that he has chosen will prove to be sufficiently diverse and will indicate how variable were the experiences and responses of Diaspora Jews; yet he himself² admits that the remains from the non-Egyptian areas are so scanty that he gathers together the material from all four of the non-Egyptian areas on the ground that a rough and hesitant sketch is better than an empty canvas. Indeed, at one point Barclay,³ in his discussion of high assimilation in the Diaspora outside of Egypt, gives five examples. First of all, they are cases of individuals; secondly, the example of Nicetas, who contributed to a Dionysiac festival and who, Barclay infers, apparently enjoyed the feast that he had helped to finance,

¹ Barclay 1996, 11.

² Barclay 1996, 320-35.

³ Barclay 1996, 321-22.

may not, despite what Barclay thinks, indicate high assimilation but rather good neighborliness in contributing to such a cause, just as today Jews often contribute to non-Jewish causes, and, in any case, it does not necessarily follow that he participated in the feast that he helped to finance; thirdly, one (Moschos) comes from Greece (not one of the five areas that he had promised to discuss), and he is alleged⁴ to have received instructions from the gods in a dream. In this last case, we may note, the inscription appears in the temple of the god Amphiaraos, and we may guess that the inscription was inscribed by the pagan caretakers of the temple and/or that the Jew went to the temple (since temples in antiquity sometimes served as hospitals, in effect, and the patient spent the night in the temple and then reported his dream to the caretaker) simply to get a cure for his ailment.

In his attempt to classify degrees of assimilation, Barclay refers to two inscriptions⁵ dating from the Ptolemaic period found in the Temple of Pan at Resediyeh in upper Egypt. One of them reads: "Praise to G-d. Theodotos, a Jew, son of Dorion, saved from the sea." The other reads: "Praise G-d. Ptolemaios, a Jew, son of Dionysios." These inscriptions lead Barclay⁶ to ask a number of apt questions, typical of his extremely careful and critical approach: "Why, we may ask, do Ptolemaios and Theodotos publicly profess themselves to be Jews (or Judaeans), yet dedicate these inscriptions in the temple of Pan? Since the Deity is referred to only as G-d (θεός), without specific reference to Pan, do they imagine they are offering thanks to the G-d of the Jews even in this non-Jewish temple? Or do they consider that Pan (παν=everything) is a proper name for the true G-d? Or again do they think it is legitimate to worship G-d in any available context, at least while far away from a synagogue and in the relief of safety after a perilous journey? Further, if Ptolemaios and Theodotos wrote an inscription, did they also offer prayer in the temple, or even sacrifice? In other words, do these inscriptions indicate social integration into non-Jewish worship or not? How did these individuals behave when they returned to their own communities? How should we interpret the fact that they identified themselves as 'Jews'/'Judaeans', a unique feature among Egyptian inscriptions?

⁴ *CIG* 1.82.

⁵ *CIG* 2.1537-38.

⁶ Barclay 1996, 100.

We simply cannot answer such questions, and intriguing as this case may be, it is difficult to make any judgment at all concerning the assimilation of these Egyptian Jews. Here and often elsewhere the evidence leaves us almost entirely at a loss.” In commenting on these inscriptions⁷ I myself had cited them as illustrating syncretism among Jews and had concluded that they would seem to indicate a real compromise with Jewish monotheism. Barclay has wisely kept the question open. We may comment that the fact that Ptolemaios and Theodotos identify themselves as Jews and do not address Pan or otherwise indicate their gratitude to pagan gods would seem to indicate that they have not assimilated, let alone converted to paganism. There is no indication that they consider Pan to be a proper name for the true G-d, since we know of no case where anyone in an inscription or a papyrus or in a literary work makes such an identification as we find in Arist. 16 equating Zeus with G-d. As to the possibility that they consider Pan to be a proper name for the true G-d since his very name signifies everything (πᾶν), we may first of all comment that there is an important difference in that the name of Pan (Πάν) is masculine, whereas the word for everything (πᾶν) is neuter. We may add that Pan is unique among the Greek gods in that we hear of a plural, Πᾶνες (masculine plural), which is distinct from the masculine plural of πᾶς, which is πάντες; but that would have a polytheistic connotation and would certainly not imply that it is a name for the true G-d. Moreover, there is always the possibility that the inscriptions are graffiti written on the temple of Pan or after the temple building was no longer in use.

Barclay is to be commended for not only attempting to classify Diaspora Jews according to the degree of their assimilation but also for admitting that in most cases the result is not definitive. In this we may add that there is seldom help from the pagans themselves. Indeed, writers such as Plutarch and Tacitus refer to *the* Jews as if all Jews were observant of such practices as the Sabbath and dietary laws, nor do they mention degrees of observance and of assimilation

Barclay⁸ is rightly cautious in asserting that the mere fact that a person has a Greek name is no proof of assimilation. Here we would point out that some of the greatest rabbis, such as Antigonos, bear

⁷ Feldman 1993, 67.

⁸ Barclay 1996, 115.

Greek names. In any case, as Barclay well points out, the name reflects the attitude of the parents who give that name rather than the person who bears that name.

On the identity as Jews of the people in Egypt who bear the name of Sambathion,⁹ Barclay¹⁰ adopts an agnostic position. He admits that the name is originally and specifically Jewish; but, as he wisely points out, nomenclature is not a sufficient indication of ethnic identity. However, I have counted in the papyri containing the name Sambathion over one hundred different people related to Sambathion, but none with distinctively Jewish names. It is striking that no other Hebrew name was ever borrowed by non-Jews. The most likely explanation for the choice of name, consequently, is that the parents were Sabbath-observers, the so-called “sympathizers,” people who observed the Sabbath without actually converting to Judaism.¹¹

Barclay makes excellent and critical use of the papyri, but he would have done well to point out that a large percentage of the papyri that we have found come from a single small town in Egypt, Oxyrhynchus, whereas none at all come from the great Jewish community of Alexandria. Whether Oxyrhynchus is typical of the Egyptian Jewish community is very questionable. Likewise, a large percentage of the inscriptions come from the single community of Rome, and, moreover, as Rutgers¹² has pointed out and as Barclay¹³ recognizes, most and perhaps all of those from Rome come from the period after Trajan. As for sarcophagi bearing non-Jewish motifs, Barclay¹⁴ wisely warns that we cannot tell whether such sarcophagi were commissioned by Jews. Yet, he adds that it is important that some Jews found such artistic assimilation unobjectionable. Even if this is so, the sarcophagi in question most likely date from the third or early fourth centuries¹⁵ and hence should be beyond the chronological scope of Barclay’s book.

On the basis of an inscription that mentions a certain Eleazar the

⁹ Cf. Tcherikover et al. 3:1964, 43-87.

¹⁰ Barclay 1996, 124.

¹¹ See Feldman 1993, 342-82.

¹² Rutgers 1995.

¹³ Barclay 1996, 284-329.

¹⁴ Barclay 1996.330.

¹⁵ See Rutgers 1995, 79.

νομοφύλαξ of Cyrene, Barclay¹⁶ concludes that this man must have been highly assimilated, since, he says,¹⁷ such a position entailed considerable responsibility, requiring education, experience, and the confidence of civic leaders, and typically required some religious participation. But the νομοφύλαξ was in charge of the observance of the civic laws; and such a position did not necessarily, it would seem, require compromise with Jewish practice, let alone indicate that such a person was highly assimilated. Again, Barclay¹⁸ asserts that it is difficult to imagine how Alityrus (Jos., *Life* 16) gained popularity in Nero's court as an actor unless he participated in pagan religious rituals, though he admits that he cannot be placed with certainty in the category of high assimilation in which he puts him. But again, we have no evidence that a court jester such as Alityrus was necessarily expected to participate in pagan rituals.

Though Barclay is thoroughly commendable for his restraint in refusing to go beyond the evidence, he notes¹⁹ that the only texts where the ethnic dimension of Jewish identity largely disappears from sight are the Letter of Aristeas and the poem of Pseudo-Phocylides. He remarks that it may be no accident that both of these are presented as the products of Gentile authors, but he does not doubt that they are by Jews.²⁰ Yet, he nowhere raises the possibility that they may actually be by Gentile authors, in which case they have nothing to tell us about their degree of cultural assimilation as Jews.

The chief arguments for identification of the author of the Letter of Aristeas as a Jew are his knowledge of the language and content of the Septuagint, his knowledge of the religious doctrines and usages of Judaism and particularly of the Temple, his reverence for Jewish beliefs, as seen in his avoidance of the name of G-d and even of the name L-rd, and his representation of the high priest Eleazar as speaking disdainfully of idolatry and of the Greek wise men. Moreover, he never explicitly identifies himself as a pagan. These are appealing arguments but they are not necessarily conclusive. In the first place, to say that only a Jew would have the knowledge of the Septuagint that he displays disregards the fact that, according to Philo (*Mos.*

¹⁶ Barclay 1996, 321.

¹⁷ Barclay 1996, 235.

¹⁸ Barclay 1996, 321.

¹⁹ Barclay 1996, 406.

²⁰ Barclay 1996, 138-50, 336-46.

2.41), who, as a leader of the Alexandrian Jewish community was certainly in a position to know, every year, on the anniversary of the completion of the translation, a festival was held on the island of Pharos, off the coast of Alexandria, where the translation had been made, to which not only Jews but also others “with their whole multitude” (παμπληθεῖς) came. As to the possibility of knowledge of the Jews by a non-Jew, Alexander Polyhistor in the first century B.C.E. wrote a whole treatise *On the Jews*, in which he refers to Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Job, Solomon, and Jeremiah. Others who composed monographs on the Jews (and presumably used the Septuagint) were Apollonius Molon and Teucer of Cyzicus in the first century B.C.E., Apion of Alexandria in the first century C.E., and Herennius Philo of Byblus in the second century C.E.²¹ Teucer’s work, in particular, seems to have been very extensive, consisting, as it did, of six books.²² Such works could hardly have been composed without access to the major source of early biblical history, the Bible, presumably in the Greek translation.

Moreover, the first-century Pseudo-Longinus (*On the Sublime* 9.9), the most celebrated literary critic after Aristotle, not only paraphrases Genesis 1:3 and 1:9-10 but cites it as an example of the most sublime style.

Moreover, it is hard to believe that a Jewish author would equate G-d and Zeus (Arist. 16), as Aristeas is reported to have done in the *Letter*. Josephus (*Ant.* 12.22) reproduces this in his paraphrase of the *Letter*, reporting it in the name of Aristeas. To be sure, Barclay²³ remarks that this statement is put into the mouth of a Greek, not a Jew. But even so, the work itself clearly endorses this point, and it is hard to believe that a Jew would have allowed it to stand without challenge, and that Josephus in turn would have quoted it without disavowing it or, as he often does, to have omitted it.

Of course, this does not prove that Aristeas was a non-Jew, but Josephus (*Ant.* 12.23), in his paraphrase of the *Letter*, reports that Aristeas told King Ptolemy that he (Aristeas) was not related to the Jews by race and that he was not their countryman. If it was so well known that non-Jews knew so little about Judaism, Josephus, who

²¹ See Stern, ed. 1974-80, 1. 148-66, 389-416; 2. 138-45.

²² *Ap. Suda*, s.v. Τεύκρος ὁ Κυζικηνός.

²³ Barclay 1996, 143.

is always aware, in the *Antiquities* and not merely in the essay *Against Apion*, that he might be challenged by those who were critical of or even despised the Jews, should have been more careful than to add such a statement. At the very least Barclay should have raised the question as to the possibility of Aristeeas being a non-Jew and should have been wary about using the Letter to indicate Jewish cultural convergence with Greek attitudes. Indeed, Barclay²⁴ admits that a number of details, notably his extraordinary knowledge of court procedure and diplomatic protocol, indicate that Aristeeas may have operated within the Ptolemaic court. Moreover, it seems unlikely that a Jew would make the egregious error of saying (*Arist.* 116) that the Jordan River circles Judaea and that it floods annually like the Nile. If so, why not postulate that he was a non-Jew?

Tcherikover²⁵ had argued that the *Letter* was not written with the aim of self-defense or propaganda and that it was addressed not to Greek but to Jewish readers in order to encourage them to embrace Greek education and to enter Greek society. Barclay agrees. But Tcherikover's thesis was based on his doubt that widespread Jewish literary propaganda among the pagans was technically possible, that the distribution of books in the ancient world was similar to that in modern times, that books were produced in large numbers of copies, that they were sold in thousands of shops and sent to distant countries, and that famous authors had their own "publishers" who profited from these sales. But we may well ask why, if he was addressing a Jewish audience, Aristeeas adopted a Gentile disguise; surely it would have been at least as effective if he had kept his Jewish identity.²⁶

Barclay²⁷ stresses the contrast in attitude toward non-Jews between the Letter of Aristeeas and 3 Maccabees. Aristeeas, he remarks, tells of a positive collocation of events in which a Ptolemy arranges that Jews be released from slavery, sponsors a translation of the Jewish scriptures, and holds a banquet in honor of the translators. 3 Maccabees tells of Ptolemy Philopator's sacrilegious attempt to enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple and his decree to kill all the Jews. However, Barclay has missed the encouragement and assistance that

²⁴ Barclay 1996, 40.

²⁵ Tcherikover 1958, 61.

²⁶ See further my discussion of the problem of the readership of Josephus' *Against Apion* in Feldman 1987-88, 230-43.

²⁷ Barclay 1996, 201.

the Alexandrian Greeks offered the Jews (3 Macc. 3:8-10). Surely, a major point of 3 Maccabees is that even though the Egyptian king was malevolent, this was merely a temporary lunacy, and that the status ante quo of co-operation between Greeks and Jews was soon restored.

As for the poem of Pseudo-Phocylides, Barclay follows Bernays²⁸ in regarding it as the work of a Jew. In particular, he notes²⁹ that some verses in the poem are directly derived from the Septuagint, either in concept or in vocabulary. He remarks that such a precept as not to take both chicks and mother from a bird's nest (verses 84-85) can only be drawn from Deut. 22:6-7; but, as we have noted above, there is good reason to think that the Septuagint was known to some non-Jews. For a work which is alleged to be a comprehensive compendium of law and conduct by a Jew it seems strange that there should be not a word about such crucial Jewish concepts as the Sabbath, dietary laws, and circumcision, nor a word of polemic against idolatry. But what are we to make of the poem's references to "gods" (θεοί, 104), "the heavenly ones" (οὐρανίδαι, 71), and "the blessed ones" (μάκαρες, 75, 163), which Barclay³⁰ admits normally point to gods in Greek literature? Could a Jew, even a highly assimilated Jew, have written this? Bernays resolves the problem by emending θεοί to νέοι ("young men") and θεοῖσι (98) to γόοισι ("weeping ones"), but Barclay, to his credit, declines to follow this easy solution. Instead, he remarks that the problem is not really acute, since the suggestion that after death men become gods is not wholly impossible in Jewish circles, where the dead could be considered angels, and angels could be styled "sons of G-d." But surely in Judaism the dead cannot be considered angels but, at best, merely like angels, and, in any case, cannot be considered "gods."

It is surprising that in a work that analyzes the main Diaspora literature Barclay does not discuss the Septuagint, the earliest major work of the Diaspora. Barclay³¹ admits that the Septuagint would certainly repay close attention, but he justifies his exclusion of it because of the scale and complexity of such an analysis. Nonetheless, even

²⁸ Bernays 1856.

²⁹ Barclay 1996, 338.

³⁰ Barclay 1996, 341.

³¹ Barclay 1996, 12.

a brief analysis would have been welcome, including the important question of the possible influence of Greek philosophy, particularly Platonism, and even of Greek mythology upon it,³² and especially since it was apparently initially highly approved of by the rabbis (*b. Meg.* 9a-b), who even justified certain changes that the translators made, only to have them later condemn it by comparing the day when it was completed to the day that the Israelites built the golden calf (*Sof.* 1:7). Barclay³³ makes no attempt to explain his omission of Demetrius, who was, according to Holladay, perhaps the first Jewish author to engage systematically in biblical criticism³⁴ and who was a disciple, either directly or indirectly, of the great Eratosthenes.³⁵

In his discussion of levels of assimilation among Egyptian Jews Barclay categorizes as highly assimilated those Jews whose circumstances resulted in their isolation from other Jews with the consequent difficulty of maintaining Jewish customs. He concludes³⁶ that Jewish peasants and artisans in the Egyptian countryside may not always have clung faithfully to Jewish customs. As evidence he notes that our papyri indicate that some Jews in the countryside adopted Egyptian names, spoke Egyptian demotic, and worked alongside Egyptian field-hands and artisans. But, we must point out, there is no indication in any of these papyri that any of these factors actually led to deviation from Jewish practices.

On the other hand, Barclay³⁷ cites as examples of medium assimilation the fact that Jews are to be found undergoing divorce in accordance with the normal rules of Hellenistic law. In the first place, however, we may remark, we have found only one such divorce (*CPJ* 144). But in a matter as crucial and delicate as divorce, this one document, which states that the husband and wife have dissolved their marriage by an agreement, is in utter contradiction to the biblical formula (*Deut.* 24:1) that states clearly that it is the husband who writes the bill of divorce. On the other hand, it is possible that this document represents a civil action corresponding to the religious

³² See Feldman 1993, 52-54.

³³ Barclay 1996, 12.

³⁴ So Holladay 1983, 1:53.

³⁵ See Modrzejewski 1993, 87-89.

³⁶ Barclay 1996, 111.

³⁷ Barclay 1996, 116.

divorce and hence is couched in terms current in the civil code.

Barclay, to his great credit, has clearly read all the primary sources in the original, and he often raises questions about readings of individual passages. But he is at times hypercritical. Thus³⁸ he remarks that the notion that the Dionysiac cult should have been imposed upon all Jews by King Ptolemy IV Philopator of Egypt is fantastic. But, we may ask, how about the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to impose paganism upon the Jews? Again, Barclay³⁹ ridicules Philo's claim (*Flacc.* 43) that the Jews in Egypt in the early Roman period numbered a million. While it is true that such a number may be a round figure, we may suggest that Philo, as the leader of the Alexandrian Jewish community, was in a good position to know the approximate Jewish population of Egypt on the basis of the number of half-shekels that we have reason to believe were faithfully contributed each year by adult male Jews.

Among Egyptian Jews who represent cultural convergence with paganism Barclay⁴⁰ cites Artapanus, and he concludes that Artapanus indicates that some Jews effected an important measure of synthesis with Egyptian culture, even Egyptian religion. He notes that Artapanus' narrative is in many cases dependent on the Septuagint, even in vocabulary; but, as we have noted above, the Septuagint might well have been available to non-Jews. He notes that in the fragments that have survived Artapanus focuses on three Jewish heroes—Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. However, even the extremely influential pagan rhetorician Apollonius Molon, who calls the Jews the most witless (*ἄφροεστάτους*, “most untalented”) of barbarians (*ap. Jos., Ap.* 2.148), refers to Abraham as wise (*σοφόν*) (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.19.2). Pompeius Trogus (*ap. Justin, Historiae Philippicae* 36.2.6-10) speaks of the extraordinary abilities of Joseph, particularly in interpreting dreams, so that his admonitions seemed to proceed not from a mortal but from a god. Moses is presented as a hero by Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 300 B.C.E.) (*ap. Diod.* 40.3.3-8), who notes that he was outstanding for both his wisdom and his courage. Indeed, Barclay⁴¹ admits that it is ironic that the very text, the Septuagint, that Artapanus embellishes contains warnings against foreign religious cults and

³⁸ Barclay 1996, 32.

³⁹ Barclay 1996, 41.

⁴⁰ Barclay 1996, 127-32.

⁴¹ Barclay 1996, 132.

lists the ibis among the unclean birds (Lev. 11:17). Barclay⁴² asserts that Artapanus' work was preserved by Jews; but, significantly, his work is mentioned by no Jewish author, whether Philo or Josephus or the Pseudepigrapha. Rather, he is mentioned only by Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius.

Barclay⁴³ finds it intriguing that Josephus (*Ap.* 1.215-18) refers to some Hellenized Jewish authors as Greeks rather than as Jews; but, in an apologetic work such as *Against Apion*, it would have been very damaging to his credibility to make such an error.

In discussing *Joseph and Aseneth* Barclay,⁴⁴ basing himself on the popularity of the work among Christians and on the similarity of phrases which seem to be like those of mystery initiations and like New Testament statements on the Last Supper, has raised the question of Christian interpolation, though, in his typically critical fashion, he is reluctant to commit himself, despite the fact that he apparently seems inclined in that direction. We may, however, comment that it would seem rather unlikely that a Christian would interpolate the work without trying to prove the Messiahship of Jesus in more direct fashion and, in a work celebrating a convert, without quoting or closely paraphrasing passages from the New Testament or so-called prooftexts from the Jewish Scriptures. It is particularly hard to imagine that a Christian interpolator in a work dealing with conversion would not have made clear that real conversion is conversion to Christianity.

Barclay⁴⁵ says that it is unlikely that *Joseph and Aseneth* was designed as a missionary tract because it presupposes so much biblical knowledge. But the fact that the story is told from the point of view of the proselyte Aseneth indicates that it is written for a Gentile audience; and the work would be most likely effective in the hands of a missionary, inasmuch as it would show that a wise Gentile would eagerly take the initiative in seeking conversion to Judaism. Surely the description of Aseneth as "dead" before her conversion illustrates a major attraction of Judaism, namely its promise of life and, indeed, of immortality.

⁴² Barclay 1996, 132 n. 20.

⁴³ Barclay 1996, 348 n. 28.

⁴⁴ Barclay 1996, 204 n. 37, 211 n. 47.

⁴⁵ Barclay 1996, 215.

As to the extent and success of the proselyting movement, Barclay⁴⁶ is non-committal. He is surprised⁴⁷ that, according to some inscriptions, proselytes even went so far as to change their names upon conversion. However, we may note that this was apparently an old practice and is still practiced today, since upon becoming a proselyte the candidate takes a new name, inasmuch as he is regarded as a person who has no relatives and is, in effect, like a new-born baby.

The book contains numerous interesting and appealing insights. Particularly persuasive is the remark⁴⁸ that paradoxically the destruction of the Temple in 70 may have helped to maintain, rather than to diminish, the attractiveness of Jewish customs to non-Jews.

On only a very few occasions does Barclay drop his ultra-agnostic stance. On one of these occasions⁴⁹ he suggests that the Jewish tragedian Ezekiel is careful to alter details that might have been used in Egyptian polemic against the Jews. As an example, he remarks that Ezekiel passes over Joseph's period of rule in Egypt, since he must have been conscious of Egyptian associations between the Jewish rulers and the hated Hyksos regime. In reply, we may remark that the subject of Ezekiel's play is the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and that the figure whom he highlights is, of courses, Moses. In one of the fragments Eusebius (*Pr. Ev.* 9.28.1) says that Ezekiel rehearsed from the beginning the story of those who came with Jacob to be with Joseph. To be sure, none of the existing fragments relates the story of Joseph's role as viceroy in Egypt, but we have only about one quarter of the play; and, in any case, there is no reason why we should not take seriously Eusebius' statement that Ezekiel did relate the story *from the beginning* of those who came with Jacob to be with Joseph. It would seem unlikely that if he told the story from the beginning he would not mention Joseph's role at the time that Jacob and his sons came to Egypt.

Barclay⁵⁰ raises an important question whether rabbinic rules were applicable to Jews in the Egyptian Diaspora. Even when appeal is

⁴⁶ Barclay 1996, 408-10.

⁴⁷ Barclay 1996, 409 n. 12.

⁴⁸ Barclay 1996, 310.

⁴⁹ Barclay 1996, 136.

⁵⁰ Barclay 1996, 85.

made to a biblical norm, for example, on charging interest, we need to know, he says, how such texts were interpreted in the times and circumstances of the Jews involved. Now, it is true that despite the strict prohibition in the Bible (Exod. 22:24, Deut. 23:20) of lending money to a Jew at interest, of the six papyri mentioning loans by Jews to Jews, one is at interest although we do not know the rate, and four are at the usual rate of interest during the Ptolemaic period of 24 per cent per year, and only one is without interest; and even that one is subject to the overtime interest rate of 24 per cent if not repaid within a year.⁵¹ But this may be explained by the fact that a device had to be found whereby interest might be charged on loans for the sake of the well-being of the economy, namely through a device of joint venture similar to the later *hetter iskah*, whereby the lender and the borrower entered into a partnership and whereby the working partner (borrower) guaranteed the investment against loss.⁵² Moreover, the fact that such great rabbinic scholars as Judah ben Tabbari and Joshua ben Peraḥayah migrated to Alexandria because of the persecution by King John Hyrcanus of Judaea at the end of the second century B.C.E. meant that there must have been some contacts with the rabbinic oral law. Furthermore, the anecdote that, according to the Talmud (*Nid.* 69b), some Alexandrian Jews asked Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, who lived at the end of the first and at the beginning of the second century, a number of legal questions would seem to indicate that they were acquainted with the principles of the oral tradition. Additionally, and significantly, there are several references in rabbinic literature of the first two centuries to an exchange of ideas between Alexandrian and Palestinian Jews.⁵³ In view of tremendous importance attached to the oral law by the Palestinian rabbis and especially in view of the formidable opposition that they faced from the Samaritans and the Sadducees, who refused in principle to accept the validity of the oral law, it would

⁵¹ See Tcherikover 1957, 1: nos. 20, 23, 24; 1960, 2: nos. 148, 149; for the loan at an unknown rate of interest, see Cowley 1923, no. 81, line 47; for the loan without interest see Tcherikover 1957, 1: no. 23. The rate of 24 per cent is to be explained by the fact that the permissible maximum on money loans was two per cent a month throughout the Ptolemaic period.

⁵² See Horowitz 1953, 493-94.

⁵³ See Tosefta *Pe'ah* 4:6, *Ket.* 3:1 and 4:9, *Shab.* 2:3, *Suk.* 4:6, cited by Belkin 1940, 6 n. 2.

seem to be significant that the rabbis, despite their many contacts with Egyptian Jews, who were, after all, in close geographical proximity to Palestine, never indicate that there were some Egyptian Jews who denied the validity of the oral law. Significantly, Philo never even mentions the Sadducees. A clue that Philo was acquainted with the oral tradition may be seen in his statement (*Mos.* 1.4) that he will tell the story of Moses as he has learned it not only from the sacred books but also from some of the elders of the nation (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθνους πρεσβυτέρων).⁵⁴ He then adds that he always interweaves what he has been told (τὰ λεγόμενα), presumably oral tradition, with what he has read, and that he consequently believes that he has a more accurate knowledge of Moses' life's history than others. The fact that he uses the word "always" (ἀεὶ) indicates that this combination of written and oral sources is to be found throughout his writings. That the rabbis issued rulings that were applicable in Egypt in particular may be seen from the statement in the Mishnah (*Tad.* 4:3) ascribed to the second-century Rabbi Tarfon, that they, that is the rabbis, have made Egypt liable for the poor man's tithe, so that the poor of Israel may depend on it in the Sabbatical year. Moreover, Philo (*Spec.* 4.149-50) mentions decisions (δόγματα) of men of old which he speaks of as customs (ἔθη) that are unwritten laws (ἄγραφοι νόμοι) which children inherit from their parents and by which they should still abide. An example of oral interpretation of the law, coinciding with the rabbinic interpretation (*Sanh.* 59b), may be seen in Philo's comment (*QG* 2.58) on Gen. 9:3: "Some say that through this statement 'as the herbs of fodder I have given you all things' the eating of meat is enjoined." The "some" may well be a reference to the rabbinic oral tradition. We may find a reference to this oral law in Philo's statement (*Migr.* 90) that those who interpret the Bible in an excessively literal fashion "are taught by the sacred word to have thought for good repute, and to let go nothing that is part of the customs fixed by divinely empowered men greater than those of our time." Who are these divinely empowered men (θεσπέσιοι)? Belkin⁵⁵ notes that after making this remark Philo proceeds (*Migr.* 91) to enumerate specific acts that are prohibited on the Sabbath, such

⁵⁴ The term "elders" is used as a technical term in Philo to designate the exponents of the oral law in Palestine. See Wolfson 1947, 1:189-90.

⁵⁵ Belkin 1940, 30.

as instituting proceedings in court or acting as jurors or demanding the restoration of deposits or recovering of loans, none of which are mentioned in the Pentateuch and all of which are mentioned in the rabbinic oral law.

The fact that in his entire book Barclay has only six brief references to rabbinic literature means that he has deprived himself of a number of insights which, if approached critically, in view of the tremendous gaps in our other sources, might have proven useful. For example, there is surely significance in the statement (*b. Pes.* 53a-b, *b. Ber.* 19a, *b. Bez.* 23a), not mentioned by Barclay, made by Rabbi Yose ben Halafta, who lived in the middle of the second century, that a certain Todos of Rome accustomed the Roman Jews to eat roasted goats in the manner in which the Passover sacrifice was roasted, whereas such roasting was prohibited outside the Temple in Jerusalem, and the message sent to him by the Sages of Palestine: "If you were not Todos, we would excommunicate you because you make Israel eat sacred flesh outside the Temple." The rabbis, again significantly, are said to have asked (*b. Pes.* 53b) whether Todos was so great or powerful a man that the rabbis refrained from excommunicating him. The rabbis then proceed to quote, in obvious admiration of his scholarship, an *a fortiori* argument presented by Todos to justify the readiness of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to suffer martyrdom. Again, we may note the tradition (*b. Sanh.* 32b), unmentioned by Barclay, that the great rabbi Matthiah ben Heresh established a yeshivah in Rome in the middle of the second century. Furthermore, since there were numerous delegations of rabbis from Palestine to the imperial court in Rome, we may well suppose that these rabbis during their stay in Rome had contact with the Jewish community. Surely, moreover, the number of references to Alexandria in particular in rabbinic literature is considerable. Though that literature was reduced to writing after the time of Trajan it may well reflect attitudes and traditions of an earlier period. After all, the Jews of Egypt had originally come from Palestine, and it seems reasonable to expect that they might have brought with them and retained at least some of the traditions that they had known in Palestine. Diaspora Jews were, moreover, reminded, as we hear in the name of the above-mentioned Rabbi Yose, that they were in exile by the fact that they were required to observe an extra day for each of the three pilgrimage festivals (*b. Erub.* 39b).

To his great credit, in the end, Barclay refuses to exaggerate the

degree of acculturation of the Jews; and in fact his last chapter is not on acculturation but on the factors that maintained Jewish identity. The fact, noted by Barclay,⁵⁶ that Josephus (*Ant.* 20.265), who, to be sure, may be boasting, says that only two or three people have succeeded in mastering the Greek literary tradition would appear to indicate that he regarded such an achievement as rare. If such an achievement were really much more widespread he would, in all likelihood, not risk, in a work that is to a great degree apologetic, making such a statement.

Barclay's critical comments on the views of modern scholars are fair and balanced and full of common sense. An example of the value of his work may be seen in his fresh and systematic treatment of the vexed and much debated question of Claudius' alleged expulsion of the Jews from Rome (Suet., *Claudius* 25.4; Cassius Dio 60.6.6; Acts 18.2; Orosius, *Adversus Paganos* 7.6.15-16). Barclay,⁵⁷ in typical fashion, modestly but cogently arrives at a compromise solution, that there were two separate events—a ban on meetings by Jews in 41 and a limited expulsion in 49. This will explain the continuing influence of the Jewish community in Rome.

In a rare sweeping statement Barclay⁵⁸ asserts that the *Antiquities* was written for Greeks. While Greeks are his primary audience, we would expect that Josephus would also seek a Jewish audience for his work. After all, the primary language of the Jews in the Diaspora, numbering several millions, was Greek; and some of them might well be expected to be interested in reading Josephus' history. He refers to his Jewish readers when he apologizes (*Ant.* 4.197) for rearranging the order of the laws of the Torah, explaining, "lest perchance any of my countrymen who chance upon this work should reproach me at all for having gone astray," that he thought it necessary to make this observation, since Moses left what he wrote in a scattered condition. Moreover, Josephus clearly says that "the main lesson to be learnt from this history by those who care to peruse it" is that G-d rewards those who obey His laws and punishes those who do not (*Ant.* 1.14). This can refer only to Jews. His highlighting of certain episodes, notably the incident of Israel's sin with the Midianite women (Num. 25:1-9, *Ant.* 4.131-55)—Josephus expands it from nine

⁵⁶ Barclay 1996, 347.

⁵⁷ Barclay 1996, 303-6.

⁵⁸ Barclay 1996, 346.

verses to twenty-five paragraphs—and Samson's relations with alien women (Judg. 14:1-16:31, *Ant.* 5.286-317), is directed, apparently, to those Jews who sought assimilation with Gentiles. Josephus' version of Balaam's prophecy of calamities that were to befall kings and cities of the highest celebrity, some of which had not yet been founded (*Ant.* 4.125), is a cryptic reference, which only Jews would appreciate, to a Messianic kingdom which would make an end of the Roman Empire. The fact, moreover, that Josephus invites his readers to read the Book of Daniel to obtain the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (*Ant.* 10.210) (which, they will learn, refers to a Messianic kingdom that would overthrow the Romans) is likewise an indication that he is directing his work to a Jewish audience.

Although most of Barclay's book is concerned with the ways and degrees in which Jews were influenced by Greek culture, he is careful to insist (p. 401) that such variations do not necessarily represent different "Judaisms." Indeed, we may assert that at least among extant non-Jewish writers—some of them such as Tacitus, quite sophisticated—, none of them differentiate the various forms of Judaism. To be sure, Barclay⁵⁹ does cite one case where there was a split in the Jewish community, namely where two delegations of Jews were sent to Claudius (*CPJ* 153, l. 90), but there is some doubt, as he notes, as to whether these represent a socio-cultural split or a political split in the Jewish community. All in all, he is careful to stress⁶⁰ that there were no typical conditions among Jews in the Diaspora; and in the end, in his last chapter, he delineates the respects in which Jews maintained their identity.

Barclay's work is of immeasurable value in that he not only treats the whole subject of the Mediterranean diaspora for the first time and in that he does so comprehensively, critically, and fairly, but that he does so only after examining each of these bits of evidence afresh and in the original. Though he valiantly attempts to categorize degrees of assimilation, to his great credit he is not afraid to conclude that it is impossible to draw firm conclusions. In particular, he is to be commended for constantly noting and commenting on difficult or disputed readings that are vital for understanding problem passages.

⁵⁹ Barclay 1996, 57.

⁶⁰ Barclay 1996, 399.

This volume beckons comparison with two other recent volumes, *Diasporas in Antiquity*, edited by Shaye J. D. Cohen and Ernest S. Frerichs (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993) and *Land, Center and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* by Isaiah M. Gafni (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). Gafni, in particular, has made major use of rabbinic sources, though he recognizes the problem raised, above all, by Jacob Neusner as to the reliability of attributions of statements to particular rabbis in particular eras. Both of these books raise the important point, not considered by Barclay, that valuable insight may be cast on the Jewish diaspora if it is compared with other ancient diasporas, since Jewish dispersion was not a unique phenomenon in the ancient world. What does seem to be unique in the case of the Jewish diaspora—a point recognized, if briefly, by Barclay⁶¹—is that the dispersion frequently, though hardly universally, was accompanied by a yearning to return to the Land of Israel and to the reconstitution there of a Jewish state. The very fact that the revolt of 66-74, which ended in such dismal disaster, did not deter two other messianic-led attempts, in 115-17 and 132-35, and at least two further attempts, in 351 against Gallus, and as late as 614-17 against Heraclius, would indicate the continued strength of this hope. The fact that the prayer for the return to Jerusalem was incorporated by the rabbis into the *‘Amidah*, which is the key prayer of the services every morning, afternoon, and evening, and was apparently recited by Jews everywhere, must have played a key role in keeping this hope alive. Moreover, Barclay does not take sufficiently into account the impact upon Diaspora Jews of the fact, as emphasized by both Joseph Méléze-Modrzejewski in the Cohen-Frerichs volume and Gafni in particular, that according to the Bible, which must have been known to many Jews in the Diaspora, presumably in the Septuagint translation, the Diaspora is understood as a punishment for the sins of the Jewish people. And the impact of the contrary view, namely that the Diaspora was a divinely given opportunity for the Jews to spread their message to the rest of the world likewise deserves consideration, as emphasized especially by Gafni.⁶² Another valuable insight would have been gained by considering the ongoing dialogue of the Palestinian rabbis with the diaspora communities and

⁶¹ Barclay 1996, 421-23.

⁶² Gafni 1997, 30-40.

of the range of responses of these communities to the rabbis. Still another valuable insight, though admittedly not the direct subject of Barclay's book, would have been gained by comparing the evidence that we have of the Babylonian diaspora with the Mediterranean diaspora, especially with regard to assimilation, cultural convergence and cultural antagonism. One caveat of which Barclay is constantly aware is that we should be careful not to look at the Jewish diaspora of two millennia ago through the eyes of the present diaspora, even though parallels, and even some tantalizingly close parallels, are not hard to find. In this connection we may call attention to a revealing point made by Shaye Cohen⁶³ that not a single ancient author who comments on Jews remarks that they are distinctive because of their looks, clothing, speech, names, or occupations.

⁶³ Cohen 1993, 3-12.

PART TWO

ANTI-SEMITISM, PHILO-SEMITISM,
CONVERSION TO JUDAISM

CHAPTER SEVEN

HATRED FOR AND ATTRACTION TO THE JEWS IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

1. INTRODUCTION: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE ANCIENT WORLD

Everyone who deals with the subject of anti-Semitism (an inappropriate term, of course, since it refers to families of languages rather than attitudes toward people) must approach it with a combination of humility and *chutzpah*—humility because we have such a small percentage of what was actually written (almost certainly not more than one per cent; and who knows whether what was written was really representative of what people thought, especially since the rate of literacy apparently did not exceed ten per cent). Nonetheless, we dare to generalize on the basis of such a small sample.¹ What I propose to do here is to examine the subject especially in the light of what a very important writer in a very important recent work does with this evidence. I am referring to Peter Schäfer's *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). People often tend to be wary about books concerning anti-Semitism written by Jews. Well, here is a book by a non-Jew, a German at that, and a highly respected and prolific writer on all aspects of ancient Judaism, particularly, of course, rabbinic literature.

The book by Professor Schäfer is extremely important not only because of what it says but also because of the identity of the author. It is the first comprehensive study of ancient anti-Semitism written by a German scholar since the Holocaust; and the fact that it is written by a non-Jew who is clearly the outstanding German scholar in the field of rabbinic and allied literature makes it particularly significant. That it is critical, intellectually honest, and refreshing makes for

¹ See Harris 1989.

extremely stimulating reading. One has learned to expect no less from Peter Schäfer.

It seems to me that it is well for us to begin, as Professor Schäfer does not, with some general considerations about the ancient world, which distinguish it from our modern world. In the first place, the ancients could not have conceived of what we would call a separation of church and state. Even if we find individuals such as Caesar and Cicero whose adherence to traditional religious beliefs is questionable, as we may see in Cicero's *De Divinatione* for example, officially, when they are part of the government or commenting on political issues, they say the "right things" so far as religious matters are concerned. The close of Cicero's first oration against Catiline (33), which he delivered in the Senate, will illustrate this: Once Catiline has left, he says, "You, great Jupiter, who were established with the same rites as this city, whom we name rightly the establisher of this city and empire," will protect us. In any codification of laws, stretching from the Twelve Tables to the Corpus of Justinian, there is no real separation of civil from religious law.

On the other hand, polytheism is, by definition, liberal and pluralistic, inasmuch as no pagan religion asserts that other religions and other gods are false. Less powerful yes, but not false. Though one could insist that the gods of one's own nation had fostered the growth and success of one's nation, so that, as the revered Ennius put it, "Moribus antiquis res stat Romana viresque," there was always room in the pantheon for another god. Judaism, however, insisted, at least officially in the Torah, that all other religions and all other gods were false and, in fact, at least in the oral tradition, that the pagans, as children of Noah, were forbidden to worship idols. Hence, in the absence of a separation of church and state, Jews, themselves constituting a state, by definition would seem to have, as their goal, the destruction of all other states; and this might well be inferred from the fact that the Israelites are commanded in the Bible (Deut. 7:1-2), upon entering the land of Canaan, to exterminate totally the seven nations of Canaan. Therefore, Apion would seem to be right in asking, in effect, why, if the Jews wish to become Alexandrian citizens, they don't worship the Alexandrian gods. One can go even further and ask how one can trust the Jews if their goal is to destroy the religious basis of the state. Intellectuals and philosophers can and do ask such questions. They are logical. Fortunately, politicians then and now are not. And fortunately neither were many theologians.

However, as to the biblical command to eliminate the seven nations of Canaan, like the command to eliminate the Amalekites, this is subject to interpretation and in practice is not observed. Otherwise, how can we explain the Septuagint's translation of *Elokim lo tekallel* (Exod. 22:27) as "You shall not curse gods," which both Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus* 1.53) and Josephus (*Antiquities* 4.207 and *Against Apion* 2.237) interpret to mean that one is not permitted to speak ill of other people's religions? Furthermore, how can we explain the Talmudic statement (*Sanhedrin* 96b) that the descendants of Haman, himself said to be a descendant of Amalek (the utter destruction of the entire nation of the Amalekites is divinely prescribed in Deuteronomy 25:19 and 1 Samuel 15:3), studied Torah in Benei Beraq and thus became the ancestors of the present-day Haredim?

As to the Hellenistic and Roman rulers, with rare exceptions, such as Antiochus Epiphanes, Caligula, and Hadrian, they gave special permission to the Jews to observe their religious beliefs and practices. The rulers of the Hellenistic and Roman world, from Alexander through his successors and through the Romans, with few exceptions, realized that the people from whom they came were a minority in their realm and, realizing how numerous and economically important the Jews were, granted them special privileges. And the intellectuals and philosophers and theologians remained with their logical arguments, wrote books, most of which fortunately have been lost (since we would otherwise have to read them), and gained promotions and tenure in the equivalent of their universities.

As for the Jews, they managed, or at least some of them managed, to interpret the Torah rather liberally. In the first place, the author (who, to be sure, is represented as a non-Jew) of the Letter of Aristeeas, which tells the story of the translation of the Torah into Greek, speaking to King Ptolemy Philadelphus, (15-16) equates the G-d of the Jews with Zeus. "The same G-d who has given them their law," he says, "guides your kingdom also, as I have learned in my researches; G-d, the overseer and creator of all things, whom they worship, is He whom all men worship, and we too, Your Majesty, though we address Him differently, as Zeus and Dis." The key passage is Exodus 22:27, which the Septuagint translates as, "Thou shalt not curse gods," which is then explained by both Philo (*De Vita Moysis* 2.205 and *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.53) and Josephus (*Against Apion* 2.237) to mean that one is forbidden to speak ill of other peoples' gods. Both Philo and Josephus, significantly, give the same reason for

this tolerance, namely, out of reverence to the very word “G-d.”

2. THE SOURCES

As for Professor Schäfer’s book, let us start with his field of expertise, rabbinic literature. The rabbis, of course, have a good deal to say about the attitude of non-Jews toward Jews, but, *mirabile dictu*, you will find none of it in this book. In fact, the only reference to rabbinic literature appears in a single footnote (p. 252, n. 84), where, discussing the evidence for Hadrian’s ban on circumcision, he remarks that the only proof for this ban is the short note in the *Scrip. Hist. Aug. (Hadrianus 14.2)*, whereupon he adds in the footnote: “Apart from rabbinic sources which are difficult to date and which for the most part refer to the period after the Bar Kochba war.” Similarly, in his recent monumental survey, Fergus Millar,² surely not an anti-Semite, deliberately and almost totally disregards rabbinic evidence, and this despite the fact that the rabbis have so much to say about the period that he covers. In another recent book, Jonathan Price³ actually states that any rabbinic story unconfirmed by outside sources is to be treated as fiction. Are all of these scholars Sadducean sympathizers in their disregard of the reliability of the Talmudic corpus for historical data? Granted that the earliest of the midrashim dates from no earlier than 400 C.E., that the codification of the Jerusalem Talmud dates from about the same time, that the codification of the Babylonian Talmud dates from about a century later, that the rabbinic documents cover a period of several centuries, that the rabbis are constantly quoting other rabbis who are citing other rabbis, and granted that the rabbinic documents are concerned with history in only the most incidental way and that we do not know how broad were the circles that they reflect, are the other sources that much more reliable? In at least some respects the rabbinic literature is perhaps more reliable: the Talmudic corpus is a book of debate, with rabbis constantly challenging one another; and how often do the rabbis admit that they do not know? Indeed, unlike the other sources, the rabbis are sharply divided in their attitude toward the

² Millar 1993.

³ Price 1992, 264.

Romans.⁴ Moreover, precisely because the Talmud is not a history book, the remarks of rabbis concerning historical details should be of particular value, inasmuch as they are usually said incidentally, casually, and in passing. As to the gap in time between the events and the time that they are recorded, is the rabbinic literature necessarily worth less than, say, Arrian's account of Alexander, written half a millennium after the events?

As for the inscriptions, at least those in the Diaspora, somewhat over a thousand deal with Jews. But this is a thousand out of approximately 200,000. Moreover, they cover a period of hundreds of years and in many countries. Finally, almost half of the Diaspora inscriptions come from a single community, Rome, which contained perhaps one per cent of the Jews of the Diaspora, and apparently date from the third century and later.⁵ But most important of all, since the great majority of them are inscriptions on tombstones, none of them indicate that the Jews who are memorialized had suffered from any kind of anti-Semitism, let alone that they had been killed in the course of an anti-Semitic outbreak.

As to the papyri, Tcherikover and his colleagues⁶ have collected 520, but they cover almost a millennium, and only thirteen allude to anti-Semitism. As to archaeological findings, none of them refer to anti-Semitic attitudes or outbreaks.

3. OUTBREAKS AGAINST THE JEWS IN ANTIQUITY

Let us examine some actual outbreaks against Jews in antiquity. What contributed to the suspicion of the Jews was their secrecy in refusing to allow non-Jews to enter the precincts of their great Temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, this seems to have been a factor in bringing about the very first pogrom of which we hear, namely the one in which Ptolemy IV Philopator (3 Macc. 5-6) in 217 B.C.E. ordered the Jews to be massacred in Alexandria by a horde of elephants because upon visiting Jerusalem, when he wanted to enter the Temple, he was mysteriously felled to the ground.⁷ Inasmuch as the Ptolemies

⁴ See Feldman 1992, 39-81.

⁵ See Rutgers 1995, xvii-xviii; and Noy 1998, 79.

⁶ Tcherikover et al. 1957-64.

⁷ See, however, Feldman 1993, 489 n. 9; and Gruen 1998, 222-36, who looks upon the whole incident as an appeal to amusement.

were themselves a minority in their own empire in Egypt and were regarded as interlopers by the native Egyptians, who were so proud of their long history, and inasmuch as Palestine was a constant battleground between the Ptolemies and the Syrian Seleucids during the third century B.C.E., Philopator may well have wondered what the Jews were hiding in the Temple when they excluded him. Added to the secrecy of the Temple was the secret book (*arcano...volumine*), to which Juvenal refers (*Satires* 14.102), the Torah. To be sure, Juvenal is a satirist, and satirists use a sledge hammer to crack a nut. Moreover, the author of the Letter of Aristeas would have us believe that the Torah was known as a good and wise book. But the author of the Letter was probably a Jew; and, besides, there is only one passage (Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* 9.9, perhaps a Jew,⁸ on Genesis 1:3, 1:9-10) or perhaps two (Hecataeus, *ap.* Diodorus 40.3.6)⁹ from the entire Torah that are ever quoted or closely paraphrased in all extant classical literature. On the other hand, instances of gross ignorance of the Torah, even in such writers as Hecataeus and Pompeius Trogus and Artapanus, who are favorably disposed toward the Jews, are numerous. And when the elephants which Philopator had lined up to trample upon the Jews disobeyed his order and trampled upon those giving them, Philopator reversed himself, released the Jews, and returned to the previous policy of toleration.

A similar event (although some say that it is merely a duplicate of the event just described) occurred on the death of Ptolemy Philometor in 145 B.C.E., who had placed his entire army under the command of two Jews, Onias and Dositheos (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.49).¹⁰ When Philometor's brother, Ptolemy Physcon (Euergetes) seized the throne, Onias, true to the legitimate sovereign, Cleopatra II, took up arms against him (*Against Apion* 2.51). Thereupon, in a manner similar to that of Ptolemy Philopator, Physcon arrested all the Jews of Alexandria—men, women, and children—and exposed them, naked and in chains, to be trampled to death by elephants, which he is said to have made drunk. When, however, the elephants were given their orders in Greek, instead of rushing on the Jews they turned and trampled on some of Physcon's friends. It is this transference

⁸ See Feldman 1993, 533-34, n. 21.

⁹ Perhaps, he is citing the Septuagint, Deut. 32:44, 28:69 (29:1 in the Septuagint), Lev. 26:46, 27:34. See Gager 1972, 32.

¹⁰ See Feldman 1993, 88-89.

of blame from one individual—in this case, the general Onias—to all the Jews, that is a characteristic element of anti-Jewish bigotry. Such an incident of persecution by a ruler is, however, on the whole, exceptional, if, indeed, it is historical at all; and shortly thereafter Phycon, like his predecessors and like his successors, apparently made his peace with the Jews (*Against Apion* 2.54-55).

The fact that Roman citizens of Jewish origin were exempted from military service (for religious reasons, notably observance of the Sabbath and dietary laws) from the time of Julius Caesar onwards (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.226) may have seemed to the Romans an indication that the Jews were not fully loyal to Rome, especially since the Jews had a state of their own, Judaea, and, as we see from Agrippa I's triumphal march in Alexandria, were loyal to that state. Tacitus (*Histories* 5.13.2), Suetonius (*Vespasian* 4.5), and Josephus (*War* 6.312) mention a belief that someone from Judaea would become ruler of the world; and this was interpreted by the Jewish revolutionaries, says Josephus, to refer to someone, presumably a messianic figure, from their own people; and this would *ipso facto* require a revolution against the Roman Empire. If someone, such as the Jew Tiberius Julius Alexander, did become part of the Roman military and political establishment, he was a renegade to his faith (*Ant.* 20.100), since, with church and state never being separated, this required worshipping the Roman gods.

The most striking case of what we would call a pogrom occurred in Alexandria, the most populous of the Jewish communities, with perhaps as many as 180,000 Jews,¹¹ in the year 38.¹² Philo (*Legatio ad Gaium* 120) reports that the hatred of the masses toward the Jews had been smoldering for some time. When a pretext was offered on the Jews' refusal to obey the decree of Emperor Gaius Caligula that he be worshipped as a god, the promiscuous mob, carried away with itself, let loose. The order of events was first, long-standing resentment at the privileged position and influence of the Jews, whether political or economic; second, and more immediate, the accusation that the Jews were unpatriotic, inasmuch as they refused to participate in the state cults, which, like a flag, united all the diverse peoples of

¹¹ See Delia 1988, 286-88.

¹² For an account of this incident see Feldman 1993, 111-16; and Gruen 2002, 54-64.

the empire; third, the rousing of the passions of the mob by professional agitators (though this appears to be exceptional); and fourth, the intervention of the government to preserve order while blaming the Jews for causing the riot. What determined the course of events in this instance was the behavior of Flaccus, the Roman governor of Egypt. During the first five of the six years of his administration, Flaccus (Philo, *In Flaccum* 2-3) had shown no signs of anti-Jewish animus and indeed was a model administrator. The change of attitude in Flaccus, and consequently the breakdown of the vertical alliance with the Roman administration, was due to the death of the Emperor Tiberius, who had appointed him and whose close friend he had been, and to the fear that, because Tiberius' successor Caligula had put to death Flaccus' friend Macro, his own position would deteriorate. In desperation, therefore, Flaccus, presumably assuming that the Jews would in their usual fashion remain loyal to the emperor, sought allies among his former enemies.

The immediate pretext for the riot was the visit of Agrippa I to Alexandria and his ostentatious display of his bodyguard of spearmen decked in armor overlaid with gold and silver. The mob responded to Agrippa's majestic appearance by dressing up a lunatic named Carabas in mock-royal apparel with a crown and bodyguards and saluting him as Marin, the Aramaic word for "lord." The implied charge clearly was that the Alexandrian Jews, in giving homage to Agrippa as a king, were guilty of dual loyalty and of constituting themselves, in effect, as a state within a state. The use of the Aramaic word would seem to be intended to emphasize the allegation that the Jews' first loyalty was to the Aramaic-speaking ruler of Palestine. Flaccus, according to Philo (*Legatio ad Gaium* 132), could have halted the riot in an hour if he had desired, but did nothing. The scenario is rather strikingly similar to what occurred in our own day in Crown Heights in Brooklyn. That the Jew-baiters decried not merely the alleged lack of patriotism but also, rather simply, the fact of Jewishness can be seen in the treatment of the women, whom they seized and forced to eat pork (Philo, *In Flaccum* 96) rather than to worship the image of the emperor. In the end, however, what must have seemed to the opponents of the Jews like an instance of "international Jewish power" asserted itself: Flaccus was recalled in disgrace, banished, and eventually executed.

The next major eruption of anti-Jewish violence coincided, significantly, with the outbreak of the Jewish rebellion against the Romans

in 66, not unconnected, we may guess, with the charge of dual loyalty. Not unexpectedly, this most violent of all the outbreaks against the Jews occurred in Alexandria.¹³ Our only source, Josephus, is hardly an impartial witness, especially because he had such an antipathy for Jewish revolutionaries. Yet, his account should be given serious weight, inasmuch as it is far from a whitewash of the murderous actions of the troops sent by the authorities. In recounting the event, Josephus (*War* 2.487) reminds us, as we had already seen in Philo, that there had always been strife between the native inhabitants and the Jewish settlers ever since the time when Alexander the Great, as a reward for the support that the Jews had given him against the Egyptians, had granted them *ἰσονομία*, that is rights equal to those of the Greeks. Presumably, the Jew-baiters felt assured that the authorities would favor their cause against people who would now be perceived as unpatriotic rebels. The uprising was put down ruthlessly by the Roman governor, Tiberius Julius Alexander (Philo's nephew); and, according to Josephus (*War* 2.497) no fewer than 50,000 Jews were slain. Finally, Alexander gave the signal to his soldiers to cease; but so great, says Josephus (*War* 2.498), was the intensity of the hatred of the Alexandrians that it was only with difficulty that they were torn away from the very corpses.

As to the motives of the Jew-baiters in these pogroms, Josephus lists three (*War* 2.464, 478): hatred, fear, and greed for plunder—apparently a combination of economic jealousy and fear of Jewish power and expansionism. It is, moreover, revealing to note that in Caesarea, the chief point of conflict in Judea, Josephus declares (*War* 2.268, *Ant.* 20.175) that the Jews were superior in wealth—another indication of the importance of the economic factor in explaining the hatred of the Jew-baiters toward the Jews,¹⁴ though we may remark that, generally speaking, ancient historians downplay the economic factor in their view of causality of events but rather highlight personality and military factors. Baron cites Josephus' extra-biblical comment (*Ant.* 2.201-2), in his paraphrase of the Bible, that the oppression of the ancient Israelites by the Egyptians was due to the Egyptians' envy of the Israelites' abundant wealth and, most appropriately, suggests that this reflects contemporary realities with respect to the

¹³ For an account of this riot see Feldman 1993, 117-18.

¹⁴ See Feldman 1993, 107-13.

masses of the Egyptian peasants.¹⁵ In this connection, we may cite a papyrus dated in 41, in which the author, a wholesale dealer in need of money, warns the recipient that if he fails to obtain a loan from the sources the author recommends, “like everyone else, do you, too, beware of the Jews” (*Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, no. 152). The fact that the writer of the papyrus adds the gratuitous phrase, “like everyone else,” would seem to emphasize that, in his eyes, the warning to beware of *the* Jews is a general one, shared by the Gentile population at large, and that seeking loans from Jews was apparently customary.

That there was an economic factor, based on Jewish prominence in trade, in popular prejudice against Jews would seem to be indicated by the remark of Claudius Ptolemy (*Apotelesmatica* 2.3.65-66 (29-31), the noted second century C.E. Alexandrian astronomer, who is convinced that national characteristics are conditioned by the geographical and astronomical situation. His list of those people who are more gifted in trade than others starts with Idumaea, Coele-Syria and Judaea; and he remarks that they are more unscrupulous, despicable cowards, treacherous, servile, and in general fickle. These people, he adds, are, in general, bold, godless, and treacherous. In referring to the inhabitants of these countries, he really has in mind only the Jews, because all three of these geographical areas are frequently identified with each other.¹⁶ Another economic factor may be seen in Tacitus’ bitter remark (*Histories* 5.5.1), alluding to the success of the Jews in winning others to convert to Judaism, that “the worst rascals among other peoples, renouncing their ancestral religions, always kept sending tribute and contributing to Jerusalem, thereby increasing the wealth of the Jews.” Hence, it was not merely that Romans were abandoning their ancestral gods, who, in the view of writers such as Ennius and Livy, had enabled the Romans to build their great empire, but that they were even contributing monetarily to alien gods, who, in principle, found no place in their pantheon for the Roman gods. We thus see the combination of the economic factor and the alleged expansionism of the Jews as factors in Judeophobia.

¹⁵ Baron 1952, 1:383, n. 35.

¹⁶ So Stern 1980, 2:163.

4. GREEK AND ROMAN WRITERS ON THE JEWS

Most of those who deal with this subject, including Schäfer, concentrate on what the Greek and Roman writers say about the Jews. But aside from the fact that the citations in Stern's collection cover a period of a thousand years, to what degree do we get a representative picture? What percentage of what the Greeks and Romans actually wrote has come down to us? Surely, as we have suggested, no more than one per cent. It is not until Herodotus in the fifth century B.C.E. that any extant Greek writer alludes to the Jews at all; and even he refers to them only obliquely when he discusses circumcision. Ezra is a contemporary of Herodotus, or perhaps of Plato, but neither of them as much as mentions him; and the first and only pagan writer who does mention him is Porphyry (*Adversus Christianos* (ap. Macarius Magnes 3.3) at the end of the third century C.E. Indeed, one of the most important points to be made is the degree to which the Jews are simply ignored. A writer such as Cicero, who, to be sure, knew about Jews and refers to them in his oration *Pro Flacco* (28.66-69), ignores them completely in a work such as *De Natura Deorum*, where he deals at length with various theories concerning theology and where we might have expected some mention of them, inasmuch as the Jewish view of deity is, from a pagan point of view, so unusual. Stern's monumental three-volume collection of testimonia seems large;¹⁷ but I have found a total of only 3372 lines of actual text in Greek or Latin in volume 1 (covering from Herodotus through Plutarch in the first century C.E.); and this includes a good deal of information that is only peripheral to anything Jewish. In volume 2, covering through the sixth century, there are 5006 lines. This comes to approximately 204 1/3 pages, and a good deal of this consists of passages about the properties of the Dead Sea. When we consider that in the first century the Jews comprised perhaps as much as ten per cent of the population of the Roman Empire,¹⁸ what surely must strike us, at least on the basis of what literature has come down to us, is that non-Jewish writers have little interest in the Jews; and it cannot be merely that the Jews were not in contact with non-Jews, since in Alexandria, at least, Philo was hardly unique in his knowledge of

¹⁷ Stern 1974-84.

¹⁸ See Baron 1952, 1.371-72, n. 7.

Greek literature and in his interest in attending sporting events and theaters. If anti-Semitism was more of an issue one would expect a lot more attention.

Another indication of this lack of interest in the Jews on the part of non-Jewish writers is the degree to which they cite Jewish writers or writings. So far as we can tell, though there are a very few writers, notably Alexander Polyhistor in the first century B.C.E., who seem to have been acquainted with the Bible, only one writer, Pseudo-Longinus (9.9), in the first half of the first century C.E., quotes, or rather closely paraphrases, a very brief passage from the Bible (Genesis 1:3, 9-10); and some think that he himself was a Jew.¹⁹

5. THE INFLUENCE OF PHILO AND JOSEPHUS ON NON-JEWISH WRITERS

Moreover, though Philo writes voluminously in excellent Greek and lived in the greatest cultural center of his era, Alexandria, he is never quoted as such by any extant pagan writer; and though Alexandria was the center of great scholarship, having the Museum, the equivalent of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, neither do any of the scholars of the Museum mention the Jews, let alone make any anti-Semitic comments, at least in the fragments that have come down to us; nor do Jewish writers such as Philo mention them or try to refute them. Indeed, there is only one passage in a pagan author that we can definitely say shows that the author, the third-century Heliodorus, in his novel *Aethiopica* (9.9.3), appropriates language taken from Philo (*De Vita Mosis* 2.195); and there is nothing there that is either for or against the Jews. Otherwise, Philo's writings apparently had little or no impact upon later pagan Graeco-Roman thought or literature, with the possible exception of Numenius in the second century and Plotinus.²⁰ It is not until early in the third century that we find a Christian writer, Clement of Alexandria, who definitely has read Philo.²¹

As for Josephus, the only passages in pagan writers which cite Josephus as a writer are to be found in a fragment (no. 17) in the

¹⁹ See the literature cited by Feldman 1993, 533-34, n. 21.

²⁰ See Stern 1980, 2:207-8, n. 5.

²¹ See Runia 1993, 132-56.

second-century Appian, referring to the prophecy that someone from Judea would become ruler of the world, and at the beginning of the fourth century in Porphyry (*De Abstinencia et esu animalium* 4.11-13), who paraphrases at some length Josephus' description of the Essenes (*War* 2.119-61). Among Christian writers he is not cited until the end of the second century by Theophilus of Antioch (*Ad Autolyicum* 3.20-23), and not at length until the third-century Hippolytus.²² That only a single papyrus fragment (*War* 2.576-79, 582-84; in *Papyrus Graeca Vindobonensis* 29810) from any of Josephus' works has thus far been found would seem to indicate that he was not much read in antiquity, at least in Egypt, though we must be very careful about generalizing from the papyri that have been found, since almost all of them come from one country, Egypt, and so large a percentage come from one little town, Oxyrhynchus.

If anti-Semitism was a burning issue, one would have thought that attempts would have been made by pagans to answer the one work that is devoted to refuting anti-Semites and which contains many debatable points and which had the sponsorship of the great bibliophile Epaphroditus and of the emperor Domitian, namely Josephus' essay *Against Apion*; but there is no such mention of the essay, let alone a refutation. If there was a widespread outcry of anti-Semitic comments among ancient intellectuals we would have expected that some indication of this would be found among the thousands of scraps of literary papyri that have been found among the papyri, but not a single such scrap has yet emerged. We would have expected to find at least some of the anti-Semitic statements of Manetho, Chaeremon, Lysimachus, Apion, or Apollonius Molon; and while it is true that we have found fragments of Apion,²³ for example, none of the anti-Semitic comments have been found. No fragments of the essay *Against Apion* have been found; and, in fact, in contrast to the fact that we have 53 manuscripts of the *Jewish War*, 33 of the first ten books of the *Antiquities*, and 44 of the second half of the *Antiquities*, we have only eight of the essay *Against Apion*, and for part of it we have no Greek manuscripts at all and have to rely

²² For the list of citations see Schreckenberg 1972, 72.

²³ Some of Apion's glosses on Homer have been found (P. Rylands 1.26), and a few first-century scholia on Homer's *Odyssey* (Literary Papyri, London 30; British Museum inv. 271) mention his name among other commentators. See Feldman 1987-88, 238-39.

upon the Latin translation that was done under the leadership of Cassiodorus.

Moreover, though the *argumentum ex silentio* must be used with caution, if, indeed, anti-Semitism was rife among pagan intellectuals, we would have expected Philo, who was a leader of what was, in effect, the Anti-defamation League of Alexandria and who headed a delegation to the Roman Emperor Gaius Caligula no less, to have replied to their writings, and he does not. As to other Jewish writers—and there is some doubt as to whether some of them are Jewish—Demetrius, Eupolemus, Pseudo-Eupolemus, Artapanus, Cleodemus-Malchus, Aristeeas, Philo the Epic Poet, and Ezekiel the dramatist, none of them reply to anti-Semitic comments, and none of them is quoted by a pagan writer. But, in all fairness, we must note that we know of at least seven writers—Alexander Polyhistor, Apollonius Molon, and Teucer of Cyzicus in the first century B.C.E., Apion of Alexandria, Damocritus, and Nicarchus in the first century C.E., and Herennius Philo of Byblus in the second century—who are said to have written whole monographs on the Jews. Teucer's work, in particular, seems to have been very extensive, consisting, as it did, of six books. There may well be significance in the fact that none of these works has survived. Is this another indication of lack of interest in the Jews? Or is this a case of deliberate suppression by later Christian writers and bibliophiles who found these works too pro-Jewish for their tastes? If we had these works, how different would our picture be of the attitude of Graeco-Roman intellectuals toward the Jews?

6. THE CHARGES OF NON-JEWISH WRITERS AGAINST THE JEWS

Schäfer concludes his book with the view that the only crucial question is what the Greco-Egyptian and Greek authors made out of Jewish separateness. "They turned Jewish separateness into a monstrous conspiracy against humankind and the values shared by all civilized human beings, and it is therefore their attitude which determines anti-Semitism." (p. 210).

But we must make one additional comment with regard to the attitude of pagan intellectuals toward the Jews, and that is that, unlike the influence of modern intellectuals, especially since the Age of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, pagan intellectuals seem to

have had little influence upon public policy or upon mass movements in antiquity. How much influence did Alexander the Great's tutor, Aristotle, who had such a negative view of barbarians, have upon Alexander? Did Cicero, for example, who speaks, in a very nasty way, of the Jews as a pressure group in his speech *Pro Flacco* (28.66), despite his extremely important position in the Roman republic, have any influence on the republic's attitude toward the Jews? Did Seneca, who refers to the Jews as a most accursed race (*sceleratissimae gentis*) have any influence on the policy toward the Jews of Nero, with whom, according to Tacitus (*Annals* 13.2), he had paramount influence, and who is defended by Josephus (*Antiquities* 20.154-55) against his detractors? How much influence did Tacitus, who was the son-in-law of the powerful Agricola, and who authored the most extensive tirade against Jews that has come down to us, have upon public policy? What the Graeco-Egyptian and Greek authors made out of Jewish separateness, in point of fact, is mere rhetoric and quite unimportant. How much of a role did intellectuals play in inciting the rioters and justifying the pogrom in the year 38? Did they produce anything like a Protocols of the Elders of Zion to set forth their theory of a monstrous conspiracy against all humanity, and did such a work play any role in outbreaks against Jews?

Among the chief contentions of Professor Schäfer's book are the following: (1) Whereas others, notably Isaak Heinemann,²⁴ have emphasized the importance of second century B.C.E. Syria-Palestine as the origin of anti-Semitism, Schäfer finds its origin in Hellenistic Egypt ca. 300 B.C.E., but argues that it actually goes back even further to the destruction of the Elephantine Jewish military community in Egypt in the fifth century B.C.E.; (2) Though the ancients are critical of other peoples besides the Jews, the charges of xenophobia and misanthropy are leveled against the Jews alone; (3) The peculiarity of the Roman attitude toward the Jews is best expressed by the term "Judeophobia" in its ambivalent combination of fear and hatred of the Jews, occasioned by Jewish success in winning converts. How valid are these contentions?

As for the first of these contentions, tracing back anti-Semitism to the experience of the Jews in Elephantine, Schäfer may well be right in concluding that there was a fundamental conflict between

²⁴ Heinemann 1931, 5-6.

the Jews of Elephantine and the Egyptian priests nearby. But is this anti-Semitism? Or is this, rather, an attack upon the soldiers in Elephantine who were the agents of the Persian government in keeping the native Egyptians under subjection and who happened to be Jewish? Would the Egyptian priests, in principle, have destroyed all Jewish temples simply because they were Jewish? The situation of the Jews in Alexandria, as Schäfer notes, was actually very similar to that of the Jews in Elephantine in that they were the supporters of a hated foreign rule; but was the opposition to them due to their being Jewish or to their being foreign occupiers of Egyptian soil?

Schäfer rightly objects to the view expressed by Heinemann, Bickerman, and especially Habicht²⁵ that ancient anti-Semitism began in the second century B.C.E. when the Hasmoneans created a new Jewish state and violently expanded its borders in all directions at the expense of their neighbors and forced conversion of those who held different beliefs. But if this were so, we would have expected anti-Jewish texts to stress this aggressive expansion, and we do not find such.

Most of Schäfer's discussions are based on what extant passages in Greek and Roman writers have to say. In dealing with this evidence, however, we should heed several caveats: (1) Most of the passages come from fragments, and thus we are generally not in a position to know the occasion and original context of the remarks; (2) Many of the passages occur in Josephus, particularly in his essay *Against Apion*, or in church fathers, where there is often a question of their authenticity and, in any case, where the polemical nature of the work in which they are embedded is clear; (3) Many passages come from rhetorical historians or satirists, where the references are clearly colored and exaggerated; (4) We may note the patterns of ethnographical treatises which, especially under the influence of the Aristotelian Peripatetic school, had developed an interest in strange, foreign peoples and in their historical origins or in geographical oddities, as we see particularly in the large number of references to the properties of the Dead Sea.

In any case the anti-Jewish remarks are to be seen in the context of their appearance. Thus, the anti-Jewish outburst in Cicero's *Pro Flacco*, which Schäfer cites at some length, is to be explained, at

²⁵ Heinemann 1931, 5-6; Bickerman 1949, 102; Habicht 1975, 97-110.

least in part, by the fact that he was defending a client who had been accused of pocketing money which the Jews had collected for transmission to the Temple in Jerusalem. Cicero himself points out the difference between his true opinions and those that he uttered as a lawyer (*Pro Cluentio* 139). Moreover, the charge made against Jews that they are lazy (Seneca, *ap. Augustine, City of God* 6.11) is also made against the Egyptians by Polybius and against the Germans by Tacitus. The charge that the Jews are superstitious (Agatharchides, *ap. Josephus, Against Apion* 1.205-11; Plutarch, *De Superstitione* 8.169C: they allowed the enemy to capture Jerusalem on the Sabbath because they refused to fight on that day) is also made by Tacitus against the Germans and by Lucian against the Egyptians.

As for the charge that the Jews hate mankind and that they refuse to mingle with others, this, I should like to suggest, is not unconnected with the fact, noted by Josephus (*Antiquities* 20.264) that the Jews in his day did not favor those who have learned foreign languages (the chief of which, of course, would be Greek), let alone those who master them; such skill, he notes, is characteristic of ordinary freemen and even slaves. Many Jews, to be sure, did acquire a smattering of Greek; but since language is the key to culture, and especially so in antiquity, the Jews, it is not surprising, were regarded by some non-Jewish intellectuals as obscurantists in their opposition to acquiring a good knowledge of Greek. In this connection we may note that Cleomenes, the author of an astronomical work (*De Motu Circulari* 2.1.91) in the first or second century C.E., in viciously attacking the vulgar language of Epicurus, remarks that the latter's expressions "derive in part from brothels, ... and in part they issue from the midst of the synagogue and the beggars in its courtyards." His utter contempt is manifest when he states that these expressions are "Jewish and debased and much lower than reptiles." In an era when language and rhetoric were the *sine qua non* of an intellectual, this disregard for the niceties of Greek style would make the Jews guilty of xenophobia. Indeed, as Saul Lieberman²⁶ has stressed, one cannot avoid noting the poverty and vulgarity of the Greek inscriptions of ordinary Jews buried in Palestine. The rabbis (*Megillah* 9b), to be sure, recognized the beauty of the Greek language; but what is important in showing their strongly negative attitude toward Greek

²⁶ Lieberman 1942, 30.

culture is that they are said, during the civil war between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II in 65 B.C.E., to have placed a curse upon the man who teaches his son Greek *wisdom* (*b. Sotah* 49b, *b. Baba Qamma* 82b, *b. Menahoth* 64b).

As to the alleged xenophobia of the Jews, we may note the statement, quoted in the name of the advisers to the Syrian king Antiochus VII Sidetes, in the first century B.C.E. Diodorus (34 [35].1.1), that the Jews should be wiped out completely “since they alone of all nations avoided dealings with any other people and looked upon all men as their enemies.” Even Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap. Diodorus* 40.3.4), in a passage that is otherwise very favorable toward the Jews, asserts that Moses introduced a certain misanthropic (ἀπάνθρωπὸν τινὰ) and xenophobic (μισόξενον) way of life. Polytheism is, by definition, pluralistic in its attitude toward other religious beliefs, and though earlier, as we see in such writers as Plato and Aristotle, the Greeks had looked down upon non-Greeks, whom they called barbarians, certainly, after Alexander, the liberalism and tolerance in religion extended to other peoples and other ways of life. And yet, there were those such as Hecataeus and especially the influential Strabo who praised the Jews as a civilized people, with a lawgiver comparable to the great and much admired Spartan Lycurgus and a laudable code of law.

However, is this negative attitude on the part of the Jews toward other peoples’ culture really so very different from what Herodotus (2.35) says about the Egyptians: “As the Egyptians have a climate peculiar to themselves, and their river is different in its nature from all other rivers, so have they made all their customs and laws of a kind contrary for the most part to those of all other men. Among them, the women buy and sell, the men abide at home and weave; and whereas in weaving all others push the woof upwards, the Egyptians push it downwards., etc.” As to Schäfer’s claim that the charge of xenophobia is particularly made against the Jews, Herodotus (2.41) says that “no Egyptian man or woman will kiss a Greek man, or use a knife, or a spit, or a caldron belonging to a Greek, or taste the flesh of an unblemished ox that has been cut up with a Greek knife.” Plato (*Laws* 12.953E) says that foreigners are expelled from Egypt from participating at meals and sacrifices.

Likewise, Juvenal, in his third satire, bitterly complains (60-61) that Rome has become a Greek city, so large has the Greek portion of the population, which he refers to as the Achaean dregs, become.

The crimes of the Greeks are said to include seductions and even murders (Juvenal 3.109-25). In the same satire he asserts that the Syrian Orontes river has flowed into the Tiber, that is, Syrians have come to Rome in such large numbers. He devotes the entire fifteenth satire to a fierce attack on the atrocities practiced by the Egyptians in their religious worship.

7. THE CHARGES AGAINST THE JEWS, LEADING TO THEIR EXPULSION FROM ROME

Furthermore, we see that Jews are not the only ones whose rites are proscribed, since we find that in the year 19 (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.85.4; Suetonius, *Tiberius* 36) the Egyptians rites are likewise abolished by the Roman authorities. But it is only the Jews who are expelled, as we see in Suetonius (*ibid.*), and we may conclude that just as the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 139 B.C.E. (Valerius Maximus 1.3.3) was because they had “attempted to transmit their sacred rites to the Romans, that is, to convert them to Judaism, so in 19 C.E. the reason for the expulsion, as we see in Cassius Dio (57.18.5a), was the alleged missionary activities of the Jews; and the same conclusion can be drawn from Josephus’ account (*Ant.* 18.169-79) that the cause of the expulsion was the fact that a woman of high rank who had become a proselyte had been cheated by some Jews who took for themselves the gifts that they had urged her to send to the Temple in Jerusalem. A third expulsion of the Jews from Rome, which took place during the reign of the Emperor Claudius (Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4, Acts 18:2), occurred because the Jews were alleged to have been constantly making disturbances at the instigation of a certain Chrestus. Significantly, Cassius Dio (60.6.6), immediately after commenting on the vast increase in the number of Jews in Rome, presumably, at least in part, through proselytism, explicitly declares that Claudius did not drive them out—the clear implication being that on other occasions the Jews had been expelled.

We may make five comments about these expulsions: (1) In no case are the Jews expelled simply because they are Jews; (2) so far as we know, the Jews are expelled only from Rome, not from Alexandria or any other city or area; (3) the common denominator of these expulsions, as we can see in one case with the coupling with the Egyptians, was attempts to convert Romans to Judaism; (4) the fact that the Jews are expelled over and over again indicates that

they were permitted to return, presumably not long after they had been expelled; (5) we hear of no pogroms in connection with—either before, during, or after—these expulsions. Where we again hear of pogroms, these are all just prior to the outbreak of the war against the Romans in 66, hence connected with a political factor. In that year 66, we hear that in Caesarea the non-Jewish inhabitants slaughtered the Jews resident in the city (Josephus, *War* 2.457). The popular resentment against the Jews was deep-seated and long-smoldering, though not because they were Jews but rather because of the long-standing quarrel of the Jews and non-Jews, as in Alexandria, over the *civic rights* of the Jews (*Ant.* 20.184). Years later, in 74, Eleazar ben Jair at Masada (*War* 7.363) recalls that the non-Jews had always been quarreling with the Jewish inhabitants of Caesarea, presumably over this issue. Josephus gives no specific motive, alleged or actual, on the part of the attackers in the assault on Jews in other cities in 66, as if it were obvious or usual; but significantly Josephus (*War* 2.463) cites the presence of “Judaizers” in each city in Syria who aroused suspicion; and we may guess that one of the causes of the Jew-hatred was precisely the Jewish success not only in winning converts but also in gaining “sympathizers.”

On the other hand, if, at a later date, under Domitian, we hear of the expulsion of a group other than the Jews, namely the philosophers (Cassius Dio 65 [66]. 13.1a), it is apparent, as we can see in the generally mild and even-tempered Cassius Dio (*ibid.*), that these intellectuals had irritated Romans intensely since they “are full of empty boasting...and look down on everyone.”

Gavin Langmuir, in his already extremely influential book,²⁷ distinguishes three kinds of hostile assertions: realistic hostility, where there is some basis in fact for the hostility toward the group; xenophobia, where the conduct of a minority of the members of a group is said to be true of all members of the group; and chimeria, where characteristics attributed to the group have never been empirically observed. On this basis he concludes that chimerical (or irrational) anti-Semitism does not arise until about 1150 c.e. In his long and incisive dialogue with Langmuir, Schäfer notes that the most salient example of chimerical anti-Semitism cited by Langmuir is the alleged Jewish custom of human sacrifice. Schäfer objects that a similar charge is made by Apion and Damocritus against the Jews; but, we

²⁷ Langmuir 1990.

may object, in any case, such a charge is not uniquely anti-Jewish, since we hear of other cannibalistic conspiracies, the most famous being that connected with Catiline. Since such a charge is made against so many peoples, it hardly indicates that the Jews are to be regarded as a menace to society, especially since, as we see in Cicero, for example, it was understood, in those days, that rhetoricians were granted the license to exaggerate and, indeed, to do so even wildly. However, the main point to be made is that the charges made by Apion and Damocritus—and we may add that even Theophrastus (*ap. Porphyry, De Abstinencia* 2.26), in an otherwise very favorable notice about the Jews, says that the Jews were the first to institute sacrifices both of other living beings and of themselves—did not lead to outbreaks against the Jews, as did those in the Middle Ages. Are we justified in using Langmuir's terminology in viewing Apion's and Damocritus' charges as chimerical? Yes, they are chimerical, but they are not part and parcel of ancient hostility, so far as we can tell. In all the cases of overt hostility, such as pogroms, we never hear the charge that Jews fatten up and kill non-Jews. We hear of expulsions of the Jews from Rome in 139 B.C.E. and in 19 C.E. and perhaps again during the reign of Claudius, but these are provoked not by harangues or comments of intellectuals but rather by the success of the Jews in winning converts; and, indeed, in each case, the Jews apparently return to Rome shortly after their expulsion despite the threat of Jewish proselytizing to the Roman way of life.

Professor Schäfer remarks that the picture of anti-Semitism in Rome "is more complex than in Egypt and Greece. Beginning with Cicero and Seneca, and reaching its climax with Juvenal and Tacitus, there is an ambivalence between dislike and fear, criticism and respect, attraction and repulsion, which responds to the peculiar combination of exclusiveness and yet success that characterizes Judaism in the eyes of the Roman authors." But Cicero, as we know, is a lawyer who argued diametrically opposed points of view; in fact, his anti-Semitic comments, such as his reference to the Jews as a pressure group, are never cited by any other extant author—or, one might add, by the later Church Fathers—despite Cicero's unchallenged position as Rome's greatest orator, and, so far as we can tell, had no influence on Roman governmental policy or the Roman masses. Seneca may have written bitter and nasty comments about the Jews; but though he was for a time the right-hand man of the Emperor Nero (*Tacitus, Annals* 13.2), he apparently had no influence

on Nero's policy toward the Jews, if we may judge from Josephus. Juvenal was a professor of rhetoric, and fortunately in those days as in ours, professors were generally regarded as *luftmenschen*, a source of good jokes, and with little or sharply exaggerated understanding of reality. Though he has some incisive comments, his influence on public policy or the masses was nil. Tacitus may have held office under three emperors, may have been consul under Nerva, and may have been governor of the province of Asia under Trajan; but we know of no evidence that he carried his anti-Semitic views into practice in any of those positions.

If fear of the Jews because of their success in winning converts is seen solely in Roman literature, why are there no riots in Rome but rather, most notably, in Alexandria against the Jews? Indeed, according to Suetonius (*Claudius* 25.4) it is the Jews who are alleged to have made constant disturbances (*assidue tumultuantis* in Rome, at the instigation of Chrestus; and these are said by Suetonius to have led the Emperor Claudius to expel the Jews from Rome. But we do not hear in Suetonius or in any other Roman source or in Josephus, who was a contemporary, or in any other Jewish source of popular riots by non-Jews against Jews at that time. It is furthermore significant that though we hear of cities in Asia Minor and Libya that did not honor the privileges that had been granted to the Jews by previous rulers and even confiscated money that the Jews had collected for transmittal to the Temple in Jerusalem, the Jews had their rights reaffirmed by Roman authorities; and, in any case, we do not hear of any riots or pogroms. Rather, the anti-Semitism manifested itself in such acts as stealing money (*Ant.* 16.45) which the Jews had collected in Asia Minor for transmittal to Jerusalem—acts which the civic magistrates apparently ignored. Since the Romans were themselves a minority in their own empire and since the Jews constituted, as we have noted, as much as ten per cent of the population of the Roman Empire and as much as twenty per cent in the eastern portion of it, the Roman policy of tolerance, even from a purely political point of view, made much sense. The attempt of the Emperor Gaius Caligula to impose the imperial cult upon the Jews, since he hoped that this would be the one common denominator that would unite all the people of the Empire, was the exception; the norm was the decree of his successor, the Emperor Claudius, reaffirming the privileges of the Jews everywhere. Even the massacres of Jews in Damascus and other cities in Syria (*War* 2.559-61, 2.461-65) are isolated events, coinciding with

the beginning of the Jewish war against the Romans. Another factor here appears to have been the success of the Jews in converting, in a city such as Antioch, a great number of Greeks “perpetually,” to quote the words of Josephus (*War* 7.45), who generally is careful to softpedal the conversion activities of Jews because he realized how sensitive the Romans were to such acts. In Damascus, we read (*War* 2.560) that the inhabitants “distrusted their wives, who were almost all addicted to the Jewish religion.” Significantly, when the revolt of 66-74 ended and the people of Antioch (*War* 7.103-11) petitioned the commander-in-chief of the Roman army, Titus, when he visited the city, to expel the Jews, he refused; and when they asked that the privileges previously enjoyed by the Jews in Antioch should be rescinded, he likewise refused, this after four years of bloody war with the Jews. It is surely remarkable that, on the whole, after three great rebellions against the Romans, against Nero, Trajan, and Hadrian (the last, that of Bar Kochba, tied up a seventh of the entire Roman army in the tiny area of Judaea), the Roman government reaffirmed its policy of protecting the privileges of the Jews; and this eventually became the policy inherited even by Constantine and the Christian emperors who succeeded him.

Langmuir views the Graeco-Roman attitude toward the Jews as devoid of any sense of threat; hence, they are the prime example of an ingroup with “realistic” assertions about the Jews. Schäfer correctly challenges this and insists, as we have seen, that it is precisely the feeling of being threatened by the Jews which informs many, if not most, anti-Jewish statements in antiquity. Moreover, to assert, as does Langmuir, that xenophobic assertions on the part of Greeks and Romans originate from the conduct of a minority among the Jews and that this is then attributed to all Jews is not borne out by the data, since the anti-Semitic statements are almost always made about *the* Jews.

According to Langmuir, the essential inferiority and powerlessness of the outgroup, that is the Jews, are a crucial factor in turning anti-Judaism into anti-Semitism. Schäfer correctly insists that this does not apply to the Jews of antiquity. A people that produced a Herod, as well as four commanders-in-chief for the Ptolemaic armies, that produced a governor of Egypt (Tiberius Julius Alexander, who, to be sure, was no longer an observant Jew), that produced an Agrippa I, who was such a crucial factor in determining that Claudius should succeed Caligula as Roman Emperor, that at one point was able

to control the kingship of half a dozen states, petty though they might be, that was able to get Roman emperors time after time to side with them against their enemies, as we can see alike from the pages of Josephus, the Talmud, and the *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*, that was able to get rights and privileges affirmed and reaffirmed in every part of the Graeco-Roman world, that, with its success in converting so many, came to embrace as much as ten per cent of the Roman Empire, was hardly powerless. Jews were feared and sometimes hated, but this is not the classic anti-Semitism such as we find in the Middle Ages and modern times.

7. ADMIRATION FOR THE JEWS AMONG NON-JEWISH WRITERS

On the contrary, Jews were even admired by some of the greatest thinkers of antiquity. Surely, among the pre-Socratic philosophers, no one had a greater reputation than Pythagoras, since, as Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.162) remarks, for wisdom and piety he was ranked above all other philosophers, presumably including even Socrates and Plato. Indeed, according to Josephus (*ibid.*), he not only knew of the institutions of the Jews but was an ardent admirer and even imitator of them. Furthermore, Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.163-64) cites a certain Hermippus (who lived ca. 200 B.C.E.), known, he says, as a careful historian, who asserts that Pythagoras adopted from the Jews and Thracians three precepts—not to pass a certain spot on which an ass had collapsed, to abstain from thirst-producing water, and to avoid all slander; and he adds that Pythagoras introduced many points of Jewish law into his philosophy. The third-century Christian Church Father Origen (*Against Celsus* 1.15) omits the reference to the Thracians and states that, according to Hermippus, Pythagoras actually brought his own philosophy from the Jews to the Greeks. Moreover, the first-century Antonius Diogenes (*ap. Porphyry, Vita Pythagorae* 11) declares that Pythagoras visited the Egyptians, Arabs, Chaldaeans, and Hebrews, and that he learned from them the exact knowledge of dreams—a skill particularly admired in antiquity. Finally, Pythagoras' condemnation of the use of images (*ap. Diogenes Laertius, Lives of the Philosophers* 1.6-9) is ascribed to Jewish influence.

The most influential philosopher during the Hellenistic period was undoubtedly Plato. The second-century Neo-Pythagorean Numenius of Apamea sums up Plato by saying (*ap. Clement of Alexandria*,

Stromata 1.22.150.4), “What is Plato but Moses speaking in Attic Greek?”

The ultimate compliment that an intellectual in antiquity could bestow upon a people was to declare that they were a race of philosophers. It is precisely this compliment that is bestowed upon the Jews by none other than the great Aristotle (*ap.* Clearchus of Soli *ap.* Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.179), who was so impressed with the wisdom of a Jew whom he met in Asia Minor that he declared that the Jewish people are actually descended from the renowned Indian philosophers. The compliment is all the greater in view of Aristotle’s parochialism (*Politics* 1.2.1252B7-8) in stating that non-Greeks, whom he termed barbarians, and slaves are by nature one. His student and successor as the head of the Lyceum, Theophrastus (*ap.* Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* 2.26), reiterates that Jews are philosophers by birth, and he paints a highly complimentary picture of the Jews conversing about the divine while they are conducting their sacrifices. The fact that he adds that the Jews make observations of the stars is a further compliment, since astronomy was the most popular of the four branches of mathematics in Hellenistic times and one of the key subjects in the higher education of the philosopher-kings in Plato’s ideal state (*Republic* 7.528B-530B).

Among the Romans none had a greater reputation for learning than Varro (so Quintilian 10.1.95). The ancient Romans, he says, worshipped the gods without an image. If this custom, he adds (*ap.* Augustine, *City of G-d* 4.31.2), had continued, “the gods would not be worshipped with greater purity.”

In conclusion, it is time to revise the lachrymose view of Jewish history, at least for certain portions of the ancient period. Despite occasional setbacks, Jews were doing well, even counter-attacking, so to speak, through gaining proselytes in large numbers. And even among intellectuals, Jews were sometimes admired.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REFLECTIONS ON RUTGERS' ATTITUDES TO JUDAISM IN THE GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

Dr. Leonard V. Rutgers, in a recent article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, has done the world of scholarship a service in examining anew the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in antiquity in the light of my recent study.¹ In it he proposes to review critically the literary, epigraphical, and archaeological evidence bearing on conversions to Judaism in antiquity. He stresses that the strength of the Jewish communities is evident from the ways in which Jews reacted to non-Jewish culture by continuously transforming it to express an identity that was unmistakably Jewish.

However, Dr. Rutgers mistates my thesis, when he² repeatedly has me arguing, as my central thesis, that the masses disliked Judaism, but that intellectuals admired it, albeit grudgingly.³ He then wonders⁴ where all the alleged converts came from, since the number of intellectuals who were converted was obviously very small. This fundamental misapprehension of my aim and thesis skews almost everything that he says. In my preface⁵ I state the problem this way: "How can we explain why the Jews in antiquity—so bitterly hated, as so many scholars have insisted—succeeded in winning so many adherents, whether as "sympathizers" who observed one or more Jewish practices or as full-fledged proselytes?" I attempt to resolve this with the thesis that Judaism was by and large strong, a significant and (to many) attractive force in the ancient world. In my chapter

¹ Rutgers 1995-96, 1-35; Feldman 1993.

² Rutgers 1995-96, 3, 10, and especially 21-22.

³ Surely, however, the statements of admiration for the Jews ascribed to such writers as Pythagoras (*ap.* Josephus, *Ap.* 1.162), Clearchus of Soli quoting Aristotle (*ap.* Josephus, *Ap.* 1.176-83), Theophrastus (*ap.* Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* 2.26), Megasthenes (*ap.* Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.15.72.5), Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.5), Pseudo-Longinus (9.9), Varro (*ap.* Augustine, *De Civitate D-i* 4.31.2), Numenius (*ap.* Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.22.150.4) are not grudging praise.

⁴ Rutgers 1995-96, 7.

⁵ Feldman 1993, xi.

on popular prejudice against Jews I do not say that all the masses hated the Jews. One must distinguish between the masses and the “mob.” In fact, I say plainly⁶ that one of the causes of the Jew-hatred for example in Syria, was precisely the Jewish success not only in winning converts but also in gaining “sympathizers” clearly among the masses themselves. The masses who converted obviously did not hate the Jews. In offering motives for conversion I explicitly discuss⁷ the importance of economic factors in inducing poverty-stricken pagans to embrace Judaism. I call attention to the fact that poor Gentiles—obviously not intellectuals—, once converted to Judaism, could benefit from the extraordinarily effective charities, according to the Jewish custom (cf. *Jos.*, *Ap.* 2.283). Those proselytes, as I remark, who were poverty-stricken, received the benefit of interest-free loans from Jews because usury is forbidden by the Torah. Indeed, the rabbis (*Sifra Behar* 5.1, *Gerim* 3:4) insisted that if a convert was in financial difficulties it was mandated that other Jews should help him, even to the point of anticipating his duress. Apparently, this reached the point (*Yal. Shimoni*, *Emor* 745; *Eleh Devarim Zuta* 1) where some of the sages note that there are people who convert simply because they liked to eat or to be supported by the Jewish community.

Dr. Rutgers⁸ asserts that Josephus’ account of the conversion of the royal family of Adiabene shows that the first-century conversions of non-Jews to Judaism, even among the upper classes, must have been the exception rather than the rule; but I never say that it was the rule. On the contrary, as I note above, most of the proselytes were clearly not of the upper classes. Dr. Rutgers⁹ notes that if one reads John Chrysostom’s eight homilies on the Jews [he means Judaizers] or any other Church Father writing about Christian attraction to Judaism it is impossible to avoid the impression that it was precisely the masses who saw no difficulty in socializing with the Jews. But I clearly indicate¹⁰ that it was many among the masses who found Jewish practices attractive. I note Chrysostom’s statement that the Jews were attracting so many Christians to their synagogues; clearly

⁶ Feldman 1993, 119-20.

⁷ Feldman 1993, 336-37.

⁸ Rutgers 1995-96, 10.

⁹ Rutgers 1995-96, 21-22.

¹⁰ Feldman 1993, 405-7.

these were not intellectuals. In particular, I note¹¹ Chrysostom's statement (*Adversus Judaeos* 2.3.860) charging Christian husbands with the responsibility of keeping wives from going to the synagogue. I likewise remark¹² that Jerome (*On Matt.* 23.15 [*P. L.* 26.175]) notes the presence of women in particular among the Judaizers. Surely I do not indicate that these women were intellectuals.

Dr. Rutgers¹³ represents me as indicating that all of the masses were antagonistic to Jews, and he notes that there were differences between Alexandria and Rome. My presentation is hardly that simplistic, and I note that large numbers of ordinary people were so sympathetic to Judaism that they became "G-d-fearers" or even proselytes. At the same time, cordial relations in certain cities or areas in normal times can be contrasted with deep hostility that then erupts; and where it erupts it reveals something about the "cordial" times.

Dr. Rutgers¹⁴ expresses skepticism as to the number of Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman period¹⁵ and specifically as to the number of converts among them. As to the number of Jews, the fact that we have information from such diverse sources is significant. Strabo (*ap. Jos., Ant.* 14.115) reports that in his day (the Augustan Age) "This people [i.e. the Jews] has already made its way into every city, and it is not easy to find any place in the habitable world which has not received this nation and in which it has not made its power felt." Philo (*Flacc.* 43), who, in his role of leadership in the Alexandrian Jewish community was certainly in a position to know and who may well have had information from his brother Alexander the alabarch (*Jos., Ant.* 18.159), reports that in his era, at the beginning of the first century, there were no less than a million Jews in Egypt. In Alexandria alone

¹¹ Feldman 1993, 405.

¹² Feldman 1993, 407.

¹³ Rutgers 1995-96, 25.

¹⁴ Rutgers 1995-96, 3-10.

¹⁵ Dr. Rutgers states that Bar Hebraeus probably derived his information as to the number of Jews from Tac., *Ann.* 21.25.5. The correct citation in Tacitus is 11.25.5. However, that Bar Hebraeus derived his figure not from Tacitus but from Eusebius is clear from the fact that precisely the same figure, 6,944,000, is given by Eusebius (*Chronicon* [in Schoene 1875, 2:152-53]) as the number of Roman citizens. Bar Hebraeus is wrong in asserting that the census revealed this as the number of Jews in the Roman Empire. Dr. Rutgers is clearly right in negating the value of Bar Hebraeus' evidence in this matter, and Salo Baron and I are clearly wrong in ascribing value to it. See Rosenthal 1954, 267-68.

we have reason to believe that there were 180,000 Jews,¹⁶ of whom, according to Josephus (*War* 2.497) fifty thousand perished during the riot of 66. Moreover, according to Cassius Dio (68.32.2) during the revolt of 115-117 C.E. the Jews were able to kill 220,000 of their opponents in Libya and 240,000 of their opponents on Cyprus; to effect this the Jews themselves must have been very numerous. As for the number of Jews living in Rome we can get some idea from the fact (*War* 2. 80, *Ant.* 17.300) that when an embassy of Jews came from Palestine to Rome asking that Archelaus be deposed, more than eight thousand of the Jews of Rome espoused their cause. As for the number of Jews in the Land of Israel, Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.13.3) reports that the total of those besieged, of every age and of both sexes, in Jerusalem during the war of 66-70 was 600,000.¹⁷ Josephus (*War* 2.280) states that a crowd of not less than three million Jews implored the Roman governor Cestius Gallus, when he visited Jerusalem at Passover, to have compassion upon them in view of the excesses of the procurator Florus. Even if we discount Josephus' figure of over 3,060,000 for Galilee alone,¹⁸ a district where he should have had good information, inasmuch as he was the general there in the year 66, at the beginning of the revolt against the Romans, we cannot so readily dismiss the count ordered by the Roman governor of Syria Cestius Gallus to be taken by the chief priests and reported to the Emperor Nero. The figure, based on the fact that there were 255,600 lambs slaughtered for Passover in that year and that each

¹⁶ See Delia 1988, 288, who notes that the figure of 180,000 mentioned in a fragment from the notorious *Acta Alexandrinorum* is intimately connected with the subject under appeal and that it most likely refers to the number of Jews resident in Alexandria and vicinity.

¹⁷ Dr. Rutgers 1995-96, 5, incorrectly cites this figure as representing the number of those who perished during the siege, whereas Tacitus does not say that they all perished. He cites this as an example of the unreliability of such figures, noting the incongruity between this figure and that of Josephus (*War* 6.420), who, he says, maintains that approximately twice as many were killed on that occasion. We may suggest, however, that Josephus' figure of 1,100,000 represents, as he is careful to note, those who perished during the entire siege, whereas Tacitus apparently gives the number who were besieged at the time when the city was captured.

¹⁸ Josephus (*Life* 235) writes to Jonathan and his fellow deputies, who, having been sent by the Jerusalem authorities, had arrived in Galilee, that there are 204 cities and villages in Galilee. He is hardly likely to have misrepresented this information to an official delegation. Elsewhere, in his extensive description of Galilee (*War* 3.35-43), he states that the villages there are so densely populated that the smallest of them contains more than fifteen thousand inhabitants.

lamb was for no fewer than ten persons meant that the number of people in Jerusalem that year was 2,556,000 (*War* 6.424); and this did not include menstruous women or those who were defiled.¹⁹ The fact that in the Bar Kochba rebellion, according to Cassius Dio (69.14.1), 580,000 Jews were slain in raids and battles, “and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out,” would indicate a very large population.

Nevertheless, Dr. Rutgers²⁰ (p. 5) insists that figures as to the number of Jews in the first century lose their value in the light of the total absence of reliable data on Jewish demography for the periods immediately before and after the first century C.E. But as to the period before, we may get some idea as to the small number of Jews in the Kingdom of Judah from the number of lambs, kids, and bulls contributed by King Josiah in 622 B.C.E., when Jews gathered in Jerusalem from throughout his kingdom, so that, according to 2 Kings 23:22, no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of Judah. According to 2 Chron. 35:7-9, Josiah himself contributed to the people as Passover offerings 30,000 lambs and kids and 3,000 bulls; his officials gave 2,600 lambs and kids and 300 bulls; the chiefs of the Levites gave 5,000 lambs and kids and 500 bulls. This makes a total of 37,600 lambs and kids and 3,800 bulls. From Josephus’ statement (*War* 6.425) that there were an average of ten diners for each lamb we may estimate the number of Jews in Jerusalem on that Passover. Moreover, as Baron²¹ has noted, the devastation wrought by the Assyrian king Sennacherib and the constant warfare for the period from King Josiah onward caused a great decline in population. We may get some idea as to the small population of the kingdom of Judah from the number of Jews whom King Nebuchadnezzar took into exile (Jer. 52:28-30): 3023 in the seventh year of his reign (597 B.C.E.), 832 in his eighteenth year (587 B.C.E.), and 745 in the twenty-third year (582 B.C.E.)—a total of 4,600. In 2 Kings 24:14 we read that Nebuchadnezzar in the year 587 B.C.E. carried away 10,000 captives; according to 2 Kings 24:16 he carried away 7,000

¹⁹ Josephus himself (*War* 6.425) gives the total as 2,700,000; but this is because, as he says, the number of people in a company often included as many as twenty.

²⁰ Rutgers 1995-96, 5.

²¹ Baron 1972, 23-73, especially 63-65.

men of valor plus 1,000 artisans and smiths. We may also get some idea as to the number of Jews from the figure of those who returned from Babylonian exile—42,360 plus 7,337 servants and 200 singers (Ezra 2:64-65 and Neh. 7:66-67).²² We must, of course, bear in mind that in the sixth century B.C.E. there were Jews, such as there were, in a very few places, whereas in the first century they were to be found in many places.

Dr. Rutgers²³ remarks that what is striking about the historical evidence for actual conversions to Judaism in the first century C.E. is not its abundance but rather its absence.²⁴ But this, too, is a statement not of skepticism but of thesis and, as such, vulnerable to skeptical analysis. Aside from the conversion of Fulvia, as noted by Josephus (*Ant.* 18.82), and some passing references in satirists such as Horace and Juvenal, he says that there is nothing other other than the conversion of the royal house of Adiabene. In the first place, however, we must not restrict the question of conversion to the first century. In the second place, as to the evidence of the satirists Horace and Juvenal, while it is true that satirists exaggerate, their effectiveness rests upon the fact that they are describing a real situation.

Moreover, what is one to make of Philo's statement (*Virt.* 103-4) that the Pentateuch commands all Jews to love incomers, that is proselytes (as is clear from *Virt.* 102), as themselves both in body and soul—a passage that is especially revealing of Philo's attitude because the biblical text (Lev. 19:33-34) on which it is based clearly refers to strangers in the land rather than to proselytes? That Philo is referring to proselytism as a recurring phenomenon is clear from the fact that he mentions it in a number of other places as well (*Mos.* 1.147, *Virt.* 179, *Spec.* 1.52 and 4.178, *Praem.* 152, and *Legat.* 211). Philo's condemnation (*Virt.* 226), in such strong language, of those who do not convert to Judaism as "enemies of the Jewish nation and of every person in every place" indicates how strongly he believed in the necessity to convert the Gentiles.

²² Nehemiah agrees with Ezra's figures except that he gives the number of singers as 245.

²³ Rutgers 1995-96, 9,

²⁴ Dr. Rutgers 1995-96, 9, says that I systematically attempt to read proselytism into sources that do not explicitly speak of conversion and cites pp. 288f. in my book. On pp. 288-89, however, there is no mention at all of any attempt to read proselytism into those sources.

Josephus remarks (*Ap.* 2.210) on the gracious welcome extended by Jews to all who wish to adopt their laws. That proselytism was not restricted to a few but was a mass movement and was characterized by the zeal of the converts is clear from his statement (*Ap.* 2.282) that it is the masses (πλήθεις, "great number," "multitude") who "have long since shown a keen desire (ζήλος, "zeal," "passion") to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread." This statement is particularly cogent in view of Josephus' own opposition (*Life* 113) to the use of compulsion in getting non-Jews to convert.

The fact that the rabbis have traditions portraying Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph as missionaries (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 84.4, 90.6, 91.5) would seem to indicate not only that they approved of such proselyting but also, in all likelihood, that the movement was still current.

The most striking passage indicating the zeal with which the Jews pursued their proselyting activities is to be found in the New Testament (Matt. 23:15), which declares that the Pharisees "compass sea and land to make one proselyte." This same zeal is alluded to in the first century B.C.E. Horace (*Sat.* 1.4.142-143), who mentions it as if it were proverbial: "We are more numerous, and like the Jews we shall force you to join our throng." In bitter allusion to the victorious spread of Judaism, the first-century C.E. Seneca the philosopher (*ap. Aug., De Civitate D-i* 6.11) declares, "The vanquished have given laws to the victor" (*victi victoribus leges dederunt*). Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.5.1), writing with rancor at the beginning of the second century, remarks that "the worst ones among other peoples, renouncing their ancestral religions, always kept sending (*congerebant*) tribute and contributing to Jerusalem, thereby increasing the wealth of the Jews." The use of the imperfect tense, *congerebant*, would indicate repetitive and continuing action.

Dr. Rutgers expresses doubt that the expulsions of the Jews from Rome in 139 B.C.E. and in the first half of the first century C.E. were due to the fact that Roman magistrates thought that the Jews were too successful in winning converts. He states that the first expulsion derives exclusively from two late epitomes of Valerius Maximus²⁵ and

²⁵ Dr. Rutgers gives the title of Valerius Maximus' work as *Dicta et Mirabilia*. The correct title is *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*.

that the summaries are so concise and contain such peculiar details that it is virtually impossible to determine whether their respective authors, Julius Paris and Januarius Nepotianus, provide reliable information at all. Though, admittedly, there are some differences in the two epitomes, the important point is that they agree that the Jews are accused of attempting to spread their religion, in the one case (Paris) by infecting the Roman customs with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius, in the other case by transmitting their sacred rites to the Romans. In the second instance (19 C.E.), Cassius Dio (57.18.5a) is explicit in stating that the Emperor Tiberius banished them because they were converting (μεθιστάντων, “place in another way,” “change,” “remove from one place to another,”) many of the natives to their ways.” While it is true that none of the other accounts of this expulsion (Jos., *Ant.* 18.81-84; Tac., *Ann.* 2.85.4; and Suet., *Tiberius* 36.1) explicitly state that the reason for the expulsion was proselytizing by Jews, Josephus significantly connects it with an incident in which a certain Fulvia, a woman of high rank who had become a proselyte, was cheated by some Jews who had appropriated for themselves the gifts that they had urged her to send to the Temple in Jerusalem. Moreover, the fact that Tacitus, like Suetonius, couples the expulsion with the proscription of the Egyptian rites would indicate that religion was the factor behind the expulsion; and the fact that he says that the devotees of the Egyptian and Jewish rites were given a deadline by which time they had to renounce their “impious rites” would imply that the objection was to converts to these rites, inasmuch as native Jews had been tolerated at Rome for a century and a half prior to this event. A likely allusion to this episode appears, moreover, in Seneca (*Epistulae Morales* 108.22), who notes, though, to be sure, without mentioning the Jews by name, that in the reign of Tiberius some foreign rites were introduced, and that the proof that a person was an adherent of the new cult was his abstention from eating certain animals, a probable allusion to the Jewish dietary laws. Judaism was hardly a new cult in the time of Tiberius; hence, the reference would appear to be to those who join the Jewish cult, that is proselytes. Dr. Rutgers²⁶ believes that the explanation that the expulsion was due to excessive proselytizing by the Jews is not very plausible and instead concludes that in taking such harsh measures

²⁶ Rutgers 1994, 62-65.

Rome was determined to restore law and order. But in view of the identification of religion and state in Rome, it is precisely success in getting Romans to give up their adherence to the state religion that could have been deemed a threat to the very existence of the Roman state, since, as Ennius had put long before, “*Moribus antiquis res stat Romana viresque.*” If we ask why the expulsion was restricted to the city of Rome, we may reply that it was particularly embarrassing for the Roman authorities to have the proselytizing go on in their very capital.

We should also call attention to an important passage in Dio (60.6.6), which states that the Emperor Claudius was ready to drive the Jews out of Rome once again because they had increased so greatly, but that he had decided not take this measure since, by reason of their multitude, it would have been hard to do so without raising a tumult; consequently, according to Dio, he decided not to drive them out but ordered them, while continuing their traditional mode of life, not to hold meetings. It would appear likely that the apparent sudden large increase in numbers was due to proselyting activities, inasmuch as Claudius was certainly not anti-Jewish, as we can see from the fact that he abolished the restrictions imposed on the Alexandrian Jews during the pogrom of 38 C.E. (Jos., *Ant.* 19.280-85) and the fact that he allowed the Jews to continue to observe their ancestral ways. This must have included permission to gather together for prayer services. It would seem likely, therefore, that the purpose of preventing them from holding meetings (συναθροίζεσθαι, “gather together,” “assemble”) was to prevent the Jews from assembling for the purpose of influencing others to join the Jewish fold.²⁷

Dr. Rutgers²⁸ cites approvingly Goodman’s interpretation²⁹ of the

²⁷ Suetonius (*Claudius* 25.1) declares that since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome; but this, it would seem, does not refer to the same instance as that mentioned by Dio, inasmuch as it specifically says that in that case Claudius did expel the Jews from Rome (so also Acts 18:2), and inasmuch as it mentions that the provocateur was Chrestus, whom most scholars have identified with Jesus. Rutgers 1994, 66, says that the passage from Suetonius can be interpreted to mean that only a small group of Jews was expelled, and not the entire community. This is true, inasmuch as Suetonius says that Claudius expelled *Iudaeos*, which could mean “the Jews” or “Jews.” But Acts 18.2 specifically says that Claudius ordered *all* the Jews to leave Rome.

²⁸ Rutgers 1995-96, 10.

²⁹ Goodman 1989, 40-44.

events surrounding the abolition of the *fiscus Iudaicus* under Nerva as proof that Romans were unaware, until after 96 C.E., that they could actually convert to Judaism. But this is a misrepresentation of Goodman, who speaks of Roman ignorance about the concept of a proselyte. Even if Dr. Rutgers is right, that until 96 the government did not countenance conversion as a legal possibility, this does not mean that “the Romans” were unaware of it.

Dr. Rutgers asserts that one should not argue that rabbinic accounts corroborate the picture of upper-class converts (though I nowhere assert that such upper-class converts were the majority of the proselytes). Yet, here the statement in the Midrash (*Deut. Rab.* 2.24) that a member of the council of the emperor (apparently Domitian) was a “G-d-fearing man” who had secretly converted to Judaism is directly parallel to the statement in Cassius Dio (67.14.1-2) that the charge brought against Flavius Clemens the consul and his wife (both of whom were relatives of the emperor Domitian) was “atheism, a charge on which many others who drifted into Jewish ways were condemned.”³⁰

Dr. Rutgers³¹ asserts that much of what Josephus reports in his account of the conversion of the royal family of Adiabene militates against my view of widespread conversions to Judaism in the first century. But, as we can see from Josephus’ statement (*Life* 113) of strong opposition to forced conversion of Gentiles during the period that he was commander in Galilee and from his silence about the reason (namely proselyting activities) for the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 19 C.E. (*Ant.* 18.81-84), that he was sensitive to the concern of the Romans that the Jews were seriously threatening, with their success in proselytism, the ancestral traditions of the Romans; hence, the one specific instance of conversions in the first century is in a region, Adiabene, outside of the Roman Empire. Dr. Rutgers³² says that the fact (*Ant.* 20.39) that Queen Helena of Adiabene suspected that the masses might revolt upon hearing about Izates’ conversion

³⁰ Dr. Rutgers 1995-96, 8, asserts that on p. 31 [he means 331] I accept the inscriptions from Rome as evidence of first-century proselytism. Later (pp. 331-332: he means 411-412) he says that I inconsistently use the same inscriptions as evidence for conversion to Judaism in late antiquity. Actually, I state that the inscriptions cannot be dated precisely, though the catacombs in which they are found were used for burials from the first to the third centuries C.E. I refer to these inscriptions again on pp. 411-412 because we cannot be sure of their date.

³¹ Rutgers 1995-96, 9.

³² Rutgers 1995-96, 10.

to Judaism suggests that in Adiabene conversions to Judaism, even in the first century, were rather unusual and in any event can never have taken place on any large scale. But we may reply that what might have been true in Adiabene was not necessarily true in the Roman Empire, at least to judge from the statements cited above. Moreover, we cannot tell from Helena's response whether the attitude of the masses was unanimous. There was, as we have noted, apparently a love-hate relationship toward the Jews among the masses: many hated the Jews and many, paradoxically, whatever their motives may have been, were actually attracted to Judaism. Furthermore, we should note that in the war against the Romans that broke out in 66 some of the revolutionaries apparently had hopes of obtaining aid from their kinsmen in Adiabene (Jos., *War* 2.388). Since the hope is there expressed of recruiting them as allies, it would seem that the expectation was that the revolutionaries in Jerusalem expected to obtain Adiabenians, presumably converts and their descendants, to join them as soldiers. Dr. Rutgers' assertion³³ that the fact that Helena suspected that the masses might revolt upon hearing about Izates' conversion to Judaism suggests that in Adiabene conversions to Judaism, even in the first century C.E., were rather unusual does not follow, since, as we have noted, the great majority of conversions were apparently not initiated by rulers but rather by private individuals.

Dr. Rutgers³⁴ asserts that positive remarks on Jews and Judaism can be encountered with special frequency at the beginning of the Hellenistic period and then again during the third century C.E. but not during the intervening period. But during the intervening period, in the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E., for example, we encounter positive remarks in such important writers as Alexander Polyhistor, Poseidonius (as Bezalel Bar-Kochva³⁵ demonstrates), Diodorus Siculus, Timagenes, Nicolaus of Damascus, Strabo, and, in particular the extremely influential Varro (whom the paramount authority on rhetoric, Quintilian [10.1.95], terms the "most learned of the Romans") and Pseudo-Longinus (the author of the most important

³³ Rutgers 1995-96, 10.

³⁴ Rutgers 1995-96, 22.

³⁵ Bar-Kochva 1996.

work on literary criticism after Aristotle). Dr. Rutgers³⁶ says that the apparent fascination with Jews and Judaism in pagan writers went only skin-deep; but we know of at least seven writers—Alexander Polyhistor, Apollonius Molon, and Teucer of Cyzicus in the first century B.C.E., Apion of Alexandria, Damocritus, and Nicarchus in the first century CE, and Herennius Philo of Byblus in the second century—who wrote whole monographs on the Jews. Teucer's work, in particular, seems to have been very extensive, consisting, as it did, of six books. We should note that perhaps less than one per cent of what the Greeks and Romans wrote is extant today. The losses are particularly heavy for the Hellenistic period; one thinks, for example, of Didymus Chalkenteros of Alexandria, who lived in the first century, and who is said to have written between 3500 and 4000 books (equivalent to perhaps 300 modern volumes), all of them lost except for fragments.³⁷

Dr. Rutgers³⁸ asserts that I view interaction between Jews and non-Jews as a one-way phenomenon and as a phenomenon that is essentially religious in nature, with Jews being largely immune to "foreign" influence. Such a definition, he says, provides an incomplete picture of contacts between Jews and non-Jews in the ancient world, inasmuch as it never raises the question of Jews undergoing outside influence. But I devote a whole chapter (2) to the influence of non-Jewish culture upon the Jews in the Diaspora, dealing specifically with the influence of Greek language and thought, secular education, athletics, the theater, and syncretism and conclude, as Dr. Rutgers realizes, that in the Diaspora Jewish communities were deeply Hellenized. He says³⁹ that I perceive interaction in narrowly antagonistic and strictly religious terms: if Jews were really to interact with non-Jews, they would cease to be strictly orthodox and would become assimilationists. But, as I note, the Jews in the Diaspora did interact with Greek culture and did not, on the whole, lose their Jewish identity. As for the Land of Israel, we must distinguish between outward and inward Hellenization. It is anachronistic to assume that assimilation in antiquity meant what it means today. The assumption

³⁶ Rutgers 1995-96, 22.

³⁷ Susemihl 1891-92, enumerates close to a thousand names of writers of the Hellenistic period, almost all of whose works are lost.

³⁸ Rutgers 1995-96, 25.

³⁹ Rutgers 1995-96, 32.

then was that ethnic origin presupposed religious practice, as we see in the standard pagan use of the Greek term Ἰουδαῖος and the Latin term *Iudaeus* (see, for example, Hecataeus of Abdera, *ap.* Diod. 40.3; Agatharchides, *ap.* Jos., *Ap.* 1.209; Cic., *Pro Flacco* 28.66-69). Hence inward assimilation would involve compromise with religious practice.

Dr. Rutgers⁴⁰ ascribes to me the view that the religious impulse was the only impulse in ancient Jewish history. But I do not deny that there were other factors; indeed, in my examination of what led non-Jews to become “sympathizers” with Judaism I list thirty-one factors,⁴¹ most of them political or social or economic or cultural, even medical.

Dr. Rutgers,⁴² noting that Jews did not adopt non-Jewish elements uncritically but rather adapted such elements for their own purposes and that they participated in the larger non-Jewish world that surrounded them, insists that such participation did not mean that in doing so they had to compromise their Jewish identity. He says⁴³ that I present Jews during the Roman period as never adopting anything substantial from the surrounding world; but I note, for example,⁴⁴ that the possession of amulets with syncretistic elements (surely something substantial) did not diminish the loyalty to Judaism of the Jews who possessed them. I note, furthermore, that there is strong evidence that the Jews of Egypt, as a community, continued to be loyal to the Temple in Jerusalem despite the existence of the temple at Leontopolis. While noting that the Jews in Egypt were influenced by pagan athletics and drama I also note that intermarriage and apostasy were relatively uncommon.

Dr. Rutgers⁴⁵ disputes my conclusion that the adoption by Jews of Greek names turned out to be a not very meaningful criterion of their degree of assimilation. He questions this since the rabbis themselves recognized the importance of onomastic practices for determining the degree of interaction between Jews and non-Jews. He asserts that my view of interaction consciously excludes evidence that is not

⁴⁰ Rutgers 1995-96, 34.

⁴¹ Feldman 1993, 370-81.

⁴² Rutgers 1995-96, 28.

⁴³ Rutgers 1995-96, 33.

⁴⁴ Feldman 1993, 65-69.

⁴⁵ Rutgers 1995-96, 26 n. 78, 33.

strictly religious. But in examining the question of the significance of adoption of Greek names I have considered evidence that is not strictly religious. The Egyptian Jews in this matter disagreed with that rabbinic view which decried such names, though actually some of the rabbis themselves had Greek names.⁴⁶

Dr. Rutgers⁴⁷ concludes that we cannot in any way be sure whether the supposed exponential increase in the number of Jews was due to proselytism, or whether it resulted from a combination of other factors, such as a general increase in population that also affected the Jews, as well as the Jews' aversion to contraception, abortion, and infanticide. But this is no less a thesis than the thesis that such a factor as conversion was involved. Without necessarily defending my thesis would it be wrong to ask Dr. Rutgers to defend his?

Once the Romans ruled, in the wake of the Bar Kochba rebellion, that Jews must abstain from circumcising non-Jews, this contributed, says Dr. Rutgers,⁴⁸ to make "Jew" and "circumcision" interchangeable categories. Dr. Rutgers then continues as follows: "It is not difficult to reconstruct the train of thought of non-Jews familiar with Roman penal law but unfamiliar with Judaism: (1) Jews circumcise; (2) circumcision of non-Jews is illegal; ergo (3) Jews are a likely group to circumcise non-Jews; and (4) Jews must be prevented from circumcising non-Jews." Step number 3 does not necessarily follow unless proselytism was actually a familiar phenomenon. Dr. Rutgers asserts rather than argues that Jews and the "danger of circumcision" were automatically connected in the lawyer's mind. In his comment on *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.26, Dr. Rutgers⁴⁹ admits that there are some remarks appended to it that specify penalties for Jews who attempt to circumcise non-Jews, but he explains that for lawgivers the category "Jew" immediately suggested to them that even in cases where Jews were "victims" and manifestly in need of

⁴⁶ Dr. Rutgers 1995-96, 33, n. 110, says that my argument lacks consistency because elsewhere (Feldman 1993, 359-61) I use names such as Sabatis or Sabbatia to argue that non-Jews observed the Sabbath. But this is quite different, since in those cases the question is the degree to which the adoption by *non-Jews* of Hebrew names or words is an indication of their adherence to Jewish practices. There the question is not that of degree of assimilation but of identity as "G-d-fearers."

⁴⁷ Rutgers 1995-96, 5.

⁴⁸ Rutgers 1995-96, 13.

⁴⁹ Rutgers 1995-96, 15.

legal protection, there was still something about them that had to be neutralized, namely the danger of circumcision. But if so, we may ask, why should the law specify penalties for Jews who attempt to circumcise *non-Jews*? It would seem to be more reasonable to assume that there was some need for such a clause.

Dr. Rutgers⁵⁰ ascribes to me the view that but for the frequently repeated imperial ban on circumcision many non-Jews would have converted to Judaism; but in the pages that he cites⁵¹ I do not state this. Moreover, even if the imperial ban on circumcision were a factor, this would not have halted conversion of women.

In his interpretation of *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.22, dating from 415, wherein the authority and powers of the patriarch Gamaliel VI are restricted, Dr. Rutgers asserts that this is not a law that provides historically useful information about conversions to Judaism in late antiquity. But surely there is historically useful information in the restrictions that new synagogues not be established, that synagogues in deserted places be destroyed, that this can be done without sedition, that the patriarch no longer has the right to judge Christians, and that trials between Jews and non-Jews be held in courts of the governors of provinces. Why should there not be similarly historical useful information in the last two provisions, namely that if the patriarch or any other Jew should convert a non-Jew to Judaism, whether freeman or slave, he is to be punished, and that Christian slaves held by the patriarch are to be transferred to the ownership of the Church? Why should these be mentioned at all if they did not constitute a problem? Noting that this law asserts that Gamaliel will be punished if he or other Jews are found guilty of "defiling" non-Jews with "the Jewish mark of infamy" (that is circumcision), Dr. Rutgers⁵² remarks that the law is essentially about the legal rights and privileges of the patriarch Gamaliel and that such a stipulation was inevitable, given the interchangeability of Judaism and circumcision in the minds of ancient lawgivers. But if so, we may ask, why does the law specify that if he *or other Jews* are found guilty of circumcising *non-Jews* they will be punished? And why specify circumcision by Jews of *non-Jews*, if the objection is simply to Jews?

⁵⁰ Rutgers 1995-96, 33.

⁵¹ Feldman 1993, 403-4, 429, 437.

⁵² Rutgers 1995-96, 16.

As for the evidence of proselyting to be inferred from the *Cod. Theod.*, Dr. Rutgers⁵³ has excluded 16.8.6, dating from the year 339, because, as he says, it cannot be established whether this law deals with conversion to Judaism or with mixed marriages. But, as Linder⁵⁴ notes, since the preceding paragraph deals with the proselyting of male-slaves, this paragraph clearly deals with the proselyting of women-slaves. Dr. Rutgers suggests that the subject is not conversion but mixed marriages; but from the fact that the law speaks of Jews leading women to the fellowship (*consortium*) of their turpitude, it is clear that the intermarriage involved conversion. Moreover, Dr. Rutgers has excluded from consideration *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.7, dating from the year 353, since, he says, this law deals with Christians who convert to Judaism out of their own account rather than with Jews who convert Christians. In the first place, however, there is no indication in the law as to whether the initiative for conversion came from Jews or from Christians since it merely states “if someone shall become Jew from Christian.” But in the second place, in either case, the only question at issue is whether there were converts to Judaism, and clearly this law does speak of such converts.

It is Dr. Rutgers’ contention⁵⁵ that the laws included in the *Cod. Theod.* containing penalties for conversion to Judaism do not reflect the current state of affairs or a Christian theological program but rather a strictly legal and strongly traditional statement. But this still does not fully answer the question as to why they were included. The constitutions, after all, reflect answers to requests on practical issues. The *Cod. Theod.* may have served also as an ideological statement, but its components were responses, in many cases, to the needs of governors and other petitioners. If the emperors repeatedly forbade conversion, especially of slaves (whose foreskins, after all, should not have been protected by law) then it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that it happened.

Dr. Rutgers⁵⁶ insists that the laws included in the *Cod. Theod.* specifying penalties for Jews who attempt to circumcise non-Jews cannot serve to capture the historical reality of conversions in late antiquity and that such laws served merely to protect the Jews. But

⁵³ Rutgers 1995-96, 11, n. 35.

⁵⁴ Linder 1987, 150, n. 8.

⁵⁵ Rutgers 1995-96, 14-15.

⁵⁶ Rutgers 1995-96, 15.

such a view is surely very forced. In a law serving merely to protect the Jews from harassment and their synagogues from being set on fire, why should the Emperor mention that Jews will be penalized with confiscation of property and perpetual exile if they have circumcised a Christian?

Dr. Rutgers⁵⁷ insists that *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.19 on the *Caelicolae*⁵⁸ is not a law on conversion to Judaism and that the remarks on Judaism and on what was believed to be its inherent danger, namely conversion to it, are nothing but part and parcel of the legal terminology. But that this is a law concerning conversion to Jewish practices seems clear from the statement that “some people...force some to cease being Christian and adopt the abominable and vile name of Jews.” The charge that force was applied and the statement that as a result people were ceasing their adherence to one religion, Christianity, and adopting another, namely Judaism, seems to refer to proselytism by Jews, if not to full conversion then, at any rate, to observance of certain Jewish practices. The fact that the law states that this crime has been legally condemned under the laws of the ancient emperors but that nevertheless “it does not bother us to admonish *repeatedly*” (*saepius*, “more often”) would indicate that this was a recurring problem and not merely legal terminology. Dr. Rutgers, in support of his contention that the law on the *Caelicolae* is not a law on conversion to Judaism, cites the fact that the editors of Justinian’s Code, when they selected this law from the *Cod. Theod.* for inclusion in their own code, omitted all references to the Jews. But we may remark that the reason why they omitted all references to the Jews was that the *Caelicolae* were not Jews but “sympathizers,” that is, non-Jews who retained their non-Jewish status while adopting certain selected Jewish practices. The very fact that the *Cod. Just.* 1.9.12 speaks of the *Caelicolae* and warns them that unless they return to “G-d’s cult” and the “Christian veneration” clearly refers to those who have deviated from Christianity; and the only group by this name who had deviated from Christianity were the “G-d-Fearers,” those who had embraced certain Jewish practices

⁵⁷ Rutgers 1995-96, 15.

⁵⁸ Dr. Rutgers translates this term as “Heaven-Dwellers.” The term is clearly parallel to the rabbinic term *Yirei Shamayim* (*y.Meg.* 3.2.74a) and should be translated “Heaven-fearers.”

without fully converting to Judaism. Even if, with Dr. Rutgers,⁵⁹ we find significance in the fact that the editors of Justinian's Code did not include a specific reference to the Jews in their law on the *Caelicolae*, this might well be explained by the fact that they did not need to mention the Jews, inasmuch as circumstances had changed and the threat of proselytizing activities by Jews had diminished.

Moreover, according to Dr. Rutgers, the category "Jew" called to the mind of the late ancient lawgiver the age-old problem of conversion, "or, to be more precise, of circumcision." But it is clear that not all those converted to Judaism were males. In fact, if we may judge from the instance of Damascus (Jos., *War* 2.560), we are told, the people of Damascus, though fired with a determination to kill the Jews who resided among them, were afraid to do so out of fear of their own wives, "who, with few exceptions, had all become converts to the Jewish religion."

Dr. Rutgers⁶⁰ says the apparent repetitiveness of laws concerning conversion to Judaism is not repetitive but rather complementary; and he cites *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.1 (315 C.E.) and 16.8.26 (423 C.E.) as an example. But there is more than a century between them; and it seems hard to view them as merely two explanatory paragraphs of a single piece of legislation. If 16.8.26 adds a punishment to the prohibition it seems legitimate to infer that someone saw that the prohibition had not been sufficiently strong to stamp out the problem.

Dr. Rutgers⁶¹ asserts that laws concerning conversion of slaves to Judaism cannot be taken as proof for a general popularity of conversion to Judaism in late antiquity, since, he says, slaves were not free to decide for themselves whether they truly preferred Judaism. But whether they were free or not to decide, the point here is that they were converted. If they were not free this should not exclude them from the ranks of the converts that we are counting.

Dr. Rutgers says⁶² that it is remarkable that Church canons do not seem to have been very much concerned with full converts to Judaism. We should, however, note that already in the Synod of Elvira in Spain in 305 (or 306), which was attended by nineteen (or according

⁵⁹ Rutgers 1995-96, 15.

⁶⁰ Rutgers 1995-96, 16.

⁶¹ Rutgers 1995-96, 17.

⁶² Rutgers 1995-96, 18.

to the *Codex Pithoanus* of its acts, forty-three) bishops, apparently one of the problems with which the bishops had to contend was intermarriage of Jewish men with Christian women, presumably because of the consequent conversion of the wives to Judaism. Hence the Council issued a canon (16) forbidding such marriages and punishing parents of those who violated this canon with interdiction for a period of five years. A similar edict issued in 388 (*Cod. Theod.* 3.7.2 and 9.7.5) forbade intermarriage between Jews and Christians. The severity of this is indicated by the penalty, which is the same as that for adultery.

Dr. Rutgers⁶³ remarks, in opposition to my view,⁶⁴ that the use of depreciative vocabulary in the *Cod. Theod.* cannot be directly attributed to the influence of Christian bishops. Rather, he says that this is due to a well-known preference for flowery formulations characteristic of Roman law in general. We may, however, well ask where else such an epithet as *nefariam* (*Cod. Theod.* 16.8.1) is found as a flowery formulation. Such a deprecatory comment is an influence of Christianity and indicates its assessment of the Jews. In supporting his thesis that there is no direct and causal relationship between the ideas expressed in patristic literature and the regulations contained in imperial laws on Jews and Judaism, Dr. Rutgers⁶⁵ notes how, as late as the 380's, different religious and political authorities could conceive of Jewish legal rights or the absence thereof. He notes that this is perhaps most evident from the conflict that arose between Ambrose (Epistles 40 and 41 [*P. L.* 16.1148-1169]) and Theodosius over the destruction of a synagogue in Callinicum on the Euphrates in the year 388. The fact is, however, that when Ambrose told Theodosius that he would not perform the mass in his presence unless the emperor would rescind his initial order to rebuild the synagogue, Theodosius agreed to rescind his order. One does not need to demonstrate a one-to-one correspondence between Roman legislation and patristic doctrine to recognize that the rhetoric and eventually the content of late Roman legislation was influenced by Christianity. Clearly the ubiquitous and ever-growing hostility of legal rhetoric and the prohibitions of owning Christian slaves and

⁶³ Rutgers 1995-96, 19.

⁶⁴ Dr. Rutgers cites my page 9; the correct page number is 387.

⁶⁵ Rutgers 1995-96, 19.

building synagogues have far more to do with Christian theology than with Roman legal tradition.

Dr. Rutgers⁶⁶ asserts that we lack the necessary information as to the actual number of conversions during the imperial period (in the fourth and fifth centuries). Actually, however, I nowhere indicate in my book that the number during this period was very great, let alone how great; certainly it was not comparable to the number in the century before and after the Common Era.

Dr. Rutgers⁶⁷ says that I⁶⁸ maintain that laws aimed at putting an end to full conversion were not obeyed, but elsewhere, he says, I⁶⁹ suggest that such laws were not enforced. There is, however, no necessary contradiction here. Dr. Rutgers suggests another hypothesis, namely that imperial laws were simply not known among the general population; but, in answer to this, we may remark that it seems hard to believe that Churchmen would not have made such laws known; and, in any case, ignorance is no excuse in the eyes of the law.

As to “sympathizers” with Judaism, Dr. Rutgers⁷⁰ insists that even after the discovery of the Aphrodisias inscription one can still argue that in some cases the term “G-d-fearer” refers to someone who was not technically a “sympathizer,” but one who simply held the Jewish G-d in high esteem. But is this not enough to make one a “G-d-fearer”? Moreover, despite Murphy-Connor,⁷¹ it is hard to believe that the same term *θεοσεβεῖς* in the same inscription would be used in two different senses, once referring to “G-d-fearers” and once referring *merely* to those who held the Jewish G-d in high esteem.

Dr. Rutgers⁷² is not convinced by my view⁷³ that the term “G-d-fearers” in an inscription from Miletus should be regarded as a reference to “sympathizers” rather than to pious Jews. But the inscription refers to the “place of the Jews who are also [called] G-d-fearers

⁶⁶ Rutgers 1995-96, 20.

⁶⁷ Rutgers 1995-96, 20. n. 59.

⁶⁸ Feldman 1993, 395.

⁶⁹ Feldman 386, 392, 394.

⁷⁰ Rutgers 1995-96, 21.

⁷¹ Murphy-O'Connor 1992, 418-24.

⁷² Rutgers 1995-96, 21, n. 62.

⁷³ Feldman 1993, 361.

(θεοσεβεῖς).” If the reference were to Jews the inscription would not have spoken of Jews who are *also* called G-d-fearers, since Jews *ipso facto* revered G-d.

Toward the end of his discussion, Dr. Rutgers⁷⁴ asserts that though neither Professor Baron nor I have much to say about Graetz, neither of us has said much that has not already been said, albeit in a more rudimentary form, by Graetz. This seems to contrast with Dr. Rutgers’ earlier statement⁷⁵ that I propose a radical new view of pagan attitudes to Jewish culture.

In summary, we all owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Rutgers for so thoughtfully raising key questions pertaining to the relations of Jews and non-Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Rutgers 1995-96, 30-31,

⁷⁵ Rutgers 1995-96, 2.

⁷⁶ I should like to express my thanks to Professors Bezalel Bar-Kochva, David Berger, Aryeh Kasher, Steve Mason, Alfredo M. Rabello, Daniel R. Schwartz, Seth Schwartz, and Joseph Sievers for their helpful suggestions in connection with this essay.

CHAPTER NINE

CONVERSION TO JUDAISM IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

1. INTRODUCTION

In the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, much scholarship, especially in Germany, insisted that Judaism, particularly when Hadrian forbade circumcision in the second century, but not restricted to that period, was not interested in gaining converts.¹ In fact, Judaism was said to be hostile to such attempts. Such scholarship was often based on hidden agenda, namely to prove that Christianity, which eagerly sought proselytes, was therefore superior to Judaism. Others, such as Dieter Georgi,² who goes so far as to assert that Jews were active missionaries, explain the development of Jewish proselytism in the context of an emerging universalism in Judaism itself and as preparation for Christian missionary activity. As for Jewish scholars, they were often influenced by the long-time prevailing attitude of thoroughly discouraging proselytism. Just prior to World War II, the Reform Judaism movement in the United States considered the possibility of seeking out converts. Two works of scholarship that appeared at that time concluded that Judaism in the Talmudic period was favorably disposed toward proselytes and indeed sought after them eagerly.³ But most studies of the subject by Jewish scholars are influenced by or at least try to explain away the current Orthodox Jewish aversion to seeking converts.

The author of this paper wishes to stress that, in contrast to his earlier view,⁴ he does not find evidence of missionary activity, let

¹ The literature on the subject of proselytism by Jews in antiquity is enormous. See the bibliography listed in Feldman 1992, 553-54, n. 1. To this list the following may be added: Barclay 1996; Georgi 1986; Goodman 1994a; McKnight 1998; Porton 1994; and Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987.

² Georgi 1986.

³ Bamberger 1939; Braude 1940.

⁴ See Feldman 1992d.

alone organized missionary activity, by Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman period (in fact, we do not know the name of a single Jewish missionary who systematically sought converts to classical Judaism during this period, nor do we know the title of a single tract that has as its goal the conversion of non-Jews to Judaism); but he does seek to show that Jews during this period were open to those who wished to convert, and that many, perhaps even very many, did convert.

This paper attempts to establish two points: first, that there was a tremendous increase in the number of Jews between the time of the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. and the first century C.E., both in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora; and secondly, that there is considerable evidence that Judaism, especially in the period from the second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E., was open to converts and that there is considerable evidence that many did indeed convert, both in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora. A good deal of the thesis depends upon the reliability of Josephus, who is a key source for population figures. Since much of the increase in population apparently occurred in the Land of Israel, an important part of the argument will be a consideration of the question as to how many people the Land could support in those days.

2. THE NUMBER OF JEWS IN 586 B.C.E.

Salo Baron, whose greatest specialty was estimating Jewish populations through the ages, begins his article, "Population,"⁵ with a strong statement of caution: "Because of the great difficulties in ascertaining human population data in general, and Jewish data in particular, especially in ancient and medieval times, a word of caution is even more necessary here than in most other areas of historical and sociological research." Baron cites the report of Carlo Cippola and his associates to the International Congress of Historical Sciences that "in the eyes of demographers bent on scientific precision and certainty all demographic research undertaken for any period before the eighteenth century runs the risk of appearing as a mere fantasy." Nonetheless, he adds, population statistics are too vital for the understanding of all other socioeconomic, political, and even intel-

⁵ Baron 1971.

lectual developments for scholarship to be satisfied with a resigned *ignoramus et ignorabimus*. He quotes the statement of David Hume⁶ that the question of population in every nation and every period is “the most curious and important of all questions of erudition.” He also cites the Spanish sociologist Javier Ruiz Almanza’s epigram, that “history without demography is an enigma, just as is demography without history.” And yet, it is only recently, and especially since the appearance of Tim Parkin’s work,⁷ that demography has finally taken a respected place in classical scholarship.⁸

Baron draws upon census figures found in the Bible itself, notably in 2 Sam. 24:9 and 1 Chron. 21:5, which indicate, in the days of King David (ca. 1000 B.C.E.), a population well over five million and which he approaches very critically. To be sure, he also draws upon the Assyrian king Sennacherib’s admittedly grandiloquent boast that in 701 B.C.E. he had deported 200,150 men, women, and children from the Judaeen kingdom. He also cites biblical data (2 Chron. 35:7-9) concerning the number of paschal lambs, 37,600, slaughtered in the reign of the Judaeen king Josiah in 622 B.C.E. (with an average of ten diners per each lamb this gives a total of 376,000). As we see from a similar method in Josephus (*War* 6.422) and in rabbinic literature (*b.Pes.* 64b) of counting people through noting the number of animals slaughtered, it is the high priest who is responsible for the counting, and we may surmise that since the counting is for religious purposes, care would have been shown. Apparently, constant warfare for the period after Josiah caused a great decline in population; and we may ascribe a general credibility, though the exact figures may be debated, to the import of the figures for the kingdom of Judah during the Babylonian conquest and its aftermath in the years 597-582 B.C.E., notably the statement (2 Kgs. 24:14-16) that the Babylonians “carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths.” Finally, Baron refers to archaeological discoveries that confirm that after 586 B.C.E. the Judaeen countryside was quite deserted.⁹ On the basis of these and numerous other scattered data, supported by a number of demographic considerations,

⁶ Hume 1875, 58. Cited by Baron 1972, 23.

⁷ Parkin 1992.

⁸ See Bowersock 1997, 373-79.

⁹ Baron 1972, 23-73, has examined the literary and archaeological evidence.

we may, largely based on Baron's figures, venture to propose the following highly tentative table for the approximate population of ancient Israel and Judah between 1000 and 586 B.C.E.:

	1000 B.C.E.	733/701 B.C.E.	586 B.C.E.
Judah	450,000	300,000-350,000	162,000-233,000
Israel	1,350,000	800,000-1,000,000	—

McGing¹⁰ states that "Baron gives absolutely no indication of how he arrives at the figure for the population of Judah in 586 B.C.E.—which is the vital starting place for the notion of a massive increase in the population later on." McGing was clearly not aware that Baron had discussed this matter in an essay in Hebrew, which had been translated into English, in which he explained how he arrived at an estimate of between 300,000 and 350,000 for the population of Judah in the year 733 B.C.E.¹¹ Baron's figure for the total population of Judah in 586 B.C.E. is based upon the estimate that the number of exiles, as mentioned in Jer. 52:28-30 (3,023 in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year) and in 2 Kgs. 24:14-16 (10,000, in addition to artisans and gatekeepers, in Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year) and in Jer. 52:29 (832 in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year) and in Jer. 52:30 (745 in Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year), consisted primarily of adult male soldiers. If we take into account the families of these adults, since in the first exile only adult males were counted, although they went into exile with their families, and if we multiply the number by four, since we may reasonably estimate that the average family consisted of about three additional members besides the soldiers, we arrive at a figure of approximately 52,000 exiles; moreover, only 1,577 were exiled in 586 B.C.E. He estimates that twenty to thirty per cent of the entire population belonged to the soldier families and less than three per cent to the craftsmen. This would give an approximate figure of between 162,000 and 233,000 for the total population.

Can such numbers be taken seriously? We may wonder about figures of casualties in war, number of captives, and especially boasts of victorious kings; but some of the figures in the Bible are census

¹⁰ McGing 2002, 90.

¹¹ Baron 1933, 76-136; English translation: 1972, 23-73.

figures (probably official numbers, especially when based on collection of taxes and the imposition of public services, where the propensity toward rounding of numbers is reduced or even absent)¹² and deserve to be taken more seriously. McKnight¹³ cannot believe that 1,650,000 Jews were wiped out, as Baron postulates, between 1000 and 586 B.C.E., but he forgets that ten of the twelve tribes were eliminated by the Assyrians in 722-721 B.C.E.

3. THE CREDIBILITY OF JOSEPHUS GENERALLY FOR POPULATION FIGURES

Josephus (*Ap.* 1.45) is particularly critical of those who venture “to describe events in which they bore no part, without taking the trouble to seek information from those who know the facts.” Indeed, as Marincola¹⁴ has noted, one of the most distinctive aspects of ancient historiography generally is the liberal use of polemic against predecessors. Josephus is aware that he may be subjected to a charge of bias, as a Jew and as one who had participated directly in the war against the Romans; and so he explicitly promises that he will not exaggerate the deeds of his compatriots and that he will faithfully record the actions of both combatants (*War* 1.9). He attacks, in the sharpest terms, other historians of the war: “We have actually had so-called histories even of our recent war published by persons who never visited the sites nor were anywhere near the actions described, but, having put together a few hearsay reports, have, with the gross impudence of drunken revelers, miscalled their productions by the name of history” (*Ap.* 1.46). Josephus is clearly here contrasting the accuracy of his narrative of his own campaign as general in Galilee and his presence at the siege of Jerusalem with the account of his chief literary rival, Justus of Tiberias (*Life* 336-39). The fact that he felt constrained to defend himself against the charges of his rival historian Justus meant that he had to be particularly careful to be accurate. He is especially critical of the inaccuracies of Justus (*Life* 358), since the latter was not a combatant and had not consulted Vespasian’s and Titus’ *Commentaries*. He specifically states that Justus

¹² See Parkin 1992, 19.

¹³ McKnight 1998, 29, n. 40.

¹⁴ Marincola 1997, 218-36.

had written his account twenty years earlier but that he had not dared to publish his work while Vespasian, Titus, and Agrippa were still alive, clearly implying that he himself had no such fears and, in fact, challenging his rivals to match his daring.

Josephus, on the other hand, stresses that, having presented his work to Vespasian, Titus, and Agrippa, he expected to receive testimony to his accuracy and that he was not disappointed. In particular, he remarks (*Life* 364) that Agrippa wrote sixty-two letters testifying to the accuracy of the records. To be sure, the number, sixty-two, does seem like a case of overkill; but if they are authentic this indicates that Josephus' accuracy was very much in question. True, he may have had a motive in exaggerating the figures; but at the time that he published his work a mere decade after the fall of Jerusalem, there were many survivors of the siege who could have challenged his data. It is surely significant that there is almost no precedent that is extant for what Josephus does, namely to seek verification of his work from a knowledgeable reader. For Josephus this is clearly a means of securing some sort of authority, both because the individuals to whom he showed his account had participated in the events and because they were important people.

We may well ask whether Josephus presented his work to the emperors Vespasian and Titus in order to have them confirm their accuracy. Perhaps he simply wanted to confirm, since they were finished works, that they conformed with the official version. Josephus' motive in presenting the book to them may have been to obtain a reward, as indeed he did receive. Indeed, that Titus affixed his signature to Josephus' work and ordered the book to be published meant that he had thus made Josephus' account the official version of the war (*Life* 363). The fact, as noted by Josephus (*Life* 359-60) and as we have mentioned above, that Josephus' great literary rival, Justus of Tiberias, waited until Vespasian and Titus had died before publishing his account, which he had written twenty years earlier, indicates that Justus had written an independent version and did not expect to get the imprimatur of the emperors. But even if Josephus hoped to gain something from his version, the fact is that his account would seem as a history to be superior in comprehensiveness to that of Justus in that Josephus, and not Justus, had actually been a combatant in the war, had been present in Jerusalem during the siege, and had had access to the memoirs of Vespasian and Titus.

We do have instances of other historians showing their work to

emperors. Cassius Dio is the best example. He (73 [72].23.2) had written a pamphlet about the dreams and portents that encouraged Alexander Severus to seek the principate and had sent it to the emperor, who, in turn, sent Dio a long and complimentary acknowledgment. Severus may simply have written a polite note of gratitude. But this is not a case of seeking confirmation of the accuracy of the historian's work, as is the case of Josephus' submitting his work to Vespasian and Titus and Agrippa II. We have no indication that Dio sought Severus' stamp of approval, which, to be sure, he did receive, after which Dio decided to write a history of the Romans from its beginning to the death of Severus (235 C.E.). As a result of this acknowledgement, says Dio, he wrote his history, which, he asserts, won Severus' approval; but he does not tell us specifically that Severus had vouched for its accuracy.

A closer example is Fronto's planned history on the Parthian War (161-165 C.E.) of the Emperor Lucius Verus. Verus himself was highly involved in that project, and Fronto solicited his input precisely because he knew that Verus could provide him with detailed information (there are some letters, e.g., *Ad Verum Imperatorem* 2.9, between Fronto and Verus that attest to this). Such apparent interest in "research" would not, of course, have guaranteed the accuracy of the information; and, indeed, it might even call into question its accuracy, since the source had such a vested interest in the narrative. But there is a difference between this case and that of Josephus in that Josephus had already written his history and sought confirmation of its accuracy after he had completed it. Fronto could still modify his account, since he was merely gathering data.

Another possible parallel is Cicero's offer to his friend Lucius Lucceius (*Fam.* 5.12) to provide him with as much information as he needed concerning the year of Cicero's consulship. But here neither Cicero nor Lucceius is seeking to confirm the accuracy of the data; in fact, Cicero suggests that Lucceius should feel free to embellish the facts.

Indeed, Josephus' very subject matter suggests that he feels most at home writing of events about which he has some personal knowledge. In this regard his approach to historiography is much more "Polybian" than "Livian." This should make us more inclined to trust Josephus—not because he is free of bias (what historian is?) but rather because there are fewer layers (chronological and otherwise) between him and his information. Moreover, no historian

whose works have come down to us from antiquity—not Herodotus, not Thucydides, not Livy, not Tacitus, not Dio Cassius¹⁵—is more interested in demonstrating his reliability and is more aware of his rivals. Indeed, he starts his history of the Jewish War with the statement (*War* 1.1-2) that the subject of his history, the war of the Jews against the Romans, had attracted historians, some whom had taken no part in the action but had merely collected from hearsay casual and contradictory stories that they had edited in a rhetorical style, while others, who had witnessed the events, had been guilty of historical inaccuracy, due either to their flattery of the Romans or their prejudice against the Jews, and had resorted in the one case to exaggerated encomium and in the other case to invective.

From this opening statement it is clear that the number of historians of the war was not small and that Josephus sought mightily to present himself as one who was not unduly beholden to the Romans and who was fair-minded toward his fellow-Jews. He goes on (*War* 1.7) to assert that the others who had written accounts of the war may have given the title of histories to their work but that, in fact, they utterly lacked sound information and that they exaggerated the achievement of the Romans while deprecating that of the Jews. The fact that Josephus (*War* 1.3) wrote his original account in Aramaic and then arranged, with some help from assistants (*Ap.* 1.50) to have his work translated into Greek, meant that he was ready to face the criticism of his fellow historians in the Graeco-Roman world. It was, he says (*ibid.*), because he was so confident of the veracity of his account that he took as his witnesses, before all others, the commanders-in-chief of the war, Vespasian and Titus, and that it was to them that he presented the first copies of the work. He then states that he gave copies to many Romans who had taken part in the war and who presumably could question his veracity. He further adds that he sold copies to a large number of Jews who likewise could have challenged his claim to truth. “All of these,” he says (*Ap.* 1.52), “bore testimony to my scrupulous safeguarding of the truth, and they were not the men to conceal their sentiments or keep silence

¹⁵ To be sure, Polybius is very much concerned with establishing his reliability and countering his rivals. Such remarks occur throughout his work, and at great length in Book 12.

had I, through ignorance or partiality, distorted or omitted any of the facts.”

Not only does Josephus seek to establish his own credibility as an accurate historian, but the fact is that he dares (*Ap.* 1.15-27) to criticize at length and by name no fewer than eight Greek historians. To be sure, none of the historians whom Josephus names was alive in his day, and the treatise in which he names them is noteworthy for its strong polemical and rhetorical elements.¹⁶ Nevertheless, there was a great risk in doing so, inasmuch as Josephus’ contemporary rivals, who often appealed to these predecessors and who were much influenced by them, could easily have reduced him to absurdity if they could show that Josephus himself was unreliable as a historian. His method is to show how the Greek historians, namely, Hellanicus, Acusilaus, Ephorus, Timaeus, Herodotus, Antiochus of Syracuse, Philistius, Callias, the Athtides, the historians of Argos, and the historians of the Persian invasion themselves accused one another of inaccuracies, mendacities, and inconsistencies. Surely, as Josephus admits (*Ap.* 1.18), no historian had a higher reputation for accuracy than Thucydides; and yet, Josephus does not hesitate to note that on many points even Thucydides is accused of error by some critics. Certainly no historian would have dared to be so critical of his fellow historians unless he felt confident that his own reputation for accuracy was beyond reproach.

Josephus then maintains (*Ap.* 1.19-22) that the most fundamental reason for the errors and inconsistencies of the Greek historians is the neglect of the Greeks, including even the Athenians, to keep official records of current events. Josephus could hardly have ventured to make such a statement if he himself had failed to consult official records, such as censuses and military reports. A second reason (*Ap.* 1.23-27), says Josephus, for their inconsistencies is that the Greek historians were concerned not so much with discovering the truth as with displaying their literary ability and thus outshining their rivals, though, ironically, that is precisely what Josephus himself seems to be doing in the essay *Against Apion*. Having made such a statement Josephus had to be careful to place his premium upon accuracy and truth.

¹⁶ See Kasher 1996, 143-86.

4. THE NUMBER OF JEWS IN THE HELLENISTIC-ROMAN PERIOD

There are many questions when we deal with figures of ancient populations. In his pathbreaking book on Roman demography, Parkin¹⁷ stresses that we cannot believe what ancient authors tell us about population sizes without first considering their source of information (namely, whether they are making observations or whether they are basing themselves on census material) and their purpose in giving us the information. In particular, he attacks the practice of some scholars of accepting a population figure if it “sounds about right,” since this is clearly too subjective. Even if we are dealing with a census figure, does this include only adult males, or does it include women, children, enfranchised aliens, and ex-slaves? When we deal with ancient literary sources, we must be wary of their hidden agenda, their cultural bias, their preference for symbolic and rounded numbers, and the impact of bureaucratic inefficiency and attempts at tax evasion on the part of those seeking to avoid being counted.¹⁸

Instead, a number of modern scholars, most notably Hopkins, Parkin, Henige, and Scheidel, have stressed the importance of examining modern parallels to determine which ancient literary evidence has some claim to coherence and validity.¹⁹ Scholars are increasingly influenced by parallels with modern studies as to the number of people who can live in a given-sized area, the amount of food and water that they need to consume, and how to explain sizable jumps and declines in numbers. Modern study of ancient demography has to an ever higher degree been interdisciplinary, drawing insights from parallels in other areas, ancient and modern, in such fields as history, biology, medicine, archaeology, anthropology, and sociology.²⁰ But even Parkin²¹ warns that we should not become bogged down in protracted comparisons with specific modern populations, as if the ancient world as a whole is directly comparable; for even if it were, he asks, how would we know? Even when we do have census figures for the number of Roman citizens, as we have in Livy every

¹⁷ Parkin 1992, 65.

¹⁸ See Scheidel 2001, 11.

¹⁹ Hopkins 1966, 245-64; Parkin 1992; Parkin 2000; Henige 1998, 215-42; and Scheidel 2001, 10-12.

²⁰ See Scheidel 2001, 80-81.

²¹ Parkin 1992, 69.

five or ten years, do they include women and children or are they of adult male citizens alone or only those who possessed the minimum property qualification that made them liable to conscription?²² How accurate was the count? Did they include those serving overseas? For example, how, if at all, can we explain the sharp rise in the Roman population, according to the census, from 319,000 in 131 B.C.E. to 395,000 in 125 B.C.E. after thirty years of slow decline?²³ In particular, since numerals in manuscripts are represented by letters in both Greek and Latin manuscripts, they are often incorrectly transmitted.²⁴

How many Jews were there in the Hellenistic-Roman period? The tendency toward extreme skepticism that we find in the most recent scholarship is epitomized by the remark of Deevey²⁵ in regard to estimates of populations before 1650. Jones,²⁶ however, states categorically that he knows of only one figure that can be regarded as an accurate count of the entire population of a definite area. That figure, he asserts, occurs in what he says is an unexpected place, namely in a speech put into the mouth of King Agrippa II by Josephus (*War* 2.385), in which he says that the population of Egypt, exclusive of Alexandria, as may be estimated from poll-tax returns, was 7,500,000.²⁷ What is striking is that Josephus gives the basis for this figure, namely the poll-tax returns. This is precisely the kind of information that is most likely to give us a fair approximation of the actual number of inhabitants, as Parkin, who is such a minimalist when it comes to population statistics, is ready to concede.²⁸ We know from the papyri that such figures were based on careful house-to-house canvassing and included all people—men, women, children, slaves,

²² See Jones 1948, 3.

²³ Jones 1948, 5. On the questions as to what the census figures represent and the degree to which they are reliable see especially Brunt 1971, 26-43, who explains the tremendous increase in the number of persons counted under Augustus by postulating that unlike Republican censors he included women and children.

²⁴ Reynolds and Wilson 1974, 201.

²⁵ Deevey 1960, 197: "One suspects that writers have been copying each other's guesses."

²⁶ Jones 1948, 10.

²⁷ The Codex Vaticanus, dating from approximately the eleventh century, reads 5,500,000, and in the margin reads 7,500,000. Niese adopts the latter figure, which is found in all the other manuscripts. Finley 1973, 31, says that this figure is one of the very few ancient population figures that we have that is likely to be accurate.

²⁸ Parkin 1992, 19-21.

and aliens. Shall we say, as do Bagnall and Frier,²⁹ that Josephus' figure was not derived from an actual count? Moreover, Josephus may, admittedly, have been motivated to exaggerate the number because Agrippa, by emphasizing that the greatest of nations have submitted to the Romans, is seeking to deter the revolutionaries from rebelling.

It is significant that Josephus' figure differs from that given by Diodorus Siculus (1.31.8) a century earlier, who notes that the population was three million but that in times of old it was seven million. Diodorus, we may remark, was also aware of the value of census returns, since he states that the free residents of Alexandria numbered 300,000, as indicated by census returns. The manuscripts read three million as the population of Egypt, but, as Parkin³⁰ indicates, almost all scholars regard this as a textual error and emend it to seven million. Rathbone³¹ is skeptical as to the credibility of Josephus' figure, since, he says, the core of the speech put into Agrippa's mouth is a mere encomium of the size and strength of the Roman Empire. He is puzzled by the fact that someone who had access to the records of the Roman administration of Egypt should have tried to calculate the total population from the number of adult males recorded in the lists of those liable to the poll-tax rather than from the census figures from which the poll-tax lists were compiled. Moreover, basing himself on the carrying capacity of the land of Egypt, which had at most 25,000 square kilometers of cultivated land, he states that the economy and population of Graeco-Roman Egypt are more likely to find a parallel in Egypt of the nineteenth century and consequently concludes that the maximum population that Egypt could have sustained is between three and five million;³² but, we may remark, even Rathbone does not contest Diodorus' statement that in times of old it supported a population of seven million. Indeed, Rathbone³³ admits that in theory the land would have been sufficient to maintain almost

²⁹ Bagnall and Frier 1994, 53-54. Moreover, Bagnall and Frier are skeptical as to the accuracy of Josephus' figure for the population of Egypt because this would suppose a population level that Egypt was not to reattain until the end of the nineteenth century after the introduction of perennial irrigation and the beginning of Egypt's integration into the industrial economies of Europe.

³⁰ Parkin 1992, 65.

³¹ Rathbone 1990, 105-6.

³² Rathbone 1990, 107-10.

³³ Rathbone 1990, 108.

ten million people at subsistence level, though he realizes that this does not take into account years of poor crops and sizable exports and the fact that those in the urban population who were better off would certainly live above the subsistence level. But he is thinking, we may add, of the subsistence level of the nineteenth century, not of antiquity. Josephus, he admits, moved in official circles and was probably acquainted with at least one governor of Egypt, the renegade Jew Tiberius Julius Alexander.

We have several writers who give us indications of the tremendous increase in the number of Jews in the Diaspora. So populous," says Philo (*Flacc.* 45-46), "are the Jews that no one country can hold them, and therefore they settle in very many of the most prosperous countries in Europe and Asia." Indeed, Philo (*Legat.* 214) says that the Jews are spread over all the continents and islands so that they seem to be not much less in number than the indigenous inhabitants. Philo is here discussing the dilemma in which the Roman governor of Syria, Petronius, found himself when he received the order of the Emperor Gaius Caligula to dedicate a statue of the Emperor in Jerusalem, since he realized that the Jews would die en masse rather than permit this to be done. It was therefore, to be sure, in Petronius' interest to exaggerate the number of the Jews; and when he sends the letter to the Emperor urging him to cancel his order he repeats (*Legat.* 330) that the Jews dwell not only in their Holy Land but also everywhere throughout the inhabitable world. When the Jewish king Agrippa I writes to Caligula he likewise emphasizes (*Legat.* 281-82) the fact that the Jews are spread out in Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, the islands of the Aegean, and Mesopotamia. Strabo, who because of his extensive travels was in a good position to see how relatively numerous the Jews were, is quoted by Josephus (*Ant.* 14.114) as saying that the whole habitable world (οἰκουμένη) is filled with Jews and singles out Cyrene and Egypt in particular. The Jewish King Agrippa II (*War* 2.398), attempting to dissuade the Jews from going to war with the Romans, warns them that, since there is not a people in the world who do not contain a portion of the Jews, Jews everywhere will be massacred.

As to Philo's estimate that the Jews in Egypt numbered a million (*Flacc.* 43), this is not merely Philo's estimate, inasmuch as he states that the governor of Egypt, Flaccus, knew that there were no fewer than a million Jews in the province. He does not tell us how he knew that Flaccus knew how many Jews were in the province, but we may

conjecture that as the governor of a province that had a history of tension between Jews and Greeks, he might well have assumed that the governor must have had access to such information. McGing³⁴ objects to my statement that Philo was the head of the Alexandrian Jewish community and consequently must have had considerable knowledge of the number of Jews. In response, we may acknowledge that it is true that we nowhere have a statement that Philo was the head of the community, but surely he would not have been chosen to head the delegation of Alexandrian Jews that met with the Emperor Gaius Caligula (*Ant.* 18.259) if he were not *de facto* the head of the community. Moreover, even if he were not actually the head of the community, he certainly describes himself (*Spec.* 3.1-6) as no longer having leisure for philosophical speculation and having been plunged and indeed submerged in the ocean of civic cares. This is the picture of a person who has devoted himself fully to the concerns of the community. True, the figure is an estimate, but one cannot plan conscientiously, as apparently he did, for a community's needs if one does not have a good idea as to the number of people in that community.

The figure of a million Jews in Egypt does not seem outrageously large when we consider that we have a figure, admittedly based upon an interpretation of a badly damaged text in the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, that there were 180,000 Jews in Alexandria in the year 37.³⁵ We are told that during the riot in Alexandria in the year 66 (*Jos., War* 2.497) 50,000 Jews perished, a round number about which we may be suspicious. But the very fact that both Philo and Josephus indicate that the number of Jewish inhabitants was very large convinces even so skeptical a scholar as Tcherikover³⁶ that their number was really large even if we cannot be precise as to their exact number. Another skeptical scholar, Wasserstein,³⁷ commenting on Philo's estimate (*Flacc.* 43) of the number of Jews in Egypt, remarks that the fact that he mentions such a number points to his expectation that it or something like it might be believed. According to Cassius Dio (68.32.2), during the revolt led by the Jewish messianic figure Lukuas-Andreas in 115-117, the Jews were able to kill 220,000 in

³⁴ McGing 2002, 97.

³⁵ See Delia 1988, 286-88.

³⁶ Tcherikover 1959, 286-87.

³⁷ Wasserstein 1996, 307-8.

Libya and 240,000 in Cyprus, similarly large numbers about which we are, to be sure, suspicious; and inasmuch as by the year 117 the revolt had been mercilessly put down, we may conjecture that the number of Jews slain would have been enormous even if we are hardly in a position to give more precise numbers.

As to the number of Jews in Syria, Josephus (*War* 7.43) remarks that Jews were densely interspersed among the native populations of every portion of the world but were particularly numerous in Syria owing to the proximity to Palestine. In view of this statement, Harnack³⁸ postulates that the only province in the Roman Empire where the percentage of Jews was higher than in Egypt was Syria; and consequently he estimates that the number of Jews in Syria was over a million. In this connection, we recall Josephus' remark (*War* 2.560) that in the year 66, on the eve of the revolt against the Romans, though the inhabitants of the Syrian city of Damascus were fired with a determination to kill the Jews who resided among them, they hesitated because of their own wives, who, with few exceptions, had all converted to Judaism, though ultimately they slaughtered all the Jews, to the number of 10,500.

As a consequence of the data cited here and elsewhere, Baron³⁹ estimates that in the first century over 4,000,000 Jews lived within the boundaries of the Roman Empire outside of Palestine, with over a million each in Syria, Egypt, Babylonia, and Asia Minor; that approximately 3,000,000 lived in Palestine, and at least 1,000,000 more in Babylonia and other countries not subjected to Roman rule. Baron⁴⁰ accepts as "a fair historical reminiscence" the statement of Bar-Hebraeus, a thirteenth-century Christian Syrian writer of Jewish extraction, that the census of all the Jews in the Empire commissioned by the Emperor Claudius revealed that the total was

³⁸ Harnack 1908, 6-7, cites the estimate of Beloch 1886, 258-59, that the Jews in Egypt comprised about thirteen per cent of the total population, which he estimates at five million. This would put the number of Jews at 650,000.

³⁹ Baron 1952, 1:170 and 370-72, n. 7. McKnight 1998, 5-14, notes the self-confessed tentative and speculative nature of Baron's estimates and stresses that at no point does Baron make any suggestion that demographic figures from two different periods can be explained only on the basis of proselytization. However, even McKnight is ready to concede a total Jewish population in the first century of six million and offers no other explanation as to how to explain the vast increase in numbers.

⁴⁰ Baron 1952, 1:170.

6,944,000, which Baron says is not impossible nor even improbable. I originally accepted Baron's position on this matter; but in an article in 1995 I called attention to Rosenthal's refutation of Baron⁴¹ and admitted my error,⁴² since we find that the very same number is given in the Syriac epitome of Eusebius' *Chronography*⁴³ as the number not of Jews but of Roman citizens. McGing,⁴⁴ who apparently was unaware of my disavowal of Baron's acceptance of Bar-Hebraeus' figure as relating to the number of Jews, correctly makes the point that the notion that Claudius would order a census specifically of Jews is extremely improbable, especially, we might note, in view of Claudius' concern to be even-handed in his treatment of the Jews, as we see in his edict with respect to the Jews (*Ant.* 19.280-85) and notably in his famous letter (*CPJ* 2, no. 153).⁴⁵

The father of Graeco-Roman demography, Beloch,⁴⁶ who was attacked in the strongest terms by such giants of his own day as Mommsen and Wilamowitz, and who has now been rehabilitated in the highest terms by Parkin, Scheidel, and Bowersock,⁴⁷ estimates the number of Jews in the early Roman Empire as six million, including two million in Palestine. In a recent essay on demography in the new edition in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, the hypercritical Frier⁴⁸ states that "by and large Beloch's prudent estimates [which were made over a century ago] have stood up extremely well to subsequent criticism." He then adds that the main difficulty is Beloch's estimate for Anatolia and greater Syria [which includes Palestine], to which Beloch assigned a combined population of nineteen million. Frier offers as the reason for his skepticism his belief that Beloch's figure would require a population density that has not been achieved until the twentieth century. But, we may reply, this assumes that the ancients required a standard of living comparable to ours and that they were

⁴¹ Rosenthal 1954, 267-68.

⁴² Feldman 1995-96, 155 n. 3.

⁴³ *Epitome Syria ex Eusebi Chronicorum Canonum Libro Deprompta*, in Schoene 1866, 211.

⁴⁴ McGing 2002, 94.

⁴⁵ See Tcherikover 1957, 1:73-74; and Feldman 1993, 561 n. 59.

⁴⁶ Beloch 1886. For a thorough and fair appreciation of Beloch's achievement see Lo Cascio 1994, 23-40.

⁴⁷ Parkin 1992, 5; Scheidel 2001, 5-9; Bowersock 1997, 373-79.

⁴⁸ Bruce W. Frier, "Demography," *CAH* vol. 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 811.

not able to raise or import enough food to maintain it. Philo (*Mos.* 2.232), obviously thinking of the extent to which the Jews in his own day had spread out to various countries, has G-d reply to those who have been unable to partake of the paschal lamb that they do not deserve to be deprived of this privilege, "particularly if the nation has grown so populous that a single country cannot contain it and has sent out colonies in all directions." Again, Philo calls attention to the magnitude of the population of the Jews (*Spec.* 1.133, 141) by noting that even the poorest of the priests have a superabundance of first-fruits. These figures diverge considerably from one another, but all of them indicate a vast increase in the number of Jews within the five centuries after the destruction of the first Temple. When one examines the long list of Jewish communities in the Diaspora, which is well documented by archaeological, epigraphic, papyrological, and literary evidence,⁴⁹ the impression, even if it is not precisely quantifiable, is that the Jews were very numerous, even though we cannot arrive at the actual total number of Jews.

5. THE NUMBER OF JEWS IN PALESTINE

How many Jews lived in Palestine during the first century? Surely one cannot proceed, as does Harnack,⁵⁰ who estimates that the number was about 700,000, on the basis of the fact that in the year that he wrote his book, 1902, there were between 600,000 and 650,000 Jews living there. Juster⁵¹ goes to the other extreme in estimating the total as 5,000,000. In his pathfinding work, Beloch⁵² estimates the total as no more than 2,000,000.

The recovery of the Jewish population after 586 B.C.E. was very slow. According to Ezra (2:64-65), the whole congregation of returning exiles was 42,360, besides 7,337 servants and 200 singers. How reliable are these numbers? Clearly, the book of Ezra intends to emphasize the authority of Ezra. He is introduced to us (Ezra 7:1-5) as one whose genealogy is carefully traced, generation by generation through seventeen generations to Aaron, the first priest. He

⁴⁹ So Wasserstein 1996, 312, who cites Schürer 1986, 3:1-86.

⁵⁰ Harnack 1908, 1:8.

⁵¹ Juster 1914, 1:210, n. 2.

⁵² Beloch 1886, 248.

is described as a brilliant scholar and, most importantly, as one to whom King Artaxerxes of Persia granted his every request (Ezra 7:6). Of course, the fact that these are not round numbers does not necessarily mean that they are accurate, but in view of Ezra's supreme position they should be taken seriously. However, after the establishment of an independent Judaeen state by Simon Maccabee in 140 B.C.E. and especially after the annexation of large territories conquered by his successors, John Hyrcanus and Alexander Janinaeus, and the conversion to Judaism of the Idumaeans (Jos., *Ant.* 13.257) and Ituraeans (Jos., *Ant.* 13.318),⁵³ the population increased considerably.

Estimating crowds has to this day been a very hazardous business. Even Julius Caesar, as Henige⁵⁴ has pointed out, is guilty of exaggerating the number of his opponents, which ranges as high as 430,000 and often exceeds 100,000, and can hardly be used to estimate the population of ancient Gaul. Moreover, numbers are the most easily corrupted items in manuscripts. In general, copyists are more likely to make a mistake with numbers than with other words, since if a copyist makes a mistake with an ordinary word, the reader may be able to correct it from the context, whereas numbers do not usually alter the meaning of a context and hence are not likely to be corrected. But ancient historians were not unaware of the tendency of poets to exaggerate numbers. Thus Thucydides (1.10.3) says that it is natural to suppose that Homer as a poet adorned and magnified the expedition of the Greeks to Troy; and yet he does not utterly dismiss such evidence but rather adopts a critical approach, adding, "Still, even on his showing, it was evidently comparatively small."

Josephus (*War* 2.280) states that a crowd of no less than three million Jews implored the Roman governor Cestius Gallus, when he visited Jerusalem at Passover in 65 C.E., to have compassion upon them in view of the excesses of the procurator Florus. Can we take this number at all seriously? Price⁵⁵ takes the extreme position of doubting Josephus' numbers unless they are absolutely provable, which, of course, they never are. His number here may well have been a round figure; we find what appears also to be a similar round

⁵³ On these conversions see Feldman 1993, 324-26.

⁵⁴ Henige 1998, 215-42.

⁵⁵ Price 1992, 205.

figure (*Ap.* 1.195) in connection with the area of Judaea, which Josephus gives as 3,000,000 *arourae* (approximately 1,500,000 acres or 234 square miles). Multiples of three are numerous in Josephus:⁵⁶ thus whereas, according to the Bible (1 Sam. 15:4), the number of infantrymen enumerated by King Saul is 200,000 and the number of men of Judah is 10,000, Josephus (*Ant.* 6.134) follows the reading of most of the manuscripts of the LXX in doubling the number of infantrymen to 400,000 and tripling that of those from Judah to 30,000. Furthermore, whereas according to the Hebrew text the number of priests slain in Nob (1 Sam. 22:18) is 85, and according to the Lucianic manuscripts of the LXX 350, and according to the other manuscripts of the LXX 305, and according to the Greek epitome 530, Josephus (*Ant.* 6.268) gives the number as 300, clearly a round number.⁵⁷ Again, he speaks of 3,000 infantry who accompanied him (*Life* 213); 300 quick-firers that the Jewish rebels had (*War* 5.359); and 30,000 followers of the Egyptian false prophet who attacked a Roman garrison in Jerusalem during the procuratorship of Felix (*War* 2.261).⁵⁸ If, as seems likely, this last is the Egyptian prophet who is mentioned in the Book of Acts (21:38), we find quite a discrepancy in the number, inasmuch as in Acts the number is merely 4,000.

Moreover, we can compare these numbers with the number of Jews present for Passover in 66. According to Josephus, the Roman

⁵⁶ The number three is likewise a favorite of the rabbis. Thus we hear (*b.Meg.* 6b) that Rome covers an area of 300 parasangs (approximately 1200 miles) by 300. It has 300 markets corresponding to the number of days of the solar year. Moreover, the Palestinian Ḥama bar Ḥanina, who lived in the latter part of the third century, alluding to the constant wars between the Romans and the Germans and the constant turnovers of Roman emperors, remarks (*b.Meg.* 6b and *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 75.9) that there were 300 crowned heads in Germany and 365 chieftains in Rome; and every day they engage in combat and one of them is killed, so that they have the trouble of appointing a new king.

⁵⁷ Elsewhere, the manuscripts of Josephus contain four different readings—85 (obviously corrected to conform with the Hebrew text), 305 (the Latin translation, obviously corrected to conform with the LXX), 530 (the reading of the Greek epitome), and 385 (the reading of the three oldest, though not always the best, manuscripts of Josephus). The fact that Pseudo-Philo (63.3) agrees with manuscripts MSP of Josephus in giving 385 as the number supports this reading of Josephus.

⁵⁸ The number three is likewise popular in exaggeration with the rabbis, as we see in the statement of Rabbi Ulla (*b.Meg.* 6b), that the city of Rome covers an area of 300 parasangs (approximately 1200 miles) by 300. It is said to have 300 markets, corresponding to the number of days in the solar year. Moreover, it is said to have 3,000 baths.

governor Cestius Gallus (*War* 6.422) in the year 66 ordered a count of the Jews to be taken by the chief priests and reported to the Roman emperor Nero. He noted that 255,600 lambs were slaughtered for Passover in that year. The size of crowds, as we have noted, is notoriously difficult to estimate, and hence scholars may object to the figure of three million in the crowd (*War* 2.280) that implored the Roman governor Cestius Gallus in 65 c.e.; but 255,600 lambs that are slaughtered are more easily and more accurately counted, and the number is not a typically large number. Josephus remarks that since each lamb was consumed by no fewer than ten persons (*War* 6.424), this gives a total of 2,556,000, and this did not include menstruous women and those who were defiled and who consequently were not permitted to partake of the sacrifice. Josephus himself (*War* 6.425) gives the total as 2,700,000; but this is because, as he says, the number of people in a company often included as many as twenty. Beloch's comment⁵⁹ on this passage is that no intelligent person will believe such a figure, and he quotes the remark of Smith:⁶⁰ "The assertions that 3,000,000 were collected at the Passover, that a million perished in the siege, that 100,000 escaped, etc., are so childish that it is surprising that anyone could ever have repeated them." Rather, this is, he says, an indication of the boastfulness of Josephus and of the lack of critical ability of those who transcribed his work. Consequently, says Beloch,⁶¹ one will view with justified distrust the other figures cited by Josephus. He then, in a remark that smacks of anti-Semitism, adds that when it comes to satisfying their own vanity Jews have always bragged.⁶²

That this was a standard method of taking a census of the Jewish people may be seen from the fact that King Agrippa (probably Agrippa II), seeking to determine the number of Jews, likewise turned to the high priest, who, we are told (*b.Pes.* 64b), in an anonymous comment of the rabbis, took a kidney from each of the Passover sacrifices and found that there were 600,000 pairs of kidneys, excluding the kidneys of those who were unclean or were on a distant journey. Likewise, we are told, there was not a single paschal lamb for which

⁵⁹ Beloch 1886, 246.

⁶⁰ Smith 1868, 1025.

⁶¹ Beloch 1886, 246.

⁶² On Beloch's views of Jews see Momigliano 1966, 32-45; (English translation, 1994) 97-120, especially 115-16; and Bowersock 1997, 373-79, especially 375.

more than ten people had not registered. This would indicate a total of six million Jews. This is clearly a round number, reminiscent of the 600,000 adult males who had left Egypt. But Josephus' number is not, like 600,000, a typically large number. Could Jerusalem have coped with the influx of so many? Why should Cestius Gallus have instructed the chief priests to take the census? Josephus (*War* 6.422) himself says that Cestius Gallus was eager to impress Nero, who, he says, held the Jews in contempt, with the strength of Jerusalem. Consequently, we may conjecture, Cestius sought to stress the sheer multitude of the Jews and the difficulty that the Romans would have in overcoming them. Since Cestius was responsible for reporting the figure, we may wonder whether he may have exaggerated the number. However, we may note that at Nero's court his consort, Poppaea Sabina, was a G-d-fearer (θεοσεβής, *Ant.* 20.195), who had successfully pleaded on behalf of the Jewish embassy that had protested the order of Festus the procurator to pull down the wall that the eminent men of Jerusalem had erected to prevent the Jewish king Agrippa II from viewing doings in the Temple. Hence, it would seem unlikely that Cestius would have risked offending the Jewish masses by misrepresenting their number.

One guesses that Cestius was confident that the chief priests could be relied upon to give an accurate count, inasmuch as it would have been most inappropriate for them, as religious leaders, to do otherwise; in any case, it was a most unusual way to count the number of people. We are suspicious of round figures, but the number of paschal lambs is not a round figure; and lambs, especially for religious purposes, are more easily counted than people. McGing⁶³ asserts that to multiply the number of lambs slaughtered by ten to determine the number of people who partook of them seems quite arbitrary, but one is less likely to be wrong if he guesses that the number of people who partook of a lamb was more than ten. Indeed, Josephus must have had the experience each Passover of partaking of the paschal lamb, and he must have noted how many partook of the paschal lamb from which he ate.

Even Parkin,⁶⁴ who is extremely skeptical about taking seriously the population figures provided by ancient writers, on the grounds

⁶³ McGing 2002, 97.

⁶⁴ Parkin 1992, 65.

that they are regularly demographically impossible, does point out, as we have noted, that we must consider the author's source of information. By this criterion Josephus' statement as to the number of Jews counted by the chief priests should be taken more seriously. To be sure, the number refers to the crowd in Jerusalem rather than to the population of all of Palestine; but we may assume that the great majority of those in the crowd came from other parts of Palestine, especially the most populous region of Galilee, which is not far from Jerusalem, rather than from such regions as Asia Minor or Egypt or Babylonia, which were further away. But even if we do not accept Josephus' number as precise, surely he is telling us, and we should be prepared to accept, that the number was very great, especially since it is supported, as to magnitude, by the number in the crowd that met Cestius Gallus, and the number of those who perished in the war against the Romans.

Nevertheless, we may note that even though Thucydides (1.20) criticizes Herodotus, to be sure not by name, for inaccuracies, he does not criticize Herodotus' figures as to the size of the Persian expedition; nor, for that matter, do other historians, who criticize their predecessors' inaccuracies, criticize their exaggerations in numbers. Is this because ancient authors understood that fanciful numbers were part of the genre? If so, how can we explain that Thucydides criticizes Homer's but not Herodotus' exaggerated numbers? Is it true that Tacitus is not addicted to exaggeration? Is Tacitus' figure (*Hist.* 5.13.3) of 600,000 as the number of those besieged in Jerusalem a typical symbolic figure, since multiples of 600 were very popular? Thus we find in Josephus (*War* 3.583) that the number of his infantry is 60,000, and his bodyguard consists of 600 picked men. Again, the number of men whom Josephus dispatched with his friend Jeremiah to the frontier of Galilee is 600 (*Life* 241). It is significant that Josephus (*War* 5.569) similarly reports that the corpses of the lower classes thrown out through the gates of Jerusalem amounted to 600,000 and that of the rest it was impossible to discover their number. The number 600,000, being the approximate number of adult Israelites who made the exodus from Egypt (Exod. 12:37), is found no fewer than five times in Josephus (*Ant.* 2.214, 317; 3.196, 288; 4.11). Is not this number clearly inconsistent with Josephus' statement (*War* 6.420) that the number of those who perished during the siege of Jerusalem was 1,100,000, of whom the majority were Jews but not natives of Jerusalem? Josephus' and Tacitus' figures do not agree, but

note should be made of the fact that Tacitus says *accepimus*, that is, “we have heard,” “we have been told,” “we have learned,” a clear admission on his part that he had not personally verified or checked the figures. He does not tell us from whom he obtained his figure; it may have been from someone who had fought under Vespasian and Titus, but he does not indicate that he had made any attempt to confirm it. Indeed, he had not been in a position to verify it, though he was not one to accept official propaganda unscrutinized, whereas Josephus was present during the time of the siege and thus had first-hand information.

Moreover, whereas 600,000 is a round number, 1,100,000 is not. If he were giving a round number we would have expected Josephus to say that the dead numbered more than a million. Furthermore, Josephus (*War* 6.420) reports the number of those taken prisoner as 97,000. This is not a round number; it is found nowhere else in Josephus⁶⁵ and deserves serious consideration; indeed, even Beloch⁶⁶ says that this number appears to be credible. It should be mentioned here, as Lo Cascio⁶⁷ remarks, that in general Beloch is hypercritical in his attitude in that he tends to accept the data of ancient sources only when they are consistent with his own interpretation. Again, we need not take Josephus’ numbers at face value, but that does not mean that we should disregard the impression that he wishes to convey, namely that the number of Jews was very large, certainly as compared with their number in 586 B.C.E. Moreover, Tacitus specifically states that the total number of those besieged of every age and both sexes was 600,000, whereas Josephus says that the 600,000 were of the lower classes only. Furthermore, Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.13.3)

⁶⁵ To be sure, 97,000 is, curiously, found elsewhere in Pseudo-Philo’s *Bib.Ant.* (31.2), where we read that of the army of Sisera there were slain 90 times 97,000 men. But, as I have noted (1971, cxvii), Josephus is speaking of the number of prisoners, whereas Pseudo-Philo is speaking of the number slain. Jacobson 1996, 2:847 adds the question as to why Pseudo-Philo would want to associate Sisera’s soldiers with the Jewish captives. Moreover, the fact that Pseudo-Philo says that the number was ninety times 97,000 instead of giving the total, 8,730,000, indicates that this is merely a large number.

⁶⁶ Beloch 1886, 248.

⁶⁷ Lo Cascio 1994, 27. Lo Cascio here cites Beloch’s comment, 1897, 323-24, on a passage in Galen (*De Propriis Animi Cuiuslibet Affectuum Dignatione et Curatione* 5.49 [Kuhn]: “I do not attribute any special importance to this passage; all my conclusions stand, even if we completely dismiss it. It simply happens to be in agreement with my system.”)

does not say that all those who were besieged died. And yet, when it comes to estimating the number of those killed we may expect that the number would hardly be precise. However, the important point to be made here is not that we have a precise number but that we have an indication of its *magnitude* from two different sources, Josephus and Tacitus, that were clearly independent of each other.

6. THE NUMBER OF JEWS IN GALILEE

One way to estimate the number of Jews, at least in Galilee, where Josephus, as general in that area, should have had special knowledge, is to start with Josephus' statement (*War* 2.583) as to the number of soldiers that he had managed to muster, namely 60,000 infantry and 350⁶⁸ cavalry, plus a bodyguard of 600.⁶⁹ Avi-Yonah⁷⁰ suggests that, on this basis, the total population of Galilee would have been approximately 750,000. At the time when, after Herod's death, his kingdom was divided among his three sons, Peraea and Galilee produced a revenue of 200 talents (*War* 2.95), whereas Herod bequeathed to Augustus 1,000 talents (*War* 1.646), that is, five times as much as the revenue of Peraea and Galilee. If, as Avi-Yonah proposes, we now multiply the number of soldiers that Josephus mustered in Galilee by five, to take into account the size of their families, this suggests a total population for the entire land of Israel of 3,750,000. However, as Broshi⁷¹ comments, this calculation is based on the credibility of Josephus' figure of 60,000, whereas this number is a stereotypical number, reminiscent of the 603,550 Israelite males who, according to the Bible, left Egypt (Num. 1:46), and assumes that the population was evenly spread throughout Palestine. Moreover, evidence of the size of armies is problematic, as den Boer⁷² points out, since we suspect that those who give the figures either exaggerate or minimize those numbers because of the position in which they happen to be,

⁶⁸ Several of the manuscripts (VRC and the Latin version) read 250.

⁶⁹ Elsewhere (*War* 2.576) Josephus says that he had levied in Galilee an army of upwards of 100,000 young men; but Thackeray 1927, 2:547, 547, explains the discrepancy between this figure and that of 60,000 (on *War* 2.583) by suggesting that not all of the 100,000 were ready for action.

⁷⁰ Avi-Yonah 1973, 429.

⁷¹ Broshi 1979, 6.

⁷² Den Boer 1973, 30.

and also because, as we have noted, variations in number are particularly frequent in manuscripts. Thus Josephus himself gives the number of soldiers whom he had mustered in Galilee as over 100,000 (*War* 2.576) and, in apparent contradiction, as 60,000 (*War* 2.583). Moreover, since Josephus covers some of the same material in the *War* and in the *Antiquities* we find discrepancies in numbers between the two works. Thus in the *War* (2.97) we are told that the revenue of the territory given by Augustus to Archelaus was 400 talents, whereas in the *Antiquities* (17.320) the amount is 600 talents. In the *War* (2.100) we are told that Augustus gave to Herod's children 1000 talents; this becomes 1500 talents in the *Antiquities* 17.323.

Furthermore, Josephus, who as general in Galilee should have had some knowledge as to the number of Jews in the area assigned to him, writes (*Life* 235) to Jonathan and his fellow deputies, who, having been sent by the Jerusalem authorities, had arrived in Galilee, that there were 204 cities and villages in Galilee. Elsewhere (*War* 3.41-43), in his extensive description of Galilee, Josephus, apparently aware that people would doubt such figures, explains that though its area is limited, the land is so rich in soil and pasturage that even the most indolent are tempted to devote themselves to agriculture. In fact, he remarks, every inch of the soil has been cultivated by the inhabitants, so that there is not a single parcel of wasteland. He notes (*War* 3.43) that the towns and even the villages, thanks to the fertility of the soil, are so densely populated that the smallest of them contains more than 15,000 inhabitants. If we multiply 204 by 15,000 this gives a minimum of 3,060,000 inhabitants.

There is general suspicion that these figures are grossly exaggerated. The number 15,000 may be a round number; and indeed we find it twice (*War* 3.305, 4.435) in connection with the number of Jews killed by the Romans in specific battles. But the number 204 is not a round number and is found in Josephus only here. As Baron⁷³ has pointed out, there is a basic difference in population distribution between antiquity and modern times in that we think of only highly industrialized countries as being thoroughly urbanized and of agricultural states as largely rural and possessing relatively few towns, most of them very small. However, as Beloch⁷⁴ remarks,

⁷³ Baron 1972, 45.

⁷⁴ Beloch 1886, 472.

people in antiquity regarded themselves as inhabitants of towns even if they did not reside within its walls. Indeed, a city consisted of a rural hinterland and an urban center, where the community had its administration and religious cults.⁷⁵ Even Rome and other so-called agro-towns⁷⁶ apparently contained within their walls only a fraction of their populations. Indeed, most of the inhabitants of many towns were actually farmers who lived within the walls of towns for security reasons. Moreover, a substantial proportion of rural population was not involved in farming or was involved in it only part-time. Thus, as Beloch⁷⁷ has noted, ancient Egyptian sacred writings mention 18,000 towns; other documents mention 30,000 or more towns under Ptolemy I (323-283 B.C.E.). Such figures seem to be highly exaggerated, since, as Baron admits, such a number, when we consider the area of Egypt that is habitable, would require that there be one township per square kilometer. Indeed, according to Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 300 B.C.E.), as cited by Diodorus, there were 3,000 cities in Egypt. Furthermore, Scipio the Younger, when he visited Egypt in the reign of Ptolemy VII in the second century B.C.E., was, according to Diodorus, amazed at the large number of cities.

Moreover, the census material from Egypt⁷⁸ suggests that similar calculations must have been made for other parts of the Roman Empire, including the province of Syria. These figures surely need not be taken literally, and neither need we take Josephus' statement literally as to the number of cities in Galilee; but such observations indicate that the number of cities was, indeed, very large. Apparently, there is a long history of numerous towns in Palestine, as we see from the mention of 118 or 119 towns, most of them in Palestine, in a list dating from the reign of the Egyptian king Thutmoses III in the fifteenth century B.C.E. Of course, some of these towns may have been destroyed, but, as Baron⁷⁹ remarks, we know of only one town, Jericho, that ceased to exist after its conquest; and, in general, there is an increase in the number of towns. Moreover, there is no indication,

⁷⁵ See Pounds 1969, 135-57; and Finley 1973, in his chapter on town and country, pp. 123-49.

⁷⁶ See Lo Cascio 2000, 164.

⁷⁷ Beloch 1886, 255, cited by Baron 1972, 45.

⁷⁸ Bagnall and Frier 1994, 53-57.

⁷⁹ Baron 1972, 47.

except in the statistic given by Josephus, as to the population of each of these towns. But we may expect that the information existed that might have allowed Josephus to give the kind of figures that he cites for the number of towns, even if we are skeptical as to the number of inhabitants in each of them. That the number of towns may not be exaggerated would seem to be indicated by the fact that Cassius Dio (69.14.1) states that two generations later (132-135), during the Bar Kochba rebellion, 985 of the Jews' most famous villages were razed to the ground.

Scheidel⁸⁰ suggests that whether or not there were 204 settlements in Galilee, it is extremely unlikely that the smallest of them could have contained 15,000 inhabitants. If Galilee covered approximately 1,500 square kilometers, the implied population density for 3,060,000 inhabitants would have been 2,000 people per square kilometer, which is roughly one third of the current population density of Singapore and Hong Kong, largely urbanized city-states that do not grow their own food, as the inhabitants of Galilee did. It would also be about ten times the average population density of Roman Egypt,⁸¹ which was apparently more fertile than Galilee. In the Fayum in the Ptolemaic period there was a mean of 312 adults in a sample of 53 villages. It seems unlikely that the smallest Galilean village could have been so much more populous. 15,000 and 30,000 are standard numbers, being multiples of three. 15,000 might be the number for a small city; and 30,000, another multiple of three, might be the number for a large city. It would seem, therefore, unwarranted to take Josephus at face value in his statement concerning the population of Galilee; but that does not mean that we should totally disregard the import of his numbers. Beloch⁸² takes seriously Josephus' statement (*War* 2.576) that when he came as general to Galilee he levied an army of more than 100,000 men. Assuming as he does that such an army would represent approximately one fourth of the total population of Galilee, he estimates a population of 400,000, approximately 125 per square kilometer. This, he admits, would mean that Galilee was very densely populated, but he then adds that Galilee was a very fruitful land, the richest in Palestine; and hence such a population

⁸⁰ Letter, 3 December 2002.

⁸¹ Scheidel 2001, 57-59.

⁸² Beloch 1886, 246.

is possible. For each of the 204 towns that Josephus says existed in Galilee Beloch is willing to assume 2000 inhabitants. This will give Galilee a population of 408,000.⁸³ Noting that, according to Cassius Dio (69.14), 580,000 Jews were slain in the Bar Kochba rebellion, in addition to those who died of sickness and hunger, he posits a population for Palestine of two million.⁸⁴

Baron notes that in the 1880's Baghdad had one inhabitant per 33 square meters, Jerusalem one per 35, and Jaffa one per 30. Basing himself on the size and number of its houses in the Canaanite period, he estimates the population per town at 1,000 to 1,500 and at most 2,000, a ratio of approximately one inhabitant per 20-40 square meters. Since a city with such a population was apparently considered important, Baron concludes that the great majority of towns had a population of 1,000 or less. Jerusalem had a larger population. The wall surrounding it, according to Hecataeus, measured 50 stadia; according to the letter of Aristeeas, 40 stadia; and according to Josephus, 33 stadia. Baron consequently suggests that the area of the city was about 300 hectares, approximately one third the size of Babylon, which may have had a population of 400,000 at the time of Nebuchadnezzar; one third the size of Alexandria, which may have had a population of 380,000 under the early Roman emperors; and one fourth the size of Rome in the third century, which may have had a population of one million. Proportionately, Jerusalem would have a population of 200,000, a ratio of one person per 15 square meters.⁸⁵ Finkelstein,⁸⁶ drawing upon the Ottoman tax registers of the sixteenth century and the data collected during the Ottoman period at the end of the nineteenth century and during the British Mandate in the 1920's to 1940's as to the population and even the number of houses in Palestinian villages, concludes that one can estimate accordingly the size of the population that a given area can support.

⁸³ Heichelheim 1938, 158. suggests a population of 500,000 on the authority of Beloch 1886, 242-43. However, McCown 1947, 426, says that even this estimate is too large, since it gives a density of over 320 to the square mile. We may, however, object that this is hardly excessive in view of the extraordinary fertility of Galilee.

⁸⁴ Beloch 1886, 248.

⁸⁵ Baron 1972, 70.

⁸⁶ Finkelstein 1990, 47-52.

But we must remark that there is a big question as to whether the figures given in these surveys are of adult males only or whether they include the entire population. We may also ask how many people a land can support with its agricultural production. Broshi,⁸⁷ on the basis of the level of cultivation of wheat, which is one of the major crops of Palestine, concludes that no more than a million people could have lived in Palestine in antiquity. Safrai,⁸⁸ however, notes that Broshi's estimate is based on wheat production in Arab farmsteads, whereas the average Arab farm did not make use of the available land at its disposal; thus the average Arab farm in the period before 1948 made use of only sixty per cent of its available farm land, and this itself was only 33.8 per cent of all available land. Moreover, there were additional terraces that may well have been destroyed over the centuries. In addition, we know that land that is taken care of properly can be far more productive than land that is neglected; and, indeed, to judge from the Talmud, the level of intensive production and its yields were much higher in Jewish farms. Archaeological excavations in the Negev of Palestine have shown that at one time it was far more productive than it has been until the most recent times. We may also remark (*Ant.* 14.206) that in the first century B.C.E., as noted in an agreement between Julius Caesar and Hyrcanus, the land was sufficiently productive to pay a tax of 20,675 modii (pecks), i.e. 182 tons, annually, except for the sabbatical year. Moreover, Ezek. 27:17 mentions the export of wheat from Minnith (east of the Jordan River) to Tyre; Acts 12:20 states that Tyre and Sidon were dependent on Herod Antipas' country for food; and the Zenon Papyri (*PSI* 324-25), dating from the third century B.C.E., mention the export of wheat to Egypt.⁸⁹ We must also bear in mind that wheat was imported into Palestine from time to time, notably, of course, in times of drought, as we see in the successful efforts of Herod (*Ant.* 15.299-316) and Queen Helena of Adiabene (*Ant.* 20.51).

In the census of 1951 the average number of inhabitants per house in Palestine was found to be 4.35. However, a survey by

⁸⁷ Broshi 1979, 1-10.

⁸⁸ Safrai 1994, 436-37.

⁸⁹ Cited by Broshi 1979, 8, n. 24.

Hirschfeld⁹⁰ of Arab houses in the Judaeen hills concluded that the average number of inhabitants in a village house was sixteen. Broshi's surprising comment on the latter finding is that either unreliable information was given to the surveyors or that living conditions are simply primitive.⁹¹ We may wonder how there would be sufficient grain produced for a large population, but we may note that during the period of Roman occupation, when the population of Egypt according to Josephus (*War* 2.385) amounted to seven and a half million exclusive of Alexandria, the country was constantly exporting a large amount of produce to Rome. Similarly, Palestine exported not only fruits but grain. How many people were able to live in such a limited area as Galilee? But as Baron⁹² has remarked, there is a difference between the Roman Empire in the East and the areas in the West. In the East a warm climate and other factors permit a very small dwelling. Furthermore, even Hamel,⁹³ who, taking into account the amount of grain that would have to be produced to support a population, concludes that the population of Roman Palestine—and this includes not only Galilee but also Judaea, Samaria, the coastal strip, and Idumaea—would theoretically have peaked at 1,150,000 inhabitants. He admits that against his own results it may be argued that archaeological surveys show an astonishing population level in the hills. Additionally, he admits that it may be maintained that the subsistence level of the time was actually lower than modern calculations indicate and that reliance on wild plants was more important than previously thought.⁹⁴

What, then, Josephus is saying and what we should be prepared to accept is the impression that the number of Jews living in Galilee was very large, even if it was not three million. Even after the tremendous losses in the war of 66-70 against the Romans, the Jewish

⁹⁰ Hirschfeld 1987, 73.

⁹¹ Broshi 1987, 79-80, 126-27; cited by Finkelstein 1990, 49.

⁹² Baron 1972, 69.

⁹³ Hamel 1990, 139.

⁹⁴ Another method for arriving at the population of Palestine in the Roman period is to note, as does Avi-Yonah 1973, 429, that there were in the Roman period four times as many settlements as there were in 1900, when there were 700,000 inhabitants; hence the population in the Roman period was 2,800,000. But as Broshi 1979, 6, remarks, this is based upon the unproven assumptions that the number of settlements in the Roman period was four times as great and that the average size of the settlements in the two periods is approximately the same.

population of Palestine remained large. Cassius Dio (69.14.1), as we have noted, reports that during the Bar Kochba rebellion (132-135) 580,000 Jews were slain in raids and battles, and that the number of those who perished by famine, disease, and fire was past finding out. The number was very large even if we suspect that it was exaggerated. The Talmud (*b. Git* 57b), seeking to convey some idea as to the number of fatalities in the war, states that the Romans, when they captured Bethar at the end of the revolt, killed in that city four hundred thousand myriads, that is four billion, "or as some say, four thousand myriads, that is forty million." Clearly these are utterly impossible exaggerations, but even so they are meant to convey some idea as to the huge number of those who were killed.

7. HOW TO EXPLAIN THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF JEWS

Unfortunately, for the period of 586 B.C.E. to 70 C.E. we have relatively few sources that give an indication as to changes in life expectancy or the size of families or the numbers lost in events such as plagues. Since, so far as we can tell, there was no major change in life expectancy or in the size of families during the period after the destruction of the first Temple, conversions would seem to be the most likely explanation for the vast increase in the number of Jews, at any rate in Egypt, where we have at least some information as to the actual number of Jews.⁹⁵ In addition to those actually converted there were apparently many "G-d-fearers" ("Sympathizers"),⁹⁶ perhaps even more numerous than actual converts.

Cohen⁹⁷ contends that the existence of large numbers of converts to Judaism proves only that Jews and Gentiles lived in an open society and that Jews and Judaism were prominent enough to be noticed and respected by outsiders. McKnight⁹⁸ remarks that the surviving evidence from Philo and Josephus reveals that many Jews, especially those from landed families, were educated in the Greco-Roman manner, that Jewish children in Alexandria were educated in the encyclical, that Herod and his descendants had a Roman education,

⁹⁵ See Wasserstein 1996, 314-17.

⁹⁶ See Feldman 1993, 342-82.

⁹⁷ Cohen 1992, 19.

⁹⁸ McKnight 2000, 835-47.

and that this was the kind of education that every aspiring politician would need. Similarly, he remarks that Jews regularly and consistently intermarried with women of other nations and religions. But there is no evidence that this was the path of more than a very small minority. It is certainly open to question whether Jews and Gentiles lived in an open society, as I have discussed elsewhere.⁹⁹ And even a glance at Menahem Stern's collection of all the references to Jews and Judaism in Greek and Latin literature will show how little the Jews were noticed, at least by intellectuals.¹⁰⁰

Cohen¹⁰¹ suggests that the single most important factor in the increase of Jewish population in antiquity must have been the conquests by the Maccabees, who by one means or another Judaized most of Palestine. But, as mentioned above, we know only of the allegedly forced conversion of the Idumeans¹⁰² by John Hyrcanus (Ptolemy the Historian, *ap.* Ammonius, *De Adfinium Vocabulorum Differentia*, no. 243; Jos., *Ant.* 13.257-58, 15.254-55) at the end of the second century B.C.E. and of the Itureans (*Ant.* 13.318) by Aristobulus I shortly thereafter. That both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus held the dual positions of religious leader as high priest and political leader as king meant that they might have sought both religious and political conquest. The fact, however, that in the vast rabbinic literature and especially in the many and long discussions about the requirements for conversion and about which converts may or may not be accepted (*b.Yeb.* 16a-b, 22a, 23a, 24b, 25b-26a, 34b-35a, 37a, 42a, 46a-48b, 74b-75a, 98a-b, 99a) there is no reference to the forced conversion of the Idumeans or of the Itureans casts some doubt upon the accounts. Bamberger,¹⁰³ noting that after Josephus no later Jewish sources speak of these forced conversions, explains this silence as due to the unpopularity of the later Hasmoneans and the disasters caused by Antipater and Herod, who were Idumaeans by birth; but, we may remark, the rabbis are not silent about the later Hasmoneans, including John Hyrcanus (*b.Ber.* 29a, *b.Sot.* 33a), and yet do not mention these conversions. But even if the report is accu-

⁹⁹ See Feldman 1993, 3-83.

¹⁰⁰ Stern 1974-84.

¹⁰¹ Cohen 1992, 20. See also Borgen 1996, 46-49.

¹⁰² For an extended, judicious discussion of the conversion of the Idumeans see Kasher 1988, 46-77.

¹⁰³ Bamberger 1939, 20.

rate, the number thus converted can hardly begin to account for the vast increase in Jewish population. It is this kind of mass conversion, though not forced but rather motivated by fear of the Jews, that we find mentioned at an earlier time in the book of Esther (8:17), where we read that after the downfall of Haman many Persians, though there is no indication of how many, converted to Judaism.

As to the Idumeans, Ptolemy the Historian (*ap. Ammonius, De Adfinium Vocabulorum Differentia*, no. 243) says that they were not originally Jews but Phoenicians and Syrians, and that after being subjugated by the Jews “they were forced (ἀναγκασθέντες) to undergo circumcision, so as to be counted among the Jewish nation and keep the same customs.”¹⁰⁴ Josephus (*Ant.* 13.257-58) likewise indicates that they were given a choice of either converting or of leaving their country. He says that John Hyrcanus, after subduing all the Idumeans, “permitted them to remain in their country so long as they had themselves circumcised and were willing to observe the laws of the Jews. And so, out of attachment to the land of their fathers, they submitted to circumcision and to making their manner of life conform in all other respects to that of the Jews. And from that time on they have continued to be Jews.” Elsewhere (*Ant.* 15.254) Josephus again mentions that Hyrcanus converted (μεταστήσαντος) the Idumeans to Jewish customs (ἔθνη) and laws (νόμιμα), though he does not actually use the word “forced.”

Apparently, not all the Idumeans agreed with the conversion, since Josephus (*Ant.* 15.255) asserts that Costobar, an Idumaeon whom Herod appointed to be governor of Idumaea, did not think that it was proper for the Idumeans to adopt the customs (ἔθνη) of the Jews and to be subject to them. Strabo (16.2.34) says that they joined (προσεχώρησαν (“went over to,” “sided with”) the Judaeans, presumably voluntarily, and shared in the same customs with them. The fact that Strabo, who is so antagonistic toward the Hasmoneans, referring to them as tyrants and robbers (16.2.37 and 40), does not refer to the forcible conversion of the Idumeans would appear to suggest that Hyrcanus had not used force. Kasher¹⁰⁵ suggests that

¹⁰⁴ If, indeed, Ptolemy the Historian is to be identified with the Ptolemy the grammarian who came from Ascalon, he may well have shared the hatred that the Hellenistic cities of Palestine had for the Hasmoneans. See Stern 1974-84, 1:355 and Kasher 1988, 69-70.

¹⁰⁵ Kasher 1988, 46-47.

one should speak of the annexation of Idumea rather than of its conquest, since the Idumaeans shared with the Jews a common hostility to the Hellenistic cities and to the Seleucids. This would seem to be supported by Strabo's statement that the immediate factor leading to the adoption of Judaism by the Idumeans was their banishment owing to a sedition that is otherwise unknown.¹⁰⁶

A key argument in favor of the voluntary conversion of the Idumeans is the fact that not long after the conversion Alexander Janneus appointed the Idumean Antipas, Herod's grandfather, as *strategos* for all of Idumea (*Ant.* 14.10)—an unusual degree of trust if Antipas had only recently accepted Judaism unwillingly.¹⁰⁷ As to why Josephus, who is otherwise so strongly opposed to forcible conversion, should have mentioned it here, we may suggest that he may have drawn from a source that was hostile to the Hasmoneans, most likely Nicolaus of Damascus,¹⁰⁸ who was the right-hand man of Herod, who so hated the Hasmoneans. Moreover, the Idumaeans had apparently been observing the practice of circumcision long before the conquest by John Hyrcanus.¹⁰⁹ We may remark that the fact that the Bible itself (Deut. 23: 8-9) specifies that an Edomite (Idumean) may not become a proselyte until the third generation and that the rabbis *b. (Yeb.* 68a, 69a, 76a) reiterate this prohibition, noting that if an Idumean proselyte cohabits with a Jewish woman this disqualifies her and her children, would make it unlikely that the Hasmoneans, who, in general, were aware of Jewish sensibilities, would have dared to violate the clear sense of Scripture.¹¹⁰

As for the conversion of the Itureans, our source is a third-hand

¹⁰⁶ As to the claim that Strabo's evidence should be invalidated, since he mistakenly identifies the Idumeans as Nabateans (16.2.34), this is the kind of error that is easily made, since the Nabateans were a people that apparently incorporated several tribes. Indeed, the same error is made by Diodorus (19.48 and 68).

¹⁰⁷ So Kasher 1988, 66; and Richardson 1996, 55.

¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Josephus (*Ant.* 13.251) quotes Nicolaus very shortly before he mentions the conversion of the Idumaeans (*Ant.* 13.257).

¹⁰⁹ See Kasher 1988, 66-67.

¹¹⁰ As to why Josephus, who was proud of his Hasmonean ancestry (*Life* 2-4) and who is so strongly opposed to forced conversion to Judaism (*Life* 113) should have depicted the Hasmonean John Hyrcanus as forcing the Idumeans to convert to Judaism, Mason 2001, 75 n. 544, correctly notes that the Hasmoneans, in their concern to establish a strong and independent state, were adding territory to Judea and always gave the conquered the choice of leaving if they would not convert (*Ant.* 13.319).

account, found in a fragment of the first century B.C.E. Timagenes, which is cited in a lost work by Strabo, who in turn is cited by Josephus (*Ant.* 13.319). The fragment says that Aristobulus I brought over (ᾠκειώσατο, “made kinsmen,” “made friends”) to the Jews a portion (μέρος) of the Ituraean nation, whom he joined (συνάψας) to them by the bond of circumcision. In the first place, we must remark that Timagenes says that Aristobulus brought over only a portion of the Itureans and with no indication as to how big or small a portion was involved. Secondly, it is important to note that there is no indication that he used force in doing so; in fact, Strabo refers to Aristobulus as having a kindly (ἐπιεικής, “fitting,” “suitable,” “reasonable,” “fair,” “moderate,” “considerate,” “gentle,” “peaceable”) nature and clearly implies that the conversion was done in a friendly fashion. It is Josephus who says that Aristobulus compelled (ἀναγκάσας) the inhabitants, “if they wished to remain in the country, to be circumcised and to live in accordance with the laws of the Jews.” Thirdly, there is no indication as to whether the Itureans wholeheartedly converted to Judaism or whether they underwent a superficial conversion.¹¹¹ Fourthly, we should note that the Itureans inhabited the area of Lebanon.

Those scholars, such as Schürer,¹¹² who argue that it was Galilee that was Judaized by Aristobulus, let alone that it was all of Galilee (and thus, presumably, would explain the huge concentration of Jews in Galilee according to Josephus [*War* 3.43, *Life* 235]), go against the geographical fact that Iturea is considerably north of Galilee. Moreover, the continuous occupation by Jews of Galilee had never been wholly interrupted. In particular, we may note that Alexander Jannaeus, the brother of Aristobulus, was educated in Galilee during their father’s lifetime (*Ant.* 13.322), as Stern¹¹³ has remarked. Moreover, as Stern¹¹⁴ notes, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 13.337), Ptolemy Lathyrus deliberately attacked the Galilean township of Asochis on Saturday in approximately the year 102 B.C.E., a mere year or two after the death of Aristobulus. This would imply that Lathyrus assumed that the Jews were so staunchly religious that they

¹¹¹ See Chancey 2002, 44-45.

¹¹² Schürer 1973, 1:218.

¹¹³ Stern 1974, 1:225.

¹¹⁴ Stern 1974, 1:225.

would refuse to fight on the Sabbath, a fact that is hardly compatible with the view that they had so recently been compelled to become Jews.¹¹⁵

If we ask what other sources there were for the increased numbers of Jews, we may suggest that part of the increase resulted from the conversion of slaves in Jewish households. Such a conversion must have been desirable in order to avoid the danger of pollution to food handled by non-Jewish slaves.

Philo (*Mos.* 2.36), gives us another clue. He says that the purpose of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek was that the *laws* should not be denied to non-Jews. This would indicate a *goal* of nothing less than actual conversion to Judaism, though, of course, it does

¹¹⁵ Most recently, Weitzman 1999, 37-59, believes that John Hyrcanus did convert the Idumeans by force and that Aristobulus I did convert the Itureans by force. He presents the challenging thesis that just as Mattathias imposed circumcision on Jews, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus extended this practice to Gentiles under their control and that since their anti-Gentile policies limited the supply of human capital available to the state they disguised the absorption of local non-Jews in order to retake the land for Judaism. However, as we have noted, Strabo's language certainly does not indicate that force was applied. If, indeed, as Weitzman suggests, the Hasmoneans were motivated by anti-Gentile zeal, surely converting the Gentiles by force was a very dangerous move, since people thus converted are likely to make things difficult for their oppressors. The question, to be sure, still remains why Josephus, who elsewhere (*Life* 113 and *War* 2.454) strongly disapproves of forced conversion, should have altered the language of Strabo, who does not speak of forcible conversion. One possible answer is that Josephus felt that where there was a matter of national security the Romans would have understood that such an action might have been justified, whereas in the case of *Life* 113 and *War* 2.454 the forcible conversion was not being done by a legitimate government but by some zealots. Josephus must have felt that the Romans had nothing to fear from the use of force against peoples who were not allies of the Romans, especially when the Hasmoneans, who used such force, were allies of the Romans and had been such for some years. Weitzman 1999, 42-43, n. 24, asserts that Josephus is inconsistent in omitting the circumcision of the Shechemites in the affair of Dinah (*Ant.* 1.337-40); but, we may remark, that is not because he was opposed to forcible conversion. Rather, he was embarrassed by the fact that the Israelites were guilty of breaking a pledge, a very serious matter to the Romans, that they had made to the Shechemites to permit the marriage of Dinah to the Shechemite prince if they would all be circumcised. As to the decline in population, there is no evidence, as Weitzman 1999, 53-54, admits, that there was such a decline; and, as we have suggested, there is reason to think that there was actually a considerable increase in population. And if there was a manpower shortage because of insurrections by the Jews themselves, the Hasmonean kings could and did hire mercenaries. Finally, the Hasmonean kings had no need to worry about a manpower shortage, since they had the greatest buttress of support for their security, namely the backing of the Romans.

not tell us how many were *actually* converted. What is particularly important is that there was an annual commemoration of the translation to which not only Jews but also, according to Philo, multitudes of others came from overseas. Philo says that he envisaged a world in which all mankind would abandon their ancestral ways and turn to honoring the laws of Jews.¹¹⁶ Inasmuch as the Noahides do not abandon their ancestral ways but merely observe seven additional commandments, this cannot refer to the Noahides, especially since Philo envisages mankind honoring *our laws alone*. This does not mean that Jewish missionaries operated on the island of Pharos at these annual meetings. What it does mean is that Jews held open their doors to those who wished to convert and were delighted when such conversions occurred.

That the Jews welcomed converts may be seen, moreover, in Philo (*Virt.* 226 and elsewhere) and Josephus (*Ap.* 2.282 and elsewhere), as I have noted.¹¹⁷ Josephus (*War* 7.45), for example, remarks that the Jews of Antioch were constantly (ἀεί) attracting to their religious ceremonies a great multitude (πολὺ πλῆθος) of Greeks; and they had, in some measure, incorporated them with themselves.

I have likewise indicated that the rabbis were, on the whole, favorably disposed toward converts.¹¹⁸ It is particularly important to note that, according to rabbinic tradition (*b.Yeb.* 47a-b), no undue obstacles

¹¹⁶ See Feldman 1993, 313-14.

¹¹⁷ See Feldman 1993, 293-98, 318-22.

¹¹⁸ See Feldman 1993, 338-41. To be sure, there are a few negative statements about proselytes. Indeed, in the words of Josephus (*Ap.* 2.123), "Many of them [the Greeks] have agreed to adopt our laws; of whom some have remained faithful, while others, lacking the necessary endurance, have again seceded." In rabbinic literature we find the statement of Rabbi Helbo (*b.Yeb.* 47b, *b.Qid.* 70b, *b.Nid.* 13b), who lived at the end of the third and at the beginning of the fourth century, that proselytes are as burdensome for Israel as a leprous scab on the skin. Of similar import is the statement of the third-century Rabbi Ḥiyya (*Mid. Ruth Zuta* on 1:12): "Do not have faith in a proselyte until twenty-four generations have passed, because the inherent evil is still within him." In particular, we find a criticism (*b.Yeb.* 24b) of those who convert for the sake of marriage or because of fear or for ulterior economic motives. Such statements were perhaps occasioned by the fact that some proselytes had turned out to be insincere (*b.'Abod. Zar.* 3b) or had become renegades and that they delay the coming of the Messiah (*b.Nid.* 13b). The very vehemence and repeated citation of such statements indicates that non-Jews were converting and that this was apparently a subject of debate. But the positive statements about proselytes are clearly in the majority. See the conclusion of Bamberger 1939, 145-46; and Feldman 1993, 338-39.

are to be placed in the path of a candidate for conversion, and that, indeed, the process is actually speeded up. Thus we are told: "If, at the present time, someone desires to become a proselyte, he is to be addressed as follows: 'What reason have you for desiring to become a proselyte? Do you not know that Israel at the present time are persecuted and oppressed, despised, harassed and overcome by afflictions?' If he replies, 'I know and yet am unworthy,' he is accepted *forthwith* [*my italics*]." Moreover, that he is not expected before conversion to know and to obligate himself to observe all the commandments is clear from the fact that he is then given instruction in *some* of the minor and *some* of the major commandments. We are told that he is not to be persuaded or dissuaded too much. Finally, if he is accepted, he is to be circumcised forthwith. As soon as he is healed, arrangements are made for his immediate ablution.

Furthermore, there is a special blessing for righteous proselytes in the Amidah prayer (*b.Meg.* 17b) that is recited three times daily. The rabbis, moreover, took pride in the claim that the Emperor Nero (*b.Git.* 56a) and even, according to some (Jerusalem Talmud, *Meg.* 3.2.74d), the Emperor "Antoninus," were proselytes and that some of their greatest teachers were said to be descended from proselytes—Shemaiah and Avtalion (*b.Sanh.* 96b, *b.Git.* 57b), Rabbi Akiva (*ibid.*), Aquila-Onkelos (*b.'Abod. Zar.* 11a), and Rabbi Meir (*b.Git.* 56a).

I have also noted¹¹⁹ that resentment was aroused against these conversions, as seen in the writings of the New Testament (Matt. 23:15), Horace (*Sat.* 1.4.142-43), Seneca the Younger (*ap.*, Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 6.11), Tac. (*Hist.* 5.5.1-2), and Juvenal (*Sat.* 14.96-106). Moreover, as I have remarked, the success of the Jews in winning converts led to their expulsions from Rome on at least two occasions.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ See Feldman 1993, 299-300.

¹²⁰ See Feldman 1993, 300-304.

8. HOW TO EXPLAIN PROSELYTISM WHEN WE HAVE NO MISSIONARY TRACTS AND KNOW OF NO MISSIONARIES

Tcherikover,¹²¹ in a seminal article, has questioned the concept of a concerted Jewish literary propaganda in the interests of conversion. He challenges the view that Jewish literary propaganda among the pagans was technically possible and that the distribution of books in the ancient world was similar to that of modern times; but literacy was apparently much more widespread than we usually think.¹²² To be sure, we have found no such tracts in papyri; but papyri are what were discarded. Schools are perhaps responsible for most papyri, and the LXX was not read there. Moreover, most of our literary papyri come from the little town of Oxyrhynchus, which may not be representative.

Cohen¹²³ argues that if Greek Jewish literature was designed for a pagan audience, it failed miserably and that pagans did not read Jewish literature. There can be no question, however, that Gentiles, as well as Jews, are addressed by some of the works of Philo¹²⁴ and of Josephus,¹²⁵ the two chief Jewish writers in Greek from the Hellenistic period; but this does not, of course, mean that the works of Philo and Josephus were missionary treatises. What it does mean is that a non-Jewish reader might have been impressed with the religion that they describe. Indeed, it is also true that these writers, if we may judge from citations in later writers, were little read in antiquity. But this tells us only that pagan intellectuals did not generally read these works; it does not, however, tell us about the reading habits of pagan non-intellectuals. Moreover, most of those converted were probably illiterate and, in any case, were probably converted by oral contacts, though not necessarily by organized efforts.

One concrete instance where reading the Bible did have an effect upon a candidate for conversion is to be seen in the account of the conversion of Izates, the king of Adiabene, who decided to be

¹²¹ Tcherikover 1956, 169-93.

¹²² See Harris 1989, 121, 206, 255-59, and especially 282; and Feldman 1993, 305-11.

¹²³ Cohen 1992, 17.

¹²⁴ Georgi 1986, 182, concludes that both Jews and Gentiles are being addressed throughout Philo's works.

¹²⁵ See Feldman 1998, 146-50.

circumcised after being told by the Jew Eleazar that he ought to do more than read the Bible (Jos., *Ant.* 20.44-46).

Josephus (*Ant.* 1.9), in the introduction to his paraphrase of the Bible and in citing the precedent of the LXX, says that he “took into account, not incidentally, both whether our ancestors were willing to transmit and whether some of the Greeks were eager to know about our affairs.” Indeed, the very fact that he paraphrases at such length (*Ant.* 12.11-118) the Letter of Aristeas, with its account of the LXX, which, at most, is very tangential to Jewish history, is, in effect, an advertisement for the Bible. Thus Josephus (*Ant.* 12.110) remarks that King Ptolemy Philadelphus was amazed at the wisdom of the lawgiver Moses and asked Demetrius, his adviser, how it was that none of the historians or poets had made mention of it, whereupon Demetrius replied that it was because of the divine and awful nature of the laws, and that some who had already attempted to do so had been afflicted by G-d.

Indeed, one might well argue that to some degree Josephus’ *Antiquities* was, in effect, a propagandistic tract, with its portrait of Abraham as a scientist and philosopher and an open-minded thinker, and with its portrait of Moses as a great general.¹²⁶ Likewise, the Sibylline Books, dating from the second century B.C.E., stress (3.195) that Judaism’s aim is to be to all mortals the guide of life.

Again, the Pseudepigraphic Joseph and Aseneth, dating apparently from the early part of the second century C.E., presents the paradigm of the proselyte who cannot marry Joseph so long as she is a heathen, whereas she can and does do so as soon as she converts to Judaism.¹²⁷ However, most importantly, as McKnight¹²⁸ stresses, it is Aseneth who takes the initiative in seeking conversion to Judaism,

¹²⁶ See Feldman 1998, 223-89, 374-442.

¹²⁷ On Joseph and Aseneth as missionary propaganda see Aptowitzer 1924, 305-6; Philonenko 1968, 106-7; and Nickelsburg 1981, 262. Kraemer 1998, 6, asserts that there is no evidence that the work was ever transmitted by Jews or circulated among Jews, let alone composed by Jews, and that there is no evidence for dating it any earlier than the fourth century. But a work in which Aseneth turns from dead gods to the living G-d can be only a Jewish or a Christian work; and if it is a Christian work it would be remarkable that there would be no reference to Jesus as Messiah. The reference (8:5) to pagan food, drink, and oil as tokens of death is clearly a contrast with Jewish views. That Aseneth’s conversion is to Judaism is clear, as Barclay 1996, 204-16, points out in his careful analysis.

¹²⁸ McKnight 1991, 60-62.

and it is not Joseph who seeks her out.¹²⁹ Philo (*Spec.* 1.320) seems to allude to propagandizers, since he berates the mystics who restrict their knowledge to three or four alone instead of proceeding to the midst of the marketplace so that every man might share in securing a better and happier life. He urges people (*Spec.* 1.321) to walk in the daylight through the midst of the marketplace, “ready to converse with crowded gatherings.” But the fact that Philo is speaking of mystics would seem to indicate that it is Judaism as a philosophy and as a mystery that is being spread; and it is not necessarily to non-Jews that it is being spread; rather, it is admittedly more likely that it is being spread to fellow Jews who are as yet uncommitted.

We do not know the name of a single missionary, unless we regard Eleazar (*Jos., Ant.* 20.43), who urged Izates to be circumcised, as one. But there it is King Izates of Adiabene who had taken the initiative to be interested in the Jewish religion and who had been zealous to convert, and it was his mother Helena who had tried to stop him by telling him that it was a dangerous move that would cause much disaffection among his subjects.

9. WHY DID PEOPLE CONVERT TO JUDAISM?

We have very few statements as to why people converted to Judaism. One reason why people converted to Judaism was that they

¹²⁹ Chesnutt 1988, 21-48, argues against the thesis that Joseph and Aseneth was a missionary tract, stressing that the author presupposes too much in assuming that his readers are familiar with the biblical story of Joseph, as well as with other patriarchal narratives; but the fact that the story is told from the point of view of the proselyte Aseneth indicates that it is written for a Gentile audience. Even Chesnutt agrees, moreover, that the central purpose of the treatise is to enhance the status of Gentile converts in the Jewish community. The fact that there is no mention in the work of Aseneth’s undergoing immersion, a rite that the rabbis insisted upon for conversion (*b.Yeb.* 46a), is no proof that she did not become a convert, inasmuch as even in that rabbinic passage there is a dispute in which the first-century Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus held that circumcision alone without immersion is sufficient to qualify a Gentile as a convert. Moreover, though there are many references to conversion in the works of Philo and especially Josephus, there is no mention anywhere of immersion of proselytes. In particular, since Josephus goes to such lengths to describe the strict requirements for conversion that were insisted upon in the case of Izates (*Ant.* 20.38-48), his silence about immersion would seem to indicate that immersion was not yet a customary, much less a universal, requirement for conversion.

were impressed by the apparent miracles that had been wrought by G-d on behalf of the Israelites and by the outstanding leadership of Moses. The Bible (Exod. 12:37-38) simply indicates that the number of those Israelite men who left Egypt was six hundred thousand and that a mixed multitude (ערב רב) went up with them. Philo (*Mos.* 1.147) emphasizes the mixed nature of the multitude whom Moses led, the clear implication being that it was extremely difficult to unify such a diverse group. In Philo's version this has become "over six hundred thousand men of military age, while the rest of the multitude, consisting of old men, womenfolk and children, could not easily be counted." Philo serves to indicate the greatness of Moses' leadership by specifying that this multitude consisted of mixed (μιγάδων, "mixed pell-mell") people and a crowd of promiscuous people (συγκλύδων, "mob," "rabble," "washed together by the waves") and servants (θεραπειάς, "attendants"), a bastard host (νόθον), as it were (ὥσανεΐ), associated with the true-born (γνησίου, "legitimate," "lawfully begotten"). He further explains that the latter were the children of Egyptian women by Hebrew fathers into whose families they had been added (προσνεμηθέντες), together with those who, significantly, reverencing the divine favor shown to the people, had come over (ἐπηλύτας, "incomers," "strangers," "foreigners") to them, and such as were converted (μετεβάλλοντο, "thrown into a different position," "turned around," "changed sides") and brought into a wiser mind by the magnitude and the number of the successive punishments that had been inflicted on the enemies of the Israelites.

Philo is saying, in effect, that to be the leader of such a motley crew must have been a challenge of immense proportions, and that only a person such as Moses could have met that challenge. Moreover, Philo takes advantage of this opportunity here to stress his point that Judaism welcomes converts, since he uses the same verb, μεταβάλλω, to refer to those of the mixed multitude who had genuinely converted to Judaism ("brought to a wiser mind") and to those who, he says (*Mos.* 2.44), come in his own day to the annual festival commemorating the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek. He expresses his belief that each nation, inspired by the Pentateuch, would renounce (χαίρειν) their ancestral customs and turn μεταβαλεῖν to the laws of the Jews alone. Hence, Moses is the leader not only of Jews but also of proselytes,

with all the challenge and opportunity that this brought with it.¹³⁰

Another reason for conversion that we find explicitly stated is in the Pseudepigraphic Joseph and Aseneth, dating apparently from the early part of the second century, the main theme of which is that Aseneth may not marry the biblical Joseph so long as she is a heathen, whereas she may and does as soon as she gives up her pagan gods. We hear (*Ant.* 19.355) that Antiochus Epiphanes of Commagene was betrothed to Drusilla, the daughter of Agrippa I, but that the marriage never took place because Epiphanes was unwilling to convert to the Jewish religion (*Ant.* 20.139). On the other hand, we hear (*Ant.* 20.145) that Berenice, the sister of Agrippa II, induced Polemo, the king of Cilicia, to be circumcised and to take her in marriage.

We may conjecture that among the reasons for conversion were economic factors (as perhaps may have been signaled by the kind of role played by the Jewish merchant Ananias in Adiabene, *Ant.* 20.34), benefiting both the haves and the have-nots. The former were benefited by the contacts that one might expect with Jews, above all in port cities. If, indeed, it was important, as the recent inscriptions from Aphrodisias show,¹³¹ to list the occupations of donors, it may be that a particular synagogue attracted those who had certain occupations, just as we hear that in the great synagogue in Alexandria seating was by trade (*b.Suk.* 51b). The fact that a Jew might, at least in those areas where rabbinic influence was strong, obtain a loan without interest might in itself have been a attraction, especially in view of the prevailing rate of interest of 24%, though admittedly we do not in extant literature have any references to people being attracted to Judaism for this reason. Indeed, we may note that in Egypt six papyri have been found mentioning loans by Jews to Jews, one of which is at interest although we do not know the rate, and four of which are at the usual rate of interest, 24%, and only one of which is without interest. On the other hand, the rabbis insisted that if a convert was in financial difficulties it was mandated that other Jews should help him, even to the point of anticipating his distress (*Sifra Behar* 1 [ed. Weiss, p. 109b], *Gerim* 3:4). Apparently, this reached the point where some of the sages noted that there are

¹³⁰ On Philo's favorable attitude toward conversion of non-Jews to Judaism see Feldman 1993, 295-96.

¹³¹ Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987; see Feldman 1989, 265-305.

people who convert simply because they wanted to eat better or to be otherwise supported by the Jewish community (*Yalqut Shimoni Emor* 745, *Eleh Devarim Zuta* 1).

Another possible reason for conversion is the outstanding charitable institutions of the Jews. Thus, one of the inscriptions from Aphrodisias,¹³² which the editors have dated in the third century, mentions a *πάτελλα*, which they interpret to mean a soup kitchen, to which the list of names that follow contributed. Indeed, in an era where there was widespread poverty, unemployment, and starvation, the assurance that no Jew would be allowed to starve must have proven attractive. Moreover, as we have noted, Philo (*Virt.* 104) calls attention to the fact that food, drink, clothing, and all the rights concerning daily life and necessary needs were granted to proselytes on an equal basis with those who were born Jews.

Furthermore, we have noted Josephus' remark (*War* 2.559-61) that on the eve of the war against the Romans the people of Damascus were fired with a determination to kill all the Jews who resided among them and considered that their plan would present no difficulty whatever except for the fear that they had of their own wives, who, except for a few, had all converted to the Jewish religion. Consequently, the men of Damascus were directed to keeping the secret from their own wives, and finally they succeeded in slaughtering 10,500 Jews. Indeed, John Chrysostom (*Adversus Judaeos* 2.3.860) in the fourth century charges Christian husbands with the responsibility of keeping wives from going to the synagogue. His contemporary Jerome (*On Matthew* 23:15) notes the presence of women in particular among the Judaizers.

As to why women in particular were attracted to becoming Jews, we may surmise that the fact that women did not undergo circumcision, which was a considerable operation for an adult, was apparently a factor.

A particular case in point may be seen in Philo's discussion (*Virt.* 220-25) of the conversion of Tamar. In the Bible (*Gen.* 38:6-30) there is no indication of her ancestry, let alone of her conversion to Judaism. Philo (*Virt.* 221), however, has the extra-biblical addition that she was from Palestinian Syria and that she had been bred in a house and in a city that worshipped a multitude of gods and that

¹³² See Feldman 1989, 265-305.

was full of images. Philo describes her passing from profound darkness to being the servant of G-d. He says that she became educated (*παιδευθεῖσαι*) in the monarchical principle by which the world is governed (*Virt.* 220), that is, the belief in one G-d, and consequently glimpsed a little ray of truth. Such a step was one of daring (*ἡὐτομόλησεν*), in which, says Philo, she risked her very life. This must mean nothing less than the experience of conversion. That it is conversion may be seen from the fact that Philo presents her story immediately after his account of the conversion of Abraham (*Virt.* 219-20). The key issue, as Niehoff remarks,¹³³ is the “unlearning” of her pagan ancestral idolatry. Philo (*Virt.* 223) then explains, presumably as a parallel to the case of Tamar, that there were women born in the extreme parts of Babylonia who were handmaids and who were given as dowry. These women, he says, passed on from mere concubinage to the position of wedded wives and were treated with the same dignity. The fact that Philo spends so much time in telling her story would seem to show his aim of holding her as an example for all non-Jewish women who came into contact with the Jewish religion.

The rabbis (*b.Yeb.* 24b) refused to accept converts who had ulterior motives. But they were realistic enough to understand the complexity of human motives and hence decided, as summarized in the words of the third-century Rav (*ibid.*), that, once admitted, even those who came for ulterior motives were to be accepted as full-fledged proselytes.

Deut. 23:4-9 declares that Ammonites and Moabites will never be allowed to marry Israelites, whereas Edomites and Egyptians are to be excluded for only three generations. Immediately after the deposition of Rabban Gamaliel the Patriarch by the Sanhedrin, there was a public confrontation between Rabban Gamaliel and Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah about the status of Ammonites and Moabites (*b.Ber.* 28a). A certain Judah, an Ammonite, came before the house of study and asked whether he might be permitted to marry a Jewess. Rabbi Joshua agreed. Rabban Gamaliel refused. Rabbi Joshua argued that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, had long ago mixed

¹³³ See Niehoff 2001, 29-31, who cites (30, n. 42), on the parallel between Abraham's and Tamar's conversion in Philo's account, Petit 1987, 80.

up all the nations and hence that he should be permitted. The rabbis ruled that he should be admitted.

In the case of the conversion of the ruling family of the Adiabeni-ans, they may have sought neutrality between the two great powers of the day, Rome and Parthia, just as the conversion of the Khazars in the eighth century may have been motivated by the desire to remain neutral between Byzantine Christendom and Islam.¹³⁴

10. SUMMARY

There is reason to believe, though the matter is certainly subject to scrutiny and though it is not possible to arrive at anything like a precise figure, that there was a great increase in the number of Jews between the time of the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C.E. and the first century C.E. In estimating populations in the Hellenistic-Roman world, scholars from Beloch and von Harnack to Parkin, Hopkins, Henige, and Scheidel have properly warned us that we cannot believe what ancient authors tell us without considering their source of information and their purpose in giving us the information.

Josephus is a major source for population statistics. Because he is so critical of the inaccuracies of his many rivals he had to be particularly careful in presenting his own data. Moreover, he presented his work to Vespasian, Titus, and Agrippa II, among others, to confirm his accuracy. The fact that he criticizes no fewer than eight Greek historians would lay him open to reduction to absurdity if he himself turned out to be unreliable.

As to the population of Palestine at this time, Josephus states that a crowd of 3,000,000 Jews implored the Roman governor Cestius Gallus, when he visited Jerusalem at Passover in 65, to have compassion upon them in view of the excesses of the procurator Florus. This number may well have been a round figure; moreover, multiples of three are numerous in Josephus. However, in the following year, on the occasion of Passover, according to Josephus, Cestius ordered a count of the Jews to be taken by any means possible by the chief priests and reported to Nero. Since all Jews were required to partake of paschal lambs, the priests counted the number of lambs that were

¹³⁴ See Baron 1952, 3:198-200.

slaughtered, which was 255,600. Inasmuch as no fewer than ten partook of each lamb, they reported a total of 2,700,000 persons.

In one case we can compare Josephus' numbers with those of Tacitus. Josephus says that the number of those who perished during the siege of Jerusalem was 1,100,000. Tacitus says that the number of those besieged was 600,000, but this may not be the same as those who perished in the siege. Josephus does mention 600,000 as the number of corpses of the lower classes thrown out through the gates of Jerusalem. We should note that Tacitus says *accepimus*, that is, "we have heard," a clear admission that he had not verified the figure. The number 600,000 is a round figure, whereas 1,100,000 is unique in Josephus.

If there was such an increase in the number of Jews, it may be explained most readily only by assuming a large number of converts to Judaism. Considerable doubt surrounds the alleged forced conversion of the Idumaeans at the end of the second century B.C.E. and of the Ituraeans shortly thereafter. The statements of Philo and Josephus indicate that the Jews were well disposed toward attracting converts and that, indeed, they succeeded in doing so. This aim is likewise reflected in statements in the New Testament, in Strabo, Seneca, Juvenal, and Tacitus, as well as in rabbinic literature. This does not mean that Judaism was a missionary religion. It certainly lacked a central administration and a central bureaucracy capable of carrying on such a mission. What it does mean is that there is evidence, direct and indirect, that there were many converts to Judaism. To say that Judaism must have been a missionary religion because Christianity, which is primarily derived from Judaism, is a missionary religion is an unproven hypothesis. Just as Christianity differed from its mother religion in its abrogation of the Law, so might it have differed from Judaism in its attitude toward missionizing. Indeed, in adopting such an attitude Christianity may have been indebted to the mystery cults such as Isis and Mithras or to the philosophical schools such as Cynicism and Stoicism.¹³⁵ The fact that we know of no tracts aimed specifically at attracting non-Jews to Judaism may be explained by the hypothesis that the great majority of people in antiquity were illiterate and that most conversions were apparently obtained through oral persuasion. Moreover, expulsions

¹³⁵ See Nock 1933, especially 1-32, 77-137, 164-92.

of the Jews from Rome on at least two occasions because of proselyting activities may indicate that some Jews were, indeed, eager to accept converts. The generally very positive attitude of the rabbis toward proselytes would accord with this view. We may conjecture that people were attracted to Judaism for various reasons, especially economic advantages and the charitable institutions of the Jews. Women, in particular, were attracted.

In sum, there are no statistics as to the actual number of converts to Judaism, nor do we have the memoir of even a single convert, nor do we have any propaganda specifically directed to converts, nor do we know of a single professional missionary. We know the names of very few converts. The evidence is inferential, based on the apparent (with emphasis on the word “apparent,” since we are far from having actual numbers) growth in the number of Jews, based on a number of literary statements indicating the welcome that Jews extended to proselytes and the bitter opposition on the part of some Gentiles who were opposed to the movement. In other words, the evidence, though substantial, is circumstantial.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ I want to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Erich S. Gruen for his careful reading of a draft of this article and for many excellent questions and suggestions. I am also grateful to Professors Richard Alston, E. Badian, Scott McKnight, Elio Lo Cascio, Walter Scheidel, and the referees of this article for many helpful comments.

PART THREE

STUDIES IN PHILO

CHAPTER TEN

PHILO'S VERSION OF THE *AQEDAH*

1. INTRODUCTION: ISSUES

Abraham, the first of the three forefathers of the Israelites and the first to recognize G-d, underwent ten trials of faith according to rabbinic tradition (*m.Abot* 5:3); but the chief of these was his readiness to obey the divine command to sacrifice his son Isaac, the product of his old age. The fact that the rabbis (*Meg.* 31a) selected the passage (Gen. 22:1-19) about Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son as the Torah reading on the second day of Rosh Hashanah indicates the importance that they attached to it. Indeed, one of the explanations for the sounding of the shofar (ram's horn) on Rosh Hashanah is that it serves as a reminder of the ram that was substituted for Isaac (*Rosh ha-Sh.* 16a). During the special *Zikronot* prayers in the Musaf service on Rosh Hashanah there is a fervent appeal to G-d to remember the *Aqedah*. The biblical passage is recited every morning in the daily prayers. On public fast days, according to the Mishnah (*Ta'an.* 2:4), the precentor says: "He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah will answer you and hear the sound of your cry this day." During the First Crusade (1096) we hear that mothers, who slaughtered their children so as to prevent their forcible conversion to Christianity, declared that they were simply repeating what Abraham had been prepared to do.¹

Apparently, the remarkable account was known to at least one non-Jew as well, since we find that Alexander Polyhistor (*ap. Eus., Pr.Ev.* 9.19) in the first century B.C.E. presents a very accurate summary of the event: "G-d commanded Abraham to bring him Isaac as a holocaust. Abraham led the child up the mountain, piled up a funeral pyre and placed Isaac upon it; however, when he was on the point of slaying him, he was prevented from doing so by an angel, who provided him with a ram for the offering. Abraham, then,

¹ See Spiegel 1967.

removed the child from the pyre, and he sacrificed the ram.”

It should not, therefore, be surprising that Philo devoted no fewer than six essays to episodes from the life of Abraham (*Migr.*, *Her.*, *Congr.*, *Fug.*, *Mut.*, and *Abr.*) and that he should refer to the ‘*Aqedah*’ in no fewer than nine of his essays (*Leg.*, *Cher.*, *Sacr.*, *Post.*, *Deus*, *Migr.*, *Fug.*, *Somn.*, and, above all, *Abr.*).

A number of questions arise when we consider Philo’s extended treatment of the ‘*Aqedah*’ in his essay *Abr.*, especially when we compare it with the biblical narrative and with Josephus’ paraphrase:

- (1) For whom is the essay *Abr.* intended: for Jews or for non-Jews?
- (2) Why in an essay on Abraham does the name of Abraham appear not even once in its first fifty paragraphs?
- (3) Why in the essay on Abraham are the episodes in his life not presented in chronological order?
- (4) Why does Philo devote so much space to the ‘*Aqedah*’?
- (5) Why does he focus so greatly on Abraham’s role and so much less on Isaac’s role?
- (6) Why is the portrait of Isaac so much more elevated in other treatises of Philo as compared with his portrayal in *Abr.*?
- (7) Why does he devote so much attention to defending Abraham against his detractors?
- (8) Why does he omit discussion of the theodicy of the episode?
- (9) Why does he omit the most famous feature of the episode, the ‘*Aqedah*’ itself, from his discussion in *Abr.*?
- (10) Why does he omit the mention of the ram that is sacrificed in place of Isaac?

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ‘AQEDAH FOR PHILO

Perhaps the most striking feature of Philo’s version (*Abr.* 167-207) of the ‘*Aqedah*’ (Gen. 22:1-19), to which Philo (*Abr.* 167) refers as Abraham’s greatest action, is the sheer amount of space that he devotes to it. In the LXX, which was Philo’s source, there are 458 words, whereas in Philo there are 1867 words. This gives a ratio of 4.08:1 of Philo to the LXX version. It is true that of Philo’s account only *Abr.* 167-77 (486 words) is actually a paraphrase of the narrative itself, while the rest is a discussion of the narrative and, in particular, Philo’s answer to critics of the episode. But even this paraphrase itself has a ratio of 1.06:1 to the LXX (458 words). By comparison, in the

LXX (Num. 31) of Moses' campaign against the Midianites there are 1179 words; Philo's version (*Mos.* 1.305-18) (305-18) contains 835 words, a ratio of .71:1 to the LXX. This compares with a ratio of .27:1 for Philo (*Migr.* 223-25, which contains 205 words) against the LXX account of the episode of Dinah (Gen. 34), which contains 753 words; the ratio for Philo's other account (*Mut.* 193-200), which contains 460 words, against the LXX is .61:1. For the episode of the spies (Num. 13-14) there are 1701 words in the LXX; Philo's version (*Mos.* 1.220-36) contains 877 words, a ratio of .52:1 to the LXX. For the episode of Phinehas and Zimri (Num. 25:6-16) there are 219 words in the LXX; Philo's version (*Mos.* 1.301-4) contains 173 words, a ratio of .79:1 to the LXX.

If we compare the relative importance of the 'Aqedah to Philo and to Josephus,² we find that in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.222-36) there are 769 words; hence the ratio of Josephus' version to the Hebrew (313 words) is 2.46:1 and to the LXX (458 words) is 1.68:1 (as compared with Philo's much higher ratio of 4.08:1).³

Philo significantly begins his narrative of the 'Aqedah with a statement of its importance. He has just told, he says (*Abr.* 167), in order to emphasize its importance, with all the care that lay within his powers, the story of the three men who appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18:1-22) and of the hospitality with which Abraham received them. Now, however, he stresses, he must not allow Abraham's greatest action, which deserves reporting, to be passed over in silence. He then adds, with even greater emphasis, that he might almost say that all the other actions that won the favor of G-d are surpassed by this, the 'Aqedah, and that on this subject he must say what is needed.

Why is Philo so much interested in the 'Aqedah? The answer would appear to be that he (*Abr.* 178) is replying to those quarrelsome (φιλαπεχθήμοσι, "fond of making enemies") people, who, he claims, misrepresent (διαβάλλουσιν, "calumniate") everything. These people, he says, do not think Abraham's action in being ready to sacrifice his son to be great and wonderful, as Jewish tradition would have it. Rather, they claim that it is not so unique, inasmuch as many Greeks of the highest reputation, full of love for their offspring,

² On Josephus' treatment of the episode see Feldman 1984-85, 212-52.

³ For other ratios of various biblical episodes in Josephus as compared with the Hebrew text see Feldman 1998, 75-80.

have sacrificed their children for great causes. He cites motives of patriotism, namely to redeem their country from wars or drought or excessive rainfall or pestilence, as well as motives of piety, as some of these causes for which they have sacrificed their children. He cites, in particular, the claim of these people that among the Greeks not only private individuals but also kings have sacrificed their offspring. Thus these individuals are said to have saved armed forces of great strength and magnitude when enlisted as their allies and have destroyed them at the first shout when they were enemies of theirs.

It would seem that Philo here, as later Josephus,⁴ has in mind Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, as referred to in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (205-47) and in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*; there we see that Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter in order to appease the goddess Artemis, so that the expedition of the Greeks, seeking to recover Helen, might receive favorable winds and proceed onward to Troy.⁵ Philo would perhaps be thinking likewise of the case of Macaria, the daughter of Heracles, as described in another play of Euripides, *Heracleidae* (407-9). She voluntarily offered herself to be sacrificed so as to bring victory to the Athenians. In her case the oracles had ordered the Athenian king, Demophoon, the son of Theseus, to sacrifice a virgin, the daughter of a noble father, to Persephone so as to bring salvation to the city from its enemies. As we see from these two plays in particular, we know of these cases, but we do not know, in any extant literature, of any of the critics to whom Philo may be referring. The objection of these critics, according to Philo, is not to Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son but rather to the claim that this deed was unprecedented.

The critics, according to Philo (*Abr.* 183), asked why Abraham should be praised when private individuals, kings, and whole nations took their lives when the occasion called for it. In particular, they

⁴ See Feldman 1998, 270.

⁵ Josephus also apparently had Euripides in mind in his paraphrase of the 'Aqedah, since just before this scene he (*Ant.* 1.218) describes how the fleeing Hagar placed her child Ishmael, who was at his last gasp, under a tree and then wandered away so that he would not die in her presence (θεῖσα τὸ παιδίον ψυχορραγῶν, ὥς μὴ παρούσης τὴν ψυχὴν ἀφῇ, προΐει). Here Josephus imitates Euripides' *Hercules Furens* (323-24), a play that seems to have been a favorite of Josephus'. See Thackeray 1929, 117-18.

pointed out that in India the gymnosophists burn themselves on a funeral pyre when old age begins to take hold of them even though they might have lived many more years, and wives burn themselves alive together with their husbands. Philo's answer to these critics is that we must examine what motivated the sacrifices. Some simply follow custom, as is the case with the Indians. Such people are not doing anything particularly great; rather, they are doing only what comes naturally. Others do so for patriotic reasons or through desire for fame or glory. If a person is motivated by fear, no praise is due, since praise is to be given for voluntary good deeds. If he does it for the sake of glory, he should be blamed, since he is acquiring glory when he should be casting it aside in order to ensure the safety of his dear ones.

Philo (*Abr.* 188) now examines the factors that might have motivated Abraham. Abraham, he declares, was not following a custom that was natural, since in Mesopotamia, where he was brought up and lived the greater part of his life, the custom of slaughtering one's children was not current. As to fear, he had nothing to fear from anyone, since no one knew of the message that he alone had received. Moreover, he was not under pressure of any public misfortune that could be remedied only by sacrificing a special child, as in the case of Agamemnon and Iphigenia. Nor was he in search of praise from the multitude, inasmuch as no one was present in the wilderness (ἐρημία)⁶ when he was about to sacrifice his son, since, as he states in an extra-biblical addition, the reason why he told his two servants to stay far away was so that he should not appear to be bringing witness to his piety.

Philo, having dealt with the factors that did not motivate Abraham, now proceeds (*Abr.* 191-99) to discuss the reasons why his deed does deserve praise. In the first place, he had always obeyed, without complaint, G-d's commands, however painful it was to obey them. Secondly, since human sacrifice was not the norm in his land, he would have been the first to initiate a new and extraordinary procedure, and no one would have brought himself to do so, since it hard to fight against nature. Thirdly, since Isaac was his one true son and since he had a special attachment to him, inasmuch as he had been begotten in Abraham's old age, for him to have sacrificed

⁶ This is Philo's addition to the biblical text.

him was an indication that he had thrown all his weight on the side of obeying G-d.

In this connection, it is significant that in Gen. 22:2 the LXX renders $\gamma\iota\omicron\iota$ ("your only one") by ἀγαπητόν ("beloved"). Presumably, this is because the translators were troubled by the fact that Isaac was not, in fact, Abraham's only son, since he had another son, Ishmael. Philo, who, like the later Josephus (*Ant.* 1.222), generally follows the LXX in this portion of Scripture, nevertheless here refers to Isaac as Abraham's one true son (*Abr.* 168). Indeed, as Philo (*Abr.* 196) remarks, for a father to surrender one of a numerous family as a tithe to G-d is nothing extraordinary, since he is left with other children to give him pleasure, but one who gives his only darling son performs an action for which words are inadequate. Fourthly, other fathers (again, presumably, he is thinking of Agamemnon), when they give their children to be sacrificed for the safety of their country or of their armies, either stay away from home or at any rate turn their eyes away from the spectacle, since they cannot bear the sight. Abraham, however, was performing the sacrificial rite himself. As Maren Niehoff insightfully remarks,⁷ we can see from Philo's remarks how lightly he regarded the idea of sacrificing one's children under normal circumstances, namely when siblings are available to replace the one who has been sacrificed. Hence, we may perceive that Philo is clearly more sympathetic, at least theoretically, to the concept of child sacrifice than either Josephus or the rabbis, even though, of course, the practice had become obsolete by his time. In particular, we may note that Josephus begins his account of the *Aqedah* with the statement (*Ant.* 1.223) that Abraham put his own happiness solely on the hope that on departing from life he should leave behind his son unscathed. The rabbis (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 56.3-4) also note that Abraham had good reason to decline G-d's command. Indeed, Philo's position on the matter of child sacrifice was that parents' obligations to their children were dictated by G-d; and this implied the parents' complete submission to G-d's will, including sacrificing their children if commanded by G-d.⁸

⁷ Niehoff 2001, 174.

⁸ See Niehoff 2001, 174-86.

3. THE QUESTION OF PHILO'S AUDIENCE

Sandmel⁹ thinks that Philo is addressing his fellow-Jews of an "assimilationist" character. However, the key word to describe the critics, "quarrelsome" (φιλαπεχθήμοσι), is a compound of the word ἄπεχθήμων, which means "hateful." This would appear to be a most appropriate term to refer to Jew-haters, since assimilationist Jews would hardly be likely to argue that Abraham was not unique in sacrificing his son; rather, their objection would more likely be to the concept that a just G-d could have ordered him to sacrifice his son or that he could have been ready to sacrifice his son at all. That, indeed, such problems of theodicy were what assimilated Jews found most troublesome may be seen in Philo's treatise *De Providentia* (2.1; *ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 8.14.386), where he engages in a dialogue with Alexander, presumably Philo's nephew, Tiberius Julius Alexander, who, we are told (*Jos., Ant.* 20.100), did not abide by the practices of Judaism. In this dialogue Alexander, in exasperation, asks Philo: "Are you alone ignorant that to the worst and vilest of men good things in abundance come crowding in—wealth, high repute, honors paid to them by the masses, again authority, health with efficiency of the senses, beauty, strength, unimpeded enjoyment of pleasures through the abundance of their resources and the bodily well-being free from all disturbance which they possess, while the lovers and practicers of wisdom and every virtue are almost universally poor, obscure, of little repute and in a humble position?"¹⁰

We find the same word, ἄπεχθήμων, "hateful," "hostile," with which Philo describes those who disparage Abraham's deed, used by Judah in addressing Joseph (Philo, *Jos.* 226), when he asks how Jacob's sons will be able to look him in the face if they come back without Benjamin. "We shall be called murderers and parricides by all the quarrelsome (ἄπεχθημόνων) people who gloat over such misfortunes." This is clearly a reference to outsiders, that is, non-Israelites, since Jews would hardly refer to one another as murderers. Again, we read (*Mos.* 1.248) that the Israelites, who sought to pass through the land of the Edomites, did not know that the Edomites

⁹ Sandmel 1956, 128.

¹⁰ See Wolfson 1947, 2:279-94, for an extended discussion of the various ways in which Philo attempts to solve the problem of theodicy.

were far advanced in depravity and had a spiteful and quarrelsome (φιλαπεχθημόνως) disposition and hence would mourn their good fortune and would take pleasure in the opposite. Here there can be no doubt that the term is used of non-Israelites. Another non-Israelite people, the Midianites, are described (*Virt.* 34) as being quarrelsome (φιλαπεχθημόνως) toward the Israelites. Another instance where this adjective is used of non-Jews is *Flacc.* 52, where we are told that the quarrelsome (φιλαπεχθημόνων) enemies of the Jews in Alexandria set up statues of Caligula in synagogues. Another clue pointing to Philo's intended audience here as non-Jews, in contrast to most of his other treatises, may be seen in the fact that Philo in *Abr.* assumes no knowledge of the Pentateuch beyond the particular passage that he is discussing. Moreover, as Colson¹¹ has perceptively remarked, this treatise contains none of the rambling from text to text or insertion of minor allegories in the midst of the main allegory, which is the most striking characteristic of Philo's other treatises in the Allegorical Commentary.

Niehoff¹² argues that the critics whom Philo speaks of as quarrelsome must have been Jewish, since there is no indication that the story of Abraham was known outside Jewish circles before the Christian era; but in the first century B.C.E. Alexander Polyhistor (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.19), as we have noted, not only knows the story of the *'Aqedah* but mentions the most important details precisely as found in the Bible. Niehoff (*ibid.*) presents as a second reason for supposing that the quarrelsome people are Jews the fact that the word διαβάλλουσι ("misconstrue") does not necessarily imply malicious intent. But this is to suppose that only Jews would be free of malicious intent, whereas even a glance at the collection of passages in pertinent Greek and Latin literature will show that there were a number of non-Jews, such as Alexander Polyhistor and Strabo, who do not show malicious intent. She asserts that some of the critics (*Abr.* 181) had suggested that the *'Aqedah* violated Deut. 12:31, which forbids burning one's children for idolatrous purposes. She asserts that only Jews could have made such a charge, in which they would point out that the Jewish tradition contradicted itself.

On the other hand, we must admit that the same adjective, "quar-

¹¹ Colson 1929-62, 6:xii.

¹² Niehoff 2001, 173 n. 42.

relsome" (φιλαπεχθήμονας), is used *Virt.* 182) of those who are rebels from the holy laws, hence clearly a reference to Jews who have defected, the very opposite of proselytes. The very fact, we may add, that in the same treatise, *Virt.*, Philo uses the word φιλαπεχθήμων, as we have seen, with reference to non-Jews and Jews would indicate that he had both audiences in mind, at least in this treatise.

The other key word in this passage in Philo is διαβάλλουσιν ("misconstrue," "slander"). It is important to note the juxtaposition of this word with the word φιλαπεχθήμοσι, which, as we have noted, refers to outright hatred. In fact, Philo (*Conf.* 48) uses the verb διαβάλλω in the sense of "to slander" in referring to the generation of the tower of Babel as one that hated both mankind (μισάνθρωπος) and one another (μισάλληλος) and which was ever inclined to slander (διαβαλεῖν προχειρότατος). Here Philo seems to be referring to enemies of the Jews in his own time who, in hating Jews, do not realize that all humans are related. Philo (*Virt.* 141) is clearly answering Jew-haters, who, he says, slander (διαβαλλέτωσαν) the Jews with the charge of misanthropy (μισανθρωπία), whereas Jews extend the duty of fair treatment even to irrational animals.

It is this quality of inhumanity and hostility to foreigners that even such a writer as Hecataeus (ca. 300 B.C.E.), who is otherwise favorably disposed toward the Jews, speaks of them (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.4) as ἀπάνθρωπόν τινα καὶ μισόξενον ("somewhat unsocial and hostile to foreigners"). It is this charge of misanthropy that we find in Lysimachus (*ap.* Jos., *Ap.* 1.309), who lived perhaps in the second or first century B.C.E., who asserts that Moses instructed the Israelites to show goodwill to no man and to offer not the best but the worst advice. Diodorus (34 [35].1.1) similarly reports that when King Antiochus VII Sidetes in the second century B.C.E. was laying siege to Jerusalem the majority of his friends advised him to wipe out the Jews, "since they alone of all nations avoided dealings with any other people and looked on all [other] men as their enemies." One is reminded of the statement of Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.5.1) at the beginning of the second century that the Jews regard the rest of humankind with all the hatred of enemies (*adversus omnes alios hostile odium*). Indeed, Schäfer¹³ has argued that it was from Egypt that hatred of Jews, based on allega-

¹³ Schäfer 1997, 170-79.

tions of xenophobia and misanthropy, was transported to Palestine and then to Rome.

In fact, Philo might have countered these critics of Abraham's deed by noting that Theophrastus (*ap.* Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* 2.26) says that the Jews were the first to institute sacrifices both of other living beings and of themselves, and hence that their doing so was unprecedented. Nevertheless, he says, they did it by compulsion and not from eagerness for it.¹⁴ But Philo may have hesitated to cite this passage from Theophrastus, if he was acquainted with it,¹⁵ because he knew, as he remarks (*Abr.* 181), that Moses strongly condemned the practice of human sacrifice. He must have felt especially strongly about this because the Jews themselves were accused by two of the leading intellectuals of the first century B.C.E., Poseidonius and Apollonius Molon (cited by Jos., *Ap.* 2.79), of a blood libel. It is these latter, it would seem, who were Apion's sources for the scandalous story that when Antiochus Epiphanes entered the Temple he was hailed with relief by a Greek who told him how he had been kidnapped and shut up in the Temple. There the Greek was allegedly held incommunicado and was fattened up on most lavish feasts so that he might be sacrificed in accordance with their usual ritual. After this ritual the Jews were said to partake of the flesh of the sacrificial victim and to swear an oath of hostility to the Greeks.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it is surely significant that despite the fact that the essay is called *De Abrahamo* Philo does not even mention Abraham until section 51 and does not get to the account of Abraham until section 60. Rather, he starts his essay by calling attention to the anomaly that the book of Genesis is so called despite the fact that it embraces numberless other matters. At this point he briefly summarizes the topics included in the book—peace and war, fruitfulness and barrenness, dearth and plenty, the destruction of the earth by fire—presumably an allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—and water—presumably the Great Flood, how plants and animals came into being, and how humans came into being, both those who lived

¹⁴ Because of this passage in Theophrastus, Jaeger 1938, 143 n. 1, suggests that Theophrastus had some vague knowledge of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac.

¹⁵ Philo does refer to Theophrastus elsewhere (*Aet.* 117).

¹⁶ So also Damocritus (*ap.* Suda, "Damokritos") refers to the Jews' sacrifice of a stranger, though not specifically a Greek.

lives of virtue and those who lived lives of vice. He concludes this summary with the statement that some of these things are parts of the world, while others are events that befell it; but the whole book is dedicated to the world, since the world is the complete consummation that contains them all. What is striking about this summary is that though more than four fifths of the Book of Genesis deals with Abraham and his successors and hence the origins of the Israelites, this summary centers on the universal aspects covered by the book, as if the book is concerned with the whole human race. As a matter of fact, Philo (*Abr.* 2) continues by reminding the reader that he has set forth in the preceding treatise, i.e. *De Opificio Mundi*, an account of the creation of the world. The question would seem to arise as to why if he has already done so he repeats his discussion as found in that treatise. He himself answers (*Abr.* 3) that before considering particular laws, which are merely copies of general and universal laws, it is necessary to examine the more general laws, which are original and which apply to all humankind and not merely, we may add, to the Israelites. From this it would seem that Philo is particularly concerned with addressing non-Jews.

It is surprising that Josephus, who, in his essay *Against Apion*, made so much effort to collect references to the Jews, including especially the charges made against them, does not mention any of these critics who, according to Philo, belittled Abraham's action in being ready to sacrifice his son. There are only two references in all of extant Greek and Latin pagan writers to the sacrifice of Isaac, neither of them attempting to diminish the achievement of Abraham. In the first of these, the first century B.C.E. polymath Alexander Polyhistor (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.19) simply and accurately, as we have remarked, recounts the event without any comment, favorable or otherwise. In the second of these, the Neoplatonist philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis (c. 300), *Contra Manichaei Opiniones Disputatio* 24, in a passage reminiscent of Philo's remark, mentions Abraham's deed as paralleled by "the stories told among the Greeks about some persons who gave themselves up for the safety of their cities." He does not, however, cast aspersions on Abraham; rather, he ridicules the attempt made by Christians to find a parallel in Jesus' passion.

All the other references to Abraham in extant classical literature are positive or neutral. Thus, the first century B.C.E. Apollonius Molon, who, we are told (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.19.2-3), actually composed invective against the Jews, characterizes Abraham as wise. He states

that Abraham's name signifies "the friend of the father," and adds that he retired to the desert. In a passage that is clearly designed to be complimentary to Abraham, the first century B.C.E. Alexander Polyhistor cites a reference in a certain Cleodemus Malchus (*ap. Jos., Ant.* 1.240-41), who states that Abraham had several sons by Keturah and that the famous Greek hero Heracles married the daughter of one of them. The first century B.C.E. Nicolaus of Damascus (*ap. Jos., Ant.* 1.159-60) and Pompeius Trogus (*ap. Justin, Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum* 36.2.3) state that Abraham was a king in Damascus. Indeed, Nicolaus adds that the name of Abram was still in his day celebrated in the region of Damascus. The Emperor Julian (*Contra Galilaeos* 354-58) praises the manner in which Abraham used to sacrifice, divining from shooting stars and from the flight of birds, and further praises Abraham's declaration that a pledge that lacked truth is folly and imbecility. According to the fourth-century *Scrip. Hist. Aug.* (*Alexander Severus* 29.2) the Emperor Alexander Severus, who ruled from 222 to 235, kept in his private sanctuary statues of "certain holy souls," among them Abraham, Apollonius of Tyana, Jesus, and Orpheus. Furthermore, in an era when astrology was so highly regarded, Pseudo-Eupolemus, who probably flourished in the second century B.C.E., says that Abraham introduced the Phoenicians (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.18.2) and the Egyptian priests (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.17.8) to astrology. Similarly, his presumed contemporary, Artapanus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.18.1) asserts that Abraham taught the king of Egypt astrology. The second-century astrological writer Vettius Valens (*Anthologiae* 2.28) refers to Abramos as a "most wonderful" innovative authority on astrology. Finally, the fourth-century Firmicus Maternus in four passages (*Mathesis* 4, *Prooemium* 5.4.17.2, 4.17.5, and 4.18.1) refers to Abraham's prominence as an astrologer.

Let us now, however, return to Philo's comment about the quarrelsome persons who misconstrue everything. That those persons may also be Jews is perhaps to be deduced from the fact that in the one other place (*Mut.* 60) where the two terms (φιλαπεχθήμοσι and διαβάλλουσιν) referring to slander that are found in *De Abrahamo* (178) appear together, the reference seems to be to errant Jews. Such Jews do not accept the literal requirements of the Torah, since the passage mentions those who wage war to the death against anything that seems to fall short in propriety if taken literally. Hence, we may conclude that Philo's audience to whom he is directing *De Abrahamo* might well consist of both Jews and non-Jews.

4. THE QUALITIES OF ISAAC

The greatness of Abraham's deed is amplified by the fact that Isaac's character is portrayed by Philo in treatises other than *De Abrahamo* in the most superlative terms. Indeed, in these treatises Isaac represents nothing less than sheer perfection (τελειότητος) and is apparently superior even to Abraham, who represents teaching, and Jacob, who represents practice (*Mut.* 12).¹⁷ Philo explains his extraordinary assessment of Isaac by noting that while Abraham and Jacob had their names changed, Isaac bore the same name throughout his lifetime, an indication to Philo that the other two forefathers were subject to improving influences, while Isaac, being of the sort that had no teacher or pupil but itself, having been made what he was by nature rather than by diligence, was perfect from the very beginning (*Mut.* 88). Whereas virtue may be acquired either by nature (as represented by Isaac) (*Somn.* 1.167) or by studies or experiences (as exemplified by Jacob) or by learning (as exemplified by Abraham) (*Congr.* 63, 122; *Somn.* 1.171), it is clear that in Philo's mind, though all these forefathers were bent on reaching the same goal, the method pursued by Isaac was the very best since, as Philo states, he had as his guide a nature which listened to and learned from itself alone (*Somn.* 1.168).

Isaac's superiority is likewise to be seen, according to Philo, in the fact that whereas Abraham and Jacob became the husbands of several women, both legitimate wives and concubines, an indication of their need for the fruits of several studies, Isaac had only one lawful wife throughout his life (*Congr.* 34-38). Isaac has another advantage over Abraham in that he was a dweller on his native soil, whereas Abraham was an emigrant and a stranger in the land (*Somn.* 1.160).

Isaac is termed "best" (ἄριστος, *Congr.* 175), the man who possesses in their fullness the gifts of G-d (*Congr.* 38) and who is perfect in virtues (ἐν ἀρεταῖς τέλειος, *Sobr.* 8). He is represented as the only example of freedom from passion beneath the sun (*Det.* 46). He is the embodiment of perfect happiness (*Det.* 60), which Philo, follow-

¹⁷ Colson 1929-62, 5:586, says that Philo's representation of Isaac as perfection does not seem appropriate and is not, to his knowledge, paralleled elsewhere. He suggests the possibility of textual corruption.

ing Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.* 1.7.1098A16-18), defines as the exercise of complete virtue in a complete life. His heart was set on the pursuit not of childish sports but of those that are divine (*Cher.* 8). Even as a child he was of great bodily beauty and excellence of soul, possessed of a perfection of virtues beyond his years (*Abr.* 168). Hence, according to Philo (*Abr.* 168), Abraham not only naturally, as a father, felt affection for him but also cherished for him an especially tender love. Finally, Philo cites as evidence of Isaac's filial piety the fact that he gave the wells (see Gen. 26:18) which he dug the same names that his father before him had assigned (*QG* 4.194).

Yet, in the narrative of the *'Aqedah*, as we shall see, whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 1.222) builds up the poignancy of Abraham's decision to obey G-d by shifting the center of gravity to Isaac through an amplification of his virtues—his practice of every virtue (ἀρετή), his devoted filial obedience (θεραπεία), and his zeal (ἐσπουδακώς) for the worship (θεραπεία) of G-d, Philo keeps the focus on Abraham. Whereas Josephus seems to model his Isaac on Iphigenia in that both figures approach their sacrifice with enthusiasm, Philo's Isaac is completely passive. This may explain why Philo did not write a separate treatise on the *'Aqedah*, since that would have focused on Isaac, whereas his chief concern was to answer those who had disparaged Abraham's role in the *'Aqedah* and had claimed that his action was not unique, and hence he inserted this episode in his biography of Abraham. To be sure, Philo (*Jos.* 1) does tell us that he composed a treatise, which is no longer extant, about Isaac; and it is possible that he focused there upon Isaac's role in the episode, whereas in *De Abrahamo* Philo quite naturally chose to focus more on Abraham.

Similarly, like Josephus, the rabbis assigned to Isaac a more active role in the story than does the biblical narrative. In the oldest Targumic account,¹⁸ Isaac gives his consent and indeed asks to be bound so that the sacrifice may be perfect; but, to be sure, this new stress is more stated than developed.¹⁹ With Josephus, as in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*, it is the child that becomes the protagonist.

¹⁸ Cf. Vermes 1973, 194, who cites the Fragmentary Targum and the Targum Neofiti on Gen. 22:10. Cf. also Moore 1927, 1:539, who cites *Sifre Deut.* 32, which goes so far as to state that Isaac bound himself.

¹⁹ Blidstein 1975, 194, n. 9. Cf. Martin-Achard 1982, 5-10, who notes the shift in Jewish literature from the biblical era to the Greco-Roman period in the status of Isaac from an evoker of smiles to martyr and from obscure son to the great witness of Israel's suffering.

What follows in Josephus is, in effect, a drama, in form somewhat like the Book of Job or Euripides' *Hippolytus*, commencing with a prologue, in which G-d appears to Abraham; then comes the play proper, so to speak, containing a dialogue between Abraham and Isaac, and an epilogue, in which G-d commends Abraham and predicts the glorious future of his descendants. Philo's presentation is not a drama; it is an apologetic narrative defending Abraham.

If we ask why the qualities of Isaac are so elevated in other treatises of Philo, whereas his role in *De Abrahamo* is so much reduced, we may respond by noting what Philo himself says in the introduction to his *De Abrahamo*. At the very opening of *De Abrahamo* Philo (*Abr.* 3) says that in the preceding treatise, that is, *De Opificio Mundi*, he has set forth in detail the order in which the world was created but that it is now necessary for him to examine the laws in regular sequence. However, he continues, he proposes to postpone consideration of particular laws, since they are only copies of the originals. The originals, he says, are the men themselves who lived good lives and whose virtues are recorded in the Bible so that they may serve to instruct and inspire the reader. Their lives were in total conformity with nature, and they were the living law. In sum, the other treatises are philosophical and allegorical, whereas *De Abrahamo* is historical. Hence, *De Abrahamo* is to be understood as a kind of official biography of a person whose whole life was one of happy obedience to this law of nature.

Amazingly enough, however, as we have noted, in a treatise entitled *De Abrahamo* Philo does not even mention the name of Abraham for the first fifty sections of the essay. Instead (*Abr.* 7-47), we have a discussion of the first of two triads of biblical figures—Enos (who represents hope), Enoch (who represents repentance), and Noah (who represents virtue)—who were only imperfectly wise. Abraham, the first of the second triad, is then presented as the climax of the history of the world. The fact, moreover, that Philo does not present the episodes of Abraham's life in chronological order²⁰ but rather

²⁰ In Philo's *De Abrahamo* the order is: G-d's command to Abraham to leave his father's house (Gen. 12:1-6; *Abr.* 62-80), the change of Abram's name to Abraham (Gen. 17:5; *Abr.* 81), the departure to Egypt and the episode with the Pharaoh (Gen. 12:10-20; *Abr.* 90-98), Abraham's hospitality to the three travellers (Gen. 18:1-22, *Abr.* 107-32); the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19:1, *Abr.* 133-66), the 'Aqedah (Gen. 22:1-19, *Abr.* 167-207); Abram's separation from Lot (Gen. 13:5-11, *Abr.* 212-24);

in illustration of Abraham's virtues of piety, hospitality, kindness, courage and self-control, is another indication that this is intended as a hagiographical biography. His life is more than the life of one human being; it is a veritable anthology of the greatest virtues that a human being can have.

5. THE SETTING OF THE *'Aqedah*

There is no specific indication in the Bible of Isaac's age at the time of the *'Aqedah* other than the reference to him (Gen. 22:5, 22:12) as a "lad" (נער). Indeed, Philo (*Abr.* 176) refers to him as a lad (παῖς), using a word related to the diminutive form παιδάριον ("little boy"), which is found in the LXX (Gen. 22:5, 22:12). To be sure, the word παῖς often refers to a child in relation to descent without indication of age. But it is significant that Josephus was apparently troubled by the thought that Isaac was a mere child; and so he specifically, in an extra-biblical addition, states that Isaac was twenty-five at the time of the *'Aqedah*.²¹ The significant point is that Josephus has chosen to mention his age, presumably because he considered it important to make clear that Isaac was not a mere lad but a grown young man, and hence was able to make a deliberate choice as to whether he would consent to being sacrificed. This item is particularly important to Josephus in view of the fact that Iphigenia, with whom Isaac would certainly be compared by his Greek readers, does heroically consent to be sacrificed in Euripides' play, *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Josephus' reference to Isaac as a mature young man heightens the contrast between Isaac and Iphigenia, who is depicted as a young girl scarcely of marriageable age, considerably younger, apparently, than

the war of the four versus the five kings (Gen. 14:1-24, *Abr.* 225-44); the death of Sarah (Gen. 23:1, *Abr.* 245-46); Sarai's advice to Abram to have a child with Hagar (Gen. 16:1-4, *Abr.* 247-54); the burial of Sarah (Gen. 23:1-20, *Abr.* 255-61).

²¹ For a discussion of the significance of the age twenty-five see Feldman 1998, 275-76. n. 122. Isaac's age is variously given in rabbinic literature (37, 36, 27, 26). Cf. *Seder Olam* 1, *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 55.5. *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen. 22:1 declares that Isaac was 37 at the time of the *'Aqedah*. Jub. dates the binding of Isaac in the year of the world 2003 (that is, in the first year of the seventh week of the forty-first jubilee), whereas Isaac was born in the year of the world 1988 (see Jub. 16:15, where the promise of his birth occurred in 1987, and 17:1, where his weaning occurred in 1989). Hence, Isaac's age at the time of the *'Aqedah* was fifteen.

twenty-five, perhaps no more than between twelve and fourteen.²² The fact that Josephus' Isaac is a grown man who deliberately acts as he does diminishes the horror that such a story would have aroused in Josephus' readers, to judge from Lucretius' comments (1.84-101) in his retelling of the parallel story of Iphigenia. Hence, in Josephus' narrative the central focus of interest is split between Abraham and Isaac. Because Philo does not give any indication as to Isaac's age the focus remains on Abraham, since there is no indication that Isaac is of an age to make a mature decision.

The rabbinic accounts of the 'Aqedah are concerned primarily, as have been modern accounts, the most famous of which is Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, with the problem of theodicy, that is, why G-d should have tested Abraham and Isaac (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen. 22:1) when He is omniscient and when He certainly knew their merits.²³ Philo, on the other hand, like the later Josephus (*Ant.* 1.222-36), not once raises the question as to why G-d had given him such a command, let alone how G-d could have ordered Abraham to slay his son and at the same time assure him that a nation would be born through his descendants. Nor does Abraham even for a moment in Philo's version weigh whether he should disobey and save his son or whether he should slay his own son. The closest that Philo comes to raising any questions at all appears in the statement (*Abr.* 169) that G-d's message to him to sacrifice his son came suddenly and to Abraham's surprise. Abraham had previously shown, in his attempt to influence G-d not to destroy the Sodomites (Gen. 18:23-33), his expertise in arguing with G-d. It is precisely at this point that one would have expected Abraham to seek to persuade G-d to withdraw his command. Not only does he not make any such attempt but Philo (*Abr.* 174-75) paints a picture of Abraham as a veritable Stoic in accepting it unquestioningly.

In the Bible (Gen. 22:1) the episode of the 'Aqedah is introduced with the words "After these things G-d tested Abraham." There is no indication of the circumstances or background of such a statement. Why should G-d have tested Abraham at all, and why at this

²² Agamemnon (Eur., *Iphigenia at Aulis* 122-23) is represented as sending a letter to his wife Clytemnestra in which he tells her not to send their daughter Iphigenia, since they should wait for another season before celebrating their daughter's marriage.

²³ See Ginzberg 1909-38), 1:272-74; 5:248-49, nn. 226-29.

particular point? Philo (*Abr.* 169) is apparently aware of this problem and notes, as we have remarked, that the divine message to sacrifice Isaac came suddenly and to Abraham's surprise. Clearly, an omniscient G-d did not have to test Abraham.

The Bible has G-d merely give a command to Abraham (Gen. 22:2) to sacrifice his son. Josephus, however, well aware that his readers would wonder at the seeming arbitrariness of such a command, has G-d elaborate on the command by first enumerating three major benefits that He had bestowed upon Abraham, namely, victory over his enemies in war, happiness (presumably in material things), and the birth of a son. These benefits will certainly serve to heighten the irony of what follows (*Ant.* 1.224). Thus the sacrifice may be viewed, as in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (32:2), as a logical repayment to G-d for His threefold benevolence.²⁴ Whereas the rabbis²⁵ present a story of Satan challenging G-d to prove Abraham's faithfulness, which involves grave problems of theodicy, Josephus, seeking to avoid theological entanglements, proceeds immediately to Abraham's obedience to G-d's command.

In the Bible (Gen. 22:2) G-d tells Abraham to take his son to the land of Moriah, with no indication as to how far away this was. Philo, following the LXX, does not mention Moriah, but rather "a certain very lofty hill," in line with the LXX. In the Bible (Gen. 22:2) G-d tells Abraham to take his son, "whom you love." Philo, however (*Abr.* 170), adds that Abraham loved his son with an indescribable (ἀλέκτω) fondness; and yet, he adds, so great was his faith and his love of G-d that he showed no change of color or weakening of soul but remained steadfast without wavering. This seems like a test, though Philo omits the explicit word "test" (indeed, Philo does not,

²⁴ Franxman 1979, 158, remarks that in Josephus' version G-d's enumeration of the benefits that He had bestowed upon Abraham "does not exactly compliment Abraham's faith"; but Josephus' purpose here is most likely apologetic, namely, to avoid casting G-d in a bad light for having made such a demand upon Abraham to sacrifice his son. We must stress that this does not contradict the thesis that Josephus in this pericope has toned down the theologizing, since he had to weigh that intention against the need to defend his people against those detractors of Judaism who had charged that the G-d of the Jews was cruel and capricious. It is to answer these critics, rather than to engage in theological speculation, that Josephus has G-d defend Himself here. In Josephus' version it is G-d who must be defended by Josephus; in Philo's version it is Abraham who must be defended against his detractors by Philo.

²⁵ Ginzberg 1909-38, 1:272-73 and 5:248-49, notes 227-28.

like the rabbis [*m.Abod* 5:3], speak of ten such tests of Abraham). It was this faith, Philo remarks in an extra-biblical addition, that so far surpassed his affection for his own family that he told none of his kin about G-d's call to him.²⁶

As father and son are proceeding to the sacrifice, Isaac innocently asks where the animal is that they are about to sacrifice. In the Bible (Gen. 22:8) Abraham says, "G-d will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son." In Philo the conversation occurs neither on the way to the altar nor while Isaac is on the altar but, again with emphasis on Abraham's activities, while Abraham is collecting stones to build the altar. Philo's Abraham adds considerably to the biblical text, showing understanding of Isaac's fear, since they are in a wide desert. Calmly and confidently he explains to Isaac why he should have nothing to fear, since all things are possible, including the impossible, for G-d (*Abr.* 175): "Child, G-d will provide Himself a victim, even in this wide desert, which perhaps makes you give up hope of finding it; but know that to G-d all things are possible, including those that are impossible or insuperable to men."²⁷

Philo lends drama to the scene by adding the extra-biblical detail that Abraham gave Isaac the fire to carry²⁸ and not merely the wood.

²⁶ So also, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 1.225), Abraham revealed his intention to no one, not even to anyone of his household, lest they should attempt to hinder him from attending to G-d's service. The rabbis declare either that Abraham told Sarah nothing (*Midr. Eccl. Rab.* 9.7) or that he was taking Isaac with him to study with Shem and Eber (*Tan. Vayera* 22, *Sefer Hayashar* 9 [ed. Dan, p. 117], *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen. 22:3) or that the angel Samael, while Abraham and Isaac were gone on their mission, told Sarah that Isaac had actually been sacrificed (*Pirke R. El.* 32). Philo and Josephus had a difficult enough time in trying to justify the deceit practiced by Abraham on the Pharaoh and on Abimelech in hiding from both of them the fact that Sarah was his wife; hence, they sought to avoid having Abraham deceive Sarah as well. Although we are dealing here with an *argumentum ex silentio*, whose tenuous nature should be recognized, Philo and Josephus may well have sought to avoid the inevitable equation in this respect of Abraham with Agamemnon, who, according to Euripides (*Iphigenia at Aulis* 98), attempted to deceive his wife Clytemnestra by writing a letter to her asking her to send their daughter Iphigenia to be married to Achilles, whereas his real intention was to sacrifice her. In contrast to Abraham, who at worst is guilty merely of withholding information from his wife as to what he intends to do to Isaac, Agamemnon resorts to outright lying.

²⁷ The latter part of this passage is a standard aphorism. It appears often in Philo: *Opif.* 46, *Somm.* 1.87, *Mos.* 1.174, *Spec.* 4.127, *Virt.* 26.

²⁸ Sandmel 1956, 126 n. 118, suggests that this is one of several lapses of memory that justify the conclusion that Philo did not have Genesis open before him in writing this treatise. On the other hand, this is the kind of touch that would add drama to the situation.

Philo explains (*Abr.* 171) that he (Abraham) thought it good that the victim himself should carry the load of the instruments of the sacrifice. Again, whereas the biblical text (Gen. 22:6) states that father and son walked together, Philo (*Abr.* 172) adds to the utter devotion to G-d that they both showed by asserting that they walked with equal speed of mind rather than of body. Again, in the biblical text we are told (Gen. 22:9) merely that Abraham built the altar for the sacrifice. Philo, however, places the focus on Abraham in his addition that Abraham collected stones with which to build the altar. What adds even more drama to the situation in Philo (*Abr.* 173), as in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.227), is the fact that Isaac's question about what sacrifice Abraham was about to offer is posed at the site of the *'Aqedah* itself rather than on the way up to it, as in Gen. 22:27.

The Bible does not so much as give us a word as to Isaac's inner feelings upon hearing his father's response. Philo, on the other hand, provides a psychological portrait of the feeling that not Isaac but Abraham has at this particular point. "To anyone else," he says, "who knew what he was about to do and was hiding it in his heart, these words would have brought confusion and tearfulness and he would have remained silent through extreme emotion and thus given an indication of what was going to happen." Abraham, in an extra-biblical addition, appears as a Stoic-like Aeneas (*Abr.* 175 and admitted no swerving of body or mind but remained unmoved in glance and in thought.²⁹ Instead, says Philo, Abraham was so steadfast that he gave no hint through his bodily movements; rather he remained fixed (Philo twice in successive phrases uses the word *σταθερῶς*, "standing fast," "firm," "fixed") in his eyes and thought and calmly answered Isaac's question.

Josephus (*Ant.* 1.228-32) has the dialogue occur after the altar has been prepared, and the dialogue itself is greatly extended. There Abraham focuses upon the many prayers that he had uttered asking for the birth of the child and the thought that the child would bring him the greatest happiness. He was now returning Isaac to G-d, he says, as a payment for the help tht G-d had given to him. The focus in Josephus in this dramatic dialogue is on Isaac, whose birth and now whose death are out of the course of nature. Isaac, he

²⁹ Cf. Aeneas' firm reaction to Dido's appeal to him not to leave her (Virgil, *Aen.* 4.331-32: *Ille ... immota tenebat lumina* ["He held his eyes unmoved"]).

concludes, will be a guardian and supporter for him in his old age. In the Bible we are not told Isaac's response. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.232) adds that Isaac received his father's words with joy and stated that it was not even right for him to have been born in the first place if he were about to spurn the decision of G-d and his father; and, in a final addition, we are told that Isaac actually rushed (ὄρμησεν, "rushed headlong," "darted," "hastened") to the altar.

Philo, however, because his chief aim is to protect the reputation of Abraham from his detractors, has minimized the role of Isaac. Instead, the focus is on Abraham; and it is Abraham who hastily (τάχιστα, "most speedily") seized his son, laid him on the altar, and drew his knife, prepared to inflict a death blow (*Abr.* 176). And it is Abraham (*Abr.* 176) who most swiftly (τάχιστα) snatches away (ἐξαρπάσας) his son.

The most important word in the entire biblical account, if we may judge, at least, from the way that the rabbis later refer to the incident, is *ἵπν* ("bound," LXX συμποδίσας, Gen. 22:9), a *hapax legomenon* in the Bible. Philo omits any mention, in his systematic account of the 'Aqedah in his essay *De Abrahamo*, of the actual binding, although he at least does describe Abraham as placing Isaac on the altar, whereas this detail also is omitted by Josephus.³⁰ Philo elsewhere (*Deus* 4), to be sure, does say that Abraham bound the feet (συμποδίσας, "tie the feet together") of the new strange victim (Gen. 22:9), "either because having once received G-d's inspiration he judged it right to tread no more on aught that was mortal, or it may be that he was taught to see how changeable and inconstant was creation, through his knowledge of the unwavering steadfastness that belongs to the Existent." But there he puts the matter on a philosophical rather than on a literal plane, whereas in *De Abrahamo* he is presenting a factual biography. The physical binding of Isaac would probably have seemed too much for a Greek audience and would have been incriminating for Abraham. Furthermore, Philo and Josephus may have avoided the implication that Isaac had to be tied, perhaps because, as the rabbis say, he might have shuddered at the sight of the knife and recoiled from the sacrifice, thus dishonoring his father and disobeying G-d (*Pirqe R. El.* 31), or because he might

³⁰ Sandmel 1956, 73, n. 337.

have struggled and thus rendered the sacrifice ritually unsuitable (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 56.8).

Moreover, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 22:11) an angel calls to Abraham and tells him not to slay his son, in Philo (*Abr.* 176), as in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.233), it is G-d Himself who calls upon him to halt. At this point in the Bible (Gen. 22:11-12) it is an angel that calls to Abraham from heaven and tells him not to do anything to his son, explaining apologetically that he now knows that Abraham is a G-d-fearing man, since he did not withhold his only son from Him. In Philo's version, as later in Josephus' account (*Ant.* 1.233), it is not an angel but G-d Himself who addresses Abraham, presumably because the subject was too important to be left to even the best of G-d's deputies.³¹ Moreover, in the Bible the angel clearly indicates that it was all a test of Abraham's loyalty to G-d. Similarly, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.233) states clearly that G-d tested Abraham to see whether, if commanded, Abraham would obey even such an injunction as to slay his own son. Philo, on the other hand, who is troubled, it seems, by the thought that G-d, who is omniscient, has to test someone, omits this completely. This may be an additional reason why Philo, who is tremendously concerned with theological matters and with preserving the crucial doctrine of G-d's omniscience, did not devote a whole treatise to the *'Aqedah*, since this would have forced him to confront the question as to why G-d, if he is omniscient, had to test Abraham.

Furthermore, whereas in the biblical text the angel calls "Abraham, Abraham," Philo calls attention to the fact that he called him twice. This is in line with Philo's view (*Leg.* 3.177) that G-d thinks that it is proper that He Himself should in His own Person bestow the principal benefits, such as health, upon humans, while His angels and the Logoi bestow the secondary gifts. G-d Himself, says Philo (*Conf.* 180, *Fug.* 66) is the bestower of good things alone, whereas it is His ministers, the angels, who bestow punishments.

According to the Bible (Gen. 22:13), after being told by the angel not to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham raised his eyes and saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns, whereupon Abraham went over and took the

³¹ So also Pseudo-Philo (*Bib. Ant.* 32.4) states that G-d sent forth His voice from on high telling Abraham not to slay his son. Similarly, *Pirque R.El.* 31 and *Sefer Hayashar* 9 (ed. Dan, p. 122), cited by Jacobson 1996, 2:869.

ram and offered it as a sacrifice in place of his son. This scene may have seemed grotesque and too much of a miracle for a rationalizing Greek mind, and so we find that Josephus (*Ant.* 1.236) omits it and states merely that G-d brought the ram from obscurity into view. The clear implication is that it had always been there but merely hidden from sight. Josephus does not explicitly tell us, as does the Bible (Gen. 22:13) that Abraham offered the ram in place of his son. Philo apparently sought to avoid the theological implication that the ram was a sacrifice for sins of man, and so he omits the ram completely from his narrative here.³² The Bible (Gen. 22:17-18) and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.235) close the pericope with the prediction that Isaac's descendants would increase greatly in numbers and wealth and that after capturing Canaan they would be envied by all. There is no such prediction in Philo's version; rather, Philo focuses not on Isaac but on Abraham, whose action, he says in summary, though not followed by the intended meaning, was complete and perfect. Indeed, after he has ended his paraphrase of the biblical account of the 'Aqedah, Philo turns his attention for no fewer than thirty paragraphs (*Abr.* 178-207) to defending the uniqueness of Abraham's action and to refuting those critics who tried to belittle it.

Philo does not, like Josephus (*Ant.* 1.224), identify the place of the intended sacrifice as Mount Moriah, as does the Hebrew text. Nor does he, as do Josephus (*Ant.* 1.226) and the rabbis,³³ indicate that this is the place where the Temple was later to be built. Sandmel³⁴ conjectures that the omission stems from the fact that Alexandrian Jews did not offer animal sacrifices in Alexandria but only when they came to Jerusalem. However, the fact that Philo sets forth in such elaborate detail the biblical regulations concerning animal sacrifices (*Spec.* 1.162-256) shows how meaningful they were to him; and the fact that he made at least one trip to Jerusalem (*Prov.* 2.64), where he says that he offered up prayers and sacrifices in the Temple, indicates that the sacrificial system was a practical reality for him,

³² Philo (*Fug.* 132-36) does mention the ram held by his horns in a thicket and indicates that this is a substitute (ἀντιδοθέν) for the sacrifice, but there he gives an allegorical interpretation for this part of the episode (*ibid.* 135-36), where the ram is identified with reason keeping quiet in suspense of judgment in matters lacking proof.

³³ *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 55.7 and parallels, cited by Ginzberg 1909-38, 5:253 n. 253.

³⁴ Sandmel 1956, 127 n. 128.

as it was for all Jews who made the pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.³⁵

Josephus might have been concerned elsewhere to downgrade the importance of theology. Here, however, he felt that he had to answer those who might have difficulty in understanding such a divine command in the first place, especially since the practice of human sacrifice was rare in classical, let alone Hellenistic, times.³⁶ Still, Philo seems to be protesting too much and, indeed, appears himself to have found the manner of G-d's test of Abraham to be a bit embarrassing.³⁷ In any case, inasmuch as G-d expressly forbids Abraham to slay his son, Philo may be implicitly countering the possible claim that Isaac actually was slain or at least wounded.³⁸ The fact that Philo focuses upon Abraham's obedience rather than upon Isaac's eagerness to be sacrificed would seem to support the view of Davies and Chilton³⁹ that Philo does not hold the view, so prominent in later rabbinic and Christian theology, that the *'Aqedah* was an expiatory sacrifice.

Here, as elsewhere, Philo (*Abr.* 200) indicates that his account is not limited to the literal and obvious explanation but that it is open to another interpretation, which is, to be sure, obscure to the masses but which appeals to the few (*Abr.* 147). In this instance, he explains that Isaac means laughter in the sense of the good emotion of the understanding, that is, joy. The fact that Abraham is prepared to sacrifice this joy as his duty to G-d shows that rejoicing is most closely associated with G-d, for humans are subject to grief and fear. G-d,

³⁵ Nikiprowetzky 1967, 97-116, contends that Philo at times depreciates the very principle of sacrifices (*Ebr.* 87), but he notes that such statements as "G-d does not rejoice in sacrifices even if one offer hecatombs, for all things are His possessions, yet though He possesses He needs none of them, but He rejoices in the will to love Him and in men that practice holiness" (*Spec.* 1:271), merely echo the prophets, as Wolfson 1947, 2:241-47 had previously remarked. In every case Philo, like the prophets, emphasizes that it is not sacrifices that he is rejecting; rather, he insists that they be accompanied by righteous conduct. In the matter of sacrifices, says Nikiprowetzky, Philo represents an Alexandrian Judaism that is intermediate between the extreme allegorists and the extreme literalists.

³⁶ Pearson 1913, 6:847-49.

³⁷ Franxman 1979, 161.

³⁸ *Pirke R. El.* 31, *Midr. ha-G.* on Gen. 22:19, and other citations in Ginzberg 1909-38, 5:251, n. 243. See also Spiegel 1967, 2-8 and *passim*; and Vermes 1973, 204-8.

³⁹ Davies and Chilton 1978, 519-21.

in turn, returns joy to the mind that offers it as a sacrifice to Him (*Abr.* 203).

6. SUMMARY

The 'Aqedah is of particular importance to Philo, as we see from the sheer amount of space that he devotes to it, because he seeks to answer malicious critics who had minimized Abraham's deed. These critics, in contrast to other pagan writers who had praised Abraham, are most likely non-Jews who had condemned the Jews for misanthropy. In contrast to his other treatises, in which he praises Isaac so greatly, Philo in *De Abrahamo* keeps the focus on Abraham. The role of Isaac is completely passive and he is presented as a young lad who is not old enough to make decisions. *De Abrahamo* is a hagiographical biography in which the events of Abraham's life are not presented in chronological order.

In his version of the 'Aqedah Philo does not even raise the problem of theodicy. There is no indication that G-d sought to test Abraham. Abraham is a veritable Stoic in accepting G-d's command. While he is leading Isaac to the sacrifice Abraham is so steadfast that he gives no hint of his intention. There is added drama in that Isaac's question as to where the animal is that is to be offered is asked not on the way to the sacrifice but at the very site of the 'Aqedah and at the very time that Abraham is gathering the stones for the altar. In contrast to Josephus, in whose version a heroic Isaac joyfully rushes to the altar, in Philo Abraham snatches him away. Philo omits the physical binding of Isaac to the altar because this would have been incriminating for Abraham. In contrast to the Bible, where it is an angel who stops Abraham from consummating the sacrifice, in Philo it is G-d Himself who does so, in accordance with his view that it is G-d who bestows benefits whereas it is the angels who inflict punishments. Philo completely omits the ram from the narrative because it may have seemed grotesque, because it may have seemed too much of a miracle for a rationalizing Greek mind, and because he sought to avoid the theological implication that the ram was sacrificed to atone for sins.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ I wish to express my thanks to Professor Gregory E. Sterling for many helpful suggestions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PHILO, PSEUDO-PHILO, JOSEPHUS, AND THEODOTUS ON THE RAPE OF DINAH

1. INTRODUCTION

James Kugel¹ has noted the danger in assuming that when one finds in the retelling of a biblical story in ancient literature details that are not present in the Bible one is justified in concluding that these details have been added by the author for merely ideological reasons or as a reflection of then-current events, since the author may simply be trying to solve a problem in the biblical text. However, we may suggest that there is often a pattern to such changes in the work of a given writer, particularly if we can surmise for what purpose and for what audience he is writing; and, if so, it is, indeed, more likely that the author has made these modifications in order to present a given point of view and to preach a lesson or to defend his people against attacks.

It is proposed here to examine several ancient accounts of the rape of Dinah and its consequences and to consider why those changes were made and whether the changes made by the authors follow a pattern found in their treatment of other biblical passages or whether they merely answer questions arising from the problems in a particular text.

2. THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT

One instance that seems to portray seeming Jewish brutality toward non-Jews is the revenge meted out by Simeon and Levi for the rape of their sister Dinah (Gen. 34). According to the biblical narrative, Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivvite, the prince of the region, saw Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and had relations with her (Gen.

¹ Kugel 1992, 2.

34:2). He then became deeply attached to her and asked his father to arrange to have him marry her. Hamor spoke to Jacob and to Jacob's sons asking them to give Dinah to Shechem and, in general, to have the Israelites intermarry with his people, offering to have them dwell among his people, to acquire property there, and to carry on business there (Gen. 34:8-10). Shechem then expressed a willingness to give whatever gifts they desired if only they would permit Dinah to marry him. Jacob's sons answered him deceitfully because he (they [i.e., the Hivvites], according to the LXX) had defiled their sister. They (Simeon and Levi, specifically identified as the brothers of Dinah, according to the LXX) said that they could acquiesce only if all their males would be circumcised (Gen. 34:13-17), in which case the Israelites would intermarry with them. Hamor and Shechem, who was the most respected in his father's household, agreed without delay and convinced their people to be circumcised, noting that thus all the possessions of the Israelites would be theirs.

On the third day after the circumcision, however, when they were in pain, Simeon and Levi killed all the males of the Hivvites, including Hamor and Shechem and took Dinah home with them (Gen. 34:25-26). These sons of Jacob then proceeded to plunder the Hivvite city, seized all their wealth, and took captive their wives and children (the LXX omits the children, perhaps because of embarrassment at such behavior by Israelites) (Gen. 34:27-29). The fact that the biblical text speaks (Gen. 34:27) of the sons of Jacob as plundering the city "who had defiled their sister" indicates that the crime had been committed not merely by one person, Shechem, but by others as well, and this would presumably justify the mass execution of the inhabitants. Jacob then told Simeon and Levi that they had brought trouble upon him by making him odious to (the LXX adds the word "all," perhaps to indicate that Jacob was so deeply upset by the fact that all the Hivvites had to pay for the act of what he apparently understood to have been by a single individual) the inhabitants of the land and expressed the fear that they would attack him. But they replied, "Should he² treat our sister as a harlot?" At this point in the Bible we hear nothing further as to what action, if any, the neighboring tribes took.

² "They" in the LXX, perhaps to indicate that the Hivvites generally countenanced the act of Shechem and thus shared in the responsibility for it.

On his deathbed, when Jacob blesses his sons, he sharply criticizes Simeon and Levi and expresses his anger with them (Gen. 49:5-7): "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. O my soul, come not into their council; O my spirit, be not joined to their company; for in their anger they slay men, and in their wantonness they hamstring oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."

The biblical text presents a number of questions and difficulties. In the first place, the Bible is selective, rather than comprehensive, and we may well ask why it includes the episode of the rape of Dinah at all. Surely the Bible focuses upon the sons of Jacob; why deal with the daughter of Jacob at all? Secondly, that the daughter of Jacob, the direct ancestor of the Israelites, was raped is not an episode that redounds to the credit of the Jewish people, since Dinah is not completely guiltless, inasmuch as, according to the biblical text (Gen. 34:1), Dinah went out "to visit the women of the land." Thirdly, Shechem is presented in a light that is far from completely negative, since we are told (Gen. 34:3) that he did not merely have relations with Dinah but that he became deeply attached to her and loved her and appealed to her emotions and expressed his readiness to give whatever would be asked of him in order to marry Dinah (Gen. 34:11-12). Fourthly, why, after hearing of the rape of his daughter, did Jacob remain silent until the arrival of his sons from the field (Gen. 34:5)? Fifthly, since it appears (Gen. 34:6, 8) that Hamor, the father of Shechem, negotiated in good faith with Jacob, offering to have the Israelites live among his people, the Hivvites, the fact that Simeon and Levi dealt deceitfully with the Hivvites surely does not redound to the credit of the Israelites. Sixthly, what justification was there for Simeon and Levi to kill all the Hivvites, rather than the one guilty person, Shechem, and for taking captive their wives and children? Seventhly, what justification was there for Simeon and Levi to seize the wealth of the Hivvites? Eighthly, why when Jacob hears what Simeon and Levi have done, does he not say a word about his feelings that his daughter has been raped but rather condemns Simeon and Levi because he fears that other nations will now attack him? Ninthly, why on his deathbed does Jacob attack Simeon and Levi so strongly and say nothing about the purity of their intentions?

3. PHILO'S VERSION

Philo (*Migr.* 223-25) has condensed the story considerably. There are 205 words in Philo's account here as against 753 words in the LXX (Gen. 34). This gives a ratio of .27 of Philo to the LXX version. In his version in *Mut.* 193-200 there are 460 words. This gives a ratio of .61 of Philo to the LXX version.³ However, most of both of these accounts does not paraphrase the narrative but rather goes far afield in allegorizing it. Most remarkably, Philo contrasts two sharply different aspects of the etymology of the geographical place called Shechem. On the one hand, he gives an etymology of Shechem as "shouldering" (*Migr.* 221) and refers to it as signifying toil, connecting it with the toil of the lover of learning (φιλομαθής), who is identified with Jacob (see *Fug.* 10) and Moses (*Fug.* 161), and representing, in a figure, clearly complimentary, "the toil of education as a hard and unbreakable substance that never yields or bends." It is this kind of toil that, according to Philo (*Migr.* 221), Issachar pursues in the blessing conferred by Jacob (Gen. 49:15). One should, Philo continues, pursue it so that the soul's court of justice, that is Dinah, which means "judgment," may not be ravished by him who sinks under the opposite kind of toil, represented by Shechem, "the insidious foe (ἐπίβυλος, "perfidious conspirator") of common sense (φρόνησις) (*Migr.* 223).

Most importantly, Philo has omitted the fact that Shechem was the highly respected son of the leader of his people, that after having relations with Dinah, he became deeply attached to her, that he and his father carried on negotiations in good faith with Jacob and Jacob's sons and offered to be joined with the Israelites on a completely equal basis, that they had agreed to have all their males circumcised, that Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, acted deceitfully in killing all the Hivvite men after they had carried out the agreement, and that Jacob was highly critical of his sons for their action.

³ If we compare this with Philo's treatment of the war against the Midianites, we note that in the LXX version (Num. 31) of that episode there are 1179 words, whereas Philo's version (*Mos.* 1.305-18) contains 835 words, a ratio of .71 to the LXX. For the episode of the spies (Num. 13-14) there are 1701 words in the LXX. Philo's version (*Mos.* 1.220-36) contains 877 words, a ratio of .52 to the LXX. For the episode of Phinehas and Zimri (Num. 25:6-16) there are 208 words in the LXX. Philo's version (*Mos.* 1.301-4) contains 173 words, a ratio of .83 to the LXX.

Instead, the whole incident is interpreted allegorically, where Dinah, as we have noted, equals “judgment”⁴ (*Migr.* 223), where Shechem is greatly denigrated, “being the son of Hamor, that is, of an irrational being—for ‘Hamor’ means ‘ass’ (*Migr.* 224; repeated in *Mut.* 193)—practicing folly and nursed in shamelessness and effrontery, [who] essayed—foul wretch that he was—to corrupt and defile the judgment faculties of the understanding” (διανοίας, “intelligence,” “sagacity,” *Migr.* 224).

Though, according to the Bible, the act of Shechem was that of a single individual, Philo (*ibid.*) generalizes and speaks, most disparagingly, of “these men” as hoping to carry off unobserved the virgin soul. He carries his allegorical interpretation further by insisting that Dinah, as the personification of incorruptible judgment, the justice that is the assessor of G-d, the ever virgin (*Mut.* 194), the befriender of those who are wronged, may have seemed to be defiled but cannot truly be defiled, and that the soul, identified with justice, becomes again a virgin (*Migr.* 225).

As to the biblical statement that Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34:25), on the third day after the circumcision, entered the city of the Hivvites confidently (חבט, “securely,” LXX ἀσφαλῶς, “safely,” “steadfastly”), presumably because they had nothing to fear inasmuch as the Hivvites were still weak from the circumcision, Philo (*Migr.* 224), far from criticizing them for deceiving the Hivvites, says that they secured (φραζάμενοι, “fencing in,” “fortifying”) their own quarters and went forth in safety (ἀσφαλῶς), the implication being, as Colson⁵ notes, that virtue, as personified in Simeon and Levi, must first fortify itself against vice before it can take the offensive. Whereas the Bible (Gen. 34:25) states that when the brothers entered the city, they found the Hivvites in pain (כאב, LXX ἐν τῷ πόνῳ), Philo (*ibid.*) states that the Hivvites were still occupied in pleasure-loving (φιληδόνῳ) and passion-loving (φιλοπαθεῖ) toil (πονῳ). This is truly ironical, since it speaks of the Hivvites as being in the midst of the distress involving love. Ironically, he adds “of the uncircumcised,” even though, according to the Bible, they had just undergone the operation of circumcision. Philo castigates the Hivvites because they were in love with pleasure in defiance of the divine decree forbidding daughters

⁴ So also in rabbinic tradition (*b.Ber.* 60).

⁵ Colson 1929-62, 4:264 n. b.

of Israel to be treated as harlots (Deut. 23:17); and these hoped to carry off the virgin soul, as if they could get away with it without being observed.

As for Dinah, she is identified with justice (*Migr.* 225), as she was earlier (223) identified with judgement (κρίσις). She is the very opposite of Hamor, since she is “the abhorrer of wickedness, the relentless one (ἀμείλικτος, “unsoothed”), the inexorable (ἀπαράιτητος, “not to be entreated”), the befriender (ἀρωγός, “advocate) of those who are wronged.” She is identified with virtue, as Shechem is identified with those who shame virtue. Since she did not will her suffering, she did not really suffer.

Likewise, commenting on the statement (Gen. 34:3) that Shechem spoke to Dinah “according to the mind of the virgin,” that is, sincerely, Philo (*Mut.* 193), again referring to Shechem in the most disparaging terms, remarks that the wicked man (Shechem) sometimes gives admirable expression to noble thoughts but that his actions and their method are most vile, the very opposite of his words (*Mut.* 194-95). Shechem, Philo repeats (*Mut.* 193), as he had previously noted (*Migr.* 221), means “shoulder” and is the symbol of toil, which, being fathered by unintelligence, is miserable and full of affliction.

Shechem, says Philo (*Mut.* 193), is the son of unintelligence (ἄνοια, “folly”), since his father is Hamor, whose name means “ass,” while his own name means “shoulder,” the symbol of toil, such as one identifies with an ass. That Shechem was insincere, he continues (194), is clear from the fact that he spoke thus after first humiliating Dinah. Again, he contrasts Shechem with Dinah, whose name, he says, means either judgement (κρίσις) or justice (δίκη) and who represents “incorruptible (ἀδέκαστος, ‘unbribed’) judgement, the justice which is the assessor (πάρεδρος, ‘coadjutor’) of G-d, the ever virgin (ἄειπάρθενος)” (*Mut.* 194). Shechem, on the other hand, is said (*Mut.* 195) to exemplify the fools (ἄφρονες, “senseless,” “witless”) who attempt to seduce Dinah by their plottings and their practices, which, he says in an extra-biblical addition, are repeated day by day; and they seek, he says in a further addition, to escape from conviction by means of speciousness (εὐπρέπεια, “comeliness,” “plausibility”) of speech. Philo then editorializes: such people, he says, “should either make their actions conform to their words or if they persist in iniquity keep still.”

In still another addition (*Mut.* 196) Philo, referring to Shechem, says that to rant (ἐκτραγωδεῖν, “deck out in tragic phrase,” “exag-

gerate”) and boast (ἐπικομπάζειν, “add boastingly”) of evil doings is a double sin. Shechem, he remarks, is typical of those who forever are addressing words of friendship (τὰ φίλα) and fairness (δίκαια) to the maiden Virtue, by which Dinah is personified; and yet lose no opportunity to slip by without using it to outrage (ὑβριτοῦσι) and maltreat (κακώσουσι) her if they can. Shechem, he adds in a preaching-like tone, is the typical hypocrite who constantly proclaims that “prudence (φρόνησις) is necessary, imprudence (ἄφροσύνη) is harmful, temperance (σωφροσύνη) deserves our choice, intemperance (ἀκολασία) our hatred, courage (ἀνδρεία) is worthy of perseverance (ὑπομονή, ‘endurance’) therein, cowardice (δειλία) of avoidance, justice (δικαιοσύνη) is profitable, injustice (ἀδικία) unprofitable, holiness (τὸ ὅσιον) is honorable, unholiness (τὸ ἀνόσιον) disgraceful, piety (θεοσεβές) is praiseworthy, impiety (ἀσεβές) blameworthy, right proposing (τὸ εὖ βουλευέσθαι), speaking (λέγειν) and acting (πράττειν) is most conformable to man’s nature, wrong proposing, speaking and acting most alien to the same.” Shechem (*Mut.* 198) typifies those who, through perpetual talk of this sort, “deceive the law-courts, the theaters, the council-chambers and every gathering and group of men, like people who set handsome masks on the ugliest of faces to prevent the ugliness being detected by the eyes of others.

Philo then compares (*Mut.* 199) Simeon and Levi to the vindicators who “will come strong and doughty (ἐρρωμένοι, ‘vigorous,’ ‘stout’), inspired with zeal (ζήλω) for virtue (ἀρετήν). They will strip off all this complication of wraps and bandages which the perverted art of the talkers has put together, and beholding the soul naked in her very self they will know the secrets hidden from sight in the recesses of her nature; and then exposing to every eye in clear sunlight her shame and all her disgraces they will point the contrast between her real character, so hideous, so despicable, and the spurious (νόθη, ‘illegitimate,’ ‘born out of wedlock’) comeliness which disguised in her wrappings she counterfeited (ἐπιμόρφαζεν, ‘pretended,’ ‘simulated’).”

Philo (*Mut.* 200) clearly vindicates Simeon and Levi, speaking of them, as he does, as champions who stand ready (εὐτρεπεῖς, “prepared”) to repel (ἄμυναν, “keep off,” “ward off”) such profane and impure ways of thinking, such as those espoused by Shechem. The two brothers, with whom Philo clearly identifies, are one in will (γνώμη, “purpose”); and this will explain, according to Philo, why in

Jacob's blessings they are grouped together (Gen. 49:5) and why in Moses' blessings the whole of Simeon is compressed into Levi (Deut. 33:8).

In short, Philo has very definitely downgraded Shechem, has totally omitted those details that would indict Simeon and Levi, and is clearly not at all critical of their actions. By omitting the demand by Simeon and Levi that the Hivvites be circumcised and the readiness of the Hivvites to do so and their being killed when they are weak from that operation, and by allegorizing the whole incident he has, in effect, bypassed the issue of deceit and guilt on the part of Simeon and Levi. Instead, Simeon and Levi are praised in terms that a philosopher would especially appreciate, namely as hearers (ἀκουσται) and pupils (γνώριμοι, "intimate friends," "disciples") of sound sense (φρόνησις, "intelligence," "sagacity," "understanding," *Migr.* 224), the very word that is the opposite of the quality of unintelligence (ἄνοια) epitomized by Shechem.

Philo, as we know from his role as the leader of a delegation of Alexandrian Jews to the Roman emperor Caligula and from the essays, *Legatio at Gaium* and *In Flaccum*, that he wrote in defense of the Jews against anti-Semitic charges, as well as from many other essays presenting his interpretation of the beliefs and practices of Judaism and of biblical heroes, was particularly concerned with the importance of telling the truth. Thus he remarks (*Mos.* 1.44-48), for example, in an extra-biblical addition, that after Moses killed the Egyptian who was beating a Jew, and while talk was circulating in Egypt that Moses was ambitious to attain the kingship, he "desired truth rather than seeming, because the one mark he set before him was nature's right reason, the source and fountain of virtues." The same tendency to overlook deceit on the part of Israelites that we find in his version of the Dinah incident may be seen in Philo's treatment of Abraham's deceit in telling Sarah (Gen. 12:12-13) that she should tell the Egyptians that she is Abraham's sister rather than his wife. In his extensive account Philo (*Abr.* 91-98) says nothing at all about such instructions to Sarah and, indeed, blackens the picture of the Pharaoh, whom he portrays as a licentious and cruel-hearted despot.

Similarly, Philo presents a whitewash of Jacob and blackening of Esau in his comment on the sale of the birthright by Esau to Jacob (*Sacr.* 18). There Philo offers a comparison, remarking that just "as the flute and lyre and the other instruments of music belong only to

the musician, so all that is supreme in value, and all to which virtue gives its place of honor, belong not to any of the wicked [i.e., Esau], but to the lover of wisdom only [i.e., Jacob].” Likewise, in his version of Jacob’s dissimulation in getting the blessing from his father Isaac by claiming that he was Esau, the first-born son, Philo mentions nothing of Jacob’s statement (Gen. 27:19) that he was Esau;⁶ instead, we are told (*Her.* 252) that Esau is deservedly supplanted because he has acquired his skill not to do good but to do harm. His goal, says Philo (*Sacr.* 135), is to efface the image of virtue and to impress in its stead, if he can, the stamp of vice. Instead of showing sympathy for Esau because he had been defrauded Philo (*Virt.* 208) blackens him further, adding that all of Esau’s concern was to act in such a way as would cause grief to his parents. Hence it is not surprising that he omits the deceit practiced by Simeon and Levi.

Philo (*Mos.* 2.27) is very much in favor of the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism, as we see from his extensive digression about the origin of the LXX (*Mos.* 2.25-44), which really has very little relevance to the subject of that essay, the life of Moses, but in which he notes, with obvious pride (*Mos.* 2.41), that every year a feast and a general assembly are held on the island of Pharos, where the translation took place, and where not only Jews but multitudes of non-Jews come to do honor to the place where the translation was made. The translation itself, he says (*Mos.* 2.27), was undertaken because some people, admiring the life style of the Jews, thought that it was a shame that the laws of the Jews should be practiced by only one half of the human race and denied altogether to the Greeks. Philo (*Mos.* 2.44) himself closes his account of the translation by expressing his hope that a fresh start be made by non-Jews and his confidence that, if so, each nation would abandon its peculiar ways and throw overboard their ancestral customs and honor the Jewish laws alone. But it is clear from the tone of this passage that Philo would be outraged by the use of deceit, let alone force, in getting non-Jews to convert to Judaism; and hence we can understand why, despite his extensive paraphrase of the Pentateuch, his version of the Dinah episode is very much reduced in size and why he totally omits the demand that

⁶ To be sure, Philo, *QG* 4.212, does ask why Isaac first blessed Jacob and only thereafter asked, “Are you my son Esau?” Philo answers that it was G-d who did the blessing through the prophet, Isaac. Still, Philo does not have Jacob actually lie by saying that he was Esau.

the Hivvites be circumcised and the deceit practiced by Simeon and Levi after they had acceded to this demand. For Philo, as we have noted, the non-Jews will freely come to Judaism because they admire the Jewish legal system and way of life. As the leader of the Jewish community in Alexandria and in view of the long history of friction between the Jews and non-Jews in that city (according to Philo, *Legat.* 120, the hatred of the masses toward the Jews had been smoldering for some time), Philo would surely have found it unpolitic to recall the details of an incident in which Jews demanded conversion and then used deceit once it had been agreed to.

4. PSEUDO-PHILO'S VERSION

Pseudo-Philo's *Bib. Ant.* (8.7) devotes a mere two sentences to the whole incident and consists of only 41 words. This gives a ratio of .10 of Pseudo-Philo to the Hebrew text (430 words). In the first sentence he says that Shechem seized (*rapuit*) and raped (*humiliavit*, "humiliated") Dinah. In the second he asserts that Simeon and Levi killed all the Hivvites (*interfecerunt omnem civitatem eorum*;⁷ Gen. 34:25 says that they killed all the males) by the sword (*in ore gladii*) and took Dinah (adding "their sister") home with them.

Like Philo, Pseudo-Philo has omitted the fact that Dinah went out to look over the daughters of the land; that Shechem was the son of Hamor, the leader of his people, and was the most respected of all his father's household; that after having relations with Dinah, he became deeply attached to her, loved her and appealed to her emotions; that Jacob, having heard that his daughter had been defiled, kept silent until the arrival of his sons; that Shechem and his father carried on negotiations in good faith with Jacob and Jacob's sons, asking that Dinah be given to Shechem as a wife, and offered to have the Israelites intermarry with the Hivvites and to have the Israelites settle and trade in their land and to acquire property in it; that Shechem offered to give as a dowry whatever would be asked of him; that Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, deceitfully offered to give Dinah to Shechem and to allow Israelite daughters to marry Hivvites and to become a single nation only if all the males of the

⁷ Jacobson 1996, 1:391, notes that the same phrase, הרגו כל העיר, is also found in Jub. 30.25 and *Yashar* 118.

Hivvites would be circumcised; that Hamor and Shechem accepted these conditions; that they told their fellow Hivvites that the Israelites were peaceful and that there was ample room in the land for them; that all the males should be circumcised, and that once they would do so all the Israelite possessions would become theirs; that the Hivvites accepted these conditions; that Simeon and Levi then proceeded on the third day after their circumcision to kill the Hivvite males; that they plundered the city, taking their flocks and all their other wealth, taking captive wives and children; that Jacob was highly critical of his sons for their action and expressed the fear that the other Canaanites would attack him and annihilate him and his household; and that, in response, Simeon and Levi asked whether Shechem should have been allowed to treat their sister as a harlot.

Pseudo-Philo, by his very brevity, is matter-of-fact about the whole incident. He omits all the details that would create sympathy for Shechem and the Hivvites and that would indict Simeon and Levi for deceit and cruelty. His more particular concern is the extra-biblical statement (8.8) that follows, namely that Job took Dinah as a wife⁸ and begat from her fourteen sons and six daughters before he was struck down with suffering, and subsequently seven sons and three daughters (whom he proceeds to name) after he was healed. His major goal is to demonstrate that good people are ultimately rewarded by G-d. As Murphy⁹ has shown, G-d is the most important character in his work; and the *Biblical Antiquities* is, in effect, a narrative theodicy, a defense of G-d's ways. The omission of details that would create a sympathy for Shechem and that would indict Simeon and Levi is in line with his fervent and continuing attack on idolatry. Thus, he even holds up for admiration the decision of Tamar (9.5) to have relations with her own father-in-law, Judah, and to die rather than to have intercourse with gentiles. Her intention, says Pseudo-Philo, was not to commit fornication; rather, she was unwilling to be separated from the Israelites.

⁸ This tradition is also found in *b.B. Bat.* 15b, *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 19, Tg. on Job, 2.9, and Test. of Job 1.6. This tradition was able to place Job in the time of Jacob by identifying him with Iobab of Gen. 36:33.

⁹ Murphy 1993, 223-29.

5. JOSEPHUS' VERSION

As for Josephus, he might have omitted, as embarrassing to the Jewish people, the whole episode as he does that of the incident of Reuben's intercourse with his father's concubine (Gen. 35:22) and the incident of Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38), as well as the first account of the Golden Calf (Exod. 32:1-20); but he apparently thought that the narrative contained important lessons to be conveyed and that the embarrassing aspects might be glossed over or omitted. Nevertheless, he has greatly reduced the amount of space that he gives to the incident. In the Hebrew (Gen. 34:1-31) there are 430 words, whereas in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.337-41) there are only 244 words. This gives a ratio of .56 of Josephus to the Hebrew text. This compares with a ratio of 1.20 for Abraham, 1.63 for Joseph (3.26 for Joseph's dreams and subsequent enslavement, 5.45 for the episode of Joseph and Potiphar's wife), .62 for Aaron, 29.1 for the affair of Zimri with Cozbi, .59 for the account of Phinehas' zealotry, 3.41 for Korah, 2.09 for Balaam, 2.56 for Solomon, and 7.45 for Zedekiah.

There are several significant changes between the biblical text and Josephus' version (*Ant.* 1.337-41). In the first place, Josephus, at the beginning of the narrative (*Ant.* 1.337) reminds us that Dinah was Jacob's only daughter and thus arouses more sympathy for her plight. Secondly, we are told (*ibid.*) that it was during a festival¹⁰ that was being celebrated by the Hivvites (whom Josephus calls Sikimites, that is from the country of Shechem) that Dinah came into the city

¹⁰ According to Gen. 34:1, Dinah went out to look about among the daughters of the land. Josephus' addition, that the Sikimites were holding a festival, may have come from Theodotus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.4), according to whom Dinah came to Shechem when there was a great festival because she wanted to see the city. Elsewhere Josephus (*Ap.* 1.216) mentions a Theodotus who refers to the Jews. It is largely on the basis of the mention of a festival by both Theodotus and Josephus that Kippenberg 1971, 56 n. 123, 90, concludes that Theodotus is Josephus' source here. In fact, he theorizes that Theodotus is Josephus' source for the foundation of the community of Shechem. His assertion that Josephus agrees with Theodotus partly verbatim is exaggerated, however. In particular, Josephus uses a different word (ἐορτή) for the key term, "festival," from that used by Theodotus, πανήγυρις. A late rabbinic tradition (*Sefer Hayashar* 13 [ed. Dan, p. 154] and *Sekel Tov* on Gen. 34:1 [ed. Buber, p. 189]) likewise speaks of a festival of women. Note that Josephus (*Ant.* 2.45) likewise adds that it was at the approach of a festival that Potiphar's wife made illness her excuse to her husband and used the opportunity to solicit Joseph.

in order to see the adornment of the Sikimite women. This would also arouse more sympathy for Dinah, since it was presumably a religious festival; and to be raped, especially at such a time, would appear to be sacrilege. Moreover, Shechem would be seen in a worse light because whereas the Bible (Gen. 34:2) says that he took (ἡρῆ) her and lay with her, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.337) reports that he seduced her (φθείρει, “destroyed,” “ruined,” “abused”)¹¹ through abduction (ἄρπαγή, “seizure,” “capture”). On the other hand, Josephus, in his generally increased respect for non-Jewish leaders,¹² has greater regard for Shechem and introduces a romantic element as well, as he so often does,¹³ by having Shechem amorously (ἔρωτικῶς) disposed toward Dinah, rather than merely appealing to her emotions, and by having him actually implore (ἵκετεύει, “approach as a suppliant,” “beseech”) rather than merely speaking to his father to arrange to have Dinah as his wife. Josephus omits the statement, which might reflect badly on Jacob as indecisive, that Jacob, after having heard that Shechem had defiled Dinah, kept silent until the arrival of his sons.

Furthermore, in dealing with the request of Hamor for the hand of Dinah (Gen. 34:6), Josephus, walking a delicate tightrope with regard to intermarriage, in view of the charges that the Jews were illiberal in their attitude toward non-Jews,¹⁴ carefully balances the fact that it was unlawful for Jacob to marry off his daughter to a foreigner against the fact that the petitioner was of high rank; and so, in an extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 1.338), he has Jacob sagely ask permission from Hamor, the king of the Shechemites, to hold a council to deliberate his request that Jacob give Dinah in marriage to Hamor.

Moreover, Josephus omits the biblical statement, which would seem to be illiberal, that when Jacob’s sons arrived from the field and heard about the rape of Dinah, they were actually fired deeply with indignation. In particular, non-Jews might well have objected to the statement in the Bible that followed, explaining the reason for

¹¹ Cf. the same root in referring to Jacob’s revelation to his children of the rape (φθοράν) of their sister (*Ant.* 1.339). The same word is used in the account of Demetrius (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.21.9: φθαρῆναι...διὰ τὴν Δείνας φθοράν).

¹² See Feldman 1998, 557-58.

¹³ See Feldman 1998, 185-88.

¹⁴ See Feldman 1998, 136-39; and 1998a, 558.

this indignation, namely that Shechem had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with a daughter of Jacob, “for such a thing ought not to be done” (Gen. 34:7). Josephus omits totally the negotiations of Hamor with Jacob and his sons. He makes no mention of Hamor’s statement that Shechem longed deeply (חשקה) for Dinah and asked “please” (נא) to give her to Shechem as a wife, since such apparently genuine feeling and politeness would have reflected badly on the Israelites if they had refused. Furthermore, he omits the apparently genuine offer of the Hivvites (Gen. 34:9-10) to open the land to the Israelites for settlement and trade and for the acquisition of property and to arrange marriages with them, since this would presumably have aroused the readers’ sympathies for the Hivvites. He likewise omits Shechem’s extremely romantic offer to Jacob and his sons to give whatever dowry, however great, they would ask (Gen. 34:11-12), since, of course, this would have aroused even more sympathy for Shechem. Most important, since its inclusion would have compromised the honor of Jacob’s sons—and consequently the Israelites generally, since all of Israel were descended from these sons—he omits that they answered Shechem and Hamor deceitfully (במרמה, Gen. 34:13).

Most significantly, Josephus omits the condition, recounted at some length in the biblical text (Gen. 34:14-24), namely that the males of the Hivvites be circumcised, since to give their sister to a man who is uncircumcised would be a disgrace for them, but that if the Hivvites would agree to this, they would consent to a general intermarriage between the Israelites and Hivvites. In that case, they would become one people—a proposal that would have struck a responsive chord with a Roman audience that remembered the similar proposal of the Romans to the Sabines after the rape of the Sabine women (Livy 1.9.14-16). He further omits the statement that Hamor and Shechem approved of this proposal and did not delay in implementing it and that, in fact, Shechem was the most respected of all his father’s household (Gen. 34:19).

Josephus was quite sensitive about circumcision for two major reasons: first, it is the sign of an everlasting covenant between G-d and Abraham and Abraham’s descendants (Gen. 17:4-14), in which G-d guarantees not only that He will make Abraham exceedingly fruitful so that he will be the father of a multitude of nations but also in which He promises him and his offspring the whole of the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession; second, the sign of this

covenant is the circumcision of every male at the age of eight days and is the *sine qua non* requirement for a male to join the Israelite people, so that in the words of the biblical text (Gen. 17:14) “any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.” As a Jew who spent the latter half of his life in the Diaspora and who sought an accommodation with the Romans, Josephus seeks to reduce the centrality of the land of Israel.¹⁵ Consequently, when he mentions the requirement of circumcision (*Ant.* 1.192), he omits, as G-d’s part of the agreement, His promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham and his posterity. It is true that Josephus here states that the purpose of circumcision is to prevent the Israelites from mixing (συμφορόμενον, “confuse,” “confound”) with others, but that is not the same as a promise of an independent state, which, in terms of the era in which Josephus lived, would require a revolt against the Romans.¹⁶ Josephus was, however, evidently well aware that his statement here might lead to a charge of misanthropy, and so he immediately adds that he will explain elsewhere¹⁷ the reason, that is, presumably, the rational or symbolic meaning of this practice.¹⁸ This announced work has not come down to us, but in it Josephus might well have pointed to the separatism of the reputedly wise Egyptians, who, he says, themselves practice circumcision (*Ap.* 1.164-70 and 2.141-42). In any case, it is significant that whereas Josephus elsewhere draws upon the Book of Jubilees,¹⁹ he does not have the strong statement in Jub. (15:26), presumably directed against the

¹⁵ See Feldman 1998, 324-26.

¹⁶ So also Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.5.2), to be sure disparagingly, remarks that the Jews adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference. Cf. Heinemann 1939-40, 397. Likewise, *Mid. Num. Rab.* 10.1: “All the deeds of Israel separate them from the nations of the world”; and Schalit 1944, on *Ant.* 1.192.

¹⁷ Presumably in a projected work on “Customs and Causes” that Josephus refers to on several occasions (*Ant.* 1.25, 29, 214; 3.94, 143, 205, 230, 257, 259, 264; 4.198; 20.268).

¹⁸ The motive of circumcision as a way of avoiding assimilation, as Sandmel 1956, 66, n. 279, correctly remarks, is lacking in the rabbinic writings. To be sure, the rabbis (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 46) do portray Abraham as fearing that circumcision will deter candidates for conversion to Judaism; but this, of course, is totally different from the reason given by Josephus, who is concerned not with winning converts—a movement that had aroused great bitterness in Roman circles, as we see from the banishment of Jews from Rome on two and possibly three occasions. See Feldman 1993, 300-4.

¹⁹ See Feldman 1998, 51 n. 60.

Hellenizers of the period, that those who are not circumcised are destined “to be destroyed and slain from the earth, and to be rooted out of the earth.”²⁰

Surely a major reason for the omission of the circumcision of the Hivvites is that one of the most serious charges made against the Jews was aggressiveness in proselytism.²¹ Thus Horace, in the first century B.C.E., speaks of the missionary zeal of the Jews as something proverbial: “We, like the Jews, will compel you to join our throng” (*Sat.* 1.4.139-43).²² Though satirists exaggerate, the point would have been lost if there had not been some basis to the charge of missionary activity. Josephus’ contemporary, Tacitus, bitterly alludes to the missionary zeal of the Jews, noting that the most degraded of other races, scorning the peoples of their origin, brought to the Jews their contributions and gifts, thus augmenting the Jews’ wealth (*Hist.* 5.5.1). The Romans were particularly sensitive to the requirement that a proselyte give up his belief in the Roman gods, since for them religion and state were one and indivisible, and since they believed that the growth and triumph of Rome were due to the favor of the gods, as we see throughout the early books of Livy’s history. Converts to Judaism, on the other hand, according to Tacitus, were taught to despise all the gods, to disown their country, and to disregard their families.

As the Romans saw a decline in religiosity (see, for example, the preface to Livy’s history), they became more and more bitter about those who were trying to draw them away from their ancestral religion and values. The expulsion of 139 B.C.E. (as reported by Valerius Maximus 1.3.3) and, apparently, that of 19 C.E. (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.81-84; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.85; Suet., *Tiberius* 36; Cassius Dio 57.18.5a)²³ were connected with the alleged attempt of the Jews to

²⁰ See Sandmel 1956, 42.

²¹ See Feldman 1993, 288-341.

²² Even if this passage does not refer to proselytism by Jews, it would, at any rate, point to the Jews as a pressure group, such as we find in Cicero’s comment (*Flacc.* 28.66) referring to how big their number is (*scis quanta sit manus*), how they stick together (*quanta concordia*), and how influential they are in informal assemblies (*quantum valeat in contionibus*).

²³ See Abel 1968, 383-86. Williams 1989, 765-84, argues that the expulsion of 19 C.E. was the conventional response of a beleaguered administration to a group that was deemed to be posing a threat to law and order; but her case is hardly convincing. Moreover, according to Suetonius (*Claudius* 25.4), the Emperor Claudius in the middle of the first century expelled the Jews, who had been constantly making

convert non-Jews to Judaism; and we might note that such drastic action had taken place despite the generally favorable attitude of the Roman government toward the Jews.²⁴

It is surely significant that in the *Antiquities*, aside from the passage about the conversion of the royal family of Adiabene (*Ant.* 20.17-96) (which was, after all, under Parthian domination and hence of no immediate concern to the Romans), Josephus nowhere propagandizes for proselytism as such. If, in the essay *Against Apion*, he declares (2.261) that the Jews gladly welcome any who wish to share their customs, he is careful to note that Jews do not take the initiative in seeking out proselytes and that, in fact, they take precautions (2.257) to prevent foreigners from mixing with them at random. Josephus himself makes a point of stressing that when the Galilean Jews tried to compel some non-Jews to be circumcised as a condition for dwelling among them, he refused to allow any compulsion to be used, declaring that everyone should worship God in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience (*Life* 113).

One would have thought that the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. and the tremendous loss of prestige for the Jews that must have accompanied it would have dealt the proselyting movement a blow from which it would not recover. And yet, it was after this period that the movement was apparently most successful in official circles in Rome, especially under Domitian, precisely the time²⁵ when Josephus was writing the *Antiquities*.²⁶ Indeed, in the reign of Domitian (95 C.E.),

disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (presumably Christus), from Rome. The New Testament (Acts 18:2) explicitly states, in agreement with Suetonius, that Claudius commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.

²⁴ See Feldman 1993, 92-102.

²⁵ Josephus (*Ant.* 20.267) says that he completed his *Antiquities* in the thirteenth year of the reign of Domitian, that is, 93-94.

²⁶ See Graetz 1884. Undoubtedly the main reasons for the success of proselytism were political, social, and religious developments in Rome itself and, above all, the inherent appeal of Judaism. See Feldman 1993, 288-341. Perhaps this success was also, in part, due to admiration for the heroism which the Jews had shown in the great war against the Romans. Thus, even Tacitus, though showing utter contempt for the Jews, grudgingly admits that during the siege "both men and women showed the same determination; and if they were forced to change their home, they feared life more than death" (*Hist.* 5.13.3). Cassius Dio (66.5), in a detail omitted, one would guess, intentionally by the pro-Roman Josephus, notes that a number of Roman soldiers defected to the Jews during the course of the siege, persuaded that the city was actually impregnable. We may further suggest that Josephus' extensive account of the defenders of Masada (*War* 7.252-406), which was relatively unim-

we hear that Flavius Clemens, the cousin of Domitian, and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, the Emperor's niece, were charged, together with many others, with atheism and with having drifted (ἐξοκέλλοντες) into the practices of the Jews (τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη) (Cassius Dio 67.14; cf. Suet., *Dom.* 15.1). In view of Dio's language, and especially the word "drifted," we cannot be sure that it was a question of actual proselytes; they may rather have been "sympathizers," who adopted certain Jewish practices without actually converting.²⁷ In any case, in a bitter attack, Juvenal (14.96-106) charges that sympathy with Jewish practices in one generation leads in the next generation to full conversion to Judaism.

Josephus, therefore, had to be extremely careful not to offend his Roman hosts by referring to the inroads that the Jews had made through proselytism into the Roman populace. Indeed, his aim (*Ant.* 1.10-12) in the *Antiquities* is to follow in the footsteps of Ptolemy Philadelphus in seeking to make the Bible better known and consequently to gain respect for the Jews, rather than to convert the pagans.

One sees this sensitivity to the charge of proselytism in Josephus particularly in his handling of the Jethro episode. In the Bible the fact that Jethro blesses G-d for having delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians and even offers a sacrifice to G-d (Exod. 18:8-12) would lead the reader to assume that Jethro had converted to Judaism.²⁸ Josephus quite carefully omits Jethro's statement about G-d's greatness and has Moses offer the sacrifice (*Ant.* 3.63).

Moreover, it is significant that Josephus says nothing about Ruth's conversion to Judaism, presumably because he wanted to avoid lending credence to the charge that the Jews were aggressive missionaries.²⁹

According to the biblical version, when King Asa of Judah was

portant from a military point of view, and of their grisly act of committing mutual suicide rather than submitting to the Romans, might have aroused the admiration of the Romans, as, indeed, it did of the Roman soldiers who entered Masada and who were "incredulous of such amazing fortitude" (*War* 7.405).

²⁷ Christian tradition makes Clemens and Domitilla martyrs during Domitian's persecution of the Christians; but by the time of Dio (150-235) the distinction between Jews and Christians was probably clear to the Roman world, as Leon 1960, 33-34, remarks, though Dio himself never mentions the Christians by name.

²⁸ In the rabbinic tradition Jethro is represented as a proselyte (*Mid. Exod. Rab.* 1.32, *Tan. B.* Exodus 71).

²⁹ See Feldman 1991a, 50-52.

gathering his army, a number of Jews from the Kingdom of Israel who happened to be sojourning in the Kingdom of Judah deserted to him when they saw that G-d was with him (2 Chr. 15:9). The LXX, in its version of this passage, declares that Asa assembled the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with strangers (προσήλυτοι) that dwelt with them. The word here translated as “strangers” is the same as the word for proselytes and implies that they were actually converts. Josephus, in his sensitivity to the issue, omits this passage.³⁰

Again, in the Jonah pericope, it is clear that the Bible looks upon the people of Nineveh as not only repenting but also as actually acknowledging the G-d of Israel and hence of converting to Judaism (Jonah 3:5).³¹ Josephus, however, totally omits the statement that the Ninevites believed in G-d. He avoids the issue by simply not indicating to which gods the sailors are praying (*Ant.* 9.209).³²

Moreover, the biblical statement that the Ninevites feared the L-rd exceedingly (Jonah 1:16) might well ring a bell among readers as a reference to the so-called “G-d-fearers,” who accepted certain practices of Judaism without actually converting³³ and who are well known from the eleven passages in Acts (10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 16:14, 17:4, 17; 18.7) referring to φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν (“fearers of G-d”) and σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν (“reverencers of G-d”) and from the passage in Juvenal referring to one who fears (*metuentem*) the Sabbath and who has a son who eventually becomes a full-fledged Jew (14.96-106). It is true that these terms, in and of themselves, do not necessarily refer to “sympathizers” and may, indeed, denote pious Jews, as I have noted.³⁴ But the new inscriptions from Aphrodisias make it more likely that these are, indeed, terms referring to “sympathizers,” at least in the third century, the apparent date of the inscriptions.³⁵

³⁰ See Feldman 1994c, 56.

³¹ This is the rabbinic tradition as well (*Tan. Vayikra* 8 end, *Pirqe R. El.* 10.72-73, *Mid. Jonah* 97).

³² See Feldman 1992e, 21-26.

³³ See Feldman 1993, 342-82.

³⁴ See Feldman 1950, 200-8.

³⁵ See Feldman 1986c, 58-69; and Feldman 1989b, 265-305. By the third century there can be no doubt that there was a class of “sympathizers,” as is clear from a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Meg.* 3.2.74a; see the discussion of this passage by Lieberman 1942, 78-80, which quotes Rabbi Eleazar, a third-century Palestinian rabbi, as saying that only the Gentiles who had nothing to do with the Jews during their bitter past will not be permitted to convert to Judaism in the time

In addition to the omission of reference to the circumcision of the Hivvites, Josephus (Gen. 34:20-23) omits the statement made by Hamor and Shechem, apparently completely convinced of the sincerity of the Israelite response, to the people of their city that the Israelites were peaceful people and urging the Hivvites to agree to allow them to settle in the land, to trade there, and to intermarry with them, and to fulfill the condition demanded by them, namely to circumcise all their males. To have included all this would certainly have created greater sympathy for the Hivvites and would also have illustrated the aggressiveness of the Israelites in seeking proselytes, insisted upon by Jacob's sons. By omitting this Josephus makes the action of Simeon and Levi appear not as treachery in violating an agreement that the Hivvites had entered into but rather as revenge for the rape of their sister.

As to Josephus' omission of the deceit of Simeon and Levi in killing the Hivvites after they had fulfilled the condition of circumcision of all the males, Josephus was apparently sensitive to the charge that the Israelites could not be trusted to be honest in keeping their word.

Elsewhere (*Ant.* 1.271), Josephus similarly avoids the embarrassment of having Jacob lie to his father by identifying himself as Esau (Gen. 27:19). Josephus solves that problem by the simple expedient of omitting the question, "Are you really my son Esau?" and by likewise omitting Jacob's false and embarrassing statement that "I am Esau, your first-born." Similarly, Josephus omits the question as to how the meal could have been prepared so quickly, as well as Jacob's deceptive answer (Gen. 27:20). Indeed, in Josephus (*Ant.* 2.173) G-d Himself justifies Jacob's theft of the blessing, saying that it was He who had given the principedom to him rather than to Esau.³⁶

of the Messiah, but that those "Heaven-fearers" (*yirei shamayim*) who had shared the tribulations of Israel would be accepted as full proselytes, with the Emperor Antoninus at their head. Attempts to identify "Antoninus" with any of the Antonine or Severan emperors at the end of the second or at the beginning of the third century have proven unsuccessful. See Gutmann 1971, 3:165-66.

³⁶ Similarly, Jub. 26:13 avoids having Jacob lie to his father; instead, he says, "I am your son." To be sure, whereas in the Hebrew text Jacob merely asks Esau to sell him the birthright (Gen. 25:31), Josephus arouses more sympathy for Esau, inasmuch as he explicitly states that Jacob took advantage (*χρησάμενος*) of Esau's famished state and forced (*ἠνάγκαζε*) him to sell it. Josephus mentions Esau's hunger three times in this brief section, whereas the Hebrew text does not refer to it at all. Hence, the sale appears more justifiable as a matter of sheer survival for Esau. Most striking of all, however, is that Josephus says nothing about Esau's

Moreover, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 34:13) all the sons of Jacob are described as speaking deceitfully to the Hivvites, in Josephus the blame, if there is any, is restricted to Simeon and Levi, since in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.339) Jacob, in an extra-biblical addition, revealing to his children the rape of their sister and the request of Hamor, asked them to hold a consultation as to what it was necessary to do; and when most of them were quiet, being at a loss as to what to do, it was Simeon and Levi who agreed on their plan. Furthermore, Josephus' audience would have sympathized with these two brothers of Dinah, since, as he adds, they were born of the same mother as Dinah (*Ant.* 1.339). In addition, whereas in Gen. 34:25-26 Simeon and Levi kill the Hivvites on the third day after their circumcision, when they were in pain, and thus may be accused of a cowardly action, in Josephus they attack them, in a surprise military action, when they had overly indulged in feasting, first killing the guards when they were asleep and then killing all the males but sparing the women. The fact that it was, in an extra-biblical comment, at a festival would remind Josephus' readers that it was, in a similar extra-biblical comment, at a festival that Dinah had been seduced by Shechem. The punishment would thus appear to be particularly appropriate for the crime. To Roman readers the whole incident might have been reminiscent of the celebrated action, according to the story popularized by Livy (1.58-60), taken by the Romans to avenge the rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius, the son of King Tarquinius Superbus, through driving Tarquinius Superbus and his sons into exile and establishing a republic in 509 B.C.E.

For apologetic reasons, since Jacob was identified as the ancestor of the Jewish people, Josephus takes care to add the unbiblical detail (*Ant.* 1.340) that Simeon and Levi, in massacring the Shechemites, acted without their father Jacob's permission and that Jacob was stricken with consternation (ἐκπλαγέντι, "panic-stricken," "driven out of his senses by a sudden shock") at the enormity (μέγεθος, "greatness," "magnitude") of the deeds of Simeon and Levi and was angry with them (*Ant.* 1.341). In Gen. 34:30 Jacob rebukes his sons because their action has brought him personal trouble, but there is

despising his birthright (Gen. 25:34). This more positive treatment of Esau, as Feldman 1998, 316-22, remarks, was motivated by the fact that Esau had already in Josephus' time become identified with Rome.

no indication that he is really angry with them, let alone aghast at the enormity of their deeds. Perhaps Jacob's stronger language in Josephus is influenced by Jacob's words (Gen. 49:7) in his blessing of Simeon and Levi (which Jos., *Ant.* 1.194, there omits), in which he curses their anger and denominates their wrath as cruel. If we ask why Josephus is so critical of the zealous acts of Simeon and Levi whereas he approves of the zealousness of Phinehas (*Ant.* 4.152-55), we may suggest that he is sensitive about relations with non-Jews, whereas he approves of strict enforcement of moral standards with regard to Jews. Josephus may also have been influenced by the fact that Phinehas, like himself, was a priest; and the biblical text (Num. 25:13) states specifically that G-d rewarded Phinehas for his zealotry by granting him and his descendants the covenant of a perpetual priesthood. If we ask how Simeon and Levi were able to overcome the entire adult male population of the Hivvites, we may suggest that, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 1.340), there was a festival, and the Hivvites had turned to relaxation and feasting, and Simeon and Levi were able to overcome the Hivvites while they were asleep.³⁷

6. THEODOTUS' VERSION

An enigmatic writer named Theodotus, variously identified as a Jew or as a Samaritan³⁸ (though Eusebius himself apparently thinks that he is a pagan author),³⁹ who lived in either Palestine or Alexandria, is the author of an epic, the title of which is disputed, and which is variously dated in either the late third or late second century B.C.E.⁴⁰ He is quoted by Eusebius (*Pr. Ev.* 9.22.1-11) from the first century B.C.E. Alexander Polyhistor,⁴¹ the extant fragments of which deal with

³⁷ *Joseph and Aseneth* 23:14 and *Test. of Levi* 5:1-3 explain this by noting that their weapons were of divine origin.

³⁸ See Holladay 1989, 2:58-68, 84-85.

³⁹ Josephus, *Ap.* 1.216, mentions a Theodotus in a list of Greek historians, whom he clearly identified as pagans, who, he says, have made more than a passing allusion to the Jews, though he adds (1.217) that the majority of these writers have misrepresented the facts of the early history of the Jews because they had not read the sacred writings of the Jews. But the fact that this Theodotus is identified as a historian, rather than as a poet, would argue against identifying him as the author of our poem, as Holladay 1989, 2:78, indicates.

⁴⁰ See Holladay 1989, 2:68-70.

⁴¹ On these questions see Holladay 1989, 2:51-99.

the patriarch Jacob. Of the 47 lines that have survived, the majority deal with Shechem's rape of Dinah and its aftermath, although it is doubtful whether this is the central focus of the entire poem.

Theodotus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.4) begins his account in a tone that would seem to view the Hivvites (Shechemites) in a favorable light, since, whereas the Bible (Gen. 33:19) states that Jacob bought a piece of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred pieces of money, Theodotus states that Hamor received him hospitably and actually gave him a certain portion of land. Like Josephus (*Ant.* 1.337), he adds that the occasion for Dinah's visit to Shechem was that there was a great festival taking place there and that she wanted to see the city.⁴² If, as noted above, this was, in all likelihood, a religious festival, the fact that this was the occasion for the rape of Dinah would surely, as we have remarked, cast Shechem in a poor light. Likewise, the details of the rape, that he seized her (ἀρπάσαντα, "captivate," "ravish") as his own, carried her away (διακομίσαι), and ruined her (φθείραι, "destroyed" her), paints a blacker picture of Shechem than does the Bible (Gen. 34:2), which says that he took her (ἤγαγεν), lay with her (ἔσβεσε), and humbled (ὑποτάξας) her, in a more negative tone resembling that of Josephus (*Ant.* 1.337), who likewise says, using words with the same roots, that he seized her (δι' ἀρπαγῆς) and ruined her (φθείρει).

Whereas in the Bible (Gen. 34:13-17) it is Jacob's sons who tell Hamor, the father of Shechem, that they will agree with Hamor's proposal that the Hivvites and the Israelites intermarry with one another only if the Hivvites undergo circumcision and whereas Josephus omits this condition altogether, according to Theodotus it is Jacob himself who enunciates this condition, thus removing Simeon and Levi from the charge of duplicity in making this condition but not in good faith. The key to Theodotus' account is the importance of circumcision in order to become a Jew (Ἰουδαίῃς), "for this very thing is not allowed (θεμιτόν) for Hebrews to bring home sons-in-law and daughters-in-law from another place but only one who boasts (ἐξεύχεται) of being of the same race" (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.6),

⁴² It is primarily this mention of a festival as the occasion of Dinah's visit to Shechem that leads Kippenberg 1971, 56, n. 123, to conclude that Josephus (who, to be sure, does not mention Theodotus anywhere by name) is dependent on Theodotus for his version of the Dinah episode, especially since it is not found in any of our extant midrashim or Philo or any other source.

whereas the Bible (Gen. 34:14) states merely that to be uncircumcised is a disgrace (חֶרֶף), without any mention of the significance of circumcision as the key to conversion. Moreover, it is clear that actual conversion is referred to and not merely circumcision *per se*, inasmuch as the text of Theodotus speaks of the necessity of having both sons-in-law and daughters-in-law of the same race, that is, being Jewish.

Whereas the Bible depicts Simeon as deceiving the Hivvites, Theodotus, like Josephus, justifies his act as one of vengeance, since he was unwilling to endure civilly (πολιτικῶς) the outrage (ὕβριν) to his sister. But, in an important addition to the biblical account (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.8), Theodotus states that Simeon spurred (παρορμήσαι) his brother Levi to action by citing an oracle (λόγιον) that said that G-d had ordained (ἀνελεῖν, “give a judgment”) “to give to Abraham’s descendants ten nations (ἔθνεα).” While this last phrase is enigmatic,⁴³ the import is to indicate divine approval for the act against the Hivvites.⁴⁴ Moreover, Theodotus (9.29.9) goes out of his way uniquely to blacken the Hivvites when he presents the extra-biblical explanation that G-d⁴⁵ implanted (ἐμβαλεῖν, “threw in”) this notion in the minds of Simeon and Levi because the Shechemites were godless (ἄσεβεῖς, “unholy,” *ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.9b), depicting them in a manner reminding one of the Sodomites, that is, with the statement that they did not show hospitality to strangers,⁴⁶ did not dispense justice to whoever came to them, whether low or noble,

⁴³ One possibility is that the reference is to the ten lost tribes of Israel; but the reference to them as nations makes this hypothesis unlikely. See Holladay 1989, 2:187-88.

⁴⁴ This divine approval is similar to the statement in the Test. of Levi 5.1-3, according to which an angel opened the gates of heaven for Levi and gave him a shield and sword, with instructions to take revenge on Shechem for the rape of Dinah.

⁴⁵ So also Jud. 9:2: “O L-rd G-d of my ancestor Simeon, to whom you gave a sword to take revenge on the strangers.” Likewise, Jub. 30:5: “Judgment is ordained in heaven against them [the Hivvites] that they [Simeon and Levi] should destroy with the sword all the men of the Shechemites because they had wrought shame in Israel.” Similarly, according to the Test. of Levi 5:3-5, Levi was instructed through an angel to avenge the rape of Dinah. A similar tradition, that the swords that carry out the vengeance came from heaven, is found in Joseph and Aseneth (23:14), which recalls that G-d punished the insult of the Shechemites through the swords of Simeon and Levi.

⁴⁶ So also Test. of Levi 7.1: “In this way they treated all strangers, taking their wives by force and banishing them.”

nor did they enforce their laws throughout their city, since it was their deadly deeds that were their chief concern. Hence, according to Theodotus, the destruction of the Hivvites was in fulfillment of G-d's decree and thus frees Simeon and Levi and the Jews of blame, whereas Josephus places the responsibility for the act of vengeance on the shoulders of Simeon and Levi and justifies it solely as such. Unlike the Bible, Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, none of whom have any comment about the Hivvites as a people, Theodotus maligns them.

Most significantly, in contrast to the biblical account, Theodotus never says that the Hivvites actually underwent circumcision. And yet, whereas Philo indicates that Simeon and Levi killed those whom they encountered when they entered, and the Bible (Gen. 34:25) and Josephus say that they killed all the males of the Hivvites, and Pseudo-Philo goes further in stating that they killed all the Hivvites, Theodotus (9.22.10) asserts that upon entering the city of Hivvites they first killed those whom they met; and then Simeon slew Hamor, and Levi slew Shechem, describing the actual slaying in fulsome detail. Theodotus then says that the other brothers, when they learned of their deed, assisted them, presumably in killing the rest of the Hivvites, and in pillaging the city. In sharp contrast to the biblical account, which states that Jacob censured his sons for their deed, Theodotus does not either blame or praise it, but he does say (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.9) that G-d Himself punished the Shechemites because they dishonored visitors and did not uphold justice.

Our analysis may help to settle the question of the place where the work was written. Theodotus is generally thought to have written in either a Palestinian or an Alexandrian setting.⁴⁷ Since most scholars believe that the work is by a Samaritan, inasmuch as the central focus of the poem is Shechem, which he refers to as a sacred city (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.1), which was, indeed, revered by the Samaritans, and which was the chief city of the Samaritans (Jos., *Ant.* 11.340), though there is no evidence that the entire poem dealt exclusively with Shechem, this view is held by most. The fact that the author states that Shechem was founded by Sikimius, the son of Hermes (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.1),⁴⁸ would seem to indicate a syncretistic ten-

⁴⁷ See Holladay 1989, 2:70-72.

⁴⁸ Admittedly, however, this text is disputed. See Holladay 1989, 2:131-35 n. 5.

dency, which was especially, though not exclusively, characteristic of Samaritan Hellenism.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, it seems hard to believe that a Samaritan would have spoken of the Shechemites as godless (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.9b), inhospitable, lawless, and deadly.

On the other hand, we know of few writers, none of them poets, who wrote in Greek in Palestine,⁵⁰ whereas Alexandria was certainly the center of Jewish Hellenistic writing. Moreover, the fact that Theodotus is so familiar with Homer would make it more likely that he was from Alexandria, since this was the center of Homeric scholarship, though, we may note that the establishment of a Greek gymnasium in Palestine ca. 175 B.C.E. might have educated Jews in Greek literature and though "the books of Homer" are mentioned in the Mishnah (*Yad.* 4:6). However, the fact that the author has not explained away or omitted the deceit practiced by Simeon and Levi and that he presents the act of Simeon and Levi as having divine sanction for their deed would indicate an insensitivity to the criticism of anti-Semites with which an inhabitant of Alexandria would have been expected to be concerned, especially since that was the center of anti-Semitic writing and riots.

If, indeed, as most scholars believe, the author was a Samaritan, as is indicated especially by his detailed description of Samaria (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.1), the possible reference to the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.22.9a), and the use of "Hebrews" in reference to themselves,⁵¹ it is more likely that he came from Palestine,⁵² since most Samaritans lived there, though

⁴⁹ See Holladay 1989, 2:63-64.

⁵⁰ Josephus wrote his works in Greek in Rome. The only authors who we know wrote in Greek in Palestine are the translator of the book of Esther into Greek in the latter part of the second century B.C.E., as indicated by the colophon; Herod the Great, whose memoirs in Greek (*Jos., Ant.* 15.174) are lost; Justus of Tiberias, who wrote a history of the Jewish war in the first century (*Jos., Life* 336-39), which is no longer extant; and the nameless others, who likewise wrote histories of the war (*Jos., Life* 336; *War* 1.1-2). Jason of Cyrene, who wrote a history of the Maccabees which is summarized in II Maccabees, perhaps spent some time in Palestine (so Hengel 1974, 1:95-99). The historian Eupolemus, who lived in the middle of the second century B.C.E., perhaps wrote in Palestine, but I (1993, 28-29) have disputed this. Pseudo-Eupolemus, an anonymous Samaritan who wrote in the middle of the second century B.C.E., probably, but not necessarily, wrote in Palestine. See Holladay 1983, 1:157, 161 n. 2.

⁵¹ But see Holladay 1989, 2:64-65.

⁵² This would be especially true if he was connected with Hasmonean politics, since the emphasis of the poem on circumcision would fit in with John Hyrcanus' forcible imposition of Judaism on the Idumaeans. See Collins 1980, 102.

we do know of Samaritans who lived in Egypt⁵³ and other places as well.⁵⁴ As for the negative portrayal of the Shechemites as “impious” and as for the fact that the author enthusiastically approves of the actions taken by Jacob’s sons against Shechem, the Samaritans occupy the geographical area known as Shechem but they are not connected with the ancient inhabitants of that city.

In summary, Theodotus has made the fewest changes in his version of the narrative. Unlike Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, he has not omitted the demand that the Hivvite males be circumcised, and in fact has ascribed this demand to Jacob and not to Simeon and Levi; nor has he omitted the deceit practiced by Simeon and Levi in slaying Hamor and Shechem, even while Hamor was encouraging his subjects to be circumcised. He presents the blackest picture of the Hivvites, describing them in tones reminiscent of Homer’s Cyclopes (*Od.* 9.215) and of the biblical Sodomites (*Gen.* 18:20). Most important, as in *Jud.* 9:2, the *Test. of Levi* 5-7, and *Jub.* 30, the act of Simeon and Levi, far from being criticized or requiring apology, has no less than divine sanction, since G-d implanted this notion in their mind. Basically, the act is one of revenge; the author is not primarily interested in making a case for conversion of the Gentiles.

7. CONCLUSION

Philo, Pseudo-Philo in his *Biblical Antiquities*, and Josephus were all confronted with several problems in connection with their treatment of the rape of Dinah by Shechem, the son of the king of the Hivvites. In the first place, how were they to understand the rape of a Jewish girl, the daughter of none other than the forefather Jacob? How were they to understand the act of a non-Jew in committing such a deed? How were they to understand the apparent genuine love that Shechem felt for Dinah after the attack? How were they to understand the initial silence of Jacob after the attack? How were they to understand the demand of Jacob’s sons that the Hivvite males be circumcised? How were they to understand that two men,

⁵³ Josephus (*Ant.* 13.74-79) informs us of a controversy between Jews and Samaritans in Egypt before Ptolemy VI Philometor.

⁵⁴ See Holladay 1983, 1:161 n. 2.

Simeon and Levi, succeeded in overcoming the city of Shechem and in killing all of its men (Gen. 34:25)? How were they to understand the deceit practiced by Simeon and Levi in killing the Hivvite men after they had fulfilled their promise of circumcising themselves?⁵⁵ How were they to understand Jacob's sharp attack upon Simeon and Levi on his death bed?

All three writers had the option of omitting reference to the incident altogether, as they do in some other instances, but they chose not to exercise this option. Rather, particularly Pseudo-Philo, they abbreviate their accounts in varying degrees.

Philo and Pseudo-Philo have omitted practically all the details of the narrative. Philo resorts to allegory, particularly through analyzing the meaning of their names, in equating Dinah with judgement and virtue and in denigrating Shechem as senseless and as hypocritically resorting to speciousness of speech. He says nothing about the demand that the Hivvites undergo circumcision. Instead, they are occupied in pleasure-loving when Simeon and Levi, who are inspired with zeal for virtue and who represent sound sense, avenge the rape of their sister.

Pseudo-Philo omits all the details that would create sympathy for Shechem and the Hivvites and that would indict Simeon and Levi for deceit and cruelty. His major goal is to demonstrate that good people, notably Dinah, are ultimately rewarded by G-d.

Most significantly, Josephus omits the condition that the males of the Hivvites be circumcised, since this would have shown aggressiveness on the part of the Israelites in seeking proselytes. Simeon and Levi are presented not as deceitful in violating an agreement but rather as avenging the rape of their sister. Their vengeance is achieved in a surprise military action. In massacring the Hivvites Simeon and Levi acted without their father's permission. Josephus,

⁵⁵ The deceit is omitted not only in Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, but also in Jud. (9:2-4) and Jub. (30:1-25). Theodotus retains it. Most manuscripts of the Test. of Levi 6:3 read that Levi advised his father and brother Reuben that he should tell the sons of Hamor to be circumcised; but Robert H. Charles 1913, basing himself on the Vatican manuscript (*Cod. Graec.* 731), which he considered the most important of all the manuscripts, reads that Levi advised that the sons of Hamor not be circumcised. For a discussion of the text see Kugel 1992, 8-12, who favors the reading of the Vatican manuscript. According to this reading, Jacob and his othersons were quite willing to intermarry with the people of Shechem. It was only Levi's zeal that thwarted this plan.

sensitive to relations with non-Jews, is critical of the zealousness of Simeon and Levi.

Theodotus is not confronted with the problems that beset Philo and Josephus in dealing with the narrative of the rape of Dinah. Like Pseudo-Philo, his central focus is on G-d, who is the one who orchestrates the action. But unlike Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, who omit the various details concerning the demand that the Hivvite males be circumcised and the deceit of Simeon and Levi in slaughtering the Hivvites, Theodotus presents the narrative in its fullest scope and blackens the Hivvites even more than do Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus. He is clearly not afraid of the charge that the Israelites use force in seeking converts, since he is not interested in gaining converts; rather, the action of Shechem justifies a divinely-ordained policy of revenge.

PART FOUR

JOSEPHUS

CHAPTER TWELVE

JOSEPHUS

1. LIFE

Few scholars have been neutral in their judgement of the life of Josephus. In the nineteenth century there was an almost unanimous condemnation of him by Jews and Christians alike, a major exception being the Jewish scholar Hamburger,¹ who regarded Josephus' own steadfast adherence to Judaism and his able literary defence of its tenets as providing sufficient ground for pardoning his supposed wrongs to the Jewish people.

Aside from Josephus' own autobiography and the references to his career in his *Jewish War*, the sources for his life are slight. Among pagan writers Suetonius (*Vespasian* 5.6), Appian (fragment 17) and Cassius Dio (66.1) mention Josephus' prediction that Vespasian would become emperor; and Porphyry (*De abstinentia et esu animalium* 4.11) cites Josephus' discussion of the three philosophical schools. Perhaps the silence of the Talmud about him is due to the fact that he was an "outsider," though Brüll² has attempted to find a hidden reference to him in a minor Talmudic tractate (*Der. Er. Rab* 5, *Pirge Ben Azzai* 3) which mentions a visit of several sages to a nameless (to be sure, pagan) philosopher in Rome seeking his intercession with the Emperor Domitian.

Born in the year 37 C.E., Josephus was given the Hebrew name Joseph ben Mattityahu. He (*Life* 2) is proud of the fact that he was descended from the first of the twenty-four courses of priests and that he was descended through his mother from the Hasmonean royalty (*ibid.*). We know nothing of Josephus' life until the age of fourteen, when, according to Josephus (*Life* 8), the chief priests and leaders of the city of Jerusalem constantly resorted to him for information concerning the laws. This is, however, a traditional motif

¹ Hamburger 1883, 502-10.

² Brüll 1879, 40-42.

in biographies, as we see, for example, in Luke 2:46-47, as well as in ancient biographies of Moses, Homer, Aeschines, Alexander the Great, Apollonius of Rhodes, Augustus, Ovid, Nicolaus of Damascus, and Apollonius of Tyana. At about the age of sixteen (*Life* 10-12) Josephus decided to gain experience in the three sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes) in order to select the best; but this procedure is, again, a common motif in this period, as we see in the cases of Nicolaus of Damascus, Apollonius of Tyana, Justin, and Galen; and it may, therefore, not correspond to reality. There is some confusion in the text, because Josephus (*Life* 11) proceeds to say that he became a devoted disciple of a certain hermit (not necessarily an Essene) named Bannus for three years. He was now, he says, in his nineteenth year; but since he spent three years with Bannus this would leave no time for the three sects. He now made his choice, involving himself in public life as a Pharisee (*Life* 12), though one would have expected him to favor the Sadducees, who were, it would seem, more closely affiliated with the priests and were more conservative than the Pharisees. But apparently Josephus realized that his ambitions would be better served by affiliating with the Pharisees, since they were more popular with the masses (*Ant.* 18.15).

In 64 Josephus (*Life* 13) says that he went to Rome (there is no statement who sent him) to help deliver some priestly friends from bondage. After surviving a shipwreck, he succeeded in his mission, thanks to the aid of a Jewish actor at court named Aliturus and of Nero's mistress Poppaea Sabina, who was a "sympathizer" (θεοσεβής) with Judaism (*Ant.* 20.195). In addition to the release of the captives Josephus also received some gifts; and one wonders whether there was not some connection between the extraordinary achievement of the young man and a promise, explicit or implicit, to defuse the incipient revolution once he would return to Jerusalem. Two years later, according to the *War* (2.562-68), the revolutionaries, after their rout of the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, brought over to their side, whether by persuasion or force, such pro-Romans as still remained and appointed additional generals, including Josephus. In the *Life* (29), however, which tells the story at greater length, Josephus asserts that he, together with the chief priests and leading Pharisees, pretended to agree with the views of the revolutionaries, while actually hoping that Cestius would in the meantime quell the revolution and that the leaders in Jerusalem, who favored pacification, dispatched him with two other priests to Galilee to induce the

terrorists to fight only in self-defence. Inasmuch as Josephus was so young, being not yet thirty, and had had no previous military experience, it seems remarkable that he was chosen as commander in the area where the Romans were most likely to attack first; and it seems likely that he was selected more because of his prominent genealogy than because of his capacity for military leadership. The later account (in the *Life*) would appear to correct the earlier one (in the *War*); and Josephus could afford to tell the truth, since now he was famous and honored. In defecting to the Romans he was merely following the wishes of the council that had appointed him. One possible way of reconciling the two versions is to say that initially Josephus sincerely attempted to fight against the Romans, but that when he saw that it was hopeless, he went over to the Roman side. The two versions may thus represent two stages in Josephus' activities.

We have every right to be suspicious of one who received such rewards from Titus as a tract of land outside Jerusalem, some sacred books (presumably Torah scrolls), the liberation of some friends, Roman citizenship, lodging in the former palace of Vespasian, and a pension. One wonders why Josephus, once appointed, did not undertake guerrilla warfare, as his ancestors, the Maccabees, had done so successfully more than two centuries earlier, or why he did not retreat with his army to Jerusalem, which he knew was by far the best fortified of all the Jewish strongholds, rather than shut himself up in the tactically hopeless trap of Jotapata. The suspicion is strong that Josephus was playing a double role; and indeed he says, in an extraordinarily candid passage (*Life* 72), that when the revolutionary John of Gischala had asked for the imperial grain in Galilee, so that he might use the income with which to construct defences for Gischala, Josephus refused, saying that he intended to reserve the grain "either for the Romans or for my own use." Again, the fact that in the suicide pact with his men at Jotapata Josephus somehow managed to be among the last two has led to suspicions that he arranged the lots. Indeed, the Slavonic version (*War* 3.391), which hardly seeks to discredit Josephus, states quite explicitly that "he counted the numbers with cunning and thereby misled them all." Perhaps Josephus, guided by an inner voice, was so deeply imbued with a sense of mission to record these events for posterity that he felt that he had to survive in order to fulfil this task. Moreover, in view of the tremendous success of the Jews during this period in

winning converts, he may have looked upon the revolt as ruining the prospect of winning the Roman Empire to Judaism. In addition, we may note that while some of the people in Jerusalem condemned him as a traitor, he was apparently never censured by the Jewish leaders. His action is hardly excused by the fact that Josephus was not alone in siding with the Romans (the Jewish king Agrippa II also did so) or that he felt that he had to survive in order to write the history of the period and in order to defend the Jews against anti-Semitic attacks. On the other hand, Josephus may have been sincerely convinced first, that the war was a terrible mistake, since an independent state was hardly a *sine qua non* for Judaism; second, that the Jews had been given considerable privileges by the Romans; and, third, that they were well on their way to converting the Empire to Judaism.

If the revolutionary council had indeed been sincere in prosecuting the war, it should have made a greater effort to enlist the support of Jewish communities outside Palestine, especially in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Babylonia (each of which had an estimated million Jews).³ It should also have attempted to entice the Parthians, the traditional and often successful opponent of the Romans, to coordinate the attack and to induce various other discontented rebel tribes to coordinate their revolts. However, the fact that we do not have the accounts of Josephus' opponents, such as Justus of Tiberias, means that we have a one-sided view; yet the fact that Josephus himself did not destroy his own self-incriminating record leads us to believe in its essential truthfulness. And even if we did have Justus' work, there is no guarantee that it would be more reliable than that of Josephus; after all, Justus could hardly have served for so many years as court secretary to Agrippa II, a puppet of the Romans, unless he, too, had been a lackey of the Romans. Indeed, Josephus and Justus seem to have been rivals precisely because they were so similar in their outlook.

It has often been pointed out that the great Pharisaic leader Joḥanan ben Zakkai similarly sought peace with the Romans and likewise prophesied (*Git.* 56a-b) that the general Vespasian would become emperor. But the two predictions should be differentiated, since Joḥanan asked and received nothing for himself. That two people independently might have made the same prediction does

³ See Baron 1952, 1:370-72 n. 7.

not seem implausible, in view of the fact that Vespasian was clearly the most experienced general of the time; indeed, Josephus (*War* 6.312), Suetonius (*Vesp.* 4) and Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.13) all indicate that there was a prediction in the air that someone from Judea would become ruler of the world at that time. Undoubtedly, as we may gather from the appearance of the revolutionary leader Menahem in royal robes in the Temple (*War* 2.444), there was a Messianic basis to the revolt against Rome, as there was to be in the revolt of Lucius Andreas against Trajan in 115-17 and in that of Bar Kokhba against Hadrian in 132-35; but instead of applying the Messianic prophecy to the Jews, Josephus and Joḥanan apparently applied it to Vespasian, just as Cyrus in Isa. 41:1 is called Messiah.

2. WORKS

a. *The Jewish War* (*Bellum Judaicum*)

Josephus' first work, his *Jewish War*, was originally composed in his "ancestral language,"—presumably Aramaic though some have suggested that it was in Hebrew (*War* 1.3), to be sent to the barbarians of the upper country Babylonia and Parthia), apparently as a warning to them not to repeat the mistake of clashing with the Roman Empire. Not a single fragment of this Aramaic or Hebrew version has come down to us, perhaps because of the bitterness felt by the Jews toward Josephus, whom they regarded as a despicable traitor. With the help of assistants (*Ap.* 1.50) he rewrote (rather than translated) the work in Greek.⁴ This help must have been considerable, since few Aramaisms or Hebraisms remain in our Greek text. The view that the Slavonic version was made directly from the lost Aramaic version has now been disproved by Meščerskij,⁵ who, through a careful linguistic analysis, has concluded that the translation was made directly from Greek.

The usual date for the *War*, 75-79, has now been challenged by Cohen,⁶ who notes that the black picture of Caecina (*War* 4.634-40) shows that the work was published after 79, when Caecina was

⁴ See Hata 1975-76, 89-108.

⁵ Meščerskij 1958.

⁶ Cohen 1979, 85-86.

executed. Book 7 of the *War*, describing events after the climactic burning of the Temple, as Schwartz⁷ has convincingly indicated, appears to have been added as a kind of appendix and was apparently composed in the mid-nineties, since it (*War* 7.451-53) describes the death of Catullus, whom he identifies as Valerius Catullus Messalinus. Caecina was executed for an alleged plot against the Emperor Vespasian. In Josephus' clearly biased account Caecina is depicted as having been always treacherous and unfaithful. Hence it was most likely written after Caecina was executed. Cohen also notes that Book 7 gives much more prominence and favor to Domitian, and he concludes that it is a Domitianic addition; Morton and Michaelson,⁸ in their statistical study, confirm that Book 7 differs markedly from the other books of the *War* in style.

For the first part of the war, when Josephus himself was a participant, it seems likely that he relied chiefly upon his own observations; for the latter part he apparently relied primarily upon the memoirs of Vespasian and Titus (*Life* 342, 358; *Ap.* 1.50). Despite his statement, traditional in prooemia, that previous accounts had been inaccurate or prejudiced or rhetorical, the very title, *Concerning the Jewish War*, shows that Josephus is writing from the standpoint of the Romans. Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.10-13), we may note, although manifestly anti-Jewish, gives a different picture of the war, portraying it as a national rebellion rather than as the work of a few thugs. Though Josephus agrees with the Talmudic rabbis (*Git.* 55b-57a) in condemning the revolutionaries, in stressing the internal division among the Jews, and in describing the terrible famine that afflicted the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he ignores mention of the facts that many Jews, not only of the Roman Empire but also beyond the Euphrates, aided the revolutionaries (Cassius Dio 66.4.3) and that some Roman soldiers even deserted to the Jews (Cassius Dio 66.5.4). Moreover, the messianic goal of the rebellion indicated by Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.13) and Suetonius (*Vesp.* 4) and by Simon bar Giora's coins is almost completely suppressed by Josephus, except for *War* 6.312-15, presumably because he wished to represent the war as an action of a fanatical element in order to conceal the general Jewish hostility to the Romans and to exculpate the Jews as a whole in the eyes of the Roman

⁷ Schwartz 1986, 373-86.

⁸ Morton and Michaelson 1973, 33-56.

administration. Moreover, inasmuch as the other two great revolts against Rome (115-17 and 132-35) were messianic and inasmuch as even Josephus himself describes the appearance of Menahem, the rebel leader, as resembling a king (*War* 2.434)—hence like a political messiah—we may suppose that there was a messianic aspect in the revolt. In addition, as Thackeray⁹ has noted, Josephus' blackened portraits of the revolutionaries Simon bar Giora and John of Gischala are suspiciously modelled, to some extent, on that of Catiline by Cicero. On the other hand, Farmer's theory¹⁰ that Josephus has deliberately ignored a connection between the revolutionaries and the Maccabees has not won general acceptance, since the Maccabees rebelled because of the suppression of the Jewish religion, whereas the Jews in the time of the revolt against Rome had religious liberty but sought to obtain political liberty.

Josephus has, however, neglected two other causes of the revolt: the increasing power in Rome of anti-Jewish freedmen of Greek origin who resented the special treatment accorded the Jews and the resentment of Jewish success in winning non-Jews to Judaism. However, Josephus pays little attention to the social and economic causes of the war, such as overpopulation, uneven distribution of land, and heavy taxation.

As to the destruction of the Temple, there is good reason to prefer the statement of the fourth-century Christian historian Sulpicius Severus (*Chronica* 2.30.6-7), who was clearly aware of Josephus' account. Sulpicius is supported by the implicit statement in the proem of Valerius Flaccus (*Argonautica* 1.13-14), who speaks of Titus' conquest of Jerusalem "as he hurls the brands and spreads havoc in every tower." He is likewise supported by Cassius Dio (6.65), and by the Talmud (*b. Git.* 56b), that Titus demanded the destruction of the Temple, rather than Josephus' statement (*War* 6.241) that Titus urged that the Temple be spared. Moreover, Josephus seems to contradict himself when he states (*War* 7.1) that Titus ordered the city and the Temple to be burned and when he declares (*Ant.* 20.250) that Titus captured and set fire to the Temple.

The most spectacular case where archaeology has enabled us to check Josephus' accuracy is the episode at Masada. Before the

⁹ Thackeray 1929, 119-20.

¹⁰ Farmer 1956.

discoveries of Yadin in 1963-65, scholars had tended to be sceptical about Josephus' account, since he himself was not present and presumably derived it from the Romans, who in turn had learned of the mass suicide from a woman who had survived in an underground conduit. The speeches by Eleazar ben Jair, the leader of the Sicarii at Masada, with passages taken almost verbatim from Plato about the relation of the body and the soul, and other passages closely corresponding to those in Posidonius and Euripides, seem to be the work of Josephus' scriptorium in the style of ancient historians. Moreover, there seems to be no basis for the statement of Eleazar ben Jair, the leader of the Sicarii at Masada, that Jewish law commands suicide if it is impossible to live as free people. We do find a later rabbinic statement (*Sanhedrin* 74a) that one should allow one's life to be taken only if one is required to commit incest (or adultery) or murder or to worship idols. There is no indication that the Romans would have required any of these from the defenders of Masada. Generally, the Romans preferred to capture their opponents, since this was a source of income through their sale. It does not seem likely that brave fighters would commit suicide rather than fight to the last man, especially since they were well armed and had plenty of water and food. Moreover, suicide, especially the kind of mutual suicide that was practiced at Masada, is severely frowned upon by Jewish law. And yet, there was a precedent for the mass suicide, namely that at Gamala (*War* 4.79-81), where more than 5000 took their own lives.

The discoveries have also, however, raised a number of other questions. Thus Josephus says that Herod's palace was on the western slope, whereas it is actually on the northern slope, that the pillars of Herod's palace were cut from a single block, whereas those found by Yadin had been made up of several sections fitted together and then covered with stucco so that the joints would not be seen, and that the food of the defenders was preserved to prove to the Romans that the defenders had not been driven to suicide by hunger, whereas Yadin found that some of it had been preserved but that part of it had been burnt. Moreover, Josephus (*War* 7.400) says that the number of victims was 960, whereas only 25 skeletons were found. In particular, the discovery of a sectarian scroll of liturgies based on the peculiar calendar used by the Dead Sea sect at Qumran would

suggest some connection, unmentioned by Josephus, between the sect and the Sicarii.

Yadin,¹¹ however, concluded that the discoveries confirmed Josephus' reliability as a historian, though Josephus was not present and though the account is based on the evidence of a single woman. However, Josephus was so fiercely hated that he had to be careful of what he wrote. We may suppose that the Roman commander at Masada, Flavius Silva, wrote memoirs and that these were available to Josephus. In addition, there must have been many Romans (and Jewish captives who had assisted them) who had participated in the siege and who could challenge any misrepresentation made by Josephus. In particular, the discovery of eleven ostraca (one of which contained the name of Ben Jair, the commander of the Sicarii at Masada), with names that may well be the lots used to determine who would kill the others, of sherds that may have been used by the defenders in rationing food, as well as of sherds connected with the tithes, appeared to confirm Josephus' credibility. Likewise, the discovery of two ritual baths and a synagogue leads one to think that Josephus' description is authentic. It is perhaps this sectarianism that will at once explain the Talmud's silence about the defenders, the fact that they engaged in a raid (*War* 4.402) on Ein Gedi on Passover (which was apparently not Passover according to their sectarian calendar),¹² and their differing view on suicide. We may conclude that, in view of Josephus' bitter denunciation of the Sicarii elsewhere, the incredulousness, according to Josephus (*War* 7.405), at their amazing boldness expressed by the Romans puts a stamp of credibility upon the narrative as a whole.

¹¹ Yadin 1966.

¹² An article in the English version of *Ha'aretz Magazine* (April 13, 2001) tells of the discovery at Ein Gedi of the remains of 260 individuals, including a well-arranged pile of human skulls. The finds date from somewhere between the first century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. Professor Israel Hershkovitz of the Anatomy and Anthropology Department of Tel Aviv University Medical School, who examined the bones, is convinced that these people were clearly butchered, one decapitated, eight others pounded with immense force. This corresponds to Josephus' account in *War* 4.402 of the raid on Ein Gedi by some Sicarii from Masada and the butchering of 700. This conclusion has, however, been disputed by Hanan Eshel of Bar Ilan University in Israel.

b. *The Jewish Antiquities (Antiquitates Judaicae)*

In the first half of the *Antiquities*, where Josephus parallels the Bible, it is clear that his solemn declaration (*Ant.* 1.17) that he will set forth the “precise details” of what is written in the Scriptures, neither adding nor omitting anything, is either a commonplace or an indication that Josephus included in “Scriptures” not only the written Bible but Jewish traditions generally. He seems to have had in his possession texts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and he varied in his use of them from biblical book to book. For the Hexateuch the evidence that Josephus used the LXX, in any of the forms known to us, is slight. Either Josephus is dependent upon a Greek tradition or upon a Hebrew text somewhat different from ours, or upon an Aramaic Targumic paraphrase, or, most likely, was eclectic in using all of them. For his paraphrase of Samuel through 1 Macc., however, Josephus employed a proto-Lucianic (or, according to Barthélemy,¹³ an old LXX) Palestinian text akin to that found in Qumran and in his presumed Palestinian contemporary Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*. Hölscher’s¹⁴ theory that Josephus used neither the Hebrew nor the Greek Bible but rather a Hellenistic Greek midrash has not been widely accepted, since it seems hard to believe that Josephus, who was certainly well educated and probably, in accordance with the usage of the time, knew much of the Bible by heart, did not also resort to direct use of the Bible; and, moreover, several of Josephus’ major modifications are paralleled in rabbinic midrashim. Thus his omission of the story of the golden calf (Exod. 32) is in accord with the minority view of the Talmud (*b. Meg.* 25a) that this passage should not be read in the synagogue out of respect for the Jewish people. In addition, Josephus sometimes shares with Philo an allegorical interpretation of the Bible, particularly in the symbolic explanation of the Tabernacle and the vestments of the high priest in cosmic terms (*Ant.* 3.123, 181-86),¹⁵ though it is hard to assert categorically that Philo was Josephus’ source since similar traditions may sometimes be found in rabbinic midrashim. In at least thirty instances, moreover, there are parallels in extra-biblical details between Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities* and Josephus, which are to be found in no other

¹³ Barthélemy 1963.

¹⁴ Hölscher 1916, 1955-60.

¹⁵ See Feldman 2000, 263 n.286.

extant source,¹⁶ though in general Pseudo-Philo is closer to the rabbinic midrashim than is Josephus.

But the *Antiquities* is also the work of Josephus himself, who, under the influence of the antiquarian approach of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (whose *Roman Antiquities*, also in twenty books, clearly influenced Josephus),¹⁷ adopted the conventions of a very different style of historiography in the *Antiquities* from that which he used in the *War*. Many of these are historiographical commonplaces derived from Isocratean rhetoric and paralleled in other Hellenistic writers.¹⁸ In rearranging the biblical material Josephus follows the “thematic” school, in accordance with the Hellenistic historical tradition, i.e., he brings into juxtaposition the items which belong together on subject matter, regardless of chronology or source. In his modifications Josephus is often concerned with answering anti-Jewish charges, such as that the Jews had invented nothing useful in the sciences, that the Jews were illiberal toward non-Jews, that the Jews were cowards, etc. Sometimes, as in the paraphrase of the stories of Joseph and of Esther, Josephus highlights erotic elements, perhaps under the influence of the Greek novelistic tradition. In particular, Josephus paints portraits of Abraham and Moses as typical national God-like heroes, such as were popular in Hellenistic times, with emphasis on them as statesmen, philosophers, logicians, rhetoricians, scientists and romantic heroes. Thus Abraham’s teleological proof for the existence of God (*Ant.* 1.156) from the irregularities of the heavenly bodies, though it is in the form of the proof promulgated by the Greek philosophical schools, is found only in Josephus; and it is clear from the context that Josephus is here combating the Stoics.¹⁹ In general, moreover, Josephus tends to downgrade miracles, as we see especially when we compare, for example, his view of Abraham and Moses as talented generals with the rabbinic portraits of these leaders as prevailing because of God’s miraculous assistance. On several occasions, moreover, when mentioning miracles, Josephus uses the formula familiar from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that “everyone is welcome to his own opinion” as an expression of courtesy and tolerance intended for his pagan readers. Similarly directed to his Hellenistic readers

¹⁶ See Feldman 1971, lviii-lxvi and Feldman 1974, 306-7.

¹⁷ See Sterling 1992, 284-90; and Feldman 1998, 7-8.

¹⁸ See Avenarius 1956.

¹⁹ See Feldman 1968, 143-56.

is Josephus' emphasis on fate as the distinguishing feature of the three Jewish sects, as well as his comparisons of the Pharisees with the Stoics (*Life* 12) and of the Essenes with the Pythagoreans (*Ant.* 15.371).

For his account of the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar Josephus also employs the Babylonian historian Berossus (third century B.C.E.). An important recently published chronicle²⁰ strikingly confirms Berossus' account, as reported in Josephus (*Ap.* 1.135 and *Ant.* 10.219-21), of the Battle of Carchemish, though it does show a number of differences with the account (*Ant.* 10.96-102) of the events leading up to the fall of Jerusalem and the capture of King Jehoiachin.

Josephus' account of Ezra and Nehemiah is full of inaccuracies, particularly in the chronology of the Persian kings, and deviates widely from both the Hebrew and Greek texts. It is clear that Josephus had an additional source for this period. In his account of Samaritan affairs during this time, Josephus has apparently projected the hostilities against the Samaritans of his own day.²¹ Papyri now confirm that Josephus has confused the first and third Sanballats, who were governors of Samaria.²²

The fact that, in a treatise on Jewish law which entailed and indeed attempts a kind of codification of halakhah, Josephus omits certain laws (e.g., Exod. 21:7-11, 20-22, 26-27; Lev. 1:4, 3:2) is an indication that his work is often motivated by apologetic concerns. Josephus' statement (*Ant.* 4.207 and *Ap.* 2.237) citing as a law the prohibition against blaspheming the gods of other peoples is clearly not based on the Hebrew Bible, which in fact (e.g., Lev. 18:3) reviles the laws of pagans and commands the destruction of pagan altars (Deut. 12:2-3); it clearly derives from the LXX version of Exod. 22:27, 'Thou shalt not revile G-d', where the plural form of the word for G-d is rendered θεοῦς, "gods," from which Philo (*Mos.* 2.205, *Spec.* 1.53) had drawn the same conclusion and indeed had given (*Mos.* 2.205) the same reason for the prohibition, namely the holiness attached to the very name of G-d. In some instances Josephus may have been influenced by his use of Philo's *Hypothetica*, namely the prohibition

²⁰ Wiseman 1956.

²¹ See Smith 1971; 2nd ed. 1987.

²² Cross 1963, 110-21.

of revealing secrets (*Ap.* 2.207; cf. *Hypoth.* 7.8), the prohibition to take what one has not placed on deposit (*Ap.* 2.208; cf. *Hypoth.* 7.6), the requirement to give fire and water to those who need them (*Ap.* 2.211; cf. *Hypoth.* 7.6), and the necessity of kindness toward suppliant animals (*Ap.* 2.213; cf. *Hypoth.* 7.7). In view, however, of the fact that Josephus was under constant attack from his fellow Jews, it seems unlikely that he would have dared to “deviate” thus from Jewish law unless such interpretations were to be found among pious Jews in his homeland; and indeed most of these prescriptions have their parallels in rabbinic sources, if not to quite the same degree as in Philo, whose language Josephus parallels, sometimes strikingly. Again, Josephus (*Ap.* 2.199) says that sexual intercourse is permitted only if designed for procreation of children; but in the Mishnah (*Yeb.* 6:6-7) we find that companionship is also a purpose of marriage. Riskin²³ conjectures that Josephus was influenced by the Essenes; but we may suggest that perhaps he was influenced by Philo’s statement (*Mos.* 1.28) that Moses participated in sexual relations solely to beget children.

Moreover, in a number of cases, Josephus appears to adopt a legal position for apologetic reasons. Thus he declares (*Ap.* 2.207) that a judge who accepts a bribe suffers capital punishment, whereas there is no such penalty in the Bible or in the Talmud. Inasmuch as, according to the rabbinic understanding of the seven Noachian commandments which are incumbent upon Gentiles, if a Gentile judge accepts a bribe he is indeed put to death, perhaps Josephus did not want to have it appear that the law is more stringent for Gentile than for Jewish judges, and thus he applied the same penalty to both. We may also note that Josephus (*Ap.* 2.202) equates abortion with infanticide, whereas the Mishnah (*Nid.* 5:3) does not regard the unborn foetus as a human being and justifies killing it to save the mother if the majority of it has not emerged. Here, too, apparently, Josephus did not want to let it appear that Jewish law was more lenient than the law as applied to non-Jews, since the Talmud (*Sanh.* 57b) quotes Rabbi Ishmael as stating that Noachian law forbids killing a foetus in its mother’s womb on the basis of an interpretation of Gen. 9:6; or perhaps Josephus was motivated by a desire not to be more lenient

²³ Riskin 1970.

than Plato, who says (according to Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum* 5.15) that a foetus is a living being.

Apologetic purposes may similarly be behind Josephus' declarations (*Ap.* 2.214), which have no basis in the Bible or in the Talmud, that the law bids the Jew even in an enemy's country to spare and not to kill beasts employed in labor, and that castration of an animal is a capital crime (cf. Philo, *Hypoth.* 7.7). Again, perhaps to remain consistent with the literal interpretation of the Bible, Josephus, in his attitude toward images, seems more strict than the rabbinic tradition. Indeed (*Ant.* 8.195), he goes out of his way to condemn King Solomon for breaking the Second Commandment in putting the images of bulls and lions in the Temple, where the Bible itself (I Kgs. 7:25, 10:20) and the Talmud (*b. Zeb.* 62b) do not censure him.

For the post-biblical period Josephus has been justly criticized for giving such scant attention to those developments in Judaism on the eve of Antiochus III's conquest of Palestine which must have been of some importance to produce the religious and cultural outburst that followed. Starting with the Maccabean period Josephus has parallel accounts in the *War* and in the *Antiquities*. The former is more carefully composed and more polished stylistically; the latter has considerably greater length, is generally more critical of Herod, and stresses the power and influence of the Pharisees. For the Maccabees, Josephus apparently used both the Hebrew original and a Greek translation of 1 Macc., which was more correct and fuller than ours. For the Hasmonaean kings and Herod Josephus' chief source was most likely Nicolaus of Damascus, Herod's non-Jewish adviser, who was probably anti-Hasmonaean. Indeed his heavy dependence on Nicolaus seems clear from the fact that once he reaches the period no longer covered by Nicolaus' work Josephus' own account becomes meagre indeed, except for occasional long digressions, where Josephus presumably had special sources. Still, Josephus consciously tried to free himself from the panegyric approach of Nicolaus toward Herod, and we must therefore conclude that he used Nicolaus more critically in the *Antiquities* than in the *War*. His other major sources for the Hellenistic period were Polybius, Posidonius, Strabo, and Diodorus.

The documents bearing on Roman-Jewish relations cited by Josephus in *Antiquities*, Books 14 and 16, have occasioned much dispute about authenticity. Most scholars have regarded the majority of

them as genuine; but Mochring²⁴ imputes significance to Josephus' silence about the fire of 69 in which three thousand documents in the Roman archives were destroyed, cites instances where decrees of the senate were forged, asserts that in antiquity historians probably did not bother to check the original texts of decrees and were content with second-hand opinions about them, notes a number of instances where the texts of the document are unusually corrupt and where Josephus' versions of decrees do not correspond to the standard known to us from epigraphical evidence, and concludes that Josephus' invitation to check the accuracy of his statements by consulting the original documents is merely a literary device. These doubts as to authenticity, however, have been challenged by Pucci Ben Zeev in thorough and careful study, in which she argues for the authenticity of the documents and concludes that the rights granted to Jews in them should not be regarded as proof of special consideration for Jewish needs but rather as consistent with the principles governing Roman policy in general.²⁵

On the basis of a close study of Josephus' vocabulary and style, Thackeray²⁶ has theorized that in Books 15 and 16 Josephus utilized an assistant who had a particular love of Greek poetry, especially Sophocles, and in Books 17-19 an assistant who was notably fond of Thucydides. Actually, we may comment, Josephus (*Ap.* 1.50) says that he used fellow-workers for the Greek of the *War*, where ironically Thackeray is forced to admit that he cannot pinpoint the nature and extent of their help. Moreover, the presence of many Sophoclean and Thucydidean phrases in the other Greek works of the period, notably in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, shows that they are characteristics of first-century Greek rather than that they are the work of a special assistant. Furthermore, there are Sophoclean and Thucydidean traces throughout the *War* and the *Antiquities*.

Where Josephus parallels Tacitus in their accounts of Parthian affairs, Josephus is generally to be preferred, as the numismatic evidence appears to indicate, presumably because Josephus, with his knowledge of Aramaic, the language of the populous Jewish communities in Babylonia, had a more direct knowledge of the events

²⁴ Mochring 1975, 124-58.

²⁵ Pucci Ben Zeev 1998.

²⁶ Thackeray 1929, 100-24.

there. Schalit²⁷ has ingeniously discerned an Aramaic word in *Ant.* 18.343 in Josephus' account of the Jewish robber-barons Anilaus and Asinaeus who defied the Parthians, and has suggested that Josephus' source was a Greek translation which goes back to an Aramaic original. He similarly, though less convincingly, finds an Aramaic source for Josephus' account of Izates, the king of Adiabene who was converted to Judaism.

Occasionally inscriptions will shed light on Josephus' terminology. Thus an inscription discovered in 1961 in Caesarea²⁸ has established Pilate's official title as prefect rather than as procurator, the title given him by Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44.3) and Josephus (*War* 2.169). But Josephus elsewhere, like the New Testament, calls him by the more ambiguous term ἡγεμών, "governor"; and Josephus' fluidity in terminology generally indicates either that Pilate's title changed in the course of his administration of Judaea or that the titles were not as rigid as most modern scholars believe.

We may remark here on the passage in Josephus which has occasioned by far more comment than any other, the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum* (*Ant.* 18.63-64) concerning Jesus.²⁹ The chief arguments usually given for its authenticity are (1) that it is found in all of our Greek manuscripts and in all the manuscripts of the Latin translation; (2) that the language seems generally consistent with Josephus in this portion of his work; and (3) that Josephus refers elsewhere (*Ant.* 20.200), in a passage whose authenticity is generally accepted, to the "so-called" or "aforementioned" Christ. However, a considerable number of Christian writers—Pseudo-Justin and Theophilus in the second century, Minucius Felix, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Julius Africanus, Tertullian, Hippolytus and Origen in the third century, and Methodius and Pseudo-Eustathius in the early fourth century—who knew the writings of Josephus and cited from his works do not refer to this passage, though one would imagine that it would be the first passage that a Christian apologist would cite. In particular, Origen (*Against Celsus* 1.47 and *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17), who certainly knew Book 18 of the *Antiquities* and cites five passages from it, explicitly states that Josephus did not believe in

²⁷ Schalit 1965, 163-88.

²⁸ Frova 1961, 419-34.

²⁹ See now the comprehensive and balanced discussion by Whealey 2003.

Jesus as Christ. The first to cite the *Testimonium* is Eusebius (c. 324); and even after him, we may note, there are eleven Christian writers who cite Josephus but not the *Testimonium*. In fact, it is not until Jerome in the early fifth century that we have another reference to it. Moreover, the passages about John, Jesus, and James do not appear in the parallel passages in the *War*, and we may therefore be suspicious that the lines about them in the *Antiquities* were interpolated.

The principal internal argument against the genuineness of the *Testimonium* is that it says that Jesus was the Christ, whereas Josephus, as a loyal Pharisaic Jew, could hardly have written this. To be sure, there were several claimants to the status of Messiah in this era, and those who followed them were not read out of the Jewish fold; but in view of the fact that Josephus nowhere else uses the word *Christos* (except in referring to James, the brother of Jesus, *Ant.* 20.200) and that he repeatedly suppresses the Messianic aspects of the revolt against Rome because of the association of the Messiah with political revolt and independence, it would seem hard to believe that he would openly call Jesus a Messiah and speak of him with such awe. The fact that Jerome (*De Viris Illustribus* 13) reads that “he was believed to be the Christ” (*credebatur esse Christus*) would suggest that his text differed from ours. Another objection to the authenticity of the passage is that it breaks the continuity of the narrative, which tells of a series of riots. Those, such as Eisler,³⁰ who regard the passage as interpolated, suggest that the original spoke of the Christian movement as a riot. Laqueur,³¹ in his most famous and most controversial theory, postulates that Josephus revised his *Antiquities* in order to win a following among the Christians by inserting a highly complimentary passage about Jesus. However, we may comment that there is no evidence that Josephus was in need of such a market, which at that time would have been small, since he had a very comfortable pension and probably would have further antagonized his much larger potential Jewish audience.

Pines³² has created a considerable stir by bringing to the scholarly world's attention two hitherto almost completely neglected works containing the *Testimonium*, one a tenth-century history of the world

³⁰ Eisler 1929.

³¹ Laqueur 1920

³² Pines 1971. On the whole question of the *Testimonium Flavianum* see Feldman 1982, 179-99, 288-93.

in Arabic by a Christian named Agapius and the other a twelfth-century chronicle in Syriac by Michael the Syrian. There are a number of differences between Agapius and our *Testimonium*, notably in the omission of the statement “if one ought to call him a man” and of Jesus’ miracles and of the role of the Jewish leaders in accusing Jesus, and, above all, in the assertion that Jesus was perhaps the Messiah (“was thought to be” in Michael). Since Agapius declares that “This is what is said by Josephus and his companions” and, indeed, includes a number of other details not found in Josephus, we may conjecture that he used other sources as well. Inasmuch as there are changes in the order of the statements of the *Testimonium* in Agapius and Michael, we are apparently dealing not with a translation but with a paraphrase.

As to Josephus’ notice about John the Baptist (*Ant.* 18.116-19), there is general agreement that it is authentic, since, if the passage has been interpolated by a Christian we would have expected some reference to John’s connection with Jesus. Moreover, an interpolator would probably have removed the discrepancy between the Gospel account of the reason for John’s condemnation, namely his denunciation of Herod Antipas’ immorality, and Josephus’ version, which stresses his success in attracting crowds and hence the fear that he was fomenting a revolution. Furthermore, belief in the genuineness of this passage is corroborated by Origen, who explicitly states that Josephus did not believe in Jesus as the Christ (*Against Celsus* 1.47 and *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17) and hence did not have the *Testimonium Flavianum*, and who cites (*Against Celsus* 1.47) the passage about John. In addition, the fact that Josephus has two different words (βαπτισμῷ, βάπτισιν) for baptism in consecutive sentences would argue against interpolation. Moreover, it is hard to believe that a Christian interpolator would have assigned almost twice as much space (163 words) to John as to Jesus (89 words).

For the lengthy account in Book 19 of the *Antiquities* of the assassination of Caligula and the accession of Claudius, Mommsen’s³³ view that Josephus’ source was the lost Roman historian Cluvius Rufus has won general acceptance, but several alternative written and oral sources have been suggested.³⁴ In particular, we may note

³³ Mommsen 1870, 295-325.

³⁴ See Feldman 1962, 320-33.

the fact that Agrippa I's role in the accession of Claudius is built up to a high degree. This can hardly be due to Cluvius, but most likely was derived from Josephus' friend Agrippa II, son of Agrippa I, who elsewhere (*Life* 366) declares himself ready to inform him of details that are not generally known.

Near the end of the *Antiquities* (20.266), Josephus dates the work in the thirteenth year of the reign of Domitian (93-94). He indicates that he will append his *Life* to his *Antiquities*. Inasmuch as the *Life* (359) definitely indicates that Agrippa is already dead, and Photius (*Bibliotheca*, p. 33) says that Agrippa died in the third year of the reign of Trajan (i.e. 100), Laqueur³⁵ has argued that the *Antiquities* appeared in two editions, the first in 93-94, and the second some years later. Our manuscript tradition, however, provides no proof for a second edition, and the alleged two endings to the *Antiquities* (20.259, 20.267) may simply be due to the fact that after twenty long books it took Josephus some time to bid the reader farewell. Still, we may remark that ancient book production afforded ample opportunity for change and correction.

c. *Life* (*Vita*)

Josephus' *Life* is the oldest autobiography that we possess from antiquity in its original form, though most of it is devoted to a single episode in the author's life, his command in Galilee. That it is an appendix to the *Antiquities* is clear from both the end of the *Antiquities* (20.266) and the end of the *Life* (430). Some scholars believe that the bulk of its contents was actually written shortly after the war itself—prior to the publication of Josephus' *War* (ca. 75-79 C.E.)—but that it was revised, supplemented, and updated prior to its publication, ca. 95 C.E. Laqueur³⁶ has hypothesized that the nucleus of the *Life* was an administrative report, the use of which makes it more original, more truthful, and less tendentious than the *War*. But all attempts at "higher criticism" of the *Life* have failed to disclose strata within it or differences between it and Book 20 of the *Antiquities* in style. On the contrary, there are numerous links of style between them, including the alleged early portions of the *Life*.

³⁵ Laqueur 1920, 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

In fact, the *Life* shows the internal unity of a single work written for a particular purpose, namely that of refuting the charges of Justus of Tiberias, whose work, written twenty years after the war, is completely lost. Laqueur postulates that Justus had attacked Josephus' style and that the competition from Justus meant financial ruin for Josephus; but inasmuch as the Emperor Titus favored the *War*, the competition with Justus would have had no direct financial impact upon Josephus; and, in any case, the style of the *Life* is inferior to that of the *War*. The invective exchanged by Josephus and Justus is typological. Actually, both of them were realists, who clashed because each was playing his own double game. In the end, Justus fled for protection to the collaborationist Agrippa II, whereas Josephus joined Vespasian. Cohen³⁷ has conjectured that the reason for Justus' delay in publishing his work was that after the war Tiberias had had to suffer the ignominy of seeing many cities become the autonomous rulers of extensive territories, while it was still subservient to Agrippa II and was not even the capital of his kingdom. Hence Justus, as a native son, came to the defence of his city, whereas the *Life* is an anti-Tiberian polemic. Moreover, Justus had apparently attacked Josephus' religiosity, and hence the *Life* seeks to portray Josephus as a religious person.

The discrepancies between the *Life* and the *War* can, in large part, be explained by the license traditionally granted to biographies to engage in panegyric. Thus Polybius (10.21), whose work Josephus knew, states that when he wrote a biographical memoir of Philopomen he exaggerated as panegyric required, whereas in his history he was more objective. Autobiography was still less reliable as a source of fact, as we may infer from Josephus' contemporary, Tacitus (*Agricola* 1). The same distinction between history and biography is to be found in the license permitted in a monograph in contrast to the truthfulness demanded in a more general history, as seen in Cicero's request (*Ad Familiares* 5.12) to the historian Lucceius to treat the events of the *annus mirabilis* of his consulship in a monograph. A comparison with the *Agricola* shows substantially the same division of subject matter and the same addiction to digression. Indeed, Cohen has with good reason concluded that the *Life* is Josephus' least careful work—confused, tendentious, inconsistent, with incorrect cross-refer-

³⁷ Cohen 1979.

ences, with doublets, and with important segments of information presented in a casual and even a startling manner.

d. *Against Apion* (*Contra Apionem*)

The treatise *Against Apion* was written after the *Antiquities*, to which it refers (1.1., 1.54, 2.287). It is a defense of the Jews against charges of their opponents, though Apion himself is not mentioned until the second book. In particular, Josephus answers the contention that the Jews are of recent origin. He counter-charges that the Greeks themselves are of much more recent origin and that their historians are untrustworthy. He shows considerable acquaintance with antiquarian problems; and his remark (*Ag.* 1.12) that Homer himself did not commit his poems to writing was the basis of Wolf's *Prolegomena* on the origin of the Homeric corpus. He replies to the distortions in the accounts of the Exodus by Manetho, Chaeremon and Lysimachus, and rebuts such calumnies in Apion as that the Jews worshipped the head of an ass in the Temple, that they practiced ritual murder, and that they were more concerned with their own affairs than with those of the community in which they lived. The work closes with a summary and defense of the Mosaic constitution as compared with those of the Greeks. In this he follows the standard rhetorical pattern for such encomia, particularly as seen in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' encomium of Rome in *Roman Antiquities* (1.9-2.29).

e. *Proposed and Spurious Works*

Josephus also mentions a number of works that he intended to write, notably on G-d and His Substance and the laws. Petersen³⁸ has, however, concluded that we have all of Josephus' proposed works, and that most of the references to contemplated works are to *Against Apion*, which, however, when finally written, contained certain changes from the original plan.

Several works are ascribed to Josephus but are clearly not by him. In particular, the Christian tradition, ever since Eusebius, has ascribed 4 Macc. to Josephus. Modern scholars have rejected this authorship on the ground that this work uses 2 Macc., which Josephus

³⁸ Petersen 1958, 259-74.

did not know. In addition, Skimina³⁹ has shown that 4 Macc. differs considerably from the other works of Josephus in its prose rhythms at the ends of sentences. It smacks of having been composed by an Alexandrian Jew deeply imbued with Greek philosophy, notably Stoicism. Moreover, Williams⁴⁰ has shown conclusively, on the basis of stylometric analysis and, in particular, on the basis of ten Josephan test words, that 4 Macc. is not by Josephus. Another work ascribed to Josephus, *De universo*, is a philosophical refutation of Plato by a Christian, presumably Hippolytus.

3. THE TEXT OF JOSEPHUS

The standard editions of Josephus remain those that were issued almost simultaneously by Niese⁴¹ and Naber.⁴² The former has a much fuller apparatus criticus in his *editio maior*; and indeed both Naber and the Loeb edition of Thackeray and others⁴³ depend upon it. It is close to the manuscript tradition and is generally, and with good reason, more widely accepted than Naber. It should be noted, nevertheless, that Niese's *editio minor* changes the text of the *editio maior* in several hundred passages, though often it is unnecessarily bold; it rates, however, as Niese's final edition. But Niese, in line with the prevailing principle in text-criticism of his time, overestimated the value of one group of manuscripts and frequently failed to consider the quality of individual readings case by case. Consequently, all too often, as Schreckenberg⁴⁴ remarks, the best textual tradition appears in Niese's apparatus. Naber's text may be smoother generally than that of Niese, especially when compared with the latter's *editio maior*; but the task of the editor is to reconstruct what Josephus wrote rather than to improve his Greek. Naber's edition, and especially his apparatus criticus, are, moreover, full of errors.

Schreckenberg⁴⁵ has provided an annotated listing of all 133 manuscripts, in whole or in part, of the Greek text of Josephus.

³⁹ Skimina 1937, 171-72.

⁴⁰ Williams 1992, 105-49.

⁴¹ Niese 1888-95 (*editio maior*); 1888-91 (*editio minor*).

⁴² Naber 1888-96.

⁴³ Thackeray, Marcus, Wikgren, Feldman 1926-65.

⁴⁴ Schreckenberg 1972.

⁴⁵ Schreckenberg 1972.

He⁴⁶ notes that no fewer than 50 were unknown to Niese, but, since only two of them are of major significance, he admits that an extensive collation of these manuscripts would increase the massive apparatus of Niese's *editio maior* insignificantly, with only a slight chance here and there of localizing the genuine tradition. Hence, the future improvement of the text of Josephus will most likely come through emendation, based, we may suggest, on the now complete concordance to Josephus, as well as on a careful study of Josephus' grammar (yet to be done), and on the careful consultation of the Latin translation ascribed to Cassiodorus, a critical edition of which remains to be completed. We must add, however, that there is a danger in the use of the concordance, in that Josephus wrote over a long period of time and presumably changed his style as he became better acquainted with the Greek language, became less dependent on his assistants (who are mentioned in *Ag.* 1.50), and changed his subject matter. Schreckenberg⁴⁷ himself, in suggesting 56 emendations, often through making good use of the concordance and of the translation into Latin, has almost always improved the sense, grammar, and style; but this presupposes that Josephus wrote better Greek than he apparently did. Moreover, few of these emendations are both necessary and palaeographically probable.

We may note that there exists only a single papyrus fragment (*War* 2.576-79, 582-84) of Josephus, dating from the late third century.⁴⁸ Though it is poorly preserved and contains only 112 words in whole or in part, there are no fewer than nine places where the fragment differs from all the manuscripts collated by Niese. Consequently, though, of course, the papyrus is too brief to be definitive and its readings are not necessarily superior to those of the manuscripts, it would seem that our text of even the *War*, which apparently is in much better shape than that of the *Antiquities*, is in need of further emendation. This is especially true when we consider that the papyrus agrees now with one group of manuscripts and now with another, thus indicating that we should not rely excessively on one group alone.

A possible clue to the unreliability of the text that we possess

⁴⁶ Schreckenberg 1970-72, 81-106. See also Schreckenberg 1977.

⁴⁷ Schreckenberg 1967-69, 64-75; 1970-72, 81-106.

⁴⁸ Published by Oellacher 1939, 61-63.

may be found in the fact that Origen (*Against Celsus* 1.47, 1.15 end; *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17), Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 11.23.60), and Jerome (*De Viris Illustribus* 13) declare that Josephus said that Jerusalem was destroyed because of the murder of James the Just, a statement nowhere to be found in our text of Josephus. Similarly, as Pines⁴⁹ has noted, there are statements in the tenth-century Arabic historian Agapius allegedly drawn from Josephus which are not in our texts. These may, of course, be due to interpolations or to loose paraphrasing, or they may refer to a different text.

The verdict of Schreckenberg and others is that the text of Josephus' *War* is said to be relatively sound; but Schalit,⁵⁰ the foremost Josephus scholar of the past generation, has remarked that the text of the *Antiquities* is more corrupt than any other Greek text.

Inasmuch as Josephus is writing in a language which is still foreign to him, and inasmuch as he appears not to have had assistants for most of the *Antiquities* (if he had them at all), as he did for the *War*, we are often reduced to finding what a writer not thoroughly familiar with the language would have written. The corruption in the text of the first half of the *Antiquities*, where he paraphrases the Bible, has been aggravated by the tendency of copyists to assimilate Josephus' text to that of the LXX, particularly in the spelling of proper names.

Schreckenberg⁵¹ has presented us a complete, annotated list of the manuscripts of Josephus (including many missed by Niese), as well as of those who cite or quote excerpts from him. The textual tradition was apparently polarized into two families as early as the third century. The oldest manuscripts of complete treatises of Josephus date from the tenth or eleventh century. The tradition for the second half of the *Antiquities* differs from that of the first half. For the treatise *Against Apion* we are dependent upon a single manuscript dating from the eleventh century, for which 2.52-113, which is missing, must be supplied from the Latin version of Cassiodorus' school. The one papyrus fragment (*War* 2.576-79) that has been found dates from the third century, apparently before this polarization took place.

⁴⁹ Pines 1971.

⁵⁰ Schalit, vol. 3, 1963, viii.

⁵¹ Schreckenberg 1972.

4. THE VERSIONS OF JOSEPHUS

Especially in view of the corrupt state of the text, the versions, often much older than our oldest Greek manuscripts, are of considerable importance. In Latin there is a free reworking of the *War* of the fourth century attributed to a certain Hegesippus (sometimes, probably wrongly, identified with Ambrose or pseudo-Ambrose), who claims to be writing an original work in accordance with the spirit of Christianity.

There is also in Latin a closer translation of the *War* usually attributed to Rufinus (d. 410) and a translation of the *Antiquities* and *Against Apion* made under the direction of Cassiodorus in the sixth century. The fact that there are 171 manuscripts of Cassiodorus' version is an indication of its popularity. Blatt's⁵² edition of Books 1-5 of the *Antiquities* is unfortunately based on only a few of these; a truly critical text remains a desideratum.

We have a Syriac version of Book 6 of the *War*. Its editor, Kottek,⁵³ has conjectured that the translator had before him a portion of the Aramaic original; but inasmuch as that original is completely lost, it is difficult to substantiate this claim.

The linguistic and ethnographic evidence that the Hebrew paraphrase of the *War* by Josippon (Josephon), identified in the manuscripts as Joseph ben Gorion (cf. *War* 2.563), dates from the middle of the tenth century seems overwhelming. The textual tradition of this version is extraordinarily complicated by the fact that there are three substantially different recensions. A critical edition has finally been produced by David Flusser.⁵⁴ Josippon's major source was Hegesippus, but he also used a Latin Bible and a Latin version of sixteen of the twenty books of the *Antiquities*. Until the nineteenth century, with the major exception of Azariah dei Rossi in the sixteenth century, Jewish commentators generally identified Josippon with Josephus, and the work was extremely popular.

In the tenth century Josippon was translated into Arabic, and this in turn was translated into Ethiopic some time between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.

⁵² Blatt 1958.

⁵³ Kottek 1886.

⁵⁴ Flusser 1978-80.

The Slavonic version of the *War*, apparently made in the eleventh century, contains a number of additions not found in the Greek, notably passages on John the Baptist and Jesus, which Josephus could hardly have written, since they speak with such antipathy of the role of the Jews. It seems hardly likely that a Jew (i.e., Josephus) could have written “according to the law of *their* fathers” or “they [i.e. the Jews] crucified him,” as we find in the Slavonic text. Recent scholarship⁵⁵ indicates that the work was used by Christians in the ideological struggle against the Khazars, who had been converted to Judaism in the eighth century

5. TRANSLATIONS OF JOSEPHUS

The standard translation into English is by William Whiston, Newton’s successor as professor of mathematics at Cambridge University but not a professional classicist, was published in 1737 and has been reprinted at least 217 times; but, though virile, it is based on Haverkamp’s inferior text and is full of outright errors. In its notes it expresses such strange notions as that Josephus was an Ebionite Christian and a bishop of Jerusalem. The Loeb Classical Library edition,⁵⁶ based on an eclectic text dependent on Niese and Naber, has relatively few original emendations. The translation itself, though accurate, is often rather free; and the commentary is sparse, though increasingly full. The Brill edition, of which three volumes have thus far appeared,⁵⁷ is more literal and has a much fuller commentary.

The translation into French by Andilly,⁵⁸ like that of Whiston, is based on an inferior Greek text. It was superseded by that by Reinach.⁵⁹ The translation and commentary, in progress, by Nodet⁶⁰ is a tremendous improvement, particularly in the commentary. The translation into German by Clementz⁶¹ is inferior to that in the

⁵⁵ Meščerskij 1958.

⁵⁶ Thackeray, Marcus, Wikgren, and Feldman, 1926-65.

⁵⁷ Feldman et al. 2000 ff.

⁵⁸ Andilly 1667.

⁵⁹ Reinach 1900-32. based on Niese’s text, is closer to the original than is the Loeb translation and is more fully annotated.

⁶⁰ Nodet 1990, 1995.

⁶¹ Clementz 1899-1900.

Loeb Library and by Reinach. It is based on the texts of Haverkamp (1726) and Dindorf (1845) and is more of a paraphrase than a translation.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND LEXICAL AIDS TO THE STUDY OF JOSEPHUS

Schreckenberg⁶² has attempted to present a year-by-year listing of all editions, translations and scholarship dealing with Josephus from 1470, the year of the *editio princeps*, to 1968, with systematic coverage to 1965. A supplementary volume carries the work to 1975 and includes many items omitted from the first volume. For most items he gives brief summaries and, in addition, places before most items a classification number according to a scheme of twenty-five categories. There are, however, numerous errors and many hundreds of omissions.

My own bibliography,⁶³ is limited to the years 1937-62. It is arranged by subject matter and contains critical appraisals of many items. It has now been revised, greatly expanded to include 5,543 entries, and brought up to 1980.⁶⁴ My further supplement contains approximately 3600 entries, including 1900 items omitted by Schreckenberg in his two volumes, as well as a number of corrections, as well as comments on the entries, and covers the period up to 1984.⁶⁵

The dictionary of Thackeray and Marcus⁶⁶ reached ἐμφιλοχωρεῖν, but nothing has appeared since 1955. It is exhaustive in most cases but is content to list merely a selection of occurrences for certain words. Rengstorf's concordance⁶⁷ lists every occurrence of every word except for certain extremely common words, which, to be sure, are sometimes very important in helping to determine authorship and interpolations. Moreover, Thackeray and Marcus give the meaning of a word for every particular occurrence, whereas Rengstorf lists all the meanings at the beginning of the article. Additionally, Thackeray and Marcus has the advantage of being an analytical dictionary, organizing the entries by constructions.

⁶² Schreckenberg 1968, 1979.

⁶³ Feldman 1963, 26-55.

⁶⁴ Feldman 1984.

⁶⁵ Feldman 1986d.

⁶⁶ Thackeray and Marcus, 1930-55.

⁶⁷ Rengstorf 1973-83.

7. THE INFLUENCE OF JOSEPHUS

The only extant pagan writer who definitely knew the works of Josephus is the third-century Porphyry, who in his *De abstinence ab esu animalium* 4.11, states that the Essenes are referred to in the second book of Josephus' *Jewish History* (that is, the *War*), in the eighteenth book of his *Archaeology*, and in the second book of his *To the Greeks* (that is, *Against Apion*).

Josephus influenced the Church Fathers, particularly the Greek Fathers: Origen, Eusebius, pseudo-Eustathius, John Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Isidore of Pelusium. Among the Latin Fathers he particularly influenced Tertullian, Lactantius, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Cassiodorus.⁶⁸ Jerome (*Epistula ad Eustochium* 22.35, *P.L.*22, col. 421) praises Josephus as a second Livy. Indeed, so marked was Jerome's favor for Josephus that during his lifetime it was thought, without basis, that he had translated Josephus' *War* into Latin. However, as Schreckenberg⁶⁹ has remarked, even important theologians disseminated and thereby sanctioned cleverly invented falsifications. We may also note that the Syriac version of the sixth book of the *War* was actually included in the sacred canon of the Syrian Church.

During the Middle Ages and into modern times Josephus was associated with either pagan or Christian authorities, as the occasion demanded. Indeed, he was regarded as a veritable polymath—an authority in such diverse fields as biblical exegesis, allegory, chronology, arithmetic (the Josephus-spiel was one of the popular arithmetical problems of the Middle Ages), astronomy, natural history, geography of the Holy Land, grammar, etymology, and Jewish theology. There was a legend that Josephus had cured the Emperor Titus of a swollen leg, gout or palsy. When the Christians were largely cut off from the direct Jewish tradition, it was Josephus who supplied the pilgrims with knowledge of the Holy Land, their teachers with knowledge of Jewish history and the Jewish religion and lore, and their military leaders with military tactics and formulae. The *Jewish War*

⁶⁸ For a comprehensive listing of passages through the sixteenth century that show the influence of Josephus see Schreckenberg 1972, 68-171. For brief discussions of these passages see Schreckenberg 1992, 51-85.

⁶⁹ Schreckenberg 1992, 85.

was particularly popular since it contained such a graphic account of the destruction of the Temple, a debacle which was explained by many Christians as divine punishment meted out to the Jews for their rejection of Jesus. Because of the *Testimonium Flavianum* Josephus was regarded as having borne witness to the miracles, Messiahship and resurrection of Jesus; and it is not surprising that in the catalogues of medieval libraries his works commonly appear with those of the Church Father. In the late Middle Ages Josephus was widely known through the *Historia Scholastica* of the twelfth-century Peter Comestor, a summary of biblical history which soon became the most popular book in Western Europe.⁷⁰ In the Byzantine Empire he was particularly used by George Syncellus, Photius, George Hamartolos, the anonymous *De obsidione toleranda*, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Joannes Zonaras, Nicetas Choniates and Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. His influence is also to be seen in painting, particularly in Christian miniatures of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.⁷¹

In modern times, until the twentieth century, both in England and on the continent, it is no exaggeration to say that Josephus was the most widely read of all Greek historians.⁷² Until our own days a very common sight in houses was a copy of Josephus (in England and in the United States most often in Whiston's much reprinted translation) next to the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, since the Jewish historian was regarded as the bridge between them. In fact, among strict English Protestants, only Josephus and the Bible were permitted to be read on Sunday. In the seventeenth century the growing sanctity of the Hebrew Scriptures in England led playwrights to turn to the Apocrypha and the works of Josephus, which provided scriptural settings and associations without the awkwardness of divine authority. The first book of Jewish authorship printed in the American colonies was L'Estrange's translation of Josephus in 1719; the second was Morvvyne's translation of Josippon in 1722. The leading intellectual in the American colonies, Cotton Mather,

⁷⁰ See Feldman 1993j, 98-101.

⁷¹ See Deutsch 1987, 398-410.

⁷² During the period from 1450 to 1700 there were more editions and translations of Josephus (73 of the *Antiquities* and 68 of the *War*) than of Herodotus or Thucydides or Plutarch, or, for that matter, of any other Greek historian. See Burke 1966, 135-52.

in the early eighteenth century, was deeply indebted to Josephus, especially in his unpublished *Biblia Americana*.⁷³

Among famous Italian writers Petrarch, among the French Voltaire, and among the Spanish Lope de Vega were particularly influenced by Josephus.

The Hebrew paraphrase of the *War*, Josippon, was well known to the mediaeval commentators on the Bible and the Talmud. The Arabic version of Josippon was widely used by Muslim historians, notably by the great fourteenth-century Ibn Khaldun. The Ethiopic version became a semi-canonical work of the Monophysite Church.

The Slavonic version of the *War* influenced mediaeval Russian literature and especially Russian chronicles and the *Tale of Igor's Expedition*.

In modern times Josephus has had notable influence on Hebbel's tragedy *Herodes und Mariamne* and on Feuchtwanger's trilogy of novels, *Der jüdische Krieg* (1932), *Die Söhne* (1935), and *Der Tag wird kommen* (1945).

⁷³ See Feldman 1993k, 122-55.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JOSEPHUS' LIBERTIES IN INTERPRETING THE BIBLE IN THE *JEWISH WAR* AND IN THE *ANTIQUITIES*

The Pentateuch (Deut. 4:2) states that “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it; that you may keep the commandments of the L-rd your G-d, which I command you.” Similarly, the Pentateuch (Deut. 13:1) asserts that “Every word that I command you you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it or take from it.” It will be recalled that Josephus, in the introduction to his *Antiquities* (1.5), seemingly in accordance with these biblical statements, proclaims that his work will embrace the entire ancient history (ἀρχαιολογίαν) and political constitution of the Jews, translated from the Hebrew records (ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων). Again, he promises his readers that he will throughout his work set forth the precise details of the Scriptures (τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς), each in its place, neither adding nor omitting anything (οὐδὲν προσθεὶς οὐδ’ αὖ παραλιπὼν [*Ant.* 1.17]). It would appear that Josephus is promising not to add to or subtract from not merely the commandments of the Scriptures but also the narrative details as well. As is well known, Josephus does not adhere to this promise, and many suggestions have been presented to explain his divergences.¹

There is surely significance in the fact that Josephus starts the *Antiquities* with the recollection of the precedent for his work, namely the LXX, which he cites as justifying his presentation of biblical history to Gentiles (*Ant.* 1.10).² The LXX, despite the fact that the translation was allegedly divinely inspired (Letter of Aristeeas 306), and though the work of translation had allegedly been carried on with the greatest of accuracy, inasmuch as a curse was pronounced upon anyone who ventured to add or transpose or remove anything

¹ See Feldman 1998, 37-46.

² Harrington 1986, 247, justifiably, however, expresses doubt whether the “rewritten Bible” represents a literary genre at all or whether one can speak about the single genre of these writings.

(προστιθεὶς ἢ μεταφέρων τι...ἢ ποιούμενος ἀφαίρεσιν, Letter of Aristeas 311), yet contains numerous modifications of the original. Yet, Philo also remarks on the utter precision of the translation, comparing it in its scientific accuracy to geometry and logic (*Mos.* 2.38-39). Indeed, he goes so far as to speak of the original and the Greek translation as being one and the same, both in matter and in words, and looks at the translators as being veritable prophets and priests of the mysteries.³

The fact that Josephus devotes so much space (*Ant.* 12.11-118) to his paraphrase of the Letter of Aristeas, which tells the story of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek and which, strictly speaking, has only the most tangential relationship to the political and military history of the Jews, which is, by far, the most central subject of the work, would indicate how important this precedent was in his eyes. In effect, like Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, Josephus was presenting another translation or paraphrase of the Bible because he felt that the existing translation was not serving the best interests of the Jewish people.

The fact that the rabbis (*Meg.* 9a-b) saw fit to tell the story of the translation of the Pentateuch by the seventy or seventy-two elders indicates how important they thought the translation was. That they say that even though the translators were placed in separate rooms G-d prompted each of them to produce the same translation and even the same changes from the original meaning of the text would indicate that the rabbis originally gave their blessing to the LXX and, most importantly, approved of the liberties that the translators took in their rendering of the text. Most important, apparently, the rabbis did not feel guilty of having violated the commandment forbidding adding or omitting anything. Neither for that matter did Philo when he reported that Moses in his childhood in Egypt had Greek and Egyptian tutors in the liberal arts (*Mos.* 1.21) or when he took the liberty to rearrange the order of the ten plagues (*Mos.* 1.98-142).⁴

³ The rabbis, with obvious approval, refer to the miraculous manner in which the seventy-two translators had been placed in seventy-two separate rooms and yet had emerged with identical translations because of Divine inspiration (*Meg.* 9a). Nevertheless: they mention certain deliberate changes that they had all made in the process of translating the sacred text.

⁴ It does seem that later the rabbis had second thoughts about the translation,

Finally, we may note that the LXX, Philo, and Josephus understood the word “translation” in a sense different from what is meant today; and it was not until Aquila was encouraged to do a more literal translation of the Bible into Greek in the early second century that the requirement that a translation be literal was taken more seriously. Prior to that time the view that prevailed was that a translation had to be true to the content of the text but not to its external form.⁵ The fact that, despite the ban on any modification of the LXX, three major recensions had emerged by the time of Jerome (Preface to the Book of Chronicles, in Migne, *PL* 28.1324-25) shows that the curse mentioned in the Letter of Aristeas was not taken too seriously.

There would seem to be a precedent for presenting an alternative version of the sacred text in the very Bible itself, namely the Book of Chronicles as compared with the Book of Kings. More directly, there is surely great significance in the fact that Josephus begins his *Antiquities* with the statement (*Ant.* 1.6) that when he was writing his account of the war between the Jews and the Romans he had decided to start his narrative not with the war but with the history of the very beginning of the Jewish people and to describe, as he says, “what fortunes they experienced, under what sort of lawgiver they were trained as to piety and the exercise of the other virtues, and the number of wars that they had fought in long ages past before they entered into this last war against their will.” In other words, he was planning to preface the history of the war of the Jews against the Romans with a history of the Jews, the sort of thing that Tacitus does much more briefly in his *Histories* (5.2-13) in prefacing the history of the Jews to the history of the Jewish war against the Romans. If he had written that account, how would it have compared with the history that we find in the *Antiquities*, and what authors might he have read during the period of his life that he spent in Rome that might have led him to modify his account? If we examine the liberties that

and the great Rabbi Akiva, according to Jerome (on Isa. 7:14), inspired his student Aquila in the second century to do a more literal translation into Greek. Still later the rabbis (*Sof.* 1:7) revised their opinion of the worth of the translation and compared the day when the translation was completed to the date when the Golden Calf was built by the Israelites.

⁵ The rabbis were aware of the danger of literal translation, as we may discern from the remark of Rabbi Judah bar Ilai (mid-second century) that whoever translates a biblical verse literally is an impostor, though admittedly he is quick to add that whoever adds thereto is a blasphemer and a libeller (*Qid.* 49a).

Josephus took in interpreting the Bible in his *Jewish War* as against his *Antiquities*, both of which he wrote during his stay in Rome under the Flavians, we see that the divergences from the biblical narrative are much greater in the *Jewish War*. Why?

Cicero (*De Legibus* 1.5) says that in history the standard by which everything is judged is the truth. But that is true of a universal history. The standard is different in a monograph dealing with a specific topic or period of history. In a letter to an old friend, Lucius Lucceius, Caesar's unsuccessful running-mate for the consulship of 59 B.C.E. (*Ad Familiares* 5.12), Cicero tries to persuade him to write a monograph about the *annus mirabilis*, the year 63 B.C.E., in which Cicero was consul, in which Cicero would be glorified a bit more than strict regard for the truth might permit. He had already approached a number of friends asking them to write memoirs on the year of his consulship. Fired by this extraordinary and, as he thought, not reprehensible eagerness to have his name rendered illustrious, Cicero turned to Lucceius as one of the eminent historians of the day. Cicero would have had to wait years before Lucceius would have reached the year 63 in his general history; and so he suggested that Lucceius write a detached account of the consulship.

The most controversial sentence in this letter is Cicero's frank request that Lucceius eulogize his actions "with even more warmth than perhaps you feel, and in that respect to disregard the canons of history." It was Cicero's hope that Lucceius, despite professions of impartiality, would not disdain to exaggerate Cicero's merits "a little more than may be allowed by truth" (*Ad Familiares* 5.12.3).

Cicero makes a clear distinction between a continuous history, such as Lucceius was then writing, and a detached monograph. It is the latter that Cicero requested, ostensibly because he was unwilling to wait until Lucceius would reach the year 63 in his history, but also because he realized that in a monograph Lucceius would find a good precedent for coloring the facts. As Cicero (*Ad Familiares* 5.12.3) himself put it: "If all your mind is concentrated upon one subject and upon one personality, I see even now, in my mind's eye, how much richer and artistic will be the result." Cicero, in this letter (*Ad Familiares* 5.12.2), is careful to allay the fears of Lucceius by citing as precedents for such a monograph works by three famous Greek writers, each of whom had written about specific wars—the fourth-century B.C.E. Callisthenes' *Phocian War*, the third-century B.C.E.

Timaeus' *Wars of Pyrrhus*, and the second-century B.C.E. Polybius' *Numantine War*.

One would suppose that the narrower the scope the more accurate the history would be, especially since this was apparently so in the case of Thucydides' account. Instead, Callisthenes, the nephew of Aristotle, consummated a remarkable wedding of Peripatetic particularism of subject-matter and Isocratean rhetorico-tragic style. The one quotation that is extant from Callisthenes' *Phocian War* provides an illustration of the tragic approach that characterized the monograph as a type. According to the quotation, which is from Athenaeus, Callisthenes noted that both the Crisaean War, which occurred against Delphi in the sixth century B.C.E., and the Phocian War, which occurred in the fourth century B.C.E. against Philip of Macedon, lasted ten years and that both were caused by a woman. In all likelihood, we may guess, Callisthenes drew parallels between the Trojan, Crisaean, and Phocian Wars, and treated his subject in the epic and tragic fashion that the Trojan War suggested.⁶

Almost nothing is known about Timaeus' monograph on the *Wars of Pyrrhus*,⁷ which occurred in the third century B.C.E. It seems likely, however, that such a dashing and glamorous character as Pyrrhus gave Timaeus an opportunity to exhibit his highly rhetorical style. In particular, Pyrrhus' death, tragic in the Aristotelian sense that the flaw in his character led to his downfall, might well have given him an opportunity to display his stylistic skill.

In view of Polybius' criticisms of the writers of such monographs, it is certainly surprising that he himself wrote one on the Numantine War, which occurred in the second century B.C.E. He claims that he treated universal history, τὸ καθόλον, in contrast to those who wrote particular histories, ἐπὶ μέρους. The writers of monographs, according to Polybius (7.7.6; cf. 3.32.1-9 and 12.23.7), dealing as they did with limited and narrow plots, were compelled, because of poverty of matter, to exaggerate a few insignificant incidents, and to speak at inordinate length on subjects that scarcely deserved mention. Moreover, he says (16.14.1, 16.17.9, 16.18.2),⁸ these writers were occupied not with real facts but with the elaboration of style.

⁶ So Ullman 1942, 49-50.

⁷ For some theories see Ullman 1942, 47-48, especially n. 118.

⁸ Cf. Ullman 1942, 42-43.

And yet, as Cicero notes, Polybius did write a monograph on the Numantine War. Unfortunately, we have no direct information about this work; but the fact is, as Polybius recognized, that to write particular histories without resorting to the devices of tragedy was almost impossible. Moreover, Polybius wrote a biography of Philopoemen of Megalopolis which, like that of Evagoras by Isocrates, was in the form of an encomium. He there employed, he admitted (10.21.6-8), a style deliberately intended to enhance the hero's merits. Unlike Callisthenes and Timaeus, who carried over the methods of the monograph into their general histories, he realized that this procedure was inappropriate for his history, which sought to be impartial and which demanded precise and true facts. He therefore could and did deviate from the truth. The important thing is that he did not apologize for it as a juvenile act but that he noted that it was permissible in an encomiastic biography.

In giving his account of the Numantine War, Polybius might well have made his friend the Younger Scipio, who brought it to its conclusion, the central figure. The war itself was an epic struggle, unique in the sense that it was decided not by a single battle or two but by long, continuous fighting. Polybius could have found numerous events that lent themselves to tragic treatment and embellishment. From Appian's account of the war, which was perhaps based partly on Polybius' monograph,⁹ can be ascertained the sort of treatment that Polybius himself gave to these events. The tale of the desperate measures taken by the Numantines during the last days of the war certainly would have lent itself to tragic treatment.

Josephus' *Jewish War*, with its elaboration of tragic and desperate measures, would fit this description of a monograph. To be sure, at the very beginning of this work (*War* 1.1-2), Josephus criticizes those who, lacking firsthand information, had written casual and contradictory accounts of the war based upon hearsay that they edited in a rhetorical style, as well as those who, though witnesses of the events, were guilty of misrepresenting the facts, while alternately engaging in invective and encomium. But such statements, in the tradition of Thucydides (1.22.2-4), are standard criticisms of their predecessors by historians and need not be taken very seriously.

⁹ So Ullman 1942, 46-47, who accepts the conclusion of Schulten 1911, 568, that Appian used Poseidonius, who had used both the Numantine monograph and the universal history of Polybius.

Apparently, however, Josephus had second thoughts about prefacing his history of the war with a brief history of the Jews, a good portion of which would be based upon the Bible. We may here be pardoned for conjecturing how he would have treated the Bible if he had summarized it as the introduction to the *Jewish War*.

As a matter of fact, Josephus in the *War* refers to ten passages from the Pentateuch¹⁰ and eleven passages from the rest of the Bible;¹¹ and it will surely be of interest to see what he does with these twenty-one passages, though, to be sure, some of them are very brief.¹² Of course we must bear in mind that in the *War* Josephus does not have a statement that he has not added to or subtracted from the biblical narrative.

Of those passages about the biblical narrative that are more substantial, we may call attention to the reference to the story of Sarai and the Pharaoh (*War* 5.379-81) in Josephus' speech to his countrymen urging them to surrender. In the Bible (Gen. 12:10-20) and in the *Antiquities* (1.161) there is a famine in the land of Canaan, and so Abram descends to Egypt with Sarai. In the Bible this is presumably to get food. In the *Antiquities* (1.161) there is an additional motive, namely to engage in dialogue with the Egyptian priests, since he was prepared to become the disciple of the Egyptians if they could convince him that their theology was superior, or to convert them if his views should be found superior. This is in line with Josephus' attempt elsewhere (*Ant.* 1.154) to demonstrate that Jews are not obscurantist but rather prepared to debate other intellectuals in pursuit of the truth (*Ant.* 1. 166).¹³ There is none of this in the version in the *War*. In the first place, there is no mention of a plague. There, moreover, it is not Abram who descends into Egypt but, most remarkably, it is the Pharaoh, whose name we are told, was Necho, which is the

¹⁰ Gen. 12:10-20 (= *War* 5.379-81), 13:18 (= *War* 4.531-33), 14:18-20 (= *War* 6.438), 19:1-29 (= *War* 4.483-85), 35:27-29 (= *War* 4.532); Exod. 12 (= *War* 6.423-26), Exod. 12:40, 7:14-11:10, 12:12-13, 12:29-36, 13:18 (= *War* 5.382-83), Exod. 39:1-31, Lev. 10:8-11, Num. 5:2 (= *War* 5.225-35); Num. 13:22 (= *War* 4.530); Deut. 21:22-23 (= *War* 4.317).

¹¹ Josh. 6 (= *War* 4.459), 1 Sam. 4:1-11 (= *War* 5.384-86), 1 Kgs. 14:25 (= *War* 6.436), 2 Kgs. 2:19-22 (= *War* 4.460-64), 2 Kgs. 19:35-36 (= *War* 5.387-88), 2 Kgs. 24:12 (= *War* 6.103-4), 2 Kgs. 25:1-10, Jer. 37:21 (= *War* 5.391-92), Jer. 7:34 (= *War* 6.301), Isa. 19:19 (= *War* 7.432), Hag. 1:1-8 (= *War* 6.270), Ezra 1:1-8 (= *War* 5.389).

¹² These are briefly discussed by Schwartz 1990, 24-35.

¹³ See Feldman 1998, 228-34.

name of a Pharaoh of a far later date,¹⁴ who invades Palestine. In the Bible and in the *Antiquities* (*Ant.* 1. 167) Abram instructs Sarai to tell the Egyptians that she is Abram's sister, since otherwise they would kill him. In the Bible the Egyptians, impressed by Sarai's beauty, take her to the Pharaoh's house, and he treats Abram well for her sake. In the *Antiquities* the Pharaoh, not content with what was being said about her, actually seizes her with zeal and is on the point of laying hands on her, but G-d thwarts his desire with a disease and civil strife.

Very different is the account in the *War*. There nothing is said about Sarai pretending to be Abram's sister. Abram is portrayed as having 318 officers, each in command of a boundless army. But though they might have gone to war with Necho, Abram decides that an army is worthless without G-d's aid, and so he prays with hands uplifted toward the place where the Temple was later to stand. Whereas in the Bible G-d afflicted the Pharaoh along with his household with plagues because of what he had attempted to do with Sarai, when the Pharaoh returned Sarai to Abram he gave orders to escort them homeward. In the *Antiquities* (1.164) Josephus adds that the Pharaoh's priests reveal to him, when he sacrifices to find deliverance, that the calamity had beset him because he had sought to outrage Abram's wife. When he heard this the Pharaoh, adds Josephus, apologized to Abram, stating that he had never intended to outrage her by lust but rather to marry her, and he showered Abram with many treasures, and Abram associated with the most erudite of the Egyptians. In the version in the *War* Sarai, after one night's absence, was sent back immaculate to her husband, in awe of the place where the Temple was to stand, and trembling at his visions of the night; and the Pharaoh fled and bestowed gifts of silver and gold upon the Hebrews.

In the telling of this brief incident there are nine major differences between the biblical version and that in the *War*: (1) In the *War* there is no mention of a famine; (2) instead of going down to Egypt, the Egyptian Pharaoh invades Canaan; (3) the Pharaoh himself carries off Sarai, rather than her being brought to Pharaoh; (4) Abram, rather than coming alone with Sarai, comes with 318 officers and

¹⁴ Necho (2 Chron. 35:20) is the pharaoh who defeated King Josiah of Judah at the end of the seventh century B.C.E.

a boundless army, yet chooses not to fight; (5) there is no mention of Sarai's deceit in claiming to be Abram's sister; (6) instead of a plague the Pharaoh is afflicted with visions; (7) Abram in the *War* prays to the place of the Temple; (8) the Pharaoh stands in awe of the place of the Temple; (9) the Pharaoh bestows silver and gold upon the Hebrews. Clearly, an important factor in these changes is that the incident is mentioned by Josephus in his speech to his countrymen urging them to surrender, in effect, to follow in the footsteps of Abram, who, though he had an army, chose the pacifists' path of prayer, seeking only G-d's help. With this aim in mind, Josephus radically revises the biblical story. Josephus, the priest, is particularly outraged that the Temple had been desecrated by the revolutionaries: for him the Temple is the place to which one directs one's prayers. It is even revered by non-Jews.

Josephus' innovations in the *War* are likewise striking when they are compared with the version found in Pseudo-Eupolemus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.17.6-7). Pseudo-Eupolemus agrees with the Bible and the *Antiquities* in stating that it was a famine that led Abram to descend to Egypt. He disagrees with the Bible and the *Antiquities* in asserting that he descended with all his household, whereas the Bible and the *Antiquities* speak only of Abram and Sarai descending. Again, whereas the Bible and the *Antiquities* do not speak of the Pharaoh as marrying Sarai, Pseudo-Eupolemus says explicitly that the Pharaoh married her. Furthermore, whereas the Bible says that Abram instructed Sarai to say that she was his sister and whereas Josephus states that he pretended that he was her brother and that he instructed her to pretend this, Pseudo-Eupolemus says explicitly that the Pharaoh married her because he had said that she was his sister. Pseudo-Eupolemus, moreover, uniquely adds that the Pharaoh was unable to have intercourse with her. He likewise uniquely adds that after the Pharaoh attempted to have relations with her, the Pharaoh's people and his household were perishing, whereas the Bible states that they were afflicted with severe plagues. Likewise, whereas the Bible says nothing about priests or diviners being summoned by the Pharaoh and whereas the *Antiquities* says that the priest revealed to him that the calamity had come to him because G-d was angry inasmuch as he had sought to outrage the stranger, Pseudo-Eupolemus asserts that diviners (μάντις) had revealed to him that the woman was not a widow, whereas in the *Antiquities* we learn that it was Sarai who revealed her identity to the Pharaoh. Hence, we see that even in as

brief an episode as this is, there is a considerable number of variant versions, but that it is in the *War* that Josephus has incorporated the largest number of variants.

Another biblical passage is that pertaining to Melchizedek in *War* 6.438. When this is compared with the brief statement about Melchizedek in Gen. 14:18-20 and in the *Antiquities* (1.180-81), we find no fewer than six details that are not found in the Pentateuch and that do not appear in the *Antiquities*—that Melchizedek was the original founder (πρῶτος κτίσας) of Jerusalem, that he was a Canaanite chief, that his name means “Righteous King” (βασιλεὺς δίκαιος), that in virtue of his righteousness he was the first to officiate as priest of G-d, that he was the first to build the Temple (τὸ ἱερόν), and that he gave the city, previously called Solyma, the name of Jerusalem.¹⁵ The most striking of these details is that Melchizedek was the first to officiate as priest of G-d and, most amazing of all, that he—and presumably not Solomon—was the first to build the Temple in Jerusalem. The net result of this interpretation is to enhance the antiquity of the Temple and its cult, since they go back hundreds of years before David to the time of Abraham, and to stress the liberal attitude of Jews toward non-Jews, since the most sacred institution of the Jews, the Temple, was founded by a non-Jew. As Schwartz¹⁶ has noted, Josephus in the *War* frequently (e.g., *War* 2.412) refers to the fact that the Temple had always accepted the gifts of foreigners and was revered by them (e.g., *War* 5.17, 5.363, 6.120).

The same centrality of the Temple is to be seen in the version of the Exodus from Egypt that we find in the *War* 5.382-83). The Bible (Exod. 13: 18) states that the Israelites were armed when they went forth from Egypt. Josephus (*War* 5.382) asserts that though they might have defended themselves by resorting to arms and violence, they chose rather to commit themselves to G-d. Consequently, G-d led them as the future guardians of His Temple. Here again, the added remarks in Josephus’ version of this incident are to be seen in the context of Josephus’ speech to his fellow-countrymen, as he urges them not to resort to arms against the Romans but to follow the example of the Israelites when they left Egypt. And once again we

¹⁵ Some manuscripts in *Antiquities* 1.180 read ἐκάλεσεν, that is, that, like *War* 6.438, it was Melchizedek who called the city Hierosolyma (Jerusalem).

¹⁶ Schwartz 1990, 27 n. 16.

find that for Josephus the priest who is so proud of the fact (*Life* 1-2) that he belonged to the first of the twenty-four courses of priests, the Temple is his central focus; and the fact that the revolutionaries had desecrated the Temple is his greatest criticism of them.

Another narrative that Josephus in the *War* (5.384-85) has interpreted very differently from the account in the Bible (1 Sam. 4:1-11) is the pericope relating how the Israelites' ark was captured by the Philistines when the Israelites were defeated in battle. In the biblical account (1 Sam. 4:1-11), after the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines and suffered heavy losses, the elders of the Israelites took the ark with them from Shiloh, seeking to have G-d save them from their enemies. At first, the Philistines were dismayed by the sound of the shofar signaling the arrival of the ark, but they strengthened themselves and eventually inflicted a heavy blow upon the Israelites and captured the ark. The account in the *Antiquities* (5.353-56) follows the biblical narrative closely. The setting in the *War* is, again, Josephus' address to his fellow-Israelites urging them to surrender to the Romans. According to the biblical account (1 Sam. 5:1-8), when the Philistines captured the ark, it wrought havoc to the Philistine god Dagon and struck the people of Ashdod with hemorrhoids. Josephus (*War* 5.385) elaborates on this and remarks that they were ulcerated in their secret parts and excreted their entrails along with their food. As Schwartz has noted,¹⁷ Josephus in the *War* 5.385 has confounded the account of the return of the ark in 1 Sam. 7-8 with the account of the return of the ark by David and his people (2 Sam. 6:1-5) to the accompaniment of cymbals and timbrels. Again, the point of introducing this passage in Josephus' address to his fellow-Jews is to try to convince them to abandon the idea of using force and to commit the issue to G-d (*War* 5.386). Josephus' point here is that the Israelites were able to recover the ark because they took the road not of military action but of prayer. It is this that overcame the enemy; and, stresses Josephus, it is this path that will enable the Jews to prevail again. This account, like the two previous accounts in the *War* of Necho and the Exodus, emphasizes the centrality of the Temple cult.

Again, according to the Bible (2 Kgs. 18:13-37), Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, captured the fortified city of Judah; and Hezekiah,

¹⁷ Schwartz 1990, 31.

the king of Judah, agreed to pay whatever tribute Sennacherib would impose upon him. In the *Antiquities* (10.5-10) the Assyrians send to Hezekiah and ask him to parley with them. Josephus there adds that out of cowardice Hezekiah does not himself come out but rather sends three of his friends. In the Bible (2 Kgs. 18:19-25) and in the *Antiquities* (10.67) Rabshakeh, the Assyrian representative, seeks to terrorize the Jews and presents Hezekiah with an ultimatum. In the *War* there is no mention of the terror or of the ultimatum. In the Bible and in the *Antiquities* (10.13) the prophet Isaiah plays the key role in praying and predicting that the enemy would be defeated. Rather, the one point that is emphasized more than any other is that prayer by the Jews was the key to the miracle that in one night the Assyrians were annihilated. In the Bible (2 Kgs. 19:35) this is brought about through an angel, but in the *Antiquities* (10.21), Josephus rationalizes and declares that the cause was a pestilence. In the *War*, however, as in the Bible, the miracle is brought about, as in the Bible, through an angel, but it is all the greater because, in an extra-biblical addition, we are told that the Jews were not even armed, nor were they even pursuing the enemy (*War* 5.388).

Surprisingly, but very significantly, Josephus does not make any mention at all in the *Antiquities* of the incident (2 Kgs. 2:19-22) in Jericho, where the prophet Elisha threw salt into the water, which had been making the land deadly. However, whereas the whole incident is covered in only four verses in the Bible, in the *War* it takes up nine paragraphs (4.459-67), in the course of which he adds a number of extra-biblical details. Thus, whereas in the Bible (2 Kgs. 2:19) we hear that the water there had been bad and had made the land deadly, Josephus (*War* 4.460) adds that the spring not only blighted the fruits and trees there but also caused women to miscarry. Again, whereas the Bible (2 Kgs. 2:18) simply states that Elisha stayed in Jericho, Josephus (*War* 4.461) asserts that he had been the guest of the people of Jericho and had been treated by them with extreme hospitality. Thus, whereas in the Bible there is no particular for Elisha's curing of the water, Josephus has him do so in requital for their kind hospitality. Furthermore, the Bible very briefly describes the method employed by Elisha to cure the water, namely that he took a new jar, put some salt into it, threw the salt at the source of the water, and declared (2 Kgs. 2:21), "Thus says the L-rd: I have made this water wholesome; henceforth neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it." Josephus (*War* 4.462-64) has considerably

elaborated Elisha's procedure: he went out to the spring, cast into the stream an earthenware vessel full of salt, raised his right hand to heaven, poured propitiatory libations upon the ground, besought heaven to temper its waters with more genial airs and to grant the inhabitants an abundance of fruits, numerous children, and an unfailing supply of water, so long as they lived righteously.

It would seem that Josephus declined to insert this account in the *Antiquities* because he normally shies away from including miracles or rationalizes them,¹⁸ especially since one of the stock charges against the Jews was credulity, as can see from Horace, who has a proverb, "Credat Judaeus Apella," referring to the fact that only the credulous Jew Apella would believe that frankincense can melt without fire (*Sat.* 1.5.97-103). Consequently, at the very beginning of the *Antiquities* (1.24) Josephus emphasizes that there is nothing unreasonable in the Bible and that everything is in harmony with the nature of the universe. Indeed, Josephus frequently in the *Antiquities*¹⁹ employs the time-honored formula, found not merely in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Lucian, and Pliny the Elder, but also earlier in Herodotus and Thucydides,²⁰ allowing the reader to make up his own mind. He thus tends to downgrade or rationalize miracles in the *Antiquities*, where his primary audience consisted of non-Jews;²¹ but in the *War*, where his primary audience consisted of Jews,²² whom he was trying to convince not to revolt against the Romans and where he was trying to prove that he was a loyal and observant Jew, he sees no need to avoid mentioning the miracles described in the Bible and, indeed, can elaborate on them.

Josephus (*War* 6.103-4), in a speech urging John of Gischala to surrender to the Romans, cites the precedent of King Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) of Judah, who of his own free will left Jerusalem before it was captured and endured voluntary captivity rather than see the Temple go up in flames (2 Kgs. 24:8-16). What he does not say is that the

¹⁸ See Feldman 1998, 209-14.

¹⁹ *Ant.* 1.108, 2.348, 3.81, 3.322, 4.158, 8.262, 10.281, 17.354, 19.108.

²⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 1.48.1, 1.48.4, 2.40.3, 2.70.5, 3.35.5; Lucian, *Quomodo* 10; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 9.18; Herodotus 2.123, 5.45; Thucydides 6.2.1.

²¹ See Feldman 1998, 46-49.

²² See *War* 1.3, where Josephus states that he originally composed the work in the vernacular, presumably Aramaic, and sent it to his countrymen in Babylonia (1.6).

Babylonians did burn the Temple shortly after the surrender. Indeed, in the *Antiquities* (10.100-10) Josephus says that Jeconiah surrendered only after receiving an oath from the Babylonians that neither they nor the city would receive any harm—a pledge, as Josephus there asserts, that the Babylonian king did not keep for even as long as a year, since he commanded his men to take captive all the young men and craftsmen in the city and bring them in chains to him. In the *War* Josephus, the pacifist who, above all, is concerned with the Temple, says nothing about this pledge and about the failure of the Babylonians to abide by it.

According to the Bible (2 Kgs. 25:7), King Zedekiah of Judah was blinded by the Babylonians, bound in leg-irons, and brought to Babylonia. According to the *Antiquities* (10.132), the Jews bravely resisted despite famine and disease, but Josephus in the *War* says nothing about their bravery. Josephus (*War* 5.392-93) notes that he, like Jeremiah, had been assailed with abuse by his opponents, because they were exasperated at being reminded of their sins. According to the Bible (2 Kgs. 25:7), Zedekiah did not see the destruction of Jerusalem, since he had been blinded and taken as a prisoner to Babylon ten years earlier. Josephus (*War* 5.391-92) emphasizes that Nebuchadnezzar was much more moderate than the revolutionary leaders of his own day in that though the prophet Jeremiah loudly proclaimed that the Jews were hateful to G-d because of their transgressions and would be taken captive unless they surrendered the city of Jerusalem, neither King Zedekiah nor the people put him to death, whereas the revolutionaries assailed Josephus with words and with missiles. However, Josephus has here taken considerable liberty with the facts, inasmuch as the priests, the prophets, and, indeed, all the people seized Jeremiah (Jer. 26:8-11) and threatened him with death. Shortly thereafter, as Jeremiah was about to leave Jerusalem, he was seized and falsely accused of deserting to the Babylonians (Jer. 37:11-21), and he was struck and imprisoned; and even the king was afraid to release him openly.

Schwartz,²³ in his examination of the passages from the Bible that are referred to in the *War*, asks whether at the time that Josephus wrote the *War* he had been educated in all the biblical books or whether he had been trained in the Pentateuch alone; and he

²³ Schwartz 1990, 24-35.

concludes that by that time he knew the outline and some details of the main narrative of the Pentateuch and the historical books and that he had some acquaintance with Jeremiah, Haggai, and Ezra. However, since, with few exceptions, the citations in the *War* so diverge from or even contradict our biblical texts, he concludes that Josephus was working for the most part from memory and that what he remembered may often have been popular or priestly storytelling; and, in fact, he says, there is little evidence that he knew the biblical texts at all. But, we may suggest, Josephus' memory must have been sharp, since in *War* 5. 388 he gives, for example, as the number of Assyrians who were slain, 185,000, the very number that we find in the Bible (2 Kgs. 19:35).

However, if we are to put any trust in Josephus' statement in his autobiography (*Life* 8), Josephus in his youth forged ahead into a vast wealth of education and was reputed to excel in both memory (μνήμη) and insight (συνέσει, "sagacity," "mother-wit," "intelligence"). He states that while still a boy, about fourteen years old, he used to be praised by everyone because he was book-loving (φιλογράμματον). The key word here is "memory," which was a fundamental component of Greek, Roman, and rabbinic education,²⁴ especially since their culture was to such a high degree oral. Indeed, the word *tanna*, referring to a rabbinic teacher of the first two centuries C.E., means "repeater" or "reciter" and comes from the Aramaic word *teni*, meaning "to hand down orally." That a high premium was placed on memory may be seen from the fact that the Talmud (*Hor.* 13b), referring to folklore and particularly to diet, lists five things that make one forget one's studies, five things that restore learning to the memory, and ten things that adversely affect one's memory. The presence of numerous mnemonic devices in rabbinic literature indicates how important it was to memorize vast quantities of material.²⁵ If so, we have a right to expect that Josephus had memorized a great deal of the Bible. But if so, how can we explain the vast divergences from the biblical text in the *War*? Had Josephus forgotten what he had learned in his youth? More likely, as we have suggested, Josephus seems to have taken greater liberties in his citations from the Bible in his account of the war of the Jews against the Romans than in his

²⁴ See Mason 2001, 13 n. 58.

²⁵ See Rabinowitz 1971, 187-90.

general history of the Jews in the *Antiquities*, both because the *War* was a monograph on a particular subject, and hence, following the precedent of Callisthenes, Timaeus, and Polybius, he felt that he could take great liberties, and because he felt he had to emphasize the uselessness of war, and the need to castigate the revolutionaries for their disrespect to the Temple, which meant so much to him as a priest.

We may here suggest that during his years in Rome Josephus was influenced by the view of Polybius, whom he quotes once in the *Antiquities* (12.135-37), even noting the book of the history from which he is quoting, and to whom he refers once more in the (12.358-59), praising him as a good (ἀγαθός) man, and once in the essay *Against Apion* 2.84). But in addition to these three places there is at least one other, namely *Antiquities* 12.402, where Josephus, who has been following 1 Macc., inserts a detail, missing from 1 Macc. but found in Polybius (31.14 [22].4), about how Nicanor had helped Demetrius to escape. In addition, Eckstein, though he does not mention Polybius' distinction between the freedom with the truth allowed in a monograph as against an extended history, has shown that Josephus had read deeply in Polybius, particularly the latter's analysis of the Roman constitution.²⁶

We may suggest that Josephus was attracted to Polybius because of the similarity in their personal lives. Just as Polybius had held important military and diplomatic positions in his native Greece, had been brought to Rome from a foreign country as a prisoner under the protective aegis of the most prominent Roman family, the Scipios, had witnessed from the Roman side the destruction of a great city, Corinth, in his native land, and had written in Rome a history defending his own behavior and extolling the power of Rome, so had Josephus held important diplomatic and military positions in his native Judaea, had been brought to Rome from Judaea under the aegis of the ruling family, the Flavians, after he had been released from captivity, had witnessed from the Roman side the destruction of the greatest city of his native land, Jerusalem, and had written in Rome a history defending his own behavior and extolling the power of Rome.²⁷

²⁶ See Cohen 1982, 368.

²⁷ See Cohen 1982, 367; and Eckstein 1990, 175.

But this is not all. Before Polybius (12.24.6, 12.28a.6)²⁸ we do not find historians emphasizing the importance of having practical experience in military affairs and having participated in the events that they are describing; but this is precisely what we find in Josephus as well (*War* 1.1, 3-4; *Ap.* 1. 55), even to the point that both use basically the same word (ἀντουργία: Polybius 12.28a.6; ἀντουργός: Jos. *Ap.* 1.55) to indicate their qualifications as an historian, namely as a participant and eyewitness in many of the events that they discuss. Moreover, just as Polybius (12.17-22, 12.25.3) is critical of Callisthenes and Ephorus for lacking military experience in their descriptions of battles, so Josephus (*Life* 357-58) is critical of his rival Justus of Tiberias for lacking military knowledge and for not being a participant in the war. Furthermore, when Josephus pardons Nicolaus of Damascus for being partial to Herod (*Ant.* 16.184-87), his sole historiographical predecessor is Polybius (8.8.4-9), who similarly pardons, on the ground that they found themselves in a difficult personal situation, historians who covered up the crimes of Philip V of Macedon.²⁹ Here, as in their views concerning the liberties that one may take in a monograph, both Polybius and Josephus seem to find an exception to the demand that the historian's absolute duty is to tell the truth. Furthermore, whereas literary critics such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ad Pompeium* 3.2-15, *De Thucydide* 41) and Plutarch (*De Herodoti Malignitate* 857A, 867C)³⁰ are critical of historians who are not sufficiently patriotic, Josephus (*Ant.* 20.157) has only one predecessor in insisting on telling the truth, even if it damages the reputation of his countrymen, and that is Polybius (38.4.2-8). In addition, Avenarius has demonstrated Josephus' dependence upon Polybius for historiographical theory generally, for organization of material, including detailed tables of contents, and particular themes, notably the characterization of personalities and causes, including verbal expression, and the conflict between rational and irrational decision-making, as well as the role of chance in history.³¹

We may well ask whether Josephus' command of Greek was suf-

²⁸ See Eckstein 1990, 180.

²⁹ See Eckstein 1990, 181-82. The parallel between Polybius and Josephus is not merely in ideas but even in sequence of ideas and, to a considerable extent, in language.

³⁰ Avenarius 1956, 53-54, 82-83; Eckstein 1990, 182-83.

³¹ Avenarius 1956, 81; Eckstein 1990, 185-87, 200-3, 207.

ficient so that he was able to read large portions of Polybius' work,³² in view of the fact that Josephus himself (*Ant.* 20.263) admits that, though he labored strenuously to partake of the realm of Greek prose and poetry, his habitual use of his native tongue had prevented his attaining precision in pronunciation of Greek and that he had to have assistants (*Ap.* 1.50) in preparing the Greek version of the *War*. But, as Rajak³³ has noted, Josephus must have had a considerable knowledge of Greek to be entrusted with the delicate mission in 64 of going to Rome to obtain the freedom of some priests (*Life* 13-16). As Rajak further states,³⁴ when Josephus (*Ant.* 20.263) asserts that he had gained a knowledge of γραμματική, he means, as Dionyius Thrax puts it, "a general familiarity with the diction of poets and prose writers."

In conclusion, there is evidence that Josephus in the *War* took greater liberties with the biblical narrative than he did in the *Antiquities*, relying upon the precedent of Callisthenes, Timaeus, and Polybius, that one may take liberties with the truth in a monograph as against a general history. In particular, he relied upon the precedent of Polybius, whose work he knew and cited and with whom he shared much in his career.

³² Eckstein 1990, 188, after a thorough examination of Polybius and Josephus' *War*, says that even a conservative estimate would conclude that Josephus had read Book 3 possibly, Book 4 possibly, Book 6 certainly, Book 8 probably, Book 9 probably, Book 12 certainly, Book 16 certainly, Book 31 certainly, and Book 38 probably.

³³ Rajak 1983, 46.

³⁴ Rajak 1983, 48.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

REARRANGEMENT OF PENTATEUCHAL MATERIAL IN JOSEPHUS' *ANTIQUITIES*, BOOKS 1-4

1. INTRODUCTION

On the one hand, in a famous statement (*Ant.* 1.17) Josephus promises that he will “set forth the precise details of what is in the Scriptures according to its proper order,... neither adding nor omitting anything.” On the other hand, he admits (*Ant.* 4.197) that he has innovated¹ in rearranging the order of topics, since, as he says, Moses left what he wrote in a scattered condition, just as he had received it from G-d.² Josephus quite clearly feels guilty about taking this liberty, since he is quick to add that he considered it necessary to mention it beforehand, “lest some blame be assigned to us by my fellow countrymen who read this work for having erred.” However, if we examine the statement in *Ant.* 1.17, we see that what Josephus has promised is not that he will present the details precisely as they appear in Scripture but rather that he will set them forth *each in its proper place* (κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν τάξιν). It is almost as if Josephus the general in Galilee is speaking, since the word that he uses for “place” or “arrangement,” τάξις, is regularly used in the sense of “battle array” especially in Thucydides (4.72), Josephus’ favorite historian.³

¹ Nodet 1995, 2:48, n. 4, remarks that the word νεωτερίζω (“innovate”), especially in the passive voice, as here, as well as its derivatives, normally has negative connotations, especially in the *War*, with implications of violence, referring to insurrections. In classical literature, e.g. Thucydides (1.58, 2.3, 4.51) and Xenophon (*Hellenica* 2.1.5), it likewise frequently has such associations. Here, however, it has the neutral meaning of “innovate.” Nodet, consequently, thinks that this is a trace of a literary collaborator, such as Josephus admits he had for the *War* (*Ap.* 1.50).

² Elon 1994, 3:1055, n. 72, notes that although Josephus here claims to have innovated this type of organization in his discussion of the laws of the Torah, actually he had been anticipated by Philo’s *Spec.* Cf. the Talmudic maxim (*b.Pes.* 6b and parallels) that there is no “earlier” or “later,” that is, that there is no chronological order in the Pentateuch.

³ There has been no systematic study of Josephus’ rearrangement of biblical data, let alone of the reasons for the rearrangement. Yadin 1977, briefly 1:62, 93-

We may note, for example (*Ant.* 8.224), that Josephus justifies such rearrangement when departing from the biblical order in the narrative of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, indicating that he intended in this way to preserve an orderly arrangement (εὐτάκτον) throughout his history. Thus, the Bible (1 Kgs. 12:1), having started its account of how the Kingdom of Israel came to be established under the leadership of Jeroboam, continues (1 Kgs. 12:25-33) with the deeds of Jeroboam, namely his establishment of idol worship, the denunciation of him by a prophet (1 Kgs. 13:1-10), the death of the true prophet (1 Kgs. 13:11-26), the prediction by the prophet Ahijah of the horrible end of the House of Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 14:1-16), and the death of Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 14:19-20). Rehoboam ruled during the same period (928-911 B.C.), but died four years before the death of Jeroboam; yet we hear nothing about what Rehoboam was doing during the same period until after the Bible had completed its account of Jeroboam's reign and death. Josephus (*Ant.* 8.246-65a), however, aware of the value of seeing a picture of what was going on contemporaneously, since the events of the two kingdoms had great influence upon each other, interrupts his account of Jeroboam's reign to tell us what Rehoboam was doing during these years of Jeroboam's reign and only thereafter resumes the account of the last years of Jeroboam (*Ant.* 8.265-89).

In his concern with arrangement, Josephus is following in the path of what his predecessor⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus calls οἰκονομικόν, the term being used initially in the sense of orderly household management and in a literary sense, more generally, of a well-ordered manner. Indeed, one of the five stylistic criteria by which Dionysius

94, 305, compares the legal sections in Josephus' *Antiquities*, Books 3 and 4, with the laws as delineated in the Temple Scroll and notes that both present the laws of the Torah classified by subjects. He suggests that the fact that Josephus spent some time with the Essenes (*Life* 10-11) influenced him in his classification of the laws. Altshuler 1982-83, 1-14, presents a chart, pp. 3-4, summarizing the basic structure of Books 3 and 4 of the *Antiquities* but comments, in only the most cursory fashion (pp. 4-6), on the reasons for the connection of the various sections with one another, namely that the rearrangement serves the larger apologetic goals of the *Antiquities*. Altshuler, 11-13, briefly compares the legal sections of the *Antiquities* with those of the Temple Scroll and concludes that there is little evidence to support Yadin's suggestion that Josephus borrowed from the Temple Scroll in arranging the legal sections of the *Antiquities*.

⁴ On the likelihood of Josephus' indebtedness to Dionysius, as one suspects from the titles of their respective books, *Jewish Antiquities* and *Roman Antiquities*, each of which is in twenty books, see Sterling 1992, 284-90.

judges historians (*Pompe*. 773-74, 778, 780) is *τάξις*, i.e. organization of material.⁵ In particular, Dionysius here and elsewhere (*Thuc*. 9) criticizes Thucydides, whom he otherwise admires greatly, for arranging his narrative by summers and winters, thus breaking it up into small sections describing the many actions that took place in many different places during a given season and thus presenting a very choppy narrative and destroying its continuity. "History," he concludes, "should be presented as an uninterrupted sequence of events, particularly when it is concerned with a large number of them that are difficult to comprehend." While Dionysius favors viewing contemporaneous events in immediate juxtaposition, he feels that Thucydides has gone too far in breaking up contemporary events into units that are so small that one has difficulty in seeing their connection.

On the other hand, Dionysius praises Xenophon for his arrangement of material (*Pompe*. 4): "Everywhere he has begun at the most appropriate place, and he has concluded each episode at the most suitable point." He likewise praises Theopompus (*Pompe*. 6) for his arrangement, which is both lucid and easy to follow.

Another prominent historian, Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the century before Josephus and whose universal history, starting with mythical times, reminds one, in its scope, of Josephus' *Antiquities*, though Josephus does not mention him by name, writes in the opening of his Book 5 (5.1.1) about the importance for the historian of the arrangement of his material: "It should be the special care of historians, when they compose their works, to give attention to everything which may be of utility, and especially to the arrangement (*οἰκονομία*) of the varied material they present." He notes, in

⁵ See the discussion by Sacks 1983, 65-87. Sacks (69) says that the term *οἰκονομία* "is not clear: it might simply be synonymous with *τάξις* (organization), or it might, as it does in *Thuc.*, stand roughly for all three middle categories of termini, variety, and organization." Sacks (75-76), however, concludes that Dionysius' theory of organization is quite complicated and frequently contradictory, though generally, in the *Pompe*. 773-74, Dionysius favors Herodotus' topical approach and criticizes Thucydides for adopting the annalistic method of organizing his material by winter and spring, though he himself, in his *Ant. Rom.*, is closer to Thucydides in scope and organization in approaching the history of Rome annalistically down to the outbreak of the First Punic War. Sacks (81) notes that in his essay *Thuc*. 9, 10, 13, *οἰκονομία* subsumes three different considerations: division (*διαίρεσις*), effective beginning and end points (*τάξις*), and proper balance (*ἐξεργασία*). In the *Pompe* the terminology varies.

particular, that some historians, although otherwise praiseworthy for their style, are, nevertheless, deficient in the way that they handle arrangement (οἰκονομία), so that they are justly censured. He then proceeds to praise Ephorus for the arrangement of his work of universal history, noting that each of the books of this work has unity, being restricted to a single topic.

Dionysius' word for "arrangement," οἰκονομία, significantly, is also the word employed by the extremely influential literary critic, Pseudo-Longinus (*Sub.* 1.4), who also uses Josephus' word τάξις in referring to the military-like marshalling of facts, which, he says, shows itself not in one or two touches but emerges gradually from the whole tissue of a composition. Even Quintilian (3.3.9) avails himself of this term, remarking that the Latin language lacks an equivalent word. He cites the view of the rhetorician Hermagoras, who places judgment, division, order, and everything related to expression under the heading of economy (*oeconomiae*), a Greek word which, Quintilian says, refers literally to the management of domestic affairs but which is applied metaphorically to oratory.

2. REARRANGEMENT IN JOSEPHUS, *ANTIQUITIES*, BOOK 1

Josephus has clearly learned this lesson, as we see even at the very beginning of the *Antiquities*. Thus, the Bible, after relating G-d's creation of the first human being (Gen. 1:27 and 2:7), proceeds to interrupt the narrative about him and instead to state that G-d planted a garden in Eden and mentions the four rivers that flowed out of it (Gen. 2: 8-14). Then the text returns to the account of the first man and G-d's instructions to him not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, G-d's bringing of every living creature to him so that he might name them, and the creation of the first woman from his rib (Gen. 2:8-22). Josephus realizes that the account of the Garden of Eden and the rivers interrupts the narrative about the first man; hence, immediately after mentioning the creation of Adam, he continues the narrative about him, noting that G-d brought to him the living creatures (*Ant.* 1.35). Whereas the Bible (Gen. 2:20-21) cites no explicit connection between that act and the creation of Eve, Josephus supplies this connection,⁶ noting that after Adam named all

⁶ So also *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 17.4 and *'Abot R. Nat.* B 8 (ed. Schechter, p. 23).

the living creatures G-d looked with astonishment at the other creatures who had their mates but noted that Adam was without one and consequently proceeded to create a mate for him (*Ant.* 1.35). Josephus thus changes the order of biblical events by placing the creation of the first woman (Gen. 2:22) almost immediately after the creation of the first man. It is only after completing this account of the creation of Adam and Eve that he proceeds to mention the Garden of Eden and the four rivers that flowed out of it (Gen. 2:8-14; *Ant.* 1.37-39). Whereas the Bible jumps around from the creation of Eden to the creation of Eve, Josephus, by his rearrangement, is able to have the expulsion from Eden follow more logically after the account of the creation of Eden (*Ant.* 1.40-51).

According to the biblical order, G-d first punished the serpent (Gen. 3:14-15), then Eve (Gen. 3:16), and then Adam (Gen. 3:17-19). In Josephus (*Ant.* 1.49-50) the order is reversed: first Adam, for yielding to a woman's counsel, then Eve, for deluding Adam, and finally the serpent, for beguiling Eve. Josephus thus seeks to establish that the chief responsibility is that of Adam, since he has less regard for women's sense of responsibility and still less for that of animals.

Again, according to the Bible (Gen. 3:20), it is only after Adam and his wife are punished for eating of the fruit of the tree that we are told that Adam called his wife's name Eve. One might have thought that Adam would have given her a name when she was first brought to him; and this is precisely what we find in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.36).

Sometimes Josephus omits biblical data either because there are long lists of names that might be regarded as difficult or boring to his readers—and if he does insert them, as he does in naming the seventy descendants of Jacob (*Ant.* 2.176-83), he is apologetic about it—or, as in the case of Seth's descendants (Gen. 5:6-31), he avoids the problem that Lamech is enumerated both as the son of Methushael and among the descendants of Cain (Gen. 4:18) and as the son of Methuselah and among the descendants of Seth (Gen. 5:25). Josephus solves the difficulty by simply omitting here the names of Seth's descendants and mentioning them only later (*Ant.* 1.79), when he states that Noah was the tenth descendant of Adam.

The Bible (Gen. 5:28) mentions Noah as the son of Lamech and asserts that he was the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, then describes the wickedness of that generation (Gen. 6:1-6), then continues with G-d's decision to eradicate the human race (Gen. 6:7),

then notes that Noah found favor in the eyes of G-d, then enumerates Noah's sons again (Gen. 6:10), then describes again the wickedness of mankind (Gen. 6:11-13), and then gives G-d's instructions to Noah to build an ark (Gen. 6:14-22). The Noah narrative in Josephus is much less focussed than it is in the Bible. The centrality of Noah is thus very much diminished, inasmuch as after he is first mentioned and we are told of the wickedness of mankind (*Ant.* 1.75) and of G-d's instructions to Noah to build an ark (*Ant.* 1.76-78), there is a long digression concerning the date of the Flood (*Ant.* 1.80-88), followed by an account of the Flood itself and of the abating of the waters (*Ant.* 1.89-92). This, in turn, is followed by another digression, noting non-Jewish witnesses to the authenticity of the Flood (*Ant.* 1.93-95), after which comes an account of Noah's sacrifice to G-d and of G-d's covenant (*Ant.* 1.91-103), followed by still another digression, explaining the longevity of the patriarchs (*Ant.* 1.104-8), followed by the account of the refusal of Noah's grandsons and later descendants to colonize the plains (*Ant.* 1.109-12). Moreover, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.109) saw no point in mentioning the names of Noah's sons until after the Flood had subsided and after the problem before the survivors became the repopulation of the human race. Then we hear of the building of the Tower of Babel (*Ant.* 1.113-21), the table of nations descended from Noah's sons Japheth and Ham (*Ant.* 1.122-39), and, finally, the story of Noah's drunkenness and nakedness (*Ant.* 1.140-42). Hence, whereas Noah's drunkenness is in the Bible mentioned only four chapters (and only 90 verses) after the first reference to Noah, in Josephus this incident is mentioned some 65 paragraphs later, even though the account of the Flood itself is considerably condensed. Each digression in Josephus, it will be noted, is apologetically motivated.⁷

One may wonder why, whereas the Bible proceeds, shortly after mentioning the building of Noah's ark (Gen. 6:14-16) and the introduction into it of the animals (Gen. 7:2-3), to describe the Flood

⁷ In Pseudo-Philo's *Ant. Bib.* also, while there are not as many digressions as in Josephus, from the first mention of Noah until the statement of his death there are three chapters (3.4-5.8, that is, 33 subsections), much of which is taken up with an extra-biblical list of the names of the descendants of Noah and an extra-biblical census of their numbers (4.2-5.8); his motive also, presumably, is apologetic, namely, to diminish, on the one hand, the relative importance of Noah himself, while, on the other hand, to show that the nations of the world are actually derived from Noah.

itself (7:17-24), Josephus, after mentioning Noah's construction of the ark (*Ant.* 1.77), does not get to the description of the Flood until a number of paragraphs later (*Ant.* 1.89). This would seem to violate his general method of dealing with a given incident in all its details before proceeding to another topic. The explanation here, however, would seem to be that Josephus is first and foremost a historian—and a critical historian at that. Once he mentioned the Flood (*Ant.* 1.75) he realized that it was crucial for him to prove the historicity of the Flood, especially since the Greeks knew of more than one Flood. Hence, immediately after noting the construction of the ark (*Ant.* 1.77) he had to establish that Noah was the tenth generation after Adam (*Ant.* 1.80). He thus gives the precise date of the Flood (*Ant.* 1.82) as occurring 2262 years after the birth of Adam. He then proceeds (*Ant.* 1.83-88) to cite the genealogy of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah to confirm this chronology. Only then does Josephus return to the account of the Flood itself (*Ant.* 1.89).

On the other hand, whereas the Bible (Gen. 8:8-12) states that Noah, in order to see whether the waters had subsided, sent forth a dove three times before it did not return to him, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.91) mentions only one sending forth of the dove, since the biblical narrative is simply repetitious.

The Bible mentions by name the sons of Noah in five different places: first and second, that Noah had begotten three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. 5:32 and 6:10); third, that the sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, entered the ark (Gen. 7:13); fourth, that the sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, emerged from the ark (Gen. 9:18); and fifth, that (Gen. 10:1) the descendants of Noah, whom it lists (Gen. 10:1-31), started with his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Josephus does not mention them by name until after the Flood has subsided and they descend to the plains to make their abode there (*Ant.* 1.109) and thereafter does not mention them again until he proceeds to enumerate their descendants (*Ant.* 1.122-47). In *Ant.* 1.109 and 1.141 Ham is referred to as Noah's youngest son; in Gen. 9:24 he is referred to as his young son, which the LXX renders as "younger."⁸ There is an apparent contradiction in the Bible itself in that Japheth (Gen. 10:21) is referred to as the oldest, whereas,

⁸ So also rabbinic tradition (*Mid. ha-Gadol Gen.* [ed. Margulies, p. 153]). He is also referred to as the youngest son in Jub. 7:10.

as noted above, Shem is listed first in Gen. 5:32, 6:10, 7:13, 9:18, and 10:1. In *Ant.* 1.109 Josephus lists the sons in the order of Shem, Japheth, and Ham. In enumerating the descendants of Noah's sons, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.122) begins with Japheth, continues with Ham (*Ant.* 1.130), and concludes with Shem (*Ant.* 1.143), whom he terms the third of Noah's sons. Guttman⁹ suggests that Josephus may have had an apologetic motive in advancing the importance of Japheth, who, according to the rabbinic interpretation of Gen. 9:27 (see *Meg.* 9b), was the ancestor of the Greeks.

We may note a striking rearrangement in that the account of Noah's drunkenness and of the cursing of Canaan, which in the Bible (Gen. 9:20-26) is seemingly more logically placed directly after the emergence of Noah and his sons from the ark, but in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.140-42) is delayed until after the account of the building of the tower of Babel and the dispersion of the inhabitants thereafter. In fact, in Josephus we are informed of Noah's death some 36 sections before (*Ant.* 1.104)! The reason for this delay is that Josephus sought to mention the cursing of Canaan immediately after his extensive enumeration of the sons of Ham and of the countries founded by them. Since he ends this enumeration with the mention of Ham's son Canaan (*Ant.* 1.138), the narrative continues logically with the account of how he came to be cursed.

Logically, the fact that after the Flood all people spoke one language (Gen. 11:1) and the account of how they came to be dispersed should have followed immediately after the subsiding of the Flood; and the list of all the descendants of Noah's sons should have followed this. Indeed, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.109-47) follows this order, whereas in the Bible the subsiding of the Flood (Gen. 8:1-9:18) is followed by the list of the descendants of Japheth and Ham and of Shem through Peleg and Joktan (Gen. 10:1-32) and by the statement that the whole earth spoke one language (Gen. 11:1), the account of the dispersal of the human race (Gen. 11:8), and the repetition of the descendants of Arpachshad, the son of Shem (Gen. 11:10-16), and the continuation of the descendants of Peleg, ending with Terah and Abram (Gen. 11:17-32). In line with Josephus' principle of maintaining continuity on a given subject once he has raised it, Josephus does not have the interruption of the building of the tower of Babel after the list of the

⁹ Guttman 1928, 8.

descendants of Japheth and Ham and partial list of Shem, but presents the account of the dispersion of the generation of Babel immediately after the subsiding of the Flood (*Ant.* 1.113-19), since those who were dispersed were the descendants of all the sons of Noah. Instead of giving the account of the descendants of Shem through Peleg and Joktan (Gen. 10:21-29) and then starting all over again and presenting the descendants of Shem beyond Peleg to Abram (Gen. 11:10-27) and inserting the account of the Tower of Babel between the two accounts (Gen. 11:1-9), Josephus first presents the complete account of the descendants of Shem (*Ant.* 1.143-51) through the family of Abram. He thereafter continues with the descendants of Heber, the great-grandson of Shem (*Ant.* 1.148-50), ending with the birth of Abram. Then, whereas the Bible mentions Nahor, the son of Terah (Gen. 11:27), only to continue at length with the story of Abram (Gen. 12:1-22:19) before mentioning the children of Nahor by his wife Milcah and by his concubine Reumah (Gen. 22:20-24), Josephus mentions these children shortly after his listing of the sons of Terah (*Ant.* 1.153).

The Bible (Gen. 13:12) mentions that Lot pitched his tents as far as Sodom and then adds (Gen. 13:13) that the people of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful. We would expect that thereafter would follow an episode wherein the Sodomites would be punished. Instead we have the episode in which the Sodomites, together with their four allies, are defeated, Lot is captured, and Abram comes to the rescue of the Sodomites (Gen. 14:1-24). It is only much later (Gen. 18:20-19:29) that Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed by G-d because of their wickedness. In Josephus' version there is no mention initially of Sodom's wickedness, only of its wealth and its large population (*Ant.* 1.171), presumably the reason why the four kings went to war with them. The impiety of the Sodomites is not mentioned until just before the decision of G-d to obliterate them (*Ant.* 1.194-95). However, as Niehoff has noted, Josephus, by stating already at an earlier point (*Ant.* 1.171) that Sodom, which was then prosperous, "has now by G-d's will been obliterated," and by adding proleptically that he will indicate "in its place" the cause of its fate, has enhanced the dramatic tension in a rhetorically sophisticated manner and has provided an interpretive framework in the light of which his later solutions will appear most natural.¹⁰

¹⁰ Niehoff 1996, 40-41. Niehoff, 41 n. 37, remarks that Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 2.11.3 and 2.26.6) uses a similar technique and similar language.

In the Bible, we read (Gen. 15:2-3) of Abram's lament to G-d that he has no offspring; and this is followed by the Covenant between the Parts (Gen. 15:9-21), in which G-d assures Abram that He has given to his descendants the land from the Nile to the Euphrates, including that of the Canaanites. This, in turn, is followed by the narrative (Gen. 16:1-2) telling how Sarai gives her maidservant Hagar to Abram for childbearing purposes. The Covenant between the Parts seems to interrupt the connection between Abram's complaint and Sarai's action to assure him a descendant by giving him Hagar. Moreover, we may well ask what is the connection between G-d's assurance as to the land that Abram's descendants will inherit, since those descendants are derived from Isaac, and the story of Hagar and Ishmael. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.186-87) has made the connection clearer. In the first place, instead of mentioning that Abram's descendants will acquire the land from the Nile to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:18), which his descendants never did, in fact, acquire, and enumerating the ten tribes, ranging from the Kennites to the Jebusites, which they will conquer, and thereby giving the Israelites a reputation for expansionism and imperialism, Josephus mentions not that the Israelites will obtain this land as a gift from G-d but that his descendants will vanquish the Canaanites in battle (*Ant.* 1.185) and thus obtain it by right of conquest. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.186) then connects the mention of the Canaanites with the fact that Abram was then living in Canaan near the city of Hebron in the vicinity of the oak called Ogyges. Whereas Gen., Chap. 16, begins with the statement that Sarai bore no children and brought Hagar to Abram, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.186) first states specifically that Abram besought G-d to grant him the birth of a male child; and this, in turn, is followed by G-d's assurance that He had led Abram out of Mesopotamia for his welfare so that children would be borne to him. Again, whereas the Bible (Gen. 16:2) states that Sarai at her own initiative brought Hagar to Abram for childbearing purposes, Josephus connects this incident with the preceding incident of the Covenant between the Parts and G-d's assurance to Abram by stating (*Ant.* 1.187, under the influence of Gen. 21:12), that it is at G-d's command that Sarai brought Hagar to Abram so that he might have children through her.

In the Bible (Gen. 17:1-14) the birth of Ishmael is followed by a restatement of the covenant between G-d and Abram, and only afterwards (Gen. 17:16) by G-d's promise that Sarai will bear a son to

Abram. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.191) has a smoother transition in that after the account of the birth of Ishmael we are told that G-d announced to Abraham that Sarai would bear him a son.

The reader of the Bible will note that whereas in Gen. 18:1-16 we hear of the visit to Abraham of three angels and then of the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah and of G-d's intention to destroy them (Gen. 18:16-33), Josephus has a more logical order: first the description of the Sodomites' overweening pride and insolence (*Ant.* 1.194-95) and G-d's decision to destroy them, and then G-d's sending the angels to carry out His decision (*Ant.* 1.196-204).

In the Bible (Gen. 20:1-13) the incident of Abimelech and Sarah is followed by the account of the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:1-8) and that of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen. 21:9-21), and then a return to the account of the alliance between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 21:22-32). Josephus avoids the interruption of the birth of Isaac and of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael and mentions the alliance between Abraham and Abimelech in its more logical place, namely immediately after the account of the incident of Abimelech and Sarah (*Ant.* 1.212). Moreover, Josephus introduces a romantic aspect into the covenant between Abimelech and Abraham by having it entered into after the episode of Abimelech and Sarah rather than, as in the Bible, after a dispute concerning a well (Gen. 21:22-34), which he omits altogether.

Moreover, the Bible (Gen. 25:12-16) does not mention the names of Ishmael's descendants until after the enumeration of Abraham's descendants by Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6). Josephus (*Ant.* 1.220), more logically, mentions Ishmael's descendants immediately after his account of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael and their rescue by an angel of G-d.

There is significance in the fact that whereas in the Bible (Gen. 22:16-18) G-d's promises to Abraham are made after the sacrifice of the ram, in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.234-35) they are made before the ram is sacrificed (*Ant.* 1.236). Josephus thus emphasizes G-d's utter confidence in Abraham's faith and the fact that he does not have to be influenced by a sacrifice.

In the Bible the account of the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19) is followed by the list of the children of Abraham's brother Nahor and by the mention of the birth of Rebecca to Nahor's son Bethuel (Gen. 22:20-23). Only then do we hear of the death of Sarah (Gen. 23:1-2). The connection is much smoother in Josephus, who tells us

(*Ant.* 1.236-37) that after the 'Aqedah Abraham and Isaac returned to Sarah, and that shortly thereafter Sarah died. Since Sarah was succeeded by Keturah as Abraham's wife, the list of his descendants by Keturah follows, whereas, as we have noted, in the Bible (Gen. 25:1-6) Abraham's children by Keturah are mentioned after the narrative of the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca.

In the Bible (Gen. 24:22) Abraham's servant, Eliezer, who is on a mission to find a wife for Isaac, produces a precious ring and two heavy bracelets after an unnamed maiden has given drink to him and his camels, and only then (Gen. 24:23) asks her identity, thus seemingly simply rewarding her for giving him drink. In Josephus' version it is only after Rebecca identifies herself that the servant produces a necklace and some other ornaments (*Ant.* 1.248-49), thus clearly indicating that he had reached the goal of his mission.

In the Bible (Gen. 24:33) Abraham's servant declares that he will not eat until he has discharged his errand; but the good guest must eat first, as we see, for example, when Telemachus visits Nestor (Homer, *Od.* 3.67-68); and so Josephus (*Ant.* 1.252) reverses the biblical order. Furthermore, whereas in the Bible the servant begins his narrative to Laban and to Rebekah's mother by stating that he is Abraham's servant (Gen. 24:34) and then mentions Abraham's tremendous wealth, Josephus, for whom clearly genealogy is more important than wealth, has Eliezer begin (*Ant.* 1.252) by giving Abraham's genealogy and by pointing out his master's kinship to his hosts.

Then, in the Bible (Gen. 24:62-67) we read of the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, followed by the account of Abraham's second marriage, to Keturah and his children by her (Gen. 25:1-4), and the statement that Abraham gave everything to Isaac, merely bestowing gifts upon the children whom he had from Keturah (Gen. 25:5-6). In Josephus' version the account of Abraham's marriage to Keturah (*Ant.* 1.238) naturally follows the account of the death of his first wife, Sarah (*Ant.* 1.237) and precedes the account of the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca (*Ant.* 1.242-55). This is followed by the statement that Abraham gave Isaac his entire estate; and immediately after this comes the remark that his sons by Keturah departed to found their colonies (*Ant.* 1.255), thus omitting the embarrassing biblical remark that Abraham did not treat all his children equally in the matter of the inheritance.

After the statement of Abraham's death and burial (Gen. 25:7-10) the Bible lists the descendants of Ishmael and notes Ishmael's death

(Gen. 25:12-18), after which we read of Rebecca's barrenness and pregnancy (Gen. 25:19-21). In Josephus' version, inasmuch as the key figure after Abraham is Isaac rather than Ishmael, the mention of Abraham's death is followed immediately by the narrative of the birth of the twins Esau and Jacob to Isaac's wife Rebecca (*Ant.* 1.257).

In the biblical narrative the birth of the twins is followed by two simple statements, describing their growth and the favoritism that Rebecca showed for Jacob (Gen. 25:27-28), followed by the story of Esau's sale of the birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25:29-34). Josephus, however, omits the account of the sale of the birthright until the very beginning of Book 2.1-3. Since the birthright is concerned with inheritance and Book 1 ends with the mention of the death of Isaac (*Ant.* 1.345-46), the sale of the birthright follows this quite naturally.

In the Bible Rebecca, hearing that Esau intended to kill Jacob, tells him to flee to her brother Laban (Gen. 27:41-45). Josephus (*Ant.* 1.278) says nothing at this point about Esau's intention to kill Jacob, perhaps because he knows the tradition identifying the Romans as descended from Esau.¹¹ Instead, we pass directly to Jacob's departure, upon the instructions of his mother and with the consent of his father, to Mesopotamia to seek a wife.

After the account of the death of Rachel in childbirth (Gen. 35:16-20), the Bible (Gen. 35:22) mentions that Reuben had relations with Bilhah, his father's concubine. Josephus omits this altogether, presumably because of the embarrassment, but also because it is an interruption in his narrative, which here, at the end of Book 1 of the *Antiquities*, deals with the death of Rachel, followed by the account of the death and burial of Rebecca and Isaac (*Ant.* 1.345-46).

3. REARRANGEMENT IN JOSEPHUS, *ANTIQUITIES*, BOOK 2

What is particularly interesting is that even though Book 2 begins with the division of their territories by Jacob and Esau following the death of their father Isaac (Gen. 36:6-7), Josephus includes in Book 2 (*Ant.* 2.2-3) the incident of Esau's sale of his birthright, which in the Bible

¹¹ See Feldman 1998, 322-24.

occurs much earlier (Gen. 25:29-34). Ostensibly the reason for this shift is that the Bible, in describing at this point the descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:9), states that Esau is the ancestor of Edom on Mount Seir. Josephus (*Ant.* 2.1), in his paraphrase, says that Esau took up his abode in Seir; and then, connecting Edom with Idumaea, he asserts that Esau ruled over Idumaea, calling the country after himself. The mention of Edom and Idumaea is then the occasion for the account of how Esau came to have the surname of Edom, the reason being, as Josephus says, following the biblical version (Gen. 25:30), that the pottage which Esau bought in his exhausted state was red, the Hebrew word for which is אֶדוֹם. In view of the apparent equation of Edom with Rome,¹² it is not surprising that Josephus here says nothing about Esau's despising his birthright (Gen. 25:34). The logical place for this story, one might assume, was, as in the Bible, before the narrative of Isaac's decision to bless his older son Esau (Gen. 27:1), whereupon Jacob, with the aid of his mother Rebecca, managed to deceive his blind father into believing that he was Esau (Gen. 27:19). Josephus was apparently troubled by this apparent deceit on the part of Jacob, the ancestor of the Israelites; and in his account (*Ant.* 1.267) there is no indication that when Isaac decides to bless Esau he does so because Esau is his first-born. To be sure, Josephus does mention that Jacob was fearful lest his guile (κακουργῶν) be discovered (*Ant.* 1.270; so Gen. 27:12). On the other hand, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.271) omits the embarrassing question "How is it that you have found it [i.e. venison] so quickly, my son?" (Gen. 27:20). He likewise omits Isaac's embarrassing subsequent requests that Jacob come near so that he may feel him to see whether he really is Esau, as he claims, and kiss him (Gen. 27:21). In particular, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 27:18) Isaac asks, "Who are you, my son?," Josephus carefully omits Jacob's own incriminating answer (Gen. 27:19), "I am Esau your first-born." In Josephus, G-d Himself justifies Jacob's theft of the blessing, saying that it was He who had given the principedom to him rather than to Esau (*Ant.* 2.173), although he postpones the statement to a later point, namely to the moment of Jacob's vision at Beersheba while he is on his way to Egypt, presumably because he felt self-conscious about having G-d justify the theft on the spot and preferred to defend it *ex post facto*.

¹² See Feldman 1998, 322-24.

In enumerating Esau's descendants (Gen. 36:1-43), Josephus (*Ant.* 2.4-5) gives the names of his five children, as well as the names of the sons of one of them, Eliphaz, but omits the names of the sons of the others, as well as the names of the sons of Seir the Horite, even though giving such lists of names would add to the historicity of his account. Elsewhere (*Ant.* 2.176) Josephus is apologetic about mentioning the names of the seventy who departed for Egypt together with Jacob. "I was inclined," he says, "not to recount their names, mainly on account of their difficulty; however, to confute those persons who imagine us to be not of Mesopotamian origin but Egyptians, I have thought it necessary to mention them."¹³ In particular, we may suggest, he omits the names of the kings who reigned in the land of Edom (Gen. 36:31-43) because the biblical text states that they reigned "before any king reigned over the Israelites" (Gen. 36:31). Such a passage would seem to imply that it was written after the kingship was established among the Israelites, i.e., long after the time when the entire Pentateuch had been supposedly given through Moses to the Israelites. Indeed, there are a number of passages in the Bible that raise serious questions about the authorship and date of composition of various biblical books. Ibn Ezra, in his commentary on Deut. (1:1), notes six of these in the Pentateuch¹⁴—of which this is one—, all of which are, significantly, omitted by Josephus.

Following the enumeration of Esau's descendants Josephus (*Ant.* 2.7) turns, as does the Bible (Gen. 37:1) to resume the account of Jacob, and in particular the saga of Joseph. However, whereas the Bible begins with the neutral statements (Gen. 37:1-2) that "Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of the family of Jacob," Josephus (*Ant.* 2.7) begins

¹³ Thackeray 1930, 4:240 n. b, comments that Josephus, like Strabo and other Hellenistic writers, commonly omits lists of uncouth names found in his sources. Thus, for example (*Ant.* 7.369), whereas 1 Chron. 27:1-34 gives a long list of the names of David's army officers and administrators, Josephus says that he has not thought it necessary to mention their names. Again, whereas Ezra 10:18-44 gives the names of the priests, Levites, and Israelites who had put away their non-Jewish wives and the children whom they had borne, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.152) asserts that he has not thought it necessary to give their names. Likewise, presumably for the same reason, Josephus omits the names, mentioned in the *Letter of Aristeas* which he closely paraphrases, of the seventy translators of the Pentateuch into Greek, "their names," he notes, "being set down at the end of the letter" (*Ant.* 12.57).

¹⁴ Gen. 12:6, Gen. 22:14, Exod. 24:4 (also Num. 33:2, Deut. 31:9), Deut. 1:1, Deut. 3:11, Deut. 34:1-12.

with the statement that Jacob reached a degree of prosperity hardly attained by any man. The statement in which such a description of Jacob's prosperity is biblically found is the account of Jacob's meeting with his brother Esau, where Jacob offers a gift to Esau, whereupon Esau says that he has enough and that Jacob should keep the gift for himself. Thereupon (Gen. 33:11) Jacob refers to his prosperity thus: "Accept, I pray you, my gift that is brought to you, because G-d has dealt graciously with me, and because I have everything."¹⁵ Josephus' account of that meeting (*Ant.* 1.336) says nothing about the offer of the gift, Esau's refusal to accept it, and Jacob's assertion of his prosperity. In the context of the meeting with Esau, who is apparently the progenitor of the Romans,¹⁶ such an offer of a gift would appear to be degrading, and if the offer had been made it would seem ungracious for Esau to reject it. Hence, the account of the meeting of Jacob and Esau is very much abbreviated, and this offer is totally omitted. Rather, Josephus has chosen to transfer the mention of Jacob's wealth to the introduction of the Joseph episode, where the statement of Jacob's wealth is extremely effective dramatically, standing as it does, in contrast to the pain and suffering that he is about to experience with the loss of Joseph, and where G-d's providence is particularly striking in that what appeared at first sight to be the depths of despair turned out to be the source of utmost felicity (*Ant.* 2.8).

The Bible (Gen. 37:3), at the very beginning of the Joseph narrative, mentions the long robe with sleeves which Jacob made for Joseph as a sign of his love for him. Josephus, apparently uneasy about Jacob's apparently unjustified favoritism for Joseph, while recognizing this favoritism (*Ant.* 2.9-10), indicates a more credible ground for it, namely the beauty of person that Joseph owed to his birth from the beautiful Rachel and his virtuous qualities of soul and understanding. Moreover, Josephus omits mention of the fact that Joseph was wearing his beautiful coat of many colors at the time when the brothers were plotting against him (Gen. 37:23), since, presumably, if Joseph were depicted as wearing that coat, he would appear to be taunting them. He first mentions the coat at a most effective point, namely when the brothers consider what to do to

¹⁵ In his account of Amram's dream Josephus has G-d remind Amram of his glorious ancestors and, in particular, recall Jacob's prosperity (*Ant.* 2.214).

¹⁶ See Feldman 1998, 322-24.

elude their father's suspicion (*Ant.* 2.35) and decide to tear this coat to pieces and befoul it with goat's blood so that their father would think that Joseph had been devoured by wild beasts.

When Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams, in Gen. 41:16 he says that this interpretation comes from G-d; but Josephus, who is interested in building up the character of Joseph and in highlighting his wisdom, totally omits the role of G-d at this point and presents the explanation as Joseph's own. Likewise, whereas Gen. 41:25, 28 stresses that G-d had used the vehicle of a dream in order to tell Pharaoh what He was about to do, Josephus likewise omits this reference to G-d's role at this point. Finally, when Joseph does subsequently mention G-d it is not to state that G-d uses the vehicle of the dream to predict what He will do but rather to forewarn men so that they may use their human sagacity (συνέσει) to alleviate the trials that will befall them (*Ant.* 2.86).

In the biblical version of the initial dramatic encounter between Joseph and his brothers in Egypt, Joseph, who recognizes them, while they did not recognize him (Gen. 42:8), accuses them of being spies (Gen. 42:14) and then proceeds to test them by declaring that he will not permit them to leave unless they send one of their number to bring back their youngest brother, Benjamin, to Egypt. He then imprisons them for three days (Gen. 42:17). It is then (Gen. 42:22) that Reuben berates his brothers, convinced that all this had occurred to them because they had not listened to him when he urged them not to carry out their scheme of hate against Joseph. Josephus has changed the order of these events: first Josephus accuses his brothers of being spies (*Ant.* 2.98), then Reuben speaks not to his brothers but appeals directly to Joseph (*Ant.* 2.101-4), then Joseph imprisons his brothers for three days (*Ant.* 2.105). Perhaps Josephus changed the sequence of events because he considered it undeservedly cruel on the part of Joseph to imprison his brothers without first hearing their case presented. There is much greater drama, moreover, in having Reuben's direct appeal to Joseph and having this followed by the imprisonment.

In the Bible (Gen. 42:16), immediately after Joseph's brothers mention that they have a younger brother at home, Joseph demands that he be brought to him as a test of whether they have been telling him the truth. Josephus, apparently regarding this as impetuous, has Joseph (*Ant.* 2.106) make this demand only after Reuben's speech to

him setting forth their family history at greater length and explaining their reason for coming.

In Gen. 42:27 one of Joseph's brothers discovers the money in his sack, it would seem, shortly after they leave Joseph. In Gen. 43:21 we read that this occurred when they arrived at the inn, again presumably shortly after they left Joseph. In Gen. 42:35, however, they discover the money as they are emptying their sacks upon their arrival at the home of Jacob. In Josephus (*Ant.* 2.113) they discover the money in all of their sacks only after they arrive at their home in Canaan. Again, we read (*Ant.* 2.120) that when they reach Egypt a second time they assure Joseph's steward that it was only on reaching their home that they had found the money in their sacks. Presumably, Josephus was troubled by the thought that if the brothers were as honest as they claimed in their statement to Joseph's steward they should have brought back the money as soon as they discovered it. Josephus also apparently wishes to avoid the discrepancy between Gen. 42:27 and 43:35 as to the place where they discovered the money, as well as the duplication of the two discoveries of the money, and so he mentions it in the most dramatic of contexts, namely when they arrive in Canaan and tell their father all that had befallen them in Egypt.

In the Bible (Exod. 1:9-10) it is the belief that the Israelites have become more numerous and stronger than the Egyptians and that they may join the enemies of the Egyptians in war that leads the king of the Egyptians first to afflict them with hard labor (Exod. 1:14), then to order the Hebrew midwives to kill male babies that are born (Exod. 1:16), and finally, when the midwives disobey him, to command his entire people to cast the sons into the Nile River (Exod. 1:22). In Josephus it is envy of the Israelites' wealth that leads the Egyptians to impose upon them every type of hardship (*Ant.* 2:201-4). The reason for the Egyptians' decision to exterminate the Israelites is the prediction by one of the Egyptian sacred scribes (*Ant.* 2:205) that there would be born to the Israelites someone who would abase the sovereignty of the Egyptians. Thereupon the Pharaoh orders that every Israelite male child be cast into the river, and that Egyptian (rather than Israelite) midwives should observe the pregnant Israelite women and watch for their delivery.¹⁷

¹⁷ Josephus does not specifically state that the midwives were to put the male babies to death; rather he says that they were to observe the deliveries of the Israelite women.

Josephus mentions the name of Amram at the very beginning of the Moses narrative (*Ant.* 2.210) in connection with G-d's prediction to him that the child whose birth has filled the Egyptians with such dread that they have condemned to destruction all the male babies of the Israelites is to be his, whereas in the Bible his name is not mentioned until much later (Exod. 6:20) in the enumeration of the heads of all the families of the Israelites. Josephus thus makes Amram into a major figure, while his wife, Jochebed, becomes a marginal character.¹⁸ On the other hand, Miriam's role is heightened, her name being mentioned in Josephus at the beginning of the Moses narrative (*Ant.* 2.221), whereas in the Hebrew her name is not mentioned until Exod. 15:20, when she leads the singing following the successful crossing of the Sea of Reeds.

In the Bible it is near the very beginning of the dialogue between Moses and G-d at the burning bush that Moses asks Him what His name is (Exod. 3:13-15). Since this would appear to show lack of faith, Moses waits until the end of the conversation in Josephus (*Ant.* 2.275) before asking this question; and there the reason for his asking is not to be able to answer the Israelites when they ask who had sent him (since this would, presumably, reflect lack of confidence on the part of both Moses and the Israelites) but rather to be able to address Him by name when offering a sacrifice. As to G-d's instruction that the Israelite women should request gold and silver vessels (Exod. 3:21-22; so also in Exod. 11:2-3, 12:35-36) and garments from the Egyptians, this would appear to be embarrassing, since the Israelites obviously had no intention of returning these to the Egyptians; and this would appear to contradict the Israelites' reputation for honesty and Moses' own reputation for integrity in directing the Israelites to "borrow" jewelry and clothing from the Egyptians.¹⁹ Hence, Josephus omits this statement here; and when he does mention it much later (*Ant.* 2.314) it comes more fittingly at the moment when the Israelites actually depart from Egypt and

¹⁸ So Cohen 1993, 49.

¹⁹ A pagan writer, Pompeius Trogus (*ap.* Justin, 36. *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum* 36.2.12-13), who is generally friendly to the Jews, states that the Jews carried off by stealth the sacred vessels of the Egyptians. One might well assume that the Israelites must have practiced deceit in order to obtain these objects, though such theft might perhaps be justified in view of the way in which the Israelites had been treated by the Egyptians for so long.

when, according to the Bible (Exod. 11:2-3), G-d instructs Moses to tell the Israelites to request gold and silver vessels from the Egyptians and when G-d “gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.” Furthermore, when Josephus does cite this matter, he carefully notes that it was the Egyptians who, trooping to Pharaoh at the time of the plague of the first-born in order to urge him to let the Israelites leave, took the initiative in honoring the Israelites with gifts, “some in order that they might depart more swiftly, others from neighborly relations with them.”

In the Bible when Moses and Aaron first go to the Pharaoh to ask him to allow the Israelites to leave (Exod. 5:1), he orders taskmasters to require that the Israelites gather straw for themselves (Exod. 5:7); and it is only later, when they come a second time (Exod. 7:9), that G-d tells Aaron to cast down his staff before the Pharaoh and that it will become a snake. Thereupon the Pharaoh summons his wise men and they do likewise, after which the staff of Aaron swallows their staffs. In Josephus (*Ant.* 2.284) it is when Moses appears before the Pharaoh for the first time that the Pharaoh accuses him of trying to impose on him by magic. Thereupon he orders his priests to duplicate Moses’ miracles. Then it is Moses, and not Aaron as in the Bible, who drops his staff, which turns into a snake, which proceeds to swallow the staffs of the Egyptians. Presumably, Josephus felt that it made more sense for Moses to exhibit his magic when he first appeared before the Pharaoh, since this would establish his credentials, so to speak. Again, it is after Moses’ first meeting with him that the Pharaoh in his anger orders his taskmasters to require that the Israelites provide their own straw (Exod. 5:7-8), whereas Josephus, in his concern to emphasize the importance of obeying authority, tries to show that the Pharaoh is not so impetuous; and so it is only after the second meeting with Moses that he orders that the Israelites are to provide their own straw for their brick-making.

In the Bible (Exod. 7:6) it is at the time when Moses and Aaron go to the Pharaoh to ask him to allow the Israelites to leave that we are told that Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three years old. Josephus (*Ant.* 2.319) waits until the moment of the Exodus itself before giving us this information. The pair’s crucial event and outstanding achievement is not their asking for the permission but their actually leading the Israelites out of Egypt; hence it is more appropriate to give us the information about the age of the leaders at that point.

According to Exod. 13:18 the Israelites were armed (חמשים) when they left Egypt. This presents a problem, since it is hard to imagine whence they could have obtained weapons at this point. Josephus postpones the mention of these weapons until the miracle of the crossing of the Sea of Reeds. The fact that the well-armed Egyptians were all drowned in the Sea makes it possible for him to state (*Ant.* 2.349) that the arms of the Egyptians were carried up to the Israelites' camp by the tide and by the force of the wind in that direction. The Israelites were thus easily able to collect the arms.

4. REARRANGEMENT IN JOSEPHUS, *ANTIQUITIES*, BOOK 3

In the Bible (Exod. 15:24) the Israelites begin to complain against Moses when they come to Marah, but this complaint is not sustained and is not particularly bitter. The complaint does become bitter after they have left Elim and arrive at the Wilderness of Sin. In Josephus (*Ant.* 3.6) they already begin to complain most vehemently almost at the very beginning of their journey, namely at Marah. This adds to the greatness of Moses as a leader, who must put up with the ungrateful, pestering rabble from the start and who is nonetheless able to alleviate their distress. When the Israelites leave Elim (Exod. 16:2) the Israelites complain that they have no more food. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 3.12), they are eager to stone Moses, so bitter are they against him and so despondent, whereas in the Bible this extreme threat is not made until the Israelites have reached Rephidim (Exod. 17:4). When the Israelites in the Wilderness complain that they have no food (Exod. 16:3), G-d promises Moses that he will send them manna. Then we read (Exod. 16:13) that in the evening quails covered the camp. In Josephus the quails are mentioned first (*Ant.* 3.25) and then the manna (*Ant.* 3.26). This may be because G-d first merely promises that He will send the manna and then says (Exod. 16:12) that the Israelites will eat meat, presumably the quails, in the evening and bread, presumably the manna, in the morning. But since in the Bible G-d mentions the manna before He mentions the meat, whereas Josephus reverses them, we may suggest that Josephus prefers to mention first the quails, since this is less of a miracle, just as he prefers to rationalize wherever possible, whereas in the Bible (Exod. 16:20) those who sought to collect more of the manna than the prescribed measure miraculously find no more than the prescribed amount and anything beyond this turns out to be spoiled.

In the Bible we have the encounter with Amalek (Exod. 17:8-16), the meeting with Jethro (Exod. 18:1-27), and the arrival at Sinai (Exod. 19:1, (although Exod. 18:5 already indicates that Moses had encamped at “the mountain of G-d”), in that order, whereas in Josephus the order is the encounter with Amalek (*Ant.* 3.39-58), the arrival at Sinai (*Ant.* 3.59-62), and the meeting with Jethro (*Ant.* 3.63-74). The biblical order presents the problem that Jethro visits Moses at Sinai, to which the Israelites actually arrived only later. Significantly, Josephus, in his effort to build up the stature of Jethro, and thus to emphasize that Jews show respect and admiration for non-Jews, goes out of his way and out of the biblical order in prefacing the visit of Jethro with the remark that the Israelites had reached Mount Sinai. This gives a more important setting for the visit, since it puts Jethro in immediate juxtaposition with the central event in Israelite history and makes of his visit more than a mere congratulation for the Israelites’ military victory over Amalek.

In its discussion of the Tabernacle, the Bible (Exod. 25:10-27:19) begins by describing the ark, the cover of the ark, the table, the menorah, the covers and walls and partition of the Tabernacle, the altar, and the courtyard. It then mentions G-d’s instruction to Moses to appoint Aaron as high priest (Exod. 28:1). It then discusses the vestments of the high priest, including the ephod, the breastplate of judgment containing the Urim and Thummim, the headplate, the tunic, and the vestments of the ordinary priests (Exod. 28:2-43), including the tunic, the sash, and the headdress. It then notes the inauguration ritual (Exod. 29:1-46) and describes the incense altar (Exod. 30:1-10). It then interrupts the account with a digression on the method by which a census is to be taken (Exod. 30:11-15). It then resumes the account of the Tabernacle by describing the laver, the anointment oil, and the incense (Exod. 30:17-38). Then we are told that Bezalel and Oholiab are to be in charge of constructing the Tabernacle (Exod. 31:11). Then we hear of the importance of observing the Sabbath (Exod. 31:12-17). Then we have the episode of the Golden Calf and its consequences (Exod. 31:18-34:35). Then once again we are told the laws of the Sabbath (Exod. 35:2-3). Then we are told of the ingredients that the Israelites contribute toward the construction of the Tabernacle (Exod. 35:4-29). In particular, we are told about the contributions of the women (Exod. 35:25-26). Then once again we are told of the selection of Bezalel and Oholiab to construct the Tabernacle. Finally, we are told about the work that

they do in constructing the curtains, the cover, the planks, the partitions, the screen, the ark and its cover, the table, the menorah, the incense altar, the burnt-offering altar, the laver, the courtyard, and the screen (Exod. 36:1-38:20), even though we have already been given many of the same details a few chapters earlier. Then we have descriptions of the various priestly vestments (Exod. 39:1-31), even though again we have had descriptions of these items a few chapters earlier.

Josephus avoids the biblical duplication and presents a more logical sequence of events. He first describes the materials that the Israelites contributed for the building of the Tabernacle (*Ant.* 3.102-4; cf. Exod. 35:5-9). Next he gives us the names of the builders, Bezalel and Oholiab (*Ant.* 3.105; cf. Exod. 31:2, 6), and notes the general and enthusiastic participation of the Israelites as a whole in contributing toward its construction (*Ant.* 3.106-7; cf. Exod. 36:3-7). He then describes the Tabernacle itself, as if to lead the reader on a tour of it, starting with the outer court enclosing it (*Ant.* 3.108-14; cf. Exod. 27:9-19, 30:17-21),²⁰ then the exterior of the Tabernacle (*Ant.* 3.115-21; cf. Exod. 26:15-30, 36:20-34), then the interior of the Tabernacle (*Ant.* 3.122-24), including the curtains (*Ant.* 3.124-33; cf. Exod. 26:31-37), the ark (*Ant.* 3.134-36; Exod. 25:10-16, 37:1-5),²¹ the cherubim on the cover of the ark (*Ant.* 3.137-38; cf. Exod. 37:6-9), the table of the shewbread (*Ant.* 3.139-43; cf. Exod. 25:23-30, 37:10-16), the candelabrum (*Ant.* 3.144-46; cf. Exod. 25:31-40), the altar of incense (*Ant.* 3.147-48; cf. Exod. 30:1-10), and the altar of burnt-offering (*Ant.* 3.149-50; cf. Exod. 27:1-8).²² Whereas the Bible

²⁰ Similarly, in describing Herod's Temple (*War* 5.184-226), *Ant.* 15.391-420), Josephus works from the outermost to the inmost part. This is also, on the whole, the order in the Mishnah (*Midd.* 1-5).

²¹ A theological problem arises when one considers that the Torah, said to have been given by G-d, seems to contradict itself. Thus the account in Exod. 37:1-9 states that Bezalel made the ark of the covenant, whereas the version in Deut. 10:1-5 indicates that Moses made it. Even if we attempt to reconcile the two versions by asserting that Moses could be credited with making that which an assistant completed, we are still confronted with another contradiction, in that in the version in Exodus Bezalel made the ark after Moses' second descent from Sinai (Exod. 34:29), whereas the account in Deut. 10:3 indicates that Moses made it before his ascent. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.134-38), apparently aware of the problem, skillfully sidesteps it by not mentioning who built the ark.

²² Even though the altar of burnt-offering was within the court (Exod. 27:1-8), Josephus postpones describing it until he comes to speak of the altar of incense

separates the description of the cover of the ark (Exod. 25:17-22) from that of the Tabernacle (Exod. 26:1-14), Josephus more logically brings the two items into juxtaposition (*Ant.* 3.124-33). Exod. 26:31-36 first describes the veil and the hangings at the entrance to the interior of Tabernacle and only afterwards (Exod. 26:37) mentions the pillars supporting the hangings, whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 3.122) first mentions the pillars and only afterwards (*Ant.* 3.124) the curtains.²³ In contrast to the Bible, which describes the screen for the entrance to the Tabernacle (Exod. 26:36-37) and then continues with a description of the altar of burnt-offering (Exod. 27:1-8), which has no immediate connection with it, Josephus, more logically, describes the altar of burnt-offering (*Ant.* 3.149) immediately after the description of the sanctuary's other altar, that of incense (*Ant.* 3.147-48). Again, whereas the Bible (Exod. 27:9-18) describes the courtyard of the Tabernacle after the description of the altar (Exod. 27:8), Josephus more logically presents this at the beginning of his systematic description of the court enclosing the table (*Ant.* 3.108-13).

Josephus, in contrast to the Bible, which first describes the high priest's vestments (Exod. 28:1-39) and then those of the ordinary priests (Exod. 28:40-43), initially describes the vestments of ordinary priests (*Ant.* 3.151-58), including the breeches, the tunic, the sash, and the turban, and concludes with the vestments of the high priest (*Ant.* 3.159-78),²⁴ including the tunic, the ephod, the breastplate, the turban, and the golden crown. In describing the vestments of the high priest, the Bible (Exod. 28:6-38) starts with the outer garments, namely the ephod, the breastplate, the robe of the ephod, and the headplate. It then mentions the undergarments (Exod. 28:39-42), namely the tunic, the sash, the headdress, and the breeches, which are worn by common priests also. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.151-58), probably

in the tabernacle (Exod. 30:1). Robertson 1991, 74, suggests that perhaps, when he came to the altar of incense, Josephus was reminded that he had omitted it in its proper place because the word for altar of incense (θυμιατήριον) so closely resembles the term (θυσιαστήριον) for the "altar" that stood within the walls of the tabernacle.

²³ Robertson 1991, 108, explains this inversion by suggesting that Josephus sought to give the impression that the tabernacle was more like a temple than like a mere tent.

²⁴ Similarly, in the *War's* account of the Temple, Josephus first discusses the ordinary priests (*War* 5.228-29), though not their vestments, and then describes the high priest's vestments (*War* 5.230-37), though there he did not have the biblical order before him.

drawing upon his own personal experience as a priest, cites the items of clothing in the order in which the priest puts them on. Hence, he starts with the undergarments—first the breeches, then the tunic, the sash, and lastly the headdress.

In particular, we may note that whereas the Bible (Exod. 28:36-38 and 39:30) repeats the description of the headplate of the high priest, Josephus describes it in detail only once (*Ant.* 3.178), though he does refer to it briefly in two other places (*Ant.* 3.172, 187).

Logically, after the completion of the description of the Tabernacle and of the vestments of the priests and their significance should come the mention of the appointment of the high priest to administer the sacrificial system, as well as the names of his four sons; and that is exactly the order in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.188-92), rather than before the description of the priestly garments, as in Exod. 28:1. Moreover, the account of the ritual prescribed for the inauguration of the Tabernacle comes in the Bible (Exod. 29:1-28) between the two accounts of the building of the Tabernacle (Exod. 25-27, 36-38; in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.204-7) it comes after the completion of the single such account.

After the incident in which the majority of the spies discourage the Israelites and are punished by G-d (Num. 13-14), G-d is quoted (Num. 15:4) as telling Moses that whenever someone brings a sacrifice he is to bring a meal offering mixed with oil, together with wine for a libation. Whereas there is no particular connection between the report of the spies and G-d's instructions about the meal offering, Josephus' report about the latter is situated in the midst of his exhaustive summary describing the sacrifices. Here, then, the statement about meal offerings (*Ant.* 3.235) is very much in place.

One apparent exception to the better ordering of details in Josephus may be seen in the fact that the Bible (Exod. 28:30), immediately after describing the breastplate of judgment of the high priest, mentions that in it are to be placed the Urim and Thummim. Josephus mentions the breastplate (*Ant.* 3.163-71) as part of his description of the vestments of the high priest but does not mention the Urim and Thummim until considerably later (*Ant.* 3.215-18). That he realized that he was departing from his usual more logical ordering of details in so doing may be seen in his apologetic comment (*Ant.* 3.214) that he is here recording a detail that he had omitted from his earlier description of the vestments of the high priest. However, there is, in fact, a rationale behind his placement of the discussion of the Urim and Thummim at precisely this point, namely that he

has just previously noted (*Ant.* 3.213) that he is about to dilate on the constitution and the laws and wishes to emphasize (*ibid.*) that Moses drew up these laws under Divine inspiration. He accordingly takes this occasion to remark (*Ant.* 3.214) that Moses left no possible opening for the malpractices of prophets, in that the decision of G-d was to be obtained through the Urim and Thummim.

Furthermore, whereas the Bible, immediately after its description of the ritual of the inauguration of the Tabernacle (Exod. 29:1-37), describes the daily sacrifice of the *tamid* (Exod. 29:38-42), Josephus more logically places the description of the *tamid* sacrifice (*Ant.* 3.237) in the context of his systematic description of various kinds of sacrifices (*Ant.* 3.224-54).

Again, whereas the Bible (Exod. 30:11-15), in the midst of its description of the various items in the Tabernacle, and again after the mention of the materials used for the work of building the Tabernacle, notes how the maintenance of all this was to be paid for, namely through the annual contribution of a half shekel by every adult Israelite male, Josephus more logically mentions this point (*Ant.* 3.194-96) after he has completed his description of the Tabernacle and the vestments of the priests and the appointment of Aaron as high priest.

Moreover, the description of the laver is inserted in the Bible (Exod. 30:17-21) long after the description of the outer court of the Tabernacle—where that laver was to be positioned—has been completed (Exod. 27:19). In Josephus the description of the laver has been placed more logically within the description of the outer court (*Ant.* 3.114).

In addition, it is not until Exod. 31:18 and again in 32:15-16 that we are told that the two tablets of testimony were inscribed by G-d. More logically this statement is found in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.101) before we are told the actual contents of the commandments. Likewise, the fact that Moses did not eat or drink for forty days during the period that he was with G-d is not found until Exod. 34:28, after the content of the commandments has been cited, whereas, more logically, Josephus mentions this detail (*Ant.* 3.99) before we are given the contents that G-d communicated to Moses.

An example of a case where Josephus connects seemingly disparate events may be seen in connection with the account of the death of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1). The Bible states that they had brought before G-d an alien fire that G-d had not com-

manded, and that a fire came forth from before G-d and consumed them. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.208) mentions this incident immediately after his account of the ceremonies that took place at the inauguration of the Tabernacle. At those ceremonies, we read, a fire went forth from before G-d and consumed the burnt-offering (Lev. 9:24); and Josephus, apparently noticing that the same language is used in connection with the death of Nadab and Abihu, which follows, connects the two incidents with the remark that the same fire that consumed the burnt-offering also consumed the sons of Aaron.

Since Josephus was himself a priest, we can expect that he would emphasize the sacrificial system but also that he would arrange the descriptions of the sacrifice in a more orderly fashion than is found in the Pentateuch. That he, in fact, does this may be seen from the fact that his description of the sacrifices, which starts with the whole burnt offerings that are described at the very beginning of the book of Leviticus (Lev. 1:3-17, *Ant.* 3.224-27), continues not with the fine flour offering, as we find in the Bible (Lev. 2:1-16), which has little in common with the whole burnt offerings, but rather with the analogous thank-offerings ("peace-offerings," Lev. 3:1-17, *Ant.* 3.228-29). Josephus further highlights the connection between these two sacrifices by remarking that in the latter the same animals are offered, the differences being that in the thank-offerings the animals must be without blemish, may be upwards of a year old, and may be males or females (*Ant.* 3.228). Moreover, in presenting his holocaust-thanksgiving offering juxtaposition Josephus was inspired by the parallel content and form of Lev. 1:3 ("If his offering is a burnt offering") and 3:1 ("If a man's offering is a sacrifice of peace offering").²⁵

The Bible (Lev. 2:13) mentions that every meal-offering is salted. Josephus, aware that the tradition²⁶ required salt for all sacrifices, cites this requirement in connection with his first description of the sacrifices, namely that of the whole burnt-offering (*Ant.* 3.227).

The Bible (Num. 15:1-16) discusses separately the meal, oil, and wine offerings to be presented as part of a burnt offering or a feast offering. Since these items are given in connection with other sacrifices, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.233-35), more logically, appends mention of

²⁵ So Gallant 1988, 44.

²⁶ So indicated in Ezek. 43:24 and Mishnah *Tam.* 4:3.

them to his discussion of the other sacrifices. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.233) follows the order of Num. 15:1-13 in specifying the amount of flour to be offered but uses the order of Num. 28-29 in indicating the quantities of oil (*Ant.* 3.234).²⁷ This allows the amounts of flour to appear in ascending order and the amount of oil to appear in descending order.

The Bible (Lev. 22:27) mentions much later the special requirement prohibiting the sacrifice on the same day of the parent animal and its offspring until that offspring has reached its eighth day. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.236) appends this rule, very logically, to his overall discussion of the rules governing sacrifices. Lev. 22:28 puts the parent first: "You shall not kill both her and her young in one day." Josephus (*Ant.* 3.236) follows rather the order found in the preceding verse: "When a bull or sheep or goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother." By reversing the order of parent and offspring here, Josephus gains assonance: γεννηκότος ("the one who has given birth to," "parent") and γεννηθέντι ("the one who has been given birth to," "its birth").²⁸ This assonance is furthered by the use of γίνονται ("there are") in the place of the more usual εἰσί at the beginning of the next sentence.

Lev. 7:13 uses the verb יקרִיב ("he shall offer") in connection with the thanksgiving offering. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.236) uses the verb ἀναλίσκεται ("is consumed") in order to connect this law with the one that follows (*Ant.* 3.237) in his description of the daily sacrifices, where we read that a lamb is to be slain daily at public expense (ἀναλώματος, "expense").

At a much later point Num. 28:3-29:39 lists the daily offerings, together with the offerings on Sabbath, the New Moon, Passover, Shabuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Shemini Atzeret. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.237-54) discusses these as part of his comprehensive survey of all the sacrifices. In the biblical list of the festivals, that of the first month, Passover (Num. 28:16-25), is followed by Shabuot (Num. 28:26-31) and by the festivals of the seventh month (Num. 29:1-39). By placing the festivals of the seventh month first Josephus (*Ant.* 3.238-39) puts in juxtaposition the new moon and seventh new moon (Rosh Hashanah). Moreover, whereas the Bible discusses the

²⁷ So Gallant 1988, 68.

²⁸ So Gallant 1988, 73.

festivals in the order in which they appear in the calendar, Josephus, having discussed the festivals of the seventh month earlier, ends with Passover and Shabuot.

Whereas in the Bible, in the prescriptions for the ceremony on the Day of Atonement, the scapegoat (Lev. 16:21-22) and the communal goat (Lev. 16:27) are not brought into immediate juxtaposition, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.240) does so by transforming the biblical places to which they are brought, i.e., into the desert (Lev. 16:22) and “outside the camp” (Lev. 16:27) to two specific areas that are parallel to each other, namely beyond the boundaries and the suburbs.²⁹ Inasmuch as the communal goat had previously been slain (Lev. 16:15), the Bible uses the verb *נִצִּיחַ* (Lev. 16:27; LXX ἐξοίσουσιν) to indicate that it is removed to its place of burning. This is a verb used for conveying inanimate or dead objects, whereas Josephus uses the verb ἄγοντες (“leading”), which is used for living objects, as we see, for example, in the case of the red heifer (Num. 19:3, *Ant.* 7.79) that is removed from the camp prior to being slain. By using this verb Josephus has created an analogy between the two goats, since the scapegoat had also been removed while still alive.

In the Day of Atonement ceremony, according to the Bible (Lev. 16:14) the blood of the bullock is taken, then the communal goat is slaughtered (Lev. 16:15), then its blood is dealt with as with the blood of the bullock (Lev. 16:15), then the blood of both is offered together (Lev. 16:18). Josephus (*Ant.* 3.242-43) is more orderly: he first disposes of the animals, then he takes care of the blood offerings.³⁰

In the Bible (Num. 18:15, 22, 30; 29.5, 11, 16) a goat is brought as a sin-offering on all festival days. Remarkably, it is only here (*Ant.* 3.249) that Josephus mentions that the priests are to feast on it. Gallant suggests that he does so in order to provide a point of connection with subsequent laws, namely the barley offering on Passover (*Ant.* 3.251) and the two loaves on Shabuot (*Ant.* 3.252), concerning which Josephus likewise mentions that the priests consume these.³¹ As Thackeray³² notes, Hebrew uses the same word, עמר, for the *assaron* measure and for the bundle of barley (*Ant.* 3.251). Josephus may have mentioned this quantity in order to connect it with the

²⁹ So Gallant 1988, 87-88.

³⁰ So Gallant 1988, 90.

³¹ Gallant 1988, 108.

³² Thackeray 1930, 4:439, n. b.

next topic, namely the two *assarons* (*Ant.* 3.252) of flour presented on Shabuot.³³

Lev. 23:12 specifies that a male lamb a year old without blemish is to be offered on the day of waving the Omer. Yet, despite the fact that the Bible indicates that all lambs for the festival sacrifices are to be one year old, Josephus does not use the word ἄρνιον (“little lamb”) anywhere else besides here (*Ant.* 3.251). Josephus may be using it here in view of his immediately preceding reference to the “first fruits” (ἀπαρχάς, *Ant.* 3.250), thus providing a link between the newly ripened crop and the newborn animal.³⁴ Whereas the festivals are the subject of many different biblical laws, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.254) brings order into the biblical chaos, so to speak, by focusing upon two features that they all have in common, namely that they feature whole burnt-offerings and that they give relief from work.

Again, in the Bible the food laws are scattered. Thus Lev. 7:26-27 and 17:10-12 prohibit the eating of blood. Likewise, it is prohibited (Lev. 11:40) to eat of the carcass of an animal that has died a natural death. Elsewhere it is specifically prohibited (Lev. 7:23-25) to eat the fat of animals. Josephus has brought all these prescriptions together in a single paragraph (*Ant.* 3.260).

While the Bible (Lev. 7:23) prohibits the consumption of fat without specifying the forbidden organs, it does specify that the fat that covers the entrails (Lev. 3:3) is to be burnt upon the altar. Taking his point of departure from Lev. 3:17, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.260) combines the injunctions against the consumption of blood and certain fats and thus provides a connection between the dietary and sacrificial laws.³⁵

Josephus, in beginning his paraphrase of the laws pertaining to impurity (*Ant.* 3.261), continues the separation theme in which he had explained the purpose of the dietary laws (*Ant.* 3.259). In his consideration of the dietary laws Josephus had used verbs with the ἀπο- prefix; hence he connects his discussion of the impurity laws with these dietary laws by using the verb ἀπήλασε (“expelled,” *Ant.* 3.261) rather than the LXX’s ἐξαποστείλάτωσαν (Num. 5:2).³⁶

³³ So Gallant 1988, 109.

³⁴ So Gallant 1988, 111.

³⁵ So Gallant 1988, 117-18.

³⁶ So Gallant 1988, 118-19.

Gallant³⁷ notes that in his paraphrase of Num. 5:2 Josephus (*Ant.* 3.261) omits the category of corpse impurity. Gallant explains this omission as due to his organizational scheme and his desire to avoid putting together cases of different categories, since leprosy and gonorrhea belong to one category (their impurity requires two sacrificial victims), whereas corpse defilement belongs to a different category, namely one in which the impurity lasts seven days.

In the Bible the sacrifices for one who has gonorrhea and for a woman who has a discharge of blood for many days are two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Lev. 15:14-15, 29-30), one for a holocaust and one for a sin-offering. The sacrifice for a leper (Lev. 14:10) is two lambs and one ewe-lamb a year old or one lamb and two birds (Lev. 14:21-22) for a guilt-offering, sin-offering, and holocaust respectively. For childbirth the requirements are a lamb as a holocaust and a bird as a sin-offering (Lev. 12:6) or two birds (Lev. 12:8). What Josephus (*Ant.* 3.262) has done here is to note features that are common to all these cases, namely that each includes a holocaust-sin-offering pair, and, where an animal victim is mentioned, it is a lamb.³⁸

In the Bible (Lev. 12:2-8) the law pertaining to the contaminated state of a woman after giving birth is placed after the discussion of the animals that are permitted or forbidden to be eaten (Lev. 11). There is no apparent connection between the two topics. There is, however, a connection with the topic that follows, namely the laws of leprosy (Lev. 13-14), since in both cases there is a prohibition of contact with anything sacred on the part of the affected person. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.258-68), however, starts his discussion of the purity laws with a statement concerning leprosy. He then moves on (*Ant.* 3.269) to the discussion of the impurity of women in childbirth, and, since he is discussing the subject of impurity of women, he then proceeds to cite the ordeal of the suspected adulteress (*Ant.* 3.270-73), which in the Bible is dealt with at a much later point (Num. 5:11-31). Having thus dealt with loyalty in a marriage here, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.274-75) now lists those marriages that are forbidden, as well as forbidden cohabitation with a menstruous woman, with a beast, and sodomy—subjects that are dealt with in still another part of the Pentateuch (Lev. 20:10-21).

³⁷ Gallant 1988, 119.

³⁸ So Gallant 1988, 120-21.

Gonorrhea is the only case of an impurity of long duration that Josephus singles out (*Ant.* 3.263). Josephus' reason for doing so is to form a connection, through repetition of the word *σπέρμα* ("seed"), with the next case (*ibid.*), that of one who has a nocturnal emission.³⁹

Gallant⁴⁰ calls attention to the effectiveness of Josephus' putting in juxtaposition the case having the least stringent purification requirement (seminal impurity, *Ant.* 3.263) with the one involving the most stringent requirement (leprosy, *Ant.* 3.264), namely to emphasize the severity of the latter condition in preparation for his immediately following refutation of the charge that Moses and his followers were themselves lepers (*Ant.* 3.265-68).

Since childbirth (*Ant.* 3.269) is the only biblical category of impurity where contact with that which is holy and entrance into the Temple are forbidden and since Josephus replaces "holy" with "sacrifices," Josephus is able to classify the purity laws in *Ant.* 3.258-73 as provisions with regard to the sacrifices and the purifications relating to them.

According to the Bible, in its treatment of the ordeal of the suspected adulteress, the placement of the earth into the potion (Num. 5:17) is followed by the uncovering of the woman's head (Num. 5:18), then by the administration of the oath to the accused woman (Num. 5:19-22), then by the writing of the curses and the expunging of them (Num. 5:23). Josephus (*Ant.* 3.272) is more orderly, placing the expunging of the Name of G-d and the placement of the earth together before the administration of the bitter waters.

Lev. 18:6-18 begins with the prohibited incestuous relationships and ends with adultery (Lev. 18:20), whereas Lev. 20 begins with adultery (Lev. 20:10) and continues with incestuous relationships (Lev. 20:11-14). Josephus (*Ant.* 3.274) follows the latter order so as to provide a connection with the preceding passage concerning the wife suspected of adultery.

In the Bible, though most of the laws pertaining to priests are stated in a single section (Lev. 21), the law that wine is forbidden to them while on duty (Lev. 10:8-9) and the statement that the animals that they sacrifice must be unblemished (Lev. 22:19-25) are found in different contexts, the first immediately after the account of the

³⁹ So Gallant 1988, 121.

⁴⁰ Gallant 1988, 122.

deaths of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-7) and the second after the laws specifying who may or may not eat *terumah* (Lev. 22:10-15). Josephus, on the other hand, has collected all the laws pertaining to priests and puts them together (*Ant.* 3.276-79). By referring to “the wife of a man who had died” (*Ant.* 3.277) rather than the Scripture’s *אלמנה* (“widow,” Lev. 21:14), in his section of laws concerning the priests, Josephus provides a connection with the topic that follows, corpse defilement by the high priest.⁴¹

Whereas the Bible first presents the laws concerning the ordinary priest’s contact with a corpse (Lev. 21:6) and his marital restrictions (Lev. 21:7-9), and follows this with the parallel laws pertaining to the high priest (Lev. 21:10-12, 13-14), Josephus (*Ant.* 3.277) deals first with the marital restrictions for both categories and then with the laws for both pertaining to contact with a corpse. In so doing Josephus brings into juxtaposition the priestly marital restrictions with those stated in the preceding paragraphs (*Ant.* 3.274-75).

In the Bible the law of the sabbatical year (Lev. 25:1-7) is found immediately after the incident of the man who had blasphemed the name of G-d and who was stoned to death in punishment (Lev. 24:10-23). Clearly these laws have no relationship to one another. In Josephus the sabbatical year is discussed (*Ant.* 3.281) after the laws pertaining to priests (*Ant.* 3.276-79). Josephus makes the connection (*Ant.* 3.280) between the two sets of laws by noting that the laws that he has previously discussed were operative during Moses’ lifetime, but that he is now about to discuss laws that are to become operative only after the conquest of Canaan, the first of which is the law of the sabbatical year, together with the Jubilee year (*Ant.* 3.281-85).

At this point Josephus seems rather abruptly to proceed to the numbering of the Israelite army (*Ant.* 3.287; cf. Num. 1:1-49). But, in fact, he does connect this topic with what precedes, since he declares, in summarizing the code of laws that he has just presented, that this is the code of laws that Moses learned from G-d while keeping his *army* encamped beneath Mount Sinai (*Ant.* 3.286).

The Bible (Num. 10:1-10) rather abruptly introduces G-d’s command to Moses to make two silver trumpets. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.291) has a much smoother transition. He has just discussed the arrangement

⁴¹ So Gallant 1988, 140.

of the Israelite camp (*Ant.* 3.289) and then notes that so long as the divine cloud was stationary above the tabernacle in the camp, the Israelites thought it good to remain, but that when it was removed they deemed it wise to break up their camp. Then comes the statement about Moses' invention of the silver trumpets (*Ant.* 3.291; cf. Num. 10:1-2), which, we are told, were sounded when the Tabernacle was to be moved (*Ant.* 3.293; cf. Num. 10:5-8).

The Bible (Num. 9:1-3) abruptly states that G-d told Moses to observe the Passover offering in the second year since the exodus from Egypt. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.294) has a much smoother transition. He notes that the trumpets (*Ant.* 3.291-93) were used for sacrificial ceremonies, both on the Sabbath and on the days of festivals. He then adds that it was now for the first time since their departure from Egypt that the Israelites kept the Passover sacrifice, this presumably being announced by the trumpets.

5. REARRANGEMENT IN JOSEPHUS, *ANTIQUITIES*, BOOK 4

The Bible (Num. 35:6-7) states that 48 cities are to be assigned to the Levites. Included among these are six cities of refuge for the benefit of the unintentional homicide (Num. 35:6-15). Normally, we would expect that Josephus would mention the details concerning this prescription in a single passage, as does the Bible. However, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.67) speaks separately of the assignment of the 48 cities and of the six cities of refuge (*Ant.* 4.172-73). The reason for his separation of the passages is, it would seem, that the first passage deals with how the Levites are to earn their livelihood since they are not assigned land in the division of Canaan. This passage deals with the contributions that the people are to make to the Levites along with the priests. Indeed, the word ἀναγκαῖον ("necessary," *Ant.* 4.68) seems superfluous, but it does enable Josephus to construct a punning assonantal connection between the Levitical tithes, which are intended to furnish the necessities (ἀναγκαίωv) of life, and the necessity of his speaking of the priestly gifts here.⁴² Just before the first passage Josephus has been dealing with the rebellion of Korah

⁴² So Gallant 1988, 156.

and the reassertion of Aaron's title to the high priesthood (*Ant.* 4.66). In the passage that follows (*Ant.* 4.69) we are told that of their 48 cities the Levites are to cede thirteen to the priests and that they are to deduct a tithe for the priests from the tithe that they receive from the people. The subject of the second passage (*Ant.* 4.172-73) is quite different, namely the refuge to be given in the Levitical cities to the involuntary murderer and the occasion when this involuntary homicide is free to end his exile, namely upon the death of the high priest.

In the Bible the law (Num. 15:17-21) requiring the setting aside of a portion of the dough which one kneads for bread follows the law concerning the sacrifice to be offered when one becomes a proselyte and the equal treatment that the proselyte is to receive (Num. 15:14-16). It, in turn, is followed by the law (Num. 15:22-29) concerning the atonement for public, unintentional idol worship. These topics are clearly not related to one another. In Josephus (*Ant.* 4.71) the law concerning the dough is preceded by the law requiring that the first-fruits of the shearing of sheep are to be given to the priests, the point of connection being that these are both dues to be presented to priests.

In the Bible the law concerning those who vow to become Nazirites (Num. 6:1-20) follows the law concerning the wife who is accused of being unfaithful (Num. 5:11-31) and precedes the instructions as to how the priests are to bless the congregation (Num. 6:22-27). Clearly, these laws have little relationship to one another. In Josephus (*Ant.* 4.72) the law concerning Nazirites follows the law concerning the dues that are to be paid to the priests (*Ant.* 4.69-71), the connection being, as Josephus notes, that the Nazirites assign their shorn locks to the priests. Following the law concerning the Nazirites Josephus (*Ant.* 4.73) has the law concerning those who vow their value to G-d (Lev. 27:1-8), the connection with the Naziriteship being that both prescriptions involve vows; and just as it is to the priests that the Nazirite assigns his shorn locks so it is to the priests that the one who has vowed his value must pay a fixed sum if he desires to be freed of his obligation.

Num. 19, containing the law of the red heifer, whereby those who have been defiled may be cleansed, precedes the statement (Num. 20:1) on the death of Miriam, but the Bible does not connect the two. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.78-79) inverts the two passages and connects

them, the point being that contact with the dead requires cleansing through the ashes of the red heifer.⁴³

The Bible (Num. 20:27-28) states that Aaron ascended Mount Hor, that Moses stripped his garments from him, that he dressed Aaron's son Eleazar in them, and that Aaron died there. It is only later, in the Bible's recapitulation of the journey of the Israelites, that we are told that he died on the first day of the fifth month (i.e. Ab) and that he was 123 years old. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.83-84) combines all this information.

Josephus, like Pseudo-Philo (*Bib. Ant.* 18.10), gives added importance to Balaam by having him offer the sacrifice (*Ant.* 4.113) before he prophesies.

The Bible (Num. 25:1) does not itself explicitly link the apparent end of the Balaam episode (Num. 24:25) with the incident involving the Israelite youths and the Midianite women (Num. 25:1-5), and only at a later point (Num. 31:16) associates Balaam with the incident. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.129) makes Balaam the originator of the Midianite scheme (*Ant.* 4.126-30).⁴⁴ The fact that Josephus (*Ant.* 4.157) once again after the conclusion of the episode with the Midianite women says that on these matters readers are free to think what they please shows that he regarded the whole complex of episodes as a single narrative.

The order of events in Num. 25:1-8 is that first the Israelite men acted immorally with the Moabite women, then a plague afflicted the Israelites, then Phinehas killed the Israelite who openly had relations with the Midianite woman, then the plague was stayed. According to Num. 25:5, Moses instructed the judges to put to death those who had apostasized. Yet, three verses later (Num. 25:8) we hear that the plague (which had not previously been mentioned), presumably sent by G-d, was stayed from the people of Israel. In Josephus, as in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* 47.1, the plague (*Ant.* 4.155) takes place after Phinehas' deed (*Ant.* 4.152-53). Apparently, Josephus felt

⁴³ The third-century Rabbi Ammi bar Nathan asks (*b.Mo'ed Q.* 28a) why the account of Miriam's death is placed in juxtaposition with the laws of the red heifer and answers that it is to show that, just as the red heifer afforded atonement by the ritual use of its ashes, so the death of the righteous affords atonement for the living whom they have left behind.

⁴⁴ So also *b.Sanh.* 106a and parallels cited by Rappaport 1930, 126 n. 180.

that it was more likely that Phinehas' daring deed inspired G-d, so to speak, to initiate His own punishing of the Israelites.

Josephus (*Ant.* 4.165) has modified the biblical order in placing Moses' appointment of Joshua as his successor (Num. 27:18-23) immediately before Moses' apportionment of land to the Transjordanian tribes (Num. 32:1-27). His apparent reason for this transposition is that he wishes to bring Moses' appointment of Joshua as his successor into immediate juxtaposition with the statement (Num. 32:18) that Moses summoned Eleazar the high priest and Joshua to lead the Israelite army across the Jordan, at the same time making the proviso that the land of the Amorites should be given to these tribes on condition of their fighting along with their brethren (*Ant.* 4.171).

In the Bible (Num. 27:1-4) the daughters of Zelophehad come to Moses noting that their father had died leaving no sons and complaining about the inheritance not being left to them. Moses is at a loss to answer them and brings the case to G-d, who judges that in such a case the inheritance should be given to the daughters. This incident, as it appears in the Bible, presents five problems: in the first place, it is embarrassing that Moses, than whom, according to the Bible itself (Deut. 34:10), no greater prophet has arisen in Israel, should have been unable to answer the complaint of the daughters. In the second place, this pericope appears suddenly and with no connection with the passage (Num. 26:1-65) which precedes, namely giving the full details of the census of the Israelites. Nor does it have any connection with what follows (Num. 27:12-14), where G-d tells Moses to climb the mountain of Abarim so that he may see the land that He has given to the Israelites. Thirdly, it is awkward that after G-d has decided that the daughters of Zelophehad are right and that they should not lose the inheritance of their father, the case should be raised once again (Num. 36:1-9), several chapters later, as if G-d had given an incomplete decision, since the daughters now raise the scenario as to what will happen if they marry outside their tribe and the land will apparently be added to the tribe into which they marry. Fourthly, this second account has no apparent connection with what precedes, namely the case of an intentional murderer who flees to a city of refuge (Num. 35:31-34). Fifthly, it is Moses now, rather than G-d, who gives the answer that the daughters are right, only to contradict himself apparently, since he says, in the name of G-d, that they are free to marry whomever they wish, but in the

very same sentence (Num. 36:6) asserts that they should marry only those who are members of their tribe.

Josephus (*Ant.* 4.174-75) resolves all these problems. In the first place, Moses is not stymied by the question of Zelophehad's daughters and answers them directly without having to consult with God. Secondly, there is a point of connection with what precedes, namely the distribution of the Amorite land (*Ant.* 4.166-71)⁴⁵ and the land (cities) given to the Levites (*Ant.* 4.172-73), since in the case of Zelophehad's daughters the question is also one concerning the inheritance of the land of their father. Thirdly, Josephus avoids the awkwardness of having Josephus take up the issue of Zelophehad's daughters twice by having a single account. Fourthly, there is no problem of a point of connection with what precedes in the second account, since there is no second account. Fifthly, there is no contradiction, since he omits Moses' statement (Num. 36:6) that the daughters should marry within the tribe of their father. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.175) makes it clear that if they married into another tribe the inheritance would, nevertheless, remain within the tribe of their father.

It would seem to be remarkable that Josephus does not begin his survey of the laws with the Decalogue, as does Philo (*Dec.* 1)⁴⁶ two generations before him. However, for Josephus the most central issue of his *Antiquities* is the constitution and philosophy of the ideal state, that is of the Jews; and being so proud of his priestly status Josephus naturally began by emphasizing the importance of Jerusalem and the Temple (*Ant.* 4.200).

Josephus begins his summary of the Jewish laws with the case of the blasphemer (*Ant.* 4.202) because he is dealing with a sacerdotal theocracy and hence starts with the one who radically denies this system after having taken part in it and whose punishment, consequently, is the most severe. Gallant,⁴⁷ for his part, remarks that Josephus' discussion of blasphemy here seems to interrupt the flow of ideas concerning monotheism and the Temple (*Ant.* 4.201) and the annual pilgrimages (*Ant.* 4.203-4) to the Temple in Jerusalem, suggesting that the regulation concerning blasphemy might have been more appropriately placed among the laws concerning sacrilege

⁴⁵ So Nodet 1995, 4:43, n.4.

⁴⁶ So Nodet 1995, 48 n. 1.

⁴⁷ Gallant 1988, 170-72.

(*Ant.* 4.206-7). But he concludes that the presentation concerning blasphemy, which is, after all, attacking the unity of G-d, emphasizes the authority of monotheism. As he notes, the charge that the Jews were atheists was common in the ancient world: see Poseidonius (*ap. Jos.*, *Ap.* 2.79) and Apollonius Molon (*ap. Jos.*, *Ap.* 2.148).

That the Temple is of supreme importance for Josephus in his summary of the laws may be seen in the fact that he stresses the role played by the law (*Ant.* 4.203-4; cf. Deut. 16:16) requiring Israelites to assemble in Jerusalem three times each year so as to promote feelings of mutual affection. He then continues to stress the importance of Jerusalem in mentioning next the second tithe (*Ant.* 4.205; cf. Deut. 14:22-27), the proceeds from which are to be eaten in Jerusalem.

Deut. 23:19 speaks of the wages of a dog, i.e. of the temple prostitute; but Josephus (*Ant.* 4.206) understands the reference to the dog literally and transforms it into a sale of the mating services of the dog. He thus attains a parallel between the prostitute, who sells her body for mating purposes, and the dog. The connection of this law with what precedes is that no sacrifices in the holy Temple, which is so central in these first laws, may be paid from the hire of a prostitute.

The next law, forbidding the blaspheming of gods of other peoples or robbing of foreign temples (*Ant.* 4.207), a commandment without biblical counterpart, is closely connected with what precedes in that holy as the Temple is for the Jew he must also have respect for the temples of others. In reading "gods" Josephus is apparently following the LXX version of Exod. 22:27, which renders לֹא תִקְלָא אֱלֹהִים as "thou shalt not revile gods" (θεοὺς οὐ κακολογήσεις).⁴⁸

One may wonder what the connection of the next law, forbidding wearing garments of mixed wool and linen (*Ant.* 4.208; cf. Deut. 22:11), might be with what precedes and follows. The link is again the Temple, since Josephus calls attention here to the fact that such clothing is permitted for priests.

The next law, pertaining to the reading of the laws every seven years (*Ant.* 4.209-11; cf. Deut. 31:10-13), is linked with what precedes in that this reading is to be done by the high priest in Jerusalem in

⁴⁸ The same interpretation is found in Philo (*Mos.* 2.205 and *Spec.* 1.53). Both Josephus (*Ap.* 2.237) and Philo (*Mos.* 2.205) argue that the very name "god" deserves respect.

the presence of all the Jews who have gathered for the festival of Tabernacles (*Ant.* 4.209).

This reading of the laws, in turn, serves as an introduction to the purpose of the laws, to learn the rewards for their observance and the penalties for their non-observance. Josephus now refers to the requirement to recite the *Shema* (*Ant.* 4.212; cf. Deut. 6:7, 11:19) twice daily and to remember with thanksgiving the deliverance from Egypt. A similar purpose is served by the directive that follows to inscribe this prescription in the *mezuzot* on one's doorposts and in the phylacteries (*Ant.* 4.213; cf. Deut. 6:9, Exod. 13:16 and Deut. 6:8).

All the above is intended to teach the Israelites reverence for G-d. This naturally leads to the next topic, the administration of justice (*Ant.* 4.214-18; cf. Deut. 16:18-20), since, as Josephus stresses (*Ant.* 4.215), respect for those in high position makes people more reverent toward G-d. On the other hand, to be influenced unduly by gain or rank in rendering judgments would be to make these judges more powerful than G-d Himself.

Next, in continuation of the theme of the centrality of justice, Josephus mentions the role of witnesses and their qualifications (*Ant.* 4.219; cf. Deut. 17:6, 19:15-21). The matter that follows, the case of the undetected murderer (*Ant.* 4.220-22; cf. Deut. 21:1-4), calls attention, in any system of justice, to the importance of magistrates who are to seek out and to punish criminals.

Note that Josephus (*Ant.* 4.223-24; cf. Deut. 17:14-20) places the discussion of the qualities and functions of the king after the passages about the administration of justice (*Ant.* 4.214-18; cf. Deut. 16:18-20), witnesses (*Ant.* 4.219; cf. Deut. 17:6-7, 19:15-21), and the case of the unsolved murder (*Ant.* 4.220-22; cf. Deut. 21:1-9). The point of connection is, as Josephus puts it in the discussion of the king (*Ant.* 4.223), that he, like judges, should have a perpetual care for justice.

Following the law concerning the setting up of a king (*Ant.* 4.223-24) Josephus has the law forbidding the removal of boundary-markers (*Ant.* 4.225; cf. Deut. 19:14). The point of connection is that in both cases one should not overstep one's bounds. Just as a king, as Josephus says, must be restrained from becoming more powerful than is expedient for the welfare of his subjects, so one must not be covetous of going beyond one's boundaries. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.225) then adds a parallel between uprooting boundary-stones and vio-

lating G-d's laws. In this connection Gallant⁴⁹ has noted that just as Josephus uses a simple verb, κινεῖν, to denote displacement of boundary-stones and a compound verb, μετακινούοντας, to denote transgression of the laws, so also he uses a simple adjective, βεβαίαν, to denote G-d's firm decree but a compound word, ὑπερβαίνειν, to denote transgression of the laws.

The next law (*Ant.* 4.226-27; cf. Lev. 19:23-25), prohibiting the enjoyment of one's fruit before the fruit tree's fourth year, likewise stresses the importance of not overstepping one's boundaries, for, as Josephus says, this fruit has not been borne in season and hence befits neither G-d nor the owner himself.

In the Bible (Lev. 19:19) the law forbidding mixtures, whether mating an animal with an animal of another species or of planting a field with mixed seeds or of mingling fibers in a garment follows the law (Lev. 19:16-18) that one should love one's fellow human being and precedes the law concerning lying carnally with a slavewoman (Lev. 29:20-22). There is clearly no connection of these laws with one another. In Josephus (*Ant.* 4.228-30) the law forbidding unnatural mixing of plants fits naturally after the law (*Ant.* 4.227) that closes with the statement that in the fifth year one is at liberty to enjoy the fruits of one's planting. Moreover, as the Bible does not, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.229-30) explains the rationale of this law, namely that if unnatural mixing were permitted it might lead, through imitation, to some perversion of the constitution. Hence, this case, too, fits in with the emphasis which Josephus places, in general, on the proper arrangement of the laws.

It is not until he gives his systematic summary of the laws that Josephus presents the laws concerning construction of the altar (*Ant.* 4.200-1). He reserves the other laws of Exodus 21-23 for this later point as well. He further presents these there in a more organized, orderly, and logical fashion: bondsmen (*Ant.* 4.273), when he discusses the laws of theft, since a thief becomes a slave when he is unable to repay what he has stolen (*Ant.* 4.272); murder and manslaughter and bodily injuries (*Ant.* 4.277-80), when he discusses quarrels and concern for the sightless and the dumb (*Ant.* 4.276); kidnapping, when he discusses theft (*Ant.* 4.271); the goring ox and damage caused by a pit (*Ant.* 4.281-84), when he discusses the *lex talionis* (*Ant.* 4.280);

⁴⁹ Gallant 1988, 204.

stealing livestock (*Ant.* 4.272), when he discusses theft in general (*Ant.* 4.271); discovery of a thief (*Ant.* 4.271-72, when he discusses the laws of loans and pledges (*Ant.* 4.267-70); laws of deposits (*Ant.* 4.285-87), when he discusses the laws concerning prompt payment of wages (*Ant.* 4.288); sorcery, when he discusses the prohibition of poison (*Ant.* 4.279), since the LXX on Exod. 22:17 renders the word “sorceress” (מכשפה) by the word “poisoners” (φαρμάκους); security for loans (*Ant.* 4.269), when he discusses the laws concerning loans and pledges generally (*Ant.* 4.267-70); blaspheming G-d (*Ant.* 4.202), when he discusses the uniqueness of Jerusalem and the uniqueness of G-d (*Ant.* 4.301); blaspheming gods (*Ant.* 4.207), when he discusses the law forbidding wearing garments woven of wool and linen (*Ant.* 4.208) perhaps because he is aware of a tradition recorded later by Maimonides (*Guide for the Perplexed* 3.37) explaining that such garments are prohibited because heathen priests adorned themselves with garments containing vegetable and animal material; disrespect for parents (*Ant.* 4.260), in connection with the law concerning rebellious children (*Ant.* 4.260-64); violation of a virgin (*Ant.* 4.252), in connection with the discussion of the laws of marriage (*Ant.* 4.244-59); concern for the poor and the oppressed (*Ant.* 4.231), in connection with his general discussion of the rights of the poor (*Ant.* 4.231-37); concern for widows and orphans (*Ant.* 4.240), in connection with the triennial tithe for them (*Ant.* 4.240-43); and the integrity of the judicial process, in connection with the general discussion of the administration of justice (*Ant.* 4.214-19).

The Bible (Lev. 19:9-10) mentions the laws requiring one to leave for the poor the corners of the field and the gleanings of one’s harvest and the undeveloped twigs of one’s vineyard immediately after the law that one must eat a peace-offering on the day that one has slaughtered it or on the very next day (Lev. 19:5-8), although the two provisions seem to be utterly unconnected. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.231), on the other hand, introduces the former rule in his discussion of the rights of the disadvantaged (*Ant.* 4.231-43).

After his discussion (*Ant.* 4.231-32; cf. Lev. 19:9-10, Deut. 24:19) concerning the rights of the poor to avail themselves of the sheaves left by owners when they gather in their crops, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.233; cf. Deut. 25:4) cites the law, which shows a similar concern for the weak, prohibiting the muzzling of oxen and forbidding owners to prohibit wayfarers (*Ant.* 4.234; cf. Deut. 23:25), whether natives or strangers, from touching fruits of the season, since one must not

account as expenditure that which one lets people take out of generosity (*Ant.* 4.237).

This leads naturally to the next topic, namely the punishment for those who are not generous but greedy. So far as Josephus is concerned, scourging (*Ant.* 4.238; cf. Deut. 25:1-3) is an appropriate punishment for one who is enslaved to greed, since scourging is a punishment suitable only for slaves. It is, therefore, most apposite that Josephus (*Ant.* 4.239), in the very next paragraph, recalls the slavery that the Israelites experienced in Egypt.

The next topic, the triennial tithe for widows and orphans (*Ant.* 4.240; Deut. 14:28-29, 26:12-15), continues the theme of social responsibility for the poor and the weak. There follows the description of the ceremony after offering the tithes, the main point of which is to ask G-d to continue such favor toward all Jews in common (*Ant.* 4.243).

Having dealt with social concerns for the weak, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.244-59) now takes up the laws of marriage and the family, which are basic to the sound structure of society generally. What is crucial here is the point that he has stressed so strongly hitherto, namely that one must learn to restrain oneself within boundaries of what is permitted and what is forbidden (*Ant.* 4.244-45). He emphasizes that one must operate within the bounds of law and justice, so that (*Ant.* 4.246; cf. Deut. 22:13-21) if he has betrothed a bride in the belief that she is a virgin, he should, if she appears not to be so afterwards, bring a suit to that effect and if guilty, the woman is to be stoned; but if the woman is innocent he is to be whipped and pay a monetary penalty.

Josephus (*Ant.* 4.249-50; cf. Deut. 21:15-17) mentions the case concerning the son of the wife held in more affection but who is younger than the son of the wife who is held in less affection and who, nevertheless, seeks to obtain a double portion of his father's inheritance. He inserts this account between the case of the bride who is accused of lacking the signs of virginity (*Ant.* 4.246-48; cf. Deut. 22:13-21) and the case of the violation of the betrothed woman (*Ant.* 4.251-52; cf. Deut. 22:23-27). The connection of these cases is the fact that in each a man has been guilty of unjust or unfair treatment of a woman.

The cases dealt with above are those involving illegal or unjust relations. Next Josephus (*Ant.* 4.253; cf. Deut. 24:14) deals with the proper separation of husband and wife, namely through divorce.

One may wonder why Josephus (*Ant.* 4.257-59; cf. Deut. 21:10-14) presents the case of the man who wishes to have relations with a woman whom he has taken prisoner after the case of levirate marriage (*Ant.* 4.254-56; cf. Deut. 25:5-10). Josephus supplies a connection in that he notes that the purpose of levirate marriage is that a child may be born with the name of the deceased who will be heir to the estate (*Ant.* 4.254); as to the man who wishes to marry the prisoner, "it is fair and just that in taking her to bear children, he should have regard for her wishes" (*Ant.* 4.258).

One notes that following the mention of levirate marriage and the marriage with a prisoner Josephus (*Ant.* 4.260-64; cf. Deut. 21:18-21) cites the case of the rebellious children. The connection is that in the first two cases the purpose is to produce children; in the case of the rebellious children, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.261) says that the parents are to tell them that their purpose in getting married was so that they might have children who would tend them in their old age and who would provide them whatever they needed. The rebellious son, therefore, is, in effect, subverting the procreative aspect of marriage.⁵⁰ Moreover, as Josephus (*Ant.* 4.260) stresses, such youths, by scorning their parents, have not paid them the honor that is due to them. He thus combines this law with the commandment "Honor your father and your mother" (Exod. 20:12, Deut. 5:16).⁵¹ Josephus' combination of the law of the rebellious son with that of honoring one's parents may also be seen in *Apion* 2.206, where the penalty for dishonoring parents is stoning, which is actually the penalty inflicted on the rebellious son (Deut. 21:21).⁵²

The fact that rebellious children are to be stoned to death (*Ant.* 4.264; cf. Deut. 21:21) and, after remaining for the whole day exposed to general view, are to be buried at night leads to Josephus' next topic, namely the general rule that those who have been condemned to death are to be given proper burial.

The discussion of the prohibition of usury which follows (*Ant.* 4.266; cf. Deut. 23:20-21) is in line with the emphasis which Josephus places upon the importance of showing generosity and of not taking advantage of someone in distress, a concern that the rebellious child has not shown.

⁵⁰ So Gallant 1988, 238-39.

⁵¹ So Goldenberg 1978, 43-44.

⁵² So Goldenberg 1978, 47, who remarks that Philo (*Spec.* 2.232) also combines the two laws.

In the statement of the law concerning loans and pledges (*Ant.* 4.267-70; cf. Deut. 24:10-13, Exod. 22:24-26) Josephus specifies, in an addition to the biblical text, silver and produce as the objects that have been borrowed. Josephus discusses this topic immediately after his discussion of usury (*Ant.* 4.266; cf. Lev. 25:37, Deut. 23:20), where he specifically mentions lending money and food upon usury. His addition of silver and produce in connection with loans thus seems to have been influenced by their mention in the Bible's own passage about usury.⁵³

The discussion of the law of theft of a person (*Ant.* 4.271; cf. Exod. 21:16) naturally leads to a statement concerning theft of objects (*Ant.* 4.271; cf. Exod. 22:6-7) and, in turn to the case of theft of cattle (*Ant.* 4.272; cf. Exod. 22:3) and this, in turn, to the case where the thief is unable to pay the imposed amount and consequently becomes a slave of those who had him condemned (*Ant.* 4.272; cf. Exod. 22:2). This then leads naturally to the discussion of the general law concerning a Jew who is a slave to another Jew (*Ant.* 4.273; cf. Exod. 21:2-6 and Deut. 15:12-18).

The connection between the law of the emancipation of slaves (*Ant.* 4.273; cf. Exod. 21:2-5 and Deut. 15:12-18) and the restitution of lost property (*Ant.* 4.274; cf. Deut. 22:1-3) seems difficult to ascertain. Perhaps the link is that in the former the slave is restored to his former state of freedom, just as the lost property is restored to its former owner in the latter.

Similar concern for those who have suffered distress is to be seen in the next laws, that requiring one to help to rescue another person's beast that is in difficulty (*Ant.* 4.275; cf. Deut. 22:4), and that requiring one to give directions to those who are lost on the way (*Ant.* 4.276; cf. Deut. 27:18)⁵⁴ and forbidding reviling the sightless and the dumb (*Ant.* 4.276; cf. Lev. 19:14).

In Deut. 18:10-11 we are told that an enchanter, conjurer, charmer, consulter with familiar spirits, and a wizard are not to be tolerated among the Israelites, but there is no specific mention of a poisoner. The Hebrew of Exod. 22:17 reads "You shall not permit a sorceress (מכשפה) to live." The LXX renders the verse as φαρμάκους οὐ

⁵³ So Goldenberg 1978, 87-88.

⁵⁴ This would seem to be a direct refutation of the charge repeated by Juvenal (*Sat.* 14.103), who declares that Jews do not point out the road except to those who practice the same rites as they do, that is, that Jews help only their coreligionists.

περιποιήσετε (“You shall not preserve poisoners”). The mention of the *lex talionis* in connection with the poisoner in Josephus (*Ant.* 4.279) is not found in Scripture. Its citation here provides a point of connection with the other juxtaposed cases (*Ant.* 4.278, 280) where it is also prescribed, namely in the case of the pregnant woman who dies of a kick (*Ant.* 4.278; cf. Exod. 21:22-23) and of someone who maims another (*Ant.* 4.280; cf. Exod. 21:24-25, Lev. 24:19-20). To be sure, the death penalty for the poisoner is, strictly speaking, not a case of *lex talionis*, since the crime is the simple possession of poison, and the would-be poisoner is not poisoned in punishment. The penalty here is, rather, for the intended injury, as in the case of false testimony (Deut. 19:19)⁵⁵ or in that of the stubborn and rebellious son (Deut. 21:18-21).

In the case of the person who injures another (*Ant.* 4.280; cf. Exod. 21:23-25, Lev. 24:17-20), Josephus prescribes the punishment of limb for limb unless the maimed person is willing to accept a monetary settlement. Gallant⁵⁶ suggests that the concept of a monetary payment may have occurred to Josephus because of the case of the ox that gores a slave (*Ant.* 4.282; cf. Exod. 21:32), which follows after this *lex talionis* passage.

With regard to the pit that a person digs (*Ant.* 4.283; cf. Exod. 21:33-34) Josephus adds to the biblical prescription that the one who dug the pit must take care to lay planks above it.⁵⁷ This provides a link to the law that follows (*Ant.* 4.284; cf. Deut. 22:8), namely that a roof must have a protective fence.⁵⁸

Gallant⁵⁹ notes a stem-asonantal link between the verb “pay” (καταβαλλέτω) at the end of the sentence concerning the pit (*Ant.* 4.284) and the verb περιβαλλέσθω (“place around”), which starts the sentence about the parapet, thus connecting the two laws.

⁵⁵ So Gallant 1988, 258. Philo (*Spec.* 3.95) justifies such preemptive punishment in the case of poisoners.

⁵⁶ Gallant 1988, 259.

⁵⁷ Here, too, Josephus, by saying (*Ant.* 4.283) that the purpose of this law is not in order that people should be prevented from fetching water but so that there should be no danger that they would fall in, seems to be replying to the claim, later repeated by Juvenal (*Sat.* 14.104), that the Jews “conduct none but the circumcised to the desired fountain.”

⁵⁸ So Gallant 1988, 264. Philo (*Spec.* 3.148-49), like Josephus, combines the two laws concerning wells and battlements which appear separately in the Bible.

⁵⁹ Gallant 1988, 265.

That one should have a sense of responsibility toward others is stressed in the law that follows, that the receiver of a deposit must regard it as if it were a sacred and divine object (*Ant.* 4.285-87; cf. *Exod.* 22:6-12). Similarly, according to the next law, wages are to be promptly paid (*Ant.* 4.288; cf. *Deut.* 24:14-15), since to withhold wages is, in effect, like taking unfair advantage of an object which has been entrusted to someone.

Josephus (*Ant.* 4.289; cf. *Deut.* 24:16) declares that children are not responsible for the wrongdoing of parents and vice versa. He then cites the law (*Ant.* 4.290; cf. *Deut.* 23:2) that one should shun eunuchs and those who have deprived themselves of their manhood. The connection between these laws is that eunuchs have no justification for not having children, since parents are not responsible for the sins of their children.⁶⁰

Now that Josephus has surveyed the laws applicable to times of peace, he turns, as a kind of appendix, to provisions for war (*Ant.* 4.292-301, cf. *Deut.* 20:1-20), first that one should meet to parley with the enemy to indicate the desire for peace; secondly, that the army must be immaculate and those who have recently married are exempt from service; and thirdly, that the army must abstain from outrageous actions, in particular from cutting down cultivated trees. Finally, although the Bible (*Deut.* 22:5) prohibits transvesticism generally, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.301) applies this specifically to dress in battle.

6. CONCLUSION

Although Josephus insists that he has not added to or subtracted from the Scriptures in his alleged paraphrase, perhaps because he had a precedent in the LXX and in the Targumim,⁶¹ he does admit that he has innovated in rearranging the order of topics, since, he claims, Moses left the Pentateuch in the disordered condition in which G-d gave it to him. If, then, we ask why Josephus felt a need to present his version of the rewritten Bible when the LXX itself

⁶⁰ So Gallant 1988, 270. Gallant also points out an assonantal connection, namely that children permit (ἐπιτρέπόντων) themselves things that are contrary to their parents' instruction, but that eunuchs do not have this justification, so that consequently one must turn away (ἐκτρέπεσθαι) from them.

⁶¹ See the discussion in Feldman 1998, 39-46.

actually does do more than merely translate it, the answer would seem to be that he, using the language of a general, a role that he had indeed played in the war against the Romans, has tried to set forth the biblical details in a more orderly arrangement.

In doing this Josephus was following the lead of another historian, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who wrote a work, *Roman Antiquities*, with a similar title and in the same number of books, twenty, and who is the one historian in antiquity who himself wrote, somewhat less than a century earlier, treatises on how to write history. It is in those treatises that Dionysius sets forth criteria for organizing historical material, even going so far as to criticize that idol of all historians, including Josephus' favorite, Thucydides, for presenting a choppy narrative, disruptive of its continuity.

A similar stress on proper arrangement of material is found in Diodorus Siculus, a contemporary of Dionysius, who wrote a universal history comparable in scope to Josephus' *Antiquities*. A comparable stress on careful marshalling of facts is found in two of the great literary critics of antiquity, Pseudo-Longinus, who wrote in Greek perhaps a generation before Josephus, and Quintilian, Josephus' contemporary, who wrote in Latin.

In rearranging material in the narrative portion of the Pentateuch Josephus' general principles are to avoid *non sequiturs* and digressions within a given episode; to maintain a logical and temporal sequence and a causal relationship in the various episodes of his narrative (that is, preserving continuity on a given subject once he has broached this, thus, for example, connecting the Balaam episode with the incident involving the Israelite youths and the Midianite women); to provide a smoother transition between episodes; to avoid contradictions and needless repetitions (as in the digging of another well by Isaac's servants); to change the order of events, as in the encounter between Joseph and his brothers in Egypt, so as to make the account more dramatic; to fill in gaps in the biblical narrative (such as identifying by name personalities who are referred to and further identifying geographical areas that are mentioned) and yet to hurry the narrative along; to maintain the emphasis on key figures such as Abraham and Moses; to highlight biblical personalities and to de-emphasize the role of G-d; to build up the stature of non-Jews such as Jethro and thus to show that Jews show respect for non-Jews; to omit embarrassing defects such as Moses' speech impediment and Moses' seeming lack of faith; to explain the Israelites' apparent lack of integrity in "bor-

rowing" jewelry and clothing from the Egyptians; to explain how the Israelites could have been armed when they left Egypt; to explain obscurities such as the identity of the one with whom Jacob wrestled or whether Esau was actually sincere when he embraced Jacob; to answer questions that the Bible should have raised but did not raise; to omit embarrassing answers by biblical personages, such as Jacob's incriminating answer to his father that he is Esau, his first-born; to omit passages that raise serious questions as to the authorship and date of composition of various biblical books; to omit long lists of names as being boring; to give the reason for apparently arbitrary statements; to explain away improbabilities, such as how Jacob could have been unaware until the following morning that it was Leah who had been given to him by Laban and how Joseph, who had no experience as an agricultural administrator, could have managed to oversee the agricultural production of so large a country as Egypt; to explain the favoritism by Jacob for Joseph; to support the biblical narrative by citing non-Jewish sources that can buttress the historicity of its account; to add proleptical comments that will provide an interpretive framework in the light of which his later solutions will appear most natural; to follow the norms of good etiquette, such as by having the guest, Abraham's servant, eat before discharging his errand; to introduce a romantic aspect where possible, as, for example, by placing the covenant between Abimelech and Abraham after the episode of Abimelech and Sarah; and apologetically to avoid antagonizing his Roman patrons and audience by omitting, for example, Esau's intention to kill Jacob, perhaps because he knew the tradition identifying the Romans as descended from Esau, and to omit, for a similar reason, Jacob's offer of a bribe-like gift to Esau.

Thus, Josephus supplies the connection, missing in the Bible, between Adam's naming of all living creatures and the creation of Eve by having G-d notice that Adam alone, of all creatures, was without a mate. The Noah narrative, which is replete with digressions in Josephus, would seem to be an exception to Josephus' tight co-ordinating of details; but each digression is apologetically motivated, with Josephus using the opportunity to resolve discrepancies in chronology, to explain the longevity of the patriarchs, and to provide proof that the Flood really occurred and that the Greeks and other peoples of antiquity are actually descended from Noah. Moreover, where there are seeming duplications of incidents, as in that of the Pharaoh and Sarai and the one with Abimelech, Josephus antici-

pates the objection of the reader by stating quite openly through a cross-reference, that Abraham practiced the same dissimulation as previously and from the same motive, fear. He connects seemingly disparate events, as for example the death of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu with the fire that went forth during the ceremonies at the inauguration of the Tabernacle.

It is especially in his systematic summary of the laws that Josephus organizes them in a more orderly and logical fashion, in particular showing the connection of each law with that which precedes and that which follows. In organizing the laws Josephus thus follows Philo's *De Specialibus Legibus* and antedates the Mishnah by over a century. Significantly, he, the proud priest, starts his discussion of the laws with a detailed description of the Tabernacle, the forerunner of the Temple. Here Josephus avoids the Bible's duplications and employs a more logical format, beginning with a discussion of the materials, the names of the builders, and continuing with a description of the Tabernacle itself, as if leading the reader on a tour of it, starting with the outer court and continuing with the exterior and then the interior of the Tabernacle. He then describes the vestments of the ordinary priests and those of the high priest, citing the items of clothing in the order in which one puts them on. When he departs from his usual ordering of details, as in his description of the Urim and Thummim, Josephus is careful to be apologetic about his doing so. He presents the descriptions of the sacrifices in a more orderly fashion than is found in the Pentateuch, in particular noting the features that they have in common. He is careful to note the connection between the narrative portions and the legal provisions, as, for example, between the report of the spies and the meal offering and the account of the death of Miriam and the law of the red heifer. Most significantly, he places the law forbidding the blaspheming of gods of other peoples (though there is no such biblical commandment) immediately after his discussion of the holiness of the Temple, the implication being clearly that Jews are to respect the temples of others. He emphasizes the importance of justice in placing the discussion of the qualities and functions of the king immediately after the passages about the administration of justice. In particular, his point in connecting the establishment of a monarchy after the law forbidding the removal of boundary markers is that one should not overstep one's bounds. Again, whereas in the Bible the food laws are scattered, Josephus has brought them all together in a single chapter. To attain smoothness

Josephus frequently resorts to punning assonantal connections. He stresses that unnatural mixture of species may lead, through imitation, to some perversion of the constitution. He connects a number of laws with the theme of social responsibility for the poor and the weak. This brings him, quite naturally, to the laws of marriage and the family, which are basic to the sound structure of society generally.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREEK TRAGEDIANS ON JOSEPHUS

1. THE INFLUENCE OF DRAMA ON HISTORIOGRAPHY

It is no mere coincidence that the beginnings of the writing of history by the Greeks coincide almost precisely with the beginnings of the writing of tragedies. As a matter of fact, as Walbank¹ comments, there had long existed a connection between history and tragedy, since both were based upon a common subject matter, the Greek myths, which, of course, were regarded as historically true. Both appealed to the emotions when read aloud (for history was also so read), both emphasized the moral lessons to be conveyed, and both had a common rhetorical background.² The classical Greek historians, so much studied and admired by Josephus, were from the very beginning deeply influenced by the tragedians. Herodotus, who greatly influenced Josephus, particularly in his *Antiquities*,³ has the materials for more than one tragedy embodied in his work. Indeed, Bury suggests that the solemn immanence of a divine direction of human affairs, which is strongly accentuated in the last three books of Herodotus' history, was due to the Athenian dramas that had dealt with the subject of the Persian invasion, namely the tragedies of Phrynicus and Aeschylus.⁴

As for Thucydides, who most influenced Josephus,⁵ Cornford⁶ has

¹ Walbank 1972, 38.

² Cf. Doran 1979, 107-14, who remarks that the term "tragic history" is employed merely to give a backhanded compliment rather than to classify it according to a particular genre.

³ See Ek 1945-46, 27-62, 213.

⁴ Bury 1909, 68.

⁵ On Josephus' knowledge of and indebtedness to Thucydides, see Drüner 1896, 1-34; Thackeray 1929, 110-14; Shutt 1961, 68-75; and Feldman 1984, 827-830. While it is true that Thackeray's theory that an assistant, steeped in Thucydides, is responsible for the style of Books 17-19 of the *Antiquities* has rightly been questioned, there are many reminiscences of Thucydides in vocabulary, grammar, and style throughout the *Antiquities*.

developed the view that he saw the whole Peloponnesian War as a great tragedy, in which the Sicilian expedition marks the *περιπέτεια* for Athens.⁷ Indeed, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 15) notes that Thucydides described terrible and poignant sufferings so vividly as to leave future historians and poets no room for exaggeration. Furthermore, the speeches that are a characteristic device not only of Herodotus and Thucydides but of ancient historians generally are, of course, essentially dramatic in origin.⁸

The fact that Aristotle (*Poetics* 9.3.1451B5-7, 22.1459A) differentiates between history and poetry, noting that history relates particular events whereas poetry is concerned with universals, and adds that the work of Herodotus would not be poetry even if it were written in verse, would indicate that in actuality they were similar and deserving of such a comparison and differentiation. Moreover, the fact that he does not cite the arousal of pity and terror (*Poetics* 6.1449B27-29) as a point differentiating tragedy from history would seem to that this is not a characteristic unique to tragedy. And if, indeed, as Aristotle (*Poetics* 9.3.1451B5-7) says, poetry (which, of course, includes tragedy) is more philosophical and of graver import than history, inasmuch as the former is more universal, it is natural, as Von Fritz implies, that to enhance history it had to be made more universal and hence more similar to poetry.⁹ "The universality of tragedy," as Gomme, remarks, "consists of the fact that it represents what stands as an extreme possibility behind every life and perhaps also in a less extreme form becomes reality, in every life."¹⁰ It is this quality of painting history in universal colors that we shall find throughout Josephus' account of the history of the Jews.

The school of Isocrates shows the great influence of rhetoric and tragedy on history. Indeed, the historian Theodectes actually wrote fifty tragedies. Another student, Asclepiades of Tragilus, quite significantly wrote a work entitled the *Τραγωδούμενα*, which, in all probability, later became an important source for the Mythogra-

⁶ Cornford 1907, 129-52.

⁷ Cf. Finley 1942, 321-25; and Ullman 1942, 27.

⁸ See Bury 1909, 116; and Cornford 1907, 137.

⁹ Von Fritz 1936, 85-145, cited and commented upon by Villalba 1986, 236-37.

¹⁰ Gomme 1954, 120.

phers. Wilamowitz calls it a *historia fabulosa*;¹¹ Ullman notes that it was a mythology based on tragedy rather than on epic or on earlier mythological treatises.¹² Likewise, Isocrates' pupil Theopompus clearly shows the influence of tragedy upon history, for he greatly favored the sensational and the marvelous in his works. Indeed, Strabo (1.2.35) points to Theopompus as an outstanding example of an historian who introduced sensational myths to give pleasure to his readers.

But it was not only the school of Isocrates that showed how deeply tragedy had influenced history. The other great school of rhetoric in the fourth century B.C.E., that of Aristotle, produced in Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew and disciple, one who went all out to arouse admiration and pity in his history of Alexander.¹³ Furthermore, the influence of tragedy was extremely strong on the historical works of Duris of Samos, a pupil of Aristotle's successor Theophrastus.¹⁴ Duris was dissatisfied with the historiographical styles of Ephorus and of Theopompus, who, he said, failed to excite the pleasure that history ought to arouse. Although their art actually did not lack embellishment, he found them too prosaic.¹⁵ His exaggeration in tragic fashion was notorious.¹⁶ He moved the feelings of his readers with the most ornate pathetic scenes, precisely materials similar to Saul's seance with the witch of Endor, which Josephus (*Ant.* 6.329-42) builds up to a high degree, and entertained them with the most fantastic anecdotes and gossip that his fertile imagination could dream up. He described the costumes appropriate to the time and circumstances in which the figures in his histories were dressed. We know that he wrote treatises on tragedy and on Sophocles and Euripides.

¹¹ Wilamowitz 1875, 181 n. 3.

¹² Ullman 1942, 30.

¹³ Ullman 1942, 34-37, nevertheless, asserts that in his approach to tragic history Callisthenes was a follower of Isocrates; but it seems hard to believe that Aristotle's own nephew would have joined Aristotle's great rival, Isocrates, in such a crucial point; in any case, none of the biographers or encyclopedists states that Callisthenes diverged from Aristotle's point of view.

¹⁴ The fact that Aristotle (*Poetics* 9.1451A-B) so sharply distinguishes tragedy and history leads Ullman 1942, 25-53, to conclude that Duris might have deserted from the Peripatetic to the Isocratean school; but more recent scholarship has questioned this hard and fast distinction between the two schools. Indeed, as Walbank 1972, 216-34, has noted, we cannot accept Ullman's thesis that the origins of tragic history are to be found in Isocrates.

¹⁵ Jacoby 1926, F1 (Μακεδονικά).

¹⁶ See Plutarch, *Pericles* 28.2.

His general fondness for quotations and for comparisons taken from tragedy is, therefore, hardly surprising. For him history was full of sensational and tragic plots.

Phylarchus, who wrote a history of the years 272-220 B.C.E. continued in the same tradition as Duris.¹⁷ It is significant that Polybius (2.56.7-8) censured him as “feminine” for aiming to move his readers to tears. Polybius (2.58.12) also charged him with telling falsehoods for the sake of sensationalism.

These historians, in both of the two major schools of Hellenistic historiography, Isocratean and Peripatetic, thus tried to arouse those emotions of pity and terror that Aristotle (*Poetics* 6.1449B24-28) felt to be peculiar to tragedy. In fact, even Polybius, who was the great critic of this trend toward rhetorical and tragic history and whom Josephus cites on several occasions (*Ant.* 12.135-37, 358-59; *Ap.* 2.84), was not immune to the influence of tragedy. Indeed, the language of tragedy may be noted in the statement in Polybius’ preface (1.1.2) in which he agrees with his predecessors that history teaches one to bear with dignity the vicissitudes of fortune by recalling the catastrophes of others. Moreover, such a statement as the following (1.1.4) might well have come from an Isocratean historian: “For the surprising nature of the events that I have undertaken to relate is in itself sufficient to challenge and stimulate the attention of everyone, old or young, to the study of my work.” An instance of the tragic approach is to be seen in the treatment of the story of Regulus, following which Polybius (1.35.4) points a moral by quoting Euripides: “One man’s skill is worth a world in arms.”¹⁸ It may, indeed, be that the popularity of tragic history in the Hellenistic period is due, in part at least, to the fact that few tragedies were put on the stage during this era and hence readers sought their tragedy in another source, namely real life, i.e., biography or biographical history. Moreover,

¹⁷ Plutarch’s lives of Agis and Cleomenes, which were taken almost entirely from Phylarchus, are the chief sources of our knowledge of Phylarchus’ actual methods in historiography. For the fragments see Jacoby 1926, II A 161-89. Cf. Plutarch’s criticism, in *Themistocles* 32.3, of Phylarchus’ tale of Themistocles’ remains, “which even an ordinary person must know is fabricated.” Phylarchus, as if in a tragedy, all but erected a stage machine for this story, according to Plutarch. By giving such a fantastic account, Phylarchus wished merely to arouse tumultuous emotion.

¹⁸ Moreover, in his treatment of Philip V of Macedonia, Polybius definitely created a tragic version with a moral. So Walbank 1938, 67. Cf. Scheller 1911, 60-61.

Connor suggests that the increased interest in this type of history is to be explained by the rise of emphasis on Tyche or Fortune.¹⁹

2. THE INFLUENCE OF TRAGEDY IN GENERAL ON JOSEPHUS

That Josephus was attracted to the great Greek tragedians may be seen in his adoption of both their language and their motifs.

That Josephus is, indeed, thinking in terms of tragedy may be seen in his use of the word “stage-masks” (προσωπεῖα), where, in commenting on Saul’s cruelty in slaughtering the priests of Nob, he reflects (*Ant.* 2.264) that it is characteristic of human nature when men attain to power to lay aside their moderate and just ways, “as if they were stage-masks,” and instead assume an attitude of audacity, recklessness, and contempt for things human and divine. The language of the stage may also be discerned in Josephus’ description (*War* 1.471) of how Antipater, Herod’s son, “with a careful eye to every detail in the staging of a play (δραματουργοῶν),” assumed the role (προσωπεῖον) of a devoted brother in his plot against his brother Alexander. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.156) uses similar language in describing the way in which the Zealots chose by lot an obscure individual named Phanni and dressed him up for his assumed part (προσωπεῖω), as on a stage (σκηνῆς).

That Josephus was acquainted with the works of Aeschylus is indicated by his use of such a phrase as “ἄπορα μὲν γίνεται τὰ πόριμα” (“the practicable things become impracticable”) (*Ant.* 1.14), which is clearly reminiscent of the very reverse in the choral passage in Aeschylus (*Prometheus Bound* 904): “ἄπορα πόριμος” (“making possible the impossible”), the only other extant author who has these two words thus in paradoxical juxtaposition. Again, such a verb as ἐκπράσσειν, “to achieve,” which is found several times in Josephus (*Ant.* 17.101, 17.106, 18.342), appears primarily and almost exclusively in the tragic poets, including five of the plays of Sophocles (*Oed. Tyr.* 377, 941, 1307; *Oedipus at Colonus* 1659; *Antigone* 303; *Ajax* 45; and *Trachiniae* 667), as well as Aeschylus (e.g., *Suppliants* 472; *Persians* 713; and *Agamemnon* 582, 1275), and Euripides (*Helen* 20; *Bacchae* 1161).²⁰

¹⁹ Connor 1985, 468.

²⁰ See Liddell and Scott 1940, 518.

As to Josephus' adoption of tragic motifs, the harsh behavior (Gen. 16:6) of Sarai toward her handmaid Hagar, who, according to the Bible (Gen. 16:4), despised Sarai after she (Hagar) had become pregnant through Abraham, is more clearly justified in Josephus' additional language, which has the ring of Greek tragedy, noting that Hagar's plight was due (*Ant.* 1.189) to her arrogant (ἄγνώμονα, "unreasonable", "obstinate", "rebellious", "unruly") and synonymously presumptuous (αὐθάδη, "arrogant", "insolent", "stubborn", "rebellious") behavior toward her mistress. One is reminded of the stubbornness (αὐθαδίαν) of Prometheus in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (1034) and of Creon's statement to Oedipus (*Soph., Oed. Tyr.*, 549-50) that "if you think obstinacy (αὐθαδίαν) without thought to be something, you are misguided," as well as the Chorus' statement (*Eur., Bacchae* 883-84) that the gods bring to correction those men who honor arrogance (ἄγνωμοσύνην) and who do not, in their sound judgment, foster things divine.

Again, in an extra-biblical addition to *Judg.* 4:3, Josephus (*Ant.* 5.200) declares that during the twenty-year period of suffering before the advent of Deborah's judgeship G-d had sought to tame the insolence (ὑβρίν) which the Israelites, through their arrogance (ἄγνωμοσύνη, "obstinacy", the noun corresponding to the adjective, ἄγνώμονα, noted above in connection with Hagar), had shown toward Him, so that they might be more moderate (σωφρονῶσιν) in the future. That is the lesson in much of Greek tragedy; one may cite as an example the passage in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (176-78) that Zeus, who has guided men to think, has laid down the rule that wisdom comes only through suffering (πάθει μάθος).

Likewise, the Philistines, in details added by Josephus (*Ant.* 5.314-15), show insolence (ἀνυβρίσωσιν) toward Samson in their cups; and he, his pride insulted (ὑβριζόμενος) by such mockery, determines to gain revenge. Again, Eli's sons (*Ant.* 5.339) are condemned as being insolent (ὑβρισταί) to men and impious to G-d. Furthermore, we read (*Ant.* 9.196), in an extra-biblical addition, that King Amaziah, after his military victories, was unable to contain himself at his good fortune (εὐπραγίας), and outraged (ἐξὑβρίζεν) G-d, from Whom he had received it; and, consequently, Josephus (*Ant.* 9.199) comments that he thinks that it was G-d Who urged Amaziah on to make war against the kingdom of Israel so that he might suffer punishment for his transgressions against Him. Likewise, Uzziah's leprosy (*Ant.* 9.226) is said to be the penalty which he paid for his insolence in thinking

that he could reach a station higher than man's. It is true that the rabbis and Pseudo-Philo also expatiate on the sins of the Israelites, but they do not use the language and the conceptual framework of Greek tragedy.

Furthermore, we may note that Queen Vashti (*Ant.* 11.192-94) is accused by the Persian King Ahasuerus' seven advisers of having insulted him. Finally, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.277) castigates Haman, in terms of Greek tragedy, for not showing moderation in time of prosperity: he did not bear his good fortune (εὐτυχίαν) wisely, nor did he make the best use of his prosperity with prudent reason (σώφρονι λογισμῷ).

One of the ways in which Josephus heightens interest in his narrative is by increasing suspense. In particular, there are several instances of added suspense in Josephus' version of the Joseph narrative. Thus, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 37:11) we learn merely that the brothers envied Joseph, Josephus (*Ant.* 2.12) says that the brothers understood that Joseph's dreams predicted that he would exercise power, majesty and supremacy over them; however, the brothers revealed nothing of this to Joseph, pretending that the dreams were unintelligible to them. There is likewise considerable build-up of suspense in Josephus' version of the search for Joseph's cup in his brothers' sacks. In the Bible (Gen. 44:11-12) each of the brothers, we are told, opened his sack, and the search proceeded from the oldest to the youngest; Josephus (*Ant.* 2.133) elaborates by describing the feeling of relief that each felt when the cup was not found in his sack. He even notes the ironic confidence they felt that the goblet would not be found in Benjamin's sack, and concludes with a description of the abuse that they poured upon their pursuers for impeding their journey.

Again, in his version of the story of Esther, there is a heightening of dramatic suspense in Josephus' introduction of Harbonah at an earlier point than he appears in the biblical narrative. In the Bible it is not until Haman has been pointed out by Esther as the one who sought to destroy her people that Harbonah remarks (Esth. 7:9) that Haman had also built gallows for Mordecai, upon which the king thereupon orders Haman to be hanged. In Josephus (*Ant.* 11.261) Harbonah, one of Esther's eunuchs sent to hasten Haman's coming to the banquet, notices the gallows, learns that they have ironically been prepared for the queen's uncle Mordecai, and for the time being holds his peace. As a storytelling device such a detail builds

up suspense, and renders Harbonah's later revelation all the more effective.²¹

Josephus likewise adds to the dramatic excitement in a series of additions (*Ant.* 1.177) to the biblical narrative. Thus, we are given a vivid picture of Abraham as a general who determines to help the Sodomites without delay, and who sets out in haste and falls upon the Assyrians on the fifth night in an attack in which he catches the enemy by surprise before they have time to arm themselves. Then we are given the graphic details of his slaughter of the enemy, how he slays some while they are still asleep, while he puts to flight others who are not yet asleep but who are incapacitated by drunkenness. The Bible (Gen. 14: 14), on the other hand, does not speak of the time and circumstances of the attack and says merely (Gen. 14:15) that Abraham continued his pursuit of the enemy, after night had fallen, with divided forces.

As an example in which Josephus increases dramatic interest we may cite the fact that whereas in the Bible (Gen. 22:9) it is Abraham who builds the altar for the sacrifice of Isaac, in Josephus' version (*Ant.* 1.227) it is Isaac himself who constructs the altar for his own sacrifice. It is likewise more dramatic to have Abraham (*Ant.* 1.228) recall the prayers for a son while he is about to place Isaac on the altar to be sacrificed and to recall that at that time he had no thought of higher happiness than to see Isaac grow to man's estate and to leave him upon his own death to be heir to his dominion.

Likewise, in the case of Joshua, Josephus supplies a number of dramatic details to enhance his military reputation; thus, in his description of the battle with Amalek, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.53) adds that the adversaries met in a hand-to-hand contest and fought with great spirit and mutual shouts of encouragement. There is also increased drama in Moses' reply (*Ant.* 4.40) to the charges of Korah, with Moses making quite a scene, raising his hands to heaven and speaking in stentorian tones. Even in his presentation of the Mosaic Code Josephus (*Ant.* 4.229) dramatically quotes what the threatened trees would say if they were endowed with voices. Furthermore, the description of the wailing for Moses' approaching death (*Ant.* 4.320-22) is much more graphic.

Another example of Josephus' desire to enhance the sense of drama

²¹ See Feldman 1970, 153.

in his rewriting of the Bible may be seen in the increased drama of Saul's selection by G-d, since it takes place at night (*Ant.* 6.37-40) rather than during the day (1 Sam. 9:15); and it is while Samuel is tossing with sleeplessness that G-d instructs him to choose the king whom He will point out. This dramatic element is further augmented by the fact that on the day before Saul's arrival G-d had declared that at precisely that hour on the following day Saul would arrive, whereas the Hebrew does not indicate the precise hour but merely declares that it will be "tomorrow about this time," and the LXX does not mention the hour at all.

Likewise, Josephus builds up the drama surrounding David's challenge to Goliath and adds (*Ant.* 6.177) to the biblical account (1 Sam. 17:26) that when David heard the Philistine giant reviling and abusing the Israelite army he became indignant. Another instance of increased drama is to be found in Josephus' account of Absalom's rebellion against and later reconciliation with his father King David. Whereas in the Bible (2 Sam. 14:33) David finally agrees to meet Absalom and kisses him, no statement by David is cited at the moment of reconciliation. In Josephus' version (*Ant.* 7.193) there is a much more dramatic scene as Absalom throws himself upon the ground and begs pardon for his sins, whereupon David, in turn, raises him up and specifically promises to forget what had happened.

Another example of increased dramatic effect is Josephus' treatment of the climactic incident in which Daniel is cast into the lions' den. According to the biblical narrative (Dan. 6:14), when King Darius heard from the satraps that Daniel had violated his edict, he was very distressed and set his heart to deliver Daniel, trying until sundown to work out a plan to save him. Josephus (*Ant.* 10.257) adds to the apprehensiveness of the scene by depicting the plotters as anticipating that Darius might treat Daniel with greater favor than they had expected and that he might be ready to pardon him despite his contempt for the royal decree. Josephus even adds at this point that they were envious of Daniel because of the regard in which he was held by Darius and hence refused to adopt a milder course.

Again, the dramatic element is increased by the additional detail, which appears in the Lucianic version but not in the Hebrew text or in the LXX, that when Haman tells Mordecai to dress himself in royal garments so that he may lead him through the city, Mordecai at first is suspicious of his intentions and, thinking that he is being

mocked, remarks (*Ant.* 11.257), “Is this the way you make sport of my misfortunes?”

One key element which renders Josephus’ paraphrase more effective is increased irony, which, as we know, is so characteristic of tragedy. As Muecke²² has noted, irony has three essential elements: it is a double-layered or two-story phenomenon to the victim of irony and to the observer; there is always some kind of opposition between the two levels, which may take the form of contradiction, incongruity or incompatibility, so that what is said is contradicted by what the observer knows; and there is an element of innocence, so that the victim is completely unaware of the very possibility of there being another point of view in addition to his own, or at any rate the author pretends not to be aware of it. The very fact that, in an addition to the Bible (Gen. 17:19, 21:3), Josephus (*Ant.* 1.213) translates the name of Isaac as “laughter,” referring to the fact that Sarah had laughed when God had said that she would give birth, heightens the irony that the aged couple, Abraham and Sarah, gave birth to a son at such an advanced age. The irony of the birth is heightened by the fact that Abraham is “on the threshold of old age” ἐπὶ γήρως οὐδῶ, a phrase borrowed from Homer, who uses it (*Iliad* 22.60) to describe Priam when he addresses his son Hector before the latter goes off to do battle with Achilles that will bring about his death,²³ thus highlighting the pathetic parallel between the aged father and the promising son who is about to die. Homer also, we may remark, uses the phrase in noting that Achilles’ father, Peleus, was as old as Priam “on the deadly threshold of old age” (ὄλωϑ̑ ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ). Hence the literate reader might well have seen the parallels among the aged Abraham, Priam, and Peleus on the one hand, and the youthful Isaac, Hector, and Achilles, all apparently doomed to die at an early age. In particular, the fact that Josephus, in the brief pericope in which he paraphrases Abraham’s intended sacrifice of Isaac (*Ant.* 1.222-36), on five occasions uses a word for happiness, stressing, on the one hand, how much happiness meant

²² Muecke 1969, 19-20. Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 8.6.54, who notes that irony is made evident to the understanding either by the delivery, the character of the speaker, or the nature of the subject.

²³ See Feldman 1984-85, 215, where I note that Homer (*Iliad* 24.487) uses the same phrase when Priam addresses Achilles, begging him to return the body of his son Hector.

to Abraham, and, on the other hand, how ready he was to forego that happiness because of his faith in God. The irony is increased by Josephus' statement (*Ant.* 1.223) that Abraham sought to leave his son ἀπαθῆ, a word that has two very different meanings, both of which are applicable here: "unscathed", in the sense that in the end Isaac will be unharmed, and "emotionless," in the sense that Isaac will actually welcome his own sacrifice.²⁴

There is likewise added irony in Josephus' version of Daniel, when he emerges unscathed from the lions' den. The biblical narrative (*Dan.* 6:24) states that Darius ordered that Daniel's accusers be cast into the lions' den, together with their wives and children, whereupon the lions broke all their bones into pieces. There is much greater drama in Josephus' version. In the first place, Josephus adds (*Ant.* 10.260) that Daniel's enemies tell the king their theory that the reason why Daniel was not harmed was that the lions were sated, whereupon the king takes them at their word and feeds the lions a large quantity of meat before throwing them into the lions' den, where, fittingly enough, they are, consumed.

Likewise, Josephus increases the irony in his version of the Esther narrative by introducing G-d's ironic laughter at Haman's hopes just before the περιπέτεια.²⁵ Again, whereas in the Bible (*Esth.* 6:6) Ahasuerus asks Haman what should be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor, Josephus' Ahasuerus (*Ant.* 11.252) adds to the irony by declaring that he knows that Haman is the only friend loyal to him. The irony is then increased, for whereas the Bible (*Esth.* 6:11) declares that Haman took the apparel and the horse and arrayed Mordecai, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.256) stresses the contrast between Mordecai clothed in sackcloth and the new purple robe which he is now told by Haman to put on. Finally, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.267-68) underscores the supreme irony in the fact that Haman was hanged on the very same gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai; he thus marvels at G-d's wisdom and justice in bringing about the result, and adds to the drama of the scene by having Queen Esther show the king the letter that Haman had written in which he had ordered the destruction of all the Jews.

It is not merely in his paraphrase of the Bible that Josephus shows

²⁴ See Feldman 1984-85, 212-52.

²⁵ On the theme of περιπέτεια in Josephus see Attridge 1976, 98.

the strong influence of the tragedians. It is no coincidence that Josephus devotes far more space to Herod than to any other historical figure. Surely one reason is that he saw tremendous dramatic possibilities, which he enhances with speeches, in his recounting of Herod's deeds and tragedies, particularly the suspicions, intrigues, conspiracies, forgeries, confessions, repentance, trials, tortures, sicknesses, murders and suicides.

Indeed, as Villalba has remarked,²⁶ Josephus is especially effective in recording aspects of depression in moments of violence, thus endowing them with a dramatic character. In particular, he describes deaths in great detail, notably in the case of Herod and his family. The portrayal of crowds wishing for a kind of *deus ex machina* to save the situation is unusually dramatic, such as, for example (*War* 1.347), the crowd congregating around the Temple, indulging in transports of frenzy and fabricating numerous oracles to fit the crisis when the city of Jerusalem is besieged by Herod.

Of course, the scene that Josephus paints of his own situation at Jotapata and his final surrender (*War* 3.316-408) is no less dramatic; and this sense of drama is enhanced particularly by Josephus' speech (*War* 3.362-68, in which he tries to deter his men from committing suicide. As Villalba appositely remarks,²⁷ the entire scene revolves around one word, μεταβολή (*War* 3.394), "change of situation", "change of fortune", in effect like the περιπέτεια of Greek tragedy, inasmuch as the situation of Josephus has changed completely from what it was previously, i.e., from a general to a prisoner. And, of course, there is intense drama in Josephus' description of the final debacle of the Jews and of the destruction of the Temple in Book 6 of the *War*, notably the account (*War* 6.201-13) of Maria, the Jewess who was led by the famine to devour her own child.

Likewise, Josephus enhances the drama in describing natural disasters such as earthquakes (e.g., *War* 1.370-72), and the panic which ensued.

²⁶ Villalba 1986, 238.

²⁷ Villalba 1986, 240.

3. JOSEPHUS' INDEBTEDNESS TO EURIPIDES

Euripides became the most popular of all ancient Greek dramatists almost immediately after his death, as Beers has noted.²⁸ This may be inferred from the fact that Plato and Aristotle quote from him more often than from any other tragedian (and in a manner which implies that the lines would be readily recognized by his audience). During the third century B.C.E. only Homer was more frequently quoted by writers of diatribe, protreptic or consolation. Thereafter Euripides was the most popular of poets (except for Homer) throughout the Hellenistic and Roman eras, as Sifakis²⁹ and Jacobson³⁰ have remarked, and was much imitated by the new poets of Hellenistic Alexandria in the third century B.C.E. and thereafter. We may note, in particular, that there is substantial evidence³¹ that Josephus was familiar with the play *Exagoge* of the Hellenistic Jewish tragedian Ezekiel, which was much influenced by Euripides, both in vocabulary and style, as well as in dramatic technique and structure, as Wieneke³² and Fraser³³ have shown. Moreover, Dio Chrysostom (18.6.7), a rhetorician who is contemporary with Josephus, advises the student of oratory to study Euripides, who, he says, is especially helpful to the politician, since he was skilled in portraying character and feelings, and since, as we see from his gnomic utterances, he was not unskilled in philosophy. Hence it is not surprising that in Dio's work only Homer is more frequently quoted than Euripides (who is cited sixteen times).³⁴

An indication of Euripides' popularity may also be seen in Lucian's burlesque essay *Quomodo Historia Conscribenda Sit* 1, where he describes how the people of Abdera in Thrace, a city famous for its obtuseness, caught tragedy fever so badly when visited by a dramatic troupe that played Euripides' *Andromeda* that they went through the streets

²⁸ See Beers 1914, 13.

²⁹ Sifakis 1967, 133.

³⁰ Jacobson 1983, 23.

³¹ Jacobson 1983, 37-38.

³² Wieneke 1931.

³³ Fraser 1972, 707-8.

³⁴ In view of the importance assigned to the study of Euripides in the training of an orator, we may here suggest that Paul's portrait of the self-sacrifice of Jesus may have been influenced not only by the parallel of Isaac but also by his knowledge of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

declaiming a line from the play until they were cooled back to sanity by the autumn frosts. We hear also that it was the performance of Euripides' play *Telephus* that influenced Crates, a philosopher of the fourth century B.C.E., to become a Cynic ascetic, that Zeus always had the lines of Euripides' play *Suppliants* on his lips, and that Chrysippus incorporated so much of Euripides' *Medea* into his own work that he absentmindedly declared that he was studying the *Medea* of Chrysippus. Inasmuch as history is, according to Cicero (*De Legibus* 1.5), an "opus ... oratorium maxime" ("above all, an orator's work"), the study of Euripides, which was regarded by Quintilian (10.68) as so useful for an orator, would also have been most useful for a historian such as Josephus as well.

Euripides' influence on Josephus may be seen, in particular, in the latter's description of Ishmael's dying state (*Ant.* 1.218), in which Josephus employs the same rare word for expiring, *ψυχορραγῶν*, literally "letting the soul break loose," which Euripides uses (*Alcestis* 20 and *Hercules Furens* 324, the latter in precisely this form). Indeed, the passage in Josephus is clearly reminiscent of the scene in Euripides' *Hercules Furens* (323-24), where Amphitryon, the father of Heracles, asks King Lycus to kill him first and thus spare him from seeing the ghastly sight of the boys gasping out their lives, crying "Mother!" and "Grandfather!"

In fact, there are several striking parallels between Isaac and Iphigenia, notably in the enthusiasm with which they both approach the sacrifice and, in particular, in such a statement as Isaac's (*Ant.* 1.232), that he could not even consider rejecting the decision of G-d, and Iphigenia's (*Eur.*, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 396), that she, a mortal woman, could not stand in the way of the goddess. We may also note the pathetic irony of the fact that Abraham seeks happiness only through his son, who, paradoxically, is about to be sacrificed, just as there is irony in the chorus' ode (*Iphigenia at Aulis* 590-91) that begins, "Oh! oh! great happiness of the great!" One may also note the remarkable addition (*Ant.* 1.233) to the biblical narrative in which G-d declares that He gave His order to Abraham "from no craving for human blood," which is clearly in contrast to the statement of Artemis (*Iphigenia at Aulis* 1524-25), who is said to rejoice in human sacrifices.

Moreover, as Blenkinsopp demonstrates,³⁵ Josephus' version of

³⁵ Blenkinsopp 1974, 239-62.

the death of Ahab (*Ant.* 8.409, 418-20) shows his tendency to restate Jewish concepts of divine power and prophetic determination in terms of the classical Greek concepts of fate and tragic destiny, as found especially in Greek tragedy and in Herodotus. The ancient reader, of course, would also think of Laius and Oedipus who, as much as they tried to avoid the fate about which they had been warned by the oracle, failed to do so. One also recalls the statement of the Chorus in Euripides' *Hippolytus* when they behold the blameless Hippolytus in his stricken state. Though they feel anger at the gods (1146), as they know, there is no escape from what must be (1256, τοῦ χρεῶν). Similarly, in Euripides' *Helen* (1301), the Dioscuri declare that they did not save their sister Clytemnestra, "for Moira's compulsion (ἀνάγκη) led where it must (τὸ χρεῶν)." Likewise, Hecabe, before giving birth to Paris, dreamed that she had given birth to a firebrand that consumed all of Troy. She consequently exposed the infant, only to have him suckled by a bear, found by a shepherd, and eventually raised to fulfill the prophecy. Or again, an oracle foretold that the son of Danae, the daughter of King Acrisius of Argos, was destined to kill Acrisius, whereupon he shut her up in an underground chamber, only to have Zeus visit her and beget a child, Perseus, who, indeed fulfilled the prophecy. One also recalls how, in Herodotus (7.14-18), after a delusive dream warns Xerxes that unless he undertakes the war against Greece he will be brought low as swiftly as he had become great, a similar dream occurs to Artabanus, Xerxes' uncle, warning him against opposing "what must be" (7.17, τὸ χρεῶν), whereupon Xerxes is convinced that this is a divine warning. Thus we see, as Chrysippus the Stoic put it, that there was no way in all of these cases to avoid the dire predictions because of the necessity that is part of Fate.³⁶

4. THE INFLUENCE OF SOPHOCLES ON JOSEPHUS

There is very good reason for believing that Josephus was familiar with the works of Sophocles, perhaps being attracted by the same emphasis on heroic humanism in the latter's rewriting of the Greek myths that he, Josephus, highlighted in his rewritten Bible. That

³⁶ So Von Arnim 1903, 270-71.

Josephus was influenced in particular by his reading of Sophocles may be seen both in his choice of language and in motifs. In fact, distinct echoes of Sophoclean style are to be found in a number of places in the early books of the *Antiquities*, notably in the proem (*Ant.* 1.1-26), the wooing of Rebecca (*Ant.* 1.242-55), the wooing of Rachel (*Ant.* 1.285-302), the temptation of Joseph by Potiphar's wife (*Ant.* 2.41-59), the exodus and the passage of the Red Sea (*Ant.* 2.315-49), the rebellion of Korah (*Ant.* 4.11-66), and the story of Balaam (*Ant.* 4.102-30). In particular, as Thackeray has noted,³⁷ and as he and Marcus have demonstrated in their lexicon of Josephus,³⁸ Books 15 and 16 of the *Antiquities* show the influence of Sophocles. Though many scholars have disputed Thackeray's theory that for these books he was dependent upon an assistant who was steeped in Sophocles,³⁹ it must be admitted that the choice of words and phrases that are found notably in Sophocles is most striking and demands further explanation, as Shutt has admitted.⁴⁰

A study of Josephus' vocabulary will indicate that he was acquainted with and influenced by all seven of Sophocles' extant tragedies. We should not be surprised to find that he was influenced in particular by Sophocles' *Ajax* and by his plays on the Oedipus cycle. In the former case, Josephus was clearly intrigued by the theme of suicide, in particular because of the inherently dramatic nature

³⁷ Thackeray 1929, 116-17.

³⁸ Thackeray and Marcus 1930-55.

³⁹ In particular, we may note that Josephus' statement (*Ap.* 1.50) that he had fellow-workers who helped him with his Greek specifically declares that this was in connection with his composition of the *War*, where Thackeray 1929, 106, ironically is forced to admit that he cannot pinpoint the nature and extent of their help. Furthermore, as Stein 1937 has shown, there are Sophoclean traces throughout the *War* and the *Antiquities*. Again, as Ladouceur 1976 has demonstrated, the presence of many of these Sophoclean phrases in the other Greek works of the period, notably Dionysius of Halicarnassus, shows that they are characteristic of first-century Greek rather than the work of special assistants. The fact that Josephus used Strabo in Books 13-15 shows that there is not a sharp dividing line, as Thackeray contends, between Josephus' work ending in Book 14 and the assistant's work commencing in Book 15. Finally, the Sophoclean element in Books 15 and 16 may be due to Herod's secretary, Nicolaus of Damascus, who was steeped in Sophocles and who was Josephus' chief source for his lengthy account of Herod in Books 14 through 17. And yet, one cannot but be struck by the extraordinary number of uniquely Sophoclean words and phrases, whether they come directly from Sophocles or through an intermediary, found in these books.

⁴⁰ Shutt 1941, 64.

of such events. Indeed, as Hankoff has noted, of the nine suicides involving mass fatalities four (the incidents of the bandits in the caves who were attacked by Herod [*War* 1.311-13], Simon and his family at Scythopolis [*War* 2.469-76], Jotapata [*War* 3.382-91] and Masada [*War* 7.320-40]) show a similarity in their dramatic construction.⁴¹ In each case the leadership decides on suicide and resists the pleas of followers or of offers of mercy from the enemy. The drama is increased because of the possibility of escaping alive. Moreover, suicide interested Josephus because he himself, as a general at Jotapata, was involved in an incident in which his men committed mass suicide. Indeed, in his works Josephus mentions no fewer than 24 different fatal suicide incidents and four attempts.⁴² In particular, in books 15 and 16 of the *Antiquities*, in which Thackeray found a notable influence of Sophocles, we may cite the dramatic incident (*Ant.* 15.50) in which Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus II, contemplates suicide, as well as the incident (*Ant.* 15.358) in which the Gadarenes, realizing that the Emperor Augustus would rule against them in their charge that Herod had been cruel and tyrannical toward them, cut their own throats during the night or threw themselves down from high places or jumped into a river.

As to parallels in language, we may note that the verb ἄρκέω, which, in the sense of “to be strong enough”, “to suffice,” appears in tragedy, notably in *Oed. Tyr.* 209, *Oedipus at Colonus* 498, *Antigone* 547, *Ajax* 16 and 1123, and *Electra* 186, is often employed by Josephus, and no fewer than twelve times in *Antiquities* 15 and 16. The relatively rare word ἄρνησις, “denial of fact,” which Sophocles uses in *Oed. Tyr.* 578 and *Electra* 527, appears ten times in Josephus’ works, three times in the “Sophoclean” books 15 and 16 of the *Antiquities* (15.193, 16.216, 16.255). The verb ἀτιμάζω, “to exclude from honor,” which is frequent in Greek tragedy and appears in *Oed. Tyr.* 340 and 1081, *Oedipus at Colonus* 49, 286, 1273, and 1409, *Antigone* 22, 71, 544 and 572, *Ajax* 98 and 1342, and *Electra* 1427, is found in three places in Josephus, all of them in the “Sophoclean” books, 15.31, 16.84, and 16.195. It is striking that twenty of the twenty-seven occurrences in Josephus of the word δυσχερής, “hard to manage,” “annoying,” “difficult,” which is found in *Antigone* 254,

⁴¹ See Hankoff 1979, 939-40.

⁴² Hankoff 1979, 937.

Ajax 1395, and *Electra* 929, appear in the “Sophoclean” Books 15 and 16 of the *Antiquities*. The uncommon word ἐγγενής, “native,” found in *Oed. Tyr.* 452, 1168, 1430, 1506, *Oedipus at Colonus* 1167, *Antigone* 199, 659, and *Electra* 428, appears twice in Josephus, both times in the “Sophoclean” Books 15.260 and 16.59.

In addition, we may note that the rare verb προσψάω, “to touch,” which appears in *Oedipus at Colonus* 330, *Trachiniae* 1214, and *Philoctetes* 1054, and in only three other places in extant Greek literature (Pindar, *Fragments* 121.3, Aelian, *De Natura Animalium* 1.57, and Dioscorides, *Euporistoi* 1.167) is used by Josephus (*War* 7.348). Furthermore, it would appear that Josephus’ use of the verb ἐντήκω (*Ant.* 16.93) in the sense of lying deep in something is influenced by Sophocles’ use of this uncommon verb in this sense in *Electra* 1311 and *Trachiniae* 413, as well as in *Fragment* 941.7. Again, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.31) employs the word πάλιν, which usually means “back” or “again,” in the sense of “in turn,” precisely as does Sophocles in *Electra* 371 and in *Oed. Tyr.* 619. Likewise, Josephus’ use (*War* 4.319) of the word ὄγκος, “height,” “peak,” “dignity,” is parallel to the use of this word in *Trachiniae* 817, as well as in *Ajax* 129, and *Oedipus at Colonus* 1162 and 1341. Furthermore, φονάω, “to be murderous,” is a Sophoclean word, appearing in *Philoctetes* 1209 and *Antigone* 117 and in very few other places in extant Greek literature; in Josephus it appears in a number of places: *War* 1.359, 1.493, 3.293, 3.362, 4.563, 5.5, 6.345, and *Ant.* 16.403.

We may see in Josephus the influence of each of Sophocles’ extant plays. Thus, we may note the meaning of the verb ἀρπάζω in *Ajax* 2 (πεῖράν τιν’ ἐχθρῶν ἀρπάσαι “to seize some opportunity of attacking the enemy”) and Titus’ statement in *War* 3.481 (ἀρπάσαι δὲ τὴν νικῆν δυνάμεθα, “we can snatch a victory”); the juxtaposition of the verb διοπτρεύειν, “to look upon,” and the noun στέγος, “roof,” in *Ajax* 307 (ὥς διοπτρεύειν στέγος) and *Ant.* 15.412 (ἀπὸ τοῦ στέγους διοπτρεύειν); the use of the verb δηλύνω, “to unman,” truly rare, at least in Attic, in *Ajax* 651-52 (ἐδηλύθη...πρὸς τῆσδε τῆς γυναικὸς οἰκτίρω δέ νιν, “I have been unmanned by this woman’s words, and I pity her”) and three passages in Josephus (*War* 1.59 [ἐδηλύετο καὶ τοῦ πάθους ὅλος ἦν, “he was unmanned and quite overcome by emotion” in the scene in which John Hyrcanus is overcome by seeing his mother tortured by his brother-in-law Ptolemy]), *War* 3.263 [where Josephus himself fears that the wailing of the women might unman (δηλύνοιν) the combatants] and *Ant.* 4.291 [where Josephus,

in his summary of Jewish law, states that it is plainly by reason of the effeminacy (τεθηλυσμένης) of their souls that eunuchs have changed the sex of their bodies]; the phrase “beams of the sun,” which in extant Greek literature is found only in *Ajax* 877 (ἄφ’ ἡλίου βολῶν) and *Ant.* 15.418 (κατὰ δὲ ἡλίου βολάση); the extremely rare word δεξιαῖς “bound by an oath”, found only in extant Greek literature in *Ajax* 1113, *Ant.* 15.36-38 and Lucian’s *Deorum Concilium* 15, the use of the word ἄμοιρος, “portionless,” in connection with a corpse that is left portionless of earth, a major theme in Jewish law (*Ant.* 4.265: “Let not a corpse be left portionless of earth”) and in both *Ajax* (1326-27: ταφῆς νεκρὸν ἄμοιρον) and *Antigone* (1071: ἄμοιρον... νέκυν); the rare metaphor of trampling of justice, found only in *Ajax* 1335 (τὴν δίκην πατεῖν) and Aeschylus (*Choephoroe* 644 and *Eumenides* 110) and in Josephus (*War* 1.544: ἐβόα... πεπατησθαι τὸ δίκαιον, “he shouted that justice had been trampled under foot”).⁴³

Josephus’ choice of vocabulary is likewise influenced by Sophocles’ *Oed. Tyr.* Thus the rare verb προσαρκέω, “to come to lend aid,” which appears three times in one of the “Sophoclean” books of Josephus (*Ant.* 15.59, 63, 301), is found twice in that play (12, 141), once in *Oedipus at Colonus* (72), once in the fragments of Sophocles (524.2), and elsewhere in extant Greek literature only in Euripides (*Hecuba* 862) and in Longinus, as quoted by Porphyry (*Plotinus* 20). Again, Josephus’ frequent use (*War* 1.81, 5.404; *Ant.* 1.203, 4.155, 7.154, 7.321, 9.289, 10.18, 10.21, 10.116) of the uncommon verb ἐνσκήπτω, “to visit with,” may well have been influenced by its occurrence in *Oed. Tyr.* (27). Likewise, Josephus’ use of δυσγένεια (“base parentage”) (*Ant.* 15.81, 220) may well be influenced by its use in *Oed. Tyr.* (1079), where base parentage is indeed a major theme of the play. Furthermore, the unusual use of δαίμονες in the sense of “ghosts” (*War* 1.599, 607) may well have been influenced by its use in *Oed. Tyr.* 1194 (as well as Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1569), in the sense of the good or evil genius of a family or a person.⁴⁴

The influence of Sophocles’ vocabulary in *Oedipus at Colonus* upon Josephus may be seen in the use of ἐντροπή, “reverence,” “respect”

⁴³ To be sure, Josephus (*War* 2.170) does use the verb πατέω in a metaphorical sense to trample the laws under foot, just as Sophocles in *Antigone* 745 uses it in a metaphorical sense to trample under foot the honors of the gods.

⁴⁴ The word δαίμων is not found in the sense of a departed soul until Lucian (*De Luctu*) and Pausanias (6.6.8).

(*War* 5.429, 6.271; *Ant.* 2.46, 14.375, 15.370, 16.187, 16.241, 16.400), which appears in *Oedipus at Colonus* 299, in connection with reverence for the blind Oedipus. Here four of the eight occurrences of this word in Josephus are to be found in the “Sophoclean books”, 15 and 16 of the *Antiquities*. In this connection we may also note that the word δεξιώματα (“pledges,” “proofs”) appears only once in Josephus, namely in a “Sophoclean” book (*Ant.* 16.56) and likewise appears only once in Sophocles, namely in *Oedipus at Colonus* (619). Again, the word ῥύσιον in the sense of “pledge” or “surety,” as found in *Oedipus at Colonus* 857, appears also in that sense in *War* 1.274 and 366 and in *Antiquities* 16.282 and 343. Finally, as Thackeray has noted,⁴⁵ Josephus’ use of triple alliteration (*Ant.* 4.91: προπεπονήκεσαν προσεπιταλαιπωρήσαι προθέμενοι) reflects the repeated use of triple alliteration in *Oedipus at Colonus* (589: κείνοι κομίζειν κείσ’; 804-5: φύσας φανεί φρένας; 1140: τοῖσδε τέκνοισι τερφθεῖς).

That Josephus most likely knew Sophocles’ *Antigone* may be deduced from the fact that the phrase ἄπτεσθαι βουλευμάτων (“to engage in plots”) appears in *Antigone* 179 and *Antiquities* 2.254. We may also note that the rare word δύσνους, “ill-affected,” “disaffected,” found in *Antigone* 212, appears five times in Josephus (*Ant.* 11.217, 13.66, 16.67, 16.201, 16.202), three of them in the “Sophoclean” Book 16 of the *Antiquities*. The phrase πρόνοιαν ἵσχειν τοῦ δὲ τοῦ νεκροῦ πέρι, “to have care for this corpse,” appears similarly in *Antiquities* 3.99 (πρόνοιαν ἣν εἶχε περὶ αὐτῶν, “care which He had for them”). The verb μυδάω, in the sense of “to decay,” is found in *Antigone* (410) with reference to the decaying body of Antigone’s brother Polyneices. This is the only occurrence in extant literature in which the verb, which usually means “to drip,” has this specific meaning, other than the occurrence in Josephus (*War* 3.530, 4.383, 5.519). Furthermore, the phrase τὰν ποσὶν κακά (“the troubles under their feet,” *Antigone* 1327) appears in almost identical form in *Ant.* 3.15 (τὰ ἐν ποσὶ κακά, “the troubles under their feet”).

That Josephus most likely knew Sophocles’ *Electra* may be deduced from the fact that he (*War* 3.282) uses the phrase ψυχῆς ... ἀφειδοῦντες, “unsparing of life,” the same words that we find in *Electra* 980 (ψυχῆς ἀφειδήσαντε). Likewise, Josephus’ metaphorical use of the verb ὀπλίζω (*War* 3.153) in the sense of dressing oneself

⁴⁵ Thackeray 1930, 520.

with armor is paralleled by Sophocles' *Electra* 995, the only instance in extant Greek literature in which we find such a metaphorical use of this word. What is particularly striking is Josephus' citation (*War* 3. 495, 5.501, *Ant.* 3.58) on three occasions of the proverb that great successes never come without risk/toil, which is very close to the language of *Electra* 945 that nothing succeeds without toil.

Josephus' indebtedness to Sophocles' *Trachiniae* may be seen in his use of the phrase ζῆ καὶ τέθηλεν, "lives and flourishes" (*War* 7.348), which is closely parallel to *Trachiniae* 235: καὶ ζῶντα καὶ θάλλοντα.⁴⁶ The unusual juxtaposition of the three words, ἐλπίς, "hope," θάρσος, "confidence," and προξενέω, is found only in *War* 5.66 ("The Jews ... were elated with inconsiderate hope [ἐλπίς], and this transient turn of fortune afforded [προξένει] them high confidence [θάρσος] as to the future") and *Trachiniae* 726 ("One ray of hope [ἐλπίς] which will fortify [προξενεῖ] their courage' [θάρσος]). Likewise, Josephus' use (*War* 4.319) of the word ὄγκος, "height," "peak," "dignity," is parallel to the use of this word in *Trachiniae* 817, as well as in *Ajax* 129, and *Oedipus at Colonus* 1162 and 1341. Most striking of all is the fact that the word περονίς, "pin," is found in extant literature only in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* (925) and in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.14, 165). Finally, Haman charges (*Ant.* 11.212) that the Jews are unsociable (ἄμικτος, the same word that Sophocles (*Trachiniae* 1095) uses to describe the Centaurs.

Josephus' knowledge of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* may be seen in his use of the phrase ἐξ ἀπόπτου, "to watch from a conspicuous spot" (*War* 1.312), the very same phrase that is found in *Philoctetes* 467, the only difference being that Josephus uses the verb ἐπιβλέπω and Sophocles uses the verb σκοπεῖν for "to watch." Again, Josephus' οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς φρονεῖν (*War* 5.326) and μηδὲν ὑγιὲς φρονεῖν (*Ant.* 9.118), "to think nothing healthy," are clearly parallel to *Philoctetes* 1006: μηδὲν ὑγιὲς ... φρονῶν. Finally, the phrase κακῶς...ἀπόλλυσθαι κακοῦς ("miserable men to perish miserably," *Philoctetes* 1369) is closely paralleled by κακοὶ κακῶς ἀπόλλυντο ("miserable wretched miserably perished," *Ant.* 2.300).

Likewise, Thackeray⁴⁷ has noted that Josephus (*War* 2,161, 3.92,

⁴⁶ The juxtaposition of these two verbs, ζάω and θάλλω, is uncommon and is found in extant literature elsewhere only in Antiphon the Sophist 60: ζῆ καὶ θάλλει.

⁴⁷ Thackeray 1930, 508 n. b.

4.478, 6.196; *Ant.* 4.66, 4.203, 5.170, 5.348, 10.252, 14.51) has a fondness for the number three, as we see in his use of *τρίς*, which we find in Sophocles (*Oedipus at Colonus* 483, *Ajax* 433, *Philoctetes* 1238, *Fragments* 678). Furthermore, as Thackeray has noted,⁴⁸ Josephus shares with Sophocles a fondness for trichotomy: three reasons for the longevity of the patriarchs (*Ant.* 1.106), three indications of the terrible straits of the Egyptians during the famine in the time of Joseph (*Ant.* 2.189), three requests made by Moses to G-d (*Ant.* 2.275), three statements made by Moses to Pharaoh (*Ant.* 2.283), three reasons for narrating the plagues of Egypt in full (*Ant.* 2.293), three reasons for the route of the exodus (*Ant.* 2.322-23), three indications of the distress of the Israelites after their exodus from Egypt (*Ant.* 2.326), three methods open to G-d for delivering the Israelites at the Sea of Reeds (*Ant.* 2.337), three actions taken by Moses when the Israelites seek to stone him (*Ant.* 3.22), three things that the Israelite army under Moses did not lack (*Ant.* 3.45), three weaknesses of the army that opposed the Israelites (*Ant.* 3.45), three natural phenomena that accompanied the revelation at Sinai (*Ant.* 3.80), three parties that hold contrary opinions concerning Moses (*Ant.* 3.96-97, 4.36-37), three recent indications of the abiding authority of Moses (*Ant.* 3.319), three reasons that will not explain why Aaron was chosen as high priest (*Ant.* 4.26), the three dominions of G-d (*Ant.* 4.40, 45), the three entities (the rebels themselves, their families, and their belongings, *Ant.* 4.48) that Moses requests G-d to engulf with an earthquake, three reasons for the three pilgrimage festivals (*Ant.* 4.203), three different views held by the Philistines as to what to do with the ark that they had captured (*Ant.* 6.8-10), three benefits promised by Samuel that will accrue to the Israelites if they obey G-d (*Ant.* 6.21), and three means by which they will not receive these blessings (*Ant.* 6.21).

We may also note the influence of Sophocles' grammatical usage upon Josephus. Thus, the verb *ἀκούω*, which is found normally with the accusative of the thing heard, is used with the genitive in *Oedipus at Colonus* 1187 (λόγων ἀκούσαι) and in *Ajax* 1070 (λόγων...ἀκούσαι), and is likewise used with the genitive in Josephus, five out of six times in the "Sophoclean" books (*War* 7.339; *Ant.* 15.214, 15.226, 16.235, 16.346, 16.384). The unusual usage of the verb *γινώσκω* with the infinitive in an indirect statement, found in *Antigone* 1089 and *Ajax*

⁴⁸ Thackeray 1930, xv-xvi.

677, is found numerous times with this construction in Josephus (*War* 3.319; *Ant.* 2.34, 2.320, 3.42, 14.415, 14.437, 15.116, 15.391, 16.325, 16.331, 16.353, and *Life* 130). We may also note the grammatical influence of the *Ajax* upon Josephus, namely in the use of δεῖ...ὥς with the future infinitive (*Ajax* 557 and *Ant.* 4.230).

Josephus was influenced by Sophocles not only in language but also in motifs, again notably in Books 15 and 16 of the *Antiquities*. Undoubtedly, Josephus found it natural to use Sophocles as a source for these books, inasmuch as his subject there, Herod, as we have noted, is almost made to order to be the tragic hero. We see this notably in Josephus' editorial-like digression in which he reflects (*Ant.* 16.395-404) on Herod's domestic tragedy. In particular, he ponders (*Ant.* 16.397), as any student of Greek tragedy would, whether to put the blame upon Fortune (τύχην), "who has a power greater than all prudent reflection." Apparently, Josephus is persuaded by this suggestion, since he then goes on to state that we call her Fate (εἰμαρμένην) "on the ground that there is nothing that is not brought about by her." It is in these books, moreover, that we have a dramatic description of the drought (*Ant.* 15.299-316) that afflicted the Jews and of Herod's generous relief of their distress, a passage reminiscent of the opening scene of Soph.'s *Oed. Tyr.*, where we likewise have a description of the drought that has afflicted the Thebans and of Oedipus' efforts to relieve it. Likewise, the reader will think of the scene (*Ant.* 1.164) in which G-d thwarts the Pharaoh's criminal passion for Sarah by causing an outbreak of disease. Indeed, in order to find a remedy for the plague, the Pharaoh, like Oedipus, consults priests, who declare that the calamity is due to the wrath of G-d because the Pharaoh had wished to outrage (ὕβρισαι, a familiar word in tragedy) the stranger's wife.

There is another thematic parallel in the scene in which, after Herod's murder of his wife Mariamne, we are told (*Ant.* 15.243) that a pestilence arose which destroyed the greater part of the people, just as we find at the beginning of *Oed. Tyr.*, where we finally discover through the prophet Teiresias that the cause of the pestilence afflicting Thebes is the god Apollo's anger at Oedipus' murder of his father and his incestuous relationship with his mother. In Josephus, too (*Ant.* 15.243), we are told that the pestilence caused all the people to suspect that their misfortune had been brought about by G-d in his anger at Herod's lawless act against Mariamne. Still another parallel may be seen between the love charm that Deianira

employs in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* in order to win back the love of her husband Heracles and the false report of Herod's sister Salome that Mariamne had tried to prepare a love-potion for her husband.

As to thematic parallels in Josephus' paraphrase of the Bible, we may note, in particular, the similarity in the extra-biblical description of Abraham (*Ant.* 1.154) as gifted in intelligence (δεινὸς ὃν συνιέναι, i.e., clever in understanding) and the description of Oedipus by Teiresias as clever in understanding (φρονεῖν...δεινόν, *Oed. Tyr.* 316). Likewise, the same words that are used by Josephus (*Ant.* 1.155) to indicate that Abraham had arrived at more lofty conceptions (φρονεῖν μεῖζον) of virtue than other men are those (φρονεῖτω μεῖζον, *Antigone* 768) applied by Sophocles' Creon to his son Haemon.

In particular, we may note that to the biblical account of Moses' death (Deut. 34:1-6) Josephus has added lamenting people, a walk to the mountain, companions on Moses' final walk, and "disappearance," details that are found in no other post-biblical source, though those sources recount Moses' last hours in far greater detail than does the Bible. And yet, it is precisely these details that are found in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*.⁴⁹

Moreover, there are several touches in Josephus' extra-biblical modifications of the account of Solomon that indicate that he had Oedipus in mind. Indeed, support for the equation of Solomon and Oedipus appears at the very beginning of Josephus' account of Solomon. In the biblical narrative G-d warns David through Nathan that if Solomon sins, He will punish him "with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men" (2 Sam. 7:14). In Josephus' narrative (*Ant.* 7.93) G-d says that He will punish Solomon with sickness (νόσῳ) and barrenness of the soil (γῆς ἀφορίᾳ) should he sin (*Ant.* 7.93).⁵⁰ Later, in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple (*Ant.* 8.115) he specifies the evils with which the Jews

⁴⁹ See Jacobson 1993, and more briefly Tabor 1989, 235. Begg 1990, 692, objects that in the end Josephus negates the whole impression of Moses' disappearance with his closing affirmation that in reality Moses did not "return to the divinity" but simply died. This does not, however, detract from the point that prior to this "correction" Josephus had described the disappearance of Moses in terms closely parallel to those used by Sophocles.

⁵⁰ One is reminded of the passage in Josephus (*Ant.* 9.289) in which he notes that G-d sent a pestilence (λοιμὸν) upon the Samaritans because they had worshipped strange gods, whereupon they consulted an oracle as to how to free themselves from this and were told that they should worship G-d.

will be smitten if they should sin as “unfruitfulness of the soil (γῆς ἄκαρπία) or a destructive pestilence (φθορὰ λαμικῇ).” There is a striking analogy with the opening scene of Sophocles’ *Oed. Tyr.* (15-29), in which we are told of the plague from which Thebes is wasting away (φθίνουσα). The plague has afflicted the blossom of the land and its herds, and is manifest in the barren pangs of women (τόκοισί τε ἀγόνους γυναικῶν). The word “sickness” (νόσος) with which G-d threatens Solomon if he should disobey Him (*Ant.* 7.93) is a leitmotif throughout Sophocles’ play. Apollo is appealed to as a deliverer from the sickness that has afflicted the city (*Oed. Tyr.* 150). The word likewise occurs in lines 217 and 303 with reference to the plague. Its central place in the play is shown by the fact that when the messenger comes to Oedipus with the news of the death of King Polybus, his first reaction is to ask whether he died through treachery or disease (νόσος) (960). Two lines later he repeats: “Ah, he died, it seems of diseases (νόσοις)” (962). A major theme of the play, as Knox remarks,⁵¹ is Oedipus’ περιπέτεια from fame and honor to utter uncleanness, becoming finally a pollution that must be covered up (1426). And at the end of the play the thought of disease (by implication, the plague) recurs, when Oedipus, blind and miserable though he is, asserts that he is sure of at least this much, that neither disease nor anything else can destroy him (1455).⁵²

When Josephus summarizes Solomon’s character, he singles out his good fortune (εὐδαιμονία, “prosperity,” “full happiness”), wealth and wisdom (φρονήσει) as those respects in which he surpassed all other kings (*Ant.* 8.211). In an extra-biblical addition, David, before the start of Solomon’s reign, prays that the good fortune (εὐδαιμονίαν) that G-d has declared He will send during Solomon’s reign will be diffused throughout the land for all time (*Ant.* 7.373). When Solomon is anointed as king, Hiram, the king of Tyre, not only sends his greetings, as in the biblical narrative (1 Kgs. 5:15), but also congratulates him on his present good fortune (ἐπὶ τοῖς παροῦσιν ἀγαθοῖς) (*Ant.*

⁵¹ Knox 1957, 32.

⁵² One is reminded likewise of the picture drawn by Hesiod (*Works and Days* 212 ff., whom Josephus elsewhere (*Ant.* 1.108, *Ap.* 1.16) mentions by name, and who likewise paints a picture of nature responding to man’s sins. The guilt of a single unrighteous man, he says, almost as a commentary on Sophocles’ later figure of Oedipus, brings failure of harvests, pestilence, and miscarriages. In the city of righteous men, on the other hand, the fields are fertile and the women bear children.

8.50). It is this motif of good and bad fortune that is a major theme in Sophocles' plays. Thus when Oedipus is one step away from knowing the terrible truth about his identity, he reaches the highest point of hope and confidence and proclaims, most ironically from the point of view of the audience, "I hold myself the son of Fortune (Τύχης), that gives good" (*Oed. Tyr.* 1189-91). And at the end of the *Antigone* (1347), the chorus concludes that wisdom is the supreme part of happiness (εὐδαιμονίας).

Above all, the key incident illustrating Solomon's wisdom is the case (1 Kgs. 3:16-28) of the two mothers who gave birth to children, one of whom died, while both claimed the living child as her own. A key addition in Josephus' version of this incident is his statement (*Ant.* 8.30) that when no one could see what judgment to give, for all were mentally blinded, as by a riddle, in finding a solution, Solomon alone devised a plan. There are, it appears, four key elements in this statement which do not appear in the original (1 Kgs. 3:23-27), whether in the Hebrew or in the LXX or in the Lucianic version: 1) others had attempted and failed to determine who the real mother was; 2) these others are spoken of as mentally blinded (τῇ διανοίᾳ τετυφλωμένων); 3) to solve the question required the use of intelligence; 4) the case is compared to a riddle (αἰνίγματι).

What is particularly striking is that all four elements are found in Sophocles' *Oed. Tyr.* In Sophocles' play (391-94) we find that others had apparently attempted but failed to solve the Sphinx's question; secondly, we find a reference to Teiresias' blindness in Oedipus' accusation: "You are blind in ears and mind and eyes" (371); thirdly, Oedipus solves the riddle of the Sphinx by the use of his intelligence (γνώμη), and the intellectual rivalry between Oedipus and Teiresias culminates in Oedipus' taunting Teiresias with the failure of his intelligence (νοῦς) (371); and fourthly, the Sphinx's question is termed a riddle (αἶνιμα) (393). Indeed, Oedipus sarcastically asks the blind prophet Teiresias why he did not solve the riddle (αἶνιγμα) of the Sphinx and thus save the city of Thebes (391-92). On the other hand, and most significantly, it is Oedipus alone who solves the Sphinx's riddles (αἰνίγματα) (1524-25) and who, ironically, is to go through a reversal (περιπέτεια) from sight to blindness (454) when he discovers his true identity. This irony of Oedipus, the mentally blind man who has physical sight at the beginning of the play, is particularly stressed by the contrast with Teiresias, the physically blind man who has mental sight (*Oed. Tyr.* 454). Indeed, the riddle of the Sphinx is the

supreme test of Oedipus' intelligence, as is the case of the two harlots for Solomon. And in both cases it is their self-confident wisdom that is ultimately their undoing. As to Oedipus, when the parts of the puzzle fall into place revealing his real identity and he begins to lose control of himself, Jocasta comments that Oedipus does not, "like a man in control of his mind (ἔννοος) judge the present on the basis of the past" (915-16).⁵³ As Knox,⁵⁴ following a suggestion of Jebb, has remarked in a pregnant note, the first part of the very name of Oedipus is close in sound and thus reminiscent of οἶδα, "to know," a word that is constantly on Oedipus' lips; as Knox continues,⁵⁵ it is his knowledge that makes Oedipus the decisive and confident ruler (τύραννος).

Faber van der Meulen,⁵⁶ on the other hand, stresses Oedipus' impotence and diminished knowledge, as opposed to the divine omnipotence and foresight. He notes that in the end it becomes clear that Oedipus is convinced that he must pay the consequences for what he has done and affirm the divine world-order. In particular, he notes that in Seneca the Younger's tragedy, *Oedipus*, which, he says, tells us how the personality of Oedipus was regarded in Josephus' own day, inasmuch as Seneca (4 B.C.E.-65 C.E.) was Josephus' older contemporary, Oedipus (1058) acknowledges responsibility for the suffering that he has caused to the land. Moreover, van der Meulen remarks that the acceptance of fate, so crucial in the portrait of Oedipus, is missing in Josephus' portrait of Solomon. Furthermore, the theme that Solomon allows himself to be misled by women at the end of his life has no parallel in the story of Oedipus. Finally, he notes a distinct difference between Oedipus and Solomon in that the latter died ingloriously (*Ant.* 8.196) and that misfortunes befell the Hebrews because of his acts (*Ant.* 8.211). Inasmuch as Josephus throughout his essay *Against Apion* attacks the Greeks for their untrustworthiness, he could hardly have used a Greek literary figure as his model. The Greek sages, he contends in *Against Apion*, are hardly models of human wisdom. If Josephus, van der Meulen

⁵³ It is this quality of being rational (ἔννοος) that Prometheus, according to Aeschylus (*Prometheus Bound* 444), bestowed upon mankind after its previous state of savagery.

⁵⁴ Knox 1957, 183-84.

⁵⁵ Knox 1957, 183-84.

⁵⁶ Van der Meulen 1978, 75-77.

concludes, had written about Greek mythological figures, he would have portrayed Achilles as a Greek Saul and Oedipus as a Greek Solomon rather than the reverse. He thus objects to the thesis that Josephus has modeled Solomon's character on Oedipus.

In reply, we may note, the comparison of biblical figures with Greek mythological figures is hardly unique to Josephus. Artapanus, who is generally thought to have been a Jew,⁵⁷ says, in obvious pride, that Moses was called Musaeus by the Greeks and that he became the teacher of the famous musician Orpheus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.3). With similar pride Artapanus notes that Moses was called by the name of the Greek god Hermes because of his ability to interpret the sacred writings (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.6).

The important point is that Josephus is selective in his parallels. It is not that Solomon is in all respects similar to Oedipus any more than Abraham is completely equivalent to a Stoic philosopher simply because he gives a proof for the existence of G-d (*Ant.* 1.156) that is similar to that of the Stoic Cleanthes,⁵⁸ or that he is equated with Heracles simply because Josephus cites, in obvious pride, Cleodemus-Malchus' statement that Heracles was joined in his African campaign by two of Abraham's sons by Ketura and that Heracles married the daughter of one of them (*Ant.* 1.241). Rather, Solomon is portrayed as having Oedipus' wisdom and as going beyond it; that is, Solomon is, with respect to his wisdom, a greater Oedipus. Moreover, above all, van der Meulen has not taken into account the four parallels noted above that portray Solomon, like Oedipus, as a solver of a riddle. Furthermore, as we have noted,⁵⁹ there is little indication that Josephus knew Latin, let alone the works of Seneca, as van der Meulen claims. On the other hand, there is, as we have also noted, very good reason for thinking that Josephus knew the works of Sophocles. Finally, while it is true that in his essay *Against Apion* Josephus disparages the reputation for reliability of the Greek historians, in the same essay, as in his *Antiquities*, he appeals to their authority in confirming details of Jewish history.

Josephus (*Ant.* 8.167) further dramatizes Solomon's wisdom in his portrayal of the way in which Solomon solved the Queen of Sheba's

⁵⁷ See Holladay 1983, 189 and 195 n. 8a.

⁵⁸ See Feldman 1968, 143-56, especially 145-49.

⁵⁹ See Feldman 1984, 821, 836.

problems. The Bible (I Kgs. 10:3) simply says that he answered all her questions, whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 8.167), like Sophocles in his portrayal of Oedipus, stresses the ease with which he mentally grasped the ingenious problems and the speed with which he solved them.

The reference to the Queen's questions as σοφίσματα recalls the use of this word in connection with the tricky problems that Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent to Solomon and that Solomon solved by the force of reason (*Ant.* 8.143). In this respect Solomon is similar to Prometheus, who is said to have discovered numbering, pre-eminent among ingenious devices (σοφισμάτων) (*Aes.*, *Prometheus Bound* 459). The word σόφισμα might also recall the use of this word in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* 14, with reference to the wily Odysseus' plan whereby he hoped to obtain Philoctetes' bow, which, according to an oracle, was the only weapon with which Troy could be captured.

The scene also calls to mind, as does Josephus' version of Solomon's decision in the case of the two women claiming the same baby, Sophocles' Oedipus, whose characteristic action, as Knox points out,⁶⁰ is the *fait accompli* and whose characteristic epithet is ταχύς ("swift"). Indeed, one of the lessons stressed by Sophocles in his *Oed. Tyr.*, as we see in the remarks of the chorus, "Swift (ταχεῖς) thinkers are not safe," (617) is the danger of making decisions too quickly. Oedipus defensively replies, twice using the word "swift" in the following lines: "When a swift plotter moves secretly against me, I must be quick with my counterplot." Indeed, the words "speedy" (ταχύς, 142, 430, 1234, 1429) and "speed" (τάχος, 765, 945, 1131, 1154) recur as a leitmotif throughout the play, being used three times by Oedipus and once each by the Second Messenger, Creon, the Chorus, Jocasta, and the Herdsman. In addition, that speed remains the characteristic trait of Oedipus may be seen from the fact that after his identity has become known, Oedipus uses the phrase "as quickly as possible" on three occasions: "Take me away from this place as quickly as possible" (ὅτι τάχιστα, 1340), "By the gods, cover me up as quickly as possible" (ὅπως τάχιστα, 1410), "Drive me from this land as quickly as possible" (ὅσον τάχισθ', 1436). Indeed, one of the themes of the play is the danger of speed; for those who, like Oedipus, are quick to think things out, are not infallible.

In his initial instructions to Solomon, David urges him to be pious

⁶⁰ Knox 1957, 15-17, 188.

(εὐσεβής), just and brave (*Ant.* 7.338). Thereafter, when he gives orders to have Solomon anointed as king, David, in an extra-biblical addition, instructs his son to rule with piety (εὐσεβῶς) and justice (*Ant.* 7.356). Again, when David commends Solomon to the leaders of the people, he assures him that G-d's promises will be fulfilled and that his reign will be prosperous if he will show himself to be pious (εὐσεβῇ) and just and an observer of the nation's laws (*Ant.* 7.374). Finally, in his dying charge to Solomon, David exhorts Solomon to be just toward his subjects and pious (εὐσεβεῖ) toward G-d and to keep His commandments, since if he transgresses any of His ordinances he will turn G-d's kind watchfulness into a hostile attitude (*Ant.* 7.304).

This coupling of piety and justice, which we find so often in Josephus, is significantly a leitmotif running through Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. Thus we find Oedipus' statement that he has come to Colonus "as one sacred and pious" (ἱερὸς εὐσεβής τε) (*Oedipus at Colonus* 287). Again, in an obvious reference to himself, Oedipus says that the gods "look on the god-fearing among men (τὸν εὐσεβῇ βροτῶν) and on the godless, and that never yet hath escape been found for an impious mortal on the earth" (*Oedipus at Colonus* 279). Oedipus' concern with piety is seen also in his request to Antigone to lead him "to a spot where I may speak and listen within piety's domain (εὐσεβείας)" (*Oedipus at Colonus* 188-91). That piety is (ironically, since Oedipus has proved to be the most impious of men in that he has slain his own father and married his mother) also associated with Oedipus is seen in Creon's words near the end of *Oed. Tyr.* (1429-31) ordering Oedipus to be taken into the house as quickly as possible, "for it accords with piety (εὐσεβείας) that kinsfolk alone should see and hear a kinsman's woes." Similarly, the attribute of justice is constantly associated with Oedipus. He is declared by the Chorus to come from a just (δίκαιος) race (*Oedipus at Colonus* 938), and he attacks Creon for using the plea of justice (δικαίου) craftily (*Oedipus at Colonus* 762); and again he refers sarcastically to Creon as "the righteous" (δίκαιον) (*Oedipus at Colonus* 992) and a few lines later designates him as one who is not a just man (*Oedipus at Colonus* 1000). But this association of justice with Oedipus is seen in many other places as well, often indirectly.⁶¹

⁶¹ See *Oedipus Tyrannus* 280, 675, 851-53, 883-89, 1282-83; *Oedipus at Colonus* 740-42, 806-7, 825, 831-32, 880, 913, 957, 971, 1028, 1138, 1202, 1498.

5. SUMMARY

There is a long tradition connecting history and tragedy, inasmuch as originally both were based upon much of the same raw material, namely the myths. Both appealed to emotions, emphasized moral lessons, and had a common rhetorical background. Both of the two major schools of ancient historiography, those of Isocrates and Aristotle, illustrate the influence of tragedy upon the writing of history.

The influence of tragedy upon Josephus may be seen in both his language and his motifs. Particularly in his paraphrase of the Bible we see the influence of the tragic motifs of ὕβρις and its consequences, suspense, and irony. Josephus introduces tragic material especially in his portrait of Herod, in his description of the events at Jotapata, and in his portrayal of the fall of the Temple.

Josephus was particularly attracted to the plays of Euripides, the most popular of the tragedians during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, notably as seen in the influence of Euripides' *Iphigenia* upon Josephus' portrayal of Isaac, and, above all, of Sophocles, especially in Books 15 and 16 of the *Antiquities*. This influence may be seen in Josephus' choice of words and phrases, as well as in his grammar. He was greatly attracted to Sophocles' *Ajax*, perhaps because of the centrality of the theme of suicide that intrigued him so greatly, and the Oedipus cycle. There are striking parallels between Josephus' additions to the biblical description of the death of Moses and Sophocles' account of the disappearance of Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*. The most vivid parallels are between Josephus' account of Solomon, especially the four key elements added by Josephus to the biblical account of Solomon's decision in the case of the two women who had given birth to children, and Oedipus' solving of the riddle of the Sphinx. There is likewise a parallel between Josephus' depiction of Solomon's wisdom in solving the problems put to him by the Queen of Sheba and Oedipus' wisdom. Moreover, the coupling of piety and justice in Josephus' description of the Solomon's character is paralleled by a similar juxtaposition of these qualities in Sophocles' description of Oedipus.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

JOSEPHUS' BIBLICAL PARAPHRASE AS A COMMENTARY ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

1. INTRODUCTION

In view of the fact that Josephus came from such distinguished ancestry (*Life* 1-7), belonging to the first of the 24 courses of priests and being descended on his mother's side from the Hasmonean kings, and in view of his excellent education (*Life* 8) and his early beginning, while only 25 years old (*Life* 13), in public life through participating in an important embassy to the Roman court to secure the release of certain priests, and culminating in his appointment as commander of the revolutionary forces in the crucial area of Galilee at the start of the war against the Romans (*Life* 29, *War* 2.568), we should not be surprised that in writing his historical works Josephus would be inclined to view events, even those that had occurred long before his own time, through his own reaction to them and as, in effect, comments on and lessons for the present.

At the very beginning of his *Antiquities of the Jews* (1.3), Josephus, in setting forth the reasons for his writing the history of the Jewish people, identifies himself with those who, induced by the magnitude of useful events, which currently, he felt, lie in a state of ignorance, have endeavored to bring forth the history of those events for common advantage. That historiography serves such a purpose would seem to reflect the statement of Josephus' major model, Thucydides (1.22.4),¹ that he seeks to make his history profitable for his readers, since he believes that the events of the past will some day, in all human probability, happen again in the same or in a similar way. Though in the *Antiquities* he is not writing about the war with the Romans, Josephus in his proem (*War* 1.4) recalls to the reader his own participation in that war and his aim in writing its history

¹ On the profound influence of Thucydides upon Josephus see Feldman 1998, 177-78.

in order to refute those who had misrepresented it. He asserts (*War* 1.5) that in writing the *Antiquities* he is addressing the whole Greek-speaking world, the great majority of whom were presumably non-Jews, in order, it would seem, to set the record straight. Again, at the end of the work (*Ant.* 20.262), he proudly declares that no one else, either Jew or Gentile, would have been equal to the task of issuing so accurate a treatise as the *Antiquities* for the Greek world. That he regarded the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities* as two parts of a single work would seem to follow from his statement (*Ant.* 1.6) that his original intention had been to write a single work covering the history of the Jews from their origin through the war against the Romans. The only reason, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 1.7), why he did not do so was that such a volume would have been excessively long.

What encouraged Josephus to write the *Antiquities*, he says (*Ant.* 1.8), was that there were certain persons who were curious to know about Jewish history. The fact that the one person whom he cites in particular as urging him to write the history is a non-Jew, Epaphroditus, would seem to indicate that the work, when written, would be especially addressed to such people. In fact, the two works, the *Life* of Josephus and the essay *Against Apion*, which are described as appendices to the *Antiquities*, are dedicated to this same Epaphroditus.

Josephus (*Ant.* 1.9) lists two other considerations in writing this history, namely, whether the ancestors of the Jews had been willing to communicate such information and whether any of the Greeks had been curious to have it presented to them. Both of these factors show his concern with his primary audience of non-Jews to whom he particularly addresses the work. If, indeed, he is concerned about relations of Jews with non-Jews there are two aspects that he would be particularly eager to address, namely, anti-Semitism and proselytism, both of which are fraught with tension.

As to the former, in the very city where Josephus was resident during the last thirty years of his life, Rome, the Jews had experienced two or even three expulsions—in 139 B.C.E., in 19 C.E., and during the reign of Claudius, most probably because of their alleged proselyting activities.²

² See Feldman 1993, 300-304.

Moreover, he wrote much of the *Antiquities* during the reign of Domitian, under whom (Suet., *Domitian* 12) the *fiscus Iudaicus* was collected very strictly (*acerbissime*, “very harshly,” “very bitterly”) through informers, and whose hostile attitude seems to have been prompted by Jewish (and/or Christian) success in winning converts, especially at the court itself in the persons of the emperor’s cousin Flavius Clemens, who was executed, and the latter’s wife, Flavia Domitilla (Suet., *Domitian* 15.1; Cassius Dio 67.14.1-2; Eus., *Hist. Eccl.* 3.19-20), who was exiled. Inasmuch as Josephus himself had been accused of being a traitor to the Jewish people because of his surrender to the Romans, he was naturally inclined, in self-defense, to seek ways to prove to his compatriots that he was zealous in defending them. We shall here consider certain themes in the first half of the *Antiquities*, where Josephus, in his additions to, subtractions from, and modifications of the biblical narrative, is, in effect, commenting upon contemporary issues, particularly the recent war of the Jews with the Romans.

2. RESPECT FOR THE CONCEPT OF A JUST WAR

The Romans felt strongly about the concept of a “just war,” that is, that a war is permitted to be waged only when all attempts at a peaceful solution have failed and when the enemy is guilty of having launched an unjust attack (Cic., *De Officiis* 1.11.34-36; *De Re Publica* 3.23.34-35). Thus, for example, before going to war against the Syrians and to justify that war, Josephus (*Ant.* 8.399) carefully expands on the history of Ahab’s claims against Syria. On the other hand, one might well wonder whether Saul’s war against the Amalekites and especially Samuel’s criticism of him for failing to fulfill the commandment to wipe them out were justified. However, Josephus’ extra-biblical explanation that the war was justified as vengeance for what the Amalekites had done to the Israelites after the exodus is more convincing (*Ant.* 6.133), since the Romans had such high regard for their ancestors.

Moreover, Josephus, from his own experience with the Romans during the Jewish revolt of 66-73/74, was well aware of the concept of a “just war.” Hence, it is significant that whereas the biblical account states merely that Ahab told the servants of Jehoshaphat that Ramoth-gilead, which was in the hands of the king of Syria, really belonged to him (Ahab) (1 Kgs. 22:3), Josephus expands this

by giving the history of Ahab's claim, namely, that the city had first belonged to his father and that it had been taken away by the father of the Syrian king (*Ant.* 8.399); thereby he justifies to Jehoshaphat the military action which they are jointly about to undertake. Furthermore, the Josephan Ahab is a respecter of peace who refuses to be party to its disruption without prior prophetic authorization (*Ant.* 8.401).³

3. CONTEMPT FOR THE MASSES

Josephus stresses that the race of mankind is by nature morose (*δυσαρέστου*, "discontented," "grumbling," "irritable") and censorious (*φιλαιτίου*, "fond of having reproaches at hand") (*Ant.* 3.23). He comments on the effects of the Egyptian famine in the days of Joseph, that it enslaved not only the bodies of the Egyptians but also their minds (*διανοίας*, "thought," "intelligence," "understanding") and drove them thereafter to degrading means of subsistence (*Ant.* 2.191). Moreover, Josephus adds a snide remark, directed against the rabble (*ὄχλος*) of women and children, who, he says, were responsible for vitiating the nobler instincts of the Israelites in the desert (*Ant.* 3.5). He returns to the theme of the fickleness of the mob, after King Saul's victory over Nahash the Ammonite, when he speaks sneeringly of "all that a crowd, elated by success, is wont to utter against those who were of late disparaging the authors of it" (*Ant.* 6.81).

Josephus betrays his contempt for the ignorant mob in his citation of the comment of Plato, who was probably the most important single intellectual force in the process of Hellenization in the East during the Hellenistic period,⁴ that it is hazardous to divulge the truth about G-d to the ignorant mob (*ὄχλων*) (*Ap.* 2.224). Thucydides, whom Josephus admired and imitated so much, points out (2.65.4) the truism that the way of the multitude is fickle, as seen by the fact that the Athenians, in their anger at the terrible losses that had befallen them during the great plague, imposed upon their great leader Pericles, only to reverse themselves shortly thereafter and to choose him again as general. Thucydides (2.49-53) graphically portrays the effects of the plague upon the Athenians, especially upon their minds, noting

³ So Begg 1989, 230-31.

⁴ Hadas 1958, 3-13; 1959, 72-82.

that it led to despair and lawlessness (2.51.4, 2.53.4, 2.61.3). Consequently, one of the major qualities of the ideal statesman, as we see in Thucydides' portrait (2.60) of Pericles, is the ability to persuade the masses.

Here Josephus followed in the footsteps of Thucydides (2.65.4) and Plato (*Rep.* 8.557-61); and here, too, there are clear overtones in his attitude toward the role of the masses in the war against Rome (*War* 3.475, 7.191). It is a truism, according to Josephus in the Korah pericope, that under the stress of want (ἀπορία, "privation") and calamity (συμφορᾶς) people become enraged with each other and with their leader (*Ant.* 4.11). Josephus here has in mind a similar scene in one of his favorite authors, Thucydides (2.65.2-3), where he depicts the attitude of the fickle Athenian mob toward Pericles after the plague had afflicted them. He uses the same word, ἀπορία, to explain the strategy of the Roman general Vespasian in blockading Jerusalem, since, he reckoned, the defenders would be reduced by their privations (ἀπορίαις) to sue for mercy (*War* 3.179). Again, during the siege of Jerusalem, Josephus (*War* 6.195) remarks that even those who were dying were not believed to be in want (ἀπορία).

Josephus stresses the disorderliness of the mob that supported Korah (*Ant.* 4.22). To Josephus the worst political behavior is that of people trooping to the assembly (ἐκκλησίαν) in disorderly wise (ἀκόσμως), with tumult (θορύβου, "turmoil," "confusion," "unrest," "disorder") and uproar (ταραχῆς, "confusion," "unrest," "disturbance," "tumult," "uproar," "ferment," "clamor," "disorder"), the terms θόρυβος and ταραχή being clearly synonymous and intended to emphasize the tumult (*Ant.* 4.22). It is this turbulence (ταραχή) that Korah arouses and that we find referred to no fewer than four times in this brief passage describing the excitement and disorderly conduct of the people (*Ant.* 4.22, 32, 35, 36). The synonymous term, θόρυβος, and its corresponding verb, θορυβέω ("to be noisy," "to be in ferment"), and adjective, θορυβώδης ("rebellious," "restless," "tumultuous"), appear three times in the passage (*Ant.* 4.22, 36, 37). Indeed, Moses appeals to the people to cease from their sedition (στάσεως) and turbulence (ταραχῆς) (*Ant.* 4.32). The fickle mob, in a scene highly reminiscent of the description in Thucydides of the attitude of the Athenians toward Pericles after the plague, in a tumultuous (θορυβώδη) assembly (*Ant.* 4.36), exhibit their "innate delight in decrying those in authority" and, in their shallowness, swayed by what anyone said, are in ferment. This recalls the way

that the masses of the Athenians vented their disappointment and anger upon Pericles (Thuc. 2.65). Such disorderliness brings about obliteration of the ordered beauty (κόσμος) of the constitution. Indeed, so deeply ingrained is this disorderliness and this seditious tendency that even after the rebels are swallowed up by the earth the sedition continues (*Ant.* 4.59) and, in fact, to a far greater degree and more grievously than before.

Significantly, the same two terms, θόρυβος and ταραχή, which figure so prominently in Josephus' account of Korah's rebellion, are used by him (*War* 5.101) to describe the disorder and confusion in the Temple when John of Gischala attacked the Zealots there. The word θόρυβος ("clamor") is used by Josephus to describe the behavior of the menacing crowd, who with their confused shouts prevented Josephus from hearing them when they made an attempt upon his life (*War* 2.611). Josephus (*War* 2.598) also uses the word ταραχή to describe the ferment that some robbers, rebuffed by Josephus, created against him in the cities around Tarichaeae, with the result that by daybreak a hundred thousand men in arms had been collected against him. As Vespasian and Titus advanced, says Josephus (*War* 4.131), every city in Judea was agitated by tumult (ταραχή) and civil war (πόλεμος ἐμφύλιος). Again, Josephus (*War* 4.151) describes how the Zealots seized the Temple and turned it into a fortress and refuge from any outbreak of popular tumult (ταραχῶν). Furthermore, adds Josephus (*War* 4.407), sedition (στάσις) and disorder (ταραχή) during the siege of Jerusalem gave the scoundrels in the country free rein to plunder.

It is precisely because the masses are so fickle that responsible and inspired leadership is so important, as we see especially in Josephus' treatment of the period of the judges. In particular, in his account of Samuel, Josephus betrays his contempt for the masses. Thus, in an extrabiblical comment, he remarks that Samuel devoted much zeal and care to instilling the idea of righteousness (δίκαιον) even into the multitude (πλήθος) (*Ant.* 6.34). This same multitude, in insisting, despite Samuel's warnings of what a king will do to them, that Samuel find them a king, is described, in a comment without biblical basis (1 Sam. 8:19), as foolish (άνόητον) and obstinate (δύσκολον) (*Ant.* 6.43). Whereas the Bible says simply that the people refused to listen to Samuel (1 Sam. 8:19), Josephus stresses the thoughtlessness of the masses by stating that they pressed him importunately (λιπαρῶς) and insisted that he should elect their king immediately

and take no thought of the future (*Ant.* 6.43).

An aphoristic contempt for the mob may likewise be seen in Josephus' remark that all the people swarmed around the body of Amasa and, "as is the way of the multitude (ὄχλος), pressed forward to wonder at it" (*Ant.* 7.287). Similar negative connotations of the word ὄχλος may be seen in the following statements: "Of the impious multitude (ὄχλον) Azaelos shall destroy some and Jehu others" (*Ant.* 8.352); "The entire multitude (ὄχλος) [during the reign of Zadekiah] had license to act as outrageously as it pleased" (*Ant.* 10.103).

Again, it is indicative of Josephus' negative attitude toward Jeroboam that the latter was called to power by the leaders of the multitude (τῶν ὄχλων) immediately after the death of King Solomon (*Ant.* 8.212) and that they were consequently responsible for the secession of the northern kingdom. Josephus himself shows his contempt for the masses when he remarks that the advisers of King Rehoboam of Judah were acquainted with the nature of crowds (ὄχλων), implying that such mobs are fickle and unreliable, and that they urged the king to speak to them in a friendly spirit and in a more popular style than was usual for royalty (*Ant.* 8.215).

Egalitarianism, which the aristocratically-minded Josephus despised, also comes to the fore in the extra-biblical promise, ascribed to Jeroboam, to appoint priests and Levites from among the general population (*Ant.* 8.228). To be sure, in the biblical text, we are told that Jeroboam appointed priests from among all the people (1 Kgs. 12:31), but it is much more effective to have this come as a promise from Jeroboam directly to his people. Josephus himself clearly opposed such egalitarianism, which smacks of the remarks made by Korah, who likewise had attacked Moses for bestowing the priesthood upon his brother Aaron (*Ant.* 4.15-19) instead of making the appointment democratically and on the basis of sheer merit (*Ant.* 4.23).

Thucydides, whom Josephus admired and imitated so much, cites (2.65.4) the truism that the way of the multitude is fickle. It is, therefore, indeed, significant that when Ezra is first introduced, Josephus, in an extra-biblical addition, notes that he enjoyed the good opinion (δόξης) of the masses (*Ant.* 11.121). With the huge Persian kingdom, consisting, as it did, of so many nationalities and with the Persians themselves being a distinct minority within it, a person such as Ezra, who had the ear of the Jewish masses, would prove extremely useful to his overlord. However, this quality would not necessarily raise Ezra in the esteem of Josephus' reading audience, since Josephus,

particularly in his portrayal of Moses, stresses that the true leader is not swayed by the multitude. It is only a rabble-rousing demagogue such as Korah who caters to the multitude and who is consequently the candidate of the people (*Ant.* 4.15, 4.20), whereas the multitude itself is actually bent on stoning Moses (*Ant.* 4.22). Again, Josephus stresses that the natural state of the multitude is anarchy, noting that, once their great leader Joshua had died, the people continued in a state of anarchy for a full 18 years (*Ant.* 6.84).

That Josephus is thinking in contemporary terms in his snide remarks about the masses may be seen particularly in the *Jewish War*. Thus, in *War* 1.172, we read of King Aristobulus of Judea disencumbering himself of his rabble (ὄχλων) of inefficient followers. Such language is also used with reference to the revolutionaries during the war against Rome, as we see in Titus' address to his troops, in which he remarks that the Jews, however dauntless and reckless of life they may be, are undisciplined and deserve to be called a mere rabble (ὄχλος... ἄλλως) rather than an army (*War* 3.475). Likewise, we hear of the mere rabble (ὄχλον ἄλλως) of Jews at Machaerus (*War* 7.191). The use of the word in connection with the mob (ὄχλον) of women and children drafted by that most despised of revolutionaries, John of Gischala, is highly significant (*War* 4.107). Similar disparaging remarks in Josephus' *War* about the mob of revolutionaries are found in *War* 3.542: "The remainder of the mob (who had congregated at Tarichaeae)—a crowd of seditious individuals and fugitives to whom their infamous careers in peace-time gave war its attractions"; *War* 6.283: "the poor women and children of the populace and a mixed multitude had taken refuge in the Temple."

4. DISDAIN FOR DEMAGOGUES

Josephus shares with Thucydides and Plato a disdain for demagogues. This contempt grew out of experiences that each saw as destroying his state in his own lifetime. One is reminded of the way in which, according to Thucydides (3.36, 6.19), the Athenian masses were swayed by demagogues such as Cleon and Alcibiades, as well as of the technique by which the gullible captain of the ship, representing the masses, in Plato's parable, instead of listening to the true navigator, is won over by the fawning sailors (*Rep.* 6.488A-89A).

In particular, Josephus connects the act of a demagogue, currying favor of the crowd, with rebellion, as seen, for example, in his com-

ment that Absalom, when rebelling against his father David, curried favor (δημαγωγῶν, “acting as a demagogue”) with the multitude; when he thought that the loyalty of the multitude (ὄχλων) had been secured, he proceeded to plot against the state, whereupon a great multitude (ὄχλος) streamed to him (*Ant.* 7.196).⁵

Here again Josephus followed in the footsteps of Thucydides (3.36, 6.19) and Plato (*Rep.* 6.488A-89A). Korah, on the other hand, is portrayed as a typical demagogue who, as such, wishes to make it appear by his words (λέγων) that he is concerned with the public welfare (τοῦ κοινοῦ) (*Ant.* 4.20), whereas in reality (ἔργῳ) he is but scheming to have the dignity of leadership transferred by the people from Moses to himself. In his demagoguery he is highly reminiscent of Cleon and Alcibiades in Thucydides’ narrative, as well as of the sophists in Plato’s parable of the ship (*Rep.* 6.488A-89A).

Josephus depicts the rise to power of Absalom as having come about through the use of techniques associated with demagogues. In the biblical version we read that Absalom would rise early and would stand outside the royal palace, and, like a modern-day politician, would greet those who had come with their lawsuits, putting out his hand, professing interest, flattering them with the view that they were right in their suit, and lamenting the injustice of the system (2 Sam. 15:2-6). By treating every man thus as his friend and equal he adopted a favorite device of demagogues. No wonder, as the biblical account concludes, Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel (2 Sam. 15:6).

Josephus goes further in depicting Absalom as a demagogue. He actually uses the word δημαγωγῶν (“be a demagogue,” “have great influence with the people,” “be a distinguished public speaker”) in characterizing Absalom’s currying favor with the masses (πλῆθος), particular]y appealing to those who lost their legal cases and seeking the loyalty (εὐνοίαν) of the multitude (ὄχλων, the key word in Josephus’ denunciation of the masses) (*Ant.* 7.196), that streamed (ἐπισυνέρρευσεν, “flow together,” “join in mass”) to him. This is in contrast to the biblical statement that two hundred men—clearly not a great multitude—from Jerusalem went with him as invited guests (2 Sam. 15:11).

Again, we see a political statement by Josephus against democ-

⁵ See Feldman 1993h, 17-21.

racy in his version of the way Absalom was chosen as king by his followers. The Bible asserts that the conspiracy grew strong, that the number of his adherents kept increasing, and that a messenger came to David with the report that “the hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom” (2 Sam. 15:12-13). In Josephus we have a description of a democratic political process whereby Absalom was chosen by all his followers as king, and we are told specifically that it was he who had contrived (στρατηγήσας, “be a field-commander,” “use cunning,” “contrive ways and means”) to have this method followed (*Ant.* 7.197).

We can see from Josephus’ usage elsewhere of the same verb, *δημαγωγέω*, how contemptuous he was of demagogues. Thus we hear that the people of Ptolemais had been persuaded to change their plans by a certain Demaenetus, who had their confidence at that time and who influenced the people (*δημαγωγῶν*) (*Ant.* 13.330). In particular, Josephus’ great rival, Justus of Tiberias, is described as a clever demagogue who, through using a charlatan’s tricks of oratory, was more than a match for opponents with saner counsels (*Life* 40).

5. REALISTIC ATTITUDE AND EVEN HIGH REGARD FOR THE SUPERPOWER OF THE DAY

Despite the Bible’s strongly positive view of Hezekiah, Josephus is clearly critical of Hezekiah for not realistically accommodating himself to the superior power of that day, Assyria; and, drawing a parallel, in effect, to the situation of the Jews vis-à-vis the Romans, Josephus is less than enthusiastic about him, even going to the point of asserting that it was cowardice that influenced Hezekiah not to come out himself to meet the Assyrians (*Ant.* 10.5).

Inasmuch as it was Isaiah’s prophecy that the Assyrian king Sennacherib would be defeated without a battle that encouraged Hezekiah to defy the Assyrians (2 Kgs. 19:20-34; *Ant.* 10.13), Isaiah and Hezekiah would seem to be associated in a refusal to submit to the superpower; and hence one can understand why Josephus would seek to minimize and downgrade both of them. After all, if we compare the message of the Assyrian king Sennacherib to Hezekiah, in which he recalls to Hezekiah what has happened to all the nations that have resisted the Assyrians (Isa. 37:11-13, 18:33-35), we see striking parallels with the speech of the Jewish king Agrippa II in which he

lists the various nations that have been overcome by the Romans (*War* 2.358-87).

At first thought one might suggest that Josephus' attitude to Jehoiachin may have been influenced by a desire to present this penultimate king of Judah in a positive light in view of his (Josephus') hope of the renewal of the monarchy at some future time. But this is unlikely, inasmuch as Josephus himself (*Life* 2) traced his ancestry back, on his mother's side, to the Hasmoneans, who were the great opponents of the Davidic line, whose kingship they usurped. Moreover, the concept of the renewal of the Davidic line was intimately connected with the expectation of a messiah, who, traditionally, was regarded as a descendant of David; and the idea of a messiah was surely anathema to the Romans, Josephus' patrons, inasmuch as a major achievement of a messiah was to be the establishment of a truly independent state; and this could, of course, occur only with the end of Roman occupation of Judea.

A more fruitful approach will be to consider the possibility that because Josephus saw a striking parallel between the events leading to the destruction of both the First and Second Temples, and because he himself acted in a fashion similar to that of Jehoiachin in surrendering to the enemy, he felt a greater necessity to defend Jehoiachin's decision. It is surely striking that in his address to his rival John of Gischala and to his fellow Jews, Josephus appeals to the same motives that led Jehoiachin to surrender, namely to spare his country and to save the Temple from destruction (*Ant.* 10.100). As a sole precedent, he cites (*War* 6.103-4) the instance of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah), whose action he refers to as a noble example, in that he voluntarily endured captivity together with his family rather than see the Temple go up in flames. He then, in a veritable peroration and clearly disregarding the biblical statement that Jehoiachin did evil, remarks that because of this action Jehoiachin is celebrated in sacred story by all Jews and will be remembered forever. It is significant, too that aside from David and Solomon, Jehoiachin is the only king mentioned by name in the *War*.

In his reworking of the narrative of Gedaliah, the client governor of Judea appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, and with clear implications for the contemporary position of Jews vis-à-vis the Romans, Josephus stresses that it was a matter of military necessity for the Jews to remain subservient to the superpower. Gedaliah's position, vis-à-vis the Babylonians at the time of the destruction of the First

Temple, was more or less replicated by Josephus at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, namely to accept subservience to the superpower in return for religious autonomy. In this he agreed with the rabbinic leadership, at least as exemplified by Johanan ben Zakkai (*Git.* 56a-b). Josephus' identification with Gedaliah's policy of subservience to the superpower should be understood in the light of his sensitivity to the charge that the Jews constituted a nation within a nation whose allegiance, wherever they were scattered, was to an independent state in the land of Israel, and hence that they would forever be subversive until their return from captivity. In effect, Josephus, unlike the Fourth Philosophy, whose adherents fought the Romans during the Great War of 66-73/74, did not regard nationhood as the *sine qua non* of Judaism; a policy such as that advocated by Gedaliah would, he believed, bring peace and prosperity to the Jews.

6. OPPOSITION TO MESSIANIC AND MESSIANIC-LIKE MOVEMENTS AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

Inasmuch as the concept of a messiah *ipso facto* meant revolt against Rome in order to establish an independent Jewish state, it is not surprising that Josephus avoids any overt inkling that he favored such a doctrine—hence his relative downgrading of Ruth as the ancestor of David, of David as the ancestor of the Messiah, and of Hezekiah, whose messiahship was apparently recognized by some (*Sanh.* 99a).⁶ Thus, in the words of Balaam, the goal of the Jews is not to dominate the world but rather merely to be happy (*Ant.* 4.114). Nor is the goal to have an independent state in Palestine but rather to live eternally (δι' αἰῶνος) in the entire habitable world, that is, the Diaspora. Indeed, one reason, we have suggested, why Josephus identified himself more closely with Elisha than with the latter's mentor Elijah, who was clearly the more popular of the two, is that Elijah was regarded as the patron of the zealots and as the forerunner of the Messiah himself.⁷

After Lot and Abraham part from each other, G-d tells Abraham (Gen. 13:14-17) to lift up his eyes in all directions and then proceeds

⁶ See Feldman 1992c, 598.

⁷ See Feldman 1994b, 62-64.

to promise all this land to him and to his descendants forever. Josephus, aware that the political implications of this promise in his own day were an implicit justification for a Jewish state independent of the Romans, judiciously omits this passage completely.⁸

When Abraham laments that he is childless (Gen. 15:2), G-d, according to the Bible (Gen. 15:7) reassures him that he has brought him from Ur in order to give him the land of Canaan to inherit. When Abraham then asks for proof that he will, indeed, inherit the land, G-d (Gen. 15:9) tells him to sacrifice a heifer, she-goat, ram, turtle-dove, and pigeon, whereupon G-d makes a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:18), assuring him that he has given the land from the Nile to the Euphrates to his descendants. Significantly, in Josephus' version of this episode, G-d (*Ant.* 1.183) assures Abraham that a son will be born to him whose posterity will be as numerous as the stars; and after Abraham sacrifices the animals and birds a divine voice announces (*Ant.* 1.185) that his posterity will overcome their enemies, vanquish the Canaanites in battle, and take possession of their land and cities. Thus, there is no indication that the land is a gift from G-d, but rather that it will be won—and presumably lost—on the field of battle. There is no indication as to the extent of the land, which, if the biblical statement is taken literally, would imply that the Jews not only have a claim to an independent state but also regard it as a matter of divine promise that their state should extend far beyond the borders of Judea.

Thus, there is less emphasis on G-d's promise of Palestine to Abraham, in line with Josephus' view that an independent state is hardly a *sine qua non* for Jews, and certainly not when it requires a revolutionary war against the Romans. On the other hand, Josephus, seeking to build up a picture of Abraham and of his descendants as fighters rather than as mere inheritors, has G-d add (*Ant.* 1.185), in his promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:13-16), as we have noted, that his posterity will defeat the Canaanites in battle. Similarly, the Bible (Gen. 17:1-16) tells how G-d appeared to Abraham, reassured him that he was to become the father of a multitude of nations, and changed his name from Abram to Abraham to signify this. In the Bible (Gen. 17:8) G-d assures him that he will give him all the land of Canaan

⁸ In contrast, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, which has no such apologetic motives, not only includes G-d's promise but greatly elaborates it.

for an everlasting possession and that the seal of this covenant is to be the circumcision that he is now commanded to perform upon himself and upon every male born in his family. Very significantly, in Josephus' version (*Ant.* 1.191-93) there is no mention of the change of name and its implications, and Canaan is described not as a divine gift but rather as a land to be won by human effort in war—something that his rationalized readers could well understand. The limits cited of the land are more modest, extending only from Sidon to Egypt (*Ant.* 1.191), rather than from the Euphrates to Egypt (so Gen. 15:18), perhaps because Jewish territory never actually reached the Euphrates, and Josephus did not wish to have his divine prediction contradicted by the historical facts.⁹ As for the circumcision that is commanded, it is not as a seal of a covenant, with its political implications, but rather a means of preventing assimilation.¹⁰

Josephus' fullest statement (*Ant.* 1.235-36) of G-d's promise of the supremacy that Abraham's descendants will exercise is found in G-d's assertion to Abraham before the appearance of the ram at the climax of the *'Aqedah*, in other words in a purely religious rather than a political context, at a time when Abraham had shown supreme faith and had proven himself worthy of G-d's blessings; here, too, we find the statement (*Ant.* 1.235) that they will subdue Canaan by force of arms and thus be envied of all people.

Whereas in the Bible (Gen. 21:18) an angel reassures Hagar when she has been banished by Abraham by telling her that G-d will make her child into a great nation, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.219) very carefully has the angel tell her merely and very vaguely that great blessings await her through the preservation of her child. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.221) was aware of the tradition that Ishmael was the ancestor of the Arabs, noting, as he does that the sons of Ishmael occupied the huge expanse of territory known as Nabatea between the Euphrates and the Red Sea; and hence he realized that the biblical promise to Hagar would indicate that the Arabs would become a great—and obviously independent—nation, something that could happen only if

⁹ So Sandmel 1956, 66 n. 278.

¹⁰ In this respect, as in several others, Pseudo-Philo is closer to the biblical narrative and to the rabbis than is Josephus' account, for even though he has vastly abbreviated the whole narrative of Abraham, he twice (Ps.-Ph. 7.4 and 8.3) mentions and gives the terms of the covenant between G-d and Abraham. He likewise, unlike Josephus, mentions the change of name of Abraham and Sarah.

the province of Arabia revolted against the Roman Empire, a situation that Josephus, the loyal Roman citizen, could hardly countenance.

The ending of Josephus' version of the *'Aqedah* is a "lived happily ever after" finale, so typical of Hellenistic novels.¹¹ Josephus develops further than does the Bible the divine prediction of the blessings that will be showered upon Abraham and his descendants; presumably, he sought thereby to build up Abraham still more. To be sure, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.191) does have G-d promise Abraham that his descendants will "subdue Canaan by their arms." Yet, Josephus has deleted the biblical theology of covenanted land, apparently because it would be offensive to his Roman patrons who had just reconquered that land.¹² He does not want the land to be the focal point, given its significance for the revolutionary theology of the Fourth Philosophy, which insisted that the Land of Israel must be free from foreign rule.

Josephus was keenly aware that his paraphrase of the Bible would have considerable contemporary implications. Thus, Josephus, writing in Rome under the patronage of the Roman Emperor and in the wake of the disaster of the Jewish revolt of 66-73/74, places less emphasis on G-d's promise of Palestine to Abraham;¹³ Josephus appears more interested in portraying the marriage alliance arranged by Abraham for Isaac than in the biblical theme of the fulfillment of G-d's promise that Abraham's descendants will inherit the land of Israel.¹⁴ Again, after Isaac proves his unquestioning faith at the *'Aqedah*, G-d promises him (*Ant.* 1.234) that after a life of felicity he will bequeath to a virtuous and lawfully begotten offspring a great dominion (ἡγεμονίαν), whose nature and extent Josephus keeps deliberately vague.

Isaac's prayer, in his blessing of Jacob (Gen. 27:29), that peoples should serve (עבדוך) him and nations bow down to him (the latter half of which becomes in the LXX "let rulers [ἄρχοντες] bow down to you"), would clearly not be well received by the peoples, nations and rulers of the world, including, of course, the contemporary Romans. Philo's solution is to interpret the passage allegorically (*QG* 4.216-17): it is the nations of the soul that are to be ruled by reason, while the

¹¹ So Schalit 1944, 2:40 n. 265.

¹² Amaru 1980-81, 208, 229.

¹³ Amaru 1980-81, 201-29.

¹⁴ Bailey 1987, 162.

princes are those who preside over and are in charge of heterodox principles. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.273) resolves the problem by omitting all mention of the subservience of nations and rulers and by substituting a prayer that Jacob will be a terror to his foes and a treasure and delight to his friends, reminiscent of Simonides' definition of justice in Plato's *Rep.* (1.332D).

As one who had participated in the war against the Romans and had come to the conclusion that resistance to Rome was futile and that Rome was divinely destined to rule the world, Josephus constantly seeks to convince his compatriots to give up the dream of national independence. Whereas in the Bible, the promise of land to Abraham is constantly renewed, Josephus shifts the stress from the covenanted land of Israel, so dear to the revolutionaries, to the biblical personalities themselves and to the role of the Diaspora. Thus, Josephus omits the passage (Gen. 26:3-5) that relates G-d's blessing of Isaac promising the land to Abraham's descendants. It is significant that whereas in the Bible (Gen. 27:27-29), in Isaac's blessing for Jacob (whom he thinks to be Esau), he asks G-d for agricultural abundance and for power to demand respect from other nations (the Hebrew reads: "Nations shall serve thee and peoples bow down to thee"; see the LXX: "Let nations serve thee, and princes bow down to thee"), in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.272) the national aspect is totally omitted, and instead we have a prayer for Esau's personal happiness and satisfaction.

When Isaac blesses Jacob before sending him off to find a wife, whereas the Bible (Gen. 28:3) has him invoke G-d's blessing to "make thee fruitful and multiply thee, that thou mayest become a multitude of people," and (Gen. 28:4) to inherit the land that G-d gave to Abraham, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.278), aware that the Romans were sensitive about the great expansion of the Jewish population especially through proselytism, omits this. Furthermore, whereas the Bible (Gen. 28:14) declares, in G-d's promise in Jacob's dream, that his seed will be "as the dust of the earth," and that "thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.282) predicts that the number of Jacob's direct descendants (ὀνόμας) will be vast (as, indeed, was the case at the time when Josephus was writing), but is careful to avoid any suggestion that they will seek to convert others to Judaism. Even the Josephan G-d's promise to Jacob that "to them (thy children) do I grant dominion (κράτος) over this land" indicates nothing more

than that the descendants of Jacob will have power or strength in the land of Canaan, though not necessarily political independence there. There is a further omission of land theology by Josephus (*Ant.* 1.309) when Jacob expresses the desire to depart to his own home (πρὸς αὐτόν); in the Bible (Gen. 30:25) Jacob asks Laban to send him away, “that [may go unto my own place, and to my country (ולאֶרֶץ)”. When Jacob replies to Laban’s objection to his attempt to escape from him, he speaks, in a long extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 1.317; cf. Gen. 31:31-32), not in nationalistic terms but rather in terms of love of native land (πατρίδος), which, he says, is innate (ἐμφῶσαι) in all.

A key to Josephus’ political position may be seen in the scene (*Ant.* 1.331-34) where Jacob wrestles with the angel. In the Hebrew (Gen. 32:28) the angel tells him that his name will from now on be Israel, because “you have striven with G-d and with men and have prevailed.” In Josephus’ version (*Ant.* 1.333) the struggle with men (which might, presumably, include the Romans) is significantly omitted from the explanation of the name, which, we are told, merely “denotes the opponent of an angel of G-d.” The assurance that the angel gives Jacob (*Ant.* 1.332) is not in terms of a future nation but rather that his race (γένος) will never be extinguished and that no mortal will surpass him personally in strength. Hence, Josephus has given us a “gereinigten” text, where the name Israel assumes an eschatological, rather than a political, significance.¹⁵

It is important to note that whereas in the Hebrew (Gen. 35:11) G-d at Bethel tells Jacob that “a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you”—a passage the political significance of which, especially in view of the recent revolt of the Jews against the Romans, might well be offensive to the Romans—Josephus quietly omits the whole scene. Again, when Jacob descends to Egypt, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 40:3), G-d declares that He will make a great nation of him there, the word “nation” is significantly omitted in Josephus (*Ant.* 2.175), who has G d announce a long era of dominion (ἡγεμονία) and glory for his posterity. The phrase “long era” implies a time limitation here, and in any case the language of covenanted land is absent.¹⁶ Striking, moreover, is

¹⁵ Butterweck 1981, 51-56.

¹⁶ Amaru 1980-81, 209.

Josephus' omission (*Ant.* 2.194) of Jacob's blessing for Judah (Gen. 49:8-10) predicting his militarism and sovereignty. Furthermore, inasmuch as the increase in numbers of the Jews, particularly through proselytism, as we have noted, had caused great anguish to some Romans, Josephus (*Ant.* 2.194) omits Jacob's statement to Joseph (Gen. 48:4) that G-d would make him fruitful and multiply, would make of him a multitude of people, and would give his descendants the land of Canaan as an "eternal possession." Moreover, in his account of Jacob's death (*Ant.* 2.194) Josephus has him prophesy how each of his descendants is destined to find a habitation (κατοικεῖν) in Canaan; but there is no mention of an independent state for them. Likewise, he omits (*Ant.* 2.195) Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:16) that they would grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. Finally, Josephus (*Ant.* 2.201) also changes the biblical statement (Exod. 1:7) that Israel in Egypt "was fruitful and multiplied exceedingly" into one that the Egyptians became bitterly disposed towards the Hebrews through envy of their prosperity (εὐδαιμονίας), omitting all mention of their increase in numbers.

A political issue on which Josephus felt strongly was nationalism. In the Bible (Exod. 3.8), G-d tells Moses from the burning bush that He will take the Israelites into a good and broad land, the land of the Canaanites, flowing with milk and honey. A similar statement is found a few verses later (Exod. 3:17). The implication is clear: the Israelites are to displace the Canaanites and establish an independent state in the land. In Josephus' version (*Ant.* 2.269), however, there is significantly no mention of the Canaanites who are to be displaced and no suggestion of an independent state; the Israelites are merely to come to the land and settle there.

Of course, inasmuch as Josephus, especially in his paraphrases of the prophets, is highly selective, he might have simply omitted the prediction by Balaam, as he does with the passage foretelling a messianic kingdom that would destroy all previous kingdoms and that itself would last forever (Dan. 2:44), as well as the later passage in Daniel, which makes it clear that the fifth, world-wide, and everlasting empire would be ruled by a people of "saints of the Most High," that is the Jews (Dan. 7:18)—a passage that would, to the obvious embarrassment of Josephus as spokesman for the Romans, imply the ultimate overthrow of Rome. The fact that he does not, on the other hand, omit the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream or the above prophecy of Balaam is an indication of Josephus'

deliberate ambiguity, reflective of his attempt to reach both of his audiences, the non-Jews and the Jews, the latter with these allusions to an apparently messianic kingdom that will make an end of the Roman Empire. Perhaps he felt that to omit them altogether would have been taken by Jewish readers as a clear indication that he had sold out to the Romans. In fact, Klausner goes so far as to argue that Josephus' trip to Rome in 64, despite his statements in the *War* that Rome's ascendancy was part of a divine plan, may have actually increased his support for the cause of the revolutionaries, inasmuch as he must have been impressed by the evidence of Rome's decadence and realized that it was only a matter of time before Rome would fall;¹⁷ hence, the passages in *Ant.* 4.125 and 10.210 may be a clue to his real feelings.

In the passage (Num. 24:17-18) corresponding to *Ant.* 4.125, however, what Balaam predicts is that a star out of Jacob and a scepter out of Israel will conquer Edom and Seir. That this is intended as an eschatological prophecy is clear from Balaam's earlier statement that he will advise Balak what the Israelites would do to the Moabites at the end of days (Num. 24:14). That a messianic prophecy is likewise intended seems to be hinted at in the LXX's version of Num. 24:7: "There shall come a man out of his (i.e., Israel's) seed, and he shall rule over many nations; and the kingdom of Gog shall be exalted, and his kingdom shall be increased." In any case, the passage was interpreted messianically shortly after the time of Josephus in reference to Bar Kochba (*y. Ta'an.* 4.7. 68d) by Rabbi Akiva. Of course, such a messianic understanding was avoided by Josephus because of his subservience to the Romans.

It should not surprise us that Josephus has omitted the passages in Isaiah that were interpreted messianically (9:6-7, 11:2-3). And yet, lest he be regarded as having sold out to the Romans, Josephus does not omit but rather adopts cryptic language in referring to Balaam's prophecy of the overthrow of cities of the highest celebrity (*Ant.* 4.125), just as he does not omit but deliberately avoids explaining the meaning of the stone that, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, destroyed the kingdom of iron (*Ant.* 10.210), which the rabbinic tradition understood to refer to the triumph of the Messiah (*Tan.* B 2.91-92).

Josephus is also careful not to offend non-Jews politically. In par-

¹⁷ Klausner 1949, 5:167-68.

ticular, he is critical of messianic and messianic-like movements, since the goal of such movements was *ipso facto* a political Jewish state independent of the Romans. In view of Josephus' sensitivity to the charge that the Jews constituted a nation within a nation whose allegiance, wherever they were scattered, was to the Land of Israel and that they would be forever subversive until their return from captivity, it is instructive to note Josephus' paraphrase of the warning issued by the prophet Azariah to King Asa. According to the biblical version, if the Jews forsake G-d He will punish them by forsaking them; "they will be broken in pieces, nation against nation and city against city" (2 Chron. 15:2-7). Josephus, in his paraphrase, introduces a new element when he declares that as a punishment G-d will scatter the Jews over the face of the earth so that they will lead a life as aliens (ἔπηλυν) and wanderers (ἀλήτην) (*Ant.* 8.296-97). From this we might conclude that the Diaspora is a curse and a punishment, whereas one would have expected Josephus, who spent the second half of his life in the Diaspora under Roman protection, to have glorified this event in Jewish history since he clearly opposed an independent Jewish state. However, we must note that there is no hint here of the traditional Jewish hope that the Jews will some day be gathered together from the exile and return to the land of Israel.

Again, in the Bible, when Jehoshaphat, confronted by the invasion of the Moabites and Ammonites, prays to G-d, he says, "Didst thou not, O our G-d, drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham, thy friend?" (2 Chron. 20:7). He then reiterates the notion of an eternal divine gift of the land to the Israelites in his statement that the land has been given to the Israelites by G-d as an inheritance (2 Chron. 20:11). In Josephus' version the central focus is not on the land but on the Temple (*Ant.* 9.9); in other words, Josephus has converted a political gift of G-d into a religious one.

We may see Josephus' opposition to the re-establishment of an independent Jewish state in the fact that whereas in the Bible King Jehoshaphat reminds G-d that it is he who has driven out the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea and has given it to the Jews as a possession that G-d has given the Jews to inherit (2 Chron. 20:5-12). Josephus' Jehoshaphat speaks not of the land as a possession that the Jews have inherited but rather as a place in which to live (κατοίκησιν) (*Ant.* 9.89).

In general, Josephus' Daniel, given the additions to the biblical narrative, comes across as having considerable concern for non-Jews. Thus, according to the Bible, Daniel approached his three companions asking them to pray to G-d concerning the mystery so that he and they might not perish with the rest of the wise men (Dan. 2:17-18). In Josephus' version it is Daniel himself who beseeches G-d (*Ant.* 10.199); furthermore, Josephus adds that he did so throughout the night; and in place of the vague term "mystery" and in place of a concern primarily with saving their own lives, together with those of the non-Jewish wise men, we are told specifically that he sought enlightenment so as to save the Magi and the Chaldaeans, together with whom they were destined to perish. It is thus significantly the fate of the Magi and the Chaldaeans that is his first thought.

That Josephus was highly sensitive to the charge of dual loyalty may be seen in his paraphrase of the biblical passage in which certain Chaldaeans accuse the Jewish youths Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, whom Nebuchadnezzar had appointed to high administrative posts, of paying no heed to the king, as witnessed by the fact that they did not serve his gods or worship his image (Dan. 3:-12)—obviously important symbols in maintaining the unity and allegiance of the many ethnic groups in his kingdom. Josephus, in his paraphrase, is careful to shift the emphasis from the failure of the Jews to serve Nebuchadnezzar's gods and to worship his image—a political demand—to the religious motive of the youths, namely their unwillingness to transgress their fathers' laws (*Ant.* 10.214). The Romans, who placed such a great emphasis upon law and upon respect for ancestral tradition, as we can see from the attention given these factors in their great national poem, Virgil's *Aeneid*, would surely have appreciated such a stance.

Elsewhere, Josephus goes even further in shifting the focus away from the conflict between Jewish religious law and the law of the state. Thus, in the Bible Daniel's envious rivals state, in their exasperation, that they are unable to find any complaint against Daniel unless they discover it to be "in the matter of the law of his G-d" (Dan. 6:5). Realizing that the word "law" in and of itself was such an important concept to the Romans and that the biblical allusion to a possible conflict between the law of the state and the law of the Jews implied an irreconcilable conflict between two systems, Josephus in his paraphrase of this passage omits the word "law" altogether and instead couches the issue solely in religious terms with his remark

that when his rivals saw Daniel praying to G-d three times a day they realized that they had found a pretext for destroying him (*Ant.* 10.252). When Josephus does subsequently mention the laws of the Jews, he makes clear that his reference is to their religious laws (*Ant.* 10.275), given the immediately following mention of the Temple and its sacrifices. Daniel's envious rivals, on the other hand, according to Josephus' addition to the biblical text (*Dan.* 6:13), sought to portray Daniel as attempting, by his disregard of the king's edict, to undermine the state, which they claimed others were seeking to keep and preserve (*Ant.* 10.256).¹⁸

It is surely striking that Josephus omits all reference to David as the ancestor of the Messiah, despite the fact that such a tradition must have been widespread in his era,¹⁹ because he apparently wished to stress for his Hellenistic Jewish readers his own repugnance of an independent state, this being generally regarded as the goal that a messiah as a political leader would accomplish. To the extent that his Roman patrons would have been aware of the beliefs of Jewish messianism, they would have objected to such a political figure who would seek to re-establish an independent Jewish state, precisely the goal of the revolutionaries against Rome in Josephus' own day whom he attacks so bitterly. While it is true, as de Jonge has remarked, that an investigation of Jewish writings dating from the beginning of the Common Era reveals that the term "messiah" is not generally used as a designation for G-d's representative or intermediary who will effect a new age of peace for Israel and for the world, the fact is that messianic movements do seem to have gained impetus precisely during the first century, aided and abetted by the treatment of the Jews by the Roman procurators.²⁰

¹⁸ There is a lacuna here in the text, but the import appears to be that those who observed the edict not to pray did so not because of impiety but because they realized how important it was to maintain respect for law and order.

¹⁹ See Feldman 1989, 173.

²⁰ De Jonge 1992, 4:787. There were several movements in Judea during the first century, particularly at the time of the revolt against Rome, headed by people who claimed the kingship or were proclaimed king by their followers. In view of the fact that these movements were clearly informed by traditional biblical prototypes, "the conclusion seems obvious that the groups led by the popularly proclaimed kings were 'messianic' movements based upon the prototypical messianic movements of biblical history." So Horsley 1992, 4:793. To be sure, Josephus avoids using the word "Messiah," except (supposing the passages are authentic) in connection with Jesus (*Ant.* 18.63; 20.200); but the movements led by Judas in Galilee, Simon in

7. CONTEMPT FOR THE REVOLUTIONARIES OF HIS OWN DAY

Like his beloved model, Thucydides, Josephus believed that history more or less repeated itself, inasmuch as its chief ingredients consisted of people, who have not changed very much through the centuries in the factors that drive them. Hence, he finds many parallels between biblical events and personalities and those of his own day, particularly during the war against the Romans.

We see one instance of this in almost the very beginning of Josephus' paraphrase of Genesis. In an addition to the biblical narrative, he notes in vivid detail the continued deterioration in Cain's descendants, each generation becoming worse than the previous one through inheriting and imitating its vices (*Ant.* 1.66). "They rushed incontinently (ἀκρατῶς) into battle," he adds, "and plunged (ὠρμήκεσαν) into brigandage (ληστείαν); or if anyone was too timid (ὀκνηρός) for slaughter, he would display other forms of bold recklessness (ἀπόνοιαν θράσους) by insolence (ὑβρίζων) and greed (πλεονεκτῶν)." All this is Josephus' embellishment of a single biblical phrase: "And he (Cain) built a city" (Gen. 4:17). Significantly, Josephus (*War* 3.9) uses the same word to describe the incontinent (ἀκρατεῖς) ardor of the Jews after they had defeated Cestius Gallus, the Roman governor of Syria, at the beginning of the war against the Romans. Likewise, in reconstructing the speech of the Jewish King Agrippa II seeking to dissuade the Jews from war with the Romans, he twice, within two paragraphs, uses the same verb to describe the way the Jews have plunged (ὠρμημένους, *War* 2.345; ὠρμημένοις, *War* 2.347; similarly, ὀρμήσας *War* 2.396) into rebellion against the Romans. He uses the same verb, ὥρμησαν (*War* 2.408), to describe the assault of the Jewish insurgents on Masada in 66.²¹ In a passage highly reminiscent of Thucydides' reflections (3.81-84) on revolution in Corcyra and other Greek cities, Josephus (*War* 4.134) describes the brigandage (λητείαν) that various revolutionary factions carried on throughout the country. He describes the revolutionary Simon's attacks as growing more timid (ὀκνηροτέρως, *War* 4.584), as most of

Peraea, Athronges in Judea, Menahem the leader of the Sicarii, and Simon bar Giora are highly reminiscent of messianic movements, even if the name "Messiah" is never used with reference to them by Josephus.

²¹ The same verb occurs no fewer than 59 times in the rest of the *War*. See Rengstorf 1979, 236-37.

his men lost heart. In his address to his troops the Roman general Titus asserts that the Jews are led on by boldness (θράσος) and recklessness (ἀπόνοια, *War* 3.479). As to the insolence of the Jewish rebels, which is a leitmotif throughout the *War*, thus the high priest Ananus (*War* 4.10) speaks of the insolence (ὕβρισμένον) of the revolutionaries against G-d. As to the atrocities of the rebels, Josephus (*War* 5.429) vividly portrays their greed (πλεονεκτούντων) in grabbing more than their share from the whimpering weak during the famine in Jerusalem.

The worst form of government, for Josephus as for Plato (*Rep.* 8.566C-9.580B), is tyranny. The great attack on Moses (*Ant.* 4.146) by Zambrias (Zimri) accuses him of acting tyrannically (τυραννικῶς) under the pretext of following the laws and obeying G-d while actually depriving the Israelites of freedom of action (αὐτεξούσιον, “self-determination”). Zambrias (*Ant.* 4.148), speaking frankly and as a free (ἐλευθέρου) man, makes a very strong case for independence of judgment (*Ant.* 4.149) when he declares that he prefers to get at the truth for himself with the help of many persons, rather than to live under a tyranny, placing all his hopes for his whole life upon one man, Moses. Again, when the Israelites, as they so often do, complain against Moses and decide to defy his leadership, the worst epithet that they can apply to him is that he is a tyrant (*Ant.* 4.3). The most effective argument of the most powerful revolutionary that Moses faced, Korah, is (*Ant.* 4.15-16) that Moses had defied his own laws in acting undemocratically in giving the priesthood to his brother Aaron, not through a majority vote of the people but rather acting in the manner of tyrants (τυράννων...τρόπῳ). And when the multitude, excited by Korah, are bent on stoning Moses, they shout (*Ant.* 4.22), “Away with the tyrant, and let the people be rid of their bondage to one who, in the pretended name of G-d, imposes his despotic orders (βίαια προστάγματα).”

As we have noted, the worst form of government for Josephus, as for Plato in the *Republic*, is tyranny. Thus, whereas the Bible describes the sons of Eli the high priest as base men who did not know the L-rd (1 Sam. 2:12) and who dealt contemptuously with the L-rd’s offerings (1 Sam. 2:17), Josephus formulates his denunciation of them in terms of classical political theory: their manner of life differed no whit from a tyranny (*Ant.* 5.339). Josephus considerably amplifies the degradation which, Samuel warns them, the Israelites will suffer at the hands of a king, remarking that they would be treated

as chattels at his will and pleasure and at the impulse of his other passions (*Ant.* 6.61). He adds an original reason why kings would be less concerned than is G-d with the welfare of their subjects, namely that they are not the people's authors and creators, as G-d is, and that, consequently, they would not lovingly strive to preserve them, whereas G-d would cherish their care. Similarly, in his account of the Jewish war against the Romans, Josephus says most emphatically that it was the tyrants of the Jews who drew down upon the holy Temple the unwilling hands of the Romans (*War* 1.10). On no fewer than thirty occasions in the *War* he applies the word "tyrants" to the leaders of the Jewish rebels against Roman rule.

Thus, significantly, Josephus refers to Menahem, the rebel leader, as an insufferable tyrant (τύραννος, *War* 2.442). Josephus himself is accused by his greatest rival, John of Gischala, of seeking to become a tyrant (*War* 2.626). The high priests Ananus and Jesus refer to the Zealots as tyrants (*War* 4.166, 178, 258); and the revolutionaries in general are thus referred to (*War* 6.202, 286). In particular, John of Gischala is referred to as a tyrant (*War* 4.564, 566; 5.5) (often without even being mentioned by name [*War* 6.98, 129, 143]), as is Simon bar Giora (*War* 4.573; 5.11; 6.227, 7.265), and the two together (*War* 5.439; 6.323, 325, 343, 370, 379, 394, 399, 409, 412, 432).

In particular, Josephus felt a need to tone down the revolutionary ideals of David, especially as these might conjure up the goals of the revolutionary groups in the war against the Romans. Thus, whereas the Bible declares that everyone who was in debt or was discontented gathered around David (1 Sam. 22:2), Josephus, apparently realizing that it was just such people who joined the revolutionaries and who burnt the city archives of Jerusalem to destroy the record of debts (*War* 2.427), omits this statement, mentioning merely that all who were in want (χρεία) or in fear of King Saul joined him (*Ant.* 6.247).

On the one hand, Josephus is careful to avoid denominating Phinehas, the slayer of Zimri, a zealot, as the Bible does, indeed, term him (Num. 25:11), since Phinehas was, like Josephus, a priest, and since G-d himself gave approval, according to the Bible, to his act in ridding the Israelites of succumbing to sexual temptation. On the other hand, Jeroboam, in his "ambition for great things" (*Ant.* 8.209) is the prototype of Josephus' rivals, John of Gischala and Justus of Tiberias, of whom a similar phrase is used (*War* 2.587, *Life* 36). Josephus decries Jeroboam's lawlessness (*Ant.* 9.282), the very sin that he

ascribes to the Sicarii in rebelling against legitimate authority (*War* 7.262).

The key characteristic of Josephus' remolding of the biblical portrait of Elijah is his elimination of its zealot features. Thus, most notably, whereas in the Bible after his victory in the contest with the priests of Baal Elijah tells the Israelites to seize the prophets of Baal and himself kills them (1 Kgs. 18:40), in Josephus it is not Elijah but the Israelites who kill the prophets (*Ant.* 8.343).²² Again, when Elijah, fleeing from Queen Jezebel, takes refuge in a cave and a voice asks him why he has done so, his biblical answer is that he has been very zealous (קנא קנא) for the L-rd (1 Kgs. 19:10); but Josephus' Elijah makes no mention of his zealotry (*Ant.* 8.350). Similarly, when, according to the biblical version, the still small voice again asks Elijah what he is doing, he replies that he has been very zealous (קנא קנא) for the L-rd (1 Kgs. 19:14). He then, zealot that he is, bitterly proceeds to indict the people of Israel for having forsaken the covenant, thrown down G-d's altars, and slain the prophets. All this is omitted in Josephus' version, where the divine voice simply exhorts the prophet not to be alarmed and assures him that none of his enemies will succeed in getting him within their power (*Ant.* 8.352).

Significantly, Josephus identifies more closely with Elisha than with Elijah, who was the popular prototype of the Zealot and the forerunner of the Messiah, as may be seen from the fact that he omits the prophecy that Elisha will kill those who escape the sword of Jehu (1 Kgs. 19:17) and, above all, from the notable fact that he has a eulogy for Elisha but not for Elijah. Indeed, Elisha thus emerges as a gentler prophet.

It is important to note in what context Josephus elsewhere uses the same epithets that he applies to Gedaliah. Thus we find that the epithet φιλόανθρωπος and its adverb φιλάνθρωπως are employed four times in connection with Titus (*War* 4.96; 5.335; 6.324; 7.107) and twice of Vespasian (*War* 6.340, 341). Moreover, the corresponding noun, φιλάνθρωπία, is used with reference to the friendliness of the Romans to the Jews (*Ant.* 14.267), as seen in the many decrees that the Romans issued on behalf of the Jews, in Augustus' treatment of

²² There is, to be sure, an inconsistency in Josephus on this point in that subsequently when Elijah enters the cave and is asked why he had left the city, he replies that he has done so because he has killed the prophets of Baal and is consequently being pursued by Queen Jezebel.

Herod's sons (*Ant.* 15.343), and in Tiberius' courteous reply to Agrippa (*Ant.* 18.162). The particular import of this term may be discerned in Titus' address to the revolutionaries in calling attention to the humanity displayed by the Romans toward the Jews (*War* 6.333), as well as in Agrippa's speech to them emphasizing the same point (*War* 2.399). Indeed, it is almost as if Gedaliah is a "stand-in" for Josephus, and as if Ishmael, who is responsible for the plot to assassinate Gedaliah, is a "stand-in" for Josephus' great enemy, John of Gischala; in fact, we find that John of Gischala hypocritically, affects Gedaliah's very quality of humanity (ὑποκριτῆς φιλάνθρωπίας) (*War* 2.587). Furthermore, we find the terms φιλοφρονούμενος ("showing kindness," *War* 3.408) and χρηστότης ("kindness," "good nature," *Life* 423) used of Vespasian's treatment of Josephus himself.

Likewise, we note that Josephus (*Ant.* 10.160), in his description of Ishmael the son of Nethaniel, who was responsible for the assassination of Gedaliah, refers to him as wicked (πονηρός) and very crafty (δολιώτατος). It is no coincidence that these epithets are used by him on a number of occasions with reference to John of Gischala, Josephus' bitter rival. Thus Josephus remarks that John, aspiring to despotic power, began to disdain the position of mere equality in honors with his peers and gathered around himself a group of the more depraved (πονηροτέρων) (*War* 4.389). Again, speaking of the rivalry between John and another revolutionary, Simon bar Giora, Josephus says, quite cynically, that the one who gave his comrades no share in the proceeds from the miseries of others was ranked a scurvy villain (πονηρός) (*War* 5.441). Indeed, Josephus remarks that the people of Galilee, knowing that John was a perjured villain (πονηρός), pressured Josephus to lead them against him (*Life* 102). In point of fact, however, it was no easy matter to shake off one who had gained such influence through his villainy (πονηρίας, *War* 4.213).

As to Ishmael's trickery, we may note that Josephus' source (Jer. 40:8), when first mentioning Ishmael, says nothing about this quality of his. Josephus, however, as we have noted, describes him as wicked and very crafty (*Ant.* 10.161), almost the exact terms that he uses of John of Gischala, whom he calls the most unscrupulous (πανουργότατος) and most crafty (δολιώτατος) of all who have ever gained notoriety by such infamous (πονηρεύμασιν) means (*War* 2.585). Likewise, he describes John as a man of extreme cunning (δολιώτατος) who carried in his breast an insatiate passion for des-

potic power and who had long been plotting against the state (*War* 4.208).²³

Josephus assigns the same quality of villainy to his great literary rival, Justus of Tiberias. Thus, using the well-known rhetorical device of *praeteritio*, Josephus remarks that while veracity is incumbent upon a historian, he is nonetheless at liberty to refrain from harsh scrutiny of the misdeeds (πονηρίας) of individuals such as Justus, not from any partiality for the offenders but because of his own moderation (*Life* 339).

Josephus also paints the other revolutionary groups of his own time with the same brush of villainy. Indeed, he remarks, that period had somehow become so prolific of crime (πονηρίας) of every description among the Jews that no deed of iniquity was left unperpetrated (*War* 7.259). In particular, he notes that the Sicarii oppressed only the more those who in righteous self-defense reproached them with their villainy (πονηρίαν) (*War* 7.258). As for the followers of Simon bar Giora, they considered it an act of petty malice (πονηρίας) to do injury to a foreigner (*War* 7.266).

Likewise, in his description of the plot to assassinate Gedaliah, Josephus clearly has John of Gischala in mind. In the biblical version, when Johanan the son of Kareah warns him of the plot and suggests a preemptive strike against Ishmael, Gedaliah's reply is to forbid such a strike, "for you are speaking falsely of Ishmael" (*Jer.* 40:16). Josephus develops the scene considerably. In the first place, he adds a motive for the plot (*Ant.* 10.164), namely Ishmael's ambition to rule over the Israelites, inasmuch as he was of royal descent. In his reply to Johanan, Gedaliah notes that Ishmael had been well treated by him and that he could not therefore believe that a person who had not wanted for anything in the midst of such scarcity should be so base (πονηρόν) and outrageous (άνόσιον, "unholy," "wicked") toward his benefactor; rather, he says, in his trusting naiveté, it would be a wicked thing in itself for such a person not to seek to save him if he were plotted against. Finally, even if it were true that a plot was being hatched to assassinate him, it would be better to die thus

²³ Thackeray 1929, 119-20, aptly suggests that this passage recalls Sallust's portrait of Catiline (*De Catilinae Coniuratione* 5), where *subdolos* is the equivalent of δολιώτατος.

than to put to death a man who had taken refuge with him and had indeed entrusted his very life to him (*Ant.* 10.166-67).

The episode is clearly reminiscent of John of Gischala's plot against Josephus. There, too, envy is said to be the motive (*Life* 85). Josephus, on the other hand, has no suspicion of any malign (πονηρόν) intention; indeed, he does not prevent John's coming but even goes so far as to write separate letters to those to whom he had entrusted the administration of Tiberias, directing them to show him proper hospitality (*Life* 86).

8. DECEIT AND HYPOCRISY OF LEADERS

It is significant that Josephus adds further details that denigrate the role of Joab. Whereas the Bible asserts merely that Joab sent messengers after Abner (2 Sam. 3:26), Josephus declares that Joab, unable to persuade David, resorted to a course still bolder (τολμηροτέραν, "more daring," "more audacious," "more unscrupulous") in sending men in pursuit of him (*Ant.* 7.33). Josephus' Joab here practices outright deceit and misrepresentation in that he tells the men whom he sends to pursue Abner to call to him in David's name and to say that he had certain things to discuss with him concerning their affairs that he had forgotten to mention when Abner was with him. Again, whereas the biblical narrative proceeds to state very matter-of-factly that Joab took Abner aside to speak with him gently and then smote him fatally in the groin (2 Sam. 3:27), Josephus incriminates Joab much more by expanding on his deceit, noting that he greeted Abner with the greatest show of goodwill (εὖνους) and friendship (φίλος), led him apart from his attendants as if to speak with him privately, and then took him to a deserted part of the gate where he slew him (*Ant.* 7.34). Josephus quite clearly does not accept Joab's explanation that he slew Abner to avenge his brother Asahel and says outright that Abner was deceived (ἐνεδρευνθείς, "plotted against," "trapped," "ambushed") by him (*Ant.* 7.36). His real motive, says Josephus, was that he feared that the command of the army and that his place of honor with the king would be taken from him and given to Abner (*Ant.* 7.36). To emphasize this deceit and to teach his readers a lesson from which they might learn for the future—the very function of his history, as we may see from Thucydides (1.22) and from his own proem (*Ant.* 1.14)—Josephus comments on Joab's act by presenting an editorial-like reflection, that very often those who undertake

disgraceful (ἀτόποις, “perverse,” “wrong,” “evil,” “improper”) acts assume (ὑποκρίνονται, “feign,” “pretend”) the part of truly good people in order to avert suspicion of their design (*Ant.* 7.34).

We may further note Josephus’ elaboration of Joab’s deceit in promising Uriah that he would come to his assistance with his whole army if the enemy would throw down part of the wall and enter the city where they were stationed, while privately instructing the men who were with Joab to desert him when they saw the enemy charge (*Ant.* 7.137).

Another example of Joab’s deceit, as we have noted, is to be seen in Josephus’ version of Joab’s act in slaying Amasa. In an extra-biblical addition, Josephus remarks that he committed this act against a brave youth because he envied him his office of commander and his being honored by the king with a rank equal to his own (*Ant.* 7.284). Josephus then adds that it was for the same reason that Joab had murdered Abner, except that for that murder he had a pretext, namely vengeance for the slaying of his brother Asahel, whereas he had no such excuse for the murder of Amasa (*Ant.* 7.285).

That Josephus is thinking in contemporary terms may be seen in his use of the same verb (ὑπεκρίνεται; cf. *Ant.* 7.34) in describing the hypocrisy of his great literary rival, Justus of Tiberias, in feigning hesitation on the subject of hostilities with Rome, while actually being eager for revolution (*Life* 36).

9. GREED OF LEADERS

Josephus takes the opportunity to preach at unusual length to the reader that from Joab’s action one may perceive to what lengths of recklessness (τολμῶσιν) people will go for the sake of ambition (πλεονεξίας) and power (ἀρχῆς); and that, in their desire to obtain these, people will resort to innumerable acts of wrongdoing and that in their fear of losing power they perform much worse acts, “their belief being that it is not so great an evil to fail to obtain a very great degree of authority as to lose it after having become accustomed to the benefits derived therefrom” (*Ant.* 7.37-38). Hence they contrive even more ruthless deeds in their fear of losing what they have (*Ant.* 7.38). The passage clearly recalls Josephus’ long editorial comment in connection with King Saul, that when people attain power they lay aside their stage masks (such as, we may suggest, Joab here shows

with his deceit) and assume instead audacity (τόλμαν), recklessness and contempt for things human and divine (*Ant.* 6.264).

We may likewise note that the vice of avarice (πλεονεξία) that Josephus ascribes to Joab as a motive in his slaying of Abner (*Ant.* 7.37) is precisely the quality that, together with ambition (φιλοτιμίαν), according to Thucydides (3.82.8), was the cause of all the evils produced by the factious rivalry (φιλονικεῖν) at Corcyra.

It is, again, precisely this quality of greed that Josephus attacks in John of Gischala as his motive in obtaining a monopoly of oil (*War* 2.591-92, *Life* 74-76). It is likewise πλεονεξία that, according to Josephus, instigated the Syrians at the outset of the war against the Romans, to murder the Judaizers in their midst, since they would then with impunity plunder the property of their victims (*War* 2.464). We may see how strongly Josephus feels about the crime of πλεονεξία in that, when he summarizes the qualities of the various revolutionary groups, it is cruelty and avarice (πλεονεξία) which he ascribes to the Sicarii (*War* 7.256). Indeed, Josephus sermonizes that avarice (φιλοχρηματία) defies all punishment and concludes that a dire love of gain (κερδαίνειν) is ingrained in human nature, no other passion being so headstrong as greed (πλεονεξία) (*War* 5.558).

10. THE DISASTROUS EFFECTS OF ENVY

Josephus is clearly thinking of contemporary parallels in his constant stress on the theme of envy and its disastrous consequences. In the case of Joab, it is this theme of jealousy that he especially stresses. Thus, in the Bible Joab tries to convince David that Abner's motive in coming to him was to spy (2 Sam. 3:25), whereas in the *Antiquities* (7.31) it is Josephus himself who analyzes Joab's motive and clearly indicates that it is envy, arising out of the fear that David might deprive him of his command and give Abner honors of the first rank as one who was apt (δεινόν, "clever" in understanding (συνιδεῖν) in matters of state (πράγματα) and who was quick to seize opportunities and who would help him in securing his kingdom. Josephus then specifically adds that Joab feared that he himself might be set down and deprived of his command.

This stress on Joab's envy is particularly evident in Josephus' account of David's dying charge to his son and successor, King Solomon. In the Bible (1 Kgs. 2:5) David simply tells his son to avenge Joab's murder of Abner and Amasa. Josephus is explicit in

ascribing the two murders to envy (ζηλοτυπίαν) (*Ant.* 7.386).

There can be little doubt that Josephus has recast the figure of Joab so as to parallel that of his archenemy John of Gischala, particularly with regard to the theme of envy. John, according to Josephus, was eager for revolution (νεωτέρων) and ambitious (ἐπιθυμίων ἔχοντα) of obtaining the command in Galilee (*Life* 70). In contrast, Josephus emphasizes that he himself was at this time about thirty years old, “at a time of life when, even if one restrains his lawless passions, it is hard, especially in a position of high authority, to escape the calumnies (διαβολάς) of envy (φθόνου) (*Life* 80).” When John, however, observed how loyal the people of Galilee were to Josephus his envy was aroused (ἐφθόνησε) (*Life* 85). When one scheme after another to destroy Josephus failed, John, believing that there was a direct relationship between Josephus’ success and his own ruin, gave way to immoderate envy (εἰς φθόνον...οὔτι μέτριον) (*Life* 122). Indeed, according to Josephus, his failures to assassinate Josephus merely intensified John’s envy (φθόνον) (*War* 2.614). He then tried to induce the inhabitants of the three leading cities of Galilee to abandon Josephus and to transfer their allegiance to him. Thereafter, he attempted to induce the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to deprive Josephus of his command in Galilee and to appoint John instead. Josephus writes that he was particularly distressed by the base ingratitude of his fellow citizens, whose jealousy (φθόνον) had prompted the order to have him put to death (*Life* 204).

We may note that Josephus uses much the same language in describing John of Gischala’s intention toward Josephus as πονηρός (“malign”) and in depicting himself, like Abner, as being deceived by him (*Life* 86). The Galilaeans, he says, knew John to be a perjured villain (πονηρός) and consequently pressed Josephus to lead them against him (*Life* 102). He likewise speaks of John’s κακουργία (“wickedness,” “evil intent,” “fraud”) in profiting from the sale of oil (*Life* 76) and, indeed, castigates him in the most extreme terms as the most unscrupulous (πανουργότατος) and most crafty (δολιώτατος) of all who have ever gained notoriety by such infamous means (*War* 2.585). We may note that Josephus uses similar language in describing the knavish tricks (κακουργήματα) of Justus of Tiberias, Josephus’s rival in historiography (*Life* 356). John, we are told, made a merit of deceit (ἀπάτην) (*War* 2.586), precisely the quality in Joab that Josephus stresses in his additions to the biblical text.

The envy (φθόνον) of even a few may bring about civil war

(πολέμου ἐμφυλίου), as Josephus remarks (*War* 2.620). In particular, Josephus notes that the leaders in Jerusalem, from motives of envy (φθόνον), secretly supplied John of Gischala with money to enable him to collect mercenaries and to make war on Josephus (*War* 2.627). Envy is likewise, according to Josephus, the motive that drove the revolutionary Zealots, whom he so much despised, to massacre the nobility (εὐγένειαν, “noble ancestry,” “aristocracy”) (*War* 4.357). Indeed, the split in the Zealot party itself was brought about, says Josephus, by the fact that some of the revolutionaries were influenced by envy to scorn John, their former equal (*War* 4.393). Moreover, Josephus ascribes the mutiny of the Idumeans within John’s army to envy of his power, as much as to hatred of his cruelty (*War* 4.566).

After the war it is again envy (φθόνον) that was excited by Josephus’ privileged position and that exposed him once again to danger (*Life* 423). He adds that numerous accusations were made against him by persons who envied him his good fortune, but that he succeeded in escaping them all through the providence of G-d (*Life* 425).

In Josephus’s depiction of the relations between Joab and Abner, Joab plays the role of John of Gischala, and Abner that of Josephus. Thus, whereas in the Bible Joab seeks to turn David against Abner by telling him that Abner had come to deceive him and to spy on his comings and goings (2 Sam. 3:34), Josephus, as we have noted, goes much further in condemning Joab. In the first place, he describes Joab’s course as dishonest (κακοῦργον, “malicious,” “deceitful,” “wrongdoing,” “criminal”) and evil (πονηρόν). He then proceeds to add that Joab attempted to calumniate (διαβαλεῖν, “to make someone disliked,” “to put someone into a bad light,” “to cast suspicion upon,” “to detract from someone’s reputation,” “to revile,” “to charge falsely”) Abner to King David, “urging him to be on his guard and not to pay attention to the agreements Abner had made; for he was doing everything, he said, in order to secure sovereignty for Saul’s son, and, after coming to David with deceit and guile, he had now gone away with the hope of realizing his wish and carrying out his carefully laid plans” (*Ant.* 7.31-32).

That Josephus is thinking in contemporary terms may be seen in his use of the same verb (ὑπεκρίνετο; cf. *Ant.* 7.34) in describing the hypocrisy of his great literary rival, Justus of Tiberias, in feigning hesitation on the subject of hostilities with Rome, while actually being eager for revolution (*Life* 36). Once again, Josephus takes the opportunity to preach at unusual length to the reader that

from Joab's action one may perceive to what lengths of recklessness (τολμῶσιν) men will go for the sake of ambition (πλεονεξία) and power (ἀρχῆς); and that, in their desire to obtain these, men will resort to innumerable acts of wrongdoing and that in their fear of losing power they perform much worse acts, "their belief being that it is not so great an evil to fail to obtain a very great degree of authority as to lose it after having become accustomed to the benefits derived therefrom" (*Ant.* 7.37-38). Hence they contrive even more ruthless deeds in their fear of losing what they have (*Ant.* 7.38). The passage clearly recalls Josephus' long editorial comment in connection with King Saul, that when people attain power they lay aside their stage masks (such as, we may suggest, Joab here shows with his deceit) and assume instead audacity (τόλμαν), recklessness, and contempt for things human and divine (*Ant.* 6.264).

We may further note Josephus' elaboration of Joab's deceit in promising Uriah that he would come to his assistance with his whole army if the enemy would throw down part of the wall and enter the city where they were stationed, while privately instructing the men who were with Joab to desert him when they saw the enemy charge (*Ant.* 7.137).

Another example of Joab's deceit, as we have noted, is to be seen in Josephus' version of Joab's act in slaying Amasa. In an extra-biblical addition, Josephus remarks that he committed this act against a brave youth because he envied him his office of commander and his being honored by the king with a rank equal to his own (*Ant.* 7.284). Josephus then adds that it was for the same reason that Joab had murdered Abner, except that for that murder he had a pretext, namely vengeance for the slaying of his brother Asahel, whereas he had no such excuse for the murder of Amasa (*Ant.* 7.285).

We may likewise note that the vice of avarice (πλεονεξία) that Josephus ascribes to Joab as a motive in his slaying of Abner (*Ant.* 7.37) is precisely the quality that, together with ambition (φιλοτιμίαν), according to Thucydides (3.82.8), was the cause of all the evils produced by the factious rivalry (φιλονικεῖν) at Corcyra.

The natural temptation on the part of apologists for the Jews, in view of the repeated assertions of their opponents, was to try to seek the reasons for such Jew-hatred. In analyzing the attacks upon Jews in Syria on 66, on the eve of the war against Rome, Josephus lists three motives for it: hatred (μῖσος), fear (δέος,) and greed (πλεονεξία) for plunder—apparently a combination of economic jealousy and fear of

Jewish power and expansionism (*War* 2.464, 478). That Josephus was acutely aware of the power of jealousy as a human drive may be seen from a number of his additions to the biblical narrative. It is thus envy (φθόνος) and jealousy (βασκανία) at their being named governors of the kingdom that are cited by Josephus as the motives that led to the betrayal of Daniel's companions to King Nebuchadnezzar (*Ant.* 10.212). It is envy of the great honor in which Daniel is held by the king that motivates the Median nobles to plot against him; and this gives Josephus the occasion to present the truism, not found in the biblical narrative (Dan. 6:4), that "men are jealous when they see others held by kings in greater honor than themselves" (*Ant.* 10.250). Similarly, it is envy (φθόνου) that motivates the satraps to accuse Daniel of transgressing the orders of King Darius (*Ant.* 10.256).

It is, again, precisely this quality of greed that Josephus attacks in John of Gischala as his motive in obtaining a monopoly of oil (*War* 2.591-92, *Life* 74-76). It is likewise πλεονεξία that, according to Josephus, instigated the Syrians, at the outset of the war against the Romans, to murder the Judaizers in their midst, since they would then with impunity plunder the property of their victims (*War* 2.464). We may see how strongly Josephus feels about the crime of πλεονεξία in that, when he summarizes the qualities of the various revolutionary groups, it is cruelty and avarice (φιλοχρηματία) that he ascribes to the Sicarii (*War* 7.256). Indeed, Josephus sermonizes that avarice (φιλοχρηματία) defies all punishment and concludes that a dire love of gain (κερδαίνειν) is ingrained in human nature, no other passion being so headstrong as greed (πλεονεξία) (*War* 5.558).

11. ABHORRENCE OF CIVIL STRIFE

The underlying theme of the *War* is that the ill-fated revolt originated in the civil strife (στάσις οἰκεία) engendered by the Jewish "tyrants" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τύραννοι). Clearly, Josephus' abhorrence of civil strife grew out of his own experience in the war against the Romans. The Romans in Josephus' audience, who themselves had experienced a century of constantly recurring civil strife from the struggle of the Senate against the Gracchi, of Sulla against Marius, of Caesar against Pompey, of Brutus against Antony, and of Antony against Octavian, and who had a great tradition of respect for law going back at least to the Twelve Tables in the fifth century B.C.E., would

surely have appreciated such an emphasis on the dire consequences of internecine bloodshed.

Almost at the beginning of his *Antiquities* Josephus describes the exalted picture of Seth's descendants (*Ant.* 1.69), completely missing from the Bible (Gen. 5:6), as inhabiting the same country without dissension (ᾠστασίαστοι). This is reminiscent of Thucydides, who especially bewails civil strife (3.80-83), and of Plato (*Laws* 3.678E9-679A2), who, in his description of the development of society after the great deluge, remarks that primitive men felt affection and good will towards one another and had no occasion for internecine quarrels about their subsistence. Josephus then indicates how self-defeating civil strife is by stating that this is the penalty imposed by G-d upon the builders of the Tower of Babel (*Ant.* 1.117).

Throughout the *War* and the last books of the *Antiquities* the reader can sense the strong feelings that Josephus has about the civil strife that had torn the Jewish people apart in his own day. Hence, when Josephus (*Ant.* 1.164), in an extra-biblical addition, states that G-d thwarted the Pharaoh's criminal passion for Sarai by inflicting political disturbance (στάσει) upon him, Josephus is emphasizing the gravity of his offense.

For Josephus, Korah's rebellion is not so much theological or philosophical as it is political and military,²⁴ as we can see from his use of the word στάσις ("sedition") in his mention of it (*Ant.* 4.12), as well as from his reference to the people who were swayed by Korah as an army (*Ant.* 4.21). Indeed, the fact that Josephus, in the brief pericope of Korah (*Ant.* 4.11-56), uses the word στάσις four times (*Ant.* 4.12, 13, 32, 36) and the verb στασιάζω ("to revolt") twice (*Ant.* 4.13, 30) underscores the political aspect of this passage. The analogy that Josephus draws is with large armies, which become ungovernable when they encounter reverses (*Ant.* 4.11). That Josephus is here thinking also of the parallel in Thucydides (3.82-84), where he describes στάσις in Corcyra, seems clear, especially since Josephus specifically states that this was a sedition the extent of which knows no parallel, whether among Greeks or barbarians (*Ant.*

²⁴ Similarly, in his account of the conflict between Midian and Israel, Josephus emphasizes the political and military point of view, in contrast, for example, to Pseudo-Philo, who, as a moralist, emphasizes (particularly in 18.10) the tragic elements in the narrative. See Van Unnik 1974, 244-45.

4.12). We recall that in his proem to the *Antiquities* Josephus declares that he intends in his work to embrace not only the entire ancient history of the Jews but also their political constitution (διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος) (1.5). It is under this rubric of politics and, in particular, of political revolution that he discusses the rebellion of Korah. In connection with the war against the Romans, the term στάσις occurs no fewer than 51 times, the verb στασιάζω for “to be engaged in civil war” occurs seven times, and the noun στασιαστής for a seditionist occurs 67 times in connection with the insurrection of the Jews and their factional strife.

Moses makes it clear, in his address to the assembly, that, in view of Korah’s complaint about the choice of Aaron as high priest, his and Aaron’s chief aim was to avoid dissension (στασιάζοντας, and this despite the fact that Aaron held his office by the decision of G-d, as ratified by the good will of the people (*Ant.* 4.30).

Drawing upon his experience in the recent war against the Romans, Josephus stresses over and over again that the most terrible political evil is civil strife. In particular, unlike the Bible (Deut. 19:14), which merely presents the commandment not to remove one’s neighbor’s landmark, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.225) adds a reason, again in political terms: removal of landmarks leads to wars and seditions (στάσεων). In an extrabiblical addition, Moses (*Ant.* 4.294) prays that, after they have conquered the land of Israel, the Israelites not be overcome by civil strife (στάσεως), “whereby you will be led to actions contrary to those of your fathers and destroy the institutions that they established.” Indeed, one of the qualities of Josephus’ ideal ruler, as we can see in his portrait of Moses, is that he seeks to prevent dissension.

Most significantly, Josephus asserts that Gideon did a greater service in assuaging the Ephramites and thus avoiding civil strife (ἐμφυλίου...στάσεως), when they were on the brink of it, than he accomplished through his military successes (*Ant.* 5.231). In this connection, we may note a biblical passage which apparently contradicts a picture of Gideon as a peacemaker and as one who avoided civil strife that Josephus wishes to paint, namely the episode with Succoth and Peniel (Judg. 8:4-17). In this case, according to the Bible, the men of those cities, who were apparently Israelites (as we see from Josh. 13:27), had declined to help Gideon’s army with bread when they were hungry; and Gideon eventually took revenge and punished them, even to the point of putting the men of Peniel to

death. Such a passage reflects badly both on the hospitality of the Israelites in not feeding the hungry and on the ability of Gideon to mollify his anger and to avoid the slaughter of his countrymen. Hence, very typically, Josephus avoids these problems by simply omitting the entire incident.

One of the qualities of the ideal ruler is to seek to prevent dissension. Hence, when Abishai urges David to put Shimei to death for revolting (2 Sam. 19:23), Josephus, while having David answer in substantially the same vein as the Bible, uses political terminology, declaring that the sons of Zeruah should not stir up new disorders (*ταραχαί*) and dissension (*στάσις*) (*Ant.* 7.265). Furthermore, whereas the Bible terms Sheba a base fellow (2 Sam. 20:1) and the LXX calls him a transgressor (*παράνομος*), Josephus again uses political language and calls him a lover of dissension (*στάσει χαίρων*) (*Ant.* 7.278), thus, in effect, enduing this biblical scene with a contemporary tinge; that is, there is here an implied attack upon those who, in his opinion, had sown dissension in Jewish ranks and whom he attacks so bitterly in Books 2 and 7 of the *War* and in Books 18 and 20 of the *Antiquities* in discussing the background of the revolution against the Romans in his own day. Hence, whereas G-d tells David in the biblical version that he will give Solomon peace (1 Chron. 22:9), in Josephus G-d promises David that he will give Solomon the greatest of all blessings—not only peace but also freedom from civil dissension (*στάσεις ἐμφύλιοι*) (*Ant.* 7.337). Similarly, when David commends Solomon to the people (1 Chron. 28:4), he adds, in Josephus' version, the request that his other sons refrain from civil dissension (*μὴ στασιάζειν*), now that he had chosen Solomon to succeed him, and enjoins the leaders of the people to show obedience (*πειθῶ*) to Solomon (*Ant.* 7.372-73), a quality which, as we have seen, he himself exemplified (*Ant.* 6.160). Furthermore, in his charge to Solomon, the biblical David tells him to be strong and of good courage (1 Chron. 22:12), whereas Josephus has him exhort the chiefs of the people to assist him, adding that, should they do so, they will enjoy peace and good order (*εὐνομία*), with which G-d repays pious and just men (*Ant.* 7.341). One will recall that *εὐνομία* is personified as the daughter of Themis ("Law," "Justice," Hesiod, *Theogony* 902) and is the title of a poem by Tyrtaeus (2, cf. Aris., *Politics* 5.7.1307A1).

In line with his constantly reiterated theme that civil strife had proven disastrous for the Jews during his own lifetime, Josephus stresses the theme of the consequences of civil strife in connection

with Joab in particular. He sets the scene by referring specifically to the long war between the house of Saul and that of David as a civil (ἐμφύλιος, “of kinsmen,” “internal,” “domestic”) war among the Hebrews (2 Sam. 3:1). Thus, whereas the biblical Abner remarks to Joab that continued fighting will lead to bitterness in the end (2 Sam. 2:26), Josephus’ Abner is more specific in articulating how wrong civil strife is by stating that it is not right to stir up fellow citizens to strife (ἔριδα) and warfare (*Ant.* 7.17).

In particular, we may note that in the Bible the anonymous old woman asks him, when Joab besieges the city of Abel Beth-Maacah, whether he is seeking to destroying “a city and a mother in Israel” and furthermore inquires whether he wishes to swallow up “the inheritance of the L-rd” (2 Sam. 20:19). Josephus, on the other hand, does not put it in the form of a question but rather in the form of an accusation, stressing the innocence of the people of the city: “You,” she charges him, “are bent on destroying and sacking a mother-city of the Israelites that has done no wrong” (*Ant.* 7.289). In acting thus, she implies, Joab is going against the will of G-d, who had chosen kings and commanders to drive out the enemies of the Hebrews and to secure peace from them, whereas Joab was doing the work of the enemy in thus attacking fellow-Jews.

It is significant that in the biblical text David, in speaking to his son Solomon, recalls G-d’s promise that a son would be born to him who would be a man of peace and that G-d would give him peace from all his enemies round about (1 Chron. 22:9). In Josephus’s version, however, G-d’s promise is not merely that he would bring peace, which, he adds, is the greatest of all blessings, but also, in terms familiar to the student of Thucydides (2.65, 4.7), Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 4.4.11, 4.6.14) and Lysias (25.26, 30.13), freedom from civil dissension (στάσεων ἐμφυλίων) (*Ant.* 7.337). This very phrase, ἐμφύλιος στάσις, “internecine civil strife,” is found in Solon (4.19), Herodotus (8.3) and Democritus (249). It was Solon’s belief (3.28) that the punishment inflicted on a state for transgression of its citizens is precisely this, that it is afflicted by party strife and civil war.

When David calls an assembly of his officers and commends Solomon to them, he asks that just as his own brothers accepted without complaint G-d’s choice of him to be king, so, in an extra-biblical statement, his other sons should cheerfully accept the choice of Solomon, since it is G-d’s choice, and refrain from civil dissension (στασιάζειν) (*Ant.* 7.372). Then, in an additional statement that, in

effect, is a kind of editorial and that clearly reflects Josephus' own present situation in living under Roman patronage in the aftermath of the debacle of the Jewish war for independence, David remarks that "it is not such a terrible thing to serve even a foreign master, if G-d so will; and when it is one's brother to whom this honor has fallen, one should rejoice at having a share in it" (*Ant.* 7.373). One is reminded of Josephus' address to his fellow Jews during the siege of Jerusalem, urging them to surrender to the Romans, inasmuch as "G-d, who went the round of the nations, bringing to each in turn the rod of empire, now rested over Italy" (*War* 5.367). Indeed, he insists, "The deity has fled from the holy places and taken his stand on the side of those with whom you are now at war" (*War* 5.412).

The case of Jeroboam becomes, for Josephus, an outstanding example of the disaster brought on by secession and civil strife.²⁵ Thus, when Jeroboam is first introduced by Josephus to his readers, whereas the Bible states that Jeroboam lifted up his hand against King Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:26), Josephus remarks that Jeroboam, "one of his own countrymen" (ὁμοφύλων, the same word that Josephus had used with reference to the revolutionaries' treatment of their fellow countrymen), rose up against the king (*Ant.* 8.205), thus emphasizing the theme of fraternal strife. It is significant that the rabbis, as we have noted, looked with favor upon this confrontation of Jeroboam with Solomon and justified it by stressing that Jeroboam wanted to ensure free access of pilgrims to the Temple, whereas in Josephus' version he is thus so severely condemned.

Indeed, when the kingdom of Israel comes to an end and Josephus seeks to analyze the underlying cause of its demise, he insists that the beginning of Israel's troubles was the rebellion that it undertook against the legitimate king, Rehoboam, when it chose Jeroboam as king (*Ant.* 9.282). It is almost as if Josephus is analyzing the demise of the Jewish state of his own day, that he likewise ascribes it to the rebellion against the legitimate authority, in his case Rome. Thus, very typically, Josephus describes Jeroboam's sedition in language very similar to that which he uses to describe his great enemy, John of Gischala (*Ant.* 8.209, *War* 2.587). In a word, Josephus points his finger at Jeroboam's lawlessness (παρανομίαν) (*Ant.* 9.282), the very

²⁵ See Feldman 1993d, 43-46.

quality that he denounces in the revolutionaries,²⁶ particularly in his bitter attack on the Sicarii as the first to set the example of lawlessness (παράνομίας) and cruelty (ὀμότητος) to their kinsmen (*War* 7.262). It is this lawlessness (παράνομίαν) and iniquity (ἀδικίας) that Josephus, in an editorial comment not found in his biblical source (1 Kgs. 15:24), stresses brought about the destruction of the kings of Israel, one after the other, in a short space of time (*Ant.* 8.314). That Jeroboam is, for Josephus, the model of lawlessness may be discerned by comparing the Bible (1 Kgs. 16:30), which speaks of the evil that Ahab did but that does not mention Jeroboam, and Josephus' statement that Ahab did not invent anything in his wickedness but merely imitated the misdeeds and outrageous behavior (ῥῆσιν) that his predecessors showed toward the Deity (*Ant.* 8.316); of these predecessors and their misdeeds, Josephus here singles out Jeroboam and his lawlessness (παράνομίαν). To the Romans, who had such a deep and long-standing reverence for law and who were so proud of their legal tradition, such an attack on Jeroboam for his lawlessness would be most effective.

That Josephus viewed Jeroboam as the prototype of the revolutionaries of his own day may be seen in Josephus' extra-biblical remark that Jeroboam attempted to persuade the people to turn away (ἀφίστασθαι) and to start a revolt (κινεῖν) (*Ant.* 8.209).²⁷ We should also note the striking coincidence that the phrase that he uses to describe Jeroboam's sedition, that he was "ambitious of great things" (μεγάλων ἐπιθυμητῆς πραγμάτων) (*Ant.* 8.209), is so similar to that which he uses to describe the archrevolutionary, John of Gischala, that he was always ambitious of great things (ἀεὶ... ἐπιθυμήσας μεγάλων) (*War* 2.587). Those who responded to John's invitation are similarly depicted as always ambitious for newer things (νεωτέρων ἐπιθυμοῦντας αἰεὶ πραγμάτων), addicted to change and delighting in sedition (*Life* 87). We find similar language applied to those bold Jews in Jerusalem who were admonished by the procurator Cumanus to put an end to their ambition for newer things, that

²⁶ See *War* 4.134, 144, 155, 339, 351; 5.343, 393, 442; 6.122. Likewise, in the *Antiquities* Josephus make a number of changes in his paraphrase of the biblical text to emphasize the importance of observance of the laws. See, for example, 5.185 (vs. Judg. 3:12); 5.198-200 (vs. Judg. 4:1); 5.255 (vs. Judg. 10:6); 7.130 (vs. no biblical parallel); 8.245 (vs. 1 Kgs. 13:33); 8.251-53 (vs. 1 Kgs. 14:22).

²⁷ Josephus is here basing himself on the LXX addition (1 Kgs. 12:24b).

is, revolution (νεωτέρων ἐπιθυμοῦντας πραγμάτων) (*Ant.* 20.109). Josephus employs similar language in describing his archrival Justus of Tiberias as “ambitious for newer things” (νεωτέρων ἐπεθύμει πραγμάτων) (*Life* 36).

The underlying theme of Josephus’ *War*, as we have noted, is the emphasis on the civil strife engendered by the Jewish “tyrants” whom he holds responsible for the ill-fated revolt (*War* 1.10). In particular, Josephus’ *Life* is largely an account of the attempts of one of these “tyrants,” John of Gischala, to interfere with Josephus’ mission in Galilee.

It is significant that whereas the Bible (1 Kgs. 15:6) states that there was a continuous civil war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, in direct contradiction to the statement (1 Kgs. 12:24) that after mustering his troops to fight against Jeroboam and to force an end to the rebellion, Rehoboam listened to the advice of the prophet and did not attack Jeroboam, Josephus (*Ant.* 8.223) very conspicuously omits the former statement and thus presents Rehoboam as resisting the obvious temptation to seek to put an end to the rebellion by force. Furthermore, whereas in the Bible (1 Kgs. 12:24; 2 Chron. 11:4) the decision not to go to war against Jeroboam is that of all the people of Judah and Benjamin, in Josephus (*Ant.* 8.223) the decision is that of Rehoboam alone, who thus clearly obtains the credit for preventing civil war. When, to be sure, in his summary of Rehoboam’s reign, Josephus (*Ant.* 8.263) asserts that all his days Rehoboam was an enemy of Jeroboam, in the same sentence he declares that he reigned in great quiet (ἡσυχία). He thus clearly avoids the biblical statement that Rehoboam was constantly at war with Jeroboam. Significantly, too, whereas in the Bible (1 Kgs. 12:24) the prophet Shemaiah (*Ant.* 8.223) quotes G-d as asserting that Rehoboam is not to fight against his kinsfolk, presumably in this particular instance Josephus uses this occasion for an editorial comment that it is not just (δίκαιον) as a general rule to make war on one’s fellow citizens (ὁμοφύλους), thus stressing that Rehoboam was convinced by the prophet’s statement. It is this failure on the part of the Jews to avoid attacks upon their own kinsfolk that Josephus constantly stresses as the basic reason for their tragedies in the biblical period, as in the civil war with the Benjaminites (*Ant.* 5.150-65), where Josephus (*Ant.* 5.151) stresses the wise advice of the Israelite elders that war ought not to be undertaken against one’s own kinsfolk (ὁμοφύλους).

To be sure, Josephus (*Ant.* 8.264) acknowledges and condemns

Rehoboam for being boastful (ἀλαζών) and foolish (ἀνόητος), the same epithets that he uses in condemning the Jewish revolutionaries (*War* 6.395) against the Romans, who were so haughty (ἀλαζόνας) and proud of their impious crimes and whom Josephus says (*Life* 18) that he warned not to expose their country, their families and themselves to dire perils through acting so rashly (προπετῶς) and so stupidly (ἀνοήτως). It is, says Josephus (*Ant.* 8.264), because of Rehoboam's boastfulness and foolishness in not listening to his father's friends that he consequently lost his royal power.

Nevertheless, though it is true that Josephus (*Ant.* 8.251) mentions Rehoboam's unjust and impious acts, Josephus goes out of his way to explain his lawlessness and evil ways by psychologizing that such an attitude arises from the greatness of people's affairs and the improvement of their position, as if to say that it is only natural that someone under those circumstances would have been misled into unjust and impious acts and would consequently have influenced his subjects accordingly. Significantly, precisely the same phrase (μέγεθος τῶν πραγμάτων, "greatness of affairs") is used by Josephus (*Ant.* 9.223) to explain the degeneration of King Uzziah, who had started his reign so promisingly. Again, whereas we read that Rehoboam was thus misled (ἐξετράπη) into unjust acts, in the case of Jeroboam (*Ant.* 8.245) no such defense is offered for his wickedness; rather, we find not the passive but the active voice, since we are informed that he outraged (ἐξύβρισεν) G-d.

It is significant that it is this aspect of fratricidal strife that is stressed when Abijah, the king of Judah, wins a great victory over the forces of Jeroboam and slays no fewer than five hundred thousand of them (2 Chron. 13:17). Josephus adds, as we have noted, that the slaughter surpassed that in any war, "whether of Greeks or barbarians" (*Ant.* 8.284). This latter phrase is found also in Josephus' comment on the incomparable impiety of the slaying of Jesus the son of Joiada by his brother Johanan, the high priest, when Jesus was plotting to become high priest in Johanan's stead (*Ant.* 11.299).

It is significant that whereas the Bible, in praising Jehoshaphat, declares that he did not follow in the ways of the kingdom of Israel (2 Chron. 17:4), Josephus, in his clear desire to promote the unity of the Jewish people, omits all reference to the ways of Israel and says, rather, that he sought to do something pleasing and acceptable to G-d (*Ant.* 8.394).

It is furthermore in the interest of stressing the importance of the

unity of the Jewish people that Josephus avoids the awkward implication of the scriptural passage that after making a marriage alliance with Ahab, the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat waited several years before visiting Ahab (2 Chron. 18:1-2). Josephus has quietly reduced the Bible's years to "some time" (μετὰ χρόνον τινά) (*Ant.* 8.398). Likewise, whereas the Hebrew Bible states that it was by guile that Ahab persuaded (וַיִּשְׁתָּחֲוֶה) Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 18:2), Josephus, seeking to smooth relations between the Jewish kingdoms, says that Ahab invited (παρεκάλει) Jehoshaphat to become his ally in a war against the king of Syria (*Ant.* 8.398). Indeed, Josephus increases considerably the warmth with which Ahab greets Jehoshaphat. According to the biblical account, Ahab killed an abundance of sheep and oxen for him and for the people who were with him (2 Chron. 18:2); Josephus expands on this, remarking that Ahab gave him a friendly welcome (φιλοφρόνως) and splendidly (λαμπρῶς) entertained, with an abundance of grain and wine and meat, the army that accompanied him (*Ant.* 8.398).

Likewise, when Ahab approaches Jehoshaphat to induce him to join in the military action to recover Ramoth-Gilead, the Bible quotes Jehoshaphat as saying, "I am as you are, my people as your people" (1 Kgs. 22:4, 2 Chron. 18:3). Josephus amplifies this, remarking that Jehoshaphat willingly offered his aid, and adds, in order that the reader may not think that Jehoshaphat was inferior in military might to Ahab, that he had a force not smaller than Ahab's (*Ant.* 8.399).

Josephus could not avoid the fact that Jehu the prophet in the biblical account does reproach Jehoshaphat, telling him that because he had helped Ahab G-d was angry with him (2 Chron. 19:2). Josephus, however, softens the reproach by having Jehu remark that G-d was displeased (ἀηδῶς) with this act (*Ant.* 9.1).

Again, the Bible cites the castigation of Jehoshaphat by Eliezer the son of Dodavahu for joining Ahaziah, the king of Israel, in an alliance, and his prophecy that as a result of this alliance G-d would destroy what they had made, namely the fleet of ships that they built in Ezion-Geber (2 Chron. 20:37). Josephus, eager to promote the unity of the Jewish people, omits Eliezer's intervention and instead ascribes the loss of the ships to their great size (*Ant.* 9.17).

This same theme of Jewish unity may be seen in another Josephan addition. The Bible states that the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom joined in an expedition against the Moabites (2 Kgs. 3:9). Josephus, clearly seeking to show that the alliance was more than

one of convenience, adds that Jehoram, the king of Israel, came first to Jerusalem with his army and received a splendid reception by Jehoshaphat there (*Ant.* 9.31). We then have Jehoram and Jehoshaphat portrayed as true partners in devising their military strategy. In the Bible it is Jehoram who makes the decision as to military strategy after Jehoshaphat asks for advice as to which way they should march (2 Kgs. 3:8); in Josephus the decision is a joint decision to advance through the wilderness of Idumea, since the enemy would not expect them to attack from this direction (*Ant.* 9.31). Again, when their army lacks water, Jehoshaphat, in an extra-biblical addition, shows warm, brotherly feeling for Jehoram by comforting him; and his doing so is attributed to his righteousness (*Ant.* 9.33).

Jehu, it would seem, was guilty of lawlessness in rebelling against the king of his nation, Israel; and Josephus was clearly in a quandary as to how to differentiate between this rebellion and the civil strife that he so strongly condemns. It is significant, therefore, that the biblical account states that Jehu conspired (וִיתְקַשֵּׁר, “joined together”) against Jehoram (2 Kgs. 9:14). In Josephus’ version, however, there is no mention of conspiracy; we hear only that Jehu collected his army and prepared to set out against Jehoram (*Ant.* 9.112). Again, whereas, after Ahab’s sons had been slain, in accordance with Jehu’s orders, Jehu admits to the people that it was he who had conspired (קִשְׁרָתִי, the same root as וִיתְקַשֵּׁר) against King Jehoram (2 Kgs. 10:9), Josephus omits the element of conspiracy and has Jehu state merely that he had marched στρατεύσασαυτο (“made war,” “undertaken a campaign,” “taken the field”) against his master (*Ant.* 9.129).

Josephus, moreover, in a comment that has no parallel in the biblical source (2 Kgs. 9:15), stresses the loyalty (εὐνοίας), that he clearly implies was well deserved, of Jehu’s followers to him, in that they declared him king because of their friendly feeling toward him (*Ant.* 9.113). As evidence of this good will, in another passage that is unparalleled in the Bible (2 Kgs. 9:15-16), Josephus notes that Jehu’s soldiers, approving (ἡσθύντες, “delighting in,” “being pleased with,” “taking pleasure in”) what Jehu had said, guarded the roads so that no one might escape to Jezreel, where King Jehoram was recuperating from a wound, and betray him to those who were there (*Ant.* 9.114).

Josephus, however, is careful not to give the impression, as does the Hebrew text (2 Kgs. 10:16), that Jehu was a zealot, inasmuch as this might associate him with the Zealots, whom Josephus excoriates

as having “copied every deed of ill, nor was there any previous villainy recorded in history that they failed zealously to emulate” (*War* 7.268-74). We may note that just as Josephus avoids labeling as a zealot Phinehas, the slayer of Zimri whom the Bible so denominates (Num. 25:11 vs. *Ant.* 4.150-55), likewise here Josephus carefully avoids applying the term to Jehu (*Ant.* 9.133). Instead, Josephus puts a pious truism into the mouth of Jehu, who tells Jonadab that it is the most desirable and pleasant of sights for a good and upright person to see the wicked punished, in keeping we may add, with the moral lesson that Josephus preaches in the proem to his *Antiquities*, namely that people are rewarded and punished by G-d in accordance with the degree to which they conform with or violate the laws revealed by G-d (*Ant.* 1.14).

12. LOYALTY TO RULERS

One of the most serious charges against the Jews was that of dual loyalty. Thus Apion not only accused the Jews of sedition and failure to worship the civic deities but also expressed astonishment that they were called Alexandrians (*Ap.* 2.38). We may conjecture that this charge of double loyalty was also a factor in a well-documented court case. Cicero's client Flaccus had seized money that the Jews of Asia Minor had sought to ship out of the province to the Temple in Jerusalem. This may well have seemed unpatriotic to the Romans because of the scarcity of money at this time throughout the republic. In 63 B.C.E., four years before the trial, the Senate had passed a resolution forbidding the export of gold and silver from Italy because of the shortage; and Flaccus had sent the Jewish money to Rome for deposit in the public treasury. Thus Cicero took care to imply that the Jews were unpatriotic (*Pro Flacco* 28.66). “There is no lack of men,” he says, “as you well know, to stir these fellows up against me and every patriotic citizen.” He thus urged the jury to show their concern for the welfare of the state and to rebuff the Jewish pressure group.

That Jews are, however, loyal to their masters is the theme, for example, of Joseph's extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 2.68-69) in his statement to the butler that even the lure of his own pleasure would not induce him to dishonor his master Potiphar. Josephus is careful to stress Joseph's loyalty to the Pharaoh even when, presumably because

of his tremendous achievement in saving the country from starvation, he might have achieved the rule for himself and, in fact, had been robed in purple by the king (*Ant.* 2.90). Josephus (*Ant.* 2.191-93) likewise uses the example of Joseph's fidelity to the Pharaoh to answer the disloyalty charge, noting that when the famine had abated Joseph repaired to each city and bestowed upon the Egyptians in perpetuity the land that they had previously ceded to the king and that he himself might have held and reserved for his own benefit. Consequently, Josephus concludes, Joseph both increased his own reputation with the Egyptians and their loyalty to their sovereign.

That Joseph is obedient to his sovereign may be inferred from the fact that whereas the Bible says simply that Joseph, as Pharaoh's vizier, came home and greeted his brothers without indicating from what place he was coming (*Gen.* 43:26), Josephus, eager to stress Joseph's loyalty, fills this lacuna by stating that he came from his attendance (θεραπείας, "service," "attention," "homage," "allegiance," "concern") upon the king (*Ant.* 2.121). Josephus felt it particularly important, in view of the recent disastrous revolt of the Jews against the Romans to stress that the proper policy for the Jews was to be loyal to their rulers. Thus, despite his high station, Joseph has no design to supplant the Pharaoh; indeed, Josephus significantly omits Judah's remark to Joseph, "Thou art even as Pharaoh" (*Gen.* 44:18 vs. *Ant.* 2.140).²⁸ Josephus is careful to avoid repeating the scriptural statement of Joseph's brothers to Jacob that Joseph was the ruler of all the land of Egypt (*Gen.* 45.26); instead, in Josephus's version we read that Jacob was told that Joseph was sharing (συνδιέπων, "administering something with someone") with the king the government of Egypt and had almost the whole charge of it in his hands (*Ant.* 2.168). Thus, when G-d describes Joseph's status in the administration of Egypt, he says that he had made him lord of Egypt and that he differed only slightly (ὥς ὀλίγω) from the status of the king (*Ant.* 2.174).

As one who had participated in the war against the Romans and who had come to the conclusion that resistance to Rome was futile and that Rome was divinely destined to rule the world, Josephus constantly seeks to prevail upon his compatriots to give up their dream

²⁸ The rabbinic tradition actually speaks of Joseph as having been appointed "king in Egypt" (*Sifre Deut.* 334.3). The LXX resolves this delicate problem by reading μετὰ Φαραώ, which the Vulgate renders as "after Pharaoh."

of national independence. We may see an instance of this concern where Josephus avoids terminology suggestive of an independent state (Num. 23:21) in Balaam's remark that G-d has granted untold blessings to the Israelites and has vouchsafed to them his own providence as their perpetual ally (σύμμαχον) and guide (ἡγεμόν) (*Ant.* 4.114). This rendering is clearly not merely an equivalent for the biblical concept of covenant but actually a replacement for it.²⁹ As Josephus's Balaam puts matters, the Israelites are thus to be happy (εὐδαίμων, *Ant.* 4.114) rather than to dominate the world. It is their fame—rather than, it would seem, their sheer force—that will fill the whole earth, as we see in another of Josephus' extra-biblical additions (*Ant.* 4.115). In particular, we may note that in place of the Bible's picture comparing the Israelites to lions that do not lie down until they have eaten their prey and drunk their blood (Num. 23:24), Josephus avoids such sanguinary particulars and speaks only of the land that the Israelites will occupy (*Ant.* 4.115-16).

Indeed, Josephus clearly shifts the focus from the land of Israel to the Diaspora when he has Balaam declare that whereas now the Israelites are circumscribed by the land of Canaan, the habitable world (οἰκουμένην), that is the Diaspora, lies before them as an everlasting habitation (*Ant.* 4.116)³⁰ Josephus' chief aim, in his reworking of the biblical Ezra narrative, is to stress Ezra's loyalty to his ruler and, by implication, to underscore the similar loyalty of Jews to the government of the state in which they reside. It is particularly important, therefore, that when Ezra is first introduced to his readers by Josephus he is termed, in an extra-biblical addition not to be found in 1 Esd. 8:4, "friendly" (φίλος, *Ant.* 11.121) to King Xerxes. A precedent for Ezra's status here may be seen in Josephus' references to Hezekiah, who was invited by the king of Babylon, Berodach-balaban, to become his ally and "friend" (*Ant.* 10.30), as well as to Daniel, who was given the extraordinarily high honor of being designated by King Darius of Media as the first of his "friends" (*Ant.* 10.263), and to Zerubbabel, who had an "old friendship" with King Darius of Persia and who was on that account "judged worthy of a place in the king's bodyguard" (*Ant.* 11.32).

²⁹ See Attridge 1976, 79-80.

³⁰ This is clearly a plea for the viability of Jewish life in the Diaspora, as noted by Schalit 1944, 1:lxvii. We may see a parallel in Josephus' version of G-d's blessings to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15; *Ant.* 1.280-83): Jacob, G-d says, will have good children who will rule over the land of Israel and will fill all other lands (*Ant.* 1.282).

In Josephus' reworking of the biblical narrative, Nehemiah emerges, in an extra-biblical detail, as the Persian king's loyal servant who gave stability to the land of Palestine at a time when it was being overrun by marauders who plundered it by day, did mischief to it at night, and carried off many captives from the country and even from Jerusalem itself (*Ant.* 11.161). The biblical text simply states that the inhabitants of Palestine were in great affliction and reproach (Neh. 1:3). Josephus adds that highwaymen had made the roads unsafe, so that they were full of corpses (*Ant.* 11.161). Inasmuch as roads were the great pride of both the Persians (cf. Herodotus 8.98) and the Romans, the fact that Nehemiah secured the safety of these roads, according to Josephus' extrabiblical addition, must have made an extremely strong impression upon his readers.

Again, Josephus dramatically illustrates the loyalty of Nehemiah to the Persian king by adding to the biblical passage (Neh. 2:1) that Nehemiah, in his fidelity to the king, hastened, just as he was, and without even bathing, to perform the service of bringing the king his drink (*Ant.* 11.163).

The king's confidence in Nehemiah is also illustrated by the omission of a biblical passage. In Neh. 2:6 the king is represented as asking him how long he will be gone and when he will return, whereupon Nehemiah, of course, answers him by setting a time. Apparently, Josephus regarded such an inquiry as itself a sign of lack of confidence in Nehemiah, and so he simply omits it (*Ant.* 11.166). An indication of Nehemiah's persuasiveness and of the king's confidence in him may likewise be seen in Josephus' addition to the biblical text (Neh. 2:8) that it took the king only one day to fulfill his promise to Nehemiah and to give him a letter to the governor of Syria (*Ant.* 11.167).

Nehemiah, as representative of the Persian king, could hardly afford to show hesitation or fear, and yet the biblical text indicates that whereas he heard in Kislev about the difficulties in Jerusalem (Neh. 1:1), it was not until four months later in Nisan that he went to the king with a request to remedy the situation (Neh. 2:1). Such a delay is obviously not consonant with dynamic leadership, and so Josephus has Nehemiah go immediately to the king after hearing of the troubles of the Jews in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 11.163). Moreover, according to the Bible, when the king asked him why he was sad, he became very much afraid (Neh. 2:2). Josephus, however, obviously found such a detail unseemly in a leader and simply omits it (*Ant.* 11.164).

A major ingredient of Nehemiah's character, as highlighted by Josephus and crucial in his capacity as the right-hand man of the Persian king, is respect for law (*Ant.* 11.183). Indeed, it is significant that in his brief encomium for Nehemiah, consisting of a single sentence, Josephus calls attention to his being just (δίκαιος), that is, observant of the proper way (δίκη) (*Ant.* 11.183). We have noted that the same two adjectives used here of Nehemiah, χρηστός and δίκαιος, are employed also for the model king Hezekiah (*Ant.* 9.260), as well as for Jehonadab (*Ant.* 9.132), Jehoiada (*Ant.* 9.166) and Jehoiachin (*Ant.* 10.100).

In the Nehemiah pericope, Josephus is concerned to underscore the allegiance of the Jews to the state, as we may see in his omission (*Ant.* 11.170) of the biblical charge, made by Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite servant, and Geshem the Arab, that the Jews were rebelling against the Persian king (Neh. 2:19-20, 6:6). These neighbors likewise tried to reduce to absurdity the action of the Jews in rebuilding the wall; indeed, the biblical text observes that they derided and despised them. Josephus omits such disparaging remarks.

The very beginning of Josephus' account of Nehemiah calls attention to his relationship to the king. Whereas in the biblical account it is not until after eleven verses of the first chapter that Nehemiah is identified as the cupbearer of the king (Neh. 2:1), a position of crucial importance requiring the complete confidence of the monarch, Josephus' very first sentence so describes him (*Ant.* 11.159). Nehemiah, indeed, is so loyal that even without bathing he hastens to bring drink to the king (*Ant.* 11.163).

That Josephus was highly sensitive to the charge of dual loyalty may be seen in his paraphrase of the biblical passage in which certain Chaldaeans accuse the Jewish youths Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, whom Nebuchadnezzar had appointed to high administrative posts, of paying no heed to the king, as witnessed by the fact that they did not serve his gods or worship his image (Dan. 3:8-12)—obviously important symbols in maintaining the unity and allegiance of the many ethnic groups in his kingdom. Josephus, in his paraphrase, is careful to shift the emphasis from the failure of the Jews to serve Nebuchadnezzar's gods and to worship his image - a political demand—to the religious motive of the youths, namely their unwillingness to transgress their fathers' laws (*Ant.* 10.214). The Romans, who placed such a great emphasis upon law and upon

respect for ancestral tradition, as we can see from the attention given these factors in their great national poem, Virgil's *Aeneid*, would surely have appreciated such a stance.

Elsewhere Josephus goes even further in shifting the focus off from the conflict between Jewish religious law and the law of the state. Thus, in the Bible Daniel's envious rivals state, in their exasperation, that they are unable to find any complaint against Daniel unless they discover it to be "in the matter of the law of his G-d" (Dan. 6:5). Realizing that the word "law" in and of itself was such an important concept to the Romans and that the biblical allusion to a possible conflict between the law of the state and the law of the Jews implied an irreconcilable conflict between two systems, Josephus in his paraphrase of this passage omits the word "law" altogether and instead couches the issue solely in religious terms with his remark that when his rivals saw Daniel praying to G-d three times a day they realized that they had found a pretext for destroying him (*Ant.* 10.252). When Josephus does subsequently mention the laws of the Jews, he makes it clear that his reference is to their religious laws (*Ant.* 10.275), given the immediately following mention of the Temple and its sacrifices. Daniel's envious rivals, on the other hand, according to Josephus' addition to the biblical text (Dan. 6:13), sought to portray Daniel as attempting, by his disregard of the king's edict, to undermine the state, which they claimed others were seeking to keep and preserve (*Ant.* 10.256).³¹

13. TOLERANCE AND RESPECT TOWARD NON-JEWS AND ESPECIALLY NON-JEWISH LEADERS

One of the recurring charges against Jews was that they had an implacable hatred of non-Jews. It is to answer this charge, as made by Apollonius Molon and Lysimachus (*Ap.* 2.145) and repeated by Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.5.1), that Josephus goes out of his way to stress that Jews show concern and compassion for non-Jews. Hence, to the extent that he was the legitimate ruler of his land, the Pharaoh in his role as king was, for Josephus, above criticism. Indeed, the only ground for criticism of the Pharaoh in the incident with Sarai was

³¹ There is a lacuna here in the text, but the import appears to be that those who observed the edict not to pray did so not because of impiety but because they realized how important it was to maintain respect for law and order.

that he failed to show self-control; in the Bible (Gen. 12:11-12), significantly, the blame is put on the Egyptians, whose licentiousness Abram fears and who take the lead in praising her to the Pharaoh, whereas in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.162) this frenzy for women is transferred to the Pharaoh himself; and it is the fear that the Pharaoh will slay him because of his wife's beauty that leads Abram to devise his scheme of pretending that she is his sister. Josephus, then, in an extra-biblical passage (*Ant.* 1.163-64), remarks that the Pharaoh, not content with reports about Sarai's beauty, was fired with a desire to see her and was actually at the point of laying hands upon her, whereupon G-d inflicted upon the Pharaoh the punishment that was most dreadful in Josephus' eyes, namely an outbreak of disease and political disturbance (στόσει). But even in this instance, Josephus comes to the Pharaoh's defense, carefully remarking (*Ant.* 1.165) that once he discovered the truth about Sarai's identity (at that point her name had not yet been changed to Sarah) the Pharaoh apologized to Abram, stressing that he had wished to contract a legitimate marriage alliance with her rather than to outrage her in a transport of passion. Significantly, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 12:16) it is before his discovery of her identity that the Pharaoh gives Abram abundant gifts, in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.165) the Pharaoh's character is enhanced by virtue of the fact that it is after the discovery of Sarai's identity and when he has nothing to gain thereby that the Pharaoh gives abundant riches to Abram.

Josephus was confronted with a dilemma on the question of how to treat the figure of Esau. On the one hand, there was a long-standing tradition, commencing with the Bible itself, of denigrating him. Thus the Bible (Gen. 25:27) quite obviously favors Jacob, the "plain" (םת, LXX ἁπλᾶστος, Tg. Onq. and Tg. Neof. יםש, "perfect") man, dwelling in tents, in contrast to Esau the hunter, the man of the field. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.258) omits this contrast completely, apparently because he seeks to walk a tightrope between degrading and uplifting either Jacob or Esau. Contrast the prophet Malachi (1:2-3), who quotes G-d as saying explicitly, "Jacob I loved, Esau I hated."

In his depiction of Esau, Josephus, however, was in a quandary, inasmuch as, if he denigrated him, he would be diminishing respect for Rome, since Esau had already in Josephus' time become identified with Rome.³²

³² See Feldman 1988-89, 130-33.

We may note Josephus' adept handling of the dilemma already in his account of the birth of the twins. In the first place, even before their birth, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.257) omits all mention of the struggle (Gen. 25:22) between them within the womb of Rebekah (the Hebrew, ויִתְרוּצְצוּ, indicates that they crushed one another). Whereas the oracle, according to the Hebrew (Gen. 25:23), declares that the older shall serve (יעבֹד, Gen. 25:23) the younger, and whereas the LXX likewise reads "will serve" δουλεύσειν), Josephus (*Ant.* 1.257), in order to avoid suggesting that the descendants of Esau are destined to be slaves to the Jews, writes that "he that to appearance was the lesser would excel (προτερήσειν, 'come before') the greater." Here Josephus follows the import of the LXX, which reads that Jacob will ὑπερέξει ("be above") Esau rather than the Hebrew γαמי ("be stronger") and thus avoids the embarrassing prophetic implication that Rome will ultimately be militarily weaker than Judea, which it had just defeated in a protracted war (66-73/74).

Moreover, the Bible (Gen. 25:25) declares that Esau came out ruddy (יָמוּם) "all over like a hairy garment"; the LXX faithfully renders this as indicating that he came out "red, hairy all over like a skin" (πυρράκης, ὅλος, ὥσεί δορά δασύς); and Tg. Onq. similarly states that he came out "red, like a hairy mantle all over." Josephus (*Ant.* 1.258), on the other hand, speaks of Esau's hairiness but says nothing either about his redness or about the struggle between Jacob and Esau in the womb.

In antiquity there was a general prejudice against ruddy or red-haired persons.³³ That Josephus was aware of the negative connota-

³³ See Gaster 1969, 165-66. In the Middle Ages, Judas Iscariot was represented as having red hair. On hairiness as a mark of savagery, see Speiser 1964, 196; and Vawter 1977, 288. Slaves, apparently, were conventionally said to have red hair, as we may see from the description of three of them in Roman comedies (Plautus, *Asinaria* 400; *Pseudolus* 1218; Terence, *Phormio* 51); and slaves often bore the name Rufus ("Red"). To be sure, Duckworth 1952, 89, asserts that there seems to be no good authority for the claim that slaves always wore red wigs in plays. A clue, however, to the fact that this was normally the case may be seen in Plautus, *Captivi* (648), where Philocrates, though a free young man, is described by his countryman as having "somewhat reddish hair" (*subrufus*), presumably because he had been disguised as a slave earlier in the play. Philo (*QG* 4.160), consistent with his practice of denigrating Esau, remarks that Esau's ruddy body and hairy hide were a sign of his character as a savage man who raged furiously in the manner of a wild beast. The rabbis associate redness with the shedding of blood. See Ginzberg 1928, 6:247 n. 13.

tion of redness may be seen in his rendering (*Ant.* 6.164) of the passage (1 Sam. 16:12) in which David is described as ruddy (רֹמָחִי; the same word is used to describe Esau in Gen. 25:25). The LXX, here as in the case of Esau, renders the Hebrew word by πυρράκης, that is, “fiery red”; but Josephus speaks, rather, of David’s complexion as “golden” (ξανθός, “yellow with a tinge of red, fair”).³⁴ Josephus (*Ant.* 1.258), aware of the connections of redness with bloodshed and apparently concerned not to imply that the descendants of Esau, the Romans, were slaves, thus totally omits Esau’s redness and remarks merely that he was excessively hairy.

Josephus’ handling of Esau’s sale of his birthright is likewise calculated to mitigate criticism of him. In the first place, Josephus postpones even mentioning the incident until after the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau, since, we may conjecture, if he had mentioned it in its proper biblical time frame this would have served to build up a cumulative dossier of evidence that Esau was really unworthy of Isaac’s blessing, inasmuch as he had such a low opinion of his birthright as to sell it. Josephus, therefore, postpones mention of the sale until he comes to the death of Isaac, whereupon he explains the division of the inheritance. There is further sympathy generated for Esau, because we are told (*Ant.* 2.2) that he was still a lad (παῖς, “child”) at the moment of the sale, while the Hebrew text gives no indication of his age. Whereas the parallel Hebrew text (Gen. 25:29) states that Esau was tired (יָעִי), Josephus uses a stronger word, indicating that he was fatigued (πόνου, implying “toil,” “strain,” “exertion”) and adds that he was famished (λιμώτων, “hungry,” “starving”). The Hebrew text might tempt one to despise Esau, who was ready to sell so precious a status as his birthright for some mere boiled pottage (דָּבָר); Josephus makes Esau’s deed more plausible, since in his account the food in question is a dish of lentils of rich (σφόδρα, “especially”) tawny hue, “which still further whetted his appetite.” Furthermore, whereas in the Hebrew text (Gen. 25:31) Jacob asks Esau merely to sell him the birthright, Josephus obviously aims to arouse more sympathy for Esau, inasmuch as he explicitly (*Ant.* 2.3)

³⁴ The word ξανθός is used by Josephus (*Ant.* 2.2, 3) with reference to the “tawny” pottage that Jacob gave to Esau in exchange for his rights as a first-born son. Hence, in referring to David as ξανθός, far from associating David with the Messiah who will overthrow the Roman Empire, Josephus may be connecting David with Rome, itself to be identified with Esau or Edom.

states that Jacob took advantage (χρωσάμενος) of Esau's famished state and forced (ἠνάγκαζε) him to sell it. Josephus mentions Esau's hunger three times in this brief section, whereas the Hebrew text does not refer to it at all. Hence, the sale appears more justifiable as a matter of sheer survival for Esau.

What is most striking of all, however, is that Josephus says nothing (*Ant.* 2.3) about Esau's despising his birthright (Gen. 25:34);³⁵ instead, he uses the story to explain the etymology of the name of the region of Idumea, which he derives from Esau's nickname "Edom," referring to the red color of the pottage that Jacob sold to Esau. If, as we suggest, Esau was already in Josephus' time regarded as the ancestor of the Romans, Josephus is being careful not to offend his Roman patrons by diverging from the biblical text, for example (*Ant.* 2.2), in not having Esau ask to swallow down (לעייטן, Gen. 25:30, implying voracious eating) the pottage but rather in asserting simply that Jacob gave him food (τροφήν). In the Hebrew the second half of Genesis 25:34 presents a staccato succession of five verbal forms calculated to emphasize Esau's lack of manners and judgment; that is, he ate, drank, rose up, went his way and finally despised (רבו) his birthright;³⁶ finally, the LXX says that "he held it cheap" (ἐφάυλισεν, "held of little value"). All this is missing from Josephus' account, presumably because he is being careful not to denigrate Esau.³⁷ And yet, true to his careful balancing act, Josephus follows the LXX (Gen. 25:31; cf. 25:33) in having Esau ask Jacob to "give in return" (ἀπόδου, "give back") the birthright, rather than to sell it to him, the implication being that Jacob really had a right to it in the first place, thus mitigating his guilt.

³⁵ Philo (*QG* 4.172) remarks that while the literal meaning of the Jacob's statement, "Sell me this day thy birthright" (Gen. 25:31), suggests Jacob's greed in wishing to deprive Esau of his rights, the allegorical meaning, which Philo obviously prefers, is that an abundance of possessions brings about sin for a wicked man (i.e., someone like Esau) but is necessary for the righteous man alone. Elsewhere (*Leg.* 3.192-95), Philo justifies Jacob's acquisition of the birthright by noting that Esau had a servile character and that, therefore, the birthright and blessings were inappropriate for him, since he was sunk in boundless ignorance. Pseudo-Philo (32.5-6) completely omits the actual barter of the birthright.

³⁶ Speiser 1964, 195.

³⁷ Philo (*QG* 4.228) goes much further than Josephus in defending Jacob's deception of his brother. He cites the parallel of athletes, whose use of deceit and trickery in contests is considered honorable.

Finally, in contrast to the extremely negative view of Esau found in the Pseudepigrapha, Philo and the New Testament, Josephus, apparently aware of the equation of Esau and Rome, is careful not to offend his Roman patrons and thus says nothing, for example, about Esau's despising his birthright (Gen. 25:34). He thus arouses more sympathy for Esau in his presentation of Esau's relationship with his father Isaac, as well as in the scene in which Isaac blesses his sons.

Moreover, in the biblical text (Gen. 41:37) we read only that Joseph's advice to the Pharaoh to gather food during the fat years for the lean years that will follow seemed good to the Pharaoh and to all his servants. On the other hand, we admire Josephus' Pharaoh much more, inasmuch as he expresses his appreciation to Joseph with much greater enthusiasm, not merely stating that Joseph was discreet and wise (Gen. 41:39) but actually marvelling (θαυμάσαντος) at the latter's discernment (φρόνησιν) and wisdom (σοφίαν). This appreciation for Joseph is particularly to be seen in that Josephus spells out the fact (Gen. 41:39 vs. *Ant.* 2.89) that the Pharaoh doubly (ἄμφοτέρων) admired Joseph, alike for the interpretation of the dream and for his counsel. Moreover, we admire Josephus' Pharaoh, inasmuch as he expresses his appreciation of Joseph with much greater enthusiasm than does his biblical counterpart (Gen. 41:39 vs. *Ant.* 2.89). Josephus emphasizes that Jews, in turn, are considerate toward non-Jews, so that, in an extra-biblical addition, he proudly notes that Joseph sells grain to all people and not merely to native Egyptians (*Ant.* 2.94, 101). The Pharaoh is likewise more magnanimous toward Joseph's brothers in permitting them to continue in their occupation as shepherds (*Ant.* 2.185 vs. Gen. 46:34).

When Josephus comes to that portion of the Bible detailing the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, he is careful (in line with the Bible itself, Exod. 1:8) to avoid the identification, which is found in the rabbinic sources (*Sot.* 11a), of this oppressor Pharaoh with the one who had appointed Joseph to high estate and states that the rule had passed to another dynasty (*Ant.* 2.202), in order to emphasize that not all Pharaohs are identical. However, the Pharaoh of the exodus also emerges more favorably, since, in Josephus' version, the blame is placed not on the Pharaoh personally but rather on the Egyptians, who are described as a voluptuous and lazy people (*Ant.* 2.201). Josephus' audience would have had little difficulty accepting this statement of contempt for the Egyptian people, if we may

judge from the remarks of a host of Greek and Roman writers, from Florus and Achilles Tatius to the author of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* and Juvenal.³⁸ As Josephus (*Ant.* 2.201-202) presents it, it is not the Pharaoh but the Egyptians who are at fault, their bitter disposition toward the Israelites being due to their envy of the latter's prosperity, brought about by the latter's work ethic, which they thought was to their own detriment.

As to the Pharaoh's decree that the male babies should be put to death, the Bible (Exod. 1:8-10) clearly puts the finger of blame upon the Pharaoh, since we are told that it is he who said to his people that the Israelites were too numerous and too mighty. In Josephus' version (*Ant.* 2.205), on the other hand, the blame is placed upon one of the Pharaoh's sacred scribes who predicts to the king that there would be born to the Israelites one who would surpass all others in virtue and who would win everlasting renown and who would abase the sovereignty of the Egyptians.³⁹ In view of this remark, the reader is not likely to censure the king who, we are told (*Ant.* 2.206), was alarmed (δεῖσας, "was afraid") and who, consequently, as we are reminded, on this sage's advice (rather than on his own initiative), ordered all male children to be drowned in the river. Moreover, we are told, it was the Egyptians (rather than the Pharaoh) who were stimulated by the advice of this scribe to exterminate the Israelites.

In addition, Josephus' Pharaoh is portrayed as less cruel than his biblical counterpart, inasmuch as in the Bible (Exod. 1:15) we read that he gave orders to the Hebrew midwives to put the male children to death, whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 2.206) specifically says that the orders were given to Egyptian midwives and explains that the Pharaoh proceeded in this way because he realized that women who were his compatriots were not likely to transgress his will. If the Pharaoh enforces his decree by declaring (*Ant.* 2.207) that those mothers who ventured stealthily to save their offspring are to be put to death along with their babes, the reader might feel at least some understanding for such a measure in view of the importance of obedience to the law, just as the reader of Sophocles' *Antigone* must identify to some degree with Creon's position, inasmuch as non-obedience to the law, even if one feels the law to be unjust or immoral, is an invitation to something even worse, namely anarchy. Even if this Pharaoh, as

³⁸ See Balsdon 1979, 68-69; p. 271 nn. 61-74.

³⁹ See Feldman 1993g, 49-63.

we shall see, lacks self-control in his personal behavior and in this respect is subject to censure, he, *qua* ruler, must be obeyed.

The very fact that Josephus devotes 2.16 times as much space to the non-Jewish priest, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, as does the Hebrew is an indication of the importance that Josephus attached to him.⁴⁰ Unlike Philo and the rabbis,⁴¹ who were divided in their views of Jethro, Josephus presents a uniformly favorable picture of him. In the first place, when the reader is introduced to him, he is described as a priest held in high veneration (πολλῆς ἡξιωμένου τιμῆς) by the people of the country (*Ant.* 2.258). Presumably, this is intended to counteract the implication of the biblical text that the shepherds drove away Jethro's daughters (Exod. 2:17), which, we may assume, they would not have done if they had had respect for Jethro himself. In fact, in a startling addition to the biblical text, Jethro even adopts Moses as his son (*Ant.* 2.263). The key point is that Jethro is actually identified here as a barbarian; clearly, Josephus' point is to stress that, far from being prejudiced against barbarians, actually, the greatest leader of the Jews married a barbarian and that he was even adopted by a barbarian. In terms of the striking impact upon a reader, only Alexander the Great's marriage with a Persian princess would be comparable.

One of the most delicate problems for Josephus must have been how to deal with the scene in which Jethro criticizes the way in which Moses had been administering justice (Exod. 18:14). In the Bible, Jethro comes right out with his criticism: "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone?" Such a criticism must have been disconcerting for Moses, especially since there is no indication in the biblical text that Jethro took Moses aside so as to avoid embarrassing him in the presence of the Israelites. On the other hand, in Josephus' version Jethro shows real sensitivity so as to avoid embarrassing his son-in-law. We are told that when he sees the way Moses administers affairs he holds his peace (ἡσυχίαν ἦγε, "kept quiet") at the moment (τότε), inasmuch as he is reluctant to hinder any who would avail themselves of the talents of their chief. It is only after the tumult of the crowd has subsided that he then discreetly takes Moses aside and in utter privacy (συμμονωθεὶς, "be

⁴⁰ See Feldman 1998a, 38.

⁴¹ See Feldman 1998a, 41-46.

alone in private with someone”) instructs him what it is necessary to do (*Ant.* 3.67).

The biblical Balaam narrative was a real challenge for Josephus, inasmuch as Balaam was a non-Jew, and Josephus is constantly aware of the charge that Jews are guilty of hating non-Jews. By shifting the focus from Balaam’s personality to the historical, military, and political confrontation between Israel and her enemies, Josephus gives a relatively unbiased portrait of Balaam (see, for example, *Ant.* 4.105, 106, 112), the pagan prophet who sought to curse Israel, especially when we compare his version with that of Philo, the rabbinic tradition, the New Testament and the book of Numbers itself.⁴²

Indeed, we find in Balaam’s words in the Bible (Num. 23:9) the statement that the Israelites are a people that shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Significantly, in his version of this passage, Josephus, clearly aware of the above, avoids presenting the Israelites as sundered off from all other peoples and instead words the statement in terms of the excellence of the Israelites as compared with other peoples, and has Balaam assert that G-d has lavished upon the Israelites the means whereby they may become the happiest of all peoples (*Ant.* 4.114). No one could object to such a prophecy of the Israelites’ happiness; the objection, which Josephus carefully avoids mentioning, would be to their cutting themselves off from other peoples.

Again, Josephus does not besitate to have Balaam prophesy that the Israelites will occupy the land to which G-d has sent them and that the whole earth will be filled with their fame (*Ant.* 4.115). If Balaam foretells the calamities that will befall kings and cities of the highest celebrity (some of which, he says, have not yet been established) (*Ant.* 4.125), he is careful to keep this prophecy cryptic enough so that Gentile readers will not necessarily recognize this as referring to Rome, just as he has a similarly cryptic prophecy in connection with the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in his pericope of Daniel (*Ant.* 10.210).

In the biblical passage (Num. 24:17-18) corresponding to *Ant.* 4.125, however, what Balaam predicts is that a star out of Jacob and a scepter out of Israel will conquer Edom and Seir. That this is intended as an eschatological prophecy is clear from Balaam’s earlier

⁴² See Feldman 1993a, 48-93.

statement that he will advise Balak what the Israelites would do to the Moabites at the end of days (Num. 24:14). That a Messianic prophecy is likewise intended seems to be hinted at in the LXX's version of Num. 24:7: 'There shall come a man out of his (i.e. Israel's) seed, and he shall rule over many nations; and the kingdom of Gog shall be exalted, and his kingdom shall be increased.' In any case, the passage was interpreted messianically shortly after the time of Josephus in reference to Bar Kochba (*y. Ta'an.* 69d) by Rabbi Akiva. Of course, such a messianic understanding was avoided by Josephus because of his subservience to the Romans.

In the same line, Josephus is eager to avoid giving the impression that the Israelites are out to destroy their enemies mercilessly (*Ant.* 4.125), as is suggested by the biblical passage in which Balaam predicts that the G-d of Israel will "eat up the nations that are His adversaries and break their bones in pieces" (Num. 24:8). In Josephus' much milder version we are informed merely that BaJaam foretold what calamities were in store for the opponents of the Israelites, without spelling out precisely what those would be (*Ant.* 4.125).⁴³

Another example illustrating Josephus' eagerness not to cast aspersions on non-Jews may be seen in his rehabilitation of Eglon, the king of Moab. Instead of blaming Eglon for subjugating the Israelites he places the onus upon the Israelites themselves for their anarchy and for their failure to obey the laws (*Ant.* 5.185). He likewise omits such disparaging elements as Eglon's obesity (Judg. 3:17) and his defecating (Judg. 3:24)⁴⁴

A number of additions in Josephus' portrayal of Solomon are intended, with a view toward Josephus' contemporary scene, to answer the charge of misanthropy and to demonstrate the excellent relations between Jews and non-Jews. Whereas in the Bible we read only that Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent his servants to Solomon when he

⁴³ Cf. Jos., *War* 5.367: "G-d, who went the round of the nations, bringing to each in turn the rod of empire, now rested over Italy." De Jonge 1974, 211, deduces from the use of the word "now" in the above quotation that Josephus regarded the Romans as being powerful at the time that he wrote but not forever. We may reply, however, that the use of the word "now" is perfectly natural in the context, namely a speech delivered by Josephus to his fellow Jews. He is there making an appeal to realism: "Right now (but without reference to the future, which really is irrelevant) the Romans are in firm control of the world; hence revolution makes no sense."

⁴⁴ See Feldman 1993e, 323-51.

heard that he had been anointed king (1 Kgs. 5:15), Josephus adds that Hiram was overjoyed and sent him greetings and congratulations on his good fortune (*Ant.* 8.50). Solomon, in turn, expresses his gratitude to Hiram for his aid in presenting him with cedar wood for the Temp[le]. Whereas the Bible states simply that, in return, Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food for his household and twenty measures of beaten oil (1 Kgs. 5:25), Josephus' Solomon goes much further in expressing his gratitude, in that he not only adds twenty thousand measures of wine to the gifts specified in the Bible, but he also commends (ἐπῆνεσε) Hiram's zeal (προθυμίαν) and goodwill (εὖνοιαν) (*Ant.* 8.57). Finally, whereas the Bible states that Hiram and Solomon made a league together (1 Kgs. 5:26), Josephus elaborates that the friendship of Hiram and Solomon increased through these things, so that they swore that it should continue forever (*Ant.* 8.58).

That the friendship between Solomon and Hiram was important in refuting the charge of misanthropy may be seen from the fact that Josephus devotes a goodly portion of his apologetic treatise *Against Apion* (1.100-127) to reproducing evidence from the Phoenician archives and from the works of Dios and Menander of Ephesus to illustrate the excellent relations between the two kings and to confirm the antiquity of the Temple (*Ap.* 1.106-108). There is good reason, says Josephus, why the erection of the Temple should be mentioned in the Tyrians' records, since Hiram, king of Tyre, was a friend of Solomon and, indeed, had inherited this friendship from his (Hiram's) father (*Ap.* 1.109-10). According to Josephus, it is the non-Jew, Hiram, who inherited the friendship from his father, whereas in the Bible it is Solomon who inherits from his father a friendship with Hiram (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kgs. 5:1). Josephus, for apologetic reasons, exults in this friendship (*Ap.* 1.110). Thus, whereas in the Bible Hiram simply sent cedar trees to David (2 Sam. 5:11), Josephus says that Hiram cut down the finest timber from Mount Libanus (*Ap.* 1.110). That this friendship carried with it a great deal of prestige may be deduced from the fact, proudly noted by Josephus, that the Phoenicians were an ancient people and that Hiram lived more than 150 years before the founding of Carthage (*Ap.* 2.17-18). In a most unusual digression, Josephus calls special attention to the fact that copies of the correspondence between Hiram and Solomon are to be found not only in the Bible but also in the Tyrian archives (*Ant.* 8.55), and then adds that he has recorded these matters in detail because he

wanted his readers to know that he has related nothing more than what is true and that he has not, by inserting into his history various plausible (πιθανοῖς) and seductive (ἐπαγωγοῖς) passages meant to deceive (ἀπάτην) and entertain (τέρψιν), attempted to avoid critical inquiry (ἐξέτασιν) (*Ant.* 8.56). This passage is, of course, reminiscent of Thucydides' implied attack (1.21.1) on Herodotus for composing a work with a view rather to pleasing (προσαγωγότερον) the ear than to telling the truth, and of his insistence that his own history is not intended as "a prize-essay to be heard for the moment but as a possession for all time" (1.22.4). Josephus then concludes with an apologia for his craft as historian: "Nor should we be indulgently held blameless if we depart from what is proper to a historical narrative; on the contrary, we ask that no hearing be given us unless we are able to establish the truth with demonstrations (ἀποδείξεως) and convincing evidence (τεκμηρίων ἰσχυρῶν) (*Ant.* 8.56).

The fact that, according to Josephus, many of the riddles and problems that Hiram and Solomon sent each other were still preserved in Tyre in Josephus' own day (*Ap.* 1.111) is important not only in building up Solomon's reputation for wisdom but also for stressing the friendship and high respect that a Jewish leader had for a non-Jew. While it is true that Josephus does say that Solomon showed greater proficiency and was the cleverer (σοφώτερος) of the two, it is still quite a compliment for Hiram that he could be compared with Solomon and that Solomon found it interesting and challenging to exchange problems and riddles with him. As further evidence of the historicity of the relations between Solomon and Hiram, Josephus on two occasions cites the words of Menander, who translated the Tyrian records from the Phoenician language into Greek (*Ant.* 8.144-46; *Ap.* 1.116-25).

The supreme example of Josephus' concern with answering the charge that the Jews were guilty of hating non-Jews is to be found in Josephus' version of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. According to the biblical version, Solomon prayed that when non-Jews come to the Temple G-d should grant all of their requests so that all the peoples of the earth may know His name and fear Him (1 Kgs. 8:41-43). Josephus says nothing about the peoples' fearing him (*Ant.* 8.116-17), perhaps because he thought that this might give the impression that the Jews were seeking proselytes or G-d-fearers—a very sensitive issue for the Romans at this time because they were afraid that the increasing success of Jews in

winning such adherents would mean the end of the old Roman way of life. Instead, Josephus adds a new dimension to the discussion by explaining that Solomon's aim in beseeching G-d thus was to demonstrate that Jews "are not inhuman (ἀπάνθρωποι) by nature nor unfriendly (ἄλλοτρίως) to those who are not of their own country, but wish that all men should receive aid from Thee and enjoy Thy blessings" (*Ant.* 8.117).⁴⁵

Solomon might well have been accused by a non-Jewish audience of an anti-foreign attitude on the basis of the biblical statement that he removed his wife, the Pharaoh's daughter, from Jerusalem to a house in another city, "for, he said, my wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel because the places are holy whereunto the ark of the L-rd hath come" (2 Chron. 8:11). Josephus defuses such a charge by omitting this passage completely (*Ant.* 8.162).

Again, Solomon, in dedicating the Temple, asks that G-d grant the prayers not only of Jews but also of non-Jews (1 Kgs. 8:41-43; *Ant.* 8.116-17). Likewise, whereas the biblical Jonah appears to be indifferent to the Gentiles whom he is to warn, since we find him, at the beginning of the account, fast asleep and even, according to the LXX, snoring (Jonah 1:5), Josephus' Jonah is not asleep and, we are told, has absented himself only because he did not wish to imitate what the sailors were doing.

Furthermore, when Mesha, the king of the Moabites, sacrifices his own son to his god, the Bible says nothing about the reaction of Kings Jehoshaphat and Jehoram (2 Kgs. 3:27); Josephus, on the other hand, calls attention to their humanity and compassion (*Ant.* 9.43).

Josephus had to avoid criticizing the Assyrians more than necessary, as he did not want to offend non-Jews unduly. Hence, in line with this last concern, he omits the biblical statement that Sennacherib wrote letters to cast contempt on the G-d of Israel (2 Chron. 32:17); and, in particular, he omits the degrading remark of the Rab-shakeh warning that the Jews are doomed to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine (2 Kgs. 18:27). Indeed, he considerably abbreviates the threats uttered by the Rab-shakeh (*Ant.* 10.10).

⁴⁵ We may also note that, in connection with the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel, Josephus stresses, in an extra-biblical detail, that the Temple is open to all, including even the schismatic Samaritans, for worship of G-d (*Ant.* 11.87).

Josephus likewise omits, in an obvious show of tolerance, the statement, in Hezekiah's prayer before G-d, that the kings of Assyria had cast the gods of other nations into the fire (2 Kgs. 19:17-18 vs. *Ant.* 10.16). He furthermore omits, as apparently too strong, the prophet Isaiah's blistering promise from G-d that He would put His hook in Assyria's nose and His bit in its mouth (2 Kgs. 19:28 vs. *Ant.* 10.16). If Sennacherib is ultimately defeated, it is not a matter of his returning to his own land because of a mere rumor, as the Bible would have it (2 Kgs. 19:7), since that presumably, from Josephus' point of view and from that of much of his audience, would have trivialized the whole incident, but rather because he is a victim, in a manner reminiscent of a Greek tragedy, of over-confidence (ὕβρις) similar to the overweening pride (ὑβρις) characteristic of the generation of the Tower of Babel (*Ant.* 1.113) and of Haman (*Ant.* 10.13). And yet, just as in the Daniel pericope, Josephus shows respect for Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius, so here he shows regard for Sennacherib, despite the latter's attack upon Jerusalem, as we see from his addition to the biblical statement (2 Kgs. 19:37), in which he points out that it was by treachery that Sennacherib was slain by his son (*Ant.* 10.23). Finally, the Bible (2 Kgs. 20:12-13; Isa. 39: 1-2) relates how the king of Babylon sent envoys to Hezekiah bearing letters and a gift (LXX, "gifts") and inviting him to become his ally, and how Hezekiah welcomed them and showed them his treasure-house; Josephus, however, eager to demonstrate the high regard that Jews have for non-Jews and, in particular, the importance of hospitality in Hezekiah's scheme of values, adds that Hezekiah feasted the envoys and sent them back with gifts for the Babylonian king.

In general, Josephus' Daniel, given the additions to the biblical narrative, comes across as having considerable concern for non-Jews. Thus, according to the Bible, Daniel approached his three companions asking them to pray to G-d concerning the mystery so that he and they might not perish with the rest of the wise men (Dan. 2:17-18). In Josephus' version it is Daniel himself who beseeches G-d (*Ant.* 10.199); furthermore, Josephus adds that he did so throughout the night, and in place of the vague term "mystery" and in place of a concern primarily with saving their own lives, together with those of the non-Jewish wise men, we are told specifically that he sought enlightenment so as to save the Magi and the Chaldeans, together with whom they were destined to perish. It is thus significantly the

fate of the Magi and the Chaldaecans that is his first thought.

Even Nebuchadnezzar, who was responsible for the destruction of the First Temple, emerges more favorably, inasmuch as Josephus omits the cruel decree that Nebuchadnezzar issued, in which he declared that anyone who spoke a word against the Jewish G-d should be torn limb from limb (Dan. 3:29). Moreover, Josephus considerably tones down the gruesome picture of Nebuchadnezzar's behaving like an animal (*Ant.* 10.217).

Likewise, one might well be critical of Darius for signing his name to an edict arbitrarily forbidding any petition directed toward any god or man for thirty days (Dan. 6:7, 9); but Josephus protects Darius' reputation by explaining that Darius had approved of the decree only because he had been misled by his advisers (*Ant.* 10.254).⁴⁶ Josephus likewise protects Darius' reputation by having him not merely express the hope, as does the Bible (Dan. 6:16), that Daniel's G-d would save him and that he would suffer no harm from the beasts but also, more positively, by having him bid Daniel to bear his fate with good courage (*Ant.* 10.258). Moreover, Darius had ordered that not only Daniel's enemies but also their innocent wives and children should be cast into the lions' den (Dan. 6:24); and it is therefore significant that Josephus omits this detail (*Ant.* 10.262).

What is most striking about Josephus' version of Ahasuerus is that there is not even a single hint in it that is negative. Josephus stresses Ahasuerus' respect for law. His apparently capricious treatment of Queen Vashti is explained as due to her insolence after she had been summoned repeatedly by her husband (*Ant.* 11.191-92). And even then, Josephus expands on Ahasuerus' deep love for her and on his remorse (*Ant.* 11.195). As to Ahasuerus' relationship with Esther, though there is good reason to question its nature, Josephus insists that it was lawful (*Ant.* 11.202). He expands on his gentle and tender concern for her (*Ant.* 11.236). Indeed, Ahasuerus is glorified as the ideal ruler whose goal is peace and good government for his subjects (*Ant.* 11.216). He is particularly magnanimous toward those who do favors for him (*Ant.* 11.252). If he did send out the edict condemning all the Jews in his realm to be put to death, the blame is placed upon his advisers (*Ant.* 11.215, 275-76).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See Feldman 1993g, 52-54.

⁴⁷ See Feldman 1994, 17-39.

14. TOLERANCE TOWARD NON-JEWISH RELIGIONS

In an interpretation of Exod. 22:27[28], wherein he follows the LXX, Josephus declares that Jews are forbidden to speak ill of the religion of Gentiles out of respect for the very word “god” (*Ant.* 4.207 and *Ap.* 2.237). Thus Josephus simply omits the passage in which Gideon, upon instructions from G-d, pulls down the altar of Baal and the Asherah tree that was worshipped beside it (Judg. 6:25-32).

Whereas in the Bible Samuel is represented as speaking to the Israelites assuring them that if they put away their foreign gods and direct their hearts to G-d they will be delivered from the hand of the Philistines (1 Sam. 7:3), Josephus’ Samuel says nothing about the worship of the foreign gods (*Ant.* 6.19). Presumably, he is concerned lest the non-Jews, comprising most of his audience, be offended by such a reference, and instead speaks to the Israelites of liberty (ἐλευθερία) and of the blessings that it brings.

In the case of Asa, Josephus has systematically removed references to his destruction of pagan cults. Thus, though the account of his reign in 1 Kings (15:12) is extraordinarily brief, yet we have mention of the fact that he put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land and that he removed all the idols that his father had made. In the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles (14:3, 5) we have still further details of Asa’s mass destruction of pagan cult objects, namely that he took away the foreign altars and the high places, broke down the pillars, and took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars. In Josephus’ version we hear nothing specific about Asa’s destruction of pagan cult objects; rather, the language is quite deliberately vague, with the emphasis on the positive: “He put his kingdom in order by cutting away whatever evil growths were found in it and cleansing it from every impurity (*Ant.* 8.290).” For similar reasons, Josephus omits the biblical statement that when Asa heard the warning given him by the prophet Azariah he put away the idols from the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim (2 Chron. 15:8).

Given Josephus’ concern not to offend his pagan readers, we should also not be surprised to find that he omits the biblical statement that Asa’s people entered into a covenant that they would put to death whoever, whether young or old, man or woman, would not seek the L-r d (2 Chron. 15:12-13). Inasmuch as mystery cults were held in such high regard by many non-Jews, it is not surprising

that Josephus altogether omits the statement, as found in the LXX translation, that King Asa ended the mystery cults (1 Kgs. 15:12).

It is in line with Josephus' tolerant attitude toward the religions of others that we find Josephus omitting the biblical statement that Jehoshaphat removed the pagan high places and the Asherim from the land of Judah (2 Chron. 17:6 vs. *Ant.* 8.394).⁴⁸ Indeed, whereas, according to the Bible, the prophet Jehu, after reproaching Jehoshaphat for joining Ahab in a military alliance, remarks that there is nonetheless some good to be found in him in that he had destroyed the pagan objects (2 Chron. 19:3), Josephus very diplomatically omits mention of their destruction, since this would imply disrespect for the religion of others, and instead has Jehu declare in the vaguest terms that the king would be delivered from his enemies, despite having sinned because of his good character (φύσιν) (*Ant.* 9.1).

This emphasis upon Jehoshaphat's liberal attitude toward pagans may be seen in Josephus' version of the biblical remark that the reason why the neighboring kingdoms did not make war against Jehoshaphat was that the fear of the Lord fell upon them (2 Chron. 17:10). In Josephus' version their fear is replaced by a positive feeling of love, since we read that the neighboring peoples continued to cherish (στέργοντες, "love," "be fond of," "like," "feel affection towards," "esteem," "think highly of") him (*Ant.* 8.396).

Josephus likewise omits King Jehu's conversion of the temple of Baal into an outhouse (2 Kgs. 10:27).

The charge that the Jews were intolerant of other religions is sharply refuted by Josephus in his version of the book of Esther as elsewhere. Thus, though Josephus generally follows the apocryphal Addition C, containing Esther's prayer to God, he omits her bitter attack on the idol-worship of the non-Jews (Addition C: 19-22): "And now they [i.e. the enemies of the Jews] have not been satisfied with the bitterness of our captivity, but they have laid their hands (in the hands of their idols), to remove the ordinance of Thy mouth, and to destroy Thine inheritance, and to stop the mouth of them that praise Thee, and to quench the glory of Thy house and Thy altar,

⁴⁸ Perhaps Josephus was troubled by the fact that the Bible seems to contradict itself on this point, inasmuch as 1 Kgs. 22:43 says specifically that during Jehoshaphat's reign the high places were not taken away and that the people continued to sacrifice and burn incense there. Josephus resolves the problem by omitting the statements of both Kings and Chronicles on this point.

and to open the mouth of the nations to give praise to vain idols, and that a king of flesh should be magnified forever. Surrender not, O L-rd, Thy sceptre unto them that be not gods.”

15. INTERMARRIAGE AND PROSELYTISM

As we see in his handling of the intermarriages of Esau, Joseph, Moses, Samson, and Solomon, among others, Josephus was in a quandary. On the one hand, the Bible explicitly prohibits intermarriage (Deut. 7:3); but, on the other hand, too strenuous an objection to the practice on his part would play into the hands of those who accused the Jews of misanthropy and illiberalism.

Significantly, whereas in the Bible it is only after the death of their father Elimelech that his sons Mahlon and Chilion took wives of the women of Moab (Ruth 1:4), Josephus, on the contrary, indicates that it was Elimelech himself who took Moabite women as wives for his sons (*Ant.* 5.319), presumably to indicate that Jews are not prejudiced against non-Jews, even Moabites, this despite the fact that the Torah declares that no Moabite may enter “the assembly of the L-rd” (Deut. 23:3), because they had shown hostility to the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the desert after the exodus. Moreover, again to show that Jews are not hostile to non-Jews, Josephus’ picture of the two Moabite daughters-in-law of Naomi arouses even more sympathy than does the biblical version. In the latter, when they are urged to return to their homeland of Moab, they reply very simply, “Nay, but we will return with thee unto they people” (Ruth 1:10). In Josephus, by contrast, we are told that the daughters-in-law had not the heart (ἐκαρτέρουν, “endured”) to be parted from Naomi (*Ant.* 5.321). And Josephus would have us give even greater credit to the daughters-in-law in light of his extra-biblical detail that Naomi actually begged (παραιτουμένη) and implored (παρεκάλει) them to remain where they were (*Ant.* 5.321-22).

The subject of proselytism was an extremely delicate one. As the Romans saw a decline in religiosity (see, for example, the preface to Livy’s history), they became more and more bitter about those who were trying to draw them away from their ancestral religion and values. The expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 139 B.C.E. (Valerius Maximus 1.3.3) and, apparently, in 19 C.E. (Jos., *Ant.* 18.81-84; Tac., *Ann.* 2.85; Suet., *Tiberius* 36; Cassius Dio 57.18.5a) had been connected with the alleged attempt of the Jews to convert non-Jews

to Judaism;⁴⁹ and we must note that such drastic action had taken place despite the generally favorable attitude of the Roman government toward the Jews.

It is surely significant that in the *Antiquities*, aside from the passage about the conversion of the royal family of Adiabene (*Ant.* 20.17-96), which was, after all, under Parthian domination and hence of no immediate concern to the Romans, Josephus nowhere propagandizes for proselytism as such. If, in the essay *Against Apion*, he declares (2.261) that the Jews gladly welcome any who wish to share their customs, he is careful to note that Jews do not take the initiative in seeking out proselytes and that, in fact, they take precautions (2.257) to prevent foreigners from mixing with them at random. Josephus himself makes a point of stressing that while he was general in Galilee, when the Galilean Jews tried to compel some non-Jews to be circumcised as a condition for dwelling among them, he refused to allow any compulsion to be used, declaring that everyone should worship G-d in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience (*Life* 113).

In the Bible, when Moses tells Jethro all that the L-rd has done to the Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Jethro rejoices for all the good that G-d has done to Israel, he blesses G-d for having delivered them from the Egyptians, he declares that he now knows that the L-rd is greater than all gods because of His saving the Israelites, he offers a sacrifice to G-d, and Aaron comes with all the elders to eat bread with him (*Exod.* 18:8-12). What is striking in this brief passage is that Jethro is brought into immediate juxtaposition with the mention of G-d no fewer than six times, as we have noted. It is not surprising, consequently, as we have remarked, that, according to rabbinic tradition, especially in view of Jethro's outright statement that the L-rd is greater than all gods, Jethro is represented as having become a proselyte to Judaism (*Exod. Rab.* 1.32, 27.6; *Mek. Yitro* 1; *Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer* (ed. Hyman G. Enelow [New York: Bloch, 1933] 304). Consequently, Josephus, in his sensitivity to the proselytizing movement, quite carefully omits Jethro's statement about G-d's greatness.

Moreover, the biblical narrative actually states that Jethro presented a burnt offering and sacrifices to G-d (*Exod.* 18:12), an act that would

⁴⁹ See Feldman 1993, 300-304.

seem to indicate, as some of the rabbis noted above deduced, that he had come to accept the belief in the Israelite G-d. Josephus, sensitive to the Roman opposition to proselytism by Jews, has quite obviously made a deliberate change in having Moses offer the sacrifice (*Ant.* 3.63).

Furthermore, in distinct contrast to Jethro's outright taking the lead in his blessing of G-d in the Bible (Exod. 18:10) and his offering of sacrifices to G-d (Exod. 18:12) and in contrast to the clearly subordinate role of Aaron in merely coming with the Israelite elders to eat bread with Jethro (Exod. 18:12), Josephus, in the apparent realization that such a role would, in effect, make Jethro a convert to Judaism, makes Aaron the prime mover in chanting hymns to G-d as the author and dispenser of salvation and liberty to the Israelites (*Ant.* 3.64). Jethro's role is clearly subordinate; Aaron merely gets him to join him (προσλαβόμενος).

Likewise, in view of the Roman sensitivity to the great expansion of the Jewish population, especially through proselytism, we can understand Josephus' difficulty when he came to the passage in Balaam's prophecy (Num. 23:10) with regard to the population explosion of the Israelites: "Who hath counted the dust of Jacob or numbered the fourth part of Israel?" Josephus diplomatically omits this statement altogether.

We may well ask why Josephus refers to Ruth only once as a Moabite (*Ant.* 5.319), whereas the biblical text designates her thus on six occasions (Ruth 1:22, 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5, 10). Moreover, we may ask why Josephus has totally omitted all references to Ruth's conversion to Judaism, so crucial in the biblical account. Hence, whereas in the biblical text, it is Ruth who takes the initiative to indicate her desire to join her mother-in-law and the Israelite people, with her words, "thy people shall be my people, and thy G-d my G-d" (Ruth 1:16), and makes the dramatic statement, indicating the degree of her sincerity, that she wishes to join her mother-in-law even in death itself, in Josephus, on the other hand, we are told simply that Ruth could not be persuaded to remain in Moab (*Ant.* 5.322). She makes no declaration of her intention to join her mother-in-law's religion. We are told merely that Naomi "took her with her, to be her partner in all that should befall" (*Ant.* 5.322).

As to the almost total omission of the identification of Ruth as a Moabite, we may note that Josephus, in his summaries of Jewish laws pertaining to marriage (*Ant.* 3.274-75; 4.244-45; *Ap.* 2.199-203),

omits the prohibition of marrying Amorites and Moabites, presumably because he wished to avoid the charge that Jews are illiberal toward other peoples.

According to the biblical version, when Asa was gathering his army, a number of Jews from the kingdom of Israel who happened to be sojourning in the kingdom of Judah deserted to him when they saw that G-d was with him (2 Chron. 15:9). The LXX, in its version of the passage, declares that Asa assembled the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with strangers (προσηλύτους) that dwelt with them (2 Chron. 15:9). The word here translated as “strangers” is “proselytes,” and implies that they were actually converts. Again, Josephus avoids the issue by simply omitting the passage.

The picture of the non-Jewish sailors in the book of Jonah is that of pious men who turn from the worship of their own pagan gods to the worship of the Hebrew G-d (Jonah 1:5). When the lot falls upon Jonah as the guilty one and when he asks to be thrown overboard, the sailors shudder to do so, since they shrink from shedding innocent blood and, indeed, invoke the name of the L-rd twice within a single sentence (Jonah 1:14). In fact, we are told that they feared the L-rd exceedingly and that they offered sacrifices to the L-rd and made vows (Jonah 1:16). One is reminded of the Mishnaic statement of the second-century Rabbi Judah in the name of his older contemporary Abba Gorion of Zadian, that most sailors are saintly (*m. Qid.* 4:14). The picture is very different in Josephus, where there is no indication whether or not the sailors were Jews or that they prayed to their own individual gods; instead, we are told very simply that the sailors began to pray, without being told to whom they were praying (*Ant.* 9.209).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ While it is true that Josephus' sailors regard it as an impious act to cast Jonah into the sea (*Ant.* 9.212), their morality is based not upon the prohibition of shedding innocent blood but rather upon the ancient Greek sanction concerning hospitality for strangers who have entrusted their lives to their hosts, a feature that a reader acquainted with Homer's *Odyssey*, with its emphasis on proper (the Phaeacians') and improper (Polyphemus the Cyclops') hospitality, would have especially appreciated. The rabbinic tradition stresses the non-Jewish origin of the sailors by noting that representatives of the seventy nations of the world were on board the vessel, each with his individual idols, and that they all resolved to entreat their gods for help, with the understanding that the god from whom help would come would be recognized and worshiped as the one true G-d (*Pirke R. El.* 10; *Tan. Vayiqra* 8; *Mid. Jonah* 97). See Ginzberg 1913, 4:247-48. Cf. *Ant.* 1.161, where in Josephus' addition to the biblical text, Abraham shows a similar openmindedness in declaring,

The biblical statement that the sailors feared the L-rd greatly is surely reminiscent of the “G-d-fearers,” well known from the eleven passages in Acts (10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7) referring to φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν (“fearers of G-d”) and σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν (“reverencers of G-d”) and from the passage in Juvenal (14.96-106) referring to one who fears (*metuentem*) the Sabbath and who has a son who eventually becomes a full-fledged Jew. It is true that these terms, in and of themselves, do not necessarily refer to “sympathizers” and may, indeed, designate pious Jews.⁵¹ But the new inscriptions from Aphrodisias make it more likely that these are, indeed, terms referring to “sympathizers,” at least in the third century, the apparent date of the inscriptions.⁵²

By the third century there can be no doubt that there was such a class, as is clear from a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud that quotes Rabbi Eleazar, a third-century Palestinian rabbi, as saying that only the Gentiles who had nothing to do with the Jews during their bitter past will not be permitted to convert to Judaism in the time of the Messiah, whereas those “Heaven-fearers” (יראי שמים) who had shared the tribulations of Israel would be accepted as full proselytes, with the Emperor Antoninus at their head (*y. Meg.* 3.2.74a).⁵³ Finally, Josephus, we may suggest, is careful not to compliment the Ninevites, since they were, geographically at any rate, as we have noted, the ancestors of the Parthians the great national enemy of the Romans.⁵⁴

upon his descent to Egypt, that if he found the doctrines of the Egyptians superior to his own, he would adopt them, but that if his own doctrines appeared superior to theirs he would convert them. In the case of Jonah, when help came from none of the pagan gods, the captain shows his admiration for Judaism by stating that he had heard that the G-d of the Hebrews was most powerful and that if they would cry to him perhaps He would perform miracles. Indeed, Pseudo-Philo (*Homily on Jonah*), on the basis of the biblical statement that Nineveh was saved, conjectures that proselytism had already reached a high point where Jonah delivered his homily.

⁵¹ See Feldman 1950, 200-208.

⁵² See Feldman 1986c, 58-69 and 1989b, 265-305.

⁵³ See Lieberman 1942, 78-80.

⁵⁴ On Josephus' anti-Parthian bias, see Colpe 1974, 97-108. Begg 1995, 18-19, similarly suggests that Josephus' decision to include a summary of Nahum's prophecy concerning Assyria was inspired by his desire to impress his Roman patrons, who would have been pleased that a Jewish prophet had predicted the overthrow of the ancestor of their national rival, Parthia. On the other hand, Jewish readers, equating Assyria with Rome, would have been pleased with a prediction of the overthrow of the Roman Empire.

16. INSISTENCE THAT GENTILES DO NOT HATE JEWS

In his effort to establish better relations between Jews and non-Jews, Josephus emphasizes that Gentile nations are not motivated by hatred of the Jews. Thus, Josephus, in the very proem of his *Antiquities*, pays a tremendous compliment to King Ptolemy Philadelphus for sponsoring the translation known as the LXX (*Ant.* 1.10-12). But it is not only Ptolemy Philadelphus whom he compliments; he goes out of his way to remark that it was fitting for him, like Ptolemy, to assume that "there are still today many lovers of learning like the king." Moreover, Balak and Balaam are motivated not by Jew-hatred but rather by a desire to defeat the Jews militarily (*Ant.* 4.112). In Josephus' view, Balaam's readiness to curse the Israelites is due not to hatred for them but rather to his friendship with Balak (*Ant.* 4.120-21).

Josephus introduces an episode (*Ant.* 2.238-53), completely unparalleled in the Bible, in which the Pharaoh chooses Moses as general to halt an invasion of Egypt by the much-feared Ethiopians. That the Pharaoh should have chosen an Israelite for such a difficult and crucial task is certainly complimentary to the Pharaoh and shows that he is clearly not prejudiced against the Israelites. Moreover, lest the reader think that the Pharaoh is deliberately choosing Moses in order to bring about his death in battle, the Pharaoh, we are told (*Ant.* 2.242), swore to do him no injury and reproached those knavish priests who had urged him to put Moses to death as an enemy.⁵⁵ Josephus is also concerned to attribute hatred of the Jewish people not to whole nations but rather merely to individuals. Thus, whereas in the Bible it is the Amalekites as a nation who beset the Israelites in the desert (Exod. 17:8-16), in Josephus it is the kings of the Amalekites who are blamed for sending messages to the kings of neighboring tribes exhorting them to make war against the Israelites (*Ant.* 3.40).

Again, whereas in the rabbinic tradition (*Tan.* *Buber* 4.134; *Num. Rab.* 20.4; *Sifre Num.* 157; *Sanh.* 105a) the Moabites and Midianites join forces, despite the fact that they are bitter enemies of one another,

⁵⁵ In this reassurance to Moses, Josephus' Pharaoh is to be contrasted with the portrait in Artapanus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.7, who says that the Pharaoh became jealous and sought to kill Moses, finding an opportunity to do so by naming Moses to the extremely dangerous position of commander in the war against the Ethiopians. When the war is over, the Pharaoh welcomes him back in words but plots against him in deed (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.11-13).

because their hatred of the Jews is even greater, Josephus (*Ant.* 4,102) assiduously avoids giving the impression that Gentiles by nature hate Jews and instead depicts the two nations as long-time friends and allies. Their motive in going to war with the Israelites, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 4,103) is thus not hatred; in fact, in an extra-biblical addition, Josephus specifically says that it was not Balak's intention to fight against men fresh with success and who had been found to be only the more emboldened by reverse; rather his aim was to check their aggrandizement. Such a presentation casts the Moabites and the Midianites in a much better light.

Moreover, far from imputing anti-Jewish hatred to Balaam, Josephus (*Ant.* 4,106) presents him as counselling the envoys who had been sent by Balak to renounce the hatred which they bore to the Israelites. By contrast, the rabbinic view (*Tan. Balak* 6; *Tan. Buber* 4.136-37; *Mid. Agg.* on Num. 22:13 [ed. Buber 2.134]) and that of Philo (*Mos.* 1.266) is that Balaam was not at all sincere in his initial refusal to accompany the envoys. In the Bible (Num. 22:13) as well, Balaam does not give advice, as Josephus reports him doing here, on his own but merely reports that it is G-d who has refused to allow him to accompany the envoys.

Moreover, Josephus' favorable picture of Balaam is enhanced by the fact that, unlike the rabbinic tradition, which connects Balaam's desire to gratify the ambassadors with his hatred of the Israelites, Josephus has Balaam explicitly inquire of G-d concerning his intention with regard to the invitation of the envoys. When G-d informs him (Num. 22:12) that he is not to curse the Israelites, in the biblical version (Num. 22:13) Balaam tells the envoy that they must return, inasmuch as G-d refuses to allow him to accompany them. To be sure, in Josephus' version (*Ant.* 4,105) Balaam might seem to be even more anti-Israelite, inasmuch as he makes plain to the envoys his readiness (*προθυμίαν*) and zeal (*σπουδήν*) to comply with their request to curse the Israelites, which, however, G-d has forbidden him to do. From this statement we see, nevertheless, that Balaam's motive is not actually hatred for the Israelites but rather loyalty to his sovereign, Balak. Moreover, in stating that G-d has vetoed the envoys' request, Josephus has him piously add to the biblical narrative a statement of his recognition that the G-d who refused him is the G-d who had brought him to his high renown for the sake of truth and its prediction (*πρόρρησιν*).

Josephus' favorable portrayal of Balaam may also be seen in the

scene (*Ant.* 4.112) in which he is said, in an extra-biblical addition, to have received a magnificent reception from Balak. According to the Bible (Num. 22:37), Balak begins by berating Balaam, asking why he had not come to him hitherto and whether the reason was that Balak was not able to honor him sufficiently. Josephus, on the other hand, is here clearly stressing that the relationship between Balak and Balaam is, in the first instance, one motivated by friendship rather than by their hatred of the Israelites. In contrast, we find the rabbis describing the reception that Balak gave to Balaam as very cheap and poor; and Philo (*Mos.* 1.275), who, to be sure, remarks that the interview began with friendly greetings, proceeds immediately to note that these were followed by Balak's censure of Balaam for his slowness and failure to come more readily.

Again, the meeting is presented by Josephus not as an occasion for the parties to express their hatred for the Israelites but rather for them to plan their military defeat. Thus, it is the Israelites' camp (*στρατόπεδον*, *Ant.* 4.112, clearly a military term) that Balak and Balaam go to inspect, rather than, as the Bible would have it (Num. 22:41), "a portion of the people." Similarly, the mountain to which they, in an extra-biblical addition, go in order to inspect the Israelites' camp is located (*Ant.* 4.112) by reference to its distance from the camp. Moreover, it is implied in the biblical text (Num. 22:41) that it was Balak who took the initiative to escort Balaam, whereas in Josephus it is Balaam who apparently asks to be conducted to one of the mountains in order to inspect the disposition—which would certainly include their fighting capacity—of the Israelites' camp.

Again, Haman's hatred for the Jews is presented not as part of an eternal Jewish-Gentile conflict but rather as a personal grudge, since he is an Amalekite (*Ant.* 11.212).

17. INSISTENCE THAT JEWS ARE NOT BUSYBODIES

One of the charges that Josephus seeks to defuse in the *Antiquities*, presumably growing out of their tremendous increase in numbers and in influence, especially in the Ptolemaic and Roman Empires, is that the Jews seek to dominate the entire world. Thus, Josephus goes out of his way to state most emphatically that Balak, in his concern that the Israelites were growing so great, had not learned that they were actually content merely with the conquest of Canaan and that

G-d Himself had forbidden them to interfere in the affairs of other countries (*Ant.* 4.102).

We can see another of the charges against the Jews reflected, for example, in the order given by Marsus, the governor of Syria, to Agrippa I, to break up the conference of various kings that the latter had convened at Tiberias, on the suspicion that Agrippa was trying to foment a conspiracy against the Romans (*Ant.* 19.340-42). Hence, in an extra-biblical detail, Josephus, in introducing the narrative of Balaam, remarks that Balak, the king of the Moabites, had formed an alliance with the Midianites when he saw the Israelites growing so great and became concerned that they would seek to expand at his expense (*Ant.* 4.102). In so doing, he had not learned, says Josephus, that the Hebrews were not for interfering with other countries, G-d having forbidden them to do so. The verb that is here used for “interfering,” πολυπραγμανεῖν, implies being meddlesome, being an inquisitive busybody, and is almost always employed in a pejorative sense.⁵⁶

Moreover, it is significant that whereas in the biblical statement G-d forbids the Israelites to attack the Moabites, inasmuch as He had not given the Moabites’ land to them, but rather to the Moabites themselves as the descendants of Lot (Deut. 2:9). Josephus broadens the statement into a sweeping general principle, namely that the Israelites do not interfere in the affairs of any other country (*Ant.* 4.102).

18. JEWS ARE NOT ECONOMICALLY OPPRESSIVE

Not only in the treatise *Against Apion* but also in his *Antiquities*, Josephus constantly seeks to answer anti-Jewish canards. This was particularly necessary in connection with Joseph, inasmuch as the scene of Joseph’s activities was Egypt, which had once been overrun by the Hyksos and which was the hotbed of attacks on the Jews on the part of intellectuals such as Manetho, Chaeremon, Lysimachus, and Apion. Thus, in the Bible (Gen. 46:33-34) Joseph instructs his brothers that when asked by the Pharaoh about their occupation, they should reply not that they are shepherds (as indeed they were)—since shepherds were

⁵⁶ Cf., e.g., Herodotus 3.15; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 5.1.15; Aristophanes, *Plutus* 913; Plato, *Rep.* 4.433A.

an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. 46:34)—but rather that they are owners of cattle. Josephus (*Ant.* 2.185-86), on the other hand, has Joseph himself tell the Pharaoh directly and apologetically that his brothers are *good* shepherds and that they follow this calling so that they may not be separated from each other and may look after their father. His Joseph likewise presents the novel economic factor that they engage in this occupation in order to ingratiate themselves to the Egyptians by not competing with them, since Egyptians are forbidden to occupy themselves with the pasture of livestock. He thus answers the charge of those opponents of the Jews who apparently claimed that Jews constituted an economic threat to the Egyptians' livelihood.⁵⁷ He also here offers a defense of the "cliquishness" of the Hebrews in living together, apart from other peoples, namely that they wished to look after their aged father.

19. CONCLUSION

We may conclude by remarking that Josephus not only, like his much admired model Thucydides, looked upon history as a handbook for statesmen but also viewed it, as had the prophets in the Bible, as a guide to the future. And to a considerable degree, he viewed the Bible through the lens of the present, and, in particular, the disastrous war that the Jews had fought against the Romans and in which he himself was directly, and many would say ignominiously, involved.

⁵⁷ I have argued that economics was a major factor in the hatred exhibited by non-Jews toward Jews in Alexandria in the popular attack on the Jews in 38 C.E. See Feldman 1986 23.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

PARALLEL LIVES OF TWO LAWGIVERS: JOSEPHUS' MOSES AND PLUTARCH'S *LYCURGUS*

1. INTRODUCTION

Lawgivers play a crucial role in the revolutionary development of a new society not only with the laws that they promulgate but also by the personal example through which they set the moral tone for their own and for future generations.

In the fourth century the Emperor Julian (*Gal.* 168B, 184B-C), who is generally sympathetic with Judaism, suggests, focusing upon three lawgivers, that it is worthwhile to compare the anger of Moses and of Moses' G-d with the mildness (πραότης) of Lycurgus and the forbearance (ἀνεξικακία) of Solon, though, to be sure, he does not indicate that such a comparison had previously been made. Moreover, though a few modern scholars¹ have studied Plutarch's references to the Jews, no one has hitherto analyzed the parallels between his *Lives* and the extended biographical portraits from the Bible in Josephus' *Antiquities*. It is here proposed to make such a comparison between Josephus' account of Moses in his *Antiquities*, completed in 93/94, and Plutarch's life of *Lycurgus*, written perhaps a mere few years or perhaps a decade or two later (to judge from C. P. Jones' studies in the chronology of Plutarch's works).² Indeed, we would expect to see parallels between Plutarch and Josephus in their methods and goals, since, on the one hand, as Wardman³ notes, some of the heroes of Plutarch's *Lives* were known to Josephus through the writings of Greek and Roman historians and since the *Lives* are, in fact, an offshoot of

¹ See, in particular, Büchler 1898, 181-202; and Feldman 1996, 529-52.

² Jones 1966, 69, dates the lives of Lycurgus and Numa after 96, noting that *Numa* 19.7 refers to Domitian's death in 96. Jones, 70, plausibly suggests that Sosius' consulate in 99 furnished the occasion to dedicate the new undertaking of the *Lives* to him. Flacelière 1969, 486, places little confidence in the chronology proposed by Jones. For a general survey of the range of approaches to the difficult question of the dating of Plutarch's *Lives* see Ziegler 1951, 899-903.

³ Wardman 1974.

ancient historiography, and since, on the other hand, Josephus, in his rewriting of the Bible, following in the Hellenistic traditions that appear to go back to the historiographical schools of historiography of the fourth-century B.C.E. Isocrates and Aristotle,⁴ focuses on history as biography. Yet, even in the fifth century B.C.E., as Westlake⁵ has argued, Thucydides had become more interested in the character of his personalities as his work progressed. Indeed, as Momigliano has stressed,⁶ the distinction during the Hellenistic period between history and biography has been less than generally accepted, and that instead biography came to be recognized as a type of history.

Isocrates, it will be recalled, had pioneered in the writing of eulogistic biography in his *Evagoras*, the purpose of which was to show that Evagoras, king of Salamis in Cyprus, surpassed even the legendary princes of ancient times in valor, piety, and justice, three key qualities that Josephus singles out for praise in his biblical heroes. That Plutarch knew the works of Isocrates and was influenced by them, particularly his views on education and political philosophy, seems most likely in view of the fact that he cites him thirty-five times.⁷ But the dividing line between the Isocrateans and the Peripatetics was not so clear-cut; and we hear that one of Isocrates' successors, Theodectes, followed his father from the Isocratean to the Aristotelian school. Another of the pupils of Isocrates, Ephorus, was noted for the incorporation of sweeping panegyrics, precisely what we find at times in Josephus' portraits of his major biblical figures. It is precisely the tendency to abandon the time-honored distinction between history and biography and to convert history into biography—one is almost tempted to say psycho-history—that we see in the very title, *Philippica*, of the work of another of Isocrates' disciples, Theopompus, which indicates that he had departed from the interest in traditional history and had turned to biography and psychology. Indeed, Theopompus is criticized by Polybius (2.8.10) for building

⁴ See Feldman 1998, 4.

⁵ Westlake 1968. Cf. Wardman 1974, 5-6.

⁶ Momigliano 1971, 1-7.

⁷ See Helmbold and O'Neil 1959, 49. Moreover, there are three specific instances, as noted here by Helmbold and O'Neil, where Plutarch's *Lycurgus* seems to have drawn upon Isocrates: 4.5, on Lycurgus' visit to the Egyptians, from whom he derived the separation of the military from the other classes of society; 16.6: on Lycurgus' decision that boys should learn only enough of reading and writing to serve their turn; and 17.3: on the practice of having boys steal whatever food they can.

his history around a man, Philip II, rather than around Greece. In fact, with Theopompus the goal of history was no longer restricted to the narration and explanation of great events but also included and even emphasized the evaluation of the feelings and motives of major characters in history.⁸ Indeed, this school frequently sought to reveal the conscious, rational motives behind men's actions. In particular, Theopompus is fond of comparing the reaction of two historical figures to similar circumstances. It was this comparative approach that Plutarch made famous and that we also see, for example, in Josephus' comparison of Agrippa I and Herod (*Ant.* 19.328-31). In fact, Theopompus is important for introducing a personal, almost a biographical, history; and this approach had a profound, though perhaps indirect, influence upon historians such as Josephus, as well as later biographers such as Plutarch.

Aristotle's followers, the Peripatetics, starting with his successor Theophrastus, tried to classify types of lives, just as they did types of animals and plants; and they thus proceeded to write biographies illustrating these various types of life. To this end, as we see in both Plutarch and Josephus, they used anecdotes and historical incidents. In fact, in research into the history of philosophy, the Peripatetics used biographical details as offensive and defensive weapons.⁹ Indeed, Dihle¹⁰ has suggested that Aristotle's *Ethics* was the main influence on later biography. There is surely significance in the fact that Nicolaus of Damascus, who was Josephus' main source not only for the large part of the *Antiquities* pertaining to Herod but also for much else, was a Peripatetic philosopher who wrote a biography, now lost, of the Emperor Augustus, though Momigliano¹¹ concludes that Aristotelianism alone was neither a necessary nor a sufficient presupposition of Hellenistic biography.¹²

During the Hellenistic period the gap between historical encomium, biography, and history had narrowed, so that, in effect, it became impossible to separate them.¹³ Hence, despite Cicero's attempt to

⁸ See Connor 1967, 133-54.

⁹ Momigliano 1971a, 14.

¹⁰ Dihle 1956.

¹¹ Momigliano 1971, 120.

¹² Momigliano 1971, 106, is, however, reluctant to see a direct influence of Aristotelian philosophy on the growth of Greek biography in the Hellenistic period.

¹³ Momigliano 1971, 83.

justify stretching the truth in a proposed monograph about his consulship (*Fam.* 5.12), for practical purposes the difference had diminished. Even Polybius himself, who is so critical of the Isocratean school, wrote an encomium of Philopoemen, which has an emotional and tragic component. Presumably, he felt that his encomium was justified so long as the panegyric was not included in his history. Josephus, like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, seems to have fused panegyric and history.

To be sure, Plutarch himself (*Alexander* 1.2) seems to make a sharp distinction between history, with its emphasis on events, and biography, with its emphasis on character, as revealed even by minor events, sayings, and jests. As Momigliano remarks,¹⁴ the principal form of biography was the encomium,¹⁵ not a form of which Thucydides would, in general, have approved; and yet it is precisely this form that we find over and over again in Josephus' *Antiquities*,¹⁶ as we do, of course, find in Plutarch's lives. However, Josephus himself, in his account of the war of the Jews against the Romans (*War* 1.1-2), follows the model of Thucydides in its interest in contemporary events and in its critical, scientific approach to the writing of history, and sharply criticizes the inclusion in history of invectives or encomia. Similarly, Lucian (*Quomodo* 7) emphatically asserts that history and encomium are separated by a high wall. But his very emphasis would seem to indicate that the distinction had broken down.

2. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SPARTA AND THE JEWS

Plutarch's interest in Sparta, its alleged lawgiver, and its unique practices is well known. Less well known is the tradition linking Sparta and the Jews. According to Tyrtaeus (8.1), Sparta was founded by Heracles. Plutarch (*Lyc.* 1.3)¹⁷ quotes Xenophon (*Res. Lac.* 10.8) as remarking that Lycurgus is said to have lived in the times of the Heracleidae and, indeed, makes him the eleventh generation from

¹⁴ Momigliano 1971, 110.

¹⁵ On the distinction among history, biography, and encomium, see Wardman 1974, 10-18.

¹⁶ See Feldman 1998, 80, 82.

¹⁷ All references to Plutarch in this essay are to his biography of Lycurgus unless otherwise noted.

Heracles (1.4). Plutarch apparently disagrees with Xenophon in using the name Heracleidae of the first and more immediate descendants of Heracles; but, in any case, as Plutarch also remarks, the latest of the Spartan kings were descendants of Heracles; and according to him (1.4) the Spartan kings (Hdt. 9.33; Plut., *Lyc.* 1.3) were said to be descended from Heracles. Indeed, the famous Leonidas, of Thermopylae fame, is identified by Herodotus (7.208) as a descendant of Heracles.

According to the otherwise unknown Cleodemus the prophet, also called Malchus, whether Jewish¹⁸ or Samaritan¹⁹ or pagan,²⁰ who lived perhaps in the second century B.C.E.,²¹ as quoted by the first century B.C.E. Alexander Polyhistor, who, in turn, is quoted by Josephus (*Ant.* 1.240-41), two of the sons of Abraham by Keturah accompanied Heracles in his expedition against Libya and Antaeus.²² Heracles married the daughter of one of them, and she bore him a son, Didoros, from whom, in turn, a son named Sophon, called Sophakes by the "barbarians," was born. Plutarch (*Sert.* 9.8-10) speaks of Heracles' son (grandson, according to Cleodemus) Sophax (presumably the same as Sophakes), from whom was born Diodoros (presumably not the same as Didoros), who conquered several nations of Africa and was an ancestor of the first century B.C.E. King Juba of Numidia.²³

Perhaps there is some connection between this and the statement in 2 Macc. 5:9 that in 168 B.C.E. the high priest Jason, when he did not find refuge in Egypt, fled to Sparta in the hope of obtaining shelter there by reason of their common origin. There is likewise perhaps some connection with the statement in 1 Macc. 12:1-23 and *Ant.* 12.225-27. There we find the letter of Areios, the third-century

¹⁸ So Hengel 1974, 1:74 and 2:51 n. 135; and Holladay 1983, 1:246; Stern 1984, 3:18.

¹⁹ Freudenthal 1875, 131-36.

²⁰ Wacholder 1974, 7, 44, 46, 53-55, 95.

²¹ So Schürer 1909, vol. 3, 4th ed., 481; Charlesworth 1981, 93.

²² The legend about Heracles' expedition in Africa is mentioned by King Juba in his Libyan history (*ap.* Plut., *Sert.* 9.8-10), as well as by Pliny (*H.N.* 5.1), Strabo (*Geog.* 17.3.2), and Pomponius Mela (3.106).

²³ Denis 1970, 176, suggests that Cleodemus' source is Glaphyra, who was the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, and who was the wife of Alexander the son of Herod and who was the second wife of Juba. This Glaphyra claimed to be descended on her father's side from Temenus, one of the descendants of Heracles (Jos., *War* 1.476).

B.C.E. Spartan king, to the high priest Onias referring to a document stating that the Spartans and the Jews are related and that they are of the family of Abraham, and a letter in reply sent by Jonathan the Hasmonean confirming this and seeking to renew the pact of friendship. Jonathan asserts (1 Macc. 12:11) that the Jews remember the Spartans “at every opportunity, incessantly on the festivals and at other appropriate days, in the sacrifices which we offer and in our prayers, as it is right and fitting to recall our kinsmen.” After the death of Jonathan the Spartans (1 Macc. 14:20-23) wrote to his successor, Simon, to renew their pact of friendship with the Jews. This connection between Spartans and Jews may have arisen from the tradition, cited by the first-century historian Claudius Iolaus, that one of the “Sown-men” (Spartoi) at Thebes was Udaeus, whence the name Judaea.²⁴

Katzoff²⁵ notes that those scholars who have doubted or denied the authenticity of Jonathan’s letter cite, as reason for their doubts, the lack of any apparent motive for Jonathan’s raising the matter of common ancestry a century or more after Arcios’ letter; but he suggests that a motive may lie in the parallel events in Spartan and Judaeon history of a few decades earlier. He cites the fact that in 189/8 B.C.E. the Achaeans, led by Philopoemen, had forced the Spartans to annul the laws and customs associated with Lycurgus, notably those associated with the training of the youth (ἀγωγή) and to replace them with those of the Achaeans (Livy 38.34.3), only to be restored not long afterwards, perhaps in 178 B.C.E. Similarly, not long afterwards, in Jerusalem the traditional Torah education had been replaced by the Hellenists by the pagan Greek ἐφηβεία in 174/5 B.C.E., only to be restored a few years later (165 B.C.E.) by the Maccabees. By reminding Hellenized Jews of the long alleged association of Jews and Spartans Jonathan was perhaps aiming to influence them to accept the changes instituted by the Hasmonean regime, since the struggle against the Hellenizers was far from over.

Moreover, Aristotle (*Pol.* 2.10.1271B20-24) states that the Spartan constitution is said to be a copy of the Cretan. Furthermore, he notes the tradition that when Lycurgus went abroad he spent most of his time in Crete. So also Plutarch (4.1) cites the tradition that

²⁴ See Stern 1974, 1:535.

²⁵ Cf. Katzoff 1985, 485-89.

Lycurgus, after he had enabled his nephew to become king, set sail to Crete, where he studied the various forms of their government, made the acquaintance of their most distinguished men, and adopted some but disapproved of others of their laws. Polybius (6.45.1-47) indicates that such learned and generally reliable writers as Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Ephorus, and Callisthenes agree in praising Crete for its constitution, which was so similar to that of Sparta. In this connection, we may note that one of the theories of the Jews' origin according to Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.2.1) is that they were exiles from Crete.

3. LAWGIVERS AND THEIR VIRTUES

Already at the very beginning of his *Antiquities* (1.6) Josephus declares that even while he was writing his account of the war of the Jews against the Romans he had thought of writing a work that would encompass the entire history of the Jews so that readers might see under what sort of lawgiver (ὅφ' οἷον...νομοθέτη) the Jews were trained as to piety and the exercise of the other virtues.

So also Plutarch (*Per.* 1-2) declares that the aim of his *Lives* is to set forth the virtues of these personalities so that they may serve as a guide for his readers. As Russell²⁶ remarks, for Plutarch "to write a life" (βίον γράφειν) is to describe the way of life of an individual, that is, to describe "what sort of man he was" (ποιός τις ἦν), precisely the aim also of Josephus, as we have noted. Normally, Plutarch is concerned with the influence of his heroes; but when he describes lawgivers, namely Lycurgus, Solon, Numa Pompilius, and Publicola, he is also concerned with the question of how their legal codes affected their respective nations.

Significantly, Josephus, in his first reference to Moses in the *Antiquities* (1.6), without even mentioning him by name, refers to him as a lawgiver (νομοθέτης). As Meeks²⁷ remarks, the rabbis would not call Moses "the lawgiver," since only G-d gave the Torah, whereas it came "by Moses' hand." Indeed, for Josephus Moses is modeled, in Platonic fashion, after the founder of a Greek πόλις whose laws

²⁶ Russell 1972, 101-2.

²⁷ Meeks 1967, 132. So also Bloch 1955, 139-40.

form the πολιτεία of the state. So also Josephus is impressed with the effect, even in his own day, of Moses' legal code, as he shows with his introduction of the anecdote (*Ant.* 3.317-18), quite irrelevant in its context, certainly chronologically, that some people from beyond the Euphrates had not been permitted to partake of sacrifices because Moses' code forbade it.

4. PARALLELS BETWEEN THE LIVES OF MOSES AND LYCURGUS

We may here note a number of similar themes in Plutarch's biography of Lycurgus and Josephus' biography, in effect, of Moses: genealogy; upbringing, virtues of wisdom, courage, justice, and especially moderation and piety; relation to the divine; rejection of kingship; setting up a council of elders; military leadership; educational systems for youths; dealings with the masses and with opponents; suppression of rebellions; attitude toward aliens; opposition to putting laws into writing; attitude toward wealth and poverty; setting up a tribal and sub-tribal system; allotment of lands; laws pertaining to first-fruits; laws and practices pertaining to marriage and parentage; laws pertaining to the modesty of women; the status of women, priests, and slaves; the training of soldiers; diet; burial; laws against sorcery; the manner of the lawgiver's death; laws forbidding modification of the laws. In particular, both felt strongly that the introduction of alien principles and institutions would destroy the internal harmony of the state.

Plutarch begins his biography of Lycurgus (1.1-2.3) with a discussion of his date and genealogy. Josephus (*Ant.* 2.210) likewise begins his discussion of Moses with his description of Amram, Moses' father, as one of those well-born among the Hebrews. He presents the extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 2.229) that Moses was the seventh (actually sixth) generation after Abraham and then proceeds to name these ancestors, just as Plutarch (1.4) asserts that Lycurgus was the eleventh generation after Heracles and then proceeds to name these ancestors.²⁸

²⁸ Talbert 1980, 135, notes that an illustrious genealogy at the beginning of a biography is a standard formula during this period, as seen in Plutarch's lives of not only *Lyc.* 1.4, but also *Theseus* 3, *Fabius Maximus* 1, *Brutus* 1-2, and *Pyrrhus* 1, as well as in Josephus' *Life* 1, Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 1.4, and *Scrip. Hist. Aug.*, *Hadrian* 1.1-2 and *Antoninus Pius* 1.1-7.

If we compare Moses and Lycurgus, we find that at the very beginning both were reluctant to obtain their position of power. In the case of Lycurgus, the previous king, Polydectes (3.1), died without leaving a son to succeed him, and consequently the kingdom devolved upon Lycurgus, Polydectes' brother. However, it later became known that Polydectes' wife was pregnant, whereupon Lycurgus declared that the kingdom belonged to her offspring if it should be male, and himself administered the government only as guardian. Polydectes' wife then made secret overtures to Lycurgus, proposing to destroy her unborn child on condition that he would marry her. Lycurgus pretended to accept the proposal but told her not to endanger her life, since he would see to it that the child, when born, should be disposed of. Lycurgus actually did save the child, but, as it turned out, the child was king for only eight months.

Similarly, there is reason to think that Moses attempted to pass off the role of leader to the person who, he thought, was more fitting for the honor, namely his older brother, Aaron. In the incident of the burning bush (Ex. 3:11) Moses, told by G-d to go to Pharaoh and to take the Israelites out of Egypt, shrinks from his commission: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" He realizes his handicap in speaking (Ex. 4:10): "Oh, my L-rd, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since Thou has spoken to Thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of tongue." In Josephus' version (*Ant.* 2.271) Moses adds: "I am at a loss, how I, an ordinary person, possessing in abundance no strength, shall either persuade with words my own kinsmen to give up the land that they just now inhabit and to follow me to that to which I myself lead them, or, even if they are persuaded, shall force the Pharaoh to allow the departure of those by whose toils and deeds they increase their own prosperity." Indeed, there is a Midrashic tradition that Moses was worried that Aaron, who, after all, was older than he, would be jealous that he had gained such power, inasmuch as Aaron had been a prophet and leader among the Israelites for many years in Egypt. In fact, he apparently considered Aaron better suited for the position of leadership by virtue of his experience and by virtue of the fact that he was older than Moses (*Mid. Tan. Exod.* 26-27). Moses finally acquiesced when G-d assured him that Aaron was not jealous (Ex. 4:14): "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well; and behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart." Indeed, as

we see in the Korah episode (Num. 16:11), Moses never begrudged Aaron his position as high priest and, according to the midrashic tradition, both of them held in their hearts nothing but happiness for the other's good fortune (*Mid. Tan. Exod.* 27).

Both Josephus and Plutarch develop the theme of envy to which their respective heroes were subjected.²⁹ In Josephus (*Ant.* 2.254-55) after Moses defeats the Ethiopians, his rivals at the court of the Pharaoh conceived a hatred for him, suspecting that he would start a revolution in Egypt because of his success, whereupon they instructed the Pharaoh about their intention to kill him. The Pharaoh, on his part, we are told (*Ant.* 2.255), owing to his envy of Moses and his fear of humiliation, was actually ready to undertake the murder of Moses when Moses escaped. In the case of Lycurgus, according to Plutarch (3.5), during the period that he was guardian of the young king, his nephew, there was a party, including the brother of the queen-mother, that envied him. Just as Moses escaped to Midian, Lycurgus travelled abroad to Crete (4.1), determined to continue his wanderings until his nephew should come of age and beget a son who would succeed him on the throne. As to the connection with Crete, according to the Bible, Moses was born in Egypt (Exod. 2:2); but whereas according to one of the theories of Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.2.2), when the Jews constituted the superfluous population of Egypt they discharged themselves on the neighboring lands, according to another theory (*Hist.* 5.2.1) the Jews originated from Crete; and when they left Crete they settled in the farthest parts of Libya.

In Lycurgus' travel to Crete we have the theme of the wise man who seeks the wisdom of other nations. One is reminded of Abraham's travels to Egypt, as told by Josephus (*Ant.* 1.161) to become the disciple of the Egyptian wise men if he found them to be better or to convert them if he found that his own thoughts were superior; we similarly think of Moses' acceptance of advice from his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, with regard to the administration of justice (*Ant.* 3.66-72). Josephus (*Ant.* 3.73-74) is not afraid to have Moses acknowledge the help that he had received from Jethro when he might have claimed as his own the advice given him. Similarly,

²⁹ Josephus, however, omits the episode (Exod. 2:11-15) in which Moses secretly killed an Egyptian overseer who was striking an Israelite, presumably because, in an apologetic work such as the *Antiquities* is, this would not cast credit upon Moses.

Plutarch (4.1-2) is not afraid to acknowledge Lycurgus' debt to a Cretan lawgiver named Thales, who was able through his odes to exhort people to obedience and harmony and to renounce their mutual hatred and whom Lycurgus, drawing upon his friendship, persuaded to go on a mission to Sparta and who, he says, in some measure was a forerunner of Lycurgus and his discipline.

From Crete Lycurgus sailed to Asia Minor with the aim of comparing the Cretan civilization, which was simple and severe, with that of Asia Minor, which was extravagant and luxurious (4.3). Here he made his first acquaintance with the poems of Homer and, indeed, is said to have been the very first who made them well known. In this connection, we may note that Josephus (*Ant.* 2.346) has Moses, after the miraculous crossing of the Sea of Reeds, compose a poem in the rhythm of Homeric hexameters. Similarly, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.303) states that just before he died Moses recited a poem in hexameter verse that he bequeathed in a book preserved in the Temple.

Plutarch (4.5) also mentions a tradition that Lycurgus visited the Egyptians and so ardently admired their separation of the military from the other classes of society that he transferred it to Sparta, as well as another tradition that he visited Libya and that he had conferences with the renowned Gymnosophists (4.6). Just as Lycurgus was thus indebted to others for his ideas with regard to military organization, so also Moses, as we have noted, was indebted to others, namely his father-in-law Jethro, for his ideas with regard to the reorganization of the army (*Ant.* 3.70-71). Like Moses it was only reluctantly that Lycurgus assumed the leadership of his nation; indeed, it was only after the Spartans had sent for him many times and Sparta was in danger of falling into anarchy that he returned (5.1).

Both Josephus' Moses and Lycurgus are depicted as generals. Josephus (*Ant.* 2.238-53) introduces a whole extra-biblical episode in which Moses leads a successful military campaign against Ethiopia. Indeed, in his final encomium of Moses (*Ant.* 4.329) Josephus asserts that Moses was in élite company as a general, and in his summary of the sojourn in the wilderness he refers to Moses as the best of generals (*Ap.* 2.158). As to Lycurgus, Plutarch (23.1) quotes Hippias the Sophist as saying that Lycurgus was very well versed in war and took part in many campaigns. He also cites Philostephanus as attributing to Lycurgus the arrangement of the Spartan cavalry by troops of fifty horsemen in a square formation.

Moreover, both Moses and Lycurgus survived rebellions. In the

case of Moses, the chief rebellion was that of Korah (Num. 16:1-17:28) (*Ant.* 4.12-58), his cousin, the magnitude of which Josephus indicates with his statement (*Ant.* 4.12) that it was a sedition unparalleled among Greeks or barbarians (*Ant.* 4.12). Korah (Num. 16:3) accuses Moses of being anti-democratic in raising himself above the multitude; and, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 4.15), he charged Moses with seeking to obtain glory for himself while pretending to do so in the name of G-d. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.14), in turn, asserts that the basis of Korah's hostility was envy.

Josephus (*Ant.* 4.14), moreover, in an extra-biblical addition, calls attention to Korah's wealth; and, according to Plutarch (11.1), it is the wealthy citizens who were particularly incensed against Lycurgus because of his removal of the concentration of wealth that had been in the hands of the few. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 4.22), in another addition to the Bible, the masses were bent on stoning Moses; and they assembled in disorderly fashion with clamor and uproar. So also the wealthy citizens of Sparta denounced Lycurgus publicly with angry shouts and cries, and finally many pelted him with stones, so that he was forced to run from the marketplace. Indeed, we are told (11.1), one passionate young man, a certain Alcander, actually attacked Lycurgus with his staff and put out one of his eyes. Lycurgus (11.2), however, like Moses (*Ant.* 4.24), far from yielding, confronted his countrymen and bravely showed them his face besmeared with blood and his eye destroyed. And just as Moses (Num. 16:12) showed his extraordinary patience with the rebels Dathan and Abiram in bidding them to come to an assembly, so Lycurgus (11.2) took the man, Alcander, who had put out his eye, into his house and shared his life with him.

In summing up the character and achievements of Lycurgus and comparing them with those of Numa, the lawgiver who was the second king of Rome, Plutarch (*Lyc. and Numa* 1.1) emphasizes his wise moderation (σωφροσύνη), piety (εὐσέβεια), his talent for governing (πολιτικόν) and educating (παιδευτικόν). In this respect Plutarch's Lycurgus is following in the steps of Isocrates' *Panathenaicus* (30-32, 198), which declares that the best citizens are those who are really educated (πεπαιδευμένοι).³⁰ In particular, Plutarch calls attention to the wisdom (σοφία) and foresight (πρόνοια) of Lycurgus in knowing

³⁰ See de Blois and Bons 1995, 106.

when to yield to the people and in avoiding factionalism. Moreover, according to Plutarch (11.4), Lycurgus showed his devotion to the virtue of moderation in the gentle way that he treated the very man, Alcander, who had put out his eye, taking him into his own home so that he became not a wild and impetuous youth but a most decorous (ἐμμελέστατος) and moderate (σωφρονικώτατος) man. Likewise, in the educational system established by Lycurgus (12.4), boys used to come to the public mess as if they were attending schools of sobriety (σωφοσύνη). Significantly, it is Josephus' editorial comment (*Ant.* 4.49; cf. *Num.* 16:30) that the chief lesson to be learned from Korah's challenge to Moses' authority is the necessity of moderation (σωφοσύνη). Furthermore, though clearly upset by Zimri's brazen action in marrying a foreign wife, Moses, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 4.150), refuses to provoke him further. Moses also (*Ant.* 4.262) shows the importance of moderation in that, in an extra-biblical addition, the goal of the treatment of the rebellious son is that he should return to more moderate (σωφρονέστερον) ways. Furthermore, in his farewell address to the Israelites (*Ant.* 4.184), he commits them, as he puts it, to the moderation (σωφοσύνη) of the laws and the orderliness of the constitution. Similarly, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.328-29), in his final eulogy for Moses, describes him as having found favor in every way, but chiefly through the moderation that he showed in his command of his passions (τῶν παθῶν ἀντοκράτωρ). Again, in connection with the incident when the Israelite men consorted with the Midianite women, he remarks that it was not reasonable, after the Israelites' sobriety (σωφρονήσαντας) in the desert, for them to relapse into drunken riot in their present prosperity (*Ant.* 4.144). Indeed, in his farewell address to the Israelites before his death, Moses affirms that the purpose of the laws that he has conveyed to his people is to teach them moderation (σωφοσύνη, *Ant.* 4.184).

Moreover, when Moses (*Ant.* 3.311) told the Israelites that they had been condemned to forty years of wandering in the wilderness and when the people were consequently plunged in grief, he showed his leadership in calming them and bringing them back to a gentler (ἡμερότερον) mood (*Ant.* 3.316).³¹ Similarly, in characterizing Lycurgus (11.3), Plutarch relates that Alcander, the man who in a rage

³¹ Josephus is probably thinking of his own ability to pacify angry crowds, despite his isolation. Cf., e.g., *Life* 100, 141-42, 146-48, 388.

had put out Lycurgus' eye only to be taken into Lycurgus' home and to be shown his gentleness, used to tell his intimate friends that Lycurgus was not harsh and self-willed, as he had supposed, but the mildest (ἥμερος) and gentlest (πρᾶος) of them all.

As for piety, in his very first mention of "the great lawgiver," Josephus states that it was in piety (εὐσέβεια) and in the exercise of the other virtues (the implication being that, in the scales of value, piety balances all the other virtues combined) that the Israelites were trained under him (*Ant.* 1.6). At the very outset of his work, Josephus entreats his readers to fix their thoughts on G-d and to test whether Moses was what we might term an orthodox theologian who had a worthy conception of His nature, who assigned to Him such actions as befitted His power, and who kept his language free of the unseemly mythology found among other lawgivers, even though in dealing with events of so long ago, he would have had ample license to invent fictions (*Ant.* 1.15). The crucial importance of piety is further seen in Josephus' remark that once Moses had won their obedience to the dictates of piety (εὐσέβεια), he had no further difficulty in persuading the Israelites of all the rest (*Ant.* 1.21).

Josephus stresses Moses' importance as a leader, especially since the race of mankind (*Ant.* 3.23) is by nature morose (δυσάρεστον) and censorious (φιλαίτιον). He stresses the importance of Moses' leadership by noting that the Israelites had endured hardships in Egypt for four hundred years, and there was a contest on between the Egyptians, striving to kill off the Israelites with drudgery, and the Israelites, ever eager to show themselves superior to their tasks (*Ant.* 2.204). Similarly, we hear that during Lycurgus' self-imposed absence from Sparta, the Spartans felt that their kings were such in name only and that in all else they were no better than their subjects, while in Lycurgus they saw one who was by nature fitted to lead and who had the power to make men follow him (5.1). Even the Spartan kings realized that Lycurgus had such qualities of leadership and was so highly respected that they were not opposed to having him return, since they had reason to hope that in his presence the masses would treat them with less insolence.

Moses showed his ability in governing the Israelites, despite their constant complaints; and, in his final encomium, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.328) notes that he spoke and dealt with the masses, pleasing them both in other respects and as master of his emotions. Similarly, Lycurgus,

through his revolutionary innovations, was able to avoid the extremes of tyranny and democracy (5.6-7).

5. CLAIMS OF A DIVINE ORIGIN FOR LEGAL CODES

Already in the first century B.C.E., Diodorus (1.94.1-2), in enumerating a catalogue of outstanding lawgivers who alleged a divine origin for their laws, mentions Mneves, Minos, Lycurgus, Zathraustes, Zalmoxis, and, last of all, Moses, who is said to have referred his laws to the god who is invoked as Iao. He clearly implies that the laws were actually Moses' own. He then remarks about all of these lawgivers that they did what they did "either because they believed that a conception that would help humanity was marvellous and wholly divine, or because they held that the common crowd would be more likely to obey the laws if their gaze was directed toward the majesty and power of those to whom their laws were ascribed."

Diodorus' contemporary, Strabo (16.2.38-39), similarly states that it is impossible for the masses to live in harmony with one another unless they have a system of law; and he remarks that the ancients, at least, held that if they believed the laws were of divine origin they regarded them in greater honor and veneration. He then gives a catalogue of lawgivers and prophets who promulgated legal codes. Minos, he says, every ninth year would go up to the cave of Zeus and receive decrees from him and carry them to the people. Lycurgus, his zealous admirer (ζηλωτής), did likewise, oftentimes going abroad to inquire of the Pythian priestess at Delphi as to what ordinances it was proper for him to institute among the Spartans. Strabo himself, in a note of skepticism, then remarks that whatever truth there may be in these reports, in point of fact they were believed and sanctioned among men; and consequently prophets also, who acted similarly in promulgating laws as from the gods, not only when they were alive but also when they were dead, were held in so much honor that they were deemed worthy to be kings. Among these prophets he names such illustrious figures as Teiresias, Amphiaras, Trophonius, Orpheus, Musaeus, Zalmoxis, Decaeneus, Achaecarus, the Indian Gymnosophists, the Persian Magi, the Assyrian Chaldaeans, the Tyrrhenian nativity-casters, and finally Moses. It is significant that just before giving this catalogue Strabo had discussed at some length (16.2.35-36) the unique view of an imageless G-d promulgated by

Moses, whom he praises as one who “enjoyed fair repute among these people, and organized no ordinary kind of government, since the people all around, one and all, came over to him, because of his dealings with them and of the prospects he held out to them.” He then contrasts Moses (16.2.37) with his successors, who, at first, were truly pious but later were succeeded by superstitious and tyrannical people. Again, after the catalogue of the lawgivers, which closes with Moses, he contrasts Moses with the Hasmonean tyrants who were ruling Judaea in his own day. The fact that the catalogue of the lawgivers is sandwiched between the references to Moses would appear to indicate that Moses is the climax of that catalogue.

Like Diodorus and Strabo, the first-century anti-Jewish Apion mentions the tradition that Moses claimed that his legal system was of divine origin. He states (*ap. Jos.*, *Ap.* 2.25) that Moses ascended Mount Sinai and remained there concealed for forty days, after which he gave the Jews laws, but that he pretended that he had received them from G-d. Likewise Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.4.1) clearly implies that the legislation introduced by Moses was of his own doing, since he supplies a motive for Moses’ promulgation of new religious practices quite opposed to those of all other peoples, namely to establish his influence over the Israelites for all time.

Of course, it was only after communing with G-d that Moses returned with (*Ant.* 3.75-99) the Ten Commandments and the rest of the law code. Similarly, Lycurgus, both before instituting his constitution and after instituting it, consulted the Delphic Oracle (5.3, 29.2). According also to Strabo (16.2.38), just as Zeus would go to the cave of Zeus to obtain decrees from him for the people, so Lycurgus went to the Pythian priestess at Delphi to inquire what ordinances it was proper to report to the Spartans. Plutarch (5.3) also reports that he consulted the Delphic oracle, which addressed him as “beloved of the gods, and rather god than man” and promised him a constitution that would be the best in the world. We are also told (13.6) that the ordinances that were introduced by Lycurgus were called “rhetras” (literally, “things said”), implying that they were of divine origin and were oracles.

6. THE LEGAL CODES OF MOSES AND LYCURGUS

Both Moses' laws and those of Lycurgus were meant for the purpose of instruction. They were intended to teach a way of life in order to direct people to act in a manner most beneficial for themselves and for society at large. It is surely significant that the laws promulgated by Moses are called תורה.³² This word, תורה, has the same root as the word הוראה ("instruction," "teaching"). Lycurgus' social system is called ἀγωγή ("direction," "training," "guidance," "conduct" (Plut., *Lyc.* 1.32.1), hence emphasizing the relationship between the laws and the method of their transmission.

Philo (*Spec.* 4.102) had already thought of comparing Moses to Lycurgus. Moses, he says, "approved neither of rigorous austerity like the Spartan legislator, nor of dainty living, like him who introduced the Ionians and Sybarites to luxurious and voluptuous practices. Instead he opened up a path midway between the two." He compares him, in speaking of the dietary laws, to a musician who blends the highest and the lowest notes of the scale, thus producing a life of harmony and concord which, he says, none can blame.

Josephus (*Ap.* 2.225) himself is well aware of the reputation of Lycurgus as the legislator who is held in the highest admiration and notes that the city, Sparta, for whom he legislated is praised throughout the world because she has remained faithful to his laws. Nevertheless, in comparing Moses with Lycurgus and other legislators, he states (*Ap.* 2.154) that "our legislator" (νομοθέτης) is the most ancient of all legislators in the records of the whole world. "Compared to him," he adds, "your Lycurguses and Solons and Zaleucus, who gave the Locrians their laws, and all who are held in such high esteem by the Greeks appear to have been born but yesterday." He then remarks that the very word "law" (νόμος) was unknown in ancient Greece, as we see from the fact that Homer never employs it in his poems. To emphasize the durability of the constitution promulgated by Moses as compared with that introduced by Lycurgus, he remarks that Moses' constitution has lasted more than two thousand years, far longer than that of Lycurgus.³³ Furthermore, the Spartans adhered

³² Josh. 8:31-32, 23:6; 2 Kgs. 14:6; Mal. 3:22; Neh. 8:1.

³³ Actually the period from Moses to Josephus' own time is approximately only 1400 years.

to Lycurgus' code only so long as they retained their independence, whereas the Jews retained theirs, even though it imposed far stricter obligations and more demanding physical duties than those of Sparta, for hundreds of years when they were no longer independent and were suffering numerous calamities. Furthermore, large numbers, in defiance of Lycurgus' code, have surrendered in a body to the enemy. Moreover, in the proem to his *Antiquities* (1.22), he says that other legislators, following myths, have, with their tales ascribed to the gods, imputed to them the shame of human errors and have thus given a considerable pretext to the wicked; on the contrary, Moses, having shown that G-d possesses a virtue that is pure, thought that human beings ought to try to participate in it, and he unrelentingly punished those who do not share these thoughts or believe in them.³⁴

In his description of the Jewish constitution, Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.6) c. 300 B.C.E., in his generally very favorable account of Moses, asserts that "their lawgiver [νομοθέτης, i.e. Moses] was careful also to make provision [πρόνοια] for warfare, and required the young men to cultivate manliness [ἀνδρεία], steadfastness [καρτερία], and, generally, the endurance [ὑπομονή] of every hardship [κακοπάθεια]," the implication being that the laws were of Moses' own devising.

Furthermore, according to Hecataeus (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.4), "the sacrifices that he established differ from those of other nations, as does their way of living, for as a result of their own expulsion from Egypt he introduced a somewhat unsocial and intolerant mode of life (ἀπάνθρωπὸν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίον)." Similarly, when Lycurgus returned to Sparta after his travels abroad, he was convinced (5.2)

³⁴ Similarly, Philo (*Opif.* 1-2), comparing Moses with other lawgivers, remarks: "While among other lawgivers some have nakedly and without embellishment drawn up a code of the things held to be right among people, and others, dressing up their ideas in much irrelevant and cumbersome matter, have befogged the masses and hidden the truth under their fictions, Moses, disdaining either course, the one as devoid of the philosopher's painstaking effort to explore the subject thoroughly, the other as full of falsehood and imposture, introduced his laws with an admirable and most impressive exordium. He refrained, on the one hand, from stating abruptly what should be practiced or avoided; and, on the other hand, in face of the necessity of preparing the minds of those who were to live under the laws for their reception, he refrained from inventing myths himself or acquiescing in those composed by others." Siegfried 1875, noting the similarity in language, argues that Josephus here is indebted to Philo.

that a mere partial change of laws would be of no avail whatever; and consequently he introduced a new and different regimen.

Moses (*Ant.* 2.312), in preparing the Israelites for their departure from Egypt, arranged them by fraternities (φρατρίαι), this unit being a political subdivision of the Greek tribe (φυλή). He also (*Ant.* 3.248), we are told, in connection with the celebration of the Passover, divided the Israelites into tribes and into subdivisions of tribes known as fraternities or brotherhoods (φρατρίαι). The word φρατρία is also used of a group celebrating the pagan festival of the Karneia at Sparta (Demetrius of Scepsis, *ap.* Athenaeus 4.141F). Lycurgus also (6.1-2), upon advice from the Delphic oracle, divided the people into tribes (φυλαί) and into subdivisions of tribes known as ὠβαί, corresponding to φρατρίαι.

One of the institutions that Moses established to assist him in governing the Israelites was a council of elders (γερουσία, *Ant.* 4.186). Similarly, according to Plutarch (5.6) the first and most important of the innovations made by Lycurgus was his institution of a council of elders (γέροντες), which, as Plutarch (*ibid.*) says, citing Plato (*Laws* 3.691E), “by being blended with the feverish government of the kings, and by having an equal vote with them in matters of the highest importance, brought safety and due moderation into counsels of state,” through avoiding the extremes of tyranny and democracy.

According to Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.7), Moses, while allotting greater amounts of land to the priests, assigned equal allotments to private citizens. As to Lycurgus’ reforms, Plutarch (8.2) says that whereas before Lycurgus wealth was wholly concentrated in the hands of a few and the city was heavily burdened with poor and helpless people, Lycurgus, in his determination to banish insolence, envy, crime, and luxury, persuaded his fellow-citizens to make one parcel of all their territory and allotted equal amounts of land to all citizens, so that later when he traversed the land just after the harvest and saw heaps of grain equal to one another, he remarked (8.4): “All Laconia looks like a family estate newly divided among many brothers.”

Whereas the Bible (Exod. 20:4, Deut. 5:7-9) prohibits making a graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven, on earth, or beneath the earth, Josephus (*Ap.* 2.191) goes much further in explaining why this is so. “No materials,” he says, “however costly, are fit to make an image of Him; no art has skill to conceive and represent it. The like of Him we have never seen, we do not imag-

ine, and it is impious to conjecture.” Although, of course, Sparta did have statues, the arts were not practiced, since, as Plutarch (9.3) says, Lycurgus banished the “unnecessary and superfluous” arts. Instead, we are told, the Spartans excelled in producing common and necessary utensils, such as the famous Laconian drinking-cup (9.4-5).

In Deut. 18:10-11 we read that an enchanter, conjurer, charmer, consulter with familiar spirits, and a wizard are not to be tolerated among the Israelites. Exod. 22:17 specifically reads “You shall not permit a sorceress to live.” The LXX renders this latter verse as “You shall not preserve poisoners,” and Josephus (*Ant.* 4.279) renders it similarly: “Let not even one of the Israelites have poison, whether deadly or one of those made for other injuries; and if, having acquired it, he should be discovered, let him die.” Lycurgus (9.3), we are told, by banishing all gold and silver money and by permitting the use of iron money only, which proved to be so heavy and clumsy, effectively made it not possible to acquire a vagabond soothsayer (μάντις). Moreover, whereas, according to the Bible (Lev. 21:7; *Ant.* 3.276), only a priest is actually forbidden to marry a prostitute, Josephus has carried this further in stating that it is forbidden for anyone to marry a prostitute (*Ant.* 4.245). Similarly, according to Plutarch (9.3), Lycurgus, by banishing gold and silver money and permitting only cumbersome iron money, made it impractical to purchase a keeper of harlots.

According to the Bible (Num. 18:12, *Ant.* 4.70), the first-fruits of all the produce that grows from the ground are to be offered for sacrifice. Similarly, according to the Lycurgan constitution (12.2), whenever anyone made a sacrifice of first-fruits or brought home game from the hunt, he sent a portion to his mess.

Josephus’ Moses stresses the particular importance of education in his extra-biblical remark (*Ant.* 4.261) of the parents to the rebellious child: “Giving the greatest thanks to G-d we reared you with devotion, sparing nothing of what seemed to be useful for your well-being and education (παιδεία) in the best of things.” In an extra-biblical remark, Josephus (*Ap.* 2.173-74) emphasizes that Moses, starting with the food fed to infants, the persons with whom they may associate, the period of time to be devoted to strenuous labor and the time to be devoted to rest, left nothing, however insignificant, to the discretion and caprice of the individual. The code promulgated by Moses likewise prescribed matters of clothing, notably the prohibi-

tion of mixed wool and linen (Lev. 19:19, Deut. 22:11, *Ant.* 4.208), with Josephus adding the reason for this prohibition, namely that this had been designated for the priests alone, and the prohibition of transvesticism (Deut. 22:5, *Ant.* 4.301), which Josephus applies to warfare, and laws pertaining to hair for Nazirites (Num. 6:5, *Ant.* 4.72). We find the same emphasis on education in Josephus' extra-biblical remark (*Ant.* 4.165), when he mentions Moses' appointment of Joshua as his successor and notes Joshua's qualifications, that Joshua had already been given a complete education (παιδεία), Moses having taught him thoroughly, in the laws and in divine matters. We find a similar supreme importance given to education by Lycurgus (14.1) in Plutarch's statement that "in the matter of education (παιδεία), which he regarded as the greatest and noblest task of the lawgiver, he began at the very source, by carefully regulating marriages and births." Similarly, Lycurgus legislated, among other provisions, the amount and type of food to be fed (8.4, 10.1-3, 17.4), the people with whom one might associate (12.4-7), the clothing to be worn (14.2, 16.6), and the arrangement of hair (16.6).

Hecataeus (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.6) makes a special point of noting that Moses was careful to make provision for warfare, and that he required the young men to cultivate manliness (ἀνδρεία), steadfastness (καρτερία), and the endurance (ὑπομονή) of every hardship. These very qualities are the hallmark of the training introduced by Lycurgus (21.4).

Josephus' Moses (*Ant.* 3.270-74) places tremendous emphasis on the laws of marriage, adding numerous extra-biblical remarks, particularly pertaining to the ordeal of women suspected of adultery and the complete prohibition of adultery, "considering it blessed for men to behave soundly with regard to marriage and advantageous for both states and households that children be legitimate." In extra-biblical additions, he terms it outrageous (*Ant.* 3.275) for a man to have sexual relations with a woman who has become unclean with her natural excretions, with animals, or with other males because of the beauty in them. Being himself a priest, Josephus stresses the special marital prohibitions for priests and, above all, for high priests (*Ant.* 3.276-77). In another statement of the laws of marriage (*Ant.* 4.244-48) he adds further stringencies, such as the requirement to marry free-born virgins, not to marry female slaves, even if compelled by passion, and not to marry a prostitute. In a further restatement of the laws of marriage (*Ap.* 2.199-203), Josephus again emphasizes the

provisions in the Pentateuch, in particular adding (*Ap.* 2.199) that marriage is solely for the procreation of children and that abortion is prohibited (*Ap.* 2.202). Similarly, Plutarch (14.1) highlights Lycurgus' careful regulation of marriages and births.

The rabbinic tradition (*b.Meg.* 13b) places a great premium on the virtue of modesty for women. To be sure, Lycurgus (14.2) accustomed the maidens no less than the youths to proceed naked in processions, and at certain festivals to dance and sing when the young men were present as spectators, but, as Plutarch (14.4) adds, there was nothing disgraceful in this nakedness of the maidens, "for modesty (αἰδώς) attended them, and wantonness (ἄκρασία) was banished."

According to rabbinic tradition, the Torah was given in two forms, written and oral (*Mid. Num. Rab.* 14.10). This was a key Pharisaic principle that was rejected by the Sadducees (*Ant.* 13.297). Furthermore, the rabbis (*b.Git.* 60b) forbade the writing down of the Oral Torah. We find a similar objection ascribed to Lycurgus (13.1). We read that none of his laws were put into writing by Lycurgus; indeed, one of the so-called rhetras (verbal agreements) forbids it, "for he thought that if the most important and binding principles which conduce to the prosperity and virtue of a city were implanted in the habits and training of its citizens, they would remain unchanged and secure, having a stronger bond than compulsion in the fixed purposes imparted to the young by education, which performs the office of a law-giver for every one of them."

Moses (*Deut.* 4:2, 13:1), in his address to the Israelites just before his death, forbade adding to or subtracting from the commandments of the Torah. He furthermore forbade deviating from the decisions of judges (*Deut.* 17:10-11). Similarly, Lycurgus (29.1), just before he died, we are told, ardently desired, so far as human forethought could accomplish the task, to make his system of laws immortal, and to let it go down unchanged to future ages. Lycurgus, accordingly (29.2), like Moses, assembled the Spartans and told them that they must abide by the established laws and make no change in them. He then proceeded to exact an oath from the kings and the senators, as well as from the rest of the citizens, that they would abide by these laws. He thereupon proceeded to consult the Delphic Oracle (29.3-4), which confirmed that the laws were good and that the city would continue to be held in the highest honor so long as it kept to the policy of Lycurgus. He himself resolved never to release the

Spartans from their oath and proceeded to abstain from food until he died (29.5).

For Moses the hallmark of education was obedience, and the worst offense for a child was to be disobedient (Deut. 21:18-21, *Ant.* 4.260-64). Moses' success in educating his people, says Josephus (*Ant.* 3.317-18) is shown by the fact that his laws survived his own lifetime. Indeed, he says, "there is not a Hebrew who does not, just as if he were still there and ready to punish him for any breach of discipline, obey the laws laid down by Moses, even though in violating them he would escape detection." He notes that only recently, in Josephus' own lifetime, when certain non-Jews from Mesopotamia, after a journey of several months, came to venerate the Temple in Jerusalem, they could not partake of the sacrifices that they had offered because Moses had forbidden this to those not governed by the laws of the Torah. Similarly, Lycurgus, clearly Plutarch's paragon of the lawgiver, regarded education as the greatest and noblest task of the lawgiver (14.1), and the training of youths was "calculated to make them obey commands well, endure hardships, and conquer in battle." Indeed, Plutarch (30.3) expresses amazement at those who claim that the Spartans, under the inspiration of Lycurgus, knew how to obey but did not know how to command and quotes the remark of the Spartan king Theopompus, who, when someone said that Sparta was safe and secure because her kings knew how to command, replied, "No, rather because her citizens know how to obey."³⁵ Indeed, under Lycurgus, according to Plutarch, Sparta attained utter stability. Consequently, as Plutarch (29.6) remarks, Sparta maintained the first rank in Greece for "good government and reputation, observing as she did for five hundred years the laws of Lycurgus, in which no one of the fourteen kings who followed him made any change, down to Agis the son of Archidamus.

The main, most serious, and most recurrent charge by intellectuals against Jews is that they hate Gentiles. It was the self-isolation of the Jews that was apparently at the heart of these attacks.³⁶ Even Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.4), who was, on the whole, well disposed toward the Jews, characterizes the Jewish mode of life as

³⁵ De Blois and Bons 1995, 104-5, suggest that Plutarch is here responding to the criticism that Isocrates had made of Sparta in his *Pan.* 46-48.

³⁶ See Sevenster 1975, 89; Feldman 1993, 125-49; Schäfer 1997, 170-81, 205-11.

somewhat unsocial (ἀπάνθρωπον, “inhuman”) and hostile to foreigners (μισόξενον). Though the Pentateuch (Exod. 23:9) commands the Jew to treat the stranger with respect, the dietary laws, Sabbath laws, and rules pertaining to idolatry were formidable barriers that, to a large extent, prevented the Jews from fraternizing with Gentiles. In a very real sense, Josephus’ *Antiquities* is an extended answer to charges that the Jews were guilty of hatred of mankind. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.192), in an extra-biblical addition, explains that the reason for the commandment of circumcision, was to prevent mixture with others and thus to preserve the individual identity of the Jewish people. But, at the same time, Moses (*Ap.* 2.237), in his summary of the laws, presents his interpretation of the law (Exod. 22:27), as the LXX does. Moreover, Josephus significantly omits the passages (Exod. 34:12-13, Deut. 12:2-3) in which G-d instructs Moses that when the Israelites enter the land of Canaan they should destroy all the statues, devastate all the high places, and make no covenant with the Canaanites. On the contrary, he stresses (*Ap.* 2.146) that the Mosaic Code was designed to promote humanity toward the world at large, that (*Ap.* 2.211-13) “our legislator,” that is Moses, inculcated into the Jews the duty of sharing with others, and that not only must the Jew furnish food and supplies to those Gentile friends and neighbors who ask for them but that he must show consideration even for declared enemies. Moses’ lack of prejudice is likewise displayed in the respect shown to Reuel (Jethro), Moses’ father-in-law, who is described (*Ant.* 2.258) as a priest held in high veneration by the people in the country.³⁷ On the other hand, in the code promulgated by Moses, the Israelites are forbidden to marry Ammonites and Moabites (Deut. 23:4), nor are they permitted to marry Egyptians until the third generation (Deut. 23:9).

Just as the code promulgated by Moses was intended to make sure that the Israelites would be kept separate and distinct from others, so Lycurgus (27.3-4) introduced measures to isolate the Spartans from foreign influences. In particular, he did not permit Spartans to live abroad and, in turn, kept foreigners away from the city, “for along with strange people, strange doctrines must come in; and novel doctrines bring novel decisions, from which there must arise many

³⁷ On Moses’ respect for Jethro see Feldman 1997a, 573-94.

feelings and resolutions which destroy the harmony of the existing political order.”

Josephus (*Ap.* 2.259) makes specific note of both of these practices of the Spartans, namely forbidding citizens to travel abroad and not permitting foreigners to enter the city, and for the reason given by Plutarch, that such contacts might lead to corruption of their laws. At this point Josephus introduces a major difference between the Spartans and the Jews, namely that the Jews, while having no desire to emulate the customs of others, nonetheless gladly welcome any who wish to share their own (*Ap.* 2.261).

7. HOW TO EXPLAIN THE PARALLELS BETWEEN JOSEPHUS AND PLUTARCH

Because we have all of Josephus' known completed works, because they cover such a tremendous range of time—from creation down to his own day—, because Josephus, notably in his *Against Apion*, where he clearly made an intensive search of all the literature produced up to that time for references to the Jews and Judaism, and because he cites no fewer than sixty-one ancient authors,³⁸ we would expect that if he knew the works of such a polymath as Plutarch he would have cited him. Granted that some or even many of these may not have been consulted first-hand, still one would be surprised if Josephus, living in Rome under the auspices of the Flavian emperors and not having any other duties, so far as we know, other than writing, should not have had contact with other writers living in or visiting Rome.

On the other hand, although there is some reason—probably very good reason—for thinking that Josephus was acquainted with and was influenced by both the *Roman Antiquities* and the rhetorical treatises of Dionysius of Halicarnassus,³⁹ he never mentions him even once. We may note, for example, that Dionysius wrote a work with a similar

³⁸ See Wacholder 1961, 102-109; reprinted 1962, 81-86, who cites forty-four works in Herod's library, nineteen of them well-attested and fourteen based on fragments of Alexander Polyhistor.

³⁹ Cf. Thackeray 1929, 56-58; Foakes-Jackson 1930, 247-48; Heinemann 1939-40, 180-203; Richards 1939, 36; Schalit, 1944, 1:xx-xxvi; Bickerman 1952, 68, 70-71; Shutt 1961, 92-101; Altshuler 1976; Attridge 1976, 43-60; Downing 1980, 8:46-65, 9:29-48; Downing 1981, 544-63; Downing 1982, 546-59; and Sterling 1992, 284-90.

title, *Roman Antiquities*, in twenty books, which narrated the fortunes that befell his protagonists (τίσι χρησάμενοι τύχαις (*Ant. Rom.* 1.5.1), just as Josephus, *Ant.* 1.6, did (τίσι χρησάμενοι τύχαις). Balch has called attention to the fact that Dionysius, in praising Rome (*Ant. Rom.* 1.9-2.29), and Josephus, in praising the Jews (*Ap.* 2.145-295), both follow the same pattern, as later codified by the third-century rhetorician Menander of Laodicea (Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν 346.26);⁴⁰ and while this does not prove that Josephus was influenced by Dionysius, this similarity does increase the likelihood. Josephus' account of the death of Moses (*Ant.* 4.326) is highly reminiscent of Dionysius' account of the deaths of Aeneas and of Romulus (*Ant. Rom.* 1.64.4, 2.56.2).⁴¹ In the kind of additions that Dionysius makes to the sources which he shares with Livy he is often similar to Josephus where the latter adds to the Bible. It is true that Dionysius polemicizes against Thucydides, whereas Thucydides is Josephus' model for his *Jewish War*. Moreover, most of the alleged instances of verbal borrowings from Dionysius are not conclusive;⁴² and Dionysius' purpose is very different from that of Josephus in that he is seeking to persuade his Greek audience to accept the Romans since they are actually Greeks,

⁴⁰ Balch 1982, 102-22.

⁴¹ Thackeray 1929, 57, thinks that it was from Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 1.48.1, 1.48.4, 2.40.3, 2.70.5, 3.35.5) that Josephus derived this formula, frequently found in his *Antiquities* (e.g., 1.108, 2.349, 3.81, 3.269, 3.322, 4.158, 8.262, 10.281), usually after the description of a miraculous event. "Let every one [of my readers] judge as he will." But this formula is found in many other authors, from Herodotus (3.122.1) to Lucian (*Quomodo* 60).

⁴² As to the similarities in language and style between Dionysius and Josephus, as mentioned by Shutt 1961, 94-101, Ladouceur 1977 and 1983, 18-38, has noted that of the 47 words which Shutt cites as particular instances of Josephus' dependence upon Dionysius, at least 22 may be found in classical literature of the fourth century and earlier. Of the rest, more than half may be cited from the LXX, Strabo, and the *Letter of Aristeas*. At least 15 occur in Polybius. Josephus' use of ἴδιος in place of the reflexive pronoun, which Shutt asserts is derived from Dionysius, may be found in Polybius and in Attic inscriptions of the first century B.C.E. Josephus' use of periphrases such as διὰ τινος ἔχειν and his use of compound verbs with two prepositions prefixed occur not merely in Dionysius but also in Polybius and in Nicolaus of Damascus, as well as in the LXX. As to declensional and conjugational forms, Josephus, far from being dependent upon Dionysius, fluctuates more freely than does Dionysius between classical and post-classical usage. From the fact that Shutt's argument is thus untenable, Bilde 1988, 203, concludes that the theory of Josephus' dependence upon Dionysius may be regarded as having been rejected; but despite this, as Sterling 1992, 286, concludes, there can be little doubt that Josephus knew Dionysius' work.

whereas Josephus emphasizes the uniqueness of the Jews. Yet, they have several points in common: the justification of the selection of their subject (Dionysius, *Ant. Rom.*, 1.2.1-3.6; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.5), the address to the Greek audience to remove their prejudice against a non-Greek people, their moralizing, their criticism of their predecessors, their emphasis on their sources, their similar scope, their pleasant style, and their preparation for their task.⁴³

In particular, Dionysius (e.g., *Ant. Rom.* 2.68) places a stress on piety similar to that found in Josephus.⁴⁴ Dionysius' stress on trust in Divine providence and on the importance of repentance (μετάνοια) is likewise frequently found in Josephus' additions in the Bible. Moreover, the moralizing and psychologizing tone, as well as the motif that power corrupts, is strikingly present in Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 10.54). It is precisely this kind of philosophic reflection against which Lucian inveighs (*Quomodo* 17); but Josephus apparently adopts the point of view of Dionysius, who praises the historian who scatters philosophic reflections throughout his history (*Ant. Rom.* 6.7) and who, in particular, lauds Theopompus for numerous fine observations on justice, piety, and the other virtues.⁴⁵

If we ask why, if he really was influenced by Dionysius, Josephus does not mention him, we may reply that he was clearly sensitive to the possible charge of plagiarism. We note, for example, that Josephus goes out of his way to call attention to the fact that although Moses might have taken credit himself for the reorganization of his system of adjudicating disputes that he recorded (*Ant.* 3.74), it was Jethro who gave him the suggestion. Similarly, Josephus makes a point (*Ant.* 4.158) of asserting that Moses modestly recorded the prophecies of Balaam, although he could easily have appropriated them for himself, since there was no witness to convict him. This is in obvious contrast to some of the Greeks with their reputation for plagiarism, as attested by the fact that numerous works were produced in the

⁴³ Sterling 1992, 289.

⁴⁴ Downing 1980, 64 n. 8.

⁴⁵ Dionysius (*Pompe.* 4.1-2) likewise lauds Xenophon for selecting subjects befitting a philosopher: the *Cyropaedia*, which contains "the portrait of a good and prosperous king," and the *Expedition of the Younger Cyrus* (*Anabasis*), which praises the bravery of the Greek mercenaries. He extols Xenophon himself (*Pompe.* 4.2) for displaying, first of all, the virtue of piety, and, secondly, the qualities of rectitude, resolution, and geniality.

ancient Greek world entitled “Περὶ κλοπῆς” (“On Plagiarism”), a list of which is presented by Porphyry, as cited by Eusebius (*Pr. Ev.* 10.3.12), the earliest of which is a study of Menander by Aristophanes of Byzantium, the learned grammarian who headed the Alexandrian Library at the beginning of the second century B.C.E. Thus, Aristophanes (*Clouds* 553-54) accuses his rival Eupolis of plagiarizing his *Knights*; Isocrates (*To Philip* 5.94) accuses his rival orators of making free use of his writings; and Aristoxenus, the pupil of Aristotle in the fourth century B.C.E., asserts (*ap. Diogenes Laertius* 3.37) that nearly all of Plato’s *Republic* was taken from Protagoras’ *Controversies*.⁴⁶

But, for that matter, Plutarch himself, with his varied interests and numerous friends, does not mention such contemporaries as Quintilian, Martial, Silius Italicus, Statius, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Juvenal, and Suetonius, though perhaps the fact that they wrote in Latin prevented a close relationship from developing.⁴⁷ But neither for that matter does he mention the popular Stoic philosopher and orator Dio Chrysostom, the Stoic philosopher and former slave Epictetus, the Neopythagorean sage and ascetic Apollonius of Tyana, and the mathematician and Neopythagorean Nicomachus of Gerasa in Transjordan, who were contemporaries and who wrote in Greek and whose literary and philosophical interests one would have expected him to have shared.⁴⁸ One factor, however, that may have militated against the possibility of Plutarch’s development of a relationship with Josephus is that Plutarch’s attitude toward the Flavians, unlike that of Josephus, is notably hostile.⁴⁹ Thus he describes Vespasian as cruel and unhappy (*Amatorius* 771C), and he speaks of Domitian’s

⁴⁶ See Silk 2003, 1188.

⁴⁷ The fact that Plutarch states (*Demosthenes* 2.2) that the pressure of other duties impeded him from acquiring a facility in Latin and that he even makes the egregious error of stating that Latin has practically no prepositions (*Quaestiones Platonicae* 1010D) would indicate that, at least at the beginning of his literary career, he was not fluent in Latin; but he does use a number of Latin sources for his *Lives*, and where these can be checked they sometimes indicate a first-hand knowledge of these sources.

⁴⁸ In his intellectual biography of Plutarch, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, “Plutarch as Biographer,” in Scardigli 1995, 54, remarks: “Nor is this the place to relate Plutarch to the intellectual life of his time: that would require consideration of his contemporaries Apollonius of Tyana, Nicomachus of Gerasa, Dio of Prusa, and the Phrygian Epictetus. Just one point, because it is such a characteristic fact: Plutarch did not take the slightest notice of any of these men.”

⁴⁹ See Jones 1971, 25.

arrogance, superstition, and tasteless extravagance.⁵⁰ Moreover, as Jones⁵¹ notes, the number of Plutarch's works that may be positively dated from the Flavian period is extremely small compared with the number of those written later, perhaps because under Domitian the most innocuous work, in view of his ban on philosophers,⁵² could be construed as an attack on the emperor (cf. Tac., *Agricola* 3.1). Nevertheless, in view of Plutarch's gregariousness and his interest in and knowledge of Judaism and in view of the fact that he is not anti-Jewish, at least in the extant sources, except for his reference to Judaism as a superstitious religion (*Super.* 3.166A, 8.169C),⁵³ of which we should not make too much since even Strabo (16.2.37), who is certainly favorably inclined toward Jews and Judaism speaks of Judaism thus, one would have expected him to have formed a friendship with the Greek-speaking Josephus during his several visits⁵⁴ to Rome.

⁵⁰ Numa 19.7, *Quaestiones Romanae* 276E, *Publicola* 15.3-6, cited by Jones 1971, 25.

⁵¹ Jones 1971, 25.

⁵² Cf. Aulus Gellius 15.11.5 and the remarks of Jones 1971, 24-25.

⁵³ The Jews, however, are hardly the only people whose religion he regards as superstitious, since he places his observation about them in juxtaposition with casting oneself down with face to the ground, besieging the gods, and prostration (*Super.* 3.166A). This is a clue to the fact that his objection is not solely to the Jews but rather primarily to the Eastern method of prostration to the deity. The Greeks, as we know, regarded such prostration as the very antithesis of liberty in politics and religion. Elsewhere in the essay (*Super.* 8.169C) he cites as an instance of superstition the failure of the Jews, because of the Sabbath, to prevent the enemy from planting ladders against their walls and capturing their defenses; but that Plutarch is not singling out the Jews may be seen from the fact that just before this passage he cites as similar examples of superstition instances in which Persians, Messenians, and Athenians had similarly suffered because of superstition. Moreover, in viewing the apparent vehemence with which Plutarch attacks such practices we should make due allowance, as Moellering 1962, 154, has noted, for the rhetorical tone of the essay *De Superstitione*. In another essay (*De Stoicorum Repugnantis* 38.1051E) he again mentions the superstition of the Jews, but here too he does not single out the Jews alone, but couples them with the Syrians as well. In contrast, when Agatharchides (*ap. Jos., Ap.* 1.205-11), in the second century B.C.E., mentions an incident similar to that cited by Plutarch of failure on the part of the Jews to defend themselves on the Sabbath, he apparently cites only the Jews, and, moreover (*ap. Ap.* 1.211), he concludes by stating that that experience had taught the whole world—and he adds, with a considerable dose of cynic acide, “except that nation”—“the lesson not to resort to dreams and traditional fancies about the law, until the difficulties are such as to baffle human reason.” Plutarch draws no such moral.

⁵⁴ See Barrow 1967, 36-42.

Plutarch had ample opportunities to become acquainted with Jews both in his native Greece,⁵⁵ in the large Jewish community of Rome,⁵⁶ and in the extraordinarily large Jewish community of Alexandria, a city that he visited at least once (*Quaestiones Convivales* 5.678C), and where the Jews in the first century, as we have noted, comprised perhaps 180,000 of the inhabitants.⁵⁷ Indeed, of the ancient writers who do mention the Jews there are few who refer to them more often than Plutarch.⁵⁸ That Plutarch was, indeed, more than slightly acquainted with the beliefs and practices of Judaism may be seen in the fact that he is the only extant pagan writer who mentions (and, in fact, describes at some length) the celebration of the Jewish holiday of Tabernacles (*Quaestiones Convivales* 4.6.2.671D-E); likewise, he alone of non-Jews refers to the Levites (*ibid.*, 671E), to the association of wine with the celebration of the Sabbath (*ibid.*, 672A), and to the institution of the Naziriteship (*ibid.*, 672B); he alone describes the clothing of the high priests (*ibid.*, 672A); he alone notes that it is just as unlawful for Jews to destroy pigs as to eat them (*ibid.*, 4.5.2.670D); he alone presents various sympathetic theories as to why Jews abstain from eating pork (*ibid.*, 4.4.4.669D-671A); and he alone sympathetically (*ibid.*, 4.5.3.671B-C), in admiration for the antiquity of the Jews,⁵⁹ identifies Adonis with Dionysus and, in turn, with the Jewish G-d.⁶⁰

If we wonder why, though he mentions several other authors, he has no reference to Philo, who preceded him by a century, or to his contemporary Josephus, we may reply that Plutarch is basically an antiquarian who is enamored principally of those, such as Homer

⁵⁵ As early as the third century B.C.E. we find a reference to Jews in Oropus, on the border between Boeotia and Attica, not far from Plutarch's birthplace, Chaeronea. See Lewis 1957, 264-66.

⁵⁶ See Leon 1960, 135-36, who estimates the Jewish population of Rome at fifty thousand in the early first century C.E.

⁵⁷ See Delia 1988, 286-88.

⁵⁸ For the references see Stern 1974, 1:545-76. In Stern's collection I have counted eighteen passages (238 lines) from Plutarch referring to Jews or Judaism, though only one of them (*Quaestiones Convivales* 4.4.4-6.2 669C-672B) is of considerable length. The only authors who have more references are the first-century B.C.E. Strabo (27 [408 lines]), the first century C.E. Pliny the Elder (23 [257 lines]), the second-century C.E. Tacitus (22 [446 lines]), Suetonius (19 [94 lines]), and Galen (19 [223 lines]), and the third century C.E. Cassius Dio (37 [343 lines]).

⁵⁹ See Feldman 1996, 546-52.

⁶⁰ See Feldman 1996, 543-46.

and Hesiod, who lived long before his time, and who mentions few works that were written shortly before or contemporaneously with his own era. In this he is not alone, since Philo is not mentioned by any extant ancient author other than Josephus (*Ant.* 18.259-60) until he is quoted by the Christian Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses* 4.39.2) in the latter part of the second century;⁶¹ and Josephus is not quoted until we find him in the Christian Theophilus of Antioch (*Ad Autolycum* 3.20-23), likewise at the end of the second century. Indeed, it is not until Porphyry (*De Abstinencia* 4.11) at the end of the third century that we find a pagan who cites the works of Josephus.

One last point to which we return is the difference between history, as seen in Josephus, and biography, as seen in Plutarch, even if that difference is sometimes blurred. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.15-16, in his proem to the *Antiquities*, insists that Moses kept his words concerning G-d pure of the unseemly mythology current among others, although in dealing with ages so remote he would have had ample license to invent fictions. In the introduction to his life of Theseus (1.5), Plutarch admits that in biography, where the emphasis is on the virtues of his characters and where he enjoys citing insignificant acts and casual remarks or jests (*Alex.* 1.2), one has the latitude with the facts that one does not have with history, where the emphasis is on events and on factual accuracy. Plutarch is well aware of this contrast. "May I therefore succeed," he says, "in purifying fable, making her submit to reason and take on the semblance of history. But where she obstinately disdains to make herself credible and refuses to admit any element of probability, I shall pray for kindly readers, and such as receive with indulgence the tales of antiquity." Josephus, in the introduction to his *Jewish War* (1.2), criticizes predecessors who were guilty of misrepresenting the facts, "their writings exhibiting alternatively invective and encomium, but nowhere historical accuracy." But *Lycurgus* is not *Theseus*, which clearly is dealing with myth. Indeed, in *Lycurgus* Plutarch is well aware of the difference, since he asserts at the very beginning (1.1) that there is least agreement among historians as to the times in which Lycurgus lived; and he certainly talks like a critical historian when he says (1.3) that although the history of those times is such a maze he will try to follow those authors who are least contradicted or who have the

⁶¹ See Smulders 1958, 154-56.

most notable witnesses for what they have written about him. One guesses that the Plutarch who writes thus should have felt a certain kinship with Josephus, who claims to be a critical historian. But, in conclusion, the possibility of a direct relationship of Josephus and Plutarch, we must say, remains *sub iudice*.

8. THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMMON SOURCE

That Josephus was acquainted with the type of rhetorical exercises known as *progymnasmata*⁶² and, in particular, with that branch dealing with encomia, seems likely in view of the fact that in his defense of the Jewish constitution (*Ap.* 2.145-295) he apparently followed the standard pattern for such encomia as described most fully in the later handbook by the third-century Menander of Laodicea (Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν).⁶³ The rhetorician Theon in his preface notes the utility of rhetorical exercises for the writing of history;⁶⁴ and we may recall Cicero's famous remark (*De Legibus* 1.5) that history is an *opus... unum... oratorium maxime*.⁶⁵

Isocrates, in his *Evagoras* (71), one of the earliest of biographies, to whom Plutarch, as we have noted, is so much indebted, lists six items as crucial to happiness: a noble lineage beyond compare, unequalled physical and mental gifts, sovereignty gloriously achieved and coextensive with life, immortal fame, a life prolonged to old age but immune from the ills that afflict old age, and offspring both numerous and goodly. Xenophon, in his *Agesilaus* (10.4), likewise one of the earliest of biographies, calls his hero blessed because he had realized most completely among men of his time his youthful passion for renown, because never throughout his reign was he balked in his high ambitions, and because, having attained the farthest limit of human life, he died without having incurred offense either as regards those whom he led or those against whom he made war. Pliny the Elder (*NH* 7.43.139), in his encomium of Lucius Caecilius Metellus,

⁶² Neyrey 1994, 177-206, especially 178-80.

⁶³ Spengel 1854, 3:331-446; Balch 1974, 187-92; 1982, 102-22.

⁶⁴ Spengel 1854, 2:60 ff.; Butts 1986.

⁶⁵ See Feldman 1951, 149-69. On progymnastic exercises and, in particular, their apparent use by historians see Marrou 1956, 194-205; North 1956, 234-42; and Clark 1957.

reports that he achieved the ten greatest and most excellent things in the quest for which men of wisdom spend their lives: to be a champion warrior, the best orator, the bravest general, commander in the greatest undertakings, recipient of the highest official preferment, a leader in wisdom, the leading senator, possessor of great wealth gained by honest methods, father of many children, and the most distinguished man of the state. In the type of speech known as an encomium, as delineated in the handbook of such a writer as Theon of Alexandria, attention was given to a person's origin and birth, nurture and training, deeds of the body (beauty, strength, agility, might, health), deeds of the soul (justice, wisdom, temperance, manliness, piety), deeds of fortune (power, wealth, friends, number and beauty of children, fame, fortune, length of life, happy death), and comparison with like personalities.⁶⁶ It is these same factors and qualities upon which Josephus focuses in his own autobiography and upon which both Josephus and Plutarch focus in portraits of their major heroes.

If we examine such key figures in Josephus' narrative as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, and Daniel, as well as figures of lesser importance,⁶⁷ we shall see that stress is generally placed on the external qualities of good birth and handsome stature, the four cardinal virtues of character—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice—, and the spiritual attribute of piety. Lest one think that piety is a Jewish addition to the list of the cardinal virtues, one should take note of Socrates' question in Plato's *Protagoras* (349B): "Are wisdom and self-control and courage and justice and piety five names which denote the same thing?" Hence, piety is the fifth of the cardinal virtues, as we see also in the outline of the encomium as noted above. In general, the Jewish hero must be a Platonic-like philosopher-king, a high priest, a prophet, and a veritable Pericles as described by Thucydides. Since Josephus is addressing a predominantly non-Jewish audience, his hero must fulfill the qualifications such as are ascribed by Tacitus to his revered father-in-law Agricola (Tacitus, *Agricola* 44-45): a life ended in its prime but rich in glory, attainment of the true blessings of virtue, consular and triumphal honors, wealth sufficient for

⁶⁶ Neyrey 1994, 179-80.

⁶⁷ See Feldman 1998, 223-657; and 1999a, 17-538.

his desires, death before that of wife and child, integrity of position and reputation, unsevered links of relationship and friendship, and immunity from massacres that followed on his death.

The recitation of a hero's virtues is a veritable aretalogy, such as was popular in Hellenistic times, especially for rulers.⁶⁸ Both Josephus and Plutarch had access to such aretalogies, and the likelihood that they had common sources may help to explain their similarities.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Goodenough 1928, 55-104; Hadas 1959, 170-81; van der Meulen 1978, 51-60.

⁶⁹ I wish to express my thanks to my student David Zarmi for several insightful suggestions.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

JOSEPHUS ON THE SPIES (NUMBERS 13-14)

1. INTRODUCTION

The first thing that strikes us about the account of Josephus (*Ant.* 3.300-16) of the episode of the spies (Num. 13-14) is its very brevity. In the Bible the account in the Hebrew comprises 1078 words. Josephus' version has a mere 768 words. This gives a ratio of .71:1 of Josephus to the Bible. For comparative purposes, for the episode of the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19, 35 lines) the ratio of Josephus (*Ant.* 1.222-36, 100 lines) is 2.86:1. For the episode of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:7-10, 22 lines), the ratio of Josephus (*Ant.* 2.41-59, 120 lines) is 5.45:1. For the episode of Korah (Num. 16.1-35, 58 lines), the ratio of Josephus (*Ant.* 4.11-56, 198 lines) is 3.41:1. As we can see, there are considerable differences in the amount of attention given to these various episodes, And yet, brief as the paraphrase of the incident of the spies is, there is hardly a passage in which more additions, subtractions, and modifications are made by Josephus than in this episode.

2. THE DECISION TO SEND THE SPIES AND THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THEM

In the Bible (Num. 13:1) there is no indication of the background of the decision to send spies into Canaan. Nor is there any indication of the connection between this decision and what precedes, namely the punishment inflicted upon Miriam for her criticism of Moses for marrying an Ethiopian woman (Num. 12). In Josephus (*Ant.* 3.300-16) it comes immediately after the Israelites complain about lack of food and the appearance of the quails (*Ant.* 3:295-99). This juxtaposition emphasizes the degree to which the Israelites needlessly complain, whereas faith in G-d fully guarantees their future.

In the Bible (Num. 13:2) G-d does not give any particular reason for sending scouts, nor does He indicate why he does so at this

particular time. Moreover, in the Bible (Num. 13:2) it is G-d or the Israelites (Deut. 1:22-23)¹ who take the initiative and tell Moses to send spies to Canaan, whereas in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.302), as in Philo (*Mos.* 1.220-21),² it is Moses whose idea it is.

According to Josephus (*Ant.* 3.300-1), Moses gathered the people in an assembly and told them that since they were now at the border of Canaan it was necessary to prepare for the task of conquering the land, which he expected would not be easy. Consequently, he thought it best to send spies into Canaan to ascertain the nature of the land and the power of its people. This fits in with Philo's and Josephus' emphasis on Moses' qualities as a general, and it builds up the stature of Moses as a military planner.³

A major quality of a general, especially in antiquity, is the ability to inspire his troops. In the Bible (Num. 13:17-20), when Moses arrives at the borders of Canaan, he does not speak to the Israelites generally but merely gives direct instructions to the scouts who are to spy out the land. The Josephan Moses (*Ant.* 3.300-1), in an extra-biblical inspiring speech to the entire people, reminds them of the blessing of liberty that G-d has already granted them and of the possession of the Promised Land that is soon to be theirs. He encourages them by telling them that no king or nation, not even if that nation is united, will be able to stop them. Whereas in the Bible (Num. 13:1-2) no background or reasoning or expectation is presented in G-d's instructions to Moses to send spies into Canaan, in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.300-2) Moses, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Israelites, presents that background as to why scouts are needed to investigate the richness of the land and the strength of the forces of the enemy. In the Bible (Num. 13:17-20) these instructions are given by Moses to the spies after they have been selected. In Josephus (*Ant.* 3.302) Moses explains to the people before selecting the scouts why he is doing so and thus prepares them for what will ensue and raises their morale accordingly.

However, this presented Philo and Josephus with a real problem,

¹ Ginzberg 1909-38, 6:92, n. 503, remarks that the rabbis recognized the problem of the contradiction between these two passages and attempted to reconcile them.

² See also the parallels cited by Ginzberg 1909-38, 6:92 n. 503. On this point Pseudo-Philo (*Bib. Ant.* 15:1) agrees with the biblical text.

³ On Moses as general in Josephus see Feldman 1998, 401-11.

namely, how, if Moses took the initiative, he could not be held responsible for the failure of the spies' mission. Indeed, one rabbinic tradition presents a scenario in which Moses is persuaded by the Israelites to send spies.⁴ In the Bible (Num. 13:1-2) G-d instructs Moses to send as spies one man from each of the twelve tribes, each of them a leader (נשיא) among them. Moses (Num. 13:3) proceeds to select men, all of them heads of the people. We are then given (Num. 13:4-15) the names of those selected from each of the tribes. Neither Philo nor Pseudo-Philo nor Josephus gives us the names of those chosen, except for Caleb and Joshua, the two who present the minority report.⁵ In the case of Josephus, at least, this should not surprise us, inasmuch as he declares (*Ant.* 1.176-77) that he is inclined to omit, because of their strangeness to a Greek ear, the names of the seventy descendants of Jacob who went down to Egypt (*Ant.* 1.176-77); but he ends up by citing the names, only to refute those opponents of the Jews who had contended that the Jews were of Egyptian rather than of Mesopotamian origin.⁶

To protect Moses from the charge that it was, after all, he who had initiated the idea of sending spies, Moses (*Ant.* 3.302) not only instructs the spies to get information about the strength of the enemy and the nature of the land but adds two all-important instructions, in his speech to the assembly of the people, namely that all the Israelites should be united (ὁμονοῶμεν) and, secondly, that they should honor G-d in the realization that He is their ally in all matters. Elsewhere Josephus appeals to his politically-minded audience by stressing the theme of the disastrous danger of civil strife (στάσις), so familiar to readers of Thucydides' description (3.82-84) of revolution at Corcyra.⁷

⁴ See *Mid. Tannaim* 11 and other midrashic passages cited by Ginzberg 1909-38, 6:92, n. 502.

⁵ Philo does not present the names of Caleb and Joshua here but only when he discusses the significance of the change of their names (*Mut.* 121-24).

⁶ On the other hand, Josephus omits the names of the families that returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity (Ezra 2:2-61, 1 Esdr. 5:4-38, *Ant.* 11.68), the names of those Jews who sent away their foreign wives at the request of Ezra (Ezra 10:18-44, 1 Esdr. 9:18-35, *Ant.* 11.152), the names of King Ahasuerus' seven chamberlains (Esth. 1:10, *Ant.* 11.190), the names of his seven counsellors (Esth. 1:14, *Ant.* 11.192), and those of Haman's ten sons (Esth. 9:7-9; *Ant.* 11.289).

⁷ The theme of the dreadful effects of anarchy and civil war is a central motif in both the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities*. See Feldman 1998, 140-43; and Feldman 1993d, 43-46. This theme would have struck a responsive chord in many of Josephus'

The theme of the crucial importance of unity of the Israelites that Josephus introduces in Moses' statement in which he proposes sending scouts (*Ant.* 3.302) is found throughout the *Antiquities*. Clearly, this concern grew out of Josephus' own experience in the war against the Romans.

The question as to how G-d is justified in punishing the majority of the spies when all that they were asked to do was to give an honest report, and when, so far as we can tell, all that they did was to give such a report of the difficulties that would confront the Israelites if they invaded Canaan must have been uppermost in Josephus' mind. It is extremely significant that when, according to the Bible (Num. 13:17-20), Moses gives his instructions to the spies he presents them with seven specific questions to be investigated: 1) how is the Land? 2) are the people in it strong or weak? 3) are they few or numerous? 4) is the Land good or bad? 5) are the cities therein open or fortified? 6) is the land fertile or lean? 7) are there trees in it or not? In addition, there is exactly one word of encouragement (Num. 13:20): **והתחזקתם** ("be of good courage").

As compared to the portrayal in Philo, Moses in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.302) is even better organized and has reduced the three categories to two: the excellence of the land and the amount of power that the inhabitants have. But, more important, he adds what is not found in the biblical instructions, namely that they should be united (an aim, according to Philo also [*Mos.* 1.221]) and, above all, that they should honor G-d, "who is our helper and ally in all matters." This, we may say, prepares us to justify what G-d does to the majority of the spies who give up hope of conquering the Canaanites; for if, indeed, they had recalled all that G-d had done for them in inflicting the Egyptians with the ten plagues, in enabling the Israelites to leave Egypt, in splitting the Sea of Reeds and defeating the Egyptians, in giving them the means to survive in the totally barren desert by feeding them with manna and quails, and in giving them the power to defeat the Amalekites utterly, they should have had faith that G-d would enable them to fulfill the promise that He had given them to lead them into the Promised Land.

readers, who might well have been acquainted with the terrible consequences of the lawlessness (*ἀνομία*) brought on by the plague in Athens (Thuc. 2:53.1).

In the Bible (Num. 13:16), Philo (*Mos.* 1.221) and Pseudo-Philo (15.1), it is Moses who selects the twelve scouts, whereas in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.303) it is the Israelites who, more democratically, do so. Moreover, whereas in the Bible (Num. 13:17-20) and in Philo (*Mos.* 1.222), it is to the scouts that Moses indicates what they are to investigate, in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.302) Moses, more democratically, indicates directly to the people what matters the scouts are to investigate. Apparently, Josephus is very sensitive to the charge made by Zimri (*Ant.* 4.146) that Moses gave orders tyrannically.⁸

The Bible (Num. 13:4-15) proceeds to give the names of the twelve scouts, but Josephus is content to state that they were the most notable men, one from each tribe. Similarly, we may note, Josephus omits the long list of the descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:20-42; *Ant.* 2.5); and, in general, he is not inclined to present long lists of names. Thus he says (*Ant.* 2.176) that he did not consider it advisable to list the names of the members of Jacob's family who accompanied him to Egypt "because of their difficulty"; and if he does so (*Ant.* 2.178-83) he explains (*Ant.* 2.177) that his purpose is to "demonstrate to those who do not suppose that we are not from Mesopotamia but Egyptians." Josephus is eager to avoid burdening his readers with long lists of names, even though this would add to the historicity of his account.⁹

⁸ Indeed, "tyrant," "tyrannical," and "tyranny" are terms of particular opprobrium to Josephus, as we see in his use of these words with reference to the revolutionary leaders—Eleazar the son of Simon (*War* 2.564), Menahem (*War* 2.442, 448), Eleazar the son of Jair (*War* 2.447), and Simon bar Giora (*War* 2.652; 4.508, 564, 573; 5.11; 6.227; 7.32, 265), as well as the last procurator, Florus (*War* 2.294) of his own day, and the false accusation of himself as being a tyrant (*War* 2.626; *Life* 302). In particular, these terms are used with reference to Josephus' nemesis, John of Gischala (*War* 4.208, 389, 564, 566, 569, 573; 5.5; 6.98, 129). Indeed, references to "the tyrant" without mentioning him by name are to John of Gischala (*War* 6.98, 129, 143). The revolutionaries as a group are constantly referred as "tyrants" (*War* 1.10; 2.275, 276; 4.166, 172, 178, 258, 278 (*bis*), 347, 401; 5.439; 6.202, 286, 323, 325, 343, 370, 379, 394, 399, 409, 412, 432; 7.261). Josephus (*War* 4.397) says that the three greatest of calamities are war, tyranny, and faction; but that to the populace war was comparatively the mildest.

⁹ Thus, for example (*Ant.* 7.369), whereas 1 Chron. 27.1-34 gives a long list of the names of David's army officers and administrators, Josephus says that he has not thought it necessary to mention their names. Again, whereas Ezra 10:18-44 gives the names of the priests, Levites, and Israelites who had put away their non-Jewish wives and the children that they had borne, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.152) asserts that he has not thought it necessary to give their names. Likewise, presumably for the same reason, Josephus (*Ant.* 12.57) states that he thinks that it is unnecessary to report the names of the seventy elders who translated the Pentateuch into Greek.

After the enumeration of the names of the twelve scouts, the Bible (Num. 13:16) adds that Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua. Philo omits this, though he does mention the change of Sarai's name to Sarah (Gen. 17:15; *Mut.* 61, 77-80) and Abram's name to Abraham (Gen. 17:5, *Mut.* 60-76), and asserts that the change of these names was ridiculed by "a godless and impious fellow." Josephus omits this last point, as he does the changes of name of Abram to Abraham and of Sarai to Sarah, though he does have the change of Jacob's name to Israel (*Ant.* 1.333). We may guess that Josephus omits such changes because one of the charges against the Jews even by someone such as Plutarch, who was relatively sympathetic to them, was that they were superstitious.¹⁰ Moreover, Josephus may well have been sensitive to the scoffing, noted by Philo (*Mut.* 60-62), of those who ridiculed the change of names of Abram to Abraham. Hence, Josephus simply omits this charge completely. For similar reasons, as appears from Philo's strained efforts to explain the change of Sarai's name to Sarah (Gen. 17:15; Philo, *Mut.* 77-80), Josephus omits her change of name also. Josephus' retention of the change of name of Jacob to Israel (*Ant.* 1.333) and of Joseph to Zaphenath-Paneah (*Ant.* 2.91) perhaps results from his wish to aggrandize the reputation of the Jewish people.¹¹

In his extra-biblical address to the Israelites before sending the scouts on their mission, as we have noted, Josephus' Moses stresses not only the importance of unity but also the need to honor G-d (*Ant.* 3.302). Indeed, in his very first mention in the *Antiquities* of "the great lawgiver" (*Ant.* 1.6), Josephus states that it was in piety (εὐσέβεια) and in the exercise of the other virtues (the implication being that, in the scales of value, piety balances all the other virtues combined) that the Israelites were trained under him. At the

¹⁰ Cf. Plut., *Super.* 8.169C: "But the Jews, because it was the Sabbath day, sat in their places immovable, while the enemy were planting ladders against the walls and capturing the defences, and they did not get up, but remained there, fast bound in the toils of superstition as in one great net." Thus, to the Greeks, the addition of an *alpha* to the name of Abram (Gen. 17:5) would seem difficult to comprehend, as Philo's efforts (*Mut.* 66-76) to explain the matter make clear. So Sandmel 1956, 66, n. 277.

¹¹ Josephus (*Ant.* 2.91) retains the change of name of Joseph to Zaphenath-Paneah ("he who explains what is hidden") because this is the name given to him by the Egyptian king. Those appointed to high positions were customarily given names reflecting their newly-gained importance, and hence this is a tribute to Joseph and to the Hebrew with whom he was identified.

very outset of his work (*Ant.* 1.15) Josephus entreats his readers to fix their thoughts on G-d and to test whether Moses was what we might term an orthodox theologian who had a worthy conception of His nature, who assigned to Him such actions as befitted His power, and who kept his language free of the unseemly mythology found among other lawgivers, even though in dealing with events of so long ago he would have had ample license to invent fictions. The crucial importance of piety is further seen in Josephus' remark (*Ant.* 1.21) that once Moses had won their obedience to the dictates of piety (εὐσέβεια) he had no further difficulty in persuading the Israelites of all the rest.¹²

It is significant that in the Bible (Num. 13:20) Moses tells the spies to take from the fruit of the land of Canaan. This raises the question whether this would not be outright theft. We should not be surprised, therefore, that Philo and Josephus, apparently aware of such a charge, do not have Moses thus instruct the spies.¹³ Josephus (*Ant.* 3.302) has Moses address the assembly of the Israelites and suggests that they send scouts "to mark the richness of the Land" but says nothing about actually taking samples of the fruits. To be sure, he does say (*Ant.* 3.304) that the spies brought back some of the products of the Land, but it is clear that they did so not because Moses had ordered them to do so but on their own initiative.

¹² In answering the anti-Jewish attacks of Apollonius Molon, Lysimachus, and the rest, who had charged that the laws of the Jews teach impiety (ἀσέβεια) (*Ap.* 2.291), Josephus (*Ap.* 2.146) emphasizes that the first quality which the Mosaic code is designed to promote is piety. He stresses the centrality of piety when he declares (*Ap.* 2:181) that even Jewish women and children agree that piety must be the motive of all of one's tasks in life. Josephus, in his peroration at the end of the essay *Contra Apionem* (2:293), exclaims, "What greater beauty than inviolable piety?" Josephus basically redefines ἀρετή as εὐσέβεια, which was, indeed, an integral part of ἀρετή, according to the Stoics (see Holladay 1977, 98). In truth, it is piety's related virtues so important in Stoicism (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.6.28-29)—magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία), courage (ἀνδρεία), patient endurance (καρτερία), and sagacity (σύνεσις)—that bring about those great dividends, so prominent in Moses' story as well—freedom from perturbation and distress. On Josephus' emphasis on Moses' piety, see Feldman 1998, 421-25.

¹³ Philo (*Mos.* 1.222-26) has Moses address the spies before the beginning of their mission but says nothing about bringing back samples of the fruits that they would find in Canaan. Philo (*Mos.* 1.230) does say that they did pluck some of the fruits, but they apparently did so on their own initiative.

3. THE INVESTIGATION OF THE LAND

The Bible (Num. 13:21-24) devotes very little attention to the description of the actual investigation of Canaan by the spies. We are given merely geographical details as to the dimensions of their explorations, namely from the wilderness of Zin to the expanse at the approach to Hamath. We are told where they began, namely in the south; where they proceeded, namely to Hebron and then to the valley of Eshcol; and where they cut a vine with a cluster of grapes and took some pomegranates and figs.

Unlike Philo, who devotes so much attention to describing the investigation of the land by the spies, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.303) describes only the dimensions of their investigation, namely from the frontier in Egypt, whereas the Hebrew says Zin (which is perhaps in the Negeb), until Amathe, that is Hamath on the river Orontes in Syria, whereas the Hebrew says that they went *on the road* to Hamath. Josephus adds the extra-biblical detail that they actually reached Mount Libanos (Lebanon). It is hard to suppose that the spies went so far north,¹⁴ though Josephus (*Ant.* 3.303), by emphasizing that they traversed *all* (ἅπασαν) of Canaan and spent only forty days on the *entire* (εἰς πᾶν) task, leaves the reader with the feeling that they had done their job superficially. Nevertheless, Josephus (*ibid.*) says that they searched out (ἐξιστορήσαντες) the nature of the land and of its inhabitants, although one wonders how they could have done this in a mere forty days.

4. THE REPORT OF THE SPIES

In Josephus' version the spies started by presenting a more positive report (*Ant.* 3.304): they referred to the beauty (εὐπρέπεια, "splendid appearance") of the fruits and added greatly to the praise of the Land by mentioning the abundance of blessings (τῷ πλήθει τῶν ἀγαθῶν) that the Land had. The fact that Josephus, in an extra-biblical addition, gives the impression that the report of the scouts was self-contradictory, in that the beauty of the fruits and the many blessings that they reported that the Land possessed roused the multitude to

¹⁴ Nodet 1990, 187 n. 6, thinks that the reference may be to Hamat Gader in the valley of Yarmuk near the Sea of Galilee.

war, would seem to indicate that the people, being unsophisticated, were positively impressed, at least at first, by the report and that they interpreted it as favoring an attack on the Canaanites. However, whereas the biblical account of the report states that the Canaanites were powerful and that their cities were very greatly fortified and that the scouts had seen there “the offspring of the giant,” but does not indicate the mood with which they made these statements, Josephus actually says that the scouts terrified (φοβοῦντες) the multitude and were much more specific in indicating what frightened them, namely that the rivers were impossible (ἀδύνατος) to cross because of their size and depth, the mountains were impossible (ἀμήχανα) for travelers to climb, and the cities were mighty with ramparts and with the strength of surrounding walls (*Ant.* 3.304).

Josephus, though he definitely did not agree with the majority report of the spies, nevertheless, apparently felt that to include such exaggerations would invalidate the credibility of his own account, and he completely omits these statements. Thus, like Philo, he omits the statement that all whom they saw were huge. Nor, again like Philo, does he have them mention the comparison with grasshoppers or the statement that the Land devours its inhabitants, presumably since, in an apologetic work, this would not redound to the credit of the Israelites. We may note that similarly, in other places in his reworking of the biblical narrative, he avoids undue exaggeration and the grotesque, which might have provoked the ridicule of a later satirist such as Lucian.¹⁵

¹⁵ Thus, in the case of Gideon, one such exaggeration—actually threefold—is the biblical description of the army of the Midianites and their allies as “like locusts for multitude,” with camels “without number, as the sand which is upon the seashore for multitude” (Judg. 7:12). Josephus is considerably more restrained: the camp is described as merely covering a large area, and there is no comparison with locusts; the camels are simply very numerous (πλείστη), and there is no comparison with sand (*Ant.* 5:224). See Feldman 1998a, 173. Likewise, for example, whereas the Bible (Judg. 16:9) reports that Samson “broke the bowstrings as a string of tow is broken when it touches the fire,” Josephus avoids this gross exaggeration, and his Samson simply bursts the shoots asunder (*Ant.* 5.310). See Feldman 1998, 486.

Again, if, as we believe, there is good reason to assume that Josephus was aware of the oral tradition as transmitted by the rabbis (see Feldman 1998, 65-73), there is significance in his non-inclusion of the tradition, as stated by the second-century Abba Saul (who, we are informed, was the tallest man in his generation), that on one occasion, as a grave-digger, he opened a cave and stood in the eyeball of a corpse, which, he was informed, was that of Absalom, up to his nose (*b.Nid.* 24b,

5. THE REACTION OF THE ISRAELITES AND OF G-D TO THE REPORT OF THE SPIES

According to the Bible (Num. 14:1), the *entire* assembly agreed with the majority report. The reaction that followed was that they wept that night, and that *all* of them murmured against Moses and Aaron, *all* of them expressing regret that they had not died in Egypt or in the wilderness and complaining against G-d, as if pointing out that He had contradicted Himself, in having brought them to the Land so as to die there and to have their wives and children taken captive (Num. 14:3); and they expressed the desire to appoint a leader who would take them back to Egypt (Num. 14:1-4). The reaction of Moses and Aaron at this point (Num. 14:5) was to fall upon their

Mid. Num. Rab. 9.24). Moreover, Josephus, in order not to lose credibility, omits the exaggeration implicit in the biblical account that a great multitude was coming to attack Jehoshaphat from beyond the sea (2 Chron. 20:1-2). Such a statement does, of course, magnify the achievement of Jehoshaphat in overcoming so vast an enemy, coming as it is from afar. But Josephus is content to say that the attackers included a large division of Arabs and says nothing of their coming from beyond the sea (*Ant.* 9.7). Likewise, while wishing to emphasize the size and power of Jehoshaphat's military forces, Josephus apparently felt that readers would find it hard to believe the Bible's statement that the tiny state of Judah could have produced an army of 280,000 under Jehoshaphat's general Jehohanan (2 Chron. 17:15) and another army of 200,000 under his general Amasiah (2 Chron. 17:16). Hence, Josephus reduces the size of Jehohanan's army to 200,000 and omits Amasiah's force altogether (*Ant.* 8.397). Similarly, while it certainly underscores Jehoshaphat's power that the Arabs should have brought him as tribute 7,700 rams and 7,000 he-goats (2 Chron. 17:11), Josephus avoids the apparent exaggeration by making their annual tribute 360 lambs and 360 kids (*Ant.* 8.396). The rabbis, on the contrary, exaggerate Jehoshaphat's power tremendously. Thus we hear that each division in Jehoshaphat's army consisted of no fewer than 160,000 warriors (*Mid. Ps.* 15.118). In the case of Jonah, the Bible states that Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in width (Jonah 3:3), while the rabbinic tradition goes even further in asserting that the city covered forty square parasangs and contained a million and a half human beings (*Mid. Jonah* 99-100) (cited by Ginzberg 1909-39, 6:350, n. 34), whereas the Bible gives the population as one hundred and twenty thousand (Jonah 4:11). Josephus simply omits such data altogether. Furthermore, Josephus is careful to avoid extravagant praise of Josiah (*Ant.* 10.73). Thus, Josephus omits the biblical statement that there was no king like him before him, "who returned to the L-rd with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his possessions," that is, in fulfillment of the central requirements of the key prayer of Judaism, the "Shema" (Deut. 6:5), "according to the entire Torah of Moses" (and hence not merely in accordance with the Book of Deuteronomy), and that no one of equal piety arose after him (2 Kgs. 23:25).

faces before the *entire* congregation. On the other hand, Joshua and Caleb tore their garments (Num. 14:6), as one does when receiving terrible news;¹⁶ and they spoke to the assembly of the people telling them not to fear since G-d was with them. At this point, according to the Bible (Num. 14:10), the *entire* assembly wanted to pelt Joshua and Caleb with stones. This, as in the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16-17), was a crucial test of Moses' leadership.¹⁷ There (Num. 16:5-11) Moses stood up to Korah, addressed him and the entire assembly, and fearlessly told him that G-d Himself would choose who should be high priest. Here, however, Moses does not address the congregation either to rebuke them or to encourage them. Instead, we are struck with Moses' silence.

At this point it is G-d Who appears in the Tent of Meeting to the congregation (Num. 14:10). He then speaks to Moses and, in exasperation, declares that He will annihilate the people and will make Moses himself into a greater and more powerful nation than they. This does seem like a case of G-d losing his temper, and one wonders how just it is for G-d to wipe out the entire people without exception instead of restricting Himself to those who sought to stone Joshua and Caleb, since, we may assume, not all the people were present in the assembly that sought to stone Joshua and Caleb. Moses then successfully argues that if G-d does so the nations of the world will say that G-d destroyed the Israelites because He lacked the power to bring them into the Land. He then appeals to G-d's quality of mercy (Gen. 14:13-19); and G-d is apparently convinced by Moses' plea to forgive the Israelites (Num. 14:20). However, immediately thereafter, G-d tells Moses that those Israelites who have angered Him through their lack of faith will not see the Land that He has sworn to their forefathers, but that Caleb,¹⁸ because he followed G-d wholeheartedly, will enter the Land, and his offspring will possess it. G-d then (Num. 14:26-35), in a supplementary address to Moses and Aaron, spells out His decree that all those twenty years of age and above, except for Caleb and Joshua, will die in the wilderness,

¹⁶ Thus in the Bible Reuben (Gen. 37:29) tears his garments when he finds Joseph missing, and Jacob does likewise (Gen. 37:34) when he sees Joseph's blood-stained garment.

¹⁷ See Feldman 1998, 386-97.

¹⁸ At this point G-d mentions Caleb alone because it was he who (Num. 13:30) silenced the people toward Moses.

and that their children will roam in the wilderness for forty years, corresponding to the number of days that the spies spent in investigating the Land, after which they will enter the promised Land. In the pestilence that followed, however (Num. 14:37), the Bible reports explicitly that those who had “brought up an evil report of the Land,” that is, the ten spies who gave the pessimistic report, perished in a pestilence, while the two who had counselled the people not to be terrified were saved, though it is not clear who else, if any, perished in the plague.

According to Josephus (*Ant.* 3.306), the people, upon hearing the majority report, continued to lament; and he adds that they did so together with their wives and children. He adds, further, that they complained that G-d had not helped them with deeds but only with promises, but he omits their logical criticism as to why G-d should have brought them to the Land only to have them fall by the sword. He omits the wish of the Israelites that they had died in Egypt or in the wilderness, since their wives and children will be taken captive, but he does have the biblical remark that they intend to appoint another leader to replace Moses and to lead them back to Egypt.

The fickleness of the masses may likewise be seen in Josephus' added comment (*Ant.* 3.307) that after spending the night in weeping, the multitude hastened together the following morning to the assembly, determined to stone Moses and Aaron and to return to Egypt. The offense of the Israelite multitude is far greater in Josephus than in the Bible in that in the latter they were ready to pelt Joshua and Caleb, the two members of the scouts who dissented from the majority, whereas in Josephus they blamed Moses and Aaron, loading them with abuse (βλασφημία, “blaspheming,” “reviling,” “hurling invectives”), and even intended to stone them (*Ant.* 3.307),¹⁹ though it was not they who had given the report. Josephus, preferring to put the emphasis on Moses and Aaron and the attempt to stone them, omits totally the decision of the congregation to stone Caleb and Joshua. In short, in Josephus the populace is rebelling not only

¹⁹ Likewise, in Josephus the Israelites are ready to stone Moses at the Sea of Reeds (*Ant.* 2.327), whereas according to Exod. 14:11-12 the Israelites protested verbally to Moses, but there is no mention of a threat to stone him. Again, at Elim (*Ant.* 3.12), according to Josephus, the Israelites are ready to stone Moses, whereas, according to the Bible (Exod. 16:2), the Israelites began their murmuring after their departure from Elim but did not threaten to stone Moses until later at Rephidim (Exod. 17:4).

against G-d but also, more especially, against Moses. Josephus has Moses and Aaron fall to the ground not before but after mention is made of Joshua's and Caleb's attempt to calm the multitude (*Ant.* 3.310), in order not to damage the reputation of Moses as the fearless charismatic leader who refused to submit to despair and did so only after the final desperate appeal by Caleb and Joshua. One wonders whether Moses and Aaron did this in order to beg for mercy from the people. This would surely not be a sign of leadership. Rather, we would have expected them to stand up to the congregation, to refute what had been told to them, and to instill in them the courage to reject the view of the majority of the spies. Instead, G-d turns to Moses, and Moses turns to G-d (Num. 14:11-35). Josephus, in his version (*Ant.* 3.310), insists that in prostrating themselves, Moses and Aaron were beseeching G-d not on behalf of their own salvation but to free the multitude from its ignorance (ἀμαθία) and to pacify their feelings.

6. MOSES' REACTION

A parallel to Moses' silence in our pericope in the face of the multitude may be seen in Moses' silence, in Josephus' version, when Zimri (*Ant.* 4.145) insults Moses, first with the implied charge that Moses is a hypocrite in that he does not observe the laws that he has promulgated for all the Israelites, second with the charge that he has taken advantage of the simplemindedness of the Israelites, and third with the statement that Moses deserved to be thrashed if only the Israelites had not been so easily outwitted. Zimri then (*Ant.* 4.146) claims that Moses has contrived slavery for his followers—an accusation particularly serious in view of the fact that the whole basis of Moses' leadership was that he had managed to extricate the Israelites from slavery to the Egyptians. He then insults Moses, charging him with hypocrisy and deceit in obtaining leadership for himself under the pretense that he has received laws from G-d, whereas actually he has deprived them of freedom. He further insults Moses (*Ant.* 4.147) by charging that he is harsher to the Israelites than to the Egyptians in claiming to punish them according to his laws for doing what they regard as agreeable to themselves. Rather, he says, it is Moses who deserves to be punished for making his own eccentricity prevail against their universal opinion.

Zimri is here apparently the voice of those of Josephus' Jewish contemporaries who objected to the ancestral religion as obscurantist and too confining, indeed as opposing universal opinion. This is basically the same accusation as that made by Haman (Esth. 3:8), that the laws of the Jews are different from those of all other peoples, as elaborated by Josephus' paraphrase of this statement (*Ant.* 11.212) that by being utterly different in customs and practices the Jews are enemies of the Persians and, indeed, of all mankind.²⁰ Zimri himself then (*Ant.* 4.148-49) seeks approbation for being honest enough to admit that he has taken a foreign wife and for being independent and not subservient to the opinion of another person. These forthright remarks appear, in Josephus' extra-biblical statement, to have terrorized the Israelite masses into silence.

At this point, as when the masses were ready to pelt Joshua and Caleb with stones, we would have expected Moses to show his quality of leadership by standing up to Zimri and systematically refuting his charges, just as he does with Korah (Num. 16:5-11). To be sure, in an extra-biblical addition, Moses initially (*Ant.* 4.142), after Zimri has taken the Midianite princess as his consort, summons the Israelites to an assembly and without mentioning Zimri by name seeks to get the sinners to repent. However, when Zimri boldly and defiantly replies (*Ant.* 4.145-49), the people, in another extra-biblical addition, are silent out of fear of what will happen. Moses himself is likewise silent and dismisses the assembly out of fear that keeping the assembly in session will simply lead others to imitate Zimri. This, we are tempted to say, would seem to indicate Moses' lack of confidence that he will, in fact, be able to refute Zimri effectively, although the effect that Josephus seeks to convey is that Moses shows wise restraint.²¹

²⁰ Cf. Schian 1973. According to this opinion, to take exception to an opinion that is universally held is, *ipso facto*, to be completely wrong.

²¹ In any case, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.151) does say that Zimri's intransigence would have led to further defections if Phinehas had not stopped him. Phinehas (Num. 25:7, *Ant.* 4.152), then, is presented as the hero who, when Moses had failed to halt Zimri, without further ado, in his indignation at what Zimri had done, determined that his insolence (ὕβρις) should not become stronger through impunity, and consequently took the law into his own hands. In extra-biblical remarks, he is introduced (*Ant.* 4.152) as a man better than the younger men in other respects and superior to his contemporaries by virtue of the prestige of his father, Eleazar, and of his grandfather Aaron. In still another additional remark (*Ant.* 4.153), Phinehas is described as superior in both daring of soul and courage of body to such a degree

To Josephus the silence of Moses, the leader par excellence, at such a crucial moment when Joshua and Caleb are about to be stoned by the populace (Num. 14:10), is utterly unacceptable, just as he cannot accept, and indeed omits just before this incident, Moses' utter despair when the Israelites show their dissatisfaction with the manna, and when he says to G-d (Num. 11:14-15) that the burden of leading the nation is too heavy for him and that if this is the way in which G-d is dealing with him He should kill him immediately. Instead (*Ant.* 3.310), Josephus omits the people's decision to stone Joshua and Caleb; rather, a cloud appears standing over the Tent and signifying the manifestation of G-d.

But it is not G-d Who must be the central figure in this drama. On the contrary, exactly as we would expect, it is Moses who now summons the courage to confront the multitude and reveals to them that G-d, aroused by their insolence (ὕβρις), will exact punishment. Nevertheless, Josephus is aware that some of his readers will be critical of G-d for losing His temper, so to speak, and overreacting in a fit of anger. Hence, Josephus immediately adds that G-d acted not in keeping with the people's misdeeds, but in a way reminiscent of fathers who inflict punishment upon their children as an admonition. In the Bible G-d, in his indignation with the Israelites, tells Moses that He will inflict a pestilence upon them and that He will thereafter create a greater and mightier nation out of him (Num. 14:12). Moses (Num. 14:13-19) answers G-d effectively, since he asserts that when the Egyptians hear of this they will say that the reason why G-d killed the people was that He lacked the power to bring them into their Land. G-d is then persuaded by Moses' argument.

To say the least, this seems to reflect badly on G-d and appears to indicate that Moses is more merciful than He. Josephus here, apparently aware of the theological problem, omits the whole passage. Instead, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.310) does not criticize G-d at all or imply that His reputation will be damaged; rather, despite the ugly mood of the multitude, whereas the Bible (Num. 14:19) simply states that

that if involved in any dangerous situation he did not leave until he had prevailed. However, whereas the Bible depicts him as being so hot-headed that he stood up from amidst the assembly and followed Zimri in the latter's tent (Num. 25:7), Josephus, seeking to tone down the features of zealotry, first arranges for the assembly to be dissolved (*Ant.* 4.151) and only then has him go into Zimri's tent (*Ant.* 4.153). The Bible (Num. 25:8) presents the gory details that he pierced Zimri and Cozbi into her stomach, but for Josephus it is sufficient to say that he killed them.

Moses prays that G-d should pardon them for complaining against Him, Moses and Aaron, we are told in this addition by Josephus, instead of panicking, show their compassion for the people, their ability to analyze the cause of their depression, and their own true leadership by supplicating G-d to rid the populace of their ignorance and to calm their spirits (*Ant.* 3.310).

In an extra-biblical passage, G-d reminds Moses about the benefits that the Israelites had received from Him and about their ungratefulness (*Ant.* 3.312).²² For Josephus the trait of showing gratitude is of crucial importance.²³ In his attention to the ὕβρις of the Israelites, Josephus is apparently thinking of the contemporary situation in which the revolutionaries, whom he so despised, showed ingratitude to the *pax Romana* and rebelled against Roman authority.

We may recall a similar biblical scene in which Abraham argues with G-d not to condemn all the Sodomites if 50 or 45 or 40 or 30 or 20 or 10 of them turn out to be righteous (Gen. 18:16-33). Josephus there also omits the anthropomorphic details of the bargaining process and instead says merely that Abraham, in sympathy with the Sodomites, implores G-d not to destroy the good along with the wicked (*Ant.* 1.199). Thus, as Loader²⁴ remarks, with the simple statement that Abraham kept quiet, Josephus neutralizes the daring tenacity with which the Abraham of Genesis 18 keeps on talking back to G-d.

7. THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE PUNISHMENT OF THE SPIES

We may well ask why the ten spies who gave a negative report were punished so severely by G-d when they apparently did the best that they could and presented what seems to be an honest report. Moreover, in a democratic society the majority—in this case ten versus

²² For Josephus this trait of showing gratitude is of crucial importance. See Feldman 1998, 123-24.

²³ While it is true that this is also found in traditional Jewish sources, the Greek readers of Josephus' text might well have been reminded of the hospitality shown by the poor and pious old couple, Philemon and Baucis, to Zeus and Hermes, and the reward granted by the gods, namely that they were saved from the flood and were granted their prayer that they be together priest and priestess of the temple into which their humble cottage had been transformed (Ovid, *Met.* 8.611-737). For further parallels see Thompson 1957, 2:E 341, pp. 433-34.

²⁴ Loader 1990, 102.

two—should have prevailed, as we see in the traditional exegesis of the Scriptural phrase (Exod. 23:2): אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים (“follow a multitude”), as formulated in the rabbinic dictum (*b.Ber.* 9a): “Where there is a controversy between an individual and the many, the *halakah* follows the many.” Consequently, the rabbis (*b.B. Mez.* 59a) insisted that even if a heavenly voice declares that the law is in accordance with the minority, the view of the majority must prevail.

It would seem that Josephus also was puzzled that the Israelites should have been punished for accepting a majority report. Moreover, it is not surprising that the effect that this report had upon the multitude was that they concluded that the conquest of the country was impossible (ἄπορος, *Ant.* 3.304). It would seem that the scouts had grossly exaggerated, and that the key word here, for which there are two further synonyms—ἀδύνατος, ἀμήχανα—is “impossible.” After all, one might ask, how had the scouts themselves managed to cross the rivers and how they managed to climb the mountains? Moreover, the scouts were surely guilty of exaggeration when they said (*Ant.* 3.305) that the possessions in Canaan were greater than all that they had come upon since their departure from Egypt. While it is true that in the biblical account the scouts describe the Land as one that “devours its inhabitants” and that the people whom they saw there were huge (Num. 13:32) and that they themselves were like grasshoppers compared to them, Josephus goes one step further in attempting to be more specific and convincing by stating that it was in Hebron that they had seen giants and by indicating the effect that the mission had upon themselves, namely that they were panic-stricken (κατεπλάγησαν, *Ant.* 3.305), and the effect that they attempted to have upon the masses, namely, to reduce the people to the same condition.

The question might well be raised whether G-d was justified in deciding that the entire multitude should be condemned to die in the desert when all that they had done was to accept the majority report of a committee, whether appointed by G-d, Moses, or themselves. A clue to the answer may be seen in the fact that whereas the Bible (Num. 14:1) says that upon receiving the report of the majority of the scouts the people wept, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.306) says that they wept, together with their wives and children. In the biblical version, G-d angrily protests that the Israelites do not have faith in Him despite all the miracles that He has performed for them (Num. 14:11). Josephus (*Ant.* 3.306) is more sarcastic in stating that the people acted as

though G-d had helped them not at all with action but had promised them with words alone.

In still another addition to the Bible, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.312) has G-d show understanding for the Israelites' behavior by noting that they had been misled by the timidity of the scouts in regarding their words as more true than His promise. A gentler G-d does not have to be persuaded by the plea of Moses. Rather, He is quoted by Moses as saying (*Ant.* 3.313) that for this reason He will not destroy them all and will not annihilate their race, since, as He asserts in an extra-biblical addition, He holds them in greater honor than all the rest of humankind. Josephus then, in apparent objection to such an equation, omits the biblical statement (Num. 14:34) that the forty years that G-d condemns the Israelites to wander in the wilderness correspond to the forty days that the spies spent in the land of Canaan, such a calculus being unworthy of G-d in Josephus' eyes. Whereas in the Bible (Num. 14:31) G-d tells Moses that He will bring the children of these Israelites into the Land, in Josephus (*Ant.* 3.314) it is Moses, whose central role as a leader is elevated,²⁵ who tells the people of G-d's promise to transmit the Land to their children and adds that He will make them masters of good things of which, he adds in another extra-biblical remark, they have been deprived owing to their lack of self-control.

One might be critical of G-d for condemning the Israelites so quickly, without hearing the people's side of the story, and so indiscriminately in condemning all the people, especially since, as we have noted, these are traits that Josephus condemns in the masses. Hence, Josephus is careful to add the extra-biblical comment that G-d had not been brought, with the fickleness characteristic of humans, to such anger against the Israelites but had condemned them only after due deliberation (*Ant.* 3.315). Moreover, we may wonder at G-d's condemnation, to die in the plague, of the ten spies who had brought the majority report (Num. 14:36-37), since a plague is likely to spread to innocent people also. Josephus, realizing that this would raise the issue of theodicy, simply omits mention of the plague altogether.

In the Bible, after the statement that the ten spies died during the plague brought on by G-d (Num. 14:36-37), we read, in the briefest of comments (Num. 14:39), that "Moses told these words to all the people of Israel," presumably reporting the punishment

²⁵ See Feldman 1998, 374-442.

that G-d had decided to inflict upon them. Josephus, aware that readers might ask why Moses did not try to convince G-d to retract his decision, almost as if answering critics of Moses, says that one should not believe that Moses was a solitary man who dissociated himself from the sufferings of his people (*Ant.* 3.316). Rather, he says, Moses calmed the huge throng of angry people and, like a true leader, led them back to a milder mood. One thinks of the picture of Neptune (Virgil, *Aen.* 1.124-47) allaying the turbulence of the seas that had been aroused by Aeolus, the god of the winds, who had caused so much anguish to Aeneas and his ships, and of the simile (Virgil, *Aen.* 1.148-56) of the political leader—a thinly-veiled portrait of Augustus, who brought peace after a century of civil war—who calms the masses after they have been hurling firebrands and stones. One guesses, moreover, that Josephus is thinking of his own ability, as general in Galilee, to pacify angry crowds, despite his isolation (*Life* 100,141-42,146-48,388).

At this point, the Bible (Num. 14:39-40), in immediate juxtaposition states that the Israelites mourned exceedingly and directly thereafter remarks that they awoke the next morning and impulsively decided to attack the Amalekites and the Canaanites (Num. 14:40-45), with disastrous results. Josephus, on the other hand (*Ant.* 3.316) interjects the extra-biblical, editorial-like comment that G-d, being present with Moses, prepared the multitude to submit to his words, so that, although they had often failed to listen to him, they now came to realize, from the fact that they had fallen into misfortune, that disobedience is disadvantageous. This is a theme that would especially appeal to the Romans, with their pride in their legal tradition going back to the Twelve Tables, and particularly to the Flavian emperors to whom Josephus was so indebted.²⁶

To illustrate the importance of obedience and to compliment the Jews of his own day for their loyalty to Moses and to the laws that he had conveyed to the Jews, Josephus (*Ant.* 3.317-22) presents a most unusual digression drawing upon a contemporary experience, even

²⁶ Thus Josephus emphasizes that Absalom's greatest sin is lawlessness and rebellion against established authority. It is Jeroboam's lawlessness that Josephus particularly denounces (*Ant.* 9.282). His chief criticism of Ahab is that he violated his country's laws (*Ant.* 8.361). On the other hand, in his portrait of Ezra Josephus stresses his role as teacher of obedience to law (*Ant.* 11.155). Furthermore, crucial to Nehemiah's position as most trusted assistant to the Persian king is his respect for law (*Ant.* 11.183).

though his subject, of course, is biblical history. Thus he relates two examples from his own time to illustrate the Jews' loyalty to their constitution: firstly, how some persons from beyond the Euphrates were unable to partake of the sacrifices that they had offered because they had not converted to Judaism; and secondly how during the reign of Claudius the Jews refused to eat bread during Passover despite the fact that a tremendous famine afflicted the land.²⁷

8. SUMMARY

The paraphrases by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus of the episode of the spies are unusually brief, though they contain many changes from the biblical account. The initiative to send spies comes from Moses in Philo and Josephus, both of whom, throughout their version of the episode, focus on the role of Moses, and from G-d in Pseudo-Philo, who centers on G-d alone.

Neither Philo nor Pseudo-Philo nor Josephus gives us the names of those chosen, except for Caleb and Joshua, as if to say that all that matters is their approach to their task. In Philo and in Josephus Moses is presented as the general who plots strategy and inspires his troops. Josephus, undoubtedly influenced by contemporary events in the war against the Romans, emphasizes the importance of unity.

In the Bible, Philo, and Pseudo-Philo it is Moses who selects the spies, whereas in Josephus it is the Israelites who do so. Similarly, in the Bible and in Philo it is to the spies that Moses gives his instructions, whereas in Josephus, sensitive to the charge that Moses had been accused of being a tyrant, Moses speaks directly to the people.

In order to give the majority report of the spies greater credibility Philo avoids undue exaggeration, and to avoid the charge that the majority had been carried away by first impressions he says that they stayed on to get a more accurate view. Unlike Philo, Josephus mentions the biblical statement that they had completed the whole

²⁷ We have no other information about this famine. Perhaps Josephus is thinking of the famine that, indeed, occurred during the reign of Claudius in the year 46 or 47, which Queen Helena of Adiabene relieved (*Ant.* 20.51) and which may be the worldwide famine predicted in Acts 11:28 as destined to take place in the days of Claudius. Or perhaps Josephus is thinking of the famine at the beginning of the war against the Romans, when the revolutionaries burnt the stores of grain so that a famine ensued (*b.Git.* 56a). See Gapp 1935, 261.

task within a mere forty days and thus emphasizes the superficiality of their observations. However, influenced by the beauty of the fruits of the Land, the multitude, being unsophisticated, were at first aroused to war.

The offense of the Israelite multitude is far greater in Josephus, ever ready to condemn the masses for their fickleness, than in the Bible in that in the latter they are ready to stone Joshua and Caleb, the two scouts who dissented from the majority, whereas in Josephus they blame Moses and Aaron, even though it is not they who have given the report.

Josephus' Moses, aware of the theological problem, does not argue with or criticize G-d but supplicates Him to rid the people of their ignorance and then boldly confronts the multitude, informing them of G-d's decision to have the adults wander in the wilderness for forty years and to prevent them from entering the Land. Josephus, however, in the belief that such a calculus is unworthy of G-d, omits G-d's statement that the forty years correspond to the forty days that the spies spent on their mission. In an addition, Josephus' Moses defends G-d's decision as having been made with due deliberation. Whereas the Bible says that the ten spies perished in a plague, and Philo adds that those who shared their views died likewise, Josephus, realizing that a plague is likely to spread to innocent people also and concerned with the problem of theodicy, simply omits mention of the plague altogether. We are then told that Moses, the true Augustus-like leader, is able to calm the angry populace and lead them back to a milder mood. Then follows the moral of the story: the people learned that disobedience is disadvantageous.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE REHABILITATION OF NON-JEWISH LEADERS IN JOSEPHUS' *ANTIQUITIES*

1. INTRODUCTION

An important part of Josephus' response to the charges of critics of the Jews can be seen in his treatment of non-Jewish figures. Here Josephus was clearly confronted with a dilemma: if he downgraded these figures he would play into the hands of those who charged that he, no less than Jews generally, was prejudiced against non-Jews; but if he showed too much regard for them he would be whitewashing idol-worshippers and, in some cases, enemies of the Jewish people, and so would clearly offend Jews in his audience. It may, therefore, be instructive to see how Josephus deals with such figures as the various Pharaohs mentioned in the Bible, Jethro, Balaam, Eglon, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Ahasuerus.

In view of the fact that he is writing for a primarily non-Jewish audience, it should not be surprising that Josephus is particularly careful, in his portrayal of non-Jewish personalities in the Bible, not to offend his pagan readers. We may see this in Josephus' more favorable portrayal of the Pharaoh in connection with Sarai (*Ant.* 1.165), of the Pharaoh in connection with Joseph and his brothers (*Ant.* 2.185), of the Pharaoh of the Exodus (*Ant.* 2.238-53), of Jethro (*Ant.* 2.258, 262-63), of Balaam (*Ant.* 4.107), of Eglon, the king of Moab (*Ant.* 5.185-86), of Nebuchadnezzar (*Ant.* 10.217), of Belshazzar (*Ant.* 10.246), of Darius (*Ant.* 10.254), and of Ahasuerus (*Ant.* 11.216).

2. JOSEPHUS' PORTRAIT OF THE PHARAOHS

In line with his stress on the importance of showing respect for the ruler of the land, Josephus emphasizes the terrible effects of civil strife (στράσις) so familiar to readers of Thucydides' description of revolution at Corcyra (3.82-84). Hence, to the extent that he was the legitimate ruler of his land, the Pharaoh in his role as king was

above criticism for Josephus. Indeed, the only ground for criticism in the incident with Sarai was that he failed to show self-control. Josephus, then, in an extra-biblical passage (*Ant.* 1.163-64), remarks that the Pharaoh, not content with reports about Sarai's beauty, was fired with a desire to see her and was actually at the point of laying hands upon her, whereupon G-d inflicted upon the Pharaoh the punishment that was most dreadful in Josephus' eyes, namely an outbreak of disease and political disturbance (στράσις). But even in this instance Josephus comes to the Pharaoh's defense, carefully remarking (*Ant.* 1.165) that once he discovered the truth about Sarai's identity (at that point her name had not yet been changed to Sarah) the Pharaoh apologized to Abram, stressing that he had wished to contract a legitimate marriage alliance with her rather than to outrage her in a transport of passion. Significantly, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 12:16) it is before his discovery of her identity that the Pharaoh gives Abram abundant gifts, in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.165) the Pharaoh's character is enhanced by virtue of the fact that it is after the discovery of Sarai's identity and when he has nothing to gain thereby that the Pharaoh gives abundant riches to Abram.

Furthermore, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 41:15) the Pharaoh is impressed with Joseph's ability to interpret his dreams but shows no particular warmth toward him, Josephus' Pharaoh (*Ant.* 2.80) is clearly a more winning personality in that he actually takes Joseph by the hand and commends him for his excellence (ἄριστος) and extreme sagacity (σύνεσιν ἱκανώτατος) in asking him to interpret his dreams. We are likewise impressed by the fact that before Joseph actually gives his interpretation the Pharaoh reassures him by telling him that he should suppress nothing through fear, nor should he feel the necessity to flatter him with lying speech, however grim the truth may be. These words would remind the reader of the assurances given by Achilles to Calchas the seer in Homer's *Iliad* (1.84-91).

When Josephus comes to that portion of the Bible detailing the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, he is careful (in line with the Bible itself [Exod. 1:8]) to avoid the identification, which we have found prevalent in the rabbinic sources, of this oppressor Pharaoh with the one who had appointed Joseph to high estate, in order to emphasize that not all the Pharaohs are identical. Indeed, Josephus (*Ant.* 2.202) very carefully remarks that not only was there a new king but that the kingdom had now passed to another dynasty. Moreover, the blame is placed not on the Pharaoh but rather on the Egyptians

(*Ant.* 2.201), who are described as a voluptuous and lazy people, “slaves to pleasure in general and to a love of lucre in particular.” Josephus’ audience would have had little difficulty accepting this statement of contempt for the Egyptian people, if we may judge from the remarks of a host of Greek and Roman writers, from Florus and Achilles Tatius to the author of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* and Juvenal.¹ As Josephus (*Ant.* 2.201-2) presents it, it is not the Pharaoh but the Egyptians who are at fault, their bitter disposition toward the Israelites being due to their envy of the latter’s prosperity, brought about by the latter’s work ethic, which they thought was to their own detriment.

As to the Pharaoh’s decree that the male babies should be put to death, the Bible (Exod. 1:8-10) clearly puts the finger of blame upon the Pharaoh, since we are told that it is he who said to his people that the Israelites were too numerous and too mighty. In Josephus’ version (*Ant.* 2.205), on the other hand, the blame is placed upon one of the Pharaoh’s sacred scribes who predicts to the king that there would be born to the Israelites one who would surpass all others in virtue and who would win everlasting renown and who would abase the sovereignty of the Egyptians. In view of this remark the reader is not likely to censure the king who, we are told (*Ant.* 2.206), was alarmed (δείσας, “was afraid”) and who, consequently, as we are reminded, on this sage’s advice (rather than on his own initiative), ordered all male children to be drowned in the river. Moreover, we are told, it was the Egyptians (rather than the Pharaoh) who were stimulated by the advice of this scribe to exterminate the Israelites.

In addition, Josephus’ Pharaoh is portrayed as less cruel than his biblical counterpart, inasmuch as in the Bible (Exod. 1:15) we read that he gave orders to the Hebrew midwives to put the male children to death, whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 2.206) specifically says that the orders were given to Egyptian midwives and explains that the Pharaoh proceeded in this way because he realized that women who were his compatriots were not likely to transgress his will. If the Pharaoh enforces his decree by declaring (*Ant.* 2.207) that those mothers who ventured stealthily to save their offspring are to be put to death along with their babes the reader might feel at least some understanding for such a measure in view of the importance of obedience to the

¹ Balsdon 1979, 68-69 and 271, nn. 61-74.

law, just as the reader of Sophocles' *Antigone* must identify to some degree with Creon's position, inasmuch as non-obedience to the law, even if one feels the law to be unjust or immoral, is an invitation to something even worse, namely anarchy. Even if this Pharaoh, as we shall see, lacks self-control in his personal behavior and in this respect is subject to censure, he, *qua* ruler, must be obeyed.

We see a very human side to the Pharaoh, and consequently have much more sympathy for him, in Josephus' depiction (*Ant.* 2.232-33), unparalleled in the biblical text (Exod. 2:10), of the Pharaoh's affectionate clasping (προσστερνισόμενος) of the infant Moses when the Pharaoh's daughter presents him to him. Furthermore, when Moses playfully tears off the king's crown and flings it to the ground (*Ant.* 2.233), the sacred scribe who had predicted that a child's birth would lead to the abasement of the Egyptian empire rushes forward to kill Moses, warning the king of the danger to him if he allows this child to live. At this point we are told not only that the king's daughter, who was raising Moses, snatched him away to safety but that the king himself delayed to slay him out of a hesitation induced by G-d. The fact of such hesitation, even if induced by G-d, would clearly redound to the Pharaoh's credit in the eyes of Josephus' readers.

Josephus introduces an episode (*Ant.* 2.238-53), completely unparalleled in the Bible, in which the Pharaoh chooses Moses as general to halt an invasion of Egypt by the much feared Ethiopians. That the Pharaoh should have chosen an Israelite² for such a difficult and crucial task is clearly complimentary to the Pharaoh and shows that he is not prejudiced against the Israelites. Moreover, lest the reader think that the Pharaoh is deliberately choosing Moses in order to bring about his death in battle, the Pharaoh, we are told (*Ant.* 2.242), swore to do him no injury and reproached those knavish priests who had urged him to put Moses to death as an enemy.³

² That the Pharaoh is aware that Moses is an Israelite is clear from Josephus' statement (*Ant.* 2.241) that when the Egyptians had recourse to oracles and divinations, they were told "to take the Hebrew for their ally." The fact that the Egyptians hoped to do away with Moses by guile through entrusting him with this extremely dangerous mission is a further indication that they were aware of Moses' origin.

³ In this reassurance to Moses Josephus' Pharaoh is contrasted with the portrait in Artapanus (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.7), who says that the Pharaoh became jealous and sought to kill Moses, finding an opportunity to do so by naming Moses to the extremely dangerous position of commander in the war against the Ethio-

The scenes in which Moses and Aaron approach the Pharaoh asking him to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt certainly offered Josephus opportunities to condemn the Pharaoh. And yet, we find him evidencing rather a certain amount of understanding for the Pharaoh's situation, since, we are told in an extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 2.281), he had only recently been promoted to the throne. One might be reminded of the similar understanding that one might well feel for Zeus in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (312), where, we are told, he, too, is new to the throne and so presumably should be given a greater opportunity to establish his rule more firmly.

When Moses asks the Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave, Josephus (*Ant.* 2.284) rather plausibly explains the Pharaoh's angry reaction by having him charge that Moses "had once escaped from servitude in Egypt and had now effected his return by fraud and was trying to impose on him by juggleries and magic."

Moreover, Josephus evokes a certain sympathy for the Pharaoh's position, inasmuch as he depicts him (*Ant.* 2.295) as perplexed (ἀμηχανήσας) and apprehensive (δείσας) for the Egyptians; it is his concern for his people that leads him to permit the Israelites to depart after the plague of the water which had turned to blood. Again, after the plague of lice, it is fear of the destruction of his people, according to Josephus' addition (*Ant.* 2.301), that induces the Pharaoh to listen to reason (σωφρονεῖν). Even when, after the plague of the blood, the Pharaoh is termed stubborn in refusing to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt, Josephus (*Ant.* 2.296) carefully remarks that the Pharaoh was no longer (οὐκέτι) willing to be wise (σωφρονεῖν, "moderate," "temperate," "reasonable"), the implication being that he had previously exercised such wisdom and moderation. When, finally, the Pharaoh does allow the Israelites to depart he is motivated by fear (*Ant.* 2.290) rather than by wisdom (φρονήσσει, "intelligence," "sagacity," "understanding," "prudence").

To be sure, when the Pharaoh, after the plague of the lice, decides to listen to reason and to allow the Israelites to leave, Josephus (*Ant.* 2.301) remarks that in his depravity he did so only in half measure; but, we may remark, while the word here translated as "depravity," φανυλότητος, may mean "poorness," "want of accomplishments or

pians. When the war is over the Pharaoh welcomes him back in words but plots against him in deed (*ap. Eus., Pr. Ev.* 9.27.11-13).

skill,” or “lack of judgment,” it may also be used in a good sense of plainness and simplicity of life. In any case, it is surely significant that Josephus does not here use any of the available words for wickedness, whether κακία or πονηρία or κακουργία or πανουργία, in reference to the Pharaoh’s motivation. Moreover, realizing that the Pharaoh’s confessions of guilt after the plague of the hail (Exod. 9:27-30) and the plague of the locusts (Exod. 10:16) were insincere and thus would certainly not redound to his credit, Josephus omits them completely. If, finally, the Pharaoh is punished, it is not because his heart was hardened (Exod. 8:19) but rather because, in Josephus’ phraseology (*Ant.* 2.302), that would certainly have appealed to the Stoics in his audience, he exasperated G-d in thinking to impose upon His providence (πρόνοια), “as though it were Moses and not He who was punishing Egypt on the Hebrews’ behalf.”

Finally, however, in an addition to the Bible (Exod. 12:30), whereas previously the Pharaoh had failed to listen to his servants (Exod. 10:7), he (*Ant.* 2.313) does give heed to his people and returns to his senses and orders the Israelites to depart. And when the Pharaoh decides to pursue the Israelites it is because he is mortified at the thought that it was the jugglery (γοητεία, “magic,” “wizardry,” “deceit”) of Moses that had brought about their departure (*Ant.* 2.320). If we may judge from Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, such alleged wizardry would have aroused considerable sympathy for its victim, the Pharaoh. In any case, whereas in the Bible (Exod. 14:5) both the Pharaoh and his servants have a change of heart after the Israelites leave Egypt and whereas (Exod. 14:8) it is specifically the Pharaoh whose heart is hardened and who takes the initiative to pursue the Israelites, in Josephus (*Ant.* 2.320) it is the Egyptians alone who repent of having let the Israelites leave and who resolve to set out after them.⁴

3. JETHRO’S QUALITIES OF CHARACTER, ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS

Josephus, in his portrait of the non-Jew Jethro, is particularly concerned to answer the charge that Jews hate non-Jews. Unlike Philo and the rabbis, who are divided in their views of Jethro, Josephus

⁴ We find a similar shift of blame from the Pharaoh to the Egyptians regarding who takes the initiative in pursuing the Israelites in Pseudo-Philo’s *Bib. Ant.* (10.2, 10.6), which so often parallels Josephus. See Feldman 1971, lviii-lxvi.

presents a uniformly favorable picture of him. In the first place, when the reader is introduced to him, he is described as a priest held in high veneration (πολλῆς ἡξιομένου τιμῆς) by the people of the country (*Ant.* 2.258). Presumably, this is intended to counteract the implication of the biblical text that the shepherds drove away Jethro's daughters (Exod. 2:17), which, we may assume, they would not have done if they had had respect for Jethro himself. This would also counter the impression found in the rabbinic tradition, if, as seems likely, Josephus was acquainted with at least some of it, that Jethro was *persona non grata* among his neighbors and was even excommunicated for giving up his idolatry (*Exod. Rab.* 1.32).

Connected with the quality of φιλανθρωπία is the virtue of showing gratitude, in accordance with the definition of justice as rendering every man his due (Plato, *Rep.* 1.332A). In the case of Jethro, Josephus elaborates considerably on the scene in which Jethro is represented as saying to his daughters after they tell him how Moses had delivered them from the shepherds and had drawn water for them, "Where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread" (Exod. 2:20). In Josephus' version the shepherds' insolence (ὑβρις) is spelled out as such, as is Moses' beneficence (εὐεργετηθεῖσαι); and Jethro specifically bids his daughters not to allow such benevolence (εὐποιία) to be in vain or unrewarded and to bring Moses to him so as to receive the gratitude (χάρις) that was his due. He commends his daughters for their zeal (σπουδή) for their benefactor (εὐεργετηκώς) (*Ant.* 2.261). In the Bible there is no statement that Jethro actually thanked Moses; we are told merely that Moses was content to dwell with Jethro (Exod. 2:21). In contrast, Josephus' Jethro, upon Moses' arrival, tells him of his (Jethro's) daughters testimony to the help that he had rendered and expresses admiration for his gallantry (ἄρετή). He adds that it is not upon those who had no sense of gratitude for these meritorious services (ἀναισθήτους εὐεργεσιῶν) that he had bestowed this help but on persons well able to requite a favor, "indeed to outdo by the amplitude of the reward the measure of the benefit" (*Ant.* 2.262). In fact, in a startling addition to the biblical text Josephus even adopts Moses as his son (*Ant.* 2.263).⁵ The key point is that Jethro

⁵ Rappaport 1930, 100-101, notes that elsewhere Josephus states that Abraham adopted Lot (*Ant.* 1.154) and that neither this adoption nor that by Jethro is men-

is actually identified here as a barbarian; clearly, Josephus' point is to stress that, far from being prejudiced against barbarians, actually, the greatest leader of the Jews married a barbarian and that he was even adopted by a barbarian. In terms of the startling impact upon a reader, only Alexander the Great's marriage with a Persian princess would be comparable. We may also add that not only does Jethro show gratitude but he appreciates it when others show it. Thus we are told that when he meets Moses he is profuse in eulogies of the Israelites for their gratitude (εὐχαριστία) to Moses (*Ant.* 3.65).

We may well ask what was the motive and what was the setting for Jethro's visit to Moses (Exod. 18:1). In the Bible this comes immediately after the description of the Israelites' victory over the Amalekites (Exod. 17:8-16); and we are told that Jethro heard of all that G-d had done for Moses and for Israel and, in particular, how G-d had brought the Israelites out of Egypt (Exod. 18:1). In the rabbinic tradition there is a debate as to exactly when Jethro came to congratulate Moses. The view of Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, adhering to the order in the biblical text, is that Jethro heard of the battle with the Amalekites, which is mentioned immediately before this passage, as we have noted; the view of Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedat is that he heard of the miraculous dividing of the Red Sea, since the passage refers to G-d's leading the Israelites out of Egypt; and the view of Rabbi Eleazar of Modin is that Jethro heard of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai (*b. Zeb.* 116a). The last is clearly the most difficult to sustain, inasmuch as the account of the revelation at Sinai is not to be found until after Jethro's visit (Exod. 19-20), though it is perhaps alluded to in the statement that Jethro came to Moses in the wilderness, where Moses was encamped at the mountain of G-d (Exod. 18:5). Significantly, Josephus, in his effort to build up the stature of Jethro, goes out of his way and out of the biblical order in prefacing the visit of Jethro with the remark that the Israelites had reached Mount Sinai (*Ant.* 3.62). This gives a more important setting for the visit, since it puts Jethro in immediate juxtaposition with the central event in Israelite history and makes of his visit more than a mere congratulation for military victory. Likewise, whereas the Bible says nothing about the feast that Moses arranged in honor of

tioned in the Bible. He suggests that perhaps Josephus took over into the Bible an institution known from Rome.

his father-in-law, Josephus not only does so but adds further honor to Jethro by remarking that the feast took place near the very site where Moses had seen the burning bush (*Ant.* 3.63).

One of the most delicate problems for Josephus must have been how to deal with the scene in which Jethro criticizes the way in which Moses had been administering justice (Exod. 18:14). In the Bible Jethro comes right out with his criticism: "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone?" Such a criticism must have been disconcerting for Moses, especially since there is no indication in the biblical text that Jethro took Moses aside so as to avoid embarrassing him in the presence of the Israelites. On the other hand, in Josephus' version Jethro shows real sensitivity so as to avoid embarrassing his son-in-law. We are told that when he sees the way Moses administers affairs he holds his peace (ἡσυχίαν ἦγε, "kept quiet") at the moment (τότε), inasmuch as he is reluctant to hinder any who would avail themselves of the talents of their chief. It is only after the tumult of the crowd has subsided that he then discreetly takes Moses aside and in utter privacy (συμμονωθεῖς, "be alone in private with someone") that he instructs him what it is necessary to do (*Ant.* 3.67).

4. BALAAM

In his treatment of Balaam, Josephus was clearly confronted with a dilemma: if he showed too much regard for Balaam, he would be giving credence to a pagan prophet who had sought to curse Israel; on the other hand, if he downgraded Balaam, he would betray his prejudice against non-Jewish wise men. Nevertheless, as we shall see, Josephus gives a relatively unbiased portrayal of Balaam,⁶

⁶ Vermes 1973, 174 remarks that Josephus plays down Balaam's wickedness slightly by imputing all of Balaam's wrongdoing to his desire to please Balak, apart from this specific slant, and that he shows the same general bias toward Balaam that is exhibited in the rest of the Palestinian tradition and in the New Testament. It is our argument that Josephus' positive changes are much more substantial. Interestingly, the portrayal by Pseudo-Philo (*Bib. Ant.* 18.3) is even more favorable to Balaam than is Josephus, as Baskin 1983, 99 has noted. Origen (*P. G.* 12.683D) is surprisingly even-handed, blaming him for inspiring idolatry and immorality but praising him when the word of G-d is placed in his mouth. See Braverman 1974, 41-50. The chief reason, however, why Balaam is viewed more positively in patristic literature is that he was regarded as prophesying the coming of Jesus.

especially when it is compared with what we find in Philo,⁷ in the rabbinic tradition,⁸ in the New Testament,⁹ or in the Jewish Scrip-

⁷ Philo (*Cher.* 32, *Conf.* 159, and *Migr.* 113) portrays Balaam as foolish and vain. *Det.* 71 presents him as an empty sophist, a conglomerate of incompatible and discordant notions. *Deus* 181, *Conf.* 159, and *Mut.* 202 depict him as a dealer in the vanity of unfounded conjecture and as the very antithesis of true prophecy. *Mos.* 1.263-300, offers an extremely unfavorable picture of Balaam, charging him, in particular, with avarice.

⁸ To be sure, the rabbis (*Sifre Deut.* 357.2, ed. Finkelstein, 430), commenting on the verse that there has not arisen a prophet in Israel equal to Moses (*Deut.* 34:10), assert that among the nations, such a prophet did arise, namely Balaam. In fact, the rabbis were ready to grant (*ibid.*) that in some respects Balaam was actually superior to Moses; that is, Moses did not know who spoke with him, whereas Balaam did know; moreover, Moses did not know when G-d would speak with him until he was actually addressed by G-d, whereas Balaam knew in advance (*Sifre Deut.* 357.2). The reason, say the rabbis, why G-d raised Balaam to such heights was so that the Gentiles would not be able to say that if they had had a prophet of the stature of Moses they would have accepted the Torah (*Seder Eliyahu Rab.* 26, ed. Freedman, p. 142). Indeed, an anonymous rabbinic tradition regarded the Balaam episode as so important that it states that Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam (*b.B. Bat.* 14b), thus singling it out as a separate book distinct from the rest of the Torah. But even those rabbinic passages which acknowledge his greatness as a prophet denigrate Balaam for his greed, envy, immorality, and bestiality (cf. *b.Sanh.* 105a, where he is said to have committed bestiality with his ass) and depict him as liable to all four of the modes of capital punishment (*b.Sanh.* 106b). He is known as Balaam the Wicked (*b.Sanh.* 105b) and, indeed, is looked upon as the very epitome of wickedness because of his skill in being able to gauge the exact moment when G-d becomes angry (*b.Sanh.* 106b). He is, thus, worse than any of those who are denied a portion in the world to come (*m.Sanh.* 10:2). His greatest wickedness consisted of his seeking to strike at the very heart of the Israelite religion by cursing the Israelites that they should have no synagogues or schools (*b.Sanh.* 105b). Indeed, he is identified as one of Pharaoh's counsellors who advised him to cast into the Nile River the new-born male children of the Israelites (*b.Sanh.* 106a). The Mishnah berates him for his evil eye, his haughty spirit, and his proud soul (*m.'Abot* 5:19). Though he was at first an interpreter of dreams and then a prophet, he sank to the level of sorcerer (*Tan. B* 4.134). There are even those who find a veiled reference to Jesus in the passage that states that a *min* (heretic) asked Rabbi Hanina how old Balaam was, whereupon he replied that since, according to the Psalm (55:24), "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," it follows that Balaam was 33 or 34 years (since a normal lifetime is seventy years), whereupon the *min* stated that he had seen Balaam's Chronicle in which he read that Balaam the lame was 33 years old when Phinehas the Robber put him to death (*b.Sanh.* 106b). Coincidentally, Jesus was 33 years old at the time of his crucifixion. The theory, however, that Balaam is Jesus, that the Chronicle is the Gospel, and that Phinehas is Pilate has been generally rejected. See, for example, Ginzberg 1928, 6:123-24, n. 722; and Klausner 1925, 32-35.

⁹ Cf., e.g. 2 Pet. 2:15: "Forsaking the right way, they [the heretics] have gone astray; they have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a dumb ass spoke

tures themselves.¹⁰ Most significantly, however, he shifts the focus from Balaam's personality to the historical, political, and military confrontation between the Israelites and their enemies in his time. Indeed, to a considerable degree, the Balaam episode, as described by Josephus, functions as a prologue to the war against the Midianites. Furthermore, Josephus employs the prophecies of Balaam to present, in a veiled form to be sure, his own vision of the future of the Jewish people.

Josephus avoids blaming Balaam by declaring, in an addition to the biblical text (Num. 23:4), that Balaam realized that his prophecy was governed by inflexible Fate (*Ant.* 4.113).

There was almost no quality more deeply appreciated in antiquity than hospitality. Hence, the reader will form a distinctly positive picture of Balaam by virtue of the hospitality which he shows in Josephus' additions to the biblical account. Thus, whereas the latter simply asserts that Balaam told Balak's envoys to remain overnight (Num. 22:8), Josephus elaborates that Balaam received them in friendly fashion (φιλοφρόνως, "lovingly," "cordially," affectionately," "benevolently," "kindly," "politely," "joyfully," "gladly"—the same word that is used with regard to the hospitality shown by David [*Ant.* 7.30]) and with hospitality (ξενία) (*Ant.* 4.105). Josephus then adds that Balaam, the gracious host, gave them supper.

The portrait of Balaam is likewise made more positive by Josephus' addition to Balak's rebuke of Balaam after the latter had praised the Israelites. Whereas the Bible says, very simply, that Balak told Balaam neither to denounce them nor to bless them (Num. 23:25), Josephus expands this considerably and dramatically by describing Balak's fuming (δυσχεραίνοντος, "feeling displeasure," "being indignant," "being annoyed," "being angry," "being dismayed," "being vexed," "being distressed," "being troubled") at Balaam and

with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness." The same theme of Balaam's unholy search for gain is to be found in Jude 1:11: "Woe to them [i.e. false teachers], for they walk in the way of Cain and abandon themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error." Finally, in the seer's vision of Jesus in Rev. 2:14 there is a bitter reference to Balaam as the one who inspired the Israelites to perform the cardinal sins of idolatry and immorality.

¹⁰ When Balaam appears after the scene in Num. 22-24 in which he is the central figure, he is depicted in negative tones. Thus in Deut. 23:5 we read that G-d would not listen to Balaam but, instead, turned his curse into a blessing. Almost exactly the same statement is found in Josh. 24:10 and in Neh. 13:2.

his accusing him of transgressing the agreement according to which he (Balak) had obtained his services (*Ant.* 4.118).

Moreover, far from imputing anti-Jewish hatred to Balaam, Josephus presents him as himself counselling the envoys who had been sent by Balak to renounce the hatred that they bore to the Israelites (*Ant.* 4.106). By contrast, the rabbinic view (*Tan. Balak* 6, *Midr. Aggadah* on Num. 22:13 [ed. Buber, 2.134]) and that of Philo (*Mos.* 1.266) is that Balaam was not at all sincere in his initial refusal to accompany the envoys. In the Bible as well, Balaam does not give advice, as Josephus reports him doing here, on his own but states merely that it is G-d who has refused to allow him to accompany the envoys (Num. 22:13).

Likewise, Josephus' favorable picture of Balaam is enhanced by the fact that, unlike the rabbinic tradition, which connects Balaam's desire to gratify the ambassadors with his hatred of the Israelites,¹¹ Josephus has Balaam explicitly inquire of G-d concerning His intention with regard to the invitation of the envoys (*Ant.* 4.105). When G-d informs him that he is not to curse the Israelites (Num. 22:12), in the biblical version Balaam tells the envoys that they must return, inasmuch as G-d refuses to allow him to accompany them (Num. 22:13). To be sure, in Josephus' version Balaam might seem to be even more anti-Israelite, inasmuch as he makes plain to the envoys his ever-readiness (προθυμία) and zeal (σπουδή) to comply with their request to curse the Israelites, which, however, G-d has forbidden him to do (*Ant.* 4.105). From this statement we see, nevertheless, that Balaam's motive is not actually hatred for the Israelites but rather loyalty to his sovereign, Balak. Moreover, in stating that G-d has vetoed the envoys' request Josephus has him piously add to the biblical narrative a statement of his recognition that the G-d who refused him is the G-d who had brought him to his high renown for the sake of truth and its prediction (πρόρρησις).¹²

Josephus' favorable portrayal of Balaam may also be discerned in

¹¹ *Tan. Balak* 5, 8, 12; *Num. Rab.* 20.12, 20.19; *Seder Eliyahu Rab.* 29 (ed. Friedmann, p. 142), *Aggadat Bereshit* 65 (ed. Buber, p. 131).

¹² The fact that Josephus here uses the word πρόρρησις does not indicate that he regards Balaam as a prophet comparable to the Hebrew prophets, inasmuch as πρόρρησις is employed by him of predictions in a dream (e.g., Joseph's dream, *Ant.* 2.15; the butler's dream, *Ant.* 2.65; the baker's dream, *Ant.* 2.72; Amram's dream, *Ant.* 2.217) or of predictions in general (e.g., of the Pharaoh's seer, *Ap.* 1.258).

the scene in which he is said, in an extra-biblical addition, to have received a magnificent reception from Balak (*Ant.* 4.112). According to the Bible, Balak begins by berating Balaam, asking why he had not come to him hitherto and whether the reason was that Balak was not able to honor him sufficiently (Num. 22:37). Josephus, on the other hand, is here clearly stressing that the relationship between Balak and Balaam is, in the first instance, one motivated by friendship rather than by their hatred of the Israelites. In contrast, we find the rabbis describing the reception which Balak gave to Balaam as very cheap and poor;¹³ and Philo, who, to be sure, remarks that the interview began with friendly greetings, proceeds immediately to note that these were followed by Balak's censure of Balaam for his slowness and failure to come more readily (*Mos.* 1.275).

Again, the meeting is presented by Josephus not as an occasion for the parties to express their hatred for the Israelites but rather for them to plan their military defeat. Thus, it is the Israelites' camp (στρατόπεδον, *Ant.* 4.112, clearly a military term) that Balak and Balaam go to inspect, rather than, as the Bible would have it, "a portion of the people" (Num. 22:41). Similarly, the mountain to which they, in an extra-biblical addition, go in order to inspect the Israelites' camp is located by reference to its distance from the camp (*Ant.* 4.112). Moreover, it is implied in the biblical text that it was Balak who took the initiative to escort Balaam (Num. 22:41), whereas in Josephus it is Balaam who apparently asks to be conducted to one of the mountains in order to inspect the disposition—which would certainly include their fighting capacity—of the Israelites' camp (*Ant.* 4.112).

Indeed, Balaam is depicted in Josephus as succumbing only to persistent pressure by Balak (*Ant.* 4.107). Thus the Bible states very simply that Balak sent yet again princes, more in number and more honorable than those whom he had sent previously, to ask Balaam to come to him (Num. 22:15). In Josephus Balak's entreaties (δέσεις, "supplication," "plea") are urgent and persistent, while Balaam agrees to consult G-d anew not out of audacity or greed, but only in order to give these new envoys some gratification (*Ant.* 4.107). Indeed, it is this desire to gratify Balak and his representatives that Josephus cites as Balaam's motive in several other additions to the biblical

¹³ 'Abot R. Nat. B. 23 (ed. Schechter, p. 48); *Tanḥuma Balak* 11.

text (*Ant.* 4.121, 123, 127). Even when Balaam, instructed by G-d to accompany them, agrees to do so, Josephus, in an extra-biblical addition, not only does not blame Balaam but even seems to castigate G-d, since we are told that Balaam did not realize that G-d had deluded him in giving him this order (*Ant.* 4.107).¹⁴ To be sure, Josephus proceeds to defend G-d's action by remarking that He was angry that Balaam should have tempted Him thus a second time; Philo, however, puts Balaam himself in a more unfavorable light by stating that his second consultation of G-d was once again pure pretense (*Mos.* 1.268). Even Balak emerges in a more favorable light, inasmuch as Josephus totally omits the attempt made by Balak, according to the Bible, to influence Balaam with the promise of power and money in order to get him to curse the Israelites (*Num.* 22:17-18 vs. *Ant.* 4.107).

Josephus makes every attempt to depict Balaam's purpose in cursing the Israelites as due to his friendship with Balak rather than to hatred of the Israelites or greed, the motives that Philo (*Mos.* 1.267-68), the New Testament (2 Pet. 2:15, Jude 11), and rabbinic literature (*m.'Abot* 5.19, *'Abot R. Nat.* A 29 (ed. Schechter, p. 88), and *'Abot R. Nat.* B 49 (ed. Schechter, p. 125) attribute to him. Thus, in an extra-biblical addition, Balaam declares that it was his earnest prayer to do no despite to Balak's desire to have him curse the Israelites but that G-d is mightier than his own wish "to do this favor" (*Ant.* 4.120-21). Again, he reiterates that it was his earnest desire to gratify Balak and the Midianites and that, indeed, it would be unseemly to reject their request (*Ant.* 4.123). Hence, when, against the biblical version, in which it is Balak who proposes to Balaam a second attempt to curse the Israelites (*Num.* 23:27), Josephus has Balaam himself suggest that new altars be erected and additional sacrifices be offered (*Ant.* 4.123). The change is intended to depict that Balaam's motive is his close friendship with Balak.

In fact, whereas in the Bible, when the angel rebukes him, Balaam responds penitently, declaring that he had sinned unknowingly and offering to return home (*Num.* 22:34), Philo remarks that Balaam was dissimulating, "for why should he ask about a matter so evident?" and

¹⁴ As Baskin 1983, 97 has noted, Josephus here appears to agree with the rabbinic tradition (*Num. Rab.* 20.9, 20.11) in indicating that it was G-d who had led Balaam astray by directing him to accede to the request of the envoys.

that his real intention continued to be to do harm to the Israelites (*Mos.* 1.274).¹⁵ In Josephus' version there is no indication of any such lack of sincerity on the part of Balaam; in fact, in an extra-biblical remark, the blame is actually put upon G-d, who has to exhort him to pursue the way on which he has set out (*Ant.* 4.111).

In any case, the picture painted of Balaam in the incident of the speaking ass is much harsher in the Bible than in Josephus; in the former, Balaam is angry (*Num.* 22:27), and even threatens to kill the animal (*Num.* 22:29), whereas Josephus omits both points; and, indeed, Balaam is, in effect, excused on the ground that he had failed to understand that it was G-d's purpose that kept the ass from serving him on his mission (*Ant.* 4.109).¹⁶ Moreover, whereas in the Bible the ass speaks in direct discourse reproaching Balaam (*Num.* 22:30), the strength of the ass' rebuke is considerably diminished by Josephus' mere report of it (*Ant.* 4.109).

5. THE REHABILITATION OF EGLON

Ehud's assassination of Eglon presented Josephus with at least two problems of major importance. In the first place, Josephus is very sensitive, as we have noted, to the charge that Jews hate non-Jews. It is, therefore, significant that in mentioning King Eglon's subjugation of the Israelites Josephus not only castigates the latter for doing what was evil in the sight of the L-rd (*Judg.* 3:12) but also blames them for their lack of a functioning government (*ἀναρχία*) and for their failure to obey the laws (*Ant.* 5.185), a theme likewise mentioned in Josephus' description of the state of the Israelites just before the judgeship of Keniaz, Ehud's predecessor (*Ant.* 5.179), and repeated in his account of the behavior of the Israelites shortly after the death of Ehud (*Ant.* 5.198). Josephus then adds that it is out of his contempt (*καταφρονήσαντα*) for their (Israel's) disorder (*ἄκοσμία*) that Eglon made war upon them.¹⁷ Significantly, in the Bible Eglon is depicted

¹⁵ So also the rabbinic tradition (*Num. Rab.* 20.14-15).

¹⁶ In the Targumim it is the ass herself which reproaches Balaam for failing to understand the ways of G-d, whereas Josephus states, in an editorial-like comment, that Balaam failed to understand G-d's purpose.

¹⁷ The Latin version of the *Antiquities* (5.186) speaks of Eglon as *despiciens inhonestam conversationem*, that is, having contempt for the shameful ("dishonorable," "disgraceful") intercourse of the Israelites; but it seems unlikely that Eglon would despise

as the means by which G-d punishes the Israelites for their neglect of Him (Judg. 3:12), whereas in Josephus Eglon acts on his own, with no mention of G-d's role, in taking advantage of the Israelites' anarchy (*Ant.* 5.186).

If, then, Eglon inflicts bodily injury (κάκωσις)¹⁸ upon the Israelites, it is occasioned, according to Josephus, in an extra-biblical comment, by the anarchy (ἀναρχία, *Ant.* 6.84) which prevailed after Joshua's death and which represents the very opposite of the aristocratic rule that prevailed under Moses and Joshua and that was restored by Ehud after the eighteen years of anarchy (Judg. 3:14). Josephus equates such anarchy with disorder (ἄκοσμία) and contempt (ὑβρις) of G-d and the laws, as we see in his remark that after the judgeship of Jair the Israelites degenerated into such a state before the appearance of another true leader, Jephthah (*Ant.* 5.255).

The above theme of the dreadful consequences of anarchy and civil strife pervades much of Josephus' paraphrase of the *Antiquities*. Furthermore, one might almost say that that same theme is the central motif of the *Jewish War*. Josephus is particularly concerned to emphasize the importance of showing respect for the legitimate ruler of a nation, even if that ruler may be guilty of performing reprehensible acts. One may readily understand why Josephus adopts this position, inasmuch as he was the recipient of a multitude of favors from Roman autocrats.

In the case of Eglon, we may note that the Bible remarks that he formed an alliance with Ammon and Amalek (Judg. 3:13). This would surely diminish, at least for Josephus' Jewish readers, their regard for Eglon, inasmuch as the Ammonites were almost constantly at war with the Israelites and inasmuch as the Amalekites, in particular, were the people who, though unprovoked, had attacked the Israelites during the latter's sojourn in the desert after the Exodus.

the Israelites for their intercourse with foreign women. Likewise, the Latin version states that Eglon *praesumeret*, that is, took the initiative, in attacking the Israelites; but it seems more likely that he was reacting to the Israelites' anarchy rather than that he made a preemptive strike against them.

¹⁸ Thackeray 1934, *Ant.* 5.187 translates οὐδὲν τῆς εἰς τὸ πλῆθος κακώσεως παρέλπιεν as "he ruthlessly molested the people," but this rendering is at variance with Josephus' care to avoid downgrading non-Jews, especially their rulers. The more literal—and more likely—translation would thus seem to be that "he omitted nothing of bodily injury (κάκωσις, "devastation," "ruin") against the multitude."

Josephus, realizing that mention of such an alliance would demean the status of Eglon, very carefully omits all mention of it.

Alter suggests that the Bible is actually poking fun at Eglon's stupidity; but Josephus has too much regard for legitimate rulers, as we have noted, to give such an impression.¹⁹ We may note that Josephus totally omits reference to the fact, which might well be a source of ridicule, that Eglon was very fat (Judg. 3:17), as well as the statement that when Ehud killed him the fat closed upon the blade (Judg. 3:22).²⁰ Moreover, whereas the Bible mentions the gruesome detail that when Ehud thrust his sword into Eglon's belly his excrement came out (Judg. 3:22), Josephus passes over this indelicate remark (*Ant.* 5.193). In particular, we may note that whereas the biblical pericope mentions that Eglon was defecating (Judg. 3:24)²¹ and therefore was not interrupted by his servants, Josephus, finding such a detail unseemly in reference to a monarch, explains the failure of the servants to come to his aid sooner by remarking that they thought that he had fallen asleep (*Ant.* 5.193).

6. JOSEPHUS' PORTRAYAL OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, BELSHAZZAR, AND DARIUS

Most remarkably, Josephus attempts to depict the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who was responsible for the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the First Temple, more positively.

In connection with Daniel, Josephus, in an effort to show broadmindedness toward non-Jews, seeks to shed more favorable light upon

¹⁹ Alter 1981, 19-20.

²⁰ To be sure, in the former passage (Judg. 3:17), the LXX, in both major versions, reads that Eglon was ἀστεῖος (that is, "elegant," "charming," "refined," "handsome"); but in the latter passage (Judg. 3:22) it is clear that Eglon is very fat, since the Greek, again in both versions, states that when Ehud plunged his weapon into him, the fat (στέαρ) closed in upon the blade.

²¹ The Hebrew text reads מסיך הוא את-רגליו ("he is covering his feet"), but the Targum Jonathan, basing itself on *b.Yeb.* 103a, understands this as a euphemism for moving one's bowels. The LXX (version B) reads: ἀποκενοῖ τοὺς πόδας, that is, "he is draining [exhausting] his feet," clearly a euphemism for evacuating. Version A reads: ἀποχωρήσει τοῦ κοιτῶνος, that is, "in the retreat of the bed-chamber"; but the word ἀποχωρήσει also means "voidance" and is used especially of excretions.

Nebuchadnezzar.²² Thus, in an extra-biblical comment not found in the biblical text (Dan. 1:3), he remarks that Nebuchadnezzar selected not only Jews for training in Chaldean wisdom but also those from the other nations whom he had subdued (*Ant.* 10.187). Whereas the Bible says that the youths were taught the learning and language of the Chaldeans (i.e. of the Babylonians) (Dan. 1:4), Josephus presents Nebuchadnezzar as less chauvinistic in that he has the youths taught the learning not only of the Chaldeans but also of the natives (*Ant.* 10.187). From the biblical narrative it would seem that Nebuchadnezzar was utterly arbitrary in insisting that his wise men not only interpret his dream but also reveal the details of the dream itself to him (Dan. 2:5). Josephus saves Nebuchadnezzar from the charge of capriciousness by explaining that he had simply forgotten the dream and by then adding in the next sentence that he told the Chaldeans and Magi and soothsayers, apparently apologetically, that he had *happened* (συμβεβηκός) to forget it (*Ant.* 10.195).

Josephus gives further evidence of his concern for non-Jews in his version of Daniel's speech to Nebuchadnezzar interpreting the latter's dream (*Ant.* 10.204). After all, Nebuchadnezzar had just arbitrarily condemned to death all the wise men of his realm simply because they had not been able to tell him the contents and interpretation of his dream. It is only in Josephus that we see the latter's concern for protecting Nebuchadnezzar's reputation, inasmuch as he remarks that no less than his sorrow for the wise men was Daniel's regard for Nebuchadnezzar's good name, inasmuch as the latter had unjustly ordered these men to be put to death (*Ant.* 10.204). Though these wise men were, with the exception of himself and his companions, all non-Jews, Daniel then proceeds to describe them all as fine and excellent men—καλοὺς κάγαθούς, "perfect gentlemen"—and upholds their reputation for wisdom by asserting that the task that the king had imposed upon them was by no means within the scope of human wisdom, since it demanded of them something that only G-d could do (*Ant.* 10.204).

Finally, Josephus also rehabilitates Nebuchadnezzar by remarking, in an addition to the biblical text (Dan. 2:46), that after Daniel had

²² The rabbinic tradition (*b.B. Bat.* 4a) says that Daniel was punished because he gave advice to Nebuchadnezzar.

interpreted his dream correctly, Nebuchadnezzar hailed him in a manner in which men worship G-d (*Ant.* 10.211).²³

We see Josephus' attempt to save Nebuchadnezzar's reputation in his total omission of the passage in which, after Daniel's colleagues have been saved from the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar issues what would seem to be an incredibly cruel decree that those who speak anything against the G-d of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are to be torn limb from limb and their houses laid in ruin (*Dan.* 3:29). Such a sudden turnabout in attitude would certainly not redound to the credit of a great king. Hence, it is not surprising that Josephus completely omits this passage (*Ant.* 10.215).

Josephus must have felt embarrassed about reproducing the gruesome and unseemly details of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (*Dan.* 4:4-18) in which he imagines that a beast's mind replaced his own (*Dan.* 4:16). The biblical narrative then describes a lurid scene, immortalized by William Blake's painting, in which, in fulfillment of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men, his hair grew like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws, and he ate grass like an ox (*Dan.* 4:30). In fact, the Bible on three occasions adds this most gruesome of details, i.e., that he ate grass like an ox (*Dan.* 4:25, 32, 33). Such a grotesque and pitiful figure would hardly be consonant with the standing of a monarch; and Josephus greatly condenses the scriptural account of the dream (*Ant.* 10.216). In particular, he omits the biblical statement, presumably as unbecoming a great monarch, that the dream had made him afraid (*Dan.* 4:5). He says merely that the king dreamt that he would make his home among the beasts rather than that he himself would take the form of a beast. He then, without indicating Nebuchadnezzar's physical state during this time, adds that the latter spent seven years in the wilderness (*Ant.* 10.217). Josephus, the loyal citizen, further remarks that during this period no one ventured to seize the government, the implication being that the king was not totally incapacitated or that, in any case, he had left the government so well organized and in such good hands that he was able to resume the royal power as soon as he emerged from his seven-year exile. Whereas in the Bible

²³ Cf. Hartman and di Lella 1978, who comment on the parallel between Nebuchadnezzar becoming the servant of G-d and Alexander greeting the high priest reverently (*Ant.* 11.329-39).

Nebuchadnezzar praises G-d after his kingdom is restored to him (Dan. 4:31-34), in Josephus' version he appears in a still better light because, while still in a state of indisposition, he prays to G-d that he may recover his kingdom (*Ant.* 10.217).

Finally, Josephus realizes that, despite all his retouches, the Babylonian monarch still does not appear in the best light; and so, deeply apologetic for including even this watered-down version, at this point he reminds his readers that they should not reproach him for carrying out his program (*Ant.* 10.218), proclaimed in his preface, of merely translating from the original text (*Ant.* 1.5) and neither adding to nor subtracting from that narrative (*Ant.* 1.17). However, to add credence to his work, Josephus quotes from extra-biblical non-Jewish sources, notably Berossus, and cites (*Ant.* 10.227) three other authors—Megasthenes, Diocles, and Philostratus—with regard to Nebuchadnezzar, as corroborating the biblical narrative (*Ant.* 10. 219-27). And when, like the Bible, Josephus recalls the above episode, whereas the Bible once again paints a grotesque picture of an insane Nebuchadnezzar having the mind of a beast and dwelling with wild asses, being fed grass like an ox (Dan. 5:21), Josephus says, much more delicately, that his way of living (δίαίτα, “nourishment,” “diet”) had been changed to that of beasts, with no indication of actual insanity (*Ant.* 10.242).

Nebuchadnezzar's “son” Belshazzar is, to be sure, according to Josephus punished severely by G-d (*Ant.* 10.247), but this is because he not only had drunk from the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple (as the Bible [Dan. 5:23] indicates), but also had grievously blasphemed G-d (*Ant.* 10.233, 242). Even so, however, Belshazzar emerges more favorably. In particular, whereas the Bible states that Belshazzar commanded that Daniel be given the various honors that he had promised him (Dan. 5:29), Josephus adds that he did so despite the fact that Daniel had prophesied doom for him (*Ant.* 10.246). He then notes Belshazzar's reasoning, namely that the prophecy was intended for himself and was in no way attributable to the one who had interpreted it, and that, in any case, Daniel was a good and just man.

As to Darius, the Bible asserts that he signed his name to an edict forbidding any petition directed toward any god or man other than himself for thirty days (Dan. 6:7, 9). One might well wonder why he should have gone along with such an arbitrary ruling. Josephus, clearly aware of this problem, explains that Darius had approved

of the decree only because he had been misled by his advisers (*Ant.* 10.254). Josephus likewise protects Darius' reputation by having him not merely express the hope, as does the Bible (Dan. 6:16), that Daniel's G-d would save him and that he would suffer no harm from the beasts but also, more positively, by having him bid Daniel to bear his fate with good courage (*Ant.* 10.258). Moreover, the fact that he had thrown into the lions' den not only his enemies but also their innocent wives and children (Dan. 6:24) would cast discredit upon Darius, and it is therefore significant that Josephus omits this detail (*Ant.* 10.262).

7. JOSEPHUS' PORTRAIT OF AHASUERUS²⁴

What is most striking about Josephus' version of Ahasuerus is that there is not even a single hint in it that is negative. Indeed, almost at the very beginning of the narrative, whereas the rabbis portray him as a drunkard (*b.Meg.* 12b), based, presumably, on the biblical passage (Esth. 1:10) that on the seventh day of his feast, the heart of Ahasuerus was merry with wine (*ketob leb hammelek bayyayin*), Josephus (*Ant.* 11.190) totally omits his drunkenness as the background of his order to his queen Vashti to appear at the banquet.

Moreover, most significantly, the pericope in Josephus' hands becomes an instrument for preaching the importance of obeying the law, a feature that, as we have noted, he stresses so often elsewhere. Indeed, the word νόμος ("law") appears no fewer than fourteen times in Josephus' paraphrase of the Esther story (*Ant.* 11.191, 192, 193, 195, 205, 210, 212, 217, 228, 230, 231, 238, 239, and 281); and what is particularly impressive is that in eight of these instances (*Ant.* 11.191, 195, 205, 210, 230, 231, 238, 239) neither the word νόμος nor any corresponding word is to be found in the parallel passages

²⁴ There are a number of indications that it is the Greek text that is Josephus' primary source for his version, most notably in his close paraphrase of a number of extensive additions which are found only in the Greek. Moreover, like the Greek, he repeatedly introduces the role of G-d into the narrative, whereas the very name of G-d is totally absent from the Hebrew text. We may cite as an example Esth. 6:1, where, in the Hebrew text, we read that "On that night the king could not sleep." The Greek text, introducing the role of G-d, reads, "The L-rd removed sleep from the king"; and Josephus (*Ant.* 11.248) clearly follows this text when he writes, "That night He [i.e. G-d] deprived the king of sleep."

(Esth. 1:12, 2:1, 2:14, 3:2, Add. C [*bis*], 7:2 [*bis*]) in the LXX, the prime source of his account. Again, as Josephus depicts it, so great is Ahasuerus' regard for law that, in an extra-biblical statement (*Ant.* 11.195), though he had a deep love for Vashti and clearly had a change of heart after dismissing her (the scene is reminiscent of Herod's attitude toward Mariamne after he had ordered her to be put to death), he declines to recall her because the law forbade such a reconciliation.

The biblical account (Esth. 1:12) stresses Ahasuerus' rage at Vashti's refusal to appear at the banquet when summoned by him and gives the reader the distinct impression that Ahasuerus' dismissal of Vashti was capricious; but Josephus (*Ant.* 11.191) protects the king's reputation by making it clear that he had sent for her not merely once but repeatedly. This point is reiterated (*Ant.* 11.192) by Josephus' addition that Ahasuerus said that he had been insulted (ὕβρισθείη) by her, "for though she had repeatedly been called by him to the banquet, she had not once obeyed." This arrogance is all the greater since Ahasuerus (*Ant.* 11.194) is said to have power over all men. The key word here is ὕβρισθείη—a word that his audience, brought up as they undoubtedly were, on the Greek tragedies, would have appreciated, since such insolence (ὕβρις) merited the most severe penalty. Indeed, it is this word which is repeated (*Ant.* 11.193) by Muchaios (Memucan), one of the seven Persians who were the king's closest advisers, who stress that such an insult affected not only Ahasuerus but all the Persians. Moreover, whereas the Bible (Esth. 2:1) states only that when the king's anger had abated he remembered Vashti, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.195) expands considerably on the king's sorrow for his act and thus gains greater sympathy from the reader. Indeed, we are told, in a remark that has no biblical parallel, that the king was in love (ἐρωτικῶς) with her and could not bear the separation and that he continued (διετέλει, the imperfect tense indicating repeated action) to grieve at not being able to obtain his desire. He is apparently so contrite that his friends note his unhappy state (*Ant.* 11.195) in his pining for Vashti, "which was doing him no good," and consequently advise him to cast Vashti out of his memory and to search for another wife who would please him most.

One of the embarrassing aspects of the story is that it would appear that Esther, the heroine, was actually only the favored woman in Ahasuerus' harem (Esth. 2:17). Hence, it is significant that Josephus (*Ant.* 11.202) makes it very clear that he made her his lawful

(νομίμως) wife. Here, once again, we see the emphasis on Ahasuerus as concerned with obeying the law. Indeed, whereas the biblical text (Esth. 2:16), in the LXX version, asserts that Esther was taken to Ahasuerus in the twelfth month, that is Adar, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.202) makes this the date that he actually married her.

Moreover, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.236) expands greatly in his depiction of the gentleness of Ahasuerus and of his tender concern for Esther's well-being. Thus, whereas Addition D in the Greek text indicates that when Esther fearfully, without being summoned, approached the king to invite him to her banquet, he changed his initial reaction of anger to gentleness, Josephus adds that he feared that his wife might have suffered some very serious injury through her fear, whereupon he embraced her and spoke to her endearingly and urged her to take heart and not to be afraid of a gloomy fate. Indeed, he reminds her, in another addition, that she ruled equally with himself and thus had complete security. Again, in Addition D, where the king is described as troubled when Esther faints, it is his servants who comfort her; in Josephus' version (*Ant.* 11.241), on the other hand, it is Ahasuerus who sympathetically is seized by anguish (ἄγωνία) and alarm (ταραχή) and who then takes the initiative to encourage her to be of good cheer and to hope for the best. Thus we see and admire Ahasuerus' deep love for Esther when Esther tells him that Haman plans to kill her people. At this point, in the biblical version (Esth. 7:7), we are told that Ahasuerus rose up from the banquet to go into the garden; Josephus' Ahasuerus (*Ant.* 11.265) reacts much more strongly: in his perturbation (ταραχθέντος) he actually leaps up (ἀναπηδήσαντος) from the banquet hall into the garden. He then shows his intense anger with Haman by calling him, in a further addition to the biblical text, "O basest of all men." Likewise, after Haman has been punished, in the biblical text (Esth. 8:8) Ahasuerus tells Esther to write, in his name, as seems best to her concerning the Jews, whereas Josephus' Ahasuerus (*Ant.* 11.271) shows even more concern for her when he adds his promise that nothing should be done to distress her nor any opposition be made to what she strives after.

In addition, Ahasuerus is, in a supplement to Addition E, represented (*Ant.* 11.278) as noted for his loyalty to his benevolent (εὐνοούντων, "well-disposed") friends. Furthermore, the statement (Esth. 10:1), after all the benefactions that he had performed on behalf of the Jews, that Ahasuerus then proceeded to levy a tax

upon his kingdom both by land and sea, an act that was hardly likely to endear him to his subjects, or for that matter to his readers, is significantly omitted altogether by Josephus (*Ant.* 11.296), though he otherwise follows the biblical text rather closely.

We may note the ridicule poured upon Ahasuerus by the rabbinic tradition (*b.Meg.* 12b) for his foolishness in sending out an order (*Esth.* 1:22) stating what was so obvious, namely that every man should rule in his own home. Josephus (*Ant.* 11.194) omits this statement completely and instead has Ahasuerus announce to the nations merely what had been decreed against Vashti. Furthermore, that Ahasuerus is identified in Josephus with good sense and reason is manifest from the fact that whereas in his edict in favor of the Jews Ahasuerus (*Add. E*) asserts that Haman was overcome by the pride of his station, Josephus' Ahasuerus (*Ant.* 11.277) castigates Haman for not bearing his prosperity with prudent reasonableness (σώφρονι λογισμῷ), a quality which Josephus clearly feels is identified with Ahasuerus.

That Ahasuerus' concern is with his subjects is clear from the appeal that Haman (*Ant.* 11.213), in an extra-biblical remark, makes to him. "If you wish to lay up a store of good deeds (εὐεργεσίαν καταθέσθαι) with your subjects, you will give orders to destroy this nation root and branch," he says, with the obvious indication that his appeal will strike a responsive chord. Indeed, Ahasuerus is represented as the ideal ruler whose goal, in an extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 11.216), is peace and good government (εὐνομία) with the aim that his subjects may enjoy these forever. Εὐνομία, we recall, is personified as the daughter of Themis in Hesiod (*Theog.* 902), is the very title of a famous poem by Tyrtaeus (cited by Aristotle, *Pol.* 5.1.1307A), and is the goal of Plato's ideal system of education (*Rep.* 4.425A).

Furthermore, to enhance the picture of Ahasuerus as a serious and effective ruler, whereas the biblical text (*Esth.* 6:1) states merely that when the king could not sleep he had his servant read from his chronicles, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.248) adds a motive for these instructions, namely, that he did not wish to waste his wakeful hours in idleness but to use them for something of importance to his kingdom by hearing the record of deeds of those kings who were before him as well as of his own deeds. He thus shows concern for the welfare of his subjects and, in particular, his eagerness to learn from history.

Moreover, Josephus enhances the gratitude that Ahasuerus feels towards those who have done good to him. Thus, whereas in the

biblical text (Esth. 6:3), when the chronicle is read to him telling how Mordecai had saved him from the conspiracy of Bigthan and Teresh, Ahasuerus asks what honor had been bestowed upon Mordecai, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.250) adds that the reader was already passing on to another incident when Ahasuerus took the initiative to stop him in order to inquire how Mordecai had been rewarded. That, indeed, magnanimity is the quality most closely associated with Ahasuerus may be seen from the fact that whereas in the Bible (Esth. 6:6) the king asks Haman what should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor, in Josephus' version (*Ant.* 11.252) Ahasuerus asks Haman to advise him, in a manner worthy of his magnanimity (μεγαλοφροσύνης), how to honor one whom he greatly cherished.

One major obstacle to the rehabilitation of the reputation of Ahasuerus is that, after all, Ahasuerus did send out the edict condemning all the Jews to death (Esth. 3:12); but Josephus (*Ant.* 11.215) diminishes the blame accorded to Ahasuerus by remarking that it was Haman who sent out the edict in the king's name. Moreover, in a supplement to Addition E, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.275) has Ahasuerus defend himself by remarking that those who had been entrusted with the administration of the government had misled their masters by false charges and slanders and had thus persuaded them (including Ahasuerus himself) to vent their anger on people who had done no wrong. In a further addition (*Ant.* 11.276) Ahasuerus then promises that in the future he will take care not to pay attention to such slanders and accusations but rather to rely upon his own knowledge. Indeed, Ahasuerus more than makes up for his past errors by declaring (*Ant.* 11.280), in a supplement to Addition E, that it is his will that the Jews be shown every honor.

8. CONCLUSION

One of the recurring charges against Jews was that they had an implacable hatred of non-Jews. It is to answer this charge, as made by Apollonius Molon and Lysimachus (*Ap.* 2.145) and repeated by Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.5.1), that Josephus goes out of his way to stress that Jews show compassion and concern for non-Jews. Thus, in Josephus' version, Joseph sells grain to all people and not merely to native Egyptians (*Ant.* 2.94, 101). Again, Solomon, in dedicating the Temple, asks that G-d grant the prayers not only of Jews but also of non-Jews (*Ant.* 8.116-17). Whereas the biblical Jonah appears to be indifferent

to the Gentiles whom he is to warn, since we find him, at the beginning of the account, fast asleep and even, according to the LXX, snoring (Jonah 1:5), Josephus' Jonah is not asleep and, we are told, has absented himself only because he did not wish to imitate what the sailors were doing. Furthermore, when Mesha, the king of the Moabites, sacrifices his own son to his god, the Bible says nothing about the reaction of Kings Jehoshaphat and Jehoram (2 Kgs. 3:27); Josephus, on the other hand, calls attention to their humanity and compassion (*Ant.* 9.43).

In particular, unlike Philo and, on the whole, the rabbinic tradition, Josephus, in order not to offend his non-Jewish readers, goes to great lengths in an effort to rehabilitate non-Jewish leaders. Thus, Jethro is seen in a most favorable light; when he wishes to criticize the way in which Moses is administering justice, he shows remarkable sensitivity in taking him aside so as not to embarrass him. Φιλανθρωπία (“humanity”) is a quality that Josephus ascribes to Cyrus (*Ap.* 1.153) and Xerxes (*Ant.* 11.123). The other non-Jewish leaders whom Josephus presents in a more favorable light include Balaam, Eglon the king of Moab, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, Ahasuerus, and even the various pharaohs (especially the one connected with Joseph) that are mentioned in the Bible. For example, Josephus stresses Ahasuerus' undeviating respect for law (*Ant.* 11.195), portrays his relationship with Esther as a lawful marriage (*Ant.* 11.202), stresses his tender concern for her (*Ant.* 11.236), and depicts him as the ideal ruler who is totally concerned with peace, good government, and the welfare of his subjects (*Ant.* 11.216, 213). Where he does criticize non-Jewish leaders he usually puts the blame on their advisers.

Likewise, Josephus stresses the tolerance of Jews toward non-Jewish religions. In an interpretation of Exod. 22:27 [28], wherein he follows the LXX, Josephus declares that Jews are forbidden to speak ill of the religion of Gentiles out of respect for the very word “god” (*Ant.* 4.207 and *Ap.* 2.237). Thus, Josephus simply omits the passage in which Gideon, upon instructions from G-d, pulls down the altar of Baal and the Asherah tree that was worshipped beside it (Judg. 6:25-32). Inasmuch as mystery cults were held in such high regard by many non-Jews, it is not surprising that Josephus altogether omits the statement, as found in the LXX translation, that King Asa ended the mystery cults (1 Kgs. 15:12 vs. *Ant.* 8.290). Furthermore, he omits the statement that Jehoshaphat removed the pagan high places and Asherim (2 Chron. 17:6 vs. *Ant.* 9.1). He likewise omits King Jehu's

conversion of the temple of Baal into an outhouse (2 Kgs. 10:27).

In his effort to establish better relations between Jews and non-Jews Josephus emphasizes that Gentile nations are not motivated by hatred of the Jews. Thus Balak and Balaam are motivated not by Jew-hatred but rather by a desire to defeat them militarily (*Ant.* 4.112). In Josephus' view, as we have noted, Balaam's readiness to curse the Israelites is due not to hatred for them but rather to his friendship with Balak (*Ant.* 4.120-21). Again, Haman's hatred for the Jews is presented not as part of an eternal Jewish-Gentile conflict but rather as a personal grudge, since he is an Amalekite (*Ant.* 11.212).

Finally, it is particularly effective to have the Jews complimented by non-Jews. Indeed, Jethro is so impressed with Moses that he even adopts him as his son (*Ant.* 2.263). Again, Balaam, who has been sent to curse the Jews, declares that they have been invested by G-d with superior (περιόν) bravery (ἀνδρεία, *Ant.* 4.117). Finally, the supreme example of compliments directed toward Jews by non-Jews is to be found in connection with Solomon. Thus, we read that the Queen of Sheba's strong desire to see Solomon arose from the daily reports that she had received about his country (*Ant.* 8.165). Furthermore, we read of the compliment paid to Solomon by a certain Dios, who wrote a history of Phoenicia and who reported how honest and modest Solomon was in acknowledging that he had been bested in the solving of riddles by a Tyrian lad named Abdemon (*Ant.* 8.149, *Ap.* 1.114-15).

While it is true that Josephus' extra-biblical additions are often based on clues in the Bible itself and while it is likewise true that some of the changes are introduced lest his Greek and Roman readers find the account incredible, many of the additions, modifications, and omissions are motivated by his concern to defend the Jewish people.

CHAPTER TWENTY

ON PROFESSOR MARK RONCACE'S PORTRAITS OF DEBORAH AND GIDEON IN JOSEPHUS

1. INTRODUCTION

Professor Mark Roncace's article, "Josephus' (Real) Portraits of Deborah and Gideon: A Reading of *Antiquities* 5.198-232," *JSS* 31 (2000) 247-74, presents a critique of two of my articles, "Josephus' Portrait of Deborah," in *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommages à Valentin Nikiprowetzky*, ed. André Caquot, Mireille Hadas-Lebel, and Jean Riaud (Leuven and Paris: Peeters, 1986) 115-28; and "Josephus' Portrait of Gideon," *REJ* 152 (1993) 5-28. His article renders a great service to the study of Josephus as an interpreter of the Bible by questioning my method, which asks whether there are more or less consistent motifs and patterns in his biblical portraits and whether it is helpful, in discovering Josephus' particular approach, to compare these motifs with portrayals of biblical personalities as found in Philo, Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, and rabbinic tradition. On the whole, though always with some exceptions, I claim to have found such motifs throughout his paraphrase of the Bible, and have presented the evidence in many articles and now in two books—*Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1998). In the former volume, on pages 3-220 and in the latter volume, on pages 539-70, I discuss the issues at length. Professor Roncace objects to my broad generalizations. He feels that Josephus' portrayal of biblical figures can be determined only by a literary analysis that pays close and systematic attention to all the details. I here present my response to a number of particular points that he raises as well as to his general method.

2. ETYMOLOGIES OF NAMES OF BIBLICAL PERSONALITIES

Professor Roncace¹ notes that in giving the etymology of Deborah's name ("bee") I assert that Josephus seldom provides the etymology of biblical names and that when he does, it is usually to denigrate the person, although I cite only one example (*Ant.* 1.205). This, he says, is a specious argument. He then proceeds to mention nineteen places where Josephus provides etymologies that in no way denigrate characters. However, my article² does not say "provides" but says "adds," meaning where there is not an etymology given in the Bible, but where Josephus has *added* an etymology. Of the nineteen instances cited by Professor Roncace only one, Adam (*Ant.* 1.34), which Josephus says means "red," is not found in the Bible. In this particular case also we may say that perhaps Josephus is not adding to the Bible, inasmuch as the etymology of Edom (עֲדוֹם), which in Hebrew has a spelling similar to that of Adam (אָדָם) and which Josephus (*Ant.* 2.3) says means "red," is found in the Bible (Gen. 25:30). Whether, however, we say that he is or is not adding to the Bible here, redness does have a pejorative connotation. When Josephus (*Ant.* 2.3) mentions the sale of the pottage by Esau, he, like the Bible (Gen. 25:30), cites the origin of Esau's other name "Edom" as derived from the fact that the pottage was red. The name's pejorative connotation seems likely from the fact that Josephus there adds the extra-biblical remark that Esau was called Edom *in jest* (κατὰ παιδιάν, "in mockery," "ridiculing") by his comrades; that this nickname was undignified also seems clear from Josephus' added remark that Esau called the country by this name, but that the more dignified (σεμνότερον, "more venerable," "more respectable") name of Idumaea was given to the country by the Greeks.

Moreover, in antiquity there was a general prejudice against ruddy or red-haired persons.³ Slaves apparently were conventionally said to have red hair, as we may see from the description of three of them in Roman comedies (Plautus, *Asinaria* 400, *Pseudolus* 1218; Terence,

¹ Roncace 2000, 251.

² Feldman 1986a, 122.

³ See Gaster 1969, 165-66. In the Middle Ages Judas Iscariot is represented as having red hair. On hairiness as a mark of savagery see Speiser 1964, 196; and Vawter 1977, 288.

Phormio 51),⁴ just as slaves often bore the name Rufus (“Red”).⁵ Philo (*QG* 4.160), consistent with his practice of denigrating Esau, remarks that Esau’s ruddy body and hairy hide were a sign of his character as a savage man who raged furiously in the manner of a wild beast. That Josephus was aware of the negative connotation of redness may be seen in his rendering (*Ant.* 6.164) of the passage (1 Sam. 16:12) in which David is described as ruddy (Hebrew יָמִיךָ, the same word that is used to describe Esau in Gen. 25:25). The LXX, here as in the case of Esau, renders the Hebrew word by πυρράκης, that is, “fiery red”; but Josephus speaks, rather, of David’s complexion as “golden” (ξανθός, “yellow with a tinge of red,” “fair”).⁶ Josephus (*Ant.* 1.258), aware of the connections of redness with bloodshed and apparently concerned not to suggest that the descendants of Esau, the Romans,⁷ whose protégé he was, were slaves, totally omits Esau’s redness and remarks merely that he was excessively hairy.

Moreover, Prof. Roncace says that I cite only one example (*Ant.* 1.205) of an etymology that denigrates a person. In the first place, there are two examples here—Moab and Amman. In addition, we may cite the etymology that Josephus gives of Nabal, who, the Bible says, was a descendant of Caleb (1 Sam. 25:3) In Josephus’ version (*Ant.* 6.296), “Nabal—such was his name—was a hard man (σκληρός, “harsh,” “gruff,” “brutal”) and of bad character (πονηρός, “wicked,” “malicious,” “contemptible”), who lived according to the practices of the cynics (κυνικῆς ἀσκήσεως). Here Josephus is basing his comment on the meaning of the name of Caleb, which he apparently equates with the Hebrew word *keleb*, which means “dog,” just as the word Cynic is derived from the Greek word for dog (κύων, κυνός). As for

⁴ To be sure, Duckworth 1952, 89, asserts that there seems to be no good authority for the claim that slaves always wore red wigs in plays. A clue, however, to the fact that this was normally the case may be seen in Plautus’ *Captivi* (648), where Philocrates, though a free young man, is described by his countryman as having “somewhat reddish hair” (*subrufus*), presumably because he had been disguised as a slave earlier in the play.

⁵ The rabbis associate redness with the shedding of blood. See Ginzberg 1928, 6:247, n. 13.

⁶ The word ξανθός is used by Josephus (*Ant.* 2.2 and 3) with reference to the “tawny” pottage which Jacob gave to Esau in exchange for his rights as a first-born son. Hence, in referring to David as ξανθός, far from associating David with the Messiah who will overthrow the Roman Empire, Josephus may be connecting David with Rome, itself to be identified with Esau or Edom.

⁷ See Feldman 1988-89, 130-33.

the name Nabal, Josephus (*Ant.* 6.302) clearly denigrates him when he states that in the Hebrew tongue it signifies “folly” (ἄφροσύνη, “lack of judgment,” “stupidity”).

Another etymology that Josephus adds is that of Abel (*Gen.* 4:2, *Ant.* 1.52), which, he says, according to some manuscripts, signifies “nothing” (οὐθέν), whereas, according to other manuscripts, it signifies “mourning” (πένθος, “sorrow,” “grief”). This, to be sure, is not denigrating, but it is pessimistic, being predictive of the fate in store for Abel.⁸

Josephus also adds an etymology for the name of Samson, which, he says (*Ant.* 5.285), means “strong” (ἰσχυρός). This, to be sure, does not denigrate him. A more obvious derivation would be from the word *shemesh*, meaning “sun”; and, indeed, rabbinic tradition (*Sot.* 10a), in the name of the third-century Rabbi Johanan, gives this etymology, noting that Samson was called by the name of G-d, as it is said, “For the L-rd G-d is a sun and shield.” At the end of the third century Eusebius (*Chronica* [ed. Schöne, 2.54=*Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller* 47 (1956), ed. Rudolf Helm, 62a, lines 16-19) notes that the life of Samson had been compared by some writers with that of Heracles; the comparison is also found in the fourth-century Philastrius, *De Haeresibus* 8 (=P.G. 92.237). To be sure, the voyage of Heracles to the west, steering the sun’s cup across the stream of Ocean (where Odysseus encountered the dead) to bring back the oxen of the triple-bodied Geryon, is but another version of Heracles’ descent to the underworld to bear away the three-head Cerberus. Moreover, his lion-emblem is astrologically the sun’s own sign. In his proem (*Ant.* 1.15) Josephus says that Moses sought to avoid unseemly mythology. We may conjecture that Josephus was eager to avoid the comparison of Samson with Heracles and consequently gave an etymology that would not suggest such a comparison.

Professor Roncace⁹ states that Josephus’ etymology of Deborah’s name in no way disparages her character. There is very good reason to believe that Josephus was acquainted with the oral tradition, as found in the Talmud and Midrash,¹⁰ even though it was written

⁸ Philo (*Migr.* 74) apparently has the same etymology, inasmuch as he says that Abel’s name stands for one to whom things mortal are a grief.

⁹ Roncace 2000, 251.

¹⁰ See Feldman 1998, 65-73.

down much later. In the Talmud (*Meg.* 14b) the fourth-century Rabbi Nahman bar Jacob is quoted as saying, “There were two haughty women [in the Bible], and their names [i.e. the etymologies of their names] are hateful, one being called a bee [i.e., Deborah] and the other a weasel [i.e., Huldah]. Of the bee it is written, ‘She sent and summoned Barak’ [Judg. 4:6], instead of going to him [as was befitting a woman]. Of the weasel it is written, ‘Tell the man’ [2 Kgs. 22:15], instead of ‘tell the king.’”¹¹ This view, ascribed to Rabbi Nahman, is not disputed in the Talmudic corpus. Josephus may well have been aware of this tradition, which disparages Deborah.

Prof. Roncace¹² notes that Josephus also provides the etymology for Barak’s name (“lightning”). According to my reasoning, he says, this should serve to denigrate his character, whereas in my article I argue that Josephus has enhanced the depiction of Barak. In the first place, in my article (p. 122), I indicate that when Josephus adds etymologies of biblical characters these etymologies *usually* denigrate them. The case of Barak is a glorious exception, especially since it serves Josephus’ goal, which is to elevate Barak, in direct contrast to the etymology of Deborah, which serves to denigrate her. In the Bible lightning is the way in which G-d manifests His power; lightning bolts are His arrows with which he terrifies people and sends them into panic (2 Sam. 22:15, Ps. 144:6, Zech. 9:14).¹³ It is to the awesome accompaniment of lightning that G-d manifested His presence at Mount Sinai when he revealed the Torah to the Israelites (Exod. 19:16). The Mishnah (*Ber.* 9:2) states that when one sees lightning one is to recite a special blessing, “Blessed is He whose power and might fill the world.” In sum, the fact that Josephus seldom adds etymologies, whereas he adds two etymologies here, with opposite effect, does seem both deliberate and very effective.

¹¹ As I (Feldman 1986, 122, n. 18) point out, the objection that the bee is the source of honey with which the Land of Israel is said to flow (Deut. 8:8) and that this is, therefore, a laudatory reference does not apply, since, according to rabbinic tradition, the honey referred to here is the product of dates.

¹² Roncace 2000, 251.

¹³ Cited by Yeivin 1971, 1127.

3. JOSEPHUS' MISOGYNY

The key to Professor Roncace's critique of my article on Deborah is his comment¹⁴ that I spend most of my time discussing Josephus' "misogyny," and how rabbinic tradition and Pseudo-Philo treat Deborah. In fact, he says,¹⁵ barely one third of my article is devoted to the study of Josephus' story of Deborah. He then adds¹⁶ that this observation alone is enough to warrant a re-examination of Josephus' story of Deborah. In fact, however, an important key to understanding Josephus' treatment of Deborah is the matter of his misogyny,¹⁷ even though Professor Roncace almost completely neglects this. Instead, we are given a note,¹⁸ in which Professor Roncace says: "Given Josephus' large corpus of writings, even his general unflattering remarks about women are relatively few. In fact, Feldman cites only four examples from the *Antiquities*, and even some of these are not overly misogynist (cf. 5.294)." If we look at *Ant.* 5.294, we find that Samson, suspecting no fraud, told the woman of Timnah the answer to the riddle, but, says Josephus (*Ant.* 5.293), she betrayed his story to the men of Timnah. "So on the seventh day," Josephus continues, "whereon they were required to give him the answer to the riddle, assembling before sunset they announced, 'Nothing is more unpleasant to meet than a lion nor more pleasant to taste than honey.' And Samson added, 'Nor is anything more deceitful than a woman who betrays our speech to you.'" This, according to Professor Roncace, is not overly misogynistic.

Professor Roncace¹⁹ states that I cite only four examples of misogyny from the *Antiquities*. I count nine in my article: *Ant.* 1.49, 3.5, 4.219, 5.294, 13.417, 13.430, 13.431, 13.432, 18.21. In this

¹⁴ Roncace 2000, 250-51.

¹⁵ Roncace 2002, 251.

¹⁶ Roncace 2000, 251 n. 13

¹⁷ See the exhaustive study by Mayer-Schärtel 1995, who concludes that Josephus' portrayal of women is, on the whole, in accord with that found in other ancient writers. That this view was generally misogynistic may be seen from comments such as those found in Plato (*Tim.* 90E): "Of those who were born as men, all that were cowardly and spent their life in wrongdoing were, according to the probable account, transformed at the second birth into women." Aristotle (*Gen. Animal.* 775A) and Philo (*QE* 1.7) say that the female is an imperfect human being.

¹⁸ Roncace 2000, 251 n. 14.

¹⁹ Roncace 2000, 251 n. 14.

connection, it is worth commenting further about *Ant.* 1.49. There Josephus repeats the common classical theme of the evil wrought by womanish counsel when he says that G-d imposed punishment on Adam for yielding (ἥττονα, “being inferior to”) to womanish counsel (γυναικείας συμβουλίας). Though this is ostensibly similar to the biblical account, which says that G-d punished Adam because he hearkened to the voice of his wife (Gen. 3:17), Josephus sneers at Adam’s “being inferior to” women and generalizes about *womanish* counsel; and in this he is reminiscent of Homer’s *Odyssey*, where, after Agamemnon has described how he met his death through the contrivance of his wife Clytemnestra, Odysseus replies, “Ah, verily has Zeus, whose voice is borne afar, visited wondrous hatred on the race of Atreus from the first because of womanish counsels (γυναικείας βουλάς). For Helen’s sake many of us perished, and against thee Clytemnestra spread a snare while thou wast afar” (Homer, *Od.* 11.436-39).

Professor Roncace²⁰ prefers to view Josephus’ Deborah in a much more positive light because she is given power and commands, but what he does not do is to interpret this in the light of Josephus’ total narrative, namely, in this case, the fact that Josephus has some harsh things to say about women. In fact, the closest parallel to Deborah is Salome Alexandra, who also ruled with great power and authority (see *War* 1.107-19, *Ant.* 13.405-32) but who, says Josephus, was unduly influenced by the Pharisees and who showed no consideration for either decency or justice (*War* 1.110-14, *Ant.* 13.408-32). In particular, when his treatment of Queen Salome Alexandra is compared with that in rabbinic literature, as I have done in my article,²¹ we see how prejudiced he is against women.

We may, moreover, add *Ant.* 2.54, where Potiphar’s wife, after Joseph had refused her advances, resolves to forestall Joseph by falsely accusing him to her husband: “This method,” says Josephus, “of avenging herself for so grievous a slight and of accusing him in advance seemed to her alike wise and womanish (γυναικείον).” Another instance of misogyny may be seen in *Ant.* 15.69, where we are told that Mariamne, Herod’s wife, in women’s fashion (γυναικείως), did not take seriously the statements of Joseph, in whose charge

²⁰ Roncace 2000, 254.

²¹ Feldman 1986a, 118-20.

Herod had left her. We may also add *Ant.* 15.168, where Josephus says that Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne, had an aggressive and very womanish (γυναικεῖον) nature. Note also *Ant.* 15.219, where Josephus says that Mariamne had in her nature something that was at once womanish (γυναικεῖον) and cruel (χαλεπόν, “difficult to deal with,” “hostile,” “ill-natured”). Note, furthermore, *Ant.* 17.121, where Josephus reports that Nicolaus of Damascus mentions the things that Antipater’s mother had said to certain people “in womanish (γυναικεῖω) frivolousness” (κουφολογία, “frivolous chatter,” “loquaciousness”). Add *Ant.* 18.255, where Josephus says that G-d punished Herod Antipas for listening to “a woman’s frivolous chatter” (γυναικείων...κουφολογιῶν). To these we may add the following passages from the *War*, which I cite in my article: 1.111-12, 2.121, 7.399. What strikes one is that these misogynistic remarks and innuendos are not only numerous but are found in both the *Antiquities* and the *War*.

Moreover, Josephus couples women with children as part of the gullible rabble. Thus (*Ant.* 3.5), in an extra-biblical addition, he remarks that a rabble (ὄχλος) of children and women, being too weak to listen to instruction by words, undermined the courage of the Israelites.

Moreover, unlike Pseudo-Philo (40.1-8),²² Josephus (*Ant.* 5.264-66) does not make a heroine out of Jephthah’s daughter, especially when we compare his treatment of her with his treatment of Isaac, whose proposed sacrifice is clearly parallel.

Turning now to the misogynistic comments in Josephus’ account of Deborah itself, we note that in the Bible (Judg. 4:8-9) Barak says to Deborah, when she tells him that G-d has commanded him to go to war against Sisera, merely that “If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go,” whereupon she replies that she will surely go with him, but tells him that he will not attain glory, since G-d will have delivered Sisera into the hands of a woman. In Josephus (*Ant.* 5.203), on the other hand, when Barak declares that he will not take the command unless she shares it with him, she indignantly (ἀγανακτήσασα, “being vexed,” “feeling a violent irritation”) replies, “Thou resignest to a woman a rank that G-d has bestowed on thee!” I remark²³ that Josephus here

²² See Brown 1992, 93-139.

²³ Feldman 1986a, 124.

betrays his misogyny, since the indignation is caused by the fact that a man seeks to surrender to a woman a role that belongs to a man. Professor Roncace remarks:²⁴ “It is a lot to get ‘misogyny’ from ‘indignation.’” However, a woman might, I believe, justly find very offensive the idea that there are certain leadership roles that belong only to a man.

To be sure, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.49-54) seems to contradict this view of women’s weakness in the speech that Zerubbabel gives to King Darius proving that women are even more powerful than wine and the king; but even here it is not so much their strength as the women’s wiliness, seductiveness, and impudence that are said to give them such influence.

4. DEBORAH AS A BIBLICAL HEROINE

In his effort to depict Josephus as building up Deborah as a biblical heroine, Professor Roncace²⁵ avers that the only instance where the people “beseech” a person rather than G-d in the Judges section of the *Antiquities* is where they beseech (ἰκέτευον) Deborah to take pity on them lest they would be destroyed by the Canaanites (*Ant.* 5.201). However, I have noted no fewer than eighteen other instances in the Judges section of Josephus where people beseech a person: where the verb for beseech is ἰκετεύω: *Ant.* 5.146: the Levite implores the young men of Gaba; where the verb for beseech is δέομαι: 5.236: in Jotham’s parable the trees (i.e., the people) beseech a fig tree to rule over them; 5.237: the trees (i.e., the people) beseech a bramble bush to rule them; 5.241: the Shechemites beseech Gaal to protect them; 5.258: the people beseech Jephthah to support them; 5.280: the wife of Manoah beseeches an angel to stay until she can fetch her husband; 5.291: the woman of Timnah beseeches Samson to explain the riddle; 5.293: she betrays his story to those who beseech her; 5.310: Delilah tells Samson that she takes it ill that he will not tell her what she besought; 5.312: responding to Delilah’s petitions, Samson reveals his secret to her; where the verb for beseech is παρακαλέω: 5.143: the old men beseech the young men to begone; 5.194: Judes beseeches the men of Jericho to assert their liberty;

²⁴ Roncace 2000, 255.

²⁵ Roncace 2000, 249-50.

5.210: the Midianites beseech the Amalekites and Arabians to aid them; 5.252: Abimelech beseeches his armor-bearer to kill him; 5.265: Jephthah's daughter beseeches her father to give her two months to bewail her youth; 5.282: Manoah beseeches the angel to stay; 5.286: Samson beseeches his parents to get the woman of Timnah for him as a wife; 5.291: the Philistines beseech the woman of Timnah to find out the key to Samson's riddle.

Professor Roncace²⁶ asserts that at the beginning of Josephus' version I overlook the fact that Deborah's religious authority is more explicit than it is in the Bible (Judg. 4:5), since she plays an intercessory role between G-d and the people, who approach her (*Ant.* 5.200), rather than G-d directly, and ask her to beseech G-d. However, we may note that her religious authority is established by the fact that she is (Judg. 4:4 and *Ant.* 5.200) termed a prophetess, indeed the first judge to be described as a prophet, and apart from Samuel the only one. By definition a prophet (Jer. 15:19) is G-d's mouthpiece and is the one to whom G-d speaks and who, in turn, speaks forth for G-d to the people. Thus, G-d is quoted as saying to Moses (Deut. 18:18): "I will raise up for them [the Israelites] a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him." Hence, to say that she is a prophet is *ipso facto* to say that she plays an intercessory role between G-d and the people. When the people ask her to pray to G-d they are then simply approaching her as a prophet; no *enhancing* of her piety is involved.

According to Professor Roncace, Josephus has enhanced the role of Deborah generally. He says²⁷ that one might have expected Deborah simply to announce that G-d had promised victory in the upcoming battle. In fact, however, he adds, contrary to expectations, that she herself both summons and commands Barak. Whereas in the Bible, he says, Deborah speaks for G-d, saying that G-d has commanded Barak to collect an army, in Josephus, although G-d chose Barak, Deborah herself commands Barak to gather an army without mentioning G-d. However, if we look at the text of Josephus (*Ant.* 5.202), we see that Deborah does mention G-d and specifically says that G-d prescribed the number the soldiers that Barak was to select—He could hardly

²⁶ Roncace 2000, 251.

²⁷ Roncace 2000, 252.

have specified the number of soldiers without commanding that he gather an army—and that it was G-d who betokened victory.

Professor Roncace, commenting on Deborah's reply to Barak (*Ant.* 5.203): "Thou resignest to a woman a rank (ἄξιωματος) that G-d has bestowed on thee! Howbeit I do not decline (παραιτοῦμαι) it," remarks²⁸ that the primary meaning of the verb παραιτέω is "to ask," and that therefore the final phrase here can be adequately rendered, "But I did not ask (for it)," thus depicting Deborah as a reluctant leader. If so, however, we may suggest, this does not fit in with Professor Roncace's portrayal of Deborah as a more assertive personality. In any case, however, the problem with his proposed translation is that it does not fully account for the μέν ... δέ construction in Josephus' Greek, according to which there is a sharp contrast between σὺ μέν, that is, "you, on the one hand," versus ἐγὼ δέ, that is, "I, on the other hand." The contrast is between Barak's resignation of the assignment and Deborah's acceptance of that assignment. To translate οὐ παραιτοῦμαι as "I do not decline" conveys the necessary contrast, whereas to translate it as "I do not ask" does not. There might perhaps be some grounds for a contrast if the verb were in a past tense, but Deborah has not asked for the position, and there is no reason for thinking that she is now doing so. Moreover, the verb παραιτέομαι usually means to "ask as a favor," "beg from," "entreat," and Deborah is not begging for a position.

Professor Roncace views Deborah's reply as a double entendre in that Barak has resigned his "rank" to Deborah, but later the reader will learn that the "esteem" that was meant for him will go to Jael. Thus, he says,²⁹ "Deborah's words serve as a complex and subtle foreshadowing of coming events." However, it is unlikely that the reader of Josephus would see such a double entendre. Deborah, in the name of G-d, has charged Barak to lead an army against the enemy. Barak, in Josephus' version, says that he will not do so unless she will share the command with him. She replies that he is handing over to a woman—clearly, here, Deborah and Deborah alone is meant—the rank that G-d has bestowed upon him. Thereupon, she says, "I [that is, Deborah and Deborah alone] accept." Surely, no double entendre is intended: everything is all very straightforward. To

²⁸ Roncace 2000, 252 n. 16.

²⁹ Roncace 2000, 253.

be sure, at a later point, after Sisera has been defeated and has been slain by Jael, we are told that the victory redounded, “as Deborah had foretold, to a woman’s glory.” Clearly, the woman there is not Deborah but Jael. But the prediction that G-d would deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman is not to be found in a Josephan double entendre; it stands, rather, in the original Hebrew text of Judges 4:9, which Josephus, but not the reader of Josephus, knew. It would thus seem to be preferable to conclude that Josephus forgot that he had not rendered Judges 4:9 than to engage in a tortured interpretation of Deborah’s reply to Barak and to make this an occasion for understanding it as a double entendre, a device generally not favored by Josephus.

Professor Roncace emphasizes Deborah’s role as co-general with Barak. It is only, he says,³⁰ after Deborah agreed to accept that role that the Israelite army gathered for battle (*Ant.* 5.203). Not only, he says, does she summon Barak and command Barak, but the army is gathered only after she agrees to accompany him. If, however, we look at the biblical text, we find that she summons and commands Barak not on her own initiative but in the name of G-d (Judg. 4:6). Moreover, in the Hebrew text she agrees to accompany him in Judg. 4:9; and it is thereafter (Judg. 4:10) that Barak gathers the army, and Deborah accompanies him.

Professor Roncace³¹ argues that Josephus’ Deborah plays a key military role in the defeat of Sisera. Whereas, he says, Barak is the one who summons the army (4:10) and leads the troops into battle (4:14b), and G-d defeats Sisera “before Barak” (4:15), and Barak pursues the fleeing Canaanites (4:16), Josephus eliminates all of these elements concerning Barak’s military involvement and instead highlights Deborah’s military role. Let us examine these points seriatim. In the first place, according to 4:10, Barak musters the army accompanied by Deborah. True, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 5.204), the Israelites and Barak were dismayed at the multitude of the enemy, but it is clearly Barak, and Barak alone, who is at their head. When the battle is joined, there is no indication that Barak has lost his position as commander, nor is there any mention of Deborah’s role during the battle itself; and it is clear that it was

³⁰ Roncace 2000, 253.

³¹ Roncace 2000, 254-55.

Barak who pursued the fleeing Canaanites, since we are told that after Jael killed Sisera, Barak's company arrived soon afterwards (*Ant.* 5.208). Moreover, as part of this pursuit by Barak (*Ant.* 5.209), we are told that Barak, marching upon Hazor, killed Jabin, a king of the Canaanites, and razed the city to the ground.

Professor Roncace³² makes much of Josephus' statement (*Ant.* 5.204) that when the Israelite army met Sisera, "the Israelites and Barak were dismayed (*καταπλαγέντας*, "panic-stricken") at the multitude of the enemy and resolved to retire, but were restrained by Deborah, who ordered them to deliver battle that very day." From this he concludes that Josephus has stressed Deborah's role and diminished that of Barak. But to appreciate what Josephus has done we have to examine his descriptions of other biblical battles. There we find, as here, that he dramatizes such battles. Thus, Josephus expands greatly the panic felt by the Israelites at the Sea of Reeds (*Ant.* 2.320-337); and by thus heightening the drama he increases the magnitude of the Israelites' achievement. There, too, we find the same verb (*καταπέπληχθε*) used by Moses in his exhortation to the Israelites (*Ant.* 2.333) urging them, in a dramatic embellishment, not to be dismayed at the Egyptians' military power. Likewise, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.7-8) has dramatized with further details the account (*Num.* 14:44-45) of a battle between the Israelites and the Amalekites in which the enemy, he says, were not dismayed (*καταπλαγέντες*) at the number of the Israelites. He then proceeds (*Ant.* 4.9) further to dramatize the battle's effect on the Israelites when, he says, they were dismayed (*καταπεπληγότας*) by their defeat. He adds further dramatic details (*Ant.* 4.87-94 vs. *Num.* 21:23-30) to the defeat by the Israelites of the Amorites, according to which the latter were panic-stricken (*κατεπλάγη*, *Ant.* 4.89), and particularly to the rout that followed (*Ant.* 4.90-92), which is recounted much more simply in the Bible (*Num.* 21:24). Moreover, Josephus (*Ant.* 10.131-34) expands and dramatizes the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (2 *Kgs.* 25:2-4, *Jer.* 52:5-7), probably influenced by his own account of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, and adds, in particular, that the Israelites were not dismayed (*καταπληττόμενοι*, *Ant.* 10.132) by the devices and engines of the Babylonians.

³² Roncace 2000, 254.

Professor Roncace³³ underscores the fact that whereas Barak decided to retreat, Deborah boldly ordered the Israelites to fight. This, he says, is the second time that Deborah has “commanded” Barak. Earlier (*Ant.* 5.202) she had commanded him to select an army and to march against the enemy. Now it is Barak who is dismayed and Deborah who takes the initiative to command him to attack. On the contrary, he says, according to the Bible (Judg. 4:14) Deborah instructs Barak: “Arise, for this is the day that the L-rd has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the L-rd go out before you?” As to the first instance, as we have noted, there Deborah does not command Barak; rather (Judg. 4:6), she, as a prophetess, conveys G-d’s command, as, indeed, the Hebrew text explicitly declares and as Josephus also states when he says (*Ant.* 5.202) that G-d has prescribed the number that are to be sent to battle and that it is G-d who has betokened victory. As to the second instance, Deborah keeps the Israelites from retiring, not because she is a general, but because she is a prophetess who is the mouthpiece of G-d, as we see from the fact that she predicts that they will be victorious that very day because G-d will lend them aid (*Ant.* 5.204). Professor Roncace says that she plays the role of both prophet and general, but there is no indication of her showing any military knowledge or insight or of having made any military preparations.

Professor Roncace³⁴ makes note of the fact that whereas in the Bible (Judg. 4:22) it is Barak who is summoned by Jael into her tent so that she may show him the dead Sisera, in Josephus (5.208) it is Barak’s company who are shown the dead Sisera. Thus, says Professor Roncace, Josephus’ Barak is conspicuously absent from the scene; he is nowhere to be found, he says, when Sisera dies. Thus, he concludes, one can hardly concur with my position that the figure of Barak is built up by Josephus. In response, when Josephus says that those about Barak (τοῖς περὶ τὸν Βάρακον) were shown the dead Sisera, there is no indication that Barak was not included, and, indeed, one would assume that he *was* present with the company that he commanded. I nowhere state that because he is shown the dead Sisera his figure is built up; (for that matter, his absence would not diminish his figure, since the achievement is Jael’s).

³³ Roncace 2000, 254.

³⁴ Roncace 2000, 256.

Overall, Professor Roncace³⁵ objects to my statement that Josephus builds up the character of Barak. Surely, however, there is much significance in the fact that whereas the Bible (Judg. 4:23) asserts that G-d subjugated Jabin and that the Israelites bore harder and harder on him until they destroyed him, Josephus (*Ant.* 5.209) attributes to Barak the victory over Jabin, and adds the extra-biblical detail that it was Barak who killed him and who razed the city of Hazor to the ground. Moreover, as Professor Roncace himself notes,³⁶ whereas at the end of the Song of Deborah in the Bible we read (Judg. 5:31) that the land had rest for forty years, Josephus (*Ant.* 5.209) very significantly states that it was Barak who, after the encounter with Sisera, held the command of the Israelites for forty years. Professor Roncace makes much of the fact that Barak is here termed a general (στρατηγεῖ) rather than a ruler, the term used for the other judges. Josephus' indication that he remained a general for forty years, he remarks, is surprising, since he is hardly portrayed as a worthy leader in the preceding story. However, it is significant that in summarizing the career of Moses, who certainly was *the* ruler of the Israelites, Josephus highlights two traits in which he particularly excelled, i.e., his ability as a general (στρατηγός), where he had few to equal him, and his role as a prophet, where he was unique (*Ant.* 4.329).³⁷ There is very good reason to believe that Josephus was not only acquainted with but well versed in the rabbinic tradition.³⁸ Even though it cannot be proved that he knew every such tradition and even though that tradition was not reduced to writing until much later, Professor Roncace never mentions this tradition in his evaluation of the Deborah story. There may well be significance, however, in the fact that, according to this tradition (*Midr. Exod. Rab.* 10.48), Barak, like most of his companions, was an ignoramus. The fact that Josephus does not mention such a detail may, therefore, be indicative of his intention of building up Barak's stature.

³⁵ Roncace 2000, 257.

³⁶ Roncace 2000, 258.

³⁷ On the importance of generalship see Feldman 1998, 107-8.

³⁸ See Feldman 1998, 65-73.

5. JOSEPHUS' ACCOUNT OF GIDEON

Professor Roncace³⁹ asserts that the phrase ἐν ὀλίγοις in Josephus' introduction of Gideon as "one of the foremost (ἐν ὀλίγοις) among the tribe of Manasseh" (*Ant.* 5.213) is ambiguous. He says that a rendering "one of the few" fits in well with Gideon's claim (*Ant.* 5.214) that his tribe was lacking in numbers. Hence, he contests my assertion⁴⁰ that Josephus, by using this phrase, is enhancing the genealogy of Gideon. However, the phrase ἐν ὀλίγοις and its kindred phrase σὺν ὀλίγοις in extant Greek literature, in a context such as we have here, always means "one of the foremost," "exceedingly," "remarkably," "extraordinarily." For example, Herodotus (4.52) speaks of the Hypanis as a remarkably great river (ποταμὸν ἐν ὀλίγοισι μέγαν) and Artabazus as most remarkably esteemed of the Persians (ἐν ὀλίγοισι Περσέων...δόκιμος, 9.41). Liddell-Scott-Jones, s.v. ὀλίγος 3b, who notes this as the *only* meaning of the phrase ἐν ὀλίγοις, where ὀλίγοις does not modify a noun, cites the above passages in Herodotus, and adds that it has this meaning frequently in later literature. It adds: "so σὺν ὀλίγοις." A check of all of the occurrences of ἐν ὀλίγοις in the portion of Josephus' work where he paraphrases the Bible (*Ant.* 2.78, 4.329, 5.213, 5.276), as well as in 20.143, where ὀλίγοις does not modify a particular noun, shows that this is likewise always the meaning there. It is particularly notable that not long after the discussion of Gideon we have the same phrase, with the same meaning, in another passage paralleling the Book of Judges, namely in a description of Manoah, the father of Samson. A similar check of all four of the occurrences of σὺν ὀλίγοις in Josephus (*Ant.* 17.307, 18.1, 19.20, 19.125), where ὀλίγοις does not modify a noun, further shows that this is always the meaning.

Professor Roncace⁴¹ remarks that I,⁴² without providing any reason, commenting on the biblical verse (Judg. 6:11), which states that Gideon, the son of Joash, was threshing wheat at the winepress to hide it from Midian, assert that he was doing this in order to enable his father to flee from Midian. He remarks as well that this inter-

³⁹ Roncace 2000, 260.

⁴⁰ Feldman 1993i, 8.

⁴¹ Roncace 2000, 261.

⁴² Feldman 1993i, 10.

pretation is completely novel and makes little sense contextually, stating in a footnote (26) that he has found no one else who understands the verse in this way. However, the rabbinic tradition, with which, as I have indicated, there is good reason to think Josephus was acquainted, commenting on Gideon's filial piety (*Midr. ha-Gadol* Gen. 48:16, 1.824-25 [ed. Mordecai Margulies (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1947)]), avers that Gideon's father was afraid to thresh his grain on account of the Midianites, and that Gideon told him that he (Joash) was too old to do such work and suggested that he go home and that he (Gideon) would finish the work, so that if the Midianites should surprise him he could flee, whereas his father would not be able to do so because of his age. Professor Roncace⁴³ cannot understand why I regard this action as indicating Gideon's courage in the face of the enemy, inasmuch as Josephus (*Ant.* 5.213) says that Gideon was afraid to beat the sheaves of corn openly on the threshing floor. But surely it was not cowardice on his part to hide his activities from the enemy, as Professor Roncace claims, but rather prudence. Brave guerrillas constantly do such things. If we view matters in light of the rabbinic tradition, it was brave for Gideon to take the place of his father in such dangerous times and conditions.

When a spectre appears to Gideon (*Ant.* 5.213) and pronounces him blessed and beloved of G-d, Josephus' Gideon bitterly and sarcastically replies, noting how terribly the Israelites have been oppressed by the Midianites, "Indeed, this is a signal proof of his favor that I am now using a winepress instead of a threshing floor." Professor Roncace⁴⁴ remarks that Gideon's caustic reply does not seem to reflect particularly well on Gideon. But the intended purpose of his reply is to dramatize the oppression that has been afflicting the Israelites and consequently to enhance Gideon's military achievement in eventually overcoming the enemy.

Professor Roncace⁴⁵ says that Gideon's statement to the spectre that it was impossible for the Israelites to regain their liberty because the tribe to which he belonged was lacking in numbers and because he himself was young and too feeble to perform such great exploits

⁴³ Roncace 2000, 261.

⁴⁴ Roncace 2000, 261.

⁴⁵ Roncace 2000, 261.

(*Ant.* 5.214) depicts him as fearful and timid. Josephus' purpose in so presenting Gideon is rather to emphasize the tremendous task that confronted him; and his modesty may be seen by comparing his reaction to Moses' response to G-d at the burning bush (*Exod.* 3:4-4:15), where Moses, like Gideon, in an extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 2.271), says that he possesses no strength in abundance, refers to himself as an ordinary person, and says that he is at a loss to understand how he will be able to persuade his own kinsmen to leave Egypt and force the Pharaoh to allow them to leave.

Professor Roncace⁴⁶ differs with my view that Josephus has diminished G-d's role in order to elevate Gideon's achievements. What Professor Roncace fails to take into consideration in this connection, however, is the diminution, overall, of the role of G-d in Josephus' treatment of other biblical personalities.⁴⁷ Even if some passages remain in which G-d's role is maintained, we must still attach significance to the fact that Josephus omits the statement that the spirit of the L-rd clothed Gideon (*Judg.* 6:34). Professor Roncace asserts that this observation is largely irrelevant because Josephus omits the whole larger block of material in which this statement occurs; but, if so, we should still ask why he omits this block of material, when, in general, he follows the Bible rather closely. We should also attach importance to the fact that Pseudo-Philo (36:2), who in a number of instances is parallel to Josephus,⁴⁸ does include a version of this statement.

As to the role of G-d in the Gideon narrative, Professor Roncace⁴⁹ asserts that my failure to interpret G-d's promise of salvation (*Ant.* 5.214) "as diminishing Gideon's role is, at best, evidence of inconsistent logic, and, at worst, of a prejudiced reading." Let us look, however, at this divine promise in the Hebrew (*Judg.* 6:14): "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; do

⁴⁶ Roncace 2000, 262-63.

⁴⁷ On the diminution of the role of G-d in Josephus' portrayal of Jephthah see Feldman 1998a, 187-88. On the diminution of the role of G-d in Josephus' portrayal of Samson see Feldman 1998, 482-86. Again, most extraordinarily, though the biblical account of Ruth, whom, of course, he associates with the period of the judges, mentions G-d seventeen times, Josephus mentions Him only at the very end of his version of the story of Ruth (*Ant.* 5.337). For a further survey of the role of G-d in Josephus' biblical portrayals see Feldman 1998, 205-14.

⁴⁸ See Feldman 1971, lviii-lxiv, and Feldman 1974, 306-7.

⁴⁹ Roncace 2000, 263.

not I send you?" Josephus (*Ant.* 5.214) puts things a little differently: "Howbeit G-d promised Himself to supply what he lacked and to grant victory to the Israelites, should he [Gideon] be their general (στρατηγούντος)." The first difference is that in the Bible G-d speaks directly to Gideon, whereas in Josephus we hear only what He is reported, indirectly, to have said. Secondly, in the Hebrew G-d stresses that He sent Gideon and that it is He who will deliver Israel. In Josephus the key phrase is that victory will accrue to the Israelites only if Gideon himself takes the initiative to assume the mantle of leadership. This puts the ball, so to speak, squarely in Gideon's court.

Professor Roncace⁵⁰ suggests that the fact that it is to young men (*Ant.* 5.215) that Gideon tells about the visit of the spectre to him is perhaps an indication that he still lacked some confidence. He also notes that Gideon is not appointed general or acknowledged as commander. Finally, he notes that thereafter an army of 10,000 is immediately gathered. He suggests that perhaps this sequence implies that G-d assembled the army, since He had promised to supply what was lacking. This would highlight the role of G-d and diminish the role of Gideon. On the contrary, we may respond, the picture of Gideon that we are given by Josephus is of a young man who has no official role and who decides on his own to talk to his friends, who naturally are young like himself, about rescuing the Israelites from the oppression of the Midianites. Surely such a person would deserve even more credit than one who was officially appointed. It is not that he lacks confidence; rather, being an amateur, he wisely turns for help to the only people whom he knows and who are likely to trust him, his young friends. The sequence of events in Josephus' version is (1) Gideon speaks to his friends; (2) Gideon is trusted by them; (3) an army of 10,000 is instantly gathered; (4) G-d appears to Gideon and tells him that such a large army would attribute their victory to their own prowess rather than to G-d and bids him to diminish the size of his army and to take with him only those who are cowards. We may well ask whether if it was G-d who miraculously assembled the 10,000 so quickly, why would He then immediately change His mind and tell Gideon to undo His work? Professor Roncace says that Josephus omits Gideon's role in assembling the army, but the fact

⁵⁰ Roncace 2000, 263.

that it was immediately after Gideon was trusted by his friends that the army was collected would seem to indicate a connection between these two facts, i.e., once Gideon wins trust, he, with the help of his friends, was able, through enthusiasm and Herculean efforts, to gather a large army in a very short period of time. Hence, Gideon does take decisive steps to regain the liberty of the Israelites. G-d, for His part, is apparently unhappy with this initiative and instructs him to diminish the size of his army.

Professor Roncace⁵¹ comments on G-d's desire (*Ant.* 5.215) to be given credit for the victory and His plan to have Gideon accomplish this victory with a minuscule number of soldiers (*Ant.* 5.216-17). But in this Josephus has not added to the biblical account (see *Judg.* 7:2-8). Hence, he has not in this respect highlighted the divine role more than is found in the Bible. The change that Josephus has made is to add that the 300 men whom G-d bade Gideon take with him (*Ant.* 5.216-17) to attack the enemy were the cowards. This certainly makes the miracle all the greater and elevates the role of G-d; but it also elevates the role of Gideon in that it shows his complete faith in G-d even when G-d tells him not only to reduce the number of his soldiers but even to select those who are cowards. Thus, when he does defeat the enemy it is not only a victory for G-d, but one in which Gideon himself must have played a key role in that he had so few and such inferior soldiers.

In the scene that follows Josephus depicts Gideon as afraid (*Ant.* 5.218) because G-d has directed him to attack at night. From this Professor Roncace⁵² concludes that Gideon is afraid of the dark and is thus less courageous than he is in the biblical account. However, in the Bible (*Judg.* 7:9) immediately after we are told that G-d appeared to Gideon at night, we read, "But if you are afraid to descend." Hence, the Bible also connects the dark and Gideon's fear. G-d raises the possibility that Gideon might be afraid because He is aware that this is the natural reaction of a human being under those circumstances. Indeed, one might well ask here how a human being with such a small army attacking at night would not be afraid. That is not cowardice; it is reality, and Josephus is out to establish Gideon as a real human being, with all the fears of a human being,

⁵¹ Roncace 2000, 264.

⁵² Roncace 2000, 265.

but who nonetheless rises to the occasion. This is part of Josephus' psychologizing and thus Hellenistic novelistic tendency.⁵³ Indeed, Josephus himself talks candidly about his own fears and the fears of his army (e.g., *War* 3.247, 250; and *Life* 22, 175, 206), though he does not wish to present himself as a coward. Rather, he tries to create a rounded and plausible view of his characters.

In order to banish his fear, G-d tells Gideon (Judg. 7:10) to go with Purah, his attendant, to the Midianite camp and to listen to what they are saying. Gideon then proceeds to go with Purah. In Josephus' version (*Ant.* 5.218) G-d tells him to take one of his soldiers. Thereafter, however, we read (*Ant.* 5.219), he took with himself his servant Purah. Apparently, G-d, in Josephus' version, realizes the danger of the situation and hence tells Gideon to go with a soldier. Gideon, more courageously, is, in this case, not afraid to go with an ordinary servant. Professor Roncace⁵⁴ suggests that Gideon's taking a soldier, in fact, may highlight his fear, since he needed a soldier and not just his servant to protect him; but he forgets that the suggestion to take a soldier along is G-d's, not Gideon's.

In his comment on the dream and its interpretation that Gideon heard recounted in the Midianite camp, Professor Roncace⁵⁵ says that Josephus' extra-biblical material adds several literary features. When, however, we compare the biblical version (Judg. 7:13-14) with Josephus' we see that Josephus has not only considerably expanded the former but that his additions are intended to add to Gideon's stature and achievement. In the biblical version (Judg. 7:13) we are told merely that a cake of barley bread was rolled through the Midianite camp, where it struck the tent and turned it upside down so that it fell. The fellow Midianite who interprets the dream explains (Judg. 7:14) that the cake is the sword of Gideon, and that G-d has delivered Midian into his hand. In Josephus' version the barley cake is further described as too vile for human consumption; and it not only rolls into the Midianite camp but destroys the king's tent and those of all his soldiers. The fellow Midianite equates the barley cake with the Israelites, since barley is the vilest of grains and the Israelites are like barley in that they are the most dishonored of peoples in

⁵³ See Feldman 1998, 197-204.

⁵⁴ Roncace 2000, 265.

⁵⁵ Roncace 2000, 266.

Asia. He then adds that, according to this dream, those who are to destroy the Midianites are a high-spirited (μεγαλοφρονούν) party, which, he says, must be none other than Gideon and his fellow soldiers. Coming from an enemy, this affirmation serves to raise the stature of Gideon, since it contrasts the high-spirited Gideon with the mass of the Israelites, who are utterly vile. Moreover, Gideon's achievement will be all the more remarkable because he and his army will not only enter the Midianite camp but will even strike down the tent of the king himself.

Upon hearing the interpretation of the dream, according to Professor Roncace,⁵⁶ the biblical Gideon is depicted as less fearful than he is in Josephus' version. In actuality, however, the Bible (Judg. 7:15) does not indicate any change in Gideon's mood. On the contrary, his first reaction after hearing the dream explained is to prostrate himself. What his mood was when he prostrated himself we do not know, but there certainly is no direct indication that he felt less fear. On the other hand, Josephus' Gideon, upon hearing the dream, is described as inspired with high hopes and confidence (*Ant.* 5.222).

Professor Roncace⁵⁷ has overlooked the importance of the fact that in Josephus Gideon is more than just a fighter. He is also, in Josephus' extra-biblical details, one who prepares for battle (he commands his men to be ready in arms) (*Ant.* 5.222), and is one who raises their morale by inspiring them through recounting to them the vision of the enemy, so that they will be alert to obey his orders. In the description of the battle, according to Professor Roncace,⁵⁸ the Josephan Gideon is less courageous than his biblical counterpart. However, the fact that in an extra-biblical remark (*Ant.* 5.224), Josephus adds that the enemy's camp covered a large area, that it included a number of nationalities, and a vast camel-corps surely adds to the achievement of Gideon in overcoming such a huge army. Professor Roncace⁵⁹ takes note of the fact that the biblical Gideon is more assertive, in that he says that his soldiers are to look at him and do likewise. However, Josephus does say that the soldiers had received orders upon approaching the enemy to sound their trum-

⁵⁶ Roncace 2000, 266.

⁵⁷ Roncace 2000, 266.

⁵⁸ Roncace 2000, 267.

⁵⁹ Roncace 2000, 267.

pets and break their pitchers at a given signal. It is clear from the context that that signal is to be given by Gideon. I⁶⁰ make a point of contrasting the biblical version (Judg. 7:20) of the battle cry of the Israelite soldiers—"the sword for G-d and for Gideon"—with that in Josephus (*Ant.* 5.225)—"to conquer, with G-d aiding Gideon." I note that the Bible focuses on G-d and Gideon, whereas Josephus' focus is on conquest, namely the conquest by Gideon, with the aid of G-d. But Professor Roncace⁶¹ himself admits that in the added statement (*Ant.* 5.225) that the Israelite army rushed forward, Josephus is underscoring the effort on their part and a diminution of G-d's role.

Professor Roncace⁶² asserts that several Josephan additions provide the narrative with dramatic irony developed around the notions of telling, seeing, and hearing. It is not clear how the examples that he provides actually do contribute to the irony.

Gideon pursues the Midianites and sends messengers to muster the Ephraimites, who have captured and killed two Midianite kings, Oreb and Zeeb (Judg. 7.25). In Josephus (*Ant.* 5.227) the Israelites kill all of their enemies, including Oreb and Zeeb. Professor Roncace⁶³ remarks that the Bible here does not report a mass slaughtering of the troops of Oreb and Zeeb, as does Josephus, and concludes that the Josephan Gideon is hardly being depicted as merciful and philanthropic, as I claim. In the first place, however, the Bible (Judg. 7:25) says that the soldiers pursued Midian; one assumes that many of the Midianites were consequently killed. But if we examine battles as described in the Bible we find that the victor usually engages in mass slaughter of the conquered.⁶⁴ That is simply the way wars were fought. Anything less than this is a show of mercy. Professor Roncace is correct in noting that I erred in asserting that Josephus has omitted the incident in which Gideon kills Zebah and Zalmunna. What I meant to say and should have said is that he omits the scene in which Gideon's son (Judg. 8:20) declines to kill them. Thereupon Gideon himself kills them (Judg. 8:21, *Ant.* 5.229). By omitting the

⁶⁰ Feldman 1993i, 19.

⁶¹ Roncace 2000, 267.

⁶² Roncace 2000, 268.

⁶³ Roncace 2000, 269.

⁶⁴ See the treatment of the divine command of genocide of the Amalekites and of the seven Canaanite nations in Feldman 2004, 1-83, 134-46.

scene in which Gideon's son does not kill them he avoids presenting a picture of a son being more merciful than Gideon, the father.

When the Ephraimites (Judg. 8:1) complain to Gideon because he did not inform them in advance of his proposed assault on the Midianites, he mollifies them by noting that they had independently captured two leaders of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. Their indignation against him is abated when he compliments them by remarking, "What could I do compared to you?" In Josephus' version (*Ant.* 5.230) the Ephraimites not only are aggrieved, but actually are resolved to march against Gideon. Can there be any doubt that when Josephus refers, as he does here, to Gideon as a man of moderation (μέτριος) and topmost in every virtue (πάσαν ἀρετὴν ἄκρος) that he is commending his character in the very highest terms? Gideon defends his action in attacking the Midianites without the Ephraimites by stating that it was not of himself by an arbitrary decision (αὐτοκράτορι χρησάμενος λογισμῷ) that he had done so, but by a divine command. Professor Roncace⁶⁵ remarks that all that Gideon is saying is that the attack on the Midianites was not based on any sort of calculated reflection on his part but on divine command. However, in saying that he did not use *arbitrary* judgment in this case, the implication is that he expects the Ephraimites to recognize that normally he uses *considered* judgment, that is λογισμός, reasonable and deliberate thought, a term applied by Josephus, in extra-biblical additions, to Isaac (*Ant.* 1.261), Jacob (*Ant.* 2.37, 2.171), Judah (*Ant.* 2.151), and Solomon (*Ant.* 8.143, 194).

Professor Roncace⁶⁶ (p. 271) notes that the biblical Gideon (Judg. 8:2-3) gives the Ephraimites credit for playing the most important role in the war with the Midianites in that they had slain the Midianite leaders Oreb and Zeeb, whereas the Josephan Gideon (*Ant.* 5.230) clears himself by remarking that he had attacked the Midianites not on his own initiative but by divine command. The victory, he kept on asserting (ἔφασκεν), belonged no less to them than to those who had actually fought in the war (ἐστρατευκότων), that is, says Professor Roncace, "because the victory ultimately belonged to G-d and not to any of those who participated in the attack." However, if the emphasis is on the phrase "but by divine command," the conclusion

⁶⁵ Roncace 2000, 271.

⁶⁶ Roncace 2000, 271.

to be drawn is that the victory belonged neither to the Ephraimites nor to those who fought in the war but to G-d. What Gideon seems to be saying here is that G-d is the one who ordered the attack but that the victory was a victory for all the Israelites, and not just for those who fought militarily.

In his summary Professor Roncace⁶⁷ notes that I call attention to the fact that Gideon is called moderate and a model of virtue. Gideon, he asserts, remains, at best, a reluctant leader, and, at worst, still too feeble to take on important responsibilities. He leaves out of account the fact that closely connected with moderation is the quality of modesty, the quality that is Moses' crowning virtue (Num. 12:3) and a virtue that Gideon shows (*Ant.* 5.214) when he is given the charge to seek to regain liberty for the Israelites. Nor does Professor Roncace take into account that for the Romans in Josephus' audience reluctance to lead has a noble history, as we see, for example, in the famous instance of Cincinnatus (Livy 3.26).

Professor Roncace⁶⁸ asks why if Josephus wished to portray Gideon as more pious he omitted his worshipping G-d after hearing the dream of the Midianite (Judg. 7:15). We may suggest that perhaps Josephus, who is writing primarily for a non-Jewish Greek audience,⁶⁹ may have been deterred by the fact that the most likely Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word וישתחוה ("he prostrated himself") was προσκυνέω. Similarly, Josephus carefully avoids all indication that anyone bowed down to Joseph. Thus, whereas the Hebrew text declares that the Pharaoh made Joseph ride in the second chariot behind him and that the cry was uttered before him "Abrech," that is "bow the knee" (Gen. 41:43), Josephus follows the LXX in omitting "Abrech" and its explanation (*Ant.* 2.90). Likewise, whereas the Bible states that the brothers bowed down before Joseph (Gen. 42:6, 43:26, 50:18), Josephus omits the bowing down (*Ant.* 2.96, 120, 197);⁷⁰ indeed, it is Joseph who does service to the king. Whereas the Bible indicates that Joseph bowed down before Jacob (Gen. 48:12), and whereas the LXX declares that Ephraim and Manasseh did so (προσεκύνησαν), in Josephus there is no *proskynesis* either by Joseph or by his sons (*Ant.*

⁶⁷ Roncace 2000, 272.

⁶⁸ Roncace 2000, 273.

⁶⁹ See Feldman 1998, 46-49.

⁷⁰ So also Philo, *Somm.* 2.99: "To G-d alone should be given the real prostrating and honor."

2.195). The reason for this is that such obeisance (προσκύνησις) represents a quasi-divine honor of the sort that was customary among the Persians and that Alexander the Great had obtained (Arrian 4.10.5-12.5) but that was regarded by the Greeks as the very antithesis of liberty in politics and religion.⁷¹ To be sure, *proskynesis* did not actually imply that the person so honored was regarded as a god;⁷² but the Greeks often mistakenly believed this to be the case. At any rate, in Josephus the term usually implies worship of G-d or of an Oriental king and frequently has a pejorative connotation, as with the prostration demanded by Haman (*Ant.* 11.209, 210, 230, 277).

Professor Roncace⁷³ also asks why if Josephus omitted Gideon's request for signs (Judg. 6:36-37) to make him appear more pious, he still includes Gideon's need to hear the enemy's dream as a sign of assurance (Judg. 7:15). In reply, we may note that the belief in dreams does not detract from a person's reputation for piety. It is wisdom that was particularly shown, among Jews and non-Jews alike, in the interpretation of dreams. Non-Jews, as well as the Jews, in Josephus' audience would not have questioned the validity of dreams. It is surely significant that Josephus records no fewer than fifty-four dreams (and their truth and fulfillment in every case).⁷⁴

Professor Roncace⁷⁵ likewise asks why, if Josephus were seeking to underscore Gideon's philanthropy he makes Gideon more violent and harsher than does the biblical portrayal. The answer to this would appear to be that Gideon's philanthropy has nothing to do with avoiding military violence and harshness. As a soldier, especially fighting against a most oppressive enemy, he had to be tough; and, indeed, that was the pattern followed by biblical leaders generally, starting (and especially) with Moses. Gideon's philanthropy has to do rather with his attitude toward non-Jewish religious practices. Here again Josephus had an audience consisting primarily of non-Jews. He, like the LXX (Exod. 22:27 (28), the *Letter of Aristaeas* (16), and Philo (*Mos.* 2.205, *Spec.* 1.53)—cf. also *Ant.* 4.207, *Ap.* 2.237—, apparently felt that it was necessary to adopt a tolerant attitude toward non-Jewish religions.⁷⁶

⁷¹ See Horst 1932, 112-16, 126-27; and Greeven 1959, 763.

⁷² Austin 1981, 22-23.

⁷³ Roncace 2000, 273.

⁷⁴ See Feldman 1998, 100-102.

⁷⁵ Roncace 2000, 273.

⁷⁶ See Feldman 2000, 403-4 n. 623 on *Ant.* 4.207.

Professor Roncace⁷⁷ asserts that for some of the virtues, namely courage and mercy, Josephus has quite consistently depicted Gideon as less virtuous than the biblical narrative. Mercy, however, is not one of the classical four (or five) cardinal virtues.⁷⁸ As for courage, the achievement of Gideon, a mere inexperienced youth, with an army of three hundred cowards, even if he has the assistance of G-d, is surely striking. Moreover, whereas the biblical Samuel (1 Sam. 12:11) recalls that G-d sent the judges Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, and Samuel to save the Israelites from their enemies, in Josephus' version (*Ant.* 6.90) Samuel's list of judges is reduced to two, Gideon and Jephthah, and this consequently raises the importance of the courage that they showed in their military achievements; secondly, there is no specific mention that G-d sent them, and so their own achievement is heightened; and thirdly, they act as generals (στρατηγούντων) and not as mere messengers of G-d.

As for the role of G-d, one of the cardinal virtues is piety; and this is shown by Gideon's faith in G-d, as demonstrated in several passages noted in my original article and in my comments above. Moreover, one must look at Josephus' generally rationalizing approach to miracles and angels. Above all, one should look at the role of G-d in his many biblical portraits, as I have discussed elsewhere.⁷⁹

Professor Roncace⁸⁰ concludes his article by laudably remarking that Josephus' portrayal of Gideon can be elucidated only by close attention to all details of the narrative. However, even though the whole Josephan narrative about Gideon is brief, being only .90 times as long as the Hebrew text, as I have noted,⁸¹ Professor Roncace does not subject a sizable portion (Judg. 6:17-40) of that narrative to the same close analysis that he commendably employs elsewhere. In this section Gideon twice asks G-d (Judg. 6:17, 6:36-37) to perform a sign to confirm His promise that He will be with him. Josephus omits these requests totally, as I⁸² have noted, apparently because desire for such a sign might imply a lack of faith, a quality that he seeks to represent as possessed by Gideon. To see how and why Josephus

⁷⁷ Roncace 2000, 273.

⁷⁸ See Feldman 1998, 96.

⁷⁹ See Feldman 1998, *passim* and especially 205-14; Feldman 1998a, *passim*.

⁸⁰ Roncace 2000, 274.

⁸¹ Feldman 1993i, 6.

⁸² Feldman 1993i, 17.

rewrites a given pericope of the biblical narrative, it is often helpful to see how and why he handles similar themes elsewhere, as well as how and why his presumed contemporary, Pseudo-Philo, deals with them. Thus, as I⁸³ note, when Moses (Exod. 4:1), at the beginning of his mission, tells G-d that the Israelites will not believe that G-d actually appeared to him and intimates a wish for a sign to confirm that He had, Josephus omits the request. On the other hand, Pseudo-Philo, who views Gideon less sympathetically than does Josephus, on two occasions (35.6, 7) notes that Gideon asked for such signs. Moreover, having omitted the request for a sign, Josephus, though eager elsewhere to call attention to Gideon's piety, omits the subsequent description of the sacrifice and the altar (Judg. 6:19-20, 24) that Gideon prepared for G-d to show his loyalty to G-d. On the other hand, though it would have demonstrated Gideon's piety supremely well, Josephus omits Gideon's destruction (Judg. 6:27), in response to G-d's order (Judg. 6:25), of the altar of Baal and the Asherah-tree near it, presumably in view of his insistence that Jews are tolerant toward non-Jewish religions, as he shows (*Ant.* 4.207, *Ap.* 2.237) in his interpretation of Exod. 22:27 (28), wherein he follows the LXX in declaring that Jews are forbidden to speak ill of the religion of Gentiles out of respect for the very word "god." Similarly, inasmuch as mystery cults were held in such high regard by many non-Jews, he omits the statement, as found in the LXX translation, that King Asa ended the Judean mystery cults (1 Kgs. 15:12). Furthermore, he leaves aside the statement that Jehoshaphat removed the pagan high places and Asherim (2 Chron. 17:6 vs. *Ant.* 9.1). He likewise passes over King Jehu's conversion of the temple of Baal into an outhouse (2 Kgs. 10:27). His omission of the angel (Judg. 6:21-22) and of the miraculous consumption of Gideon's sacrifice (Judg. 6:21) are in line with Josephus' general rationalistic attitude in his treatment of biblical angels⁸⁴ and miracles.⁸⁵

⁸³ Feldman 1993i, 17.

⁸⁴ See Feldman 1998, 212-13.

⁸⁵ See Feldman 1998, 209-14.

6. SUMMARY

As for Professor Roncace's method, he deserves our approbation and thanks for his close attention to details. Whereas, however, he claims⁸⁶ to be proposing an alternative and what he regards as a better approach to Josephus' account, that is, one that takes that account as a literary creation in and of itself, without reference to its (biblical) sources, in fact his actual readings of the Deborah and Gideon narratives consistently focus on comparisons with the Bible. In this respect, his approach is very much in line with mine. Where he differs is in what he makes of the differences that emerge from a comparative reading of Josephus and the Bible. But I note that in his entire article there is not a single citation from Pseudo-Philo (probably an almost exact contemporary of Josephus) or the rabbinic literature (contemporary in oral form with Josephus though not written down until later), even though both have so much to say about Deborah and Gideon and even though a comparison and/or contrast with Josephus would highlight the particular features of Josephus' treatment.

I would, however, not stop with the details. As a historical exegete, I try to situate Josephus in a context both biblical and classical. I do this partly to understand Josephus better (what was in the air, what he might have had in mind, what his audience might have understood) and partly to understand the context better for having Josephus' contribution to it. There are certain motifs in Josephus' works, as in most writers' works, that pervade them; and it helps in the analysis of individual details if we discern certain patterns in his thinking, in his assumptions, and in his prejudices. It is also helpful if we look at him against the backdrop of his time and compare his views, especially when these deal with the same biblical topics—as they so often do—as those treated by such writers as Philo and Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, as well as with the rabbinic tradition, which in his day was still oral but which there is good reason to think that he knew. Moreover, I have presented evidence that Josephus was often looking at biblical personalities through the lenses of his own time and even through the events of his own life.⁸⁷ Like Professor Roncace, I look

⁸⁶ Roncace 2000, 247-48.

⁸⁷ See Feldman 2000a, 124-201.

at individual details, but I do not stop there: I ask myself whether I have seen those attitudes and even those very phrases elsewhere in Josephus, and whether, in fact, there is a more or less consistent pattern in the way he views people and events. When I think that I see a prevalent tendency, for example, to rationalize miracles, and I find an exception to that tendency, I ask myself whether my generalization should be revised or whether and how I can explain the apparent exception. I ask myself whether, for example, in his attitude toward women, he is reflecting misogynistic attitudes that are widely prevalent in ancient literature. I further ask myself whether he is coloring his portraits so as to appeal to his reading audience, whether (particularly) pagan or Jewish. I ask myself whether in his biographies he is asking questions similar to those asked by other ancient biographers, such as Plutarch. I ask myself whether he may have been influenced not only by Thucydides' language but also by the latter's portrait of the qualities of leadership, such as Thucydides attributes to Pericles. I ask myself whether he has been influenced by the Greek tragedians in interpreting the biblical narrative.⁸⁸ I ask myself whether there is a relationship between the amount of space that he devotes to individual biblical portraits and his attitude toward these personalities. I ask myself whether, in view of his knowledge of the Greek language and extensive knowledge of Greek literature, Josephus may have been influenced by pagan Greek conceptions of the cardinal virtues. I ask myself whether in his rewriting of the Bible he may have been influenced by what he conceived to be the need to answer anti-Jewish charges. I ask myself whether he is seeking to resolve apparent difficulties and contradictions in the biblical text. I realize the danger in seeking such patterns, since one is tempted to disregard what does not fit into the picture that seems to emerge; and I am especially grateful to Professor Roncace for questioning a number of my reflections and generalizations, though I hope that I have here respectfully answered a few of his own doubts.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ See Feldman 1998c, 51-80.

⁸⁹ I want to express my gratitude to Professors Christopher Begg and Steve Mason for several helpful comments on Professor Roncace's article.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

JOSEPHUS' PORTRAYAL (*ANT.* 5.136-74) OF THE BENJAMINITE AFFAIR OF THE CONCUBINE AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS (*JUDG.* 19-21)

1. THE IMPORTANCE AND CONTEXT OF THE PERICOPE

There is no episode from the book of Judges, other than the exploits of Samson¹, to which Josephus devotes more space than the Benjaminite affair of the concubine and its repercussions. In the Hebrew of the Bible it covers 164 lines;² in the Greek of Josephus it covers 231 lines.³ This means that the text of Josephus is approximately 1.41 times as long as the Hebrew text.⁴ Among major figures in the book of Judges, Ehud (2.45) and Samson (1.52) get relatively more space;⁵ Deborah (0.63), Gideon (0.90), and Jephthah (0.94) get relatively less space.⁶ This episode gets more space relatively even than that of Joshua (0.79).⁷ Yet there has been no systematic discussion of Josephus' treatment of this passage.⁸

In the first eleven books of the *Antiquities*, where Josephus parallels the Bible, he generally follows the order of the biblical narrative. He himself says that he has set forth the precise details of the scriptural

¹ See Feldman 1988a, 171-214.

² In the edition of Malbim 1950.

³ In the edition of Thackeray 5:1934.

⁴ In general, as Nodet 1995, xiv-xv, has shown, regarding the book of Judges, Josephus has a very close relationship with the Lucianic version of the LXX as against the Masoretic Text, though there are a number of cases where he has forms that indicate a knowledge of the Hebrew text. Christopher Begg has called my attention to a manuscript found at Qumran, 4QJudgb, containing a fragment of Judg. 19:5-7. As reconstructed by the editor, J. Trebolle Barrera, it is identical with the Masoretic Text. See Ulrich 1995, 166.

⁵ See Feldman 1994a, 177-201; and 1988a, 171-214.

⁶ See Feldman 1986a, 115-28; 1993i, 5-28; 1996a, 67*-84*.

⁷ See Feldman 1989, 351-76.

⁸ The most recent treatments of the biblical episode are the following: Hudson 1994, 49-66; Stone 1995, 87-107; Müllner 1996, 81-100; Bach 1998, 1-19. In none of these is there an analysis of Josephus' version of this episode. There is a very brief treatment in Spilsbury 1998, 153-56.

records, “each in its place, as my narrative proceeds, that being the procedure that I have promised to follow throughout this work, neither adding nor omitting anything” (*Ant.* 1.17). To be sure, Josephus makes this statement with particular relevance to his treatment of the Pentateuch, but he nowhere indicates that his treatment of the rest of the Bible is different from his treatment of the Pentateuch. Josephus would have us believe that his one innovation in his treatment of the Pentateuch (he is dealing with Mosaic laws at this point) has been to rearrange the order of the topics, “for he [Moses] left what he wrote in a scattered condition, just as he received each several instruction from G-d” (*Ant.* 4.197).⁹

Normally, when Josephus rearranges the order of verses in the Bible he does so to produce a more coherent, thematic narrative, in accordance with the views of Diodorus (5.5.1) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De Thucydide* 9).¹⁰ Josephus stresses that he proposes to set forth the details of biblical history in accordance with their proper order (κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν τάξιν), using the military term τάξις (arrangement of troops, battle array or order of battle), as if he were in literature the general he had been in the field during the war against the Romans (*Ant.* 1.17). Sometimes it is a difficulty in the Bible that causes such a rearrangement.

What is particularly significant is Josephus’ omission of the episode just before the account of the concubine, namely the story of Micah and his idolatry (Judg. 17).¹¹ One possible explanation is that Josephus

⁹ Josephus seems to have conceived of his task as being similar to that of the Athenian Pisistratus, who sought to bring order into the chaotic state of the Greek equivalent of the Bible, i.e., the Homeric poems (Cic., *De Oratore* 3.137). Indeed, in characterizing the state in which Moses left the Scriptures, Josephus employs the same word, σποράδην, that is used to describe the disarray of Homer’s poems (*Palatine Anthology* 11.442). He apparently realized that some of his Jewish readers would question his tampering with the order of the episodes, and so he adds that he has thought it necessary to make this preliminary observation “lest perchance any of my countrymen who read this work should reproach me at all for having gone astray” (*Ant.* 4.197).

¹⁰ See Avenarius 1956, 119-27. Cohen (1979) 40 notes a number of instances, e.g., *Ant.* 1.140-42, which connects the story of Noah, Ham, and Canaan (Gen. 9:20-27) to the genealogical list of Ham’s descendants (*Ant.* 1.130-39); and *Ant.* 1.212, which unites the story of Abimelech by juxtaposing Gen. 20:15 to 21:1-32.

¹¹ To be sure, Josephus (*Ant.* 5.175-78, following his version of Judg. 19-21, does give a version of the story of the Danite migration, which is interwoven with the story of Micah and his idolatry in Judg. 17-18.

did not regard idolatry as a major problem in Israelite history; but any reading of the book of Judges would have shown how important this factor was. More likely, he suppressed it for apologetic reasons. We may note, in particular, that a young man of Bethlehem, who was a Levite, served Micah as a priest (Judg. 17:7-13). If Josephus knew the tradition that the nameless young man was Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses (*t.Sanh.* 14:3, *B.Bat.* 109b), Josephus may have been embarrassed that the grandson of Moses could have committed such a sin.¹² Moreover, Josephus, who was so proud of being a priest (*Life* 1-4), must have been particularly chagrined at such a major lapse. We may note, furthermore, that, in contrast to Josephus, his presumed contemporary Pseudo-Philo¹³ does connect the tribe of Benjamin with the episode of Micah and the idols, quoting G-d as saying that he cannot totally destroy the tribe of Benjamin on the grounds that they were the first to be led astray after Micah (44.8). Pseudo-Philo thus presumably connects this episode with the narrative of Judges 20, in which, to be sure, Benjamin is almost totally destroyed.

The rabbinic tradition also directly connects the crime of the Benjaminites with the idol worship of Micah, since it declares that Micah's graven image was set up on the very same day on which the war against the Benjaminites began, that is, on the 23rd of Shevat (*S. 'Olam Rab.* 12 and *Esth. Rab.* 37.7). Another rabbinic tradition similarly connects Micah with the concubine at Gibeah, for it explains that forty thousand of those who went to war against the Benjaminites in the matter of the concubine at Gibeah were slain because they had not protested against Micah's idolatry, but had protested for the honor of a woman (*Sanh.* 103b; cf. *Pirque R. El.* 48).¹⁴ If Josephus was acquainted with this tradition, as he apparently was with so many other midrashic and midrashic-like traditions, it would have been extremely embarrassing that so shortly before the choice of a Benjaminite, Saul, as king, for whom Josephus has such admiration,¹⁵

¹² On Josephus' knowledge of rabbinic tradition see Feldman 1998, 65-73.

¹³ See Feldman 1971, xxvii-xxxi, and Jacobson 1996, 1:199-210.

¹⁴ In like fashion, and for similarly apologetic reasons, Josephus omitted such passages and certain incriminating details in connection with Jacob's deception of his father in order to obtain his blessing (Gen. 27:1-29) and Moses' slaying of the Egyptian (Exod. 2:12). See further Feldman 1998, 37-38.

¹⁵ See Feldman 1982, 45-99.

the Benjaminites should have been guilty of so flagrant a violation as idol worship.

The story of the concubine, the most highly-charged episode in Book 5 of the *Antiquities*, has been transposed by both Josephus and the rabbis (*S. 'Olam Rab.* 12, *S. Eliyahu Rab.* 11.57) from the very end of the book of Judges to a point immediately after Chapter 2, that is, to the period before the Judges.¹⁶ Thackeray, following Whiston, in his translation of Josephus, and Moore, conjectures that Josephus may have done so in order to allow time for the tribe of Benjamin to recover itself before it furnished the nation with its first king.¹⁷ since, as Moore remarks, “it is incredible that the tribe of Benjamin was almost exterminated only a generation of two before the time of Saul.”¹⁸ However, there is no indication that at this point Josephus was concerned with chronology; moreover, as Nodet notes, since the period of Joshua and the judges lasted 476 years, this would give more than enough time for the tribe to reconstitute itself.¹⁹ *S. Eliyahu Rab.* 11.57 explains that the episode of Gibeah is put at the end of the history of the judges so that the Gentiles may not say that the Israelites were already morally corrupt when they entered Palestine.

2. POLITICAL CONCERNS OF JOSEPHUS

Attridge suggests that the chief consideration behind the shift of our our pericope to a position near the beginning of the Judges material is the moralizing structure of Book 5 of the *Antiquities*, and that the effect is to distribute accounts of corruption throughout the period covered by it.²⁰ We may add that there is a basic reason why Josephus places the incident where he does, namely to stress his political theory with regard to the themes of moral decay and civil strife.

Likewise, in the passage just before the episode of the concubine, Josephus twice dwells on the theme of peace leading to luxury (τρυφή,

¹⁶ On this transposition see Glatt 1993, 89-100, who notes the parallel in *S. 'Olam Rab.*

¹⁷ Thackeray 1934, 5:62-63 (on *Ant.* 5.136).

¹⁸ Moore 1895, 405.

¹⁹ Nodet 1995, 5:135 *ad loc.*

²⁰ Attridge 1976, 134-35.

Ant. 5.132, 134) and enslavement to pleasure (ἡδονή, *Ant.* 5.132, 135); and we are told that the Israelites thought little (ὀλιγόρουν) of the orderliness (κόσμου) of the constitution (πολιτείας) and of the laws (νόμων, *Ant.* 5.132). As a consequence of this gross recklessness (ἄδειαν, “lack of scruple or restraint”), grave discord (στάσις... δεινή) assailed them (*Ant.* 5.135). It is this crucial statement that is the immediate background of the incident of the concubine.

As to the disdain for the orderliness of the constitution as the immediate background of the incident of the Benjaminites, in his comprehensive summary of the laws of the Torah, Josephus stresses that if the Israelites disdain (ὀλιγορήσαντες) those laws, they will have brought their penalty upon themselves (*Ant.* 4.209-11). Indeed, Moses sternly warns the Israelites that if they get so carried away with the wealth which will be theirs after they have crossed the Jordan River that they come to have a contempt and disdain (ὀλιγορίαν) for virtue, they will lose the favor that they have found from G-d (*Ant.* 4.189-90). Josephus also emphasizes that when youths belittle (ὀλιγορήσας) respect toward their parents, G-d, as father of the human race, is likewise distressed (*Ant.* 4.262).²¹

Significantly, Josephus uses the same word (ὀλιγόρουν) with regard to the men of Gibeah: “The old man replying that he (i.e., the husband of the woman) was a kinsman and a Levite and that they (the men of Gibeah) would be guilty of a dreadful crime in violating the laws (νόμους) at the beck of pleasure (ἡδονῆς), they recked little (ὀλιγόρουν) of righteousness (δικαίου), mocked at it, and threatened to kill him if he thwarted their lusts” (*Ant.* 5.144). It is particularly appropriate that when a reconciliation is reached by the rest of the Israelites with the Benjaminites, the same verb is

²¹ Josephus repeatedly stresses the importance of not belittling or disregarding good advice. Thus the prophet Samuel sharply criticizes King Saul’s premature sacrifice and tells him that if he had not, acting in haste, disobeyed him or lightly regarded (ὀλιγορήσας) the counsels that G-d had given Samuel, he and his descendants would have been destined to have long reigns (*Ant.* 6.104). Again, it is because the priests of Baal had set at naught (ὀλιγορημένοις) the customs of their fathers that they were slain (*Ant.* 9.137). Likewise, in describing King Uzziah’s degeneration (*Ant.* 9.222), he remarks that it was because Uzziah had become corrupted in mind through pride and had been filled with vanity on account of his prosperity that he became contemptuous (ὀλιγορήσεν) of G-d and of the Laws. He similarly decries the contempt (ὀλιγορίας) of G-d shown by King Amaziah (*Ant.* 9.204) in his innovations, Ahaz (*Ant.* 9.257) in his complete closure of the Temple, and Hoshea (*Ant.* 9.258) in his disregard for his duties to G-d.

used, this time, however, of the Israelites disregarding (ὀλιγορεῖν) the oaths that they had sworn not to give their daughters in marriage to the Benjaminites, on the grounds that they had sworn under the sway of passion (ὀργῆς), without reflection or judgment (*Ant.* 5.169). Indeed, almost immediately after the incident with the Benjaminites, it is the Israelites' belittlement (ὀλιγορίας) of G-d and their loss of aptitude for work that lead to a decline of their condition from bad to worse (*Ant.* 5.179).²²

Significantly, almost immediately after the conclusion of the incident, Josephus, clearly editorializing, remarks that "having once parted from the ordered course (κόσμου) of their constitution (πολιτείας), they (i.e., the Israelites) drifted into living in accordance with their own pleasure (ἡδονήν) and caprice (βούλησιν), and thus became contaminated (ἀναπίμπλασθαι) with the vices (κακῶν) current (ἐπιχωριαζόντων) among the Canaanites" (*Ant.* 5.179).

It is the lack of orderliness, therefore, that Josephus is attempting to highlight in placing the incident of the Benjaminites between these two statements. On the other hand, it is the orderliness (κόσμου) in the construction of the world that Josephus stresses in the prooemium to his *Antiquities*, where he notes that Moses, when framing his laws, did not, like other lawgivers, begin with contracts and the mutual rights of man, but rather with the orderly creation of the "world," with κόσμος here meaning both "order" and "world" (*Ant.* 1.21). And when he begins his paraphrase proper of the Bible, he reiterates, again playing on the double meaning of κόσμος, that he is beginning with the orderly creation of the world (*Ant.* 1.26).²³ Likewise, when Moses bids his people farewell, he commits them to

²² In painting a picture of gross recklessness (ἄδειαν, *Ant.* 5.135) as the background of the incident of the Benjaminites, Josephus uses the word (*Ant.* 1.16) that he employs with reference to that license in inventing fictions that Moses avoided. He also uses it with reference to the recklessness through which Zambrias' insolence (ὕβριν) in defying Moses gained strength (*Ant.* 4.152). Likewise, it is through the recklessness (ἄδειαν, *War* 2.238) with which they were emboldened that Jews, reacting to the slaying of a single Galilean, let loose with raids and robbery. Josephus draws a particularly effective comparison between the infection that envelops all the bodily members after inflammation attacks the principal member, and the sedition and disorder that gave brigands in Judea license (ἄδειαν, *War* 4.407) to plunder. Again, the Pharisee Sameias rebukes the Sanhedrin for granting so much license (ἄδειαν) to Herod (*Ant.* 14.174).

²³ Cf. Feldman 1993f, 415; and 1998, 435-36.

the sober guidance of the laws, namely the ordered scheme (κόσμοφ) of the constitution (πολιτείας) (*Ant.* 4.184).²⁴

Furthermore, Josephus the army general in Galilee, sees a parallel between the orderliness and discipline demanded of an army and the orderliness demanded of a government. Indeed, he looks upon orderliness in terms of military imagery, so that when he describes the rout of the Amorites, he states that the Israelites, seeing the Amorites give way, destroyed their (the Amorites') orderliness (κόσμος), reducing them to panic (*Ant.* 4.90, 193). In particular, he admires the orderliness of the Roman army, both in their tents and in marching, in war and in peace (*War* 3.85, 93, 104). Such soldiers, habituated to discipline and order, "when suddenly confronted with disorderly warfare, are peculiarly liable to be thrown into confusion" (*War* 5.79).

As we have noted, the immediate background of the incident of the Benjaminites is the outbreak of civil discord (στάσις) (*Ant.* 5.135). Indeed, strife (στάσις) is the opposite of orderliness, as we see in Moses' summary of the laws (*Ant.* 4.292). In recounting all that he did for the people, Moses highlights that he procured for them an ordered constitution (πολιτείας κόσμον) (*Ant.* 4.312). Josephus calls attention to the inherent contradiction in the view of the Epicureans, who declare that the world (κόσμον) runs by its own movement rather than by the direction of a guide (*Ant.* 10.278, 280). So important is the orderly rule of law that only G-d is comparable to it in permeating the universe (*Ap.* 2.284). Like the world, words, too, notably in a history such as Josephus is writing, require orderly arrangement (ἁρμονίας) and elegance (κόσμον) (*Ant.* 14.2).

From this degeneration the Israelites were saved by the judge Keniaz; but after his death, the affairs of the Israelites again suffered through lack of government and failure to obey the laws (*Ant.* 5.185). The king of Moab, Eglon, likewise took advantage of this disorderliness and humiliated the Israelites (*Ant.* 5.186).²⁵

²⁴ In applying this principle to politics, Sentius Saturninus, addressing the Roman Senate upon the assassination of the Emperor Caligula and the accession of Claudius, declares that "ever since Julius Caesar ... caused an upheaval of the state by doing violence to the orderliness of the laws (τὸν κόσμον τῶν νόμων), ... there is not a single evil that has not afflicted the city" (*Ant.* 19.173). In turn, a delegation from the Senate urged Claudius to yield to the Senate and to allow the law to provide for the orderly organization (κόσμον) of the commonwealth.

²⁵ We again find this theme of the dreadful consequences of the Israelites' aban-

Josephus' emphasis on political theory may be seen particularly in the section immediately before the beginning of the account of the concubine: "Aye, even that aristocracy (ἀριστοκρατίαν) of theirs was now becoming corrupted. No more did they appoint councils of elders (τὰς γερονσίας) or any other of those magistracies (ἀρχήν) beforetime ordained by law (νενομισμένων), but lived on their estates, enslaved to the pleasure (ἡδονῇ) of lucre. And so, by reason of this great recklessness (ἄδειαν), grave discord (στάσις) again assailed them and they were launched into civil war (τὸ πολεμεῖν ἀλλήλοις) through the following cause" (*Ant.* 5.135).

To Josephus, aristocracy (ἀριστοκρατία), with the life that is lived thereunder, is indeed the best: "Let no craving possess you for another polity," Moses is quoted as saying, "but be content with this, having the laws for your masters and governing all your actions by them; for G-d sufficeth for your ruler" (*Ant.* 4.223). Hence, Josephus is particularly upset that this ideal form of government was being undermined by the affair of the Benjaminites.²⁶

When the Israelites returned to the Land of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, their form of government, under priestly rule according to Josephus, was at once aristocratic and oligarchic (*Ant.* 11.111). Being himself a priest and, indeed, of the highest of the twenty-four courses of priests (*Life* 1-2), Josephus personally identified with this

doning themselves to luxury in connection with the sons of the prophet Samuel, who abandoned themselves to luxury (τρυφήν) and sumptuous fare in defiance of G-d and of their father (*Ant.* 6.34). On the other hand, Daniel and his friends did not weigh down their souls or soften their bodies with luxury (*Ant.* 10.194). Indeed, even Herod emphasizes that his life has not been given over to the pleasures of luxury (τρυφήν), "which cuts short the lives even of the young" (*War* 1.462). Josephus himself was apparently sensitive to the charge of luxury, since a deputation sent by the high priest Ananus sought to depose him from his command in Galilee on the grounds that he had lived in luxury (τρυφᾶις) and had neglected to alleviate their share of the burden of the war (*Life* 284).

²⁶ We may see how deeply pained Josephus was by the challenge to this aristocracy when we read how sorely grieved the prophet Samuel was when the Israelites implored him to appoint a king for them, "for he was keenly enamored of aristocratic (ἀριστοκρατίας) government, accounting it divine and productive of bliss to those who adopted it" (*Ant.* 6.36). That aristocracy is the ideal form of government may be gleaned from the fact that Josephus declares that it was under Moses and Joshua that the Israelites remained under aristocratic rule, but that once Joshua had died they continued in a state of anarchy for a full eighteen years, after which they returned to their former most excellent polity (literally, aristocracy) (*Ant.* 6.84; so also *Ant.* 20.229).

aristocratic rule. Again, when the Israelite people lost their monarchic role at the hands of Pompey in 63 B.C.E., they lived under an aristocracy, that is, under priestly rule (*Ant.* 14.91). A century later, after the death of King Herod and the ethnarch Archelaus, the constitution once again became an aristocracy, with the leadership of the nation entrusted to the high priests (*Ant.* 20.251).

To appreciate the emphasis that Josephus puts on the terrible effects of lawlessness and civil strife during this period of Israelite history, we shall do well to compare Josephus' view of this period with that of Pseudo-Philo. Of the 86 1/2 pages (65 chapters) in Jacobson's Latin text of Pseudo-Philo,²⁷ covering the period from the creation through the death of Saul, 51 pages, that is, 37 chapters or 59% (Chaps. 20-56), cover the period of Joshua through the judges. The central focus here is not, however, on the dreadfulness of civil strife and immorality but on the Israelites' going astray after strange gods, as we can see from the great attention given to this topic in Pseudo-Philo's account of Kenaz (*Bib. Ant.* 25-28) and his inclusion and development of the story of Micah (*Bib. Ant.* 44).

For Josephus, on the other hand, concerned as he was not to offend his primarily non-Jewish readers (who were, after all, idol-worshippers), idol-worship is a subject not to be stressed and even, as in the case of Micah, to be omitted altogether. Indeed, the theme of the decline of the Israelites due to their succumbing to luxury and worldly pleasure and of no longer strictly adhering to their constitution and laws, so strongly emphasized in the pericope under discussion and so often repeated elsewhere in Josephus, is hardly noticed by Pseudo-Philo (*Bib. Ant.* 16). The attention given to political theory, particularly aristocracy and its corruption (*Ant.* 5.135), which constitutes the immediate prologue to this pericope and which is a recurring theme in Josephus, and the crucial importance of avoiding civil strife (στράσις, *Ant.* 5.135), which is likewise featured in the immediate prologue to this pericope and is a recurring theme in Josephus are ideas that are absent from Pseudo-Philo.²⁸

²⁷ Jacobson 1996, 1:1-87.

²⁸ Pseudo-Philo is concerned rather with religious deviations. According to him, Joshua criticizes the Israelites for not studying the Law and says that if they had done so they would not have been led astray after a man-made altar (22.5). In Pseudo-Philo, Kenaz devotes his first and most complete attention to the task of finding out "whose heart has turned away from the L-rd our G-d, so that the fury

In contrast to Pseudo-Philo's emphasis on religious concerns, Josephus, seeking to appeal to the non-Jews and secularly educated Jews in his audience, catered to their political interests. Thus, in his prooemium, Josephus sets forth as the goal of his work that it should embrace not only the entire ancient history of the Jews, but also an evaluation of their political constitution (διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος) (*Ant.* 1.5). He appeals to his politically minded audience by stressing the theme of civil strife (στάσις) so familiar to readers of Thucydides' description of revolution at Corcyra (3.82-84). This theme would have struck a responsive chord in many of Josephus' readers, who might well have been acquainted with the terrible consequences of the lawlessness (ἀνομία) brought on by the plague in Athens (Thuc. 2.53.1). The Romans, who themselves had experienced a century of constantly recurring civil strife from the struggle of the Senate against the Gracchi, of Sulla against Marius, of Caesar against Pompey, of Brutus against Antony, and of Antony against Octavian, and who had a great tradition of respect for law going back at least to the Twelve Tables, would surely have appreciated such an emphasis on the dire consequences of internecine bloodshed.

The theme of the dreadful effects of anarchy and civil war is a central motif in both the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities*. Thus, we may note the striking coincidence that the phrase that Josephus uses to describe Jeroboam's sedition, namely that he was "ambitious of great things" (μεγάλων ἐπιθυμητῆς πραγμάτων, *Ant.* 8.209), is similar to that which he uses to describe both the arch-revolutionary, John of Gischala (ἐπιθυμήσας μεγάλων, *War* 2.587), and Josephus' literary arch-rival, Justus of Tiberias, who was "ambitious for newer things" (νεωτέρων...ἐπεθύμει πραγμάτων, *Life* 36).²⁹ Very pointedly, he contrasts the brutal treatment by these "tyrants" of their fellow-countrymen (ὁμοφύλους) with the clemency that the Romans

of his wrath not be brought upon the people" (25.3-26.15), similar to the attempt of Joshua (7.12-26) to find the sinner in the midst of the Israelites, who turns out to be Achan, who confesses and is executed and who is actually mentioned in Pseudo-Philo's account of Kenaz (25.7). Attention is likewise centered on such extrabiblical figures as Aod the priest-magician of Midian (34.1) and angels such as Nathaniel (38.3), the angel in charge of fire who burned the servants of the judge Jair. Cf. Jacobson 1996, 2:750, *ad loc.* We may likewise see Josephus' emphasis on morality and political theory as against Pseudo-Philo's emphasis on ritual with regard to the sons of Eli the high priest. See Feldman 1998, 502.

²⁹ See Feldman 1993d, 43-46.

showed toward the Jews, even though the Jews were an alien race (ἄλλοφύλους) (*War* 1.27).

One of the leitmotifs of both the *Jewish War* and Josephus' autobiography is that it was civil strife that cost the Jews most heavily in the war against the Romans. In connection with his own command in Galilee, Josephus notes that the principal instigator of the mob claiming that he was a traitor was a certain Jesus, son of Sapphias, the chief magistrate of Tiberias, whom Josephus describes as "unrivalled in fomenting sedition (στιασιποιός) and revolution (νεωτεριστής" (*Life* 134).³⁰

At the very beginning of the biblical passage containing this incident we read: "In those days, when there was no king in Israel" (*Judg.* 19:1). Josephus significantly omits this (*Ant.* 5.136). The implication of the Hebrew is that if there had been a king, he would have punished the wrongdoers, thereby avoiding a civil war. Josephus, however, as we have indicated, believed that the best form of government was not a monarchy but an aristocracy, which he identified with the rule of the judges (*Ant.* 6.36, 84-85, 268).³¹

³⁰ On Josephus' depiction of the evils of civil dissension and of rebellion against legitimate authority, as well as his assertion of the connection of fratricide with pollution, see Feldman 1998, 140-43.

³¹ Schwartz 1983-84, 30-52, is troubled by the apparent contradiction in Josephus concerning forms of government, even though it is clear, as he remarks, that Josephus had given a great deal of thought to providing a consistent theory regarding the political status of the Jewish nation. On the one hand, Josephus designates the period of the Judges as an aristocracy (*Ant.* 6.36, 84-85, 268), but at another point he refers to it as a monarchy (*Ant.* 20.229). Another apparent contradiction arises in Josephus' designation of the period between the return from Babylonian captivity and the Hasmoneans as an aristocracy and an oligarchy (*Ant.* 11.111), while elsewhere he refers to the government during this period as a democracy (*Ant.* 20.234). Schwartz conjectures that the contradiction may reflect different sources, but concludes that it is more likely that it reflects a shift between the time that he wrote the early part of the *Antiquities* and the period when Josephus finished the work, perhaps due, he thinks, to a change in historical circumstances. I think it more likely that Josephus uses the term "aristocracy" to refer not to a particular form of government but rather, as the etymology of the term implies, to the government by the best, which for him means the rule of G-d, that is a theocracy. Therefore, the government under Moses (*Ant.* 4.223), under the Judges, and under the high priests after the return from Babylonian captivity is termed an aristocracy. The common denominator in all periods, from Josephus' point of view, is that the nation was in reality being ruled by G-d. Hence, the appropriateness of the term "theocracy," a term that Josephus apparently invented for such a government (*Ap.* 2.165). Consequently, when Josephus designates the period of the Judges as a monarchy (*Ant.* 20.229), even though he has previously referred to it as an aristocracy,

As to the dangerous consequences of luxury, the reader is reminded of counsel given to the Pharaoh by Joseph after he explains the former's dreams, namely, not to permit the Egyptians to use their surplus for luxury (τρυφήν) but to reserve it for a time of want (*Ant.* 2.88). Josephus notes that the Israelites have in every age observed their laws as the gift of G-d, and have not transgressed any of them either in peace through luxury (τρυφῆς) or in war under constraint (*Ant.* 3.223). Indeed, immediately after his account of the affair with the Benjaminites, Josephus, editorializing as it were, remarks that "the state of the Israelites went from bad to worse through their loss of aptitude for toil and their neglect of the Divinity. For, having once parted from the ordered course (κόσμου) of their constitution, they drifted into living in accordance with their own pleasure (ἡδονήν) and caprice, and thus became contaminated with the vices current among the Canaanites. So G-d was wroth with them, and all that prosperity (εὐδαιμονίαν) that they had won with myriad labors they now through idle luxury (τρυφήν) cast away" (*Ant.* 5.179-80).

3. JOSEPHUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE LEVITES

At the very beginning of his narrative, whereas Judges 19:1 speaks simply of a Levite, Josephus describes him as a Levite of the lower ranks (δημοτικωτέρων) (*Ant.* 5.136).³² This is in contrast to Elkanah, the father of the prophet Samuel, who is described as coming from

he is using the term "monarchy" in the etymological sense and is stating that it involved a single ruler. This is not in contradiction to his earlier statement that it was an aristocracy (*Ant.* 6.36, 84-85, 268), that is, the government by the best, inasmuch as the rulers, the Judges, were directed by G-d. That Josephus is using monarchy in this sense is clear from his statement that the period of monarchy was followed by the rule of kings (*Ant.* 20.229), the latter term being a reference to a form of government. One contradiction does remain, namely between Josephus' designation of the government of the Jews during the period between the return from Babylonian captivity and the rise of the Hasmoneans as an oligarchy (*Ant.* 11.111) and his subsequent designation of this period as a democracy (*Ant.* 20.234). Perhaps the solution to this apparent contradiction is that Josephus regarded the rule of the high priests—clearly the rule of the few and hence an oligarchy—during this period as having the approval of the people at large.

³² Nodet 1995, 148* (on *Ant.* 5.136) suggests that whereas the Hebrew (Judg. 19:1) reads that the Levite was sojourning in the remote parts (בִּירְכֵי, lit., "in inner parts") and the LXX ἐν μηροῖς (lit., "in thighs"), Josephus understands the word in a social sense, "in a low rank."

the middle ranks of the Levites (*Ant.* 5.342). We may note that there was a considerable rivalry between the priests and the Levites; and Josephus, as a priest, tends to lower the stature of the Levites.

As a priest, Josephus is particularly sensitive to the attempt of the Levites to attain the status of the priests (Num. 16:10). As a proud priest, Josephus is particularly sensitive to the attempt of a Levite such as Korah to usurp the privilege of the high priesthood, an issue that was very much alive in Josephus' day.³³ Josephus may well be thinking of the incident during the procuratorship of Albinus (62-64 c.E.) in which those Levites who were singers of hymns succeeded in persuading King Agrippa II to convene the Sanhedrin and to grant them permission to wear linen robes on equal terms with the priests (*Ant.* 20.216-18). This, says Josephus, was contrary to the ancestral laws, and he ominously declares that such transgression was bound to make the Jews liable to punishment, presumably by G-d himself (*Ant.* 20.218).³⁴

As Seth Schwartz has noted, there are in Josephus a number of pro-priestly revisions of both the legal and narrative portions of the Bible.³⁵ In particular, Josephus states that the priests alone, rather than the Levites, were permitted to carry the ark (*Ant.* 3.136, 4.304); that the king may do nothing without consulting the high priest and the Gerousia (*Ant.* 4.224); that Moses consigned the holy books to the priests alone (*Ant.* 4.304); and that Moses gave equal portions to the priests and the Levites from the booty taken from the Midianites (*Ant.* 4.164), whereas the Bible indicates that Moses assigned to the Levites ten times as much as he gave to the priests (Num. 31:27-30).

Significantly, whereas the Bible enumerates princes, Levites, and priests whom King Jehoshaphat sent to the cities of Judah to teach the law (2 Chron. 17:7-8). Josephus omits the Levites (*Ant.* 8.395) (though nine of them are actually mentioned by name in the biblical narrative). Likewise, in enumerating the officers whom Jehoshaphat appointed, Josephus omits mention of the Levites (2 Chron. 19:11 vs. *Ant.* 9.6).³⁶

³³ See Feldman 1993f, 411.

³⁴ On the background of this dispute see Feldman 1965, 504-5, n. b; Vogelstein 1889), and Meyer 1938, 721-28, especially 727.

³⁵ Schwartz 1990, 88-90.

³⁶ See Feldman 1993c, 161.

Nevertheless, the quarrel between the priests and the Levites is, so to speak, a family quarrel; and Josephus could not afford to allow his confederates in the Temple service to be degraded to such a low level as would appear to be the case from the Hebrew text of Judg. 19:1.

It is true that Moses is described by the same epithet, δημοτικώτερον (*Ant.* 3.212), that is used of the Levite in our narrative. But it is clear that Moses is hardly a commoner. Rather, he is dressed like any ordinary person in order to appear no different from the crowd. Indeed, when Solomon's friends advise the new king Rehoboam, Solomon's son, to speak to the people in a more popular style (δημοτικώτερον) than was usual for royal dignity, this is merely practical advice, because they realize that subjects naturally like affability in their kings and wish to be treated almost as equals; and it is consequently wise to give this impression. It is true that the Pharisees, with whom Josephus was identified politically (*Life* 12), in contrast to the Sadducees (*Ant.* 13.298), had the support of the masses; but, as Mason notes, Josephus consistently laments the fame and popularity of the Pharisees (*War* 1.110-12, 2.162; *Ant.* 13.400-404, 18.17; *Life* 191-94).³⁷

That the word δημοτικός may have a pejorative connotation can be seen from the passage in which Josephus describes how, after the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, the royal power that had formerly been bestowed upon those who were high priests now became the privilege of commoners (δημοτικῶν) (*Ant.* 14.77-78). A similar pejorative connotation may be seen in the statement that when the Hasmoneans lost their royal power, it passed to Herod, who came from a house of common people (δημοτικῆς) (*Ant.* 14.491).

If the Levite in the narrative emerges as a loyal and kind husband who cannot bear the degradation brought upon his wife, this does not cast a better light upon him as a Levite but rather contributes to the romantic motif that Josephus stresses in the story. Whereas in the Bible he hands over his wife to the mob (Judg. 19:25), in Josephus it is the mob who seize her by force (*Ant.* 5.146); but this is Josephus' way of increasing the drama rather than an attempt to elevate the reputation of the Levite as a Levite. Alternatively, we may suggest that Josephus is eager to protect the Levites from dishonor,

³⁷ Mason 1991, 243.

and that he therefore stresses that this man was a commoner, of the lower ranks, and consequently not the sort of Levite who would be of near-priestly status.

4. ROMANTIC MOTIFS

Josephus makes his narrative more appealing to his Greek readers by introducing romantic motifs reminiscent of Homer,³⁸ Aeschylus,³⁹ and Hellenistic novels.⁴⁰ He apparently realized that the reader's interest could hardly be maintained through twenty books of political and military history without digressions in the form of purple passages and, especially, romantic narratives.⁴¹

A major change is found at the very beginning of our narrative, where we read in the Bible that the Levite "took to himself a concubine" (Judg. 19:1). In Josephus' version this has become "he married (ἄγεται,⁴² a woman" (*Ant.* 5.136). Apparently, Josephus was embarrassed to have a Levite, a member of a class of Jews in theological importance second only to the priests, associated with a concubine. Though Josephus does acknowledge that Abraham had a concubine (*Ant.* 1.214), it is clear that concubinage was not practiced by Jews during Josephus' lifetime nor during the talmudic period.⁴³ It is true, moreover, that Josephus does mention briefly King Saul's concubine Rizpah (2 Sam. 3:7; *Ant.* 7.23), but royal concubines were standard among kings generally, including the kings of Judah

³⁸ Homer, *Od.*, especially Book 6 (the Nausicaa episode).

³⁹ *Choephores* 613-22 (Scylla's betrayal of her father out of love for Minos; cf. Ovid, *Met* 8.6-151).

⁴⁰ Notably, Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesiaca* 1.3, 1.12, 3.11, 4.5.

⁴¹ On romantic motifs in Josephus' rewriting of the Bible see Feldman 1998, 185-88.

⁴² This is the meaning in Hdt. 2.47 and throughout Greek literature; see Lidell, Scott, Jones 1940, s. v. ἄγω, B.2.

⁴³ Josephus himself, in his succinct summary of the most important laws of the Pentateuch, advises young men, on reaching the age of marriage, to wed virgins, freeborn and of honest (literally "good") parents (παρθένους ἐλευθέρας γονέων ἀγαθῶν) (*Ant.* 4.244). Moreover, free men should not marry female slaves even if they are driven by sexual passion (ἔρωτος). "Such passion," he sternly declares, "must be mastered by regard for decorum and the properties of rank." See Rabinowitz 1971, 5:863.

and Israel;⁴⁴ and even in that case, he omits totally the incident in which Rizpah protected the dead bodies of her sons by Saul from the beginning of the harvest until the rainy season, as well as the incident in which David was so moved by her maternal love that although he had delivered them to the Gibeonites to be hanged, he now had her children buried in the family sepulchre of Saul's father Kish (2 Sam. 21:10-14).⁴⁵

In Josephus' version the concubine has become a "woman" (*Ant.* 5.136), where the word used for woman, γύναιον, had the connotation of a weak, pitiable, poor woman, sometimes used as a term of endearment for a wife, sometimes, to be sure, used deprecatingly of a simple woman or a woman of low status. By making the concubine into the Levite's wife, Josephus has raised the status of the Levite, though he is careful not to raise the Levite to too high a rank. This is particularly important for Josephus, who is so proud of his role as a priest and therefore in the Temple ritual, in view of the role played by the Levites in the Temple service.

This legitimate status of the relationship of the Levite and the woman is reinforced in Josephus' narrative by the reference to her parents as his in-laws (πενθερούς) (*Ant.* 5.137). Indeed, whereas the Hebrew text says that the woman's husband was greeted with joy by the concubine's father (Judg. 19:3), and that it is the father who took the initiative in urging the Levite to stay (Judg. 19:4) and entertained him with food and drink (Judg. 19:6), and indeed kept urging and even pressed him to stay on each of three occasions when the Levite got up to leave (Judg. 19:7, 8, 9), Josephus stresses the determination of the Levite to get the woman to leave with him (*Ant.* 5.138). The romantic attachment is all the more emphasized by the fact that the woman's parents are reluctant to part with their daughter and so seek delays.

In the biblical narrative the concubine "plays the harlot against"

⁴⁴ Josephus mentions the concubines of David (*Ant.* 7.70, 199, 213-14, 279), Solomon (*Ant.* 8.113), and Rehoboam (*Ant.* 8.250).

⁴⁵ To be sure, Josephus does mention the concubines of King Alexander Jannaeus (*Ant.* 13.380), but he is hardly held up as a model by Josephus, since in that very same paragraph he mentions that Jannaeus feasted with his concubines in a conspicuous place even as he, with incredible inhumanity, ordered 800 Jews to be crucified and slaughtered their wives and children before their very eyes while their husbands and fathers were still alive.

(הנה) the Levite “before him” (עליו) (Judg. 19:2), i.e., as the thirteenth-century Provençal commentator David Kimḥi asserts, she commits adultery without even attempting to conceal it. To be sure, version A of the LXX says that she “grew angry with” (ὀργίσθη) with the Levite, while version B says that she “departed from” (ἐπορεύθη) him, thus avoiding the ugly taint of her being a harlot. In Josephus, however, as Spilsbury has noted, there is no indication of infidelity on her part.⁴⁶ Indeed, Josephus avoids all the ugliness and actually paints the relationship in romantic colors, stating that she held herself aloof (ἀλλοτρίως) from him, whereupon he, being deeply enamored (ἐρῶν σφόδρα) of her and captivated (ἡττημένος) by her beauty (κάλλους) and receiving no like return from her, became all the more ardent (ἐκκαιομένου) in his passion (πάθει) (*Ant.* 5.137). The Levite is thus portrayed as a loving husband willing to meet his wife’s demands.⁴⁷ This theme of unrequited love, which Josephus has introduced, is reminiscent of Joseph’s disdain for the advances of Potiphar’s wife (Gen. 39:7-12, *Ant.* 2.42-54).

In contrast, the Hebrew text says nothing about the quarrels, but, rather, that she left him for her father’s house and remained there for four months (Judg. 19:2-3). Josephus’ version, departing as it does from both the Hebrew and the LXX, is more romantic in that it seems to indicate that the woman left her husband in a huff after staying with him for four months. According to the Hebrew version, it took four months before the Levite decided to go after her in order to win her back, whereas, according to Josephus’ more romantic version, as soon as the Levite realized that she had rejoined her parents, he visited her parents, redressed her grievances (μέμψεις, the same word that is used earlier in this paragraph), and was reconciled with her.⁴⁸ A further romantic touch is to be seen in the fact that it is her

⁴⁶ Spilsbury 1998, 155.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ant.* 5.137 says that the concubine rejoined her parents. whereas Josephus speaks only of the father (Judg. 19:3). Nodet 1995, *ad loc.*, says that Josephus may not have wished to emphasize a suspected friendship with the father-in-law; but aside from the fact that the father-in-law (see Judg. 19:4) received him warmly, there is no indication of such a relationship between son and father-in-law-to be. According to the Hebrew text and Version B of the LXX, the woman brought the Levite into her father’s house, whereas according to Version A, he entered into the house of her father. Josephus avoids this question by stating merely that he visited her parents.

beauty (εὐπρέπειαν) that the men of Gibeah marvel at and which arouses their lust (*Ant.* 5.143), whereas the Bible says nothing about her appearance.

In stating that the Levite was enamored of the woman, Josephus has used the same verb, ἐράω, that he employs with reference to Jacob's love for Rachel. Thus we hear that Jacob, when first meeting Rachel, was not so much moved by their relationship as cousins or by the affection consequent thereon as he was captivated by love for her (ἔρωτι...ἡττηθεὶς) (*Ant.* 1.288), the same two words as those used to describe the impact of the woman on the Levite (ἐρῶν ... ἡττημένος, *Ant.* 5.136).⁴⁹

In Josephus' version, the romance between the Levite and the woman is built up by the added statement that because her aloofness caused his passion to increase, quarrels constantly arose between them, until, at last, the woman, utterly weary of them, left him (*Ant.* 5.137).

5. THE INCIDENT AT GIBEAH

In both the Hebrew text and Josephus the Levite and the woman come to Jerusalem but decide not to remain there because it is in the hands of foreigners (*Judg.* 19:10-15, *Ant.* 5.139-140). They then proceed to Gibeah in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin (*Judg.* 19:13-15, *Ant.* 5.140).⁵⁰

The reader of the biblical narrative may well ask what inspired

⁴⁹ On Josephus' introduction of the erotic motif in his rewriting of the Bible, as well as in his treatment of post-biblical Jewish history, see Feldman 1998, 185-88. Interestingly, the rabbinic tradition (*b.Git.* 6b) does not consider the romantic relationship between the Levite and the concubine. Rather, it has a dispute between the third-century Rabbis Abiathar and Jonathan, as explained by their contemporary Rabbi Judah ben Ezekiel, concerning the fault that the Levite had found with the concubine. Pseudo-Philo, who apparently is interested solely in moral aspects of the tale, says nothing at all about the romantic relationship between the Levite and the concubine, their separation, his visit to her parents to win her back, and the reason for this trip (45.1).

⁵⁰ According to Pseudo-Philo, the Levite wished to stay in Gibeah, but the inhabitants there did not allow him to do so (45.1). Thereupon, in an extra-biblical addition, Pseudo-Philo, who omits the couple's reluctance to stop at Jerusalem, states that the Levite decided to go to Nob. Pseudo-Philo thus provides a justification for the later destruction of Nob (see 1 Sam. 21-22), since it is in Nob that the woman is raped (Pseudo-Philo 47.10, 63.1).

the old man to offer hospitality to the Levite (Judg. 19:16-21). Judg. 19:16 says that he was from Ephraim and happened to be sojourning in Gibeah. Josephus adds that they were both of common stock, that is, both were Levites, and explains that the husband was escorting his wife from her parents back to his own home (*Ant.* 5.142).

At this point there is a remarkable divergence between the biblical account (Judg. 19:22) and Pseudo-Philo (45.3), on the one hand, and Josephus (*Ant.* 5.143-45), on the other. In the former two accounts the men of Gibeah demand that the old man, the master of the house where the Levite and the woman have been given hospitality, bring out their guest(s), the purpose being, as the Bible states explicitly, "that we may know him." Pseudo-Philo adds the threat: "Otherwise, we will burn in the fire both you and them" (45.3). The parallel with the biblical account of the Sodomites' attempt to get Lot to surrender his visitors to them is manifest (Gen. 19:4-11). In that account the Sodomites use the same language: "Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Indeed, Pseudo-Philo (who, to be sure, does not relate Genesis 19 in its biblical position) specifically mentions the parallel with the Sodomites, since the old man tells the Levite to leave in a hurry and says that God will shut the minds of the Gibeahites "as he shut up the Sodomites before Lot" (Ps.-Ph. 45.2). The language of the ruffians, "It has never happened that strangers give orders to the local inhabitants" (Ps.-Ph. 45.3), is very similar to that of the Sodomites, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he would play the judge" (Gen. 19:9). Josephus adds that the Gibeonites, however, cared little (ὀλιγόρουν) for righteousness (δικαίου), mocked (κατεγέλων) it, and threatened to kill him if he thwarted their lusts (*Ant.* 5.144). The old man, in the biblical narrative, then offers his own virgin daughter and the concubine (Judg. 19:24), just as Lot had offered his own virgin daughters (Gen. 19:8). Josephus, troubled that the old man should offer one of his guests to the Gibeahites, in violation of the norm of hospitality, says that the old man offered his daughter and does not mention the concubine (*Ant.* 5.145).

Josephus, most significantly, has totally omitted the attempt at homosexuality.⁵¹ In his version the Gibeahites demand not the man

⁵¹ To be sure, the manuscripts read that the old man told the Gibeahites that the Levite was a kinsman and that they would be guilty of a dreadful crime in violating the laws for the sake of pleasure (ἡδονῆς) (*Ant.* 5.144), implying perhaps

but the woman, since—again the romantic touch—they had seen her in the marketplace and admired her beauty (εὐπρέπειαν) (*Ant.* 5.143). Attridge, while admitting that there may be an apologetic attempt on the part of Josephus to expunge the homosexuality from his account,⁵² thinks that a more important concern was to create a consistent and melodramatic story of love lost, into which a homosexual episode would hardly fit. He notes that Josephus had no scruples in recording the attempt by the Sodomites at homosexual abduction (*Ant.* 1.200.⁵³ However, we may note one major difference: the Sodomites are not Jews, whereas the Gibeahites are, and it would be most embarrassing to speak of Jews conducting themselves thus. It is interesting that the rabbis felt considerable sensitivity about this part of the story of the Gibeahites and that there was apparently some sentiment at first for omitting the reading and translation of it, though eventually they permitted it (*Meg.* 25a). Similarly, we may note, Pseudo-Philo de-emphasizes the homosexual element in the story, remarking that after the ruffians had dragged him and his concubine off, they released the man and abused the concubine alone (45.3-5). For Josephus homosexuality, which was acceptable to the Greeks, is utterly abhorrent, as we see in *Ap.* 2.199.

Whereas, according to Judg. 19:25, the Levite then seized his concubine and—most ungallantly and very unromantically—thrust her outside to the Gibeahites, Josephus puts the blame solely on the Gibeahites, asserting that they seized her and, yielding still more to the force of their lust, actually carried her off to their homes, where they sated their desires all night long (*Ant.* 5.146).⁵⁴ In having the ruf-

that they wanted to have homosexual relations with the Levite, but this is not necessarily implied, since the reference to the laws may be to those pertaining to hospitality. Moreover, the tenth-century Epitome of Josephus, as well as the Latin version, say that the Levite woman (that is, the Levite's wife) was a kinswoman of the Gibeahites.

⁵² Similarly, Josephus is careful to avoid the implication that the friendship of Jonathan and David was a homosexual love affair. Hence, whereas such a conclusion might have been drawn from the scriptural words that Jonathan loved David as he loved his own soul (1 Sam. 18:1, 20:17), Josephus omits this statement completely (*Ant.* 6.193, 232); and somewhat later we hear only of Jonathan's affection (εὐνοια, "empathy," "devotion," "goodwill," "faithfulness") for David (*Ant.* 6.236).

⁵³ Attridge 1976, 136.

⁵⁴ Pseudo-Philo omits the old man's offer of his own daughter to the ruffians. In Pseudo-Philo the ruffians enter by force, drag the Levite and his concubine off, and after letting him go, abuse her until she dies (45.3).

fians use violence, Josephus and Pseudo-Philo (45.3) are portraying them as being similar to the Sodomites (Gen. 19:9), who attempted to break down Lot's door.

The scene that follows in Josephus continues in the romantic vein. In the Bible, the woman, after being abused all night, returns toward morning to the old man's house where her master is staying (Judg. 19:26-28). When he arises in the morning (the implication is that he has slept peacefully), he opens the door and leaves to go on his way, though one would think, if he cared at all for the concubine, that he would not have started to leave before making a thorough search for her. He is surprised to discover his concubine at the entrance of the house. He then, very ungallantly, tells her to get up; and when she does not reply, he puts her on a donkey and proceeds on his way.

There is much more feeling in Josephus' version. The woman, in a series of additions by Josephus, is described as worn out by her woes, overcome with grief at what she had endured, and, in a very moving touch, not daring for shame to face her husband, since she felt (ἐλογίζετο) that he would be inconsolable (ἀνιάτως) at her fate (*Ant.* 5.147). Josephus develops the suspense of the melodrama considerably. He adds that the Levite supposes his wife to be buried in deep sleep and, suspecting nothing serious, tries to arouse her (*Ant.* 5.148). His intent, in an extra-biblical addition clearly showing his intense love for her, is to console her by recalling how she had not voluntarily surrendered herself to her abusers, but that it was they who had carried her off against her will. Very different and most unromantic is Pseudo-Philo's extra-biblical attempt, in an utterly unique detail, perhaps inspired by the biblical reference to her harlotry (Judg. 19:2), to justify her suffering because she had sinned with the Amalekites (45.3).

In the Bible there is no indication as to when and how the Levite came to realize that the concubine was dead (Judg. 19:28-29). We read only that he put her upon a donkey and that when he arrived at his home he sliced her body limb by limb and sent her parts to all the Israelites; in fact the Hebrew text does not even say explicitly that she was dead, whereas the LXX (Judg. 19:28), Pseudo-Philo (45.4), and Josephus (*Ant.* 5.149) do. Moreover, the Hebrew text of the Bible does not state what message was delivered with each of the pieces that were sent to the Israelites. Josephus, describing the tremendous impact of his wife's loss upon the Levite, says that when he found that she was dead, he, brought to his senses (σωφρονισθεῖς)

before the enormity of the wrongs, laid her upon his beast and bore her to his home (*Ant.* 5.149). Moreover, Josephus makes it clear that the bearers of his wife's limbs stated who had caused her death and gave an account of the debauchery of the tribe, namely (though not mentioned by name) Benjamin, in whose territory the outrage had occurred. Pseudo-Philo likewise states the message that accompanied the dismembered corpse of the concubine, but the message is very different, and there is no mention of the tribe of Benjamin: "These things were done to me in the city of Nob,⁵⁵ and those dwelling there rose up against me to kill me, and they took my concubine while I was locked up [this is Pseudo-Philo's unique addition] and killed her" (45.4).

6. THE WAR WITH THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN

In the aftermath of the death of the concubine and the delivery of her limbs to all the Israelites, they gathered together at Mizpah,⁵⁶ according to the Bible (Judg. 20:1). Josephus was undoubtedly troubled by several features in the account in the Bible (Judg. 20:1-13): (1) The crime committed at Gibeah was not a capital offense, inasmuch as the concubine was not a married woman and her death was not intentional; (2) The assembly of the tribes heard the statement of the Levite alone and were ready to act without consulting the tribe of Benjamin; (3) The whole tribe of Benjamin was not responsible for an act committed by the inhabitants of a city within its boundaries; (4) The ultimatum to the tribe of Benjamin to turn over the lawless Gibeahites was unwarranted, since, from a legal point of view, the jurisdiction in the case rested in the hands of the tribe of Benjamin, inasmuch as each tribe was autonomous. Josephus seeks to resolve the matter by noting, in an extra-biblical addition, that though the Israelites were impatient to rush straight to arms and to treat the people of Gibeah as enemies without a trial, they were restrained by

⁵⁵ Pseudo-Philo has thus relocated the incident. On Pseudo-Philo's transfer of the scene of the crime from Gibeah to Nob, Regev 1997, 55-66, unconvincingly explains that the author was confused because the two places are close to each other.

⁵⁶ According to both Josephus (*Ant.* 5.150) and Pseudo-Philo (45.5), the assembly took place at Shiloh.

their elders, who urged them first to consult with them concerning their grievances, since the law (i.e., Deut. 20:10-12) did not permit them to lead an army even against aliens without having first sent an embassy and made other attempts to bring the wrong-doers to repentance (*Ant.* 5.150-51).⁵⁷ Furthermore, there is no direct mention in Josephus' account here of the tribe of Benjamin; rather, the embassy is sent to Gibeah. It is only after the people of Gibeah refused to surrender the youths that the Israelites took an oath that none of them would give his daughter in marriage to a Benjaminite and proceeded to go to war against the Benjaminites, in whose tribal boundaries Gibeah lay.

When it comes to political and military affairs, Josephus extols the use of reason. Thus, whereas the Benjaminites, according to Judg. 20:13, confronted with an ultimatum to surrender the culprits who were responsible for the rape of the concubine, are reported simply to have refused to heed it, Josephus explains why, namely that they reasoned (ἡγοῦντο) that it would be shameful to yield out of fear of war and that they could hold their own in war (*Ant.* 5.154).⁵⁸ Later, after they have been defeated, the surviving Benjaminites recognize (γνωσιμαχήσαντες) that their misfortunes were due to G-d's decree and to their own iniquity; hence they comply with the invitation of the other tribes to leave their place of refuge (*Ant.* 5.168). Again, before the other tribes can agree to let a remnant of the Benjaminites survive, some are of the opinion (συνεβούλευον) that they should

⁵⁷ Cf. *Ant.* 4.296-97. See also Philo (*Spec.* 4.221 and *Virt.* 109). Nodet 1995 *ad loc.*) calls attention to *y. Shebi.* 6.1, 36c, according to which Joshua sent three distinct messages to the Canaanites seeking to avoid war, offering to spare them if they would accept the seven commandments of Noah. Josephus, in view of his close contacts with the Romans, their ideals, and their methods of warfare, was presumably aware also of their laws and practices of war, as they are recorded, for example, in Cicero (*Off.* 1.11.34-36 and *De Re Pub.* 3.23.34-35) and Virgil (*Aen.* 6.852-53). Elsewhere in Josephus we find that before going to war against the Syrians, and in order to justify that war, Ahab carefully expands on the history of his claims against Syria (*Ant.* 8.399). See Begg 1989a, 230-31.

⁵⁸ In general, behind the action of many personalities lies the concern for the emotions that move them. Thus, fear is often a factor in Josephus' additions to the biblical text. It besets Ehud lest he should strike amiss with his dagger and not deal the king Eglon a mortal blow (*Ant.* 5.192); it causes the Israelites to retire before the army of Sisera (*Ant.* 5.204); it even affects Gideon when he is divinely ordered to attack the Midianites at night (*Ant.* 5.218). Again, parallel to the feeling noted above of shame as a motivating force is the shame that filled the Israelites before being rescued from it by the leadership of Keniaz (*Ant.* 5.182).

disregard their previous oaths as having been sworn under the sway of passion, without reflection (γνώμη) or judgment (κρίσει).

The battle between the Benjaminites and the rest of the Israelites, as described in the Bible (Judg. 20:15-48), Josephus (*Ant.* 5.156-65), and Pseudo-Philo (46.1-47.12), proceeded in three stages. Not surprisingly, Josephus, who was a general in Galilee at the beginning of the war with the Romans, shows his interest in military details.⁵⁹ Thus, for example, Josephus knows that night can prevent a disaster for the combatants. Indeed, in connection with the first battle he adds the extra-biblical detail, as he does in the defeat of the Amalekites (*Ant.* 3.54), that even more of the Israelites would have perished had not night checked the pursuing Benjaminites and parted the combatants (*Ant.* 5.157).

The account of the final encounter, which in the Bible seems to be repetitious and confused, is greatly compressed, more dramatic, and more picturesque in Josephus. Josephus has added that at the beginning of this third encounter, while the Israelites were retreating, even the old men and lads who had been left in town by the Benjaminites as incompetent sallied out, eager to crush the enemy (*Ant.* 5.161). The details of the rout are in Josephus:⁶⁰ the Israelites emerging with a shout, fell upon the enemy in an ambush. The Benjaminites, realizing that they were entrapped, were in a hopeless position. Driven into a rugged hollow, they were shot down by the darts of the Israelites.⁶¹ The survivors from among the Benjaminites, rallying, pushed through the Israelites' midst and re-established themselves in the neighboring hills.

Before the beginning of the first battle, as we would expect, the

⁵⁹ According to the Hebrew text of Judg. 20:15 there were 26,000 soldiers in the Benjaminite army, plus 700 Gibeahites. The LXX gives the number as 25,000, plus 700 Gibeahites. Josephus (*Ant.* 5.156) is in accord with the Latin version, which gives the number as 25,600.

⁶⁰ The language of the battle scene, as noted by Thackeray 1934, 73 n. d on *Ant.* 5.160 recalls Thuc. 2.81; *Ant.* 5.161 recalls Thuc. 8.1; *Ant.* 5.162 recalls Thuc. 7.84.

⁶¹ According to Judg. 20:44, 18,000 Benjaminites were killed in the battle; according to Judg. 20:46, all told, 25,000 Benjaminite soldiers fell that day; according to Judg. 20:47, only 600 survived. Josephus says that about 25,000 perished and that 600 remained, but does not give a separate figure as to how many actually were killed in the battle itself (*Ant.* 5.163). Pseudo-Philo, who, as we have noted, locates the whole affair in the city of Nob, says that 85,000 men and women of Nob, presumably including civilians, died (47:10).

Israelites inquired of G-d as to who should advance first to wage war against the Benjaminites (Judg. 20:18). Though the question was not whether they should go to war in the first place, the answer given, namely that the tribe of Judah should be first, clearly implied that they should go to war and that if Judah would lead the fighting, they would be successful. The rabbinic tradition (*Yoma* 73b) is clearly troubled by the fact that the implication of the answer is not fulfilled, given that the Israelites' first advance ends in a rout (Judg. 20:19-21), and explains that the words were not fulfilled because the Israelites did not inquire whether the result would be victory or defeat but rather merely who should lead them. Pseudo-Philo is more explicit. "Let us," say the Israelites, "first ask the L-rd and learn if He will deliver our brothers into our hands; if not, let us desist" (46.1). Phinehas, the bold, heroic, and revered high priest, then brings out the Urim and Thummim and makes the inquiry. G-d's answer is very clear: "Go up, because I will deliver them into your hands." The battle is then fought (Judg. 20:19-21) and the result, despite the apparent assurance by G-d of victory for the Israelites, is victory for the Benjaminites and a loss of 22,000 men by the Israelites. Pseudo-Philo then explains that G-d led the Israelites astray so that He might fulfill His words, that is, "Because they were not zealous then [in connection with Micah's idolatry], therefore let their plan turn out badly and their heart be confused, so that those who allow evil will be destroyed along with the sinners" (45.6).

After the tremendous loss of 22,000 men⁶² in the first stage of the battle, the Israelites, according to Pseudo-Philo, were convinced that this was G-d's punishment for sinning and inquired of G-d who the sinner was (46.3). G-d's answer, again unambiguous, was: "If you wish, go up and fight, and they will be delivered into your hands, and then you will be told why you fell before them." Again, the Israelites, despite G-d's assurance, are routed and lose 46,000

⁶² According to Judg. 20:44, 18,000 Benjaminites were killed in the battle; according to Judg. 20:46, all told, 25,000 Benjaminites died that day; according to Judg. 20:47, only 600 men survived. Josephus says that about 25,000 perished and that 600 remained, but does not give a separate figure as to how many actually were killed in the battle itself (*Ant.* 5.163). Pseudo-Philo, who, as we have noted, locates the whole affair in the city of Nob, says that 85,000 men and women of Nob, presumably including civilians, died (47.10).

men.⁶³ The reaction of the Israelites is to ask whether G-d wished to lead His people astray or whether He had decided, on account of their sins, that the innocent, presumably because of their silence in the face of the mistreatment of the concubine, must suffer together with the guilty. When the people then rend their garments and fall before the ark, Phinehas asks G-d why, if what the Benjaminites had done is right, he had not told the Israelites so that they might desist from their attacks, while if the Benjaminites' deed was not pleasing to G-d, why He had allowed the Israelites to fall before them.⁶⁴

In the case of the inquiries in the war against the Benjaminites, the Bible itself presents no explanation as to why G-d apparently so misled the Israelites. Pseudo-Philo, theologically oriented as he is and utterly concerned to defend the reputation of G-d,⁶⁵ is not at all ambiguous in explaining why G-d gave the answers that He did and why the Israelites lost so drastically in the first two stages of the battle. Before the first stage of the battle G-d is represented as saying to the "adversary," that is, Satan, "Do you see that this foolish people were not disturbed at a time...when Micah acted craftily to lead the people astray?" (Ps.-Ph. 45.6). He adds that since they were not zealous with regard to Micah's idols, G-d then caused their plan against the Benjaminites to turn out badly. Perhaps, as Jacobson suggests, there was a current opinion that the unjustified defeat of Israel was in fact the doing of Satan.⁶⁶

In contrast to Pseudo-Philo, who thus seeks to justify G-d's apparently misleading predictions, Josephus simply omits the first two consultations, and hence has no need to justify G-d. It is only after the second phase of the fighting that the Israelites beseech G-d through Phinehas to diminish His anger against them, whereupon G-d reassures them that they will be victorious (*Ant.* 5.159).

There is, however, a fundamental problem of theodicy; namely, why those who did not participate in the crime should be punished together with the sinners. The answer, according to Pseudo-Philo, is in the form of a parable about the lion that was silent while some beasts came and devoured all the young of the animals, whereas he

⁶³ According to *Judg.* 20:25, 18,000.

⁶⁴ As Jacobson (1996) 2:1043-44, notes, this complaint is very similar to that of Joshua after the defeat at Ai (*Josh.* 7:7-9).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 241-53.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 2.1037-38.

roared loudly when he beheld a small animal eating the small cub of another savage beast. The implication is a contrast of the Israelites' silence in the face of Micah's transgressions with their intense concern when the concubine had been maltreated (47.4-6). "Therefore," says God in self-defense, "I deceived you and said, 'I will deliver them to you.' Now I have destroyed you, who were silent then. And so I will take vengeance on all who have acted wickedly." Josephus, significantly, omits mention of the problem and hence does not need to offer a solution.

7. THE AFTERMATH OF THE DEFEAT OF THE BENJAMINITES

According to Judg. 21:2, after the near total annihilation of the Benjaminites, the Israelites gathered in Bethel and wept bitterly, lamenting the loss, for practical purposes, of an entire tribe; and then, on the following day, they rose early, built an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings (Judg. 21:4). The Israelites are said to have compassion for the Benjaminites because G-d had made a breach in the tribes of Israel (Judg. 21:15). In Josephus, the Israelites are smitten with remorse (μετάνοια) and ordain a fast on their behalf (*Ant.* 5.166). Moreover, whereas in the Bible the Israelites simply proclaim peace with the Benjaminites (Judg. 21:13), in Josephus they show more compassion and sympathy for them, deploring the calamity that had struck not only the Benjaminites but also themselves, in that the victims were their kinsmen; they urged them to bear it patiently and to come and join them (*Ant.* 5.167). Moreover, in an extra-biblical addition, the Israelites grant to the Benjaminites the territory of the whole tribe and as much booty as they can carry off (*Ant.* 5.167). Josephus uniquely adds that the Israelites, nevertheless, maintained that the Benjaminites had deservedly suffered for sinning against the laws. Moreover, whereas in the Bible there is no indication that the Benjaminites felt contrition for their behavior, in Josephus the Benjaminites recognize that what has happened to them is due to G-d's decree and to their own iniquity and, by implication, do not blame the other Israelites (*Ant.* 5.168).

What mars the Israelites' behavior and seems to contradict their feeling of contrition is the fact that after weeping so bitterly and lamenting the loss of a whole tribe in Israel, these same Israelites then proceeded to ask which group of Israelites did not join them in the

war against the Benjaminites (Judg. 21:8). Asserting that no one had come from Jabesh-Gilead, they then sent 2,000 of their bravest men to kill every male and every female who had lain with a male, as well as the children (Judg. 21:10).⁶⁷ The Bible, to be sure, introduces this episode in order to explain the source of the 400 women who are given as wives to the surviving Benjaminites. It would seem to be a contradiction in terms for the Israelites to express such great regret for what they had done to the Benjaminites and then to proceed to kill other Israelites who are civilians—innocent men, women, and children—in cold blood. Josephus saves the reputation of the Israelites by transferring this episode to the pursuit of the Benjaminites in the final battle. There, in the heat of battle, as they are pursuing the Benjaminites in their various cities, the Israelites are so exasperated, having themselves suffered such great losses in the previous two battles, that they proceed to send 12,000 men with orders to destroy the town of Jabesh-Gilead, which had been the one town that had not aided them in their war (*Ant.* 5.164-65). Moreover, they do not massacre all the men but only those of military age, along with the children and all the women, save those who were unmarried, which in antiquity was a normal pattern of massacres so as to prevent revenge. Josephus further attempts to justify the massacre by adding: “To such lengths did their rage carry them, because, in addition to what they had suffered on the woman’s account, they had further suffered the slaughter of their men-at-arms.”

The reconstitution of the tribe of Benjamin would appear to be impossible in view of the oath that the Israelites had sworn at Mizpah not to give their daughters in marriage to the Benjaminites (Judg. 21:1) and their declaration that anyone who would give a wife to a Benjaminite was accursed (Judg. 21:18). They gave the 400 virgins whom they had captured from Jabesh-Gilead to the Benjaminites as wives; but inasmuch as 600 Benjaminites had remained alive, they had the problem of what to do for the remaining 200. Josephus introduces a debate among the Israelites, in which some express the opinion that “they should disregard the oaths as having been sworn under the sway of passion (ὀργῆς, “rage”) without reflection

⁶⁷ The LXX, Version A, mentions women and the “multitude” (λαόν) and omits the children; Version B omits the women and children altogether.

(γνώμη) or judgment (κρίσει), that they would be doing nothing in opposition to G-d, could they so save a whole tribe in danger of extinction, and that perjuries were not grave or hazardous when they were prompted by necessity, but only when rashly committed with malicious intent" (*Ant.* 5.169).

That an oath must be taken with the utmost seriousness is clear from the fact that it is the third of the Ten Commandments; and, in his summary of the Decalogue, Josephus states that this commandment teaches us not to swear by G-d on any frivolous matter (*Ant.* 3.91). Moreover, so seriously is an oath regarded that if a depository loses a deposit, all he has to do to be free from blame is to come before a court and swear by G-d that nothing has been lost through his own intention or malice and that he has not appropriated any part of it for his own use (*Ant.* 4.287). Even when the Gabaonites falsely claimed that they had no connection whatever with the Canaanites and, consequently, Eleazar the high priest, along with the council of elders, swore to regard them as friends and allies and to contrive no iniquity against them, and the people ratified the oaths, Joshua, after he learned that they were actually of the stock of the Canaanites and had convened a meeting of Eleazar and the council of elders, refused to violate the oath but appointed them rather as public slaves (*Ant.* 5.56-57).

When King Saul decreed a fast, strictly charging the people with an oath forbidding them to eat food on that day, and when his son Jonathan, who had not heard when his father adjured the people, unwittingly transgressed the oath (1 Sam. 14:24-28), Saul declared that Jonathan must die (1 Sam. 14:44); and Josephus, in his paraphrase, remarks that Saul "swore to slay him, respecting his oath more than the tender ties of fatherhood and of nature" (*Ant.* 6.126). Indeed, it was only the sympathy of all the people for Jonathan that prevented Saul from carrying out his oath. There, too, according to Josephus, it is the loss of control of reason (λογισμοῦ) that leads Saul to invoke his rash curse (*Ant.* 6.116).

It is notable, however, that whereas Josephus appears to praise Saul for his readiness to respect his oath, even while referring to this as due to loss of reason and as dreadful and very blameworthy (*Ant.* 6.116), he condemns Jephthah outright for adhering to his vow (Judg. 11:31, *Ant.* 5.266) to sacrifice whatever would first come forth from his house to greet him upon returning from battle victoriously

(*Ant.* 5.263).⁶⁸ The difference, it would seem, is that Jephthah's vow was a purely personal one, to express exaltation upon his hoped for victory, whereas Saul's had a national purpose, that is, in response to a military triumph. Similarly, in the case of the Benjaminites, their oath served a national rather than a personal purpose and consequently had to be taken with the utmost seriousness; but its circumvention is not condemned.⁶⁹ Josephus himself knew the importance of adhering to oaths, as we see in his remark that Jonathan and his party corroborated their assertions of friendship by the most awe-inspiring oaths known to him, so that he felt that it would be impious to disbelieve them (*Life* 273-75).

The elders of the congregation were in a quandary as to what to do about wives for the 200 remaining Benjaminites, since, as they put it, "There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe be not blotted out from Israel" (Judg. 21:17). A solution was found. Since there was a yearly feast of the L-rd at Shiloh,⁷⁰ they commanded the Benjaminites to lie in wait in the vineyards and, if the daughters of Shiloh should go out, for each of them to grab a wife from among them and to go to the land of Benjamin; and if the fathers or brothers should come to protest, the elders of the Israelites should say that they should be compassionate to the

⁶⁸ See Feldman 1996a, 67*-84*. In a rare move, Josephus, who clearly had aggrandized the character of Jephthah, proceeds to criticize him openly for lacking two of the five major virtues, namely wisdom and piety. Specifically, he remarks that Jephthah "had not by reflection (λογισμῶ) probed (διαβασανίσας) what might befall or in what aspect the deed would appear to them that heard of it" (*Ant.* 5.266). In other words, before making the vow, Jephthah should have used his reasoning powers and been wise enough to calculate that the first entity to greet him after his victory would be his own daughter; or he should have realized that his vow was actually invalid, as indeed, the rabbis declared. Consequently, the rabbis bluntly state that Jephthah is to be classed with the fools who do not distinguish between vows (*Eccl. Rab.* 4.7).

⁶⁹ Likewise David is concerned that he should not seem to have brought about the death of Abner in violation of the sworn pledges that he had given to Abner (*Ant.* 7.40). Shimei, however, who had not remained true to the oath that he had sworn, is condemned to death by King Solomon (1 Kgs. 2:41-46, *Ant.* 8.19). According to Josephus, King Herod tried to persuade Pollion the Pharisee, Samaias, and most of their disciples to take an oath of loyalty to him, but they would not agree to this because of their abhorrence of using the name of G-d in an oath (*Ant.* 15.370). Cf. Philo, *Dec.* 84-86: "To swear not at all is the best course and most profitable to life."

⁷⁰ According to Pseudo-Philo (48.3), this was the festival of Passover.

Benjaminites since not enough women had been captured in the raid on Jabesh-Gilead and since they could not themselves give wives to them freely because of the oath which they had taken (Judg. 21:19-22).⁷¹ The Benjaminites did so and took wives from the dancers whom they carried off (Judg. 21:23).

Josephus is very concerned that the plan suggested by the elders appears to be a ruse; and so he carefully says that the elders protested at the mere mention of perjury (*Ant.* 5.170), whereupon someone suggested a plan to provide wives for the Benjaminites without breaking their oaths.⁷² Whereas in the Bible the elders actually direct (ויצו) the Benjaminites on how to obtain wives (Judg. 21:20), Josephus, realizing that this was a way of aiding and abetting the violation of the oath, says that the plan was to let the Benjaminites “be permitted” (ἐφείσθω) to capture their brides “without either encouragement or hindrance on our part” (*Ant.* 5.171).⁷³ Moreover, whereas according to the Bible (Judg. 21:22), if the fathers or brothers of the girls protest, they are told to be compassionate toward the Benjaminites, Josephus adds the defense that the parents are themselves to blame for neglecting to protect their daughters and that, in any case, the Israelites must abate their resentment against the Benjaminites, in which they have already in the past been immoderate (*Ant.* 5.171).

The plan itself bears a rather striking resemblance, in at least some respects, to the rape of the Sabine women by the Romans, as recounted by Livy (1.9). Perhaps significantly, Livy is the one Latin writer whom Josephus mentions by name as the author of a history of Rome who narrates the exploits of Pompey (*Ant.* 14.68). The points of resemblance between the two episodes are as follows: (1)

⁷¹ *Hul.* 133a draws a distinction between seizing and giving. Malbim 1950, in his commentary on Judg. 21:22, suggests that since the girls married the Benjaminites of their own free will and the parents did not actually assist the Benjaminites, they had not violated the oath.

⁷² According to the written text of Judg. 21:20 “he directed” (ויצו) the Benjaminites what to do, whereas the text, when read, says “they directed” (ויצו). Perhaps this is the source of Josephus’ “someone” (τις) who suggested the plan whereby the Benjaminites could obtain wives (*Ant.* 5.170).

⁷³ According to the rabbinic tradition (*Ta’an.* 30b), the tribe of Benjamin was permitted to re-enter the congregation of Israel on the 15th of Ab, a day that was particularly joyful. The third-century Babylonian Rav explained the permission granted to the tribe of Benjamin on the basis of the exposition of the oath (Judg. 21:1): “No one of us shall give his daughter in marriage to Benjamin.” The phrase “no one of us” was interpreted to mean “but not from any of our children.”

The Romans sought, unsuccessfully, the right of intermarriage with their neighbors; the Benjaminites, by implication, sought marriage with other Jews; (2) In both cases the plan is to have the women seized at a festival; (3) The Benjaminites wait in ambush; the Romans wait for a signal; (4) The Benjaminites are permitted by the Israelite elders to capture the maidens; the Romans are permitted by their king, Romulus; (5) The Sabine maidens are taken completely by surprise; similarly, the maidens of Shiloh, playfully and with no suspicion of what is underfoot, come along unguardedly; (6) When accused by the Sabines of violating hospitality, Romulus blames the parents of the maidens for their pride in refusing the right to intermarry; the Israelite elders blame the parents of the maidens, though on the grounds that they had neglected to protect their daughters; (7) Romulus urges the Sabines to moderate their anger against the Romans; the elders tell the parents of the maidens to lay aside their anger.

There are differences, to be sure: (1) The Romans sought the right of intermarriage with their neighbors; it is the other Jews who are concerned that the Benjaminites should have the right of marriage with their fellow Jews; (2) The Israelites had taken a solemn oath not to permit marriages with the Benjaminites; there is no oath mentioned in connection with the Sabines; (3) The Roman Senate sent envoys to the neighboring nations seeking the right of marriage with them; the Israelite elders themselves sought a way to provide wives for the Benjaminites; (4) There is no mention of an ambush in the case of the Romans, whereas the Benjaminites hide in ambush in vineyards and other places in twos and threes (*Ant.* 5.172); (5) The maidens are caught while they perform dances (*Judg.* 21:21, not mentioned by Josephus); (6) The Benjaminites are permitted to capture their brides without either encouragement or hindrance on the part of the Israelite elders, whereas the Romans are instructed to do so by Romulus; (7) Some of the Sabine maidens, of exceptional beauty, had been marked out for the chief senators and were carried off to them by Roman plebeians, whereas no maidens were thus designated for specific Benjaminites; (8) The Israelite women, according to Josephus, had been playful (*Ant.* 5.173), whereas there is no indication of what the Sabine women had been doing; (9) The parents of the Sabine maidens fled in sorrow, whereas there is no mention of the reaction of the parents of the daughters of Shiloh; (10) There is no indication as to how the women seized by the Benjaminites felt

or how the Benjaminites themselves felt, whereas Livy says that the Sabine women felt diminished resentment, and that the Romans who had seized them showed passion and love; (11) The Sabines go to war after this incident, whereas the biblical incident follows the Benjaminite war.

The conclusion of the narrative in the Bible states that the Benjaminites, having taken their wives thus, rebuilt their towns while the rest of the Israelites departed to their families and their inheritances (Judg. 21:23-24). Josephus adds an editorializing comment, clearly showing his satisfaction that the Benjaminites had thus been reconstituted. He praises the other Israelites for having played the role that they did in this reconstitution and adds, with clear approval and indeed enthusiasm, that the Benjaminites proceeded to flourish both in numbers and in all else (*Ant.* 5.174).

We may well ask why Josephus goes out of his way to applaud the rehabilitation of the Benjaminites. The answer may perhaps be found in the fact that two Benjaminites, Ehud and, above all, Saul, did so much to save the Israelites.

The very fact that the episode of Ehud, which in the Bible appears several chapters before that of the Levite and the concubine (Judg. 3:12-30), has been placed after it by Josephus (*Ant.* 5.185-97) is, at least in part, Josephus' way of indicating that one major dividend of the rehabilitation of the Benjaminites is that they produced this hero of gallant daring (*Ant.* 5.188). We may note that even in sheer amount of space devoted to Ehud's extraordinary exploit in killing Eglon, the king of the Moabites, Josephus has called great attention to this Benjaminite.⁷⁴ Indeed, in the Hebrew Bible there is no indication that Ehud was a judge at all, since we are told merely that the land had rested for eighty years following his exploit (Judg. 3:30). By contrast, the LXX (both versions, A and B, Judg. 3:30) adds that he judged the Israelites until he died. Josephus combines the two readings and declares that Ehud held the office of governor (ἡγεμονία) for eighty years (*Ant.* 5.197). This would make Ehud's rule the longest in the entire period of the Judges. For Josephus, who attached such great importance to the rule of law and order, Ehud's extended term of office was all the more impressive, inasmuch as the period of the Judges, though in theory the best form of government,

⁷⁴ See Feldman 1994a, 137.

was marked, as he says over and over again, by disregard of the order (κόσμου) of the constitution (πολιτείας) and contempt for the laws (νόμων) (*Ant.* 5.132, 179). Josephus has encomia for only a select few of his biblical heroes; yet he sees fit to praise Ehud by remarking that even apart from his extraordinary exploit in killing the king of the enemy, he deserved to obtain praise, presumably because he restored respect for law and order (*Ant.* 5.197). In the case of Ehud we see this quality of leadership displayed in his success in exhorting his fellow Israelites to assert (ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι) their liberty (ἐλευθερίας) (*Ant.* 5.194). This notice is to be contrasted with the biblical statement, according to which Ehud told his fellow Israelites merely to follow quickly, “for the L-rd has given your enemies, the Moabites, into your hands” (*Judg.* 3:28). Here it is G-d who gets all the credit; there is no exhortation, and there is no mention of the key Josephan theme of liberty.⁷⁵

Furthermore, though Josephus, in his extra-biblical additions, speaks of many of the biblical heroes as brave, only four others—Joshua (*Ant.* 3.49), Abimelech the son of Gideon (*Ant.* 7.142), Sibbechai the Hushathite (*Ant.* 7.301), and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim (*Ant.* 7.302)—are referred to in the superlative as “most brave,” used by Josephus of Ehud. As for the description of Ehud as δυνατώτατος (“most mighty”), this epithet is found in Josephus of only one other biblical figure, Jephthah, who is described as a mighty man by reason of the valor of his forefathers (διὰ τὴν πατρώων ἀρετὴν) and who has his own troop of mercenaries that he maintained himself (*Ant.* 5.257).

Josephus introduces Saul to the reader, as does the Bible (1 Sam. 9:1), as coming from the tribe of Benjamin and as being exceptional in appearance and stature (*Ant.* 6.45); but he adds that he was gifted with a spirit and mind surpassing these outward advantages. Here, as with Ehud, the sheer amount of space (2.19 times more than the Hebrew text) that he devotes to Saul is a clear indication of the importance

⁷⁵ Ehud’s success in persuading his fellow Israelites may be further seen in what follows, where we are told that they, welcoming his announcement, rushed to arms and sent heralds throughout the country to give the signal by sounding rams’ horns (*Ant.* 5.194). Ehud’s achievement in arousing his fellow Israelites is seen as well in the added detail that before the garrison of the Moabites could be mustered, the host of the Israelites was upon them (*Ant.* 5. 195). By way of parallel to all this, the Bible has only the brief statement, “And they went down after him” (*Judg.* 3:27).

that he attaches to him. Moreover, what is even more impressive is that Josephus devotes approximately three times as much space to his encomium of Saul (*Ant.* 6.343-50: 55 lines in Greek in the Loeb edition) as to his encomium of Moses himself (*Ant.* 4.328-31: 18 lines) or of David (*Ant.* 7.390-91: 16 lines), four times as much as to his encomium of Samuel (*Ant.* 6.292-94: 13 lines), and approximately ten times as much as to his encomia of Isaac (*Ant.* 1.346), Jacob (*Ant.* 2.196), Joseph (*Ant.* 2.198), Joshua (*Ant.* 5.188), Samson (*Ant.* 5.317), and Solomon (*Ant.* 8.211). Whereas in the biblical chapters dealing with Saul (1 Sam. 9-31), he is from time to time overshadowed by Samuel and David, this is hardly true in Josephus' treatment of him where, indeed, Saul emerges as a grand, heroic, and tragic figure reminiscent of the Isocratean school of historiography. Whereas in certain passages of the Bible (1 Sam. 14:36-44, 18:10-11, 18:20-29, 19:11-24, 20:20-34), Saul appears to be an outright villain, and in others seems enigmatic (1 Sam. 13:5-15), Josephus, without whitewashing him completely, presents a much more favorable portrait of Saul. In depicting the qualities of Saul, Josephus emphasizes his good birth, physical beauty, and wisdom. Above all, he aggrandizes the courage of Saul in his military leadership and exploits, stressing the difficulties that he had to overcome, exaggerating the ferocity of his enemies, and highlighting the skill that he displayed as a strategist. In particular, Josephus magnifies Saul's generalship and his ability and magnetism as a psychologist in arousing his troops against his greatest military challenge, the Philistines. Above all, Josephus aggrandizes the heroism of Saul in going into his final battle knowing full well from the prophecy of Samuel that he was destined to perish. Josephus rationalizes Saul's madness explaining it clinically as a medical disorder.⁷⁶

It would seem significant that whereas, according to the Bible, the assembly of the Israelites took place in Mizpah, at which they, in intense and righteous wrath (*Ant.* 5.150), decided to avenge the

⁷⁶ See Feldman 1982, 45-99. The rehabilitation of the Benjaminites is also found in the rabbinic tradition. Thus we find that Benjamin himself (*Shab.* 55b) is listed, together with Amram, the father of Moses, Benjamin's father Jesse, and Caleb, the son of David, as one of the four who died without having committed any sins. Moreover, Jacob's blessing on his deathbed to Benjamin is said to have contained the prophecy that his tribe would provide the Israelites with their first ruler, Saul, and their last, Esther, who was also of the tribe of Benjamin (*Gen. Rab.* 99.3).

rape of the concubine (Judg. 20:1), in Josephus, as in Pseudo-Philo (45.5), the site is Shiloh, the natural site for an assembly, given the presence of the Tabernacle there (Josh. 18:1). On the other hand, when he describes the assembly that the prophet Samuel convened and at which Saul was chosen as king, Josephus locates it, as does the Bible (1 Sam. 10:17), in Mizpah (*Ant.* 6.60). To have located in Mizpah the vengeful assembly of the Israelites after the rape of the concubine would have reminded the reader that Saul, the Benjaminite, was named king in the very town where the Israelites had decided to wipe out the Benjaminites for the terrible crime of the rape. Moreover, the last sentence of Judges states that “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes” (21:25). This is the natural transition to the book of Samuel that follows, and in which the most important event is the naming of a king. The reader would, in all probability, associate the naming of a king who came from the tribe of Benjamin with this incident involving the Benjaminites. Josephus, eager to dissociate the Benjaminites of Saul’s day from the Benjaminites involved with the incident of the concubine, omits both the mention of the site of the vengeful assembly at Mizpah and the closing statement of Judges that looks forward to another assembly at Mizpah at which a king of Benjaminite origin will be named.⁷⁷

8. SUMMARY

No episode receives more attention in the book of Judges than the Benjaminite affair of the concubine. Significant is Josephus’ omission, probably for apologetic reasons, of the episode just before this, namely the story of Micah and his idolatry. Josephus transposes the incident of the concubine from the end of the book to near the beginning to stress his political theory with regard to the themes of moral decay, luxury, and civil strife and the importance of giving attention to the order and discipline of the Jewish constitution and the aristocratic form of government. The language that he uses in recounting the episode is often the same with which he criticizes his contemporaries.

⁷⁷ Amit 1994, 28-40, has made a case for viewing the account of the rape of the concubine in Gibeah in the Hebrew version as a hidden polemic against Saul and his followers.

In contrast, Pseudo-Philo, in his *Biblical Antiquities*, is concerned with religious deviations.

As a proud priest, and in view of the rivalry between priests and Levites, Josephus lowers the stature of the Levite in the story. If, nevertheless, the Levite emerges as a loyal husband, this does not cast a better light upon him as a Levite, but rather contributes to the romantic motif that Josephus stresses. By making the concubine into the Levite's wife, he has raised the status of the Levite, though he is careful not to raise him to too high a rank. In stating that the Levite was enamored of the woman, Josephus uses the same verb, ἐράω, that he employs to describe Jacob's love for Rachel. Unlike the rabbinic tradition and Pseudo-Philo, which do not consider the romantic relationship between the Levite and the concubine, Josephus has built up the romantic background of their separation.

Regarding the rape itself by the Gibeahites in the territory of the Benjaminites, Josephus has omitted their attempt at homosexuality, since it would be most embarrassing to speak of Jews conducting themselves thus. Moreover, Josephus, troubled that the old man should offer one of his guests to the ruffians in violation of the sacred norm of hospitality, says only that he offered his daughter and does not mention the concubine. Whereas, according to the Bible, the Levite thrust his concubine outside to the ruffians, the romantic Josephus puts the blame solely on the ruffians. There is much more feeling and more suspense in Josephus' version of the Levite's discovery of the woman after the rape.

Troubled by the fact that the Israelites were impatient to rush to arms and to treat the people of Gibeah as enemies without a trial, Josephus represents the Israelites as restrained by their elders, who urge them to consult with the Gibeahites before going to war. On the other hand, whereas the Bible does not explain why the Benjaminites were bold enough to go to war against the other eleven tribes, Josephus explains that they reasoned that they could hold their own in war.

Josephus, a general in Galilee in the war with the Romans, not surprisingly shows his interest in military affairs in his account of the battle between the Benjaminites and the rest of the Israelites. The account of the final encounter is more dramatic and more picturesque. Whereas in the Bible G-d appears to mislead the Israelites when he is consulted before the first two encounters, Josephus omits

these consultations. The fundamental problem of theodicy, namely why those who did not participate in the crime should be punished together with the sinners, is simply omitted by Josephus.

In the Bible the Israelites simply proclaim peace with the Benjaminites, but Josephus shows the former exhibiting more compassion and sympathy for the latter. The Benjaminites, in turn, recognize that what has happened is due to G-d's decree and to their own iniquity and hence do not blame the Israelites. The Israelites' feeling of contrition seems to be contradicted by their massacre of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, but Josephus saves the Israelites' reputation by transferring this episode to the pursuit of the Benjaminites in the final battle.

The Israelites had sworn not to give their daughters in marriage to the Benjaminites. In view of the seriousness of such an oath, Josephus introduces a debate among the Israelites in which some express the opinion that they should disregard it as having been sworn under the sway of passion. Josephus is concerned that the plan suggested by the elders appears to be a ruse and so, instead of having them direct the Benjaminites to capture their brides, he is careful to say that they permitted them to do so, without either encouragement or hindrance. He adds the defense that the parents themselves are to blame for neglecting their daughters and says, in any case, that the Israelites must abate their resentment.

As to why Josephus goes out of his way to applaud the rehabilitation of the Benjaminites, the answer appears to lie in the fact that two Benjaminites, Ehud and, above all, Saul, did so much to save the Israelites. Finally, eager to dissociate the Benjaminites of Saul's day from the Benjaminites of our episode, Josephus omits the mention of the site of the vengeful assembly at Mizpah in our pericope, since this is the place where a king of Benjaminite origin, Saul, was named.

In every way Josephus' changes and additions to his biblical source have lessened the horror of the story. The concubine is now a wife. The couple are in love. There is no homosexuality, no deliberate abandonment of the woman by the Levite. The men of Gibeah are guilty of the very human sin of lust for a beautiful woman instead of the planned group sodomy directed against foreigners and guests. This is the thread that unites Josephus' attitude to the entire piece. Josephus enhances the romantic motifs in the story, but his primary

motivation is clearly apologetic; and his methodology is to underplay consistently the unpleasant elements of the account.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ I am indebted to Christopher Begg of the Catholic University of America and Aubrey Isaacs of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel for a number of very helpful comments.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE IMPORTANCE OF JERUSALEM AS VIEWED BY JOSEPHUS

1. INTRODUCTION

For the Jews in antiquity, there could be no other capital than Jerusalem, the seat of the Temple, the religious focus of Jews throughout the world and the one to which they contributed each year and which they visited during the three pilgrimage festivals. Even Herod, subservient as he was to the Romans, realized this and, in his efforts to be recognized as the leader of the Jews not only of Judaea but also of the Diaspora, made his announcements even regarding the Diaspora, from Jerusalem.¹ Hecataeus of Abdera refers to Jerusalem as the city in Palestine that is now (i.e., ca. 300 B.C.E.) the most renowned of all (*ap. Diod.* 40.3.3). Pseudo-Hecataeus refers to the great beauty and extent, the numerous population, and the temple buildings of Jerusalem and says that it has been inhabited by Jews from remote ages (*ap. Jos., Ap.* 1.196-99). Even Agatharchides, who reproaches the Jews as superstitious, nonetheless refers to the strong and great city of Jerusalem (*ap. Jos., Ant.* 12.6). Pliny the Elder, Josephus' older contemporary, goes even further and regards Jerusalem as by far the most famous city of the East (*Nat. Hist.* 5.70). Hence, it is not surprising that Josephus, too, refers to it as a famous (λαμπράν) city (*Ant.* 11.303) of world renown (*War* 7.4) and asserts that the Temple itself is much talked about (περιβόητον) throughout the world (*Ant.* 20.49). In fact, a large portion of Josephus' account of the war of the Jews against the Romans (5.136-237) is given to an extremely detailed description of the city of Jerusalem and, in particular, of Herod's palace (*War* 5.176-83), which, he says, was beyond all description since it surpassed all other buildings in extravagance and equipment (*War* 5.176-77), and, above all, the Temple (*War* 5.184-237).

¹ See Mendels 1992, 288.

Moreover, as lengthy as is his description of the city and of the Temple, he twice indicates that the topic is of such importance to him that he intends to speak about it even more minutely at a later point in a work which, as it turned out, he never lived to complete (*War* 5.237, 247).

Indeed, Jerusalem came to be a veritable synonym for the Jewish state, as we can see, for example, in the fact that Hecataeus makes the error of citing Moses as the founder of Jerusalem (*ap.* Diod. 40.3.3), when what he really means is that Moses was the founder of the Jewish nation. Similarly, when Suetonius reports that certain astrologers had promised Nero the rule of the East and had expressly named the sovereignty of Jerusalem (*Nero* 40.2), what they clearly meant was the role not merely of the city of Jerusalem but of all of Judea, which Jerusalem represented by a kind of metonymy. Likewise, in Josephus, in a number of places where the biblical text refers to the kingdom of Judah without further identification (1 Kgs. 12:32, 13:1, 22:9/2 Chron. 20:4), Josephus specifies Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.230, 231, 411; 9.8). In particular, in several places where the Bible speaks of kings over Judah (1 Kgs. 15:9; 2 Chron. 20:31; 2 Kgs. 3:9, 8:16, 9:16, 9:21, 10:13, 18:1, 25:27) or does not mention Judah (1 Kgs. 15:24/2 Chron. 16:13, 2 Chron. 17:1, 1 Kgs. 22:30/2 Chron. 18:29, 2 Kgs. 11:3/2 Chron. 22:12), Josephus speaks of kings of Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.290, 314, 393, 412; 9.17, 31, 95, 112, 117, 130, 142, 177, 194, 200, 202, 203, 243, 246, 260; 10.229). We see this same identification of Jerusalem and Judea in Josephus' paraphrase (*Ant.* 13.194) of 1 Macc. (1:52). Apparently, we find a similar identification of Jerusalem with Judea in non-Jewish writers as well. Thus Dios, the author of a history of the Phoenicians (*ap.* Jos., *Ant.* 8.148, *Ap.* 1.114), and Menander of Ephesus (*ap.* Jos., *Ant.* 8.146, *Ap.* 1.120) refer to Solomon as king of Jerusalem. Likewise, when Josephus says that Pompey in the year 63 B.C.E. made Jerusalem tributary to the Romans (*Ant.* 14.74) he clearly means not only the city of Jerusalem but the state of Judea. This equation of Jerusalem and Judea, reminiscent of our referring to Washington when we mean the United States of America, is to be found also in Josephus' statement that Ptolemy Soter recognized the people of Jerusalem—he means Judea, of course—as most constant in keeping their pledges (*Ant.* 12.8).

2. THE CENTRALITY OF JERUSALEM

It should not surprise us to discover that Jerusalem was central in Josephus' thought. In identifying himself in the introduction to his *War*, he says three things about himself: "a Hebrew by race, a native of Jerusalem, and a priest" (*War* 1.3). In his autobiography he proudly notes that his father Matthias was among the most notable men in Jerusalem (*Life* 7), which he proceeds to describe as the greatest city in the land. It was in Jerusalem, where he was born and raised, that, while a mere fourteen years of age, the chief priests and the leading men of the city came constantly to consult him on matters pertaining to Jewish law (*Life* 9).

That Jerusalem was central in Josephus' thought may be seen in his paraphrase of the Bible. Thus, in an extra-biblical addition, he identifies Salem, of which Melchizedek was king (Gen. 14:18), as Jerusalem (*Ant.* 1.180; so also *War* 6.438). He likewise identifies the mountain whither Abraham took his son Isaac to be sacrificed as one whereon King David (actually Solomon) later erected the Temple (*Ant.* 1.226).²

In a number of places where the Bible mentions a place without giving its exact location, Josephus, being oriented toward Jerusalem, gives its distance from Jerusalem. Thus, whereas the Bible tells us that Absalom had set up for himself a pillar in the King's Valley (2 Sam. 18:18), Josephus locates this with reference to Jerusalem, as being two stades distant (*Ant.* 1.243). Again, when we are told that the Philistines are at Bethlehem (2 Sam. 23:14), it is Josephus, always orienting himself to Jerusalem, who tells us that Bethlehem is twenty stades distant from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 7.312). Likewise, where the Bible mentions Ramah (2 Chron. 16:1), Josephus locates it forty stades from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.303). He also locates Engedi (2 Chron. 20:2) as 300 stades distant from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 9.7). Furthermore, he locates the ascent of Ziz (2 Chron. 20:16) between Jerusalem and Engedi (*Ant.* 9.10-11). Moreover, whereas the Bible tells us that Jericho is a city of palm trees (2 Chron. 28:15), Josephus locates it as not far from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 9.251).

Again, whereas the Bible simply mentions the inhabitants of Gi-

² So also in rabbinic tradition. See *Berakot* 62b and other passages cited by Ginzberg 1925, 5:253, n. 253 (for *Ta'an.* 10a read *Ta'an.* 16a).

been without further identification (Josh. 9:3), Josephus significantly adds “who lived quite close to Jerusalem” (*Ant.* 5.49). A few verses later we are told that Joshua summoned these Gibeonites (Josh. 9:22); and Josephus identifies them as living not far from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 5.56). Shortly thereafter, when Joshua sends out men to measure the country of Canaan, the Bible mentions the various boundaries of the sections of the land (Josh. 18:8), but Josephus looks at the districts in comparison with Jerusalem and adds the comment, for which there is no basis in the biblical text, that the land of Canaan is such that one may see plains of great area that may seem altogether blest when compared with other districts, yet when compared with the regions of Jericho and Jerusalem would appear as worthless (*Ant.* 5.77). Additionally, he explains that the reason why the Benjaminites received such a narrow piece of land was because of the excellence of the soil, inasmuch as their area included Jericho and Jerusalem (*Ant.* 5.82); once again the Bible, though it gives at this point an extraordinarily detailed description of the boundaries of the land allotted to the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. 18:11-20), does not give this reason and merely mentions Jerusalem as one of fourteen cities given to the tribe (Josh. 18:28).

Furthermore, whereas the Bible gives a very brief version of David’s capture of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:6-9 and 1 Chron. 11:4-7), Josephus presents a much more extensive account of the difficulties which he and his army bravely overcame (*Ant.* 7.61-64). Moreover, whereas the Bible says that after capturing Jerusalem David became greater and greater, since G-d was with him (2 Sam. 5:10 and 1 Chron. 11:9), Josephus is more explicit in stating that it was after David had chosen Jerusalem as his royal residence that his greatness increased, and in describing his fortune as ever more brilliant (λαμπροτέροις) because of G-d’s provident (προνοουμέγου) care in enhancing it (*Ant.* 7.65). In another passage, where in the Bible David tells Ziba, Saul’s servant, to till the land for Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son (2 Sam. 9:10), Josephus specifies that he is to send the produce to Jerusalem (*Ant.* 7.115). Again, during the rebellion of Absalom, we read that a lad saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz (2 Sam. 17:18); but it is only Josephus who tells us that it was two stades from the city of Jerusalem where they were spotted (*Ant.* 7.225). Furthermore, after the end of Absalom’s rebellion, David came back to the Jordan (2 Sam. 19:15); in Josephus after envoys come to him, it is to Jerusalem that David goes (*Ant.* 7.263). In addition, we read that a delegation came about

harvest time to David at the cave of Adullam in southern Israel (2 Sam. 23:13); in Josephus it is to Jerusalem that they come (*Ant.* 7.311). Again, whereas we read that David assembled all the leaders of Israel in order to number them (1 Chron. 23:2), Josephus specifies that it is to Jerusalem that he summons them and for the purpose of appointing his son Solomon as king (*Ant.* 7.363).

With Solomon also Josephus' orientation is constantly Jerusalem. Thus the Bible reports that Solomon had 12,000 horsemen (1 Kgs. 5:6); Josephus adds that half of these horsemen attended the king in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.41). Furthermore, there is no specific indication in the Bible as to whither the wood is to be brought from Lebanon by Hiram's servants (1 Kgs. 5:23); Josephus specifies that it is to Jerusalem that it is to be transported (*Ant.* 8.54). Furthermore, in an addition to the Bible Josephus tells us that the place where Solomon went for recreation was two *schoinoi* (approximately eight to ten miles) from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.186-87); moreover, he adds that he paved with black stone the roads leading to Jerusalem, both for the convenience of wayfarers and in order to show the greatness of his wealth and power.

As to Jeroboam, the Bible notes that Solomon perceived his diligence and put him in charge of all the taxpayers of the tribe of Joseph (1 Kgs. 11:28); Josephus' version focuses upon Jerusalem, and we are told that Solomon appointed him overseer of the building of walls when he surrounded Jerusalem with defenses (*Ant.* 8.205). Again, the Bible tells us about the deed performed by the prophet Jadon in Beth El and how he had been killed by a lion (1 Kgs. 13:11, 24); but it is only Josephus who tells us that Jadon had come from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.236) and that the lion had met him as he was journeying back to Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.241). Likewise, whereas the Bible does not specify whence Jehoshaphat was coming to aid Ahab (1 Kgs. 22:4, 2 Chron. 18:3), Josephus asserts that his army was coming from Jerusalem (*Ant.* 8.399).

That the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple were paramount in Josephus' thought may be seen from the fact that though they are not mentioned in the Book of Daniel as such, they are cited in Josephus' summary of Daniel (*Ant.* 10.276). What is particularly striking is that Josephus chose to include the statement, clearly one on which his Roman hosts would be sensitive, that Daniel also wrote about the empire of the Romans, though he avoids telling the reader what he wrote. It is, moreover, notewor-

thy, since there is no biblical source, that Josephus says that Ezra was buried in Jerusalem, whereas, according to rabbinic tradition, he was buried in Persia.³ Josephus also expands considerably the account of Nehemiah's achievements in the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Neh. 7:1-4). In particular, Nehemiah tells the people to bring tithes of their produce to Jerusalem so that the priests and Levites may have a perpetual source of livelihood and thus not have to abandon the service in the Temple (*Ant.* 11.182); he thus is able to effect an increase in the population of Jerusalem. Because he attended to the crucial task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, these walls, says Josephus, became his eternal monument (*Ant.* 11.183).

3. JOSEPHUS' ATTACHMENT TO THE TEMPLE

Of course, Josephus' chief attachment to Jerusalem was through his being a priest, of which he is so proud that he mentions it at the very beginning of his autobiography (*Life* 1). In his case, his pride is not merely in being a priest but, more particularly, in belonging to the first of the twenty-four courses of priests, and, what is more, in being descended on his mother's side from the Hasmoneans, who were not merely kings but also high priests (*Life* 2-4).

It is furthermore significant that Josephus devotes a goodly portion of Book 3 of the *Antiquities* to a detailed description of the Tabernacle (the forerunner of the Temple) and the priestly vestments (*Ant.* 3.102-203) even though, strictly speaking, such data are only marginally relevant in a history of the Jewish people. Moreover, when he has completed the story of the destruction of the First Temple, he gives a complete list of the high priests from the time of Solomon until the destruction of the Temple (*Ant.* 10.152-53). Likewise, the *Antiquities* proper really ends with Josephus' account of the completion of the redesigning of the Temple and of the labor found for the now idle workmen (*Ant.* 20.219-23). Immediately thereafter, aside from a very brief passage about the procuratorship of Florus (*Ant.* 20.252-58) and a concluding passage summarizing his *Antiquities* and his qualifications for writing it, as well as his plans for future works (*Ant.* 20.259-68), he ends his *Antiquities* with a detailed account of the history of the

³ See Ginzberg 1925, 4:358, 6:446.

high priesthood and an enumeration of the high priests (*Ant.* 20.224-51). Moreover, as part of his otherwise very brief final conclusion, he states that he has endeavored in his work to preserve the record of the line of high priests from the beginning until his own day (*Ant.* 20.261).

Indeed, in an extra-biblical addition, in his discussion of the capture of Jerusalem by David, he notes that in the time of Abraham the city was called Solyma, and that only afterwards was it named Hierosolyma, the etymology of which he gives from the word for temple (ἱερόν) (*Ant.* 7.67). Indeed, in all the manuscripts we have the additional statement that "some say that afterwards Homer called it Hierosolyma, a passage that Marcus⁴ says is probably a gloss, though he himself calls attention to a statement in the fifth century B.C.E. Choerilus that mentions a people speaking a Phoenician language in the Solymian hills near a broad lake (presumably the Dead Sea) (*Ap.* 1.172-73) and that apparently goes back to a mention of the Solymian hills in Homer (*Od.* 5.283).

Furthermore, in the description of the conveying of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:1-3, 1 Chron. 13:1-3), the Bible does not mention the name of Jerusalem explicitly, though admittedly it is understood. Josephus, in his version, however, mentions Jerusalem explicitly and adds that the priests and the Levites should keep it in Jerusalem in the future and there worship G-d with proper sacrifices (*Ant.* 7.78-79). He then states David's belief that if they had done so while Saul was still reigning they would not have suffered any misfortunes.

Clearly the Temple was the single most famous building in Jerusalem; and as we can see from Polybius (*ap. Jos.*, *Ant.* 12.136) and Livy (*Periochae* 102), the Temple was identified with Jerusalem itself.

4. HOW DID JOSEPHUS FEEL ABOUT THE LOSS OF JERUSALEM AND OF THE TEMPLE?

In view of his birth and education in Jerusalem and especially in consequence of his priestly status, one would expect that Josephus would be deeply pained by the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the destruction of the First Temple and no less by the

⁴ Marcus 1934, 5:394.

capture of Jerusalem by Titus and the destruction of the Second Temple. As for Josephus' depiction of the Babylonian captivity, he does not use such a word as ξενόομαι ("to go into banishment") for "exile" but rather asserts that Nebuchadnezzar "took captive" the people of Judah and "carried them away" (ἀπήγαγεν) to Babylon. Far worse than being carried away is the prospect of the city of Jerusalem being destroyed, as we see from Josephus' striking remark that the Judaeen king Jehoiachin did not think it right to allow the city to be endangered on his account and consequently removed his mother and his relatives and delivered them to the commanders sent by the Babylonian king (*Ant.* 10.100).

Indeed, though Josephus uses the word φυγή, the usual Greek term for exile, no fewer than 147 times, he never employs it with reference to the exile of the Israelites in 722-721 B.C.E. or of the people of Judah in 586 B.C.E. Rather, the language that he (*Ant.* 10.223) uses for the deportation is that of the founding of colonies. Indeed, even in his own day Josephus (*Ap.* 2.38) viewed the Jewish community of Alexandria as a colony; and in his argument that the Jews are entitled to be called Alexandrians, he insists that "all persons invited to join a colony (ἀποικίαν), however different their nationality, take the name of the founders."

As we can see from his portrait of Jehoiachin,⁵ Josephus saw a striking parallel between the events leading up to the destruction of both Temples; hence he concludes that it is wiser to surrender to the superpower and to endure exile than to resist and bring about the destruction of the Temple and of the land (*Ant.* 10.100).⁶ He was certainly aware of the criticism that must have been leveled against Jehoiachin for surrendering the city of Jerusalem. as he was of the bitter criticism that he himself had suffered for surrendering Jotapata to the Romans. It is surely striking that in his address to

⁵ See Feldman 1995, 11-31.

⁶ So also the rabbinic tradition (*Mid. Lev. Rab.* 19.6), which praises Jehoiachin because, in his devotion to his people, he did not wish the city of Jerusalem to be exposed to peril for his sake but rather surrendered himself to the Babylonians after they had sworn that neither the city of Jerusalem nor the people should suffer harm. The *Mid. Lev. Rab.* 19.6), clearly refusing to denigrate life in the Diaspora, remarks that while Jehoiachin was living in Jerusalem he did not observe the ritual laws of family purity but that he did so in Babylonia and consequently was pardoned by G-d for his sins.

his rival John of Gischala and to his fellow-Jews, Josephus appeals to the same motives that led Jehoiachin to surrender, namely, to spare his country and to save the Temple from destruction. As a sole precedent, he cites the instance of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah), whose action he refers to as a noble example, in that he voluntarily endured captivity together with his family rather than see the Temple go up in flames (*War* 6.103-4). He then, in a veritable peroration and clearly disregarding the biblical statement that Jehoiachin did evil, remarks that because of this action Jehoiachin is celebrated in sacred story by all Jews and will be remembered forever. It is significant, too, that aside from David and Solomon, Jehoiachin is the only king mentioned by name in the account of the *Jewish War*. Indeed, so impressed is Josephus with Jehoiachin's behavior that instead of characterizing him, as does the Bible, as one who did what was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kgs. 14:9, 2 Chron. 36:9), he describes him as being kind (χρηστός) and just (δίκαιος) (*Ant.* 10.100).⁷

Similarly, Josephus rehabilitates Zedekiah. In the Bible we are told that this king, together with all his soldiers, fled when a breach was made in the city (2 Kgs. 25:4, Jer. 39:4). Josephus, on the other hand, notes, in the first place, that Zedekiah's primary concern was for the Temple, since it is only when he learned that the Temple had been entered by the enemy that he fled; and, in the second place, it is Zedekiah who takes the initiative to take with him in his flight his wives and children, as well as his officers and friends (*Ant.* 10.136). Josephus' clear message is that it is wiser to surrender and to endure exile, as he himself did, rather than to bring about the destruction of Jerusalem and, in particular, of the Temple, which was so dear to him, the priest belonging to the first of the twenty-four courses of priests (*Life* 2). Indeed, Jeremiah bids Zedekiah to take courage and tells him that he would suffer no harm in surrendering to the Babylonians and (in an addition to Scripture, Jer. 38:17) that the Temple would consequently remain unharmed (*Ant.* 10.128).

A clue to Josephus' attitude toward the political loss of Jerusalem may be seen in the striking fact that he nowhere mentions, let alone laments, the Roman decision to shift the seat of their administration of Judea from Jerusalem to Caesarea. Nor does he express any

⁷ For a discussion of the significance of this complete reversal of the biblical statement see Feldman 1995, 11-31.

criticism or regret that Herod, whom he otherwise strongly dislikes, refounded Caesarea and thus eventually gave the Romans the seat from which they could and did govern Judea. After all, Caesarea was a pagan city, and, as Levine comments,⁸ it was endowed with impressive religious, cultural, and social institutions. Having a fine port, it was, in effect, Judea's window on the world. In shifting the capital of Judea from Jerusalem to Caesarea the Romans were, in effect, giving notice that they would attempt to be "even-handed" in their dealings with the Jews and non-Jews of Judea, and that Palestine was from now on going to become more integrated into the Roman Empire. Even Agrippa I, whom Josephus admires so much (*Ant.* 19.328-34), though he enjoyed residing in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 19.331), nevertheless apparently had his usual residence in Caesarea (*Acts* 12:19).⁹

That, indeed, the shift occurred seems clear from the fact that Caesarea was the headquarters for such procurators as Pilate (*War* 2.171, *Ant.* 18.55, 57), Cumanus (*War* 2.230, *Ant.* 20.116), Felix (*Acts* 23:23, 33), Festus (*Acts* 25: 1, 13), and Florus (*War* 2.288, 332, 407), and that Tacitus, who clearly is aware that, from a Jewish point of view, Jerusalem is the capital of Judea because of the presence in it of the Temple (*Hist.* 5.8.1), specifically and quite matter-of-factly says that when Vespasian went to Judea he went to Caesarea, that city being, as he asserts, the capital of Judea (*Hist.* 2.78.4).¹⁰ That the two cities were bitter rivals would seem to be indicated by the anonymous rabbinic remark that "If one says to you that both [Jerusalem and Caesarea] are destroyed, do not believe him; if he says that both are flourishing, do not believe him; if he says that Caesarea is waste and Jerusalem is flourishing, or that Jerusalem is waste and Caesarea is flourishing, you may believe him" (*Meg.* 6a). We find a similar sentiment in the rabbinic comment that before Jerusalem was destroyed no city was regarded as important, but that afterwards Caesarea became a metropolis (*Lam. Rab.* 39.1 on *Lam.* 1:5).

⁸ Levine 1975, 19.

⁹ Schwartz 1990, 130-31.

¹⁰ Juster 1914, 2:4, n. 3, argues that Tacitus' statement merely reflects the later status, during Tacitus' own lifetime, of Caesarea as the administrative capital of Judea; but the numerous references noted above both in Josephus and the Book of Acts confirm that it was the capital under the procurators.

To be sure, in the *War* (5.389) Josephus does not refer to the seventy years of the Judeans' bondage in Babylon as an exile (μετανάστης), "one who has changed his home," "wanderer." "emigrant"); but the crucial point here is that it is Josephus who is speaking, endeavoring to convince his countrymen to surrender, since it is quite clear that G-d is not on their side, any more than He was on their side when they fought the Babylonians. "In short," as he concludes, "there is no instance of our forefathers having triumphed by arms or failed of success without them when they committed their cause to G-d; if they sat still they conquered, as it pleased their Judge, if they fought they were invariably defeated" (*War* 5.390).

That Josephus did not view the exile negatively may also be deduced from his version of Haman's charge against the Jews of Persia, namely that they are "a wicked nation scattered (δισπαρῆναι) throughout the habitable land (οἰκουμένης) ruled by him." The fact that he closely follows the LXX's version (Esth. 3:8) that the Jews are "a nation scattered (δισπαρμένον) among the nations in all your kingdom" (*Ant.* 11.212) indicates that for him the verb διασπείρω, from which Diaspora is derived, is not to be viewed negatively, inasmuch as this word is put into the mouth of the Jews' arch-enemy Haman, and especially since he has Haman add immediately thereafter, in phrases that have no counterpart in the Hebrew original or in the LXX, that the Jews are unsociable (ἄμικτον, "unmingled"—a term used of Centaurs and Cyclopes¹¹) and incompatible (ἄσύμφυλον, "unsuitable," "not akin"). Since these are stock charges similar to those used by the Alexandrian Jew-baiters whom Josephus answers in his essay *Against Apion*, we may assume that Josephus did not view the scattering of the Jews in a negative sense.¹² Indeed, one reason why Josephus presents the account of Esther so extensively is to show what Jews can do in an alien environment and how G-d will rescue them.¹³

Though the noun Diaspora is not found in Josephus, the verb διασπείρω, which is found in many writers ranging from Herodotus to Sophocles and appears sixteen times in Josephus, generally has a negative nuance. In Josephus, however, it is used in connection with

¹¹ Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 1095; Euripides, *Cyclops* 429.

¹² See Feldman 1970, 163-64.

¹³ See van Unnik 193, 139.

exile and viewed as a punishment in only one passage, which closely parallels the Bible (1 Kgs. 14: 15), namely where the prophet Ahijah predicts to King Jeroboam of Israel that not only is his line doomed but that his people, too, shall share this punishment (τιμωρίας) “by being driven from their good land and scattered (διασπαρέν) over the country beyond the Euphrates because they have followed the impious ways of the king [Jeroboam]” (*Ant.* 8.271).¹⁴

That Josephus elsewhere seemingly viewed exile as punishment may be deduced from Moses’ speech to the Israelites before his death. In Josephus, as in the Bible (Deut. 4:27), Moses warns the people that if they disobey G-d’s laws He will scatter them (γῆρη, LXX διασπερεῖ, Josephus σκεδασθέντες) throughout the habitable world (οἰκουμένης, *Ant.* 4.190). But here the focus is on the rejection of Moses’ leadership; as Josephus has Moses declare, “Think not that liberty lies in resenting what your rulers require you to do” (*Ant.* 4.187).

Likewise, whereas in the Bible G-d warns Solomon that if he or his children fail to keep His commandments, He will cut off Israel from the land that He has given them (1 Kgs. 9:7), Josephus amplifies this statement by asserting that after driving them out of the land that He had given to their fathers He would make them aliens (ἐπήλυδας, “strangers,” “immigrants”) in a strange (ἄλλοτρίας, “foreign,” “alien,” “hostile”) land (*Ant.* 8.127). The emphasis here is on the penalty for disobedience to the Law and on the prediction of the forthcoming disaster of 586 B.C.E.¹⁵

Similar significance may, it would appear, be seen in Azariah’s prophecy to King Asa that if the Jews abandoned the worship of G-d, they, as a punishment, would be scattered (σπαρήσεται) over the face of the earth so that they would lead a life as aliens (ἔπηλυν) and wanderers (ἀλήτην) (*Ant.* 8.296-97). In the corresponding passage in the Bible we read merely that if the Jews will forsake G-d He will forsake them, and there is no mention of the Jews being scattered throughout the earth (2 Chron. 15:2).¹⁶ We should note, however,

¹⁴ Cf. van Unnik 1993, 140, who notes that this is the only passage where the verb διασπείρω is found in an unfavorable sense but remarks that this is true for only a portion of the Jewish people. We may suggest that this is in line with Josephus’ overwhelmingly unfavorable view of Jeroboam as the one who had caused the dissension that had split the Jewish people. See Feldman 1993, 29-51.

¹⁵ So Amaru 1994, 111.

¹⁶ Shochat 1953, 47, asserts that in Azariah’s admonition to Asa Josephus is

that there is no hint in Josephus of the traditional Jewish hope that the Jews would some day be gathered together from the exile and return to the land of Israel. This omission may well be due to the fact that Josephus was sensitive to the charge that the Jews were a nation within a nation who would forever be subversive until their return from captivity.

Again, whereas in the Bible when King Josiah discovers the books of Moses and has them read, he rents his clothes since he realizes that the people have failed to observe the laws (2 Kgs. 22:11, 2 Chron. 34:19), Josephus adds that Josiah was afraid that his people would be “driven away (ἀνάστατοι, ‘driven from house and home’) and, after being cast out of their own country into a foreign (ἀλλοτρίας) land where they would be destitute of all things, might there miserably end their lives” (*Ant.* 10.59). Here, too, Josephus’ emphasis is on the importance of obeying the Law and on the prediction that the defeat in 586 B.C.E. will be due to disobeying that Law.

That Josephus viewed the Babylonian exile as a punishment may, it would seem, be deduced from his speech to his fellow-countrymen urging them to surrender to the Romans. “You know,” he says, “of the bondage (δουλείαν) in Babylon, where our people passed seventy years in exile (μετανάστης, “wanderer,” “vagrant”) and never reared their heads for liberty” (*War* 5.389). Here, however, Josephus is appealing to his fellow-countrymen in terms that would be most effective, since they predominately looked upon the exile in the most negative terms.

Another passage that appears to view the diaspora negatively is the one in which King Antiochus III of Syria, in his letter to his governor Ptolemy, pays tribute to the Jews for their loyalty and assistance against the Egyptians and, as a reward, decides to repopulate the city of Jerusalem by bringing back to it those who have been dispersed abroad (διεσπαρμένων) (*Ant.* 12.139). It is clear that in this context the Diaspora is a condition that the Jews will be happy to see terminated.

Significantly, however, when Josephus, in what we might term an editorial comment, remarks on the fact that G-d Himself turned away from Jerusalem and deemed the Temple no longer a proper

portraying the situation in his own time, but there is no indication of this in the text.

dwelling place for Himself, he says that He “inflicted slavery upon us, together with our wives and children, for He wished to chasten us by these calamities” (*Ant.* 20.166). What is significant is that he avoids using the word “Diaspora” as the punishment that G-d inflicted.

The apparent contradiction in Josephus’ attitude toward the Diaspora may be explained as due to the various audiences that he is addressing. On the one hand, there were those who, like himself; felt very much at home in the Diaspora and were indeed thriving in it. Shochat suggests that Josephus’ positive portrayal of the dispersion of the Jews throughout the Diaspora is an indication of encouragement and prediction of mass proselytism;¹⁷ but Josephus, it would seem, was too loyal to his Roman benefactors not to realize the danger of such a view, with its inherent threat to the Roman way of life. Schlatter remarks that the joy with which Josephus notes the size of the Jewish population abroad, which to him is a sign of Jewish power, leads him to be careful to avoid the word Diaspora.¹⁸ Moreover, Romans in his audience would certainly not have appreciated the view that the Diaspora was a punishment and, in fact, only a temporary expedient until the Jews would be restored to their land and to an independent state—a status that would require still another revolt against Rome. On the other hand, Josephus, as we see in the cryptic statements in his paraphrase of Balaam (*Ant.* 4.125) and of Daniel (*Ant.* 10.210), also sought to reach a Jewish audience; and many of them might well, like the prophet Jeremiah, have viewed the exile as a punishment and one destined to end eventually with the restoration of the Jews to their homeland. When Josephus is talking to his fellow-countrymen he uses language that will appeal to them, namely exile; but his deepest felt sentiments, as seen in his autobiography, are to view the Diaspora positively. Most significantly, and in sharp contrast to Philo (*Praem.* 165), who envisages an eschatological ingathering of the exiled Jewish people,¹⁹ Josephus clearly regarded the exile as everlasting and never foresees an end to it.

Josephus, like his model Jeremiah, with whom he identified so closely (*Ant.* 10.112-15),²⁰ drew a sharp distinction between the

¹⁷ Shochat 1953, 50,

¹⁸ Schlatter 1932, 87.

¹⁹ See Wolfson 1947, 2:408-409, who notes that this reunion of the exiled will be followed, according to Philo (*Praem.* 168), by national prosperity in the homeland to which they will have returned.

²⁰ See Daube 1980, 18-36; Cohen 1982, 366-81; and Gray 1993, 72-74.

destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, on the one hand, and the end of the Jewish state, on the other hand. Hence, he mentions and identified with Jeremiah's prophecy, which looked forward to the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of Jerusalem (*Ant.* 10.113) but says nothing about the revival of Jewish independence. The reason, he says, why the people of Judea were angry with Jeremiah, as they were later with Josephus, is that he urged them not to risk their lives for their country (*Ant.* 10.119).

When, after the capture of Jerusalem, Titus, on his way from Antioch to Egypt, visited Jerusalem, he contrasted its sorry scene of desolation with the former splendor of the city and commiserated its destruction (*War* 7.112-15). It is almost as if Josephus himself, who so admired Titus, had himself revisited the city. It was the loss of this famous city that he lamented, not the loss of independence.

One sees a similar attitude in Philo, a Jew born in the Diaspora in Alexandria, who likewise had tremendous reverence for Jerusalem, which he referred to as G-d's city (*Somn.* 2.248) and the name of which he translated as "vision of peace" (*Somn.* 2.250). Indeed, to Philo Jerusalem, in one sense, is the name "for the world which has received the whole bowl, wherein the divine draught is mixed, and feasted thereon and exultingly taken for its possession the gladness that remains for all time never to be removed or quenched" (*Somn.* 2.248). In another sense, he says, Jerusalem is "the soul of the Sage, in which G-d is said to walk as in a city" (*ibid.*). "Therefore," he concludes, "do not seek for the city of the Existent among the regions of the earth, since it is not wrought of wood or stone, but in a soul, in which there is no warring, whose sight is keen, which has set before it as its aim to live in contemplation and peace." Here we see a distinction, with which Josephus would have heartily agreed, between Jerusalem the holy, even mystically holy, city, and the political entity of an independent state, Judea. Indeed, when Agrippa I writes a letter to the Emperor Gaius Caligula urging him to rescind his order to place his statue in the Temple, he dwells on the holiness of the city and, by implication, stresses the distinction between Judaism as a universal religion, of which Jerusalem is the chief symbol and which knows no political bounds, as against a political entity known as Judea. While Jerusalem, he says, "is my native city," she is also the mother city not of one country, Judea, but of most of the others in virtue of the colonies sent out at diverse times to the neighboring lands" (Philo, *Legat.* 281). Philo reiterates

this distinction in his essay *Flacc.* (45-46): “So populous are the Jews that no one country can hold them, and therefore they settle in very many of the most prosperous countries in Europe and Asia, both in the islands and on the mainland; and while they hold the Holy City where stands the sacred Temple of the most high G-d to be their mother city, yet those which are theirs by inheritance from their fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors even further back, are in each case accounted by them to be their fatherland in which they were born and reared, while to some of them they have come at the time of their foundation as immigrants to the satisfaction of the founders.” Josephus, the Galut Jew by adoption, clearly shared this point of view. Indeed, in his final appeal to his fellow-Jews urging them to surrender to the Romans, he exclaims, exhorting them to preserve the city and the Temple, “What a city! What a Temple! What countless nations’ gifts!” (*War* 5.417). The focus, he insists, should be on saving Jerusalem and the Temple, not on gaining political independence.

In particular, it is his concern for the Temple that Josephus shares, as we see, for example, in his clear identification with the great anxiety that the Jews who were then in Alexandria felt about the men whose task it was to present the case for the Temple in Jerusalem against the Samaritans who sought to obtain the favor of King Ptolemy Philometor for their claims with regard to the temple on Mount Gerizim, “for,” says Josephus in a comment reflecting his own view, “they were resentful that any should seek to destroy this Temple that was so ancient and the most celebrated of all those in the world” (*Ant.* 13.77). The key point to be made is that though Josephus laments at length in the *War* for the loss of the city and of the Temple he nowhere looks forward to the end of the Diaspora and nowhere looks forward to the reconstitution of a Jewish state. And yet, what is even more striking is that nowhere, in his long account in the *War* of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple does Josephus express the hope or prayer, let alone confidence, that the city and the Temple will be rebuilt, and certainly says nothing about the reconstitution of a Jewish state. Unlike Jeremiah, who in his last words has G-d predicting that Babylon, which had destroyed the Temple, will itself be leveled to the ground and that Babylon shall sink like a stone (Jer. 51 :58-64), there is no prediction there in Josephus that Rome, the destroyer of the Second Temple, will itself be destroyed (at best there is the cryptic comment in *Ant.* 10.210).

Again, unlike Jeremiah, who at the end of Lamentations (5:21) calls out for restoration and renewal, “Restore us to thyself, O L-rd, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old!” there is no such hope or prayer in the pages of Josephus. Rather, as he reflects on the destruction of the Temple, Josephus says that we may draw very great consolation from the thought that there is no escape from Fate, whether it is for works of art and places or for living beings, noting that the Second Temple was burnt in the very month and on the very day when the First Temple was destroyed (*War* 6.267-68). In the seventh and last book of the *Jewish War* Josephus describes at length the spectacular realistic triumphal procession in Rome in honor of Vespasian and Titus as victors in the war against the Jews, culminating in precious objects captured from the Temple in Jerusalem (7.132-57); but nowhere do we find any expression of pain there, let alone of hope, on the part of Josephus. Apparently, so far as Josephus is concerned, now that the Temple has been destroyed, Jews should be content to fast on the ninth of Av, to weep as they read the gruesome account of the war of liberation in the pages of Josephus, and to live in Rome or Boro Park or Lincoln Square.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE CONCEPT OF EXILE IN JOSEPHUS

1. THE TERMINOLOGY OF EXILE

When Socrates has been judged by his jury to be guilty of the crimes of atheism and corrupting the youth, in accordance with Athenian practice he then is expected to propose a penalty. Among those penalties which he considers and rejects is exile (Plato, *Apol.* 37C; *Cri.* 52C). The word which he uses for “exile” is clearly the standard word, namely *φύγις*, as we see in many other instances in Plato,¹ Greek tragedians,² historians,³ and orators.⁴ When the LXX deals with exile (גולה), it uses the language of emigration or colonization. Thus, they translate גולה in 2 Kgs. 24:15 (LXX 4 Kgs. 24:15) by the Greek word *ἀποικεσία*, which means “emigration.” The same Greek word is used by the LXX in Ezra (6:19) in referring to the גולה. They use a word from the same stem, *ἀποικία* (“migration,” “colony”) or its corresponding verb, *ἀποικίζειν*, in translating the word גולה in Jer. (29:1, LXX 36:1) and the word גלות in Jer. 28:4 (LXX 35:4), 29:22 (LXX 36:22), and 52:31, and 2 Kgs. 25:27. The synonymous noun, *μετοικεσία* is also used by the LXX to translate גלות (Judg. 18:30) or גלות Obad. 1:20 [*bis*] or גולה (Ezek. 12:11, Nah. 3:10).

The picture that one gets is of the founding of a colony, since this, or the verb *ἀποικίζω*, derived from the same stem, is the word used by Herodotus in referring to the colonies established by the Athenians in Ionia (1.146) and by the Therans in Cyrene (4.155) and the colony which Aristagoras the Milesian is thinking of founding (5.124). The word *ἀποικία* is likewise used by Hecataeus of Abdera (*ap. Diod., Bibliotheca Historica* 40.3.3) in referring to the “colony” in Jerusalem

¹ E.g., *Apol.* 21A, *Grg.* 516D, *Laws* 1.638A, *Prot.* 325B.

² E.g., *Aes.*, *Ag.* 1412, *Cho.* 254; *Soph.*, *Oed. Tyr.* 659; *Eur.*, *Hipp.* 37, 1043, *Med.* 400, *Ores.* 900.

³ E.g., *Hdt.* 7.3.

⁴ E.g., *Lys.* 3.42, 13.74, 14.38; *And.* 1.78, 1.106.

and other cities established by Moses and his followers when they are allegedly driven out by the Egyptians during a pestilence.

That Philo is clearly aware of the significance of the term *φυγή* as referring to exile is to be seen in the passage (*Abr.* 64) where, paralleling the discussion in Plato's *Apol.*, Philo declares that actually exile is a far heavier punishment than death itself, since "death ends our troubles; but banishment (*φυγή*) is not the end but the beginning of other new misfortunes and entails in place of the one death which puts an end to pains a thousand deaths in which we do not lose sensation." When Philo (*Cher.* 2) speaks of the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden and of the expulsion of Hagar (*Cher.* 3-4, 9) he refers to these expulsions as eternal banishment (*φυγή*, "exile"). He likewise (*Post.* 9) refers to the exile of Cain in going forth into banishment (*φυγή*) from G-d as the greatest penalty that one could possibly imagine. Philo thus adopts the word that is used by Plato and the other classical Greeks noted above for "exile." He stresses (*Cher.* 1) that such people as Adam were not merely "sent forth" but "cast forth." He, moreover, uses the term *φυγή* in connection with the exile into which those who have slain people must go (*Fug.* 53, 89; *Spec.* 1.161, 3.123, 3.150, 3.168). It is clear that Philo looks upon such exile as a punishment, inasmuch as he speaks (*Prob.* 7, 55; cf. 145; *Flacc.* 105, 151, 181; *Legat.* 110, 341) in juxtaposition of those who have been condemned to disfranchisement or banishment (*φυγή*) and declares (*Spec.* 3.181) that those legislators deserve censure who prescribe banishment (*φυγή*) for wilful murder, since the penalty does not fit the crime. That, however, Philo does not regard the Jews who, in his day, were living in the Diaspora as "exiles" in this sense may be deduced from his statement (*Virt.* 117) that G-d may with a single call easily gather together from the ends of the earth to any place that He wills the exiles (*ἀποφικισμένους*) dwelling in the utmost parts of the earth. The word that he here uses for exiles connotes those who have emigrated, who have settled in a far land, and who have been sent to colonize it; and it has not the connotation of having been punished thus.

The New Testament, on the other hand, uses the word *φυγή* only once (Matt. 24:20), and then not in connection with exile but rather with the flight that will take place at the end of days. In connection with the Babylonian exile the word which is used is *μετοικεσία* (Matt. 1:11, 12, 17), signifying merely a change of abode or a migration.

Similarly, Josephus, though he uses the word *φυγή* no fewer than

147 times, never employs it with reference to the exile of Israelites in 722-721 B.C.E. or of the people of Judah in 586 B.C.E. The only occasions where he uses it with reference to banishment are in connection with those who have committed involuntary manslaughter and for whom cities of refuge are appointed (*Ant.* 4.172-73). Clearly such exile is not a punishment but rather a refuge given to such people so as to escape revenge by kinsfolk of those whom they have slain. When Josephus (*Ant.* 10.33) cites the prophecy of Isaiah (2 Kgs. 20.17-18, Isa. 39.6-7) to King Hezekiah that within a short time his wealth would be taken away to Babylon and his offspring made eunuchs and servants to the king of Babylon, he avoids using any particular word for "exile." In describing (*Ant.* 10.149) the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar Josephus says that the Babylonian general removed (μεταναστήσας) the people and carried (ἐκόμισε) them off, but he does not use the word for "exile." Again, when he comes to the account of Cyrus' decree permitting the return from Babylon (*Ant.* 11.1) Josephus asserts that this was the seventieth year from the time when the Jews were fated to migrate (μεταναστήναι) from their own land to Babylon. Here he mentions their servitude (δουλεῦσαι) under Nebuchadnezzar but avoids the word "exile." Similarly, throughout the narrative of Daniel and his companions in Nebuchadnezzar's court in Babylon, Josephus (*Ant.* 10.186-281) avoids using any word for "exile."

Elsewhere in the language which Josephus (*Ant.* 10.223) uses for the deportation is that of the founding of colonies (κατοικίας, "settlements," "residences")—a standard word for colonies, as we see in Strabo (5.4.11, 6.2.5), in Plut. (*Anton.* 16, *Pomp.* 47), in Appian (*B. Civ.* 5.19) and in papyri (*Tebtunis Papyri* 61[b].227, dating from the second century B.C.E.), or for a body of residents in a foreign city, as we see in an inscription (*IGRom.* [Paris, 1927] 4.834). Nebuchadnezzar, he says (*Ant.* 11.91), took the people captive (αἰχμάλωτος) to Babylon, where he settled (μετώκισεν) them. Elsewhere (*Ant.* 11.18) Josephus speaks of those who returned to Jerusalem from the land of their captivity (αἰχμαλωσία) rather than of their exile. Again, in his summary of the list of high priests, he remarks (*Ant.* 20.231) that Nebuchadnezzar "carried away (μετήνεγκεν) our nation" but does not use the word "exiled." He asserts (*Ap.* 1.132) that Nebuchadnezzar dislodged (ἀναστήσας) and transported (μετώκισεν) the entire population of the Jews to Babylon. Josephus (*Ant.* 10.223) says, quoting the Babylonian historian Berossus, that on becoming master of

his father's entire realm Nebuchadnezzar gave orders to allot to the captives, when they came, settlements (κατοικία; ἀποικία, "colonies" in *Ap.* 1.138) in the most suitable places in Babylonia.⁵ Finally, when Josephus (*Ant.* 11.8) speaks of the return of the Jews from Babylon, whereas the Bible (Ezra 2:1) mentions the return of those who came up out of the captivity of the exile (הגולה), the LXX renders this as ἀποικίας and Josephus himself does not refer to the exile as such at all.

Indeed, even in his own day Josephus (*Ap.* 2.38) viewed the Jewish community of Alexandria as a colony; and in his argument there that the Jews are entitled to be called Alexandrians, he insists that "all persons invited to join a colony (ἀποικία), however different their nationality, take the name of the founders."

2. JOSEPHUS' POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD EXILE

One would expect that Josephus would have a positive attitude toward the concept of exile.⁶ One indication of this is to be found in his autobiography, where he remarks that Titus, upon his departure for Rome in 70 C.E., took Josephus with him, treating him with every mark of respect (*Life* 422). Josephus adds that when he arrived in Rome he received great consideration from the Emperor Vespasian (*Life* 423), who gave him lodging, citizenship, and a pension. Josephus then notes that his privileged position exposed him to envy but that Vespasian supported him and that he was able to overcome all

⁵ In the Slavonic version of Josephus' *Jewish War* replacing 1.364-70 we find a reference in the speech of a certain Jonathan predicting the coming of a Messiah who will not give over the Jews to desolation and ruin as under Nebuchadnezzar. He then adds that the prophets then made promises concerning the captivity and concerning the return. In another passage replacing *War* 4.407 the revolutionaries are accused of having forgotten what the Jews had endured during their bondage in Egypt, during their captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, and during the implementation of Antiochus Epiphanes' decrees. These passages, however, with their very negative view of the exile, have no parallel in the Greek of Josephus. I am indebted to J. Bernard Orchard, who is the director of the English translation project of the Slavonic version and who has been kind enough to send me a first draft of this version before its publication.

⁶ Schlatter 1932, 87, ascribes significance to the fact that Josephus completely avoids the word "Diaspora," but, as he himself notes, Josephus does use the verbs διασπείρω (*Ant.* 8.271 and *Ap.* 1.33) and παρὰσπείρω (*War* 7.43)(incorrectly cited by Schlatter as 7.113).

these accusations (*Life* 425). Upon Vespasian's death, he adds, the new emperor, Titus, Vespasian's son, showed him the same esteem (*Life* 428-429). What is striking is that Josephus nowhere expresses pain at being exiled from his homeland, whether this is due to his fear of offending the Emperor or whether he really felt at home in his new residence in Rome. And nowhere does he express the hope or prayer that he will be able to return to Jerusalem, his birthplace and the site of his beloved Temple, where he had served as a priest. Indeed, Schalit⁷ concludes that after the abortive revolution of 66-74 Josephus gave up on the land of Israel and saw the future of the Jews as being in the Western diaspora. Kaufmann⁸ asserts that Josephus gave up the traditional Messianic hope in complete silence, so that he even claimed that the oracle that someone from Judea would become ruler of the world applied to Vespasian (*War* 6.312-13); hence he no longer saw the land of Israel as central to the Jewish people.

Moreover, the pride with which Josephus refers to the spread of Jews throughout the inhabited world (*War* 6.442, 7.43; *Ant.* 14.114) would indicate that he did not regard the exile in pejorative terms. In a striking passage (*Ap.* 2.284) he compares the spread of the Law, that is of Judaism, to the degree to which G-d permeates the universe. It is likewise with pride that Josephus (*War* 7.43) remarks that the Jewish people are densely interspersed (παρέσπαρται) among the native populations of every portion of the world.

Other clues to Josephus' attitude may be seen in his paraphrase of the Bible in the first half of the *Antiquities*. The first place where Josephus might have mentioned the concept of exile was in his paraphrase of the biblical account of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. In the biblical account the expulsion (Gen. 3:23) is clearly a punishment intended to prevent Adam and Eve from partaking of the tree of life and thus of living forever. To enforce this punishment we are told (Gen. 3:24) that G-d placed cherubim and a flaming sword at the east of the Garden of Eden. That the expulsion from Eden is a punishment inflicted by G-d upon Adam and Eve because of their disobedience is clear in Philo (*Post.* 9-10,⁹ as well as in the rabbinic tradition (*Gen. Rab.* 11.7), with both

⁷ Schalit 1944, 1:lxvii.

⁸ Kaufmann 1929, 297.

⁹ Nevertheless, elsewhere Philo (*Plant.* 34) adopts language similar to that of

of which there is good reason to believe Josephus was acquainted.¹⁰ What is furthermore significant is that the rabbinic tradition (*Gen. Rab.* 21.8), which has a play on the word ויגרש ("drove out") as ויגרס ("crushed"), declares that this intimates that when G-d drove out Adam He showed him the destruction of the Temple, in connection with which it quotes the verse, "He has made my teeth grind (ויגרס) on gravel" (*Lam.* 3:16), the implication being that the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. was, like the expulsion of Adam, due to sinful behavior. On the other hand, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.51) makes no such connection and, indeed, after mentioning the penalties imposed upon Adam, Eve, and the serpent, then states that G-d removed (μετοικίζει, "resettled," "led to another abode") them from the garden to another place, clearly separating this from the penalties themselves.

In the case of Cain the Bible (*Gen.* 4:12) states that, as a punishment for the murder of his brother Abel, he was to be "a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." The parallel of Cain's wandering with the exile of the Jews to Babylonia may be inferred from the statement of Rabbi Judah the son of Rabbi Ḥiyya, who lived in Babylonia and Palestine at the end of the second and at the beginning of the third century, that exile (גלות) atones for half of men's sins (*b. Sanh.* 57b). To be sure, Philo (*Post.* 3.10) asserts that Cain left the land voluntarily, in contrast to Adam, whom G-d drove out. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.58) specifically says that G-d expelled him from the land. But even here whereas Cain in the Bible (*Gen.* 4:14) expresses the fear that whoever finds him will slay him and whereas G-d, in turn (*Gen.* 4:15), reassures him that if anyone slays him vengeance will be taken upon him sevenfold, in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.59) G-d reassures him that he will be in no danger from beasts and that he may fare unafraid "through every land" (διὰ πάσης...γῆς), a hint, we may suggest, that the Jew wandering in exile through every land in the Diaspora need not be afraid, since G-d will protect him.

It is, furthermore, significant that in the discussion that follows after Noah emerges from the ark, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.110-12), in a passage

Josephus in stating not that Adam and Eve were expelled but rather that they migrated (μετανασθῆναι) from the Garden of Eden.

¹⁰ As to Philo see Feldman 1984, 410-18. As to the rabbinic tradition see Feldman 1993b, 211-12.

which has no parallel in the Bible, in Philo, in Pseudo-Philo, and in rabbinic literature, focuses on the failure of Noah's descendants, despite an increase in population, to send out colonies (στέλλειν ἀποικίας). Josephus (*Ant.* 1.110) cites another reason for sending out colonies, namely so that the inhabitants might not quarrel with one another, a motive which is reminiscent of that which led Abraham to divide his land with Lot (*Ant.* 1.169). It is such quarreling (στάσις in Corcyra) that Thucydides (3.82-84) so bewails and that David (*Ant.* 7.372) asks his sons to cease and from which Solomon (*Ant.* 7.337) asks to be free. To Josephus (*Ant.* 1.110) this failure to send out colonies and, in effect, to establish a diaspora, is a result of the people's blindness, and the consequence is that they were plunged into calamities. As Josephus (*Ant.* 1.112) puts it, in their refusal to emigrate, the descendants of Noah were suspicious that G-d was plotting against them so that they would be divided and thus more open to attack, whereas in point of fact they did not realize that they owed their blessings to His benevolence rather than to their own might. This is, we may suggest, in contrast to Herodotus' favorable description (1.94) of the founding of Etruria by Lydians due to lack of food, presumably owing to overpopulation. To be sure, the Midrash (*Pirke R. El.* 24) also notes a rapid increase in population among Noah's descendants, remarking that women gave birth to sextuplets, but it says nothing about the founding of colonies.

As to the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—, whereas the Bible, as Amaru¹¹ stresses, emphasizes the covenanted promise of the Land of Israel, Josephus speaks in more universal terms to a Roman audience out of his perspective as a diaspora Jew writing in the year 93, two decades after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans, whose commitment is to a Diaspora coexisting with a homeland. Whereas in the Bible (Gen. 15:18-21) there is a covenantal promise by G-d that Abraham's descendants will possess the Land of Israel, in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.185) there is merely a prediction that his descendants will vanquish the Canaanites and possess the land.¹² In particular, whereas the Bible (Num. 14:7-8) speaks of Palestine as an exceedingly good land flowing with milk and honey, abounding in water and fruits and metals (Deut. 8:7-9) that will be forever under the

¹¹ Amaru 1980-81, 211; Amaru 1994, 103.

¹² See Amaru 1994, 96-97.

watchful eyes of G-d (Deut. 11:12), Josephus has none of this mystical and poetic description but rather refers to the land as he does to the earth in general by the most general word for land, γῆ, on two occasions referring to Canaan and immediately thereafter “the earth” by the same word γῆ.¹³ Moreover, in a passage that is Josephus’ own, since it has no parallel in the Bible, G-d in a dream reminds Amram, the father of Moses, that Abraham had bequeathed Arabia to Ishmael, Troglodytis to his children by Keturah, and Canaan to Isaac (*Ant.* 2.213). Significantly, whereas the Bible (Gen. 25:6) states that Abraham sent away his sons by Keturah to the East, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.239) says that Abraham sent them out to found colonies (ἀποικιστῶν), a word which is used in place of exile by both Philo (*Virt.* 117) and Josephus (*Ap.* 1.138). As Amaru insightfully stresses, there is no distinction among Arabia, Troglodytis, and Canaan; and what is even more striking is that it is Abraham, not G-d, who grants these lands to Abraham’s children.

Again, whereas in the Bible (Gen. 28:15) the climax of G-d’s message to Jacob in his dream is to assure him that He will bring him back to the land of Canaan, in Josephus’ version (*Ant.* 1.280-83) G-d reassures him that He will be with him on his journey to Mesopotamia to find a wife but says nothing about Jacob’s return to the Land.¹⁴ To Josephus the Diaspora is clearly a blessing, since G-d promises Jacob (*Ant.* 1.282) that Jacob’s children shall fill all that the sun beholds of earth and sea and not merely the land of Canaan.

In the case of Joseph, it would seem that his sale to Egypt was punishment, and this would appear to be the implication from Thackeray’s version that Joseph was “banished to remotest exile”;¹⁵ but this is a mistranslation, since the Greek says merely that he was “furthest away” (πορρωτάτω), with no implication of exile.

It is extremely effective that, in an addition to the biblical text (Num. 23:7-10, 18-24, 24:3-9, 15-24), it is a pagan prophet, Balaam, who predicts, in the most glorious terms (*Ant.* 4.115-16), the spread of the Israelites throughout the world: “With their fame shall earth and sea be filled: aye and ye shall suffice for the world, to furnish every land with inhabitants sprung from your race. Marvel ye then,

¹³ Amaru 1994, 102, 105.

¹⁴ See Amaru 1994, 98-99.

¹⁵ Thackeray 1930, 4:183 on *Ant.* 2.33.

blessed army, that from a single sire ye have grown so great? Nay, those numbers now are small and shall be contained by the land of Canaan; but the habitable world (οἰκουμένη), be sure, lies before you as an eternal habitation, and your multitudes shall find abode on islands and continent, more numerous even than the stars in heaven." What is particularly noteworthy is that the Diaspora is not only presented in very positive terms (Num. 23:7-24 makes no mention of the Jews' being dispersed throughout the world) but that it is said to be eternal.¹⁶

Again, whereas just before his death Moses (Deut. 28:64) warns the Israelites that if they disobey the Law G-d "will scatter (והפיצך) thee among all the nations, from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth," Josephus (*Ant.* 4.313) omits all mention of the forthcoming Diaspora and asserts that they will be sold into slavery to men who will take no pity on their misfortunes. Though he very greatly abbreviates Moses' speech warning the Israelites in great detail of the misfortunes that they will endure for disobedience to the Law, he adds that their cities and the Temple will be lost not once but often, but without indicating that these losses will be accompanied with a dispersion of the Jews. Moreover, in his accounts of the threatened dispersion, Josephus omits completely the promises of redemption and return, such as is found in Deut. 30:3: "He [G-d] will gather you again from all the peoples where the L-rd your G-d has scattered you."¹⁷ Josephus' treatment of the exile of the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel in 722/721 B.C.E. is likewise significant. To be sure, exile is presented as a punishment, but this is only when it is a prediction on the part of the prophet Ahijah (1 Kgs. 14:15, *Ant.* 8.271). When, however, the Bible describes the actual final defeat of the Kingdom of Israel, it (2 Kgs. 17:6-7) puts into immediate juxtaposition the statement that the Assyrian king carried away the Israelites to Assyria and explicitly asserts that this was so because the people of Israel had sinned against G-d. Such a juxtaposition is lacking in Josephus (*Ant.* 9.279). At one point (*Ant.* 9.249) the prophet Oded rebukes the army of the Kingdom of Israel for daring to take captive people of the tribes of Judah and

¹⁶ Cf. Schalit 1944, 1:lxviii, who interprets this as a plea for the viability of Jewish life in the Diaspora.

¹⁷ See Amaru 1980-81, 224.

Benjamin and warns them that if they do not release these captives “they should suffer punishment at the hands of G-d.” But he does not specify what that punishment will be and gives no hint that it will be exile from the land of Israel. And when the Kingdom of Israel is finally defeated by the Assyrians, Josephus does not say that they were “exiled” or “dispersed” but rather says that the Assyrian king Shalmaneser transported (μετόκισεν, “led to another abode”) the Israelites to Media and Persia (*Ant.* 9.278); two paragraphs later, using a verb based on the same stem, he says that the ten tribes “emigrated” (μετόκησαν, “changed their abode”) from Judea (*Ant.* 9.280). The punishment, or at any rate the main ingredient of the punishment, is in the fact that the Assyrian king “utterly destroyed” (ἄρδην ἠφάνισε) the government of Israel, that is, the political end of the Kingdom of Israel.

As for the great exile as a result of the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E., one opinion of the rabbis was that it actually served a positive purpose. One positive view of exile in general, as expressed by an anonymous rabbi (*b.Ber.* 56a), is that exile (גלות) gives an opportunity to atone for iniquity. Another positive aspect may be seen in the statement of the second-century Palestinian Rabbi Nehorai (*m.Avot* 4:14) that one should go into exile (גלה) to a place of Torah, that is, the very experience of exile is of positive benefit since it brings about greater self-reliance. Still another reason why G-d exiled the Jews is, in the words of the third-century Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedath, in order that proselytes might join them (*b.Pes.* 87b). That exile is generally viewed positively is clear from the remark (*b.Pes.* 49a) of the Babylonian Rabbi Kahana, who lived in the third and fourth centuries, that if he had not married a priest’s daughter he would not have gone into exile (גלה) and that even though the place of exile was one of learning, he was not exiled as people are ordinarily exiled, that is voluntarily and beneficially, but rather had been forced to flee. That the Babylonian exile should be viewed positively may be inferred from the remark (*b.Pes.* 87b) of Rabbi Hiyya, who lived in Babylonia and Palestine at the end of the second century, that since G-d knew that the Jews would be unable to endure the cruel decrees of Edom (i.e. the Romans) he therefore exiled them to Babylonia. To this the third-century Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedath added that they were exiled to Babylonia because it is as deep as Sheol, that is, its very depth guaranteed a speedy redemption. The third- and early fourth-century Palestinian and Babylonian Rabbi

Ḥanina then remarked that the reason why the Jews were exiled to Babylonia was that the language of that country, that is Aramaic, is similar to Hebrew. The final comment in this sequence is by the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Johanan ben Nappaḥa and is most positive in its view of the exile, namely that G-d exiled the Jews to Babylonia because “He sent them back to their mother’s house,” that is, to Babylonia, since Abraham had originally come from there. Finally, lest one think that the presence of G-d was to be found only in the Temple in Jerusalem, Rabbi Judah ben Menasiah, a Palestinian Amora, declares—and is not contradicted—that G-d fills the whole world, as the soul fills the body. In fact, there is even a debate (*Pesiq. Rabbati* 160a) as to whether the presence of G-d dwelled in the Second Temple at all.

Even more, as expressed by the Palestinian Hoshaiiah Rabbah in the third century, “The Holy One, blessed be He, showed righteousness unto Israel by scattering them among the nations” (*b.Pes.* 87b). In support of this position Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedath (*ibid.*) quotes Hosea (2:25), “I will sow her unto Me in the land,” since a farmer sows a certain amount of seed in order to harvest much more. As Modrzejewski points out, in the Greek version of this text from Hosea, זרעתיא (“I will sow”) becomes σπερῶ, the future of σπείρω, the verb from which *Diaspora* is derived.¹⁸ He suggests, very plausibly, that this positive evaluation by the rabbis of the Diaspora may well have originated in a Jewish rejoinder to the Christian interpretation—which was negative—of the notion of the diaspora, as we see, for example, in Origen (*C. Cels.* 5.22), who sees it as a just retribution for the crime of deicide.

As for Josephus’ depiction of the Babylonian captivity, he does not use such a word as ξενόσμου (“to go into banishment”) for “exile” but rather asserts that the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar “took captive” the people of Judah and “carried them away” (ἀπήγαγεν) to Babylon. Far worse than being carried away is the prospect of the city of Jerusalem being destroyed, as we see from Josephus’ striking remark (*Ant.* 10.100) that the Judean king Jehoiachin did not think it right to allow the city to be endangered on his account and consequently removed his mother and his relatives and delivered them to the commanders sent by the Babylonian king.

¹⁸ Méléze-Modrzejewski 1993, 71.

As we can see from his portrait of Jehoiachin,¹⁹ Josephus saw a striking parallel between the events leading up to the destruction of both the First and Second Temples and those of his own day; hence he concludes (*Ant.* 10.100) that it is wiser to surrender to the superpower and to endure exile than to resist and bring about destruction of the Temple and of the land.²⁰ He was certainly aware of the criticism that must have been leveled against Jehoiachin for surrendering the city of Jerusalem, as he was of the bitter criticism that he himself had suffered for surrendering Jotapata to the Romans. It is surely striking that in his address to his rival John of Gischala and to his fellow-Jews, Josephus appeals to the same motives that led Jehoiachin to surrender, namely, to spare his country and to save the Temple from destruction. As a sole precedent, he cites (*War* 6.103-4) the instance of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah), whose action he refers to as a noble example, in that he voluntarily endured captivity together with his family rather than see the Temple go up in flames. He then, in a veritable peroration and clearly disregarding the biblical statement that Jehoiachin did evil, remarks that because of this action Jehoiachin is celebrated in sacred story by all Jews and will be remembered forever. It is significant, too, that aside from David and Solomon, Jehoiachin is the only king mentioned by name in the *Jewish War*. Indeed, so impressed is Josephus with Jehoiachin's behavior that instead of characterizing him, as does the Bible (2 Kgs. 14:9, 2 Chron. 36:9), as one who did what was evil in the sight of the L-rd, he describes him (*Ant.* 10.100) as being kind (χρηστός) and just (δίκαιος).²¹ The Bible (2 Kgs. 24:12) says nothing about Jehoiachin's motive in surrendering. Moreover, it (2 Kgs. 24:15-16) describes graphically and in detail how Nebuchadnezzar "carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon; the king's mother, the king's wives, his

¹⁹ See Feldman 1995, 11-31.

²⁰ So also the rabbinic tradition (*Lev. Rab.* 19.6), which praises Jehoiachin because, in his devotion to his people, he did not wish the city of Jerusalem to be exposed to peril for his sake but rather surrendered himself to the Babylonians after they had sworn that neither the city of Jerusalem nor the people should suffer harm. The Midrash (*Lev. Rab.* 19.6), clearly refusing to denigrate life in the Diaspora, remarks that while Jehoiachin was living in Jerusalem he did not observe the ritual laws of family purity but that he did so in Babylonia and consequently was pardoned by G-d for his sins.

²¹ For a discussion of the significance of this complete reversal of the biblical statement see Feldman 1995, 11-31.

officials, and the chief men of the land, he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon all the men of valor, seven thousand, and the craftsmen and the smiths, one thousand, all of them strong and fit for war.” Josephus, on the other hand (*Ant.* 10.101), says that the Babylonian king ordered his men to take captive all the young men and craftsmen in the city and to bring them in chains to him, but says nothing about their being brought to Babylon. Indeed, it is only in the third deportation (*Ant.* 10.150) that we hear specifically that the Babylonian king took all the Judean captives and King Zedekiah to Babylon; and even there he does not say that he “exiled” them there but rather that he led (ἡγάγεν) them there.

Similarly, Josephus rehabilitates Zedekiah. In the Bible (2 Kgs. 25:4, Jer. 39:4) we are told that this king, together with all his soldiers, fled when a breach was made in the city. Josephus (*Ant.* 10.136), on the other hand, notes, in the first place, that Zedekiah’s primary concern was for the Temple, since it is only when he learned that the Temple had been entered by the enemy that he fled; and, in the second place, it is Zedekiah who takes the initiative to take with him in his flight his wives and children, as well as his officers and friends. Moreover, in order not to detract from Zedekiah’s reputation for bravery, whereas the Bible (2 Kgs. 25:8) indicates that it was the Babylonian army that was responsible for the pursuit and capture of the king, Josephus (*Ant.* 10.137) puts the blame on the Jews who had earlier deserted to the Babylonians and who informed the Babylonians of Zedekiah’s attempt to escape. Josephus’ clear message is that it is wiser to surrender and to endure exile, as he himself did, rather than to bring about the destruction of the country and, in particular, of the Temple, which was so dear to him, the priest belonging to the first of the twenty-four courses of priests (*Life* 2). Indeed, Jeremiah (*Ant.* 10.128) bids Zedekiah to take courage and tells him that he would suffer no harm in surrendering to the Babylonians and (in an addition to Scripture, Jer. 38:17) that the Temple would consequently remain unharmed.

In fact, in his summary of the deportations of the people of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Josephus (*Ant.* 10.183) says that ten tribes were driven out (ἐξέπεσεν, “fell out,” “were driven out”) by the Assyrians, as were the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar. He says that Shalmaneser “removed” (ἀναστήσας) the Israelites rather than that he exiled them, and similarly that the king of Babylon “led away”

(ἐξαγαγών) the two tribes (*Ant.* 10.184). Finally, in his summary (*Ant.* 10.185) of the deportations of 721 B.C.E. and 586 B.C.E., he speaks of the interval of time between the captivity (αἰχμαλωσίας) of the Israelites until the removal (ἀνάστασις) of the two tribes but avoids the word “exile.”

To be sure, in the *War* (5.389) Josephus does refer to the seventy years of the Judeans’ bondage in Babylon as an exile (μετανάστης, “one who has changed his home,” “wanderer,” “emigrant”); but the crucial point here is that it is Josephus who is speaking, endeavoring to convince his countrymen to surrender, since it is quite clear that G-d is not on their side, any more than that He was on their side when they fought the Babylonians. “In short,” as he concludes (*War* 5.390), “there is no instance of our forefathers having triumphed by arms or failed of success without them when they committed their cause to G-d: if they sat still they conquered, as it pleased their Judge; if they fought they were invariably defeated.”

In his account of Ezra and Nehemiah, who were the leaders in the return from the Babylonian captivity, we might have expected that Josephus would magnify the figure of Ezra the priest, just as the rabbis elaborate on his tremendous achievements as scholar, teacher, legislator, prophet, and holy man, especially since Josephus is so proud of his own priestly status, which he mentions in the very first sentence of his *Life* (1).²² Indeed, as Koch²³ remarks, Ezra’s work was probably as all-encompassing as that of Moses himself, since his ambitious aim was to rebuild Israel as the nation of twelve tribes, including even the Samaritans. Furthermore, we would expect special attention to be given to Ezra by Josephus in view of his great knowledge of and general antagonism toward the Samaritans,²⁴

²² See Feldman, 1993b, 190-214.

²³ Koch 1974, 196. To be sure, as Smith 1971, 122, has noted, outside the traditions which are preserved in the Books of Chronicles and 1 Esdras, Ezra cuts no great figure in early Jewish legend. Thus, for example, Ben Sira (49:11-13), in his list of heroes, does not mention him but rather praises Nehemiah; similarly, he is ignored by 2 Maccabees. However, by the time of Josephus, if we may judge from rabbinic literature, Ezra had come to be regarded as a key figure in Jewish history.

²⁴ See Feldman 1992c, 23-45. A late rabbinic tradition (*Tanḥuma on Vayeshev* 2 end, *Pirqe R. El.* 37 [38]) recalls the total excommunication of the Samaritans, allegedly proclaimed by Ezra with great solemnity in the presence of three hundred priests, three hundred children, and three hundred scrolls of the Torah, to the accompaniment of three hundred trumpets.

who, in turn, according to the Second Samaritan Chronicle, looked upon Ezra as their arch-enemy because, they claimed, he altered the script and contents of the Torah. Moreover, whereas such major biblical figures as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Saul, David, and Solomon are mentioned by Josephus on numerous occasions outside the pericope devoted specifically to them, once Josephus completes his narrative of Ezra with the mention of his death, he nowhere refers to him again. In actuality, however, the ratio of space given by Josephus as compared with the Hebrew text for Ezra is only 1.22:1, whereas the ratio for such figures as Korah is 3.42:1, for Rehoboam is 3.51:1, and for King Zedekiah is 7.45:1.

Furthermore, because to a writer of a history of the Jews like himself Nehemiah's memoir would be of immense importance and because, indeed, a whole biblical book is devoted to Nehemiah and because Nehemiah was of crucial importance in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the Temple, which were so important to Josephus, who was born in Jerusalem and who, as a priest, had a special attachment to the Temple, one would expect Josephus to aggrandize his portrait. The lack of attention given to Nehemiah, where the ratio of Josephus' coverage to that in the biblical original is 0.24:1, is even more striking, in fact the least of all major figures in the Bible.²⁵ We may attribute this brevity in part to Nehemiah's unpopularity in his own lifetime²⁶ or to the fact that he was supposedly excessively self-complacent (*b.Sanh.* 93b) or to the relative paucity of aggadic material about Nehemiah. Nevertheless, the fact that Nehemiah was identified with the famed Zerubbabel (*b.Sanh.* 38a), the leader of the original caravan of repatriates who is spoken of as the builder of the Temple which frequently bears his name (Ezra 3:2), should, it would seem, have induced Josephus, who was so proud of his priesthood, to give him much more attention. Apparently, the concept of return from exile was not for Josephus a matter of major importance.

That Josephus did not view the exile negatively may also be deduced from his version of Haman's charge against the Jews of Persia, namely that they are "a wicked nation scattered (διεσπάρθαι) throughout the habitable land (οἰκουμένη) ruled by him." The fact

²⁵ See Feldman 1992a, 187-202.

²⁶ Cf. *b.Sanh.* 103b, which points out that Nehemiah, like David, had many enemies; yet both were truly righteous men.

that he (*Ant.* 11.212) closely follows the LXX's version (*Esth.* 3:8) that the Jews are "a nation scattered (*διασπαρμένον*) among the nations in all your kingdom" indicates that for him the verb *διασπείρω*, from which the word "Diaspora" is derived, is not to be viewed negatively, inasmuch as this word is put into the mouth of the Jews' arch-enemy Haman, and especially since he has Haman add immediately thereafter, in phrases that have no counterpart in the Hebrew original or in the LXX, that the Jews are unsociable (*ἄμικτον*, "unmingled"—a term used of Centaurs and Cyclopes²⁷) and incompatible (*ἀσύμφυλον*, "unsuitable," "not akin"). Since these are stock charges similar to those used by the Alexandrian Jew-baiters whom Josephus answers in his essay *Against Apion*, we may assume that Josephus did not view the scattering of the Jews in a negative sense.²⁸ Indeed, one reason why Josephus presents the account of Esther so extensively is to show what Jews can do in an alien environment and how G-d will rescue them.²⁹

Finally, we may note Josephus' use of the verb *διασπείρω* in a neutral sense (*Ap.* 1.33)—but certainly not in a negative sense—where he remarks that Jewish priests keep a strict account of their marriages not only in Judea but also in Egypt, Babylonia, and "other parts of the world in which any of the priestly order are living in dispersion" (*διασπαρμένοι*).

3. JOSEPHUS' VIEW OF EXILE AS PUNISHMENT

The prevalent view of the rabbis is that exile is a punishment inflicted upon the Jews for their sins. Thus (*m.Abod* 5:9) we read that "exile comes into the world because of the worship of idols, fornication, and bloodshed." Indeed, in an anonymous comment (*b.Yoma* 9b) we are told that it is these three sins that are responsible for the destruction of the First Temple. Similarly (*b.Shab.* 33a), in an anonymous statement, we are told that the Jews suffer exile (*גלות*) as a punishment for incest, idolatry, and the non-observance of the sabbatical and jubilee years. A clearly negative view of exile is to be seen in the statement of the third-century Babylonian rabbi Ḥana bar Abba, namely that

²⁷ Soph., *Trach.* 1095; Eur., *Cyc.* 429.

²⁸ See Feldman 1970, 163-64.

²⁹ See van Unnik 1993, 139.

there are four things of which G-d repents that He had created, namely Exile, the Chaldeans, the Ishmaelites, and the Evil Inclination (*b.Suk.* 52b). In particular, the juxtaposition of the Exile with the Evil Inclination is conclusive indication of the extent to which Exile is viewed negatively. That the exile is a cause for weeping is clear from the statement of the third-century Babylonian Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel in the name of the third-century Babylonian Rav that G-d himself (*b.Ber.* 3a) is said to remark, "Woe to the children on account of whose sins I destroyed My house and burned My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world." It is likewise to be inferred from the explanation by the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedath of the prophet Jeremiah's threefold mention of weeping (*Jer.* 13:17), that it refers to the first Temple, to the second Temple, and to Israel who have become exiled from their place (*b.Hag.* 5b). Likewise negative is the observation of the second- and third-century Babylonian Rab that exile is a greater hardship for men than for women (*b.Sanh.* 26a). Again, the second-century Palestinian Rabbi Ishmael speculates whether because Israel is now exiled they should revert to the restriction forbidding the eating of meat (*b.Hul.* 16b). On the other hand, the ultimate goal of Judaism is the return of all Jews to the Land of Israel (*Gen. Rab.* 98.9).³⁰

Though the noun Diaspora is not found in Josephus, the verb διασπείρω, which is found in many writers ranging from Herodotus to Sophocles and appears sixteen times in Josephus, generally has a negative nuance. In Josephus, however, it is used in connection with exile and viewed as a punishment in only one passage (*Ant.* 8.271), which closely parallels the Bible (1 Kgs. 14:15), namely where the prophet Ahijah predicts to King Jeroboam of Israel that not only is his line doomed but that his people, too, shall share this punishment (τιμωρίας) "by being driven from their good land and scattered (διασπαρέν) over the country beyond the Euphrates because they have followed the impious ways of the king [Jeroboam]."³¹

³⁰ The Church Fathers viewed the exile similarly as a punishment; but whereas the rabbis looked upon it as retribution for the sins noted above, Fathers such as Origen (*C.Cels.* 5.22) regarded it as punishment for the crime of deicide.

³¹ Cf. van Unnik 1993, 140, who notes that this is the only passage where the verb διασπείρω is used in an unfavorable sense but remarks that this is true for only a portion of the Jewish people. We may suggest that this is in line with Josephus' overwhelmingly unfavorable view of Jeroboam as the one who had caused the dissension that had split the Jewish people. See Feldman 1993d, 29-51.

That Josephus, however, elsewhere viewed exile as punishment may be deduced from Moses' speech to the Israelites before his death. In Josephus (*Ant.* 4.190), as in the Bible (Deut. 4:27), Moses warns the people that if they disobey G-d's laws He will scatter them (*vehefiz*, LXX διασπερεί, Josephus σκεδασθέντες) throughout the habitable world (οἰκουμένη, *Ant.* 4.190). But here the focus is on rejection of Moses' leadership; as Josephus has Moses declare, "Think not that liberty lies in resenting what your rulers require you to do" (*Ant.* 4.187).

Likewise, whereas in the Bible (1 Kings 9:7) G-d warns Solomon that if he or his children fail to keep His commandments, He will cut off Israel from the land which He has given them, Josephus (*Ant.* 8.127) amplifies this statement by asserting that after driving them out of the land that He had given to their fathers He would make them aliens (ἐπήλυδας, "strangers," "immigrants") in a strange (ἄλλοτρίας ("foreign," "alien," "hostile") land. The emphasis here is on the penalty for disobedience to the Law and on the prediction of the forthcoming disaster of 586 B.C.E.³²

Similar significance may be seen in Azariah's prophecy (*Ant.* 8.296-97) to King Asa that if the Jews abandoned the worship of G-d, they, as a punishment, would be scattered (σπαρήσεται) over the face of the earth so that they would lead a life as aliens (ἔπηλυν) and wanderers (ἀλήτην). In the corresponding passage in the Bible (2 Chron. 15:2) we read merely that if the Jews will forsake G-d He will forsake them, and there is no mention of the Jews being scattered throughout the earth.³³ We should note, however, that there is no hint in Josephus of the traditional Jewish hope that the Jews would some day be gathered together from the exile and return to the land of Israel. This omission may well be due to the fact that Josephus was sensitive to the charge that the Jews were a nation within a nation who would forever be subversive until their return from captivity.

Again, whereas in the Bible (2 Kgs. 22:11, 2 Chron. 34:19) when King Josiah discovers the books of Moses and has them read, he rents

³² So Amaru 1994, 111.

³³ Shochat 1953, 47, asserts that in Azariah's admonition to Asa Josephus is portraying the situation in his own time; but there is no indication of this in the text.

his clothes since he realizes that the people have failed to observe the laws, Josephus (*Ant.* 10.59) adds that Josiah was afraid that his people would be “driven away (ἀνάστατοι, ‘driven from house and home’) and, after being cast out of their own country into a foreign (ἄλλοτρίας) land where they would be destitute of all things, might there miserably end their lives.” Here, too, Josephus’ emphasis is on the importance of obeying the Law and on the prediction that the defeat in 586 B.C.E. will be due to disobeying that Law.

That Josephus viewed the Babylonian exile as a punishment may be deduced from Josephus’ speech to his fellow-countrymen urging them to surrender to the Romans. “You know,” he says (*War* 5.389), “of the bondage (δουλεία) in Babylon, where our people passed seventy years in exile (μετανάστης, “wanderer,” “vagrant”) and never reared their heads for liberty.” Here, however, Josephus is appealing to his fellow-countrymen in terms that would be most effective, since they predominantly looked upon the exile in the most negative terms.

Another passage that appears to view the diaspora negatively is the statement (*Ant.* 12.139) in which King Antiochus III of Syria, in his letter to his governor Ptolemy, pays tribute to the Jews for their loyalty and assistance against the Egyptians and, as a reward, decides to repopulate the city of Jerusalem by bringing back to it those who have been dispersed abroad (διεσπαρμένων). It is clear that in this context the Diaspora is a condition which the Jews will be happy to see terminated.

Significantly, however, when Josephus (*Ant.* 20.166), in what we might term an editorial comment, remarks on the fact that G-d himself turned away from Jerusalem and deemed the Temple no longer a proper dwelling place for Himself, he says that He “inflicted slavery upon us, together with our wives and children, for He wished to chasten us by these calamities.” What is significant is that he avoids using the word “Diaspora” as the punishment which G-d inflicted.

4. THE RECONCILIATION OF THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE VIEWS OF EXILE

To understand what Josephus has done with the biblical narrative in the *Antiquities* we must first ask for whom the work is intended. It would seem that Josephus actually had two audiences in mind. On the one hand, the statement in his prooemium, in which he cites (*Ant.*

1.10) as a precedent for his work the translation of the Torah into Greek for King Ptolemy Philadelphus, is clearly designed as a justification for his directing his work to Gentiles with apologetic intent. The fact that Josephus (*Ant.* 1.12) says that even Ptolemy failed to obtain all the records (i.e. the entire Bible) of the Jews, since he received only the translation of the Pentateuch, clearly indicates that Josephus' aim is to present a version of the entire Bible to Ptolemy's Gentile successors. He inquires (*Ant.* 1.9) whether Jews have previously been willing to communicate such information to Gentiles, the implication being that the present work is intended for Gentiles. Finally, the fact (*Ant.* 1.8) that it was his patron Epaphroditus, a non-Jew, who, above all, urged him to write the history would indicate that it was intended for his patron and for other Gentiles like him.

The fact, moreover, that Josephus asks (*Ant.* 1.9) whether any of the Greeks have been curious to learn "our history" and that he specifically declares (*Ant.* 1.5) that his work was undertaken in the belief that the whole Greek world would find it worthy of attention indicates that he was directing the *Antiquities* to pagans. In transcribing the decrees issued by the Romans on behalf of the Jews, Josephus (*Ant.* 16.174) explains that he felt it necessary to cite them, "since this account of our history is chiefly meant to reach the Greeks in order to show them that in former times we were treated with all respect." The fact that at the end of the work (*Ant.* 20.262) he boasts that no one else would have been equal to the task of issuing so accurate a treatise for the Greeks (εἰς Ἑλλήνας) indicates that he directed the work to the non-Jewish world, since the term "Greeks" for Josephus is used in contrast to Jews.

We would expect, however, that Josephus would also seek a Jewish audience for his work.³⁴ After all, the primary language of the Jews in the Diaspora, numbering several millions,³⁵ was Greek; and some of them might well be expected to be interested in reading Josephus' history. Josephus clearly says (*Ant.* 1.14) that "the main lesson to be learnt from this history by those who care to peruse it" is that G-d rewards those who obey His laws and punishes those who do not. His

³⁴ Migliario 1981, 92, 96, 136; and Rajak 1984, 178, actually say that Josephus' works were addressed primarily to Diaspora Jews.

³⁵ Baron 1952, 1:170, states that a Jewish world population of more than eight million in the middle of the first century, most of whom were in the Diaspora, is fully within the range of probability.

highlighting of certain episodes, notably the incident of Israel's sin with the Midianite women (Num. 25:1-9, *Ant.* 4.131-55)—Josephus expands it from nine verses to twenty-five paragraphs—and Samson's relations with alien women (Judg. 14:1-16:31, *Ant.* 5.286-317), is directed, apparently, to those Jews who sought assimilation with Gentiles.³⁶ Josephus (*Ant.* 4.150-51) vehemently condemns Zambrias (Zimri) and bestows exalted praise upon Phinehas, "a man superior in every way to the rest of the youth" (*Ant.* 4.152), who, after all, might well have been condemned for taking the law into his own hands in putting Zambrias to death without a trial. He condemns Samson (*Ant.* 5.306) for transgressing the laws of his forefathers and debasing (παρεχάρασσεν, used with reference to coins) his own rule of life by imitation of foreign usages, which, he says, proved the beginning of his disaster. Josephus makes a point of stressing that the fortunes of Anilaus and Asinaeus, the robber-barons who established an independent Jewish state in Mesopotamia, began to deteriorate at the very peak of their success because Anilaus, in his affair with a Parthian general's wife, plunged into lawlessness (*Ant.* 18.340) "in violation of the Jewish code at the bidding of lust and self-indulgence."

There are a number of other indications that Josephus has a Jewish reading audience in mind, though clearly they are not his main audience. For example, he apologizes (*Ant.* 4.197) for rearranging the order of the laws of the Torah, explaining, "lest perchance any of my countrymen who chance upon this work should reproach me at all for having gone astray," that he has thought it necessary to make this preliminary observation, since Moses left what he wrote in a scattered condition. Furthermore, the fact that Josephus (*Ant.* 1.88) warns his readers not to examine the ages of the ante-diluvians at their death but rather the dates of their birth is an indication that he is addressing a Jewish audience, inasmuch this presupposes that the readers will consult the biblical text.³⁷

Hence, Josephus felt that he had to cater not only to a non-Jew-

³⁶ Cf. van Unnik 1993, 259: "It is hardly conceivable that the words of the remarkable speech [Zambrias' defense of his apostasy: *Ant.* 4.145-49] arose out of Josephus' own imagination. They are the expression of what was thought by his contemporaries who broke away from the ancestral religion and gave these reasons for doing so."

³⁷ Sterling 1992, 306.

ish but also to a Jewish readership, and so he is often deliberately ambiguous. We already see this ambiguity in his account of Balaam's prophecies (*Ant.* 4.125), where Josephus speaks in the vaguest terms of the calamities that will befall cities of the highest celebrity, some of which had not yet been founded. There was no reason why Josephus had to mention this prophecy at all, since, as he himself says (*Ant.* 10.210), the historian is expected to write only of the past and not to predict the future. And yet, the fact that he does cite such a prophecy is an indication that he wished somehow to satisfy his Jewish readers, who might well have recognized an allusion to Rome here.³⁸ Non-Jewish readers, of course, would not be offended since Josephus does not mention Rome specifically by name. As Bruce has remarked, Josephus, writing two decades after the fall of Masada, may even have come to entertain second thoughts as to whether the Jewish revolutionaries in the war against Rome were altogether wrong, though we may well doubt Bruce's further suggestion that in the end Josephus' patriotism triumphed and that he foresaw his people's vindication.³⁹

The most striking indication of Josephus' ambiguity with regard to the Romans may be seen in his evasiveness (*Ant.* 10.210) concerning the meaning of the stone which, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, destroys the kingdom of iron (*Dan.* 2:44-45).⁴⁰ His excuse on this point, as

³⁸ Such is the rabbinic tradition, with which, as we have noted, Josephus was likely acquainted. See Ginzberg 1911, 3:380, and the rabbinic passages that Ginzberg 1928, 6:133, n. 782, cites.

³⁹ Bruce 1965, 160. In a similar effort not to offend the Romans, Daniel, in describing Nebuchadnezzar's dream, says (*Ant.* 10.206) that the legs and feet of the image in the dream were of iron, whereas, according to the biblical text (*Dan.* 2:33), the legs are of iron, but the feet are partly of iron and partly of clay. Perhaps the might of iron would be regarded as a reference to Rome (*Exod. Rab.* 35.5), whereas Josephus felt that a mixture of iron and clay would be a sign of Rome's fragility. Likewise, Josephus (*Ant.* 10.209) omits the portion of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (*Dan.* 2:42) referring to the division of the fourth kingdom, perhaps because, like the rabbis (cf. *Exod. Rab.* 35.5), he may have identified this with Rome and so would have been careful not to offend his Roman readers by mentioning it.

⁴⁰ The perceptive reader might well have connected this remark with the passage (*Ant.* 10.276) in which Josephus states explicitly that Daniel wrote about the empire of the Romans, though admittedly there is no necessary connection between the two passages. Stemberger 1983, 33-37, concludes that Josephus is more critical toward Rome in the *Antiquities* than in the *War* and aligns himself with the apocalyptic tradition in the former. Perhaps we should say not that he is more critical but rather that he is more ambiguous.

we have noted, is that, as an historian, he is expected to discuss the past and not to predict the future, although Josephus certainly saw a kinship between the prophet and the historian, particularly since he must have been aware of the dictum of Thucydides (1.22.4), one of his favorite authors, that "whoever wishes to have a clear view of the events that have happened and of those that will some day, in all human probability, happen again in the same or a similar way" will find his history useful.⁴¹ This is the only place in his writings where Josephus makes such a statement; and, in fact, no other extant ancient historian makes any such remark either.

Of course, inasmuch as Josephus, especially in his references to the prophets, is highly selective, he might have simply omitted to paraphrase the above passage, as he did the prophecy (Dan. 2:44) of a messianic kingdom that would destroy all previous kingdoms and that itself would last forever, as well as the passage in Daniel (7:18), in which it is made clear that the fifth, world-wide, and everlasting empire would be ruled by the people of "saints of the Most High," that is the Jews—a passage that would, to the obvious embarrassment of Josephus as spokesman for the Romans, imply the overthrow of Rome.⁴² The fact that he does not, nevertheless, omit the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is an indication of the deliberate ambiguity of his attempt to reach both of his audiences, the non-Jews and the Jews, for the latter of whom the reference would apparently be taken as announcing a messianic kingdom that would make an end of the Roman Empire. Perhaps he felt that to omit it altogether would have been regarded by his Jewish readers as a clear indication that he had sold out to the Romans. In fact, Klausner goes so far as to argue that Josephus' trip to Rome in 64, despite his statements in the *War* that Rome's ascendancy was part of a Divine plan, may have actually increased his enthusiasm for the cause of the revolutionaries, inasmuch as he must have been impressed with Rome's

⁴¹ Feldman 1990, 397-400. Conversely, a prophet is concerned with recording the past, as may be seen from the fact that Moses (*Ant.* 4.320), at the close of his life, "prophesies" to each of the tribes the things that are past.

⁴² Flusser 1972, 148-75, concludes that Josephus (*Ant.* 10.276-77) could not speak of the common interpretation of the four empires in Daniel because of its anti-Roman character, but that in *Ant.* 15.385-87, where no such danger would arise, he gives the common Jewish sequence of the four empires—Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. We may remark, however, that there is no indication in the latter passage that the Roman Empire is destined to be overthrown.

decadence and hence saw that it was only a matter of time before Rome would fall;⁴³ on this view the passage in *Ant.* 10.210 would be a clue to his real feelings toward the Romans.

When Josephus goes on to direct anyone who is eager for exact information about these hidden things of the future to read the Book of Daniel for himself, he surely realized that non-Jews were unlikely to follow through on this suggestion, whereas this would seem to be a hidden hint to Jews to read the Book of Daniel itself and to perceive the reference to the future downfall of Rome. That Josephus' evasiveness here is deliberate seems apparent from the fact that elsewhere (*Ap.* 2.168-69) Josephus proudly contrasts the great Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, and the Stoics, who did not venture to disclose their true beliefs to the masses, with the openness of Moses.

If Josephus really took seriously his statement that it is not the function of the historian to deal, through prediction, with future events, he had no need to mention the above prophecy at all, since it does not concern historic events that had already occurred. If he does so, nevertheless, it is, it would seem, for the benefit of Jewish readers, who would certainly find great comfort in that prophecy.⁴⁴ In this respect it would seem likely that Josephus shared one of the major and distinctive tenets of the Pharisees, namely their apocalyptic hopes. While it is true that there is no mention in the works of Josephus of a Messiah (other than the references in *Ant.* 18.63 and 20.200, the former of which is probably partly interpolated), inasmuch as the belief in a Messiah was a cardinal tenet of the Pharisees,⁴⁵ with

⁴³ Klausner 1949, 5:167-68.

⁴⁴ Cf. Braverman 1978, 111, who perceptively remarks that Josephus must have been confident that his Roman readers would not check his source by snooping in the Book of Daniel itself, and hence that this reference is evidence that he was addressing two different audiences, telling each one what it wanted to hear.

⁴⁵ That the rabbis understood the stone (*Dan.* 2:44-45) to refer to the Messiah is clear from *Tan.* B 2.91-92 and *Tan. Terumah* 7. De Jonge 1974, 211-12, argues that Josephus' speech (*War* 5.367), in which he states that G-d, having made the round of the nations, had now caused the rod of empire to rest over Italy, is making the point that it is only for "now" (*vûv*) that Rome is supreme and that this is actually an indication that its supremacy is not to last forever. Hence, according to de Jonge, Josephus here, as in *Ant.* 4.114-17, 10.210, and 10.267, evidences a clear eschatological messianic faith. We may, however, express doubt that the passage in *War* 5.367 expresses a messianic anticipation, since it seems very unlikely that Josephus, having been commissioned by the Romans to urge the Jews to

whom Josephus (*Life* 12) identified himself, it seems most likely that Josephus did share this view.⁴⁶ Moreover, although Josephus (*Ant.* 10.268) makes a point of contrasting Daniel with other prophets as a bearer of good tidings whereas they foretold disasters, those good tidings are not recorded in Josephus' subsequent presentation.⁴⁷ Once again, however, we may suggest that here, too, he is cryptically addressing his statement to his Jewish readers who, in accordance with Josephus' recommendation (*Ant.* 10.210), would read the Book of Daniel (notably 9:24 ff., which Josephus significantly omits), with its prophecies of future Jewish greatness that Josephus, in his delicate position as a protégé of the Flavians, did not feel free to cite.

That Josephus was really walking a tightrope in his handling of Daniel's (purported) predictions about the Romans may be seen in his comment (*Ant.* 10.276) that Daniel wrote about the empire of the Romans and that Jerusalem would be taken by them and the Temple laid waste.⁴⁸ As his formulation here shows, Josephus apparently was reluctant to tell the reader what it was that Daniel wrote about the Romans (at least as interpreted by tradition), namely that the Roman Empire would itself be overthrown and that the Jews would ultimately triumph.⁴⁹ Indeed, though he devotes more attention to

surrender, would have ventured to suggest such an anticipation in clear defiance of his Roman hosts.

⁴⁶ See Davies 1978, 15-28, and Nikiprowetzky 1989, 216-36. If Josephus thus suppresses the messianic ideals of those who led the revolution against Rome in 66-74, he apparently did so to avoid the wrath of the Romans, who would have seen the Messiah as a political rebel against Rome. The fact is that Josephus in the last book of the *Antiquities* lists at least ten leaders who were probably regarded as Messiahs by their adherents, though Josephus himself avoids calling them such. The meaning of the term "Messiah" was apparently flexible enough to accommodate the careers of all these figures.

⁴⁷ Attridge 1976, 105.

⁴⁸ The text is in doubt here; and Eisler 1931, 631, suspects an interpolation. The restoration is based upon an excerpt in John Chrysostom. See Marcus 1937, 6:310-11, n. c, who concludes that there is no reason why a mere reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans would have been avoided by Josephus as likely to offend his Roman readers. We may, however, respond that such a reference would not merely have offended his Roman readers but, on the contrary, would have given them cause for pride in overcoming such a mighty revolt; rather, it is the reference to what Daniel wrote about the Roman Empire, namely its ultimate overthrow (Dan. 9:26), which would surely not have set well with them. For a discussion of the ambiguity in the Josephan passage (*Ant.* 10.276) see Braverman 1978, 109-10.

⁴⁹ Nikiprowetzky 1971, 461-90, argues that there are esoteric references in the

Daniel than to any other prophet, he omits any reference to the celebrated seventy-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, which foretells the coming of a messianic redeemer, presumably from Roman rule.

The apparent contradiction in Josephus' attitude toward the Diaspora may, therefore, be similarly explained as due to the various audiences that he is addressing. On the one hand, there were those who, like himself, felt very much at home in the Diaspora and were indeed thriving in it. Shochat⁵⁰ suggests that Josephus' positive portrayal of the dispersion of the Jews throughout the Diaspora is an indication of encouragement and prediction of mass conversion; but Josephus, it would seem, was too loyal to his Roman benefactors not to realize the danger of such a view, with its inherent threat to the Roman way of life. Schlatter⁵¹ remarks that the joy with which Josephus notes the size of the Jewish population abroad, which to him is a sign of Jewish power, leads him to be careful to avoid the word Diaspora. Moreover, Romans in his audience would certainly not have appreciated the view that the Diaspora was a punishment and, in fact, only a temporary expedient until the Jews would be restored to their land and to an independent state—a status that would require still another revolt against Rome. On the other hand, Josephus, as we see in the cryptic statements in his paraphrase of Balaam and of Daniel, also sought to reach a Jewish audience; and many of them might well, like the prophet Jeremiah, have viewed

War to Messianism, suggestive of Josephus' belief that the Roman power was destined to be overthrown by a messianic kingdom; but we may reply that the passage (*War* 6.310-15) that he cites in support of his thesis refers to a prediction that someone from Judea would become the ruler of the world. There is no indication that this "someone" would necessarily be a Jew, and indeed, at least according to Josephus (*War* 6.313), the reference was, rather, to Vespasian, who was proclaimed emperor while he was leading his army in Judea. In fact, it would have been foolhardy and outright dangerous for Josephus to imply that the reference was to a Jewish Messiah; consequently, Josephus suppresses the messianic ideals of the revolutionaries in the war against Rome, so much did he apparently fear Roman wrath. Bilde 1988, 188, on the basis of the cryptic passage (*Ant.* 10.210) in which Josephus mentions the stone without revealing its meaning, concludes that Josephus did have an eschatology but that it was different from that of the militant nationalists, being, in fact, similar to that which we find in the contemporary apocalyptic circles represented by the Book of Daniel, the Essenes, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul. We may, however, comment that if so, Josephus certainly was careful to conceal his eschatological beliefs or to wrap them in ambiguity.

⁵⁰ Shochat 1953, 50.

⁵¹ Schlatter 1932, 87.

the exile as a punishment and one destined to end eventually with the restoration of the Jews to their homeland. When Josephus is talking to his fellow-countrymen he uses language that will appeal to them, namely exile; but his deepest felt sentiments, as seen in his *Life*, are to view the Diaspora positively. Most significantly, and in sharp contrast to Philo (*Praem.* 165), who envisages an ingathering of the exiled Jewish people,⁵² Josephus clearly regarded the exile as everlasting and never foresees an end to it.

⁵² See Wolfson 1947, 2: 408-9, who notes that this reunion of the exiled will be followed, according to Philo (*Praem.* 168), by national prosperity in the homeland to which they will have returned.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

RESTORATION IN JOSEPHUS

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF JOSEPHUS FOR RECONSTRUCTING THE PERIOD OF RESTORATION

Amazingly little is known about the period of two centuries from the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity to Alexander; and since Josephus is the only systematic source covering this period, even if briefly, he is particularly important. Hence, it is not surprising that Cross draws heavily upon him in reconstructing these years.¹ Grabbe² very appositely asks whether Josephus had information for the Persian period beyond what is available in the biblical text and in I Esdras, and if so what was the nature of this information and how much historical reliance can be placed upon it.

As is well known, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.17) promises his readers that he will throughout his work set forth the precise details of the Scriptures (τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς), each in its place, neither adding nor omitting anything (οὐδὲν προσθεὶς οὐδ' αὖ παραλιπὼν). And yet, in point of fact, Josephus has added to, subtracted from, and modified the biblical account in numerous places, though admittedly these changes are, on the whole, relatively minor.³ In the case of the Persian period, however, these changes are not so minor. Thus, whereas Ezra 4:7-23 (1 Esdr. 2:16-30) says that it is to King Artaxerxes that his officials write that the returning Jews are rebellious in rebuilding their city, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.184), realizing that Artaxerxes, whom he identifies with Ahasuerus of the Esther narrative, lived long after these events, quietly corrects the name to Cambyses, who, indeed, succeeded Cyrus. As to the time of Ezra, whom Ezra 7:1 and 1 Esdr. 8:1 date in the reign of Artaxerxes, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.120-21) places him, as he does Nehemiah (*Ant.*

¹ Cross 1975, 4-18.

² Grabbe 1987, 231-46.

³ See Feldman 1998, 37-46.

11.168), in the reign of Xerxes.⁴ This must be incorrect, however, inasmuch as he asserts that Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Xerxes, whereas Xerxes reigned only twenty years (485-465 B.C.E.). It would appear from this that Josephus had additional information, not always correct, about the Persian kings, perhaps from Herodotus, whose work he mentions ten times in his works,⁵ for the kings from Cyrus to Artaxerxes, perhaps from Berossus for the later kings.⁶

2. JOSEPHUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EXILE OF THE JEWS FROM PALESTINE⁷

Significantly, Josephus does give an account (*Ant.* 9.278) of the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians (2 Kgs. 17:4) because the people of Israel had violated the laws and had disregarded the prophets and of the transportation of its people to Media and Persia; but this is described as an emigration (*Ant.* 9.280). Josephus does not tell us about the ultimate fate of the ten tribes, except that in an addition, not found in Ezra 7:27 or 1 Esdr. 8:25, he says that the Israelite nation as a whole remained in the country (Babylonia) and that in this way "it has come about that there are two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while until now there have been ten tribes beyond the Euphrates—and countless myriads whose number cannot be ascertained" (*Ant.* 11.133). In any case, Josephus presents no prophecies or hope of the return of the ten tribes.

In the *War* (5.389) Josephus does refer to the seventy years of the Judaeans' bondage in Babylon as an exile (μετανάστης, "one who has changed his home," "wanderer," "emigrant"); but the crucial point here is that it is Josephus who is speaking, endeavoring to convince his countrymen to surrender, since it is quite clear that G-d is not on their side, any more than that He was on their side when

⁴ Tuland 1966, 178-79, argues that the biblical text is correct in placing Ezra and Nehemiah in the reign of Artaxerxes; he notes, in particular, that Josephus (*Ant.* 11.168) says that Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Xerxes, whereas Xerxes reigned only twenty years.

⁵ *Ant.* 8.157, 253, 260, 262; 10.18-20; *Ap.* 1.16, 66, 73, 168-71; 2.142.

⁶ So Grabbe 1987, 233. He presumably knew Berossus through Alexander Polyhistor.

⁷ See Feldman 1997, 145-72.

they fought the Babylonians. “In short,” as he concludes, “there is no instance of our forefathers having triumphed by arms or failed of success without them when they committed their cause to G-d: if they sat still they conquered, as it pleased their Judge; if they fought they were invariably defeated” (*War* 5.390).

That Josephus did not view the exile negatively may also be deduced from his version of Haman’s charge against the Jews of Persia, namely that they are “a wicked nation scattered (δισεσπάρθαι) throughout the habitable land (οἰκουμένη) ruled by him” (*Ant.* 11.212). The fact that he closely follows the LXX’s version (*Esth.* 3:8) that the Jews are “a nation scattered (δισεσπαρμένον) among the nations in all your kingdom” (*Ant.* 11.212) indicates that for him the verb διασπεύρω, from which “Diaspora” is derived, is not to be viewed negatively, inasmuch as this word is put into the mouth of the Jews’ arch-enemy Haman, and especially since he has Haman add immediately thereafter, in phrases that have no counterpart in the Hebrew original or in the LXX, that the Jews are unsociable (ἄμικτον, “unmingled”—a term used of Centaurs and Cyclopes)⁸ and incompatible (ἄσύμφυλον, “unsuitable,” “not akin”). Since these are stock charges similar to those used by the Alexandrian Jew-baiters whom Josephus answers in his essay *Against Apion*, we may assume that Josephus did not view the scattering of the Jews in a negative sense.⁹ Indeed, one reason why Josephus presents the account of Esther so extensively is to show what Jews can do in an alien environment and how G-d will rescue them.¹⁰

3. THE VOCABULARY OF RESTORATION IN JOSEPHUS¹¹

Politicians today carefully use, or avoid, as the case may be, certain key words, often called “buzz” words, which arouse strong feelings.

⁸ Soph., *Trach.* 1095; Eur., *Cyc.* 429.

⁹ See Feldman 1970, 163-64.

¹⁰ See van Unnik 1993, 139.

¹¹ In his entire book Ackroyd 1968 has only two very brief references to Josephus’ treatment of the restoration. He suggests (p. 141, n. 16), but does not give specific examples, that Josephus offers an elaborated account of Cyrus’ actions, utilizing the Chronicler’s narrative, and particularly the material of 1 Esdras, sometimes oversimplifying and sometimes elaborating, possibly on the basis of extra material and possibly imaginatively. In his book on the restoration, Foster 1970 has only four very brief mentions of Josephus.

It will be instructive to see the frequency of the use by Josephus of the key word for restoration, ἀποκατάστασις, a word used elsewhere especially with regard to military formations to refer to reversal of a movement (Asclepiodotus Tacticus 10.6) or return to an original position (Asclepiodotus Tacticus 10.1); and this may be a reason why Josephus favors it, since, having been general in Galilee in the war against the Romans, he often employs such military terminology, as he does, for example, in referring to his arrangement of biblical matters as a τάξις (“battle array,” *Ant.* 1.17).¹² The word ἀποκατάστασις appears only twice in all the works of Josephus. That in itself is surely significant, since Josephus relates the entire history of the Jewish people from creation to his own day and, of course, covers the key events of the elimination of the kingdom of Israel and the exile of its inhabitants by Assyria in 722-721 B.C.E.; the elimination of the kingdom of Judah, the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the exile of its inhabitants by Babylonia in 587 B.C.E.; the return from Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C.E. and thereafter; and the suppression of the independence movement in Judea and the burning of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. Moreover, Josephus had ample opportunities, particularly in his *Jewish War*, where there are several speeches recalling the key events of earlier Jewish history, to mention these events and to express the hope, if there was such, that the Jewish people would return some day to reclaim their land.

The first occurrence of the word ἀποκατάστασις appears after the pericope (*Ant.* 11.1-18) recounting the Persian King Cyrus’ decision to restore the Jews to the land of their fathers and to allow them to build the Temple. This is followed by the pericope (*Ant.* 11.19-30) in which the Persian king Cambyses, in response to the warning by the Samaritans that the Jews are a rebellious people and that, in being allowed by the Persians to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to erect the Temple, the Jews were once again preparing to revolt,

¹² Ἀποκατάστασις is also used especially with regard to astronomical matters to refer to the return of stars to the same position in the heavens as in a former year (Diod. 12.36; Plut. *De Facie Quae in Orbe Lunae Apparet* 2.937F) or the periodic return of the cosmic cycle (*SVF* 2.184, 190) or the return of a planet to a place in the heavens occupied in a former epoch (Antiochus Atheniensis Astrologus [ed. F. Boll, *Cat. Cod. Astr.* 7.120-21]) or with reference to the zodiacal revolution of the sun and moon after an eclipse (Plut., *Axiochus* 370B).

ordered that the Jews should not be permitted to rebuild the city. Josephus then tells (*Ant.* 11.33-63) of the contest of the three bodyguards of the new Persian king Darius in which the king promised a number of magnificent rewards to the one who would give the most convincing speech as to whether wine, kings, women, or truth was the strongest. It was Zerubbabel, the governor of the Jewish captives, who impressed the king and his nobles most with his speech praising the power of women and, above all, truth. When the king invited him to ask for something beyond what he himself had promised, Zerubbabel (*Ant.* 11.58) reminded him of what he had vowed to do if he obtained the throne, namely to rebuild Jerusalem, to construct the Temple there, and to restore the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from there to Babylon. Actually, according to Josephus' own version of the vow (*Ant.* 11.31), all that Darius, then a private citizen, had vowed was to send "all the vessels of G-d which were still in Babylon to the Temple in Jerusalem." Significantly, there is no statement in I Esdras, Josephus' source at this point, of this version of Darius' initial vow; and the later version (*Ant.* 11.58) is the only one, indeed, point by point and practically verbatim, that we find in 1 Esdr. 4:43-45. The first version, being Josephus' addition to the text of his source, most probably represents his own view, and this clearly makes no mention of a restoration of the Jewish people or of a rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, let alone making it the capital of the province. According to Josephus' later version of this vow (*Ant.* 11.58), Darius was pleased with Zerubbabel's recollection of this promise (*Ant.* 11.59); and, in a passage closely parallel to his source (1 Esdr. 4:48-63), Josephus tells how Darius ordered that the Persian officials should aid in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and should carry out the wishes of Cyrus before him for the restoration (ἀποκαταστάσεως) of the Temple. However, when (*Ant.* 11.63) he recalls what Cyrus had decreed, he does not mention the rebuilding of Jerusalem, let alone the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, but only the restoration of the Temple, precisely, as we shall see over and over again, the chief concern of Josephus, the proud priest.

The other occurrence of the word ἀποκατάστασις is found in Josephus' account (*Ant.* 11.88-97) of the Samaritans' attempt to stop the building of the Temple on the grounds that it was more like a fortress than a sanctuary and hence a danger to the Persian empire, in their citation of a letter of King Cambyses forbidding

the Jews to build the Temple, and in their charge that the restoration (ἀποκατάστασιν) would not be safe for Darius' government. Darius then is said (*Ant.* 11.99) to have made a search of the royal archives and to have found a decree of Cyrus ordering that aid be given the Jews in building the Temple. What is interesting here is that there is nothing in Josephus' source, whether Ezra 6:1-12 or 1 Esdr. 6:21-34, which indicates that the Samaritans had sent such a letter to Darius. The charge is Josephus' addition intended to answer the canard that Jews are disloyal subjects, dangerous to the government under whose control they happened to be. Significantly, when the archives are searched and Cyrus' decree (*Ant.* 11.99-103) is discovered, it says nothing about the restoration of Jerusalem and restricts itself solely to the building of the Temple and the use of the tribute of the territory in paying for the expenses of the sacrifices.

The verb corresponding to the noun ἀποκατάστασις, ἀποκαθίστημι ("to restore," "reinstate," "re-establish"), is found seventeen times in Josephus.¹³ In the first of these passages Josephus (*Ant.* 11.2) reports that G-d had foretold through the prophet Jeremiah that after the Jews had served Nebuchadnezzar and his descendants for seventy years He would restore (ἀποκαταστήσει) them to the land of their fathers and they would rebuild the Temple and enjoy their ancient happiness (εὐδαιμονίας). Significantly, in the passage in Jeremiah on which Josephus' statement is based, Jeremiah, after telling the exiles (Jer. 29:4-7) to build houses in Babylon and to seek the welfare of the city, quotes G-d's promise (Jer. 29:10-14) that after seventy years He will restore the fortunes of the Jews and gather them from all the nations and all the places where they have been driven and that He will bring them back to the place from which they have been sent into exile. What is most striking in Josephus' version is that the centerpiece of G-d's promise is that the Jews will rebuild the Temple, which is the one aspect of restoration that is most crucial for Josephus the priest. Moreover, Josephus, the Jew who had spent the last three decades of his life living in luxurious exile in Rome, omits the statement that the Jews are to be gathered from all the places all over the earth where they have been scattered.

The second occurrence of this verb (*Ant.* 11.14) cites King Cyrus' letter to the satraps of Syria stating that he has given the vessels

¹³ An eighteenth occurrence (*Ant.* 15.22) is actually an emendation by Naber.

taken by Nebuchadnezzar to his treasurer Mithridates and to Zerubbabel, the leader of the Jews, to be restored (ἀποκαταστήσωσιν) to the Temple. Again, we have the restoration connected with the Temple.

In the third occurrence (*Ant.* 11.58), as we have noted, Zerubbabel reminds Darius of his vow to rebuild Jerusalem, construct the Temple, and restore (ἀποκαταστήσαι) the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken as spoil to Babylon. Again, we see restoration connected with the Temple, in this case its vessels, rather than with the people who are to be restored.

The fourth instance occurs in the passage (*Ant.* 11.92) recalling Cyrus' instructions that the Temple be rebuilt and that the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar be restored (ἀποκαταστήσαι) to the Temple; again we see the association of restoration with items in the Temple.

The fifth passage (*Ant.* 11.144) does speak of the restoration (ἀποκαταστήσαντα) of the exiles to Jerusalem and "their own country" (τὴν οἰκείαν γῆν), but this focuses on the sins that the Jews have committed and states that G-d had compelled the Persian kings to take pity on them. There is no touch of nationalism, let alone the hope that the returned exiles will establish an independent nation or that a messianic era was dawning.

The sixth passage (*Ant.* 12.102) occurs in Josephus' paraphrase of the *Letter of Aristeas* (294). In both Josephus and the *Letter* the same verb is used; in the *Letter* it refers to the slave who is to hand over (ἀποκαταστήσουντα) the three talents of silver bestowed as a reward upon each of the seventy-two translators; in Josephus it refers to the slaves who are to take the translators back (ἀποκαταστήσουντας) to their lodgings. This is restoration in the generic sense and obviously has nothing to do with the restoration of the Jews to the Land of Israel.

The seventh passage (*Ant.* 12.281) contains Mattathias' dying charge to his sons, the Maccabees, assuring them that if they remain true to their ancestral laws G-d will restore (ἀποκαταστήσει) to them their liberty, in which they will live securely and in the enjoyment of their own customs. This restoration is not to the Land, since they are already in it, but rather to security in that land and religious freedom.

In addition, in citing the decree of the people of Sardis reaffirming the privileges of the Jews, Josephus (*Ant.* 14.260) notes that their

laws and freedom have been restored (ἀποκαθισταμένων) to them by the Roman Senate and people;¹⁴ this decree is dealing with a Diaspora community that has no intention to be restored to the Land of Israel, but rather seeks to have its privileges in the Diaspora reaffirmed. Two similar passages (*Ant.* 14.313, 321), again reaffirming privileges of Jews in the Diaspora (who clearly have no intention to be restored to the Land of Israel), cite Marc Antony's letters commanding the people of Tyre to restore (ἀποκαταστήσαι) whatever they possess belonging to the Jews. In the *Life* (183) we read that the Jewish king Agrippa II, who sided with the Romans against the Jewish revolutionaries, restored to Batanaca (Bashan), north of the Yarmuk and east of the Jordan River, the Babylonian Jews who had been settled there by Herod the Great and many of whom had been massacred by Varus, Agrippa's viceroy. These Jews, however, having been settled there deliberately for military purposes to protect the district, can hardly be regarded as part of a restoration to the Land for idealistic reasons. The other passages (*Ant.* 13.131, 13.261, 13.408, 14.366, 15.195, and 16.19) containing this verb have nothing to do with restoring the Jews their Land.

Another word, ἀνακαίνιζω, having the meaning "to restore," appears in Josephus' account (*Ant.* 11.107) of the completion of the Temple with the consent of Cyrus and Darius. As Josephus describes it, the Jews now brought sacrifices in token of having a sanctuary having been restored (ἀνακαίνισθέν). The key word "restored" is, significantly, not in the source used by Josephus, whether it was Ezra 6:13-22 or 1 Esdr. 7:1-15. Again, Josephus uses this word with regard the restoration of the Temple, rather than with reference to the restoration of the Jews from exile. Four centuries later it is again the restoration (ἀνάκτησιν, *Ant.* 12.323, 324) of the Temple service that occasions the promulgation of a law that the restoration of the Temple service by Judah Maccabee and his followers should be celebrated for eight days in the holiday of Chanukah.

¹⁴ Pucci Ben Zeev 1998, 220, notes that from Greek inscriptions we can see that the word ἀποκαθισταμένων has a legal meaning, referring to the restitution, commonly given by the Romans to Greek cities, of the right to live according to their own laws.

4. THE ROLE OF EZRA

The two chief leaders in the return of the Jews from Babylonian Captivity were Ezra and Nehemiah. We might expect that Josephus would magnify the figure of Ezra,¹⁵ inasmuch as the rabbis do elaborate on his tremendous achievements as chief priest, scholar, teacher, legislator, prophet, and holy man. Indeed, Ezra's work was probably as all-encompassing as that of Moses himself (cf. *t. Sanh.*

¹⁵ Previous to my study, Feldman 1993b, 190-214, there had been no substantial study of Josephus' treatment of Ezra. Rappaport 1930, who attempts to cite all midrashic parallels to Josephus, has nothing at all on Ezra. Likewise, Attridge 1976 has not a single reference to Ezra. The only other works that even attempt to evaluate Josephus' treatment of Ezra are Treuenfels 1850, 693-98; Pohlmann 1970, 74-114; and Williamson 1977, 21-29. Treuenfels and especially Pohlmann are concerned with the relationship between Josephus and 1 Esdras and amply demonstrate, through a comparison of vocabulary and phraseology, especially in the documents which Josephus cites, that Josephus followed this source very closely, presumably because he was attracted to its more elegant Greek style, as suggested by Thackeray 1899, 1.759. Where there are differences, these are due to Josephus' attempt to remove chronological discrepancies or repetitious material. Thackeray concludes that there is no evidence of embellishment on the basis of our Hebrew text of Ezra. Both he and Williamson are concerned with vocabulary and style rather than with content, and particularly with the question of the nature of the text of Ezra that was available to Josephus. Pohlmann, Williamson, and Thackeray, however, seem to be going too far when they insist that Josephus has used only the Greek text of 1 Esdras. That Josephus also knew the Hebrew text would seem evident from the fact that he knows the entire canon of the Bible, including Ezra-Nehemiah (*Ap.* 1.40). Moreover, 1 Esdr. 8:66 (63) mentions twelve goats for a peace-offering among the sacrifices offered by Ezra, whereas Josephus clearly follows the Hebrew text here (Ezra 8:35) in mentioning twelve goats as a sin-offering (*Ant.* 11.137). Another instance where Josephus seems to be dependent upon the Hebrew text is in *Ant.* 11.144, where he states that Ezra besought God, "who had preserved a seed and remnant out of their recent misfortune." Here 1 Esdr. 8:78 remarks that "we still have a root and a name in the place of thy sanctuary" but says nothing of a remnant, whereas the Hebrew Ezra 9:8 specifically does mention a remnant. Ararat 1971 concludes that Ezra, 1 Esdras, Josephus' account of Ezra, and the legends of the rabbinic sages pertaining to the Persian era are all based upon a lost source which he calls the "Comprehensive Chronicle": if so, however, it seems remarkable that no trace of this lost source has come down to us. Tuland 1966, 176-92, is concerned with the technical question of the names of the several Persian kings mentioned by Josephus and is critical of Josephus' corrections of the biblical sequences for the Persian kings. Also concerned with this question, though with a more positive view of it is Emery 1987, 33-44. In any event, if, as Grabbe 1987, 231-46, claims, Josephus does not offer a consistent, clear account of the period and has confused his data, this applies to the chronology of the Persian kings but not to his narrative data concerning Ezra.

4:7), since his ambitious aim was to rebuild Israel as the nation of twelve tribes, including even the Samaritans.¹⁶

That Ezra held much less interest for Josephus than several other biblical figures may be seen in the sheer amount of space that he devotes to him. Thus, in the portion of I Esdras 8-9 (Ezra 7-10) that Josephus paraphrases (*Ant.* 11.121-58, 224 lines) there are 304 lines in Rahlfs' text (183 lines in the Hebrew version, chapters 7-10, corresponding to this). This gives a ratio of only .74 of Josephus to I Esdras and of 1.22 to the Hebrew text. Moreover, whereas such major biblical figures as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Saul, David, and Solomon are mentioned by Josephus on numerous occasions outside the pericope devoted specifically to them; once Josephus completes his narrative of Ezra with mention of his death, he nowhere refers to him again.

Josephus starts his autobiography (*Life* 2-4) with the statement that his priestly ancestors belonged to the very first of the twenty-four courses of priests and that his great-grandfather married the daughter of Jonathan, who was the first of the Hasmoneans to attain the position of high priest. In view of this pride in his priestly ancestry we would also expect Josephus to give much more attention to Ezra the priest because of the latter's great knowledge of and general antagonism toward the Samaritans,¹⁷ who offered so much opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the Temple and who, in turn, according to the Second Samaritan Chronicle, looked upon Ezra as their arch-enemy because he altered the script and contents of the Torah.

Hence, we should expect that Josephus would pay particular attention to Ezra, who, when he is first introduced in the biblical account

¹⁶ See Koch 1974, 196. To be sure, as Smith 1971, 122, has noted, beyond the traditions which are preserved in the Books of Chronicles and in 1 Esdras, Ezra cuts no great figure in early Jewish legend. Thus, for example, Ben Sira (49:11-13), in his list of heroes, does not mention him but rather praises Nehemiah; similarly, he is ignored by 2 Maccabees. However, by the time of Josephus, if we may judge from rabbinic literature, Ezra had come to be regarded as a key figure in Jewish history. See Porton 2001, 305-33.

¹⁷ See Feldman 1992, 23-45, on the relationship of the Samaritans and the Jews. A late rabbinic tradition recalls the total excommunication of the Samaritans, allegedly proclaimed by Ezra with great solemnity in the presence of three hundred priests, three hundred children, and three hundred scrolls of the Torah and to the accompaniment of three hundred trumpets (*Tan. on Vayeshev* 2 end; *Pirque R. El.* 37 [38]).

(Ezra 7:1-5, 1 Esdr. 8:1-2), has his pedigree carefully traced back no fewer than sixteen generations to the first high priest, Aaron. Furthermore, it is Josephus' wont elsewhere to embellish the genealogies of his biblical heroes. Tracing Ezra's genealogy should, it seems, have been a matter of importance to Josephus, inasmuch as, according to rabbinic tradition, Ezra himself had carefully worked out his own pedigree before consenting to leave Babylonia (*b.B. Bat.* 15a) and inasmuch as one of his chief achievements was checking the genealogies of those who went with him from Babylonia to Palestine (Ezra 8:1-20; 1 Esdr. 8:28-49). Josephus knows of Ezra's status as a leading priest, since he refers to him as a foremost priest (πρῶτος ἱερεὺς, *Ant.* 11.121), while, unlike 1 Esdras (9:40), which refers to him as high priest, Josephus is apparently aware that Ezra did not serve as high priest while Joiakim the son of Joshua was still alive, inasmuch as he mentions Joiakim as high priest in the sentence before he introduces Ezra to the reader (*Ant.* 11.121). To our amazement, however, not only is there no aggrandizement, but there is even no mention of Ezra's genealogy in Josephus. On the other hand, Josephus was apparently embarrassed by the lack of observance by the priests, according to the biblical text; hence, whereas 1 Esdr. 9:40 states that Ezra brought the law to all the multitude, as well as to the priests, Josephus says merely that he stood up in the midst of the multitude to read the Law and omits mention of the priests altogether (*Ant.* 11.155).

Though Josephus adds extra-biblical remarks about the wisdom of so many of his biblical heroes, in the case of Ezra we are told nothing about his wisdom but only that he was very learned in the laws of Moses (*Ant.* 11.121), another clear indication that Josephus wishes to stress Ezra's subordination to Moses. Furthermore, whereas the biblical text describes Ezra as a teacher who is to see to the instruction of those who lack theological knowledge (1 Esdr. 8:23), Josephus does not depict Ezra as a teacher but rather declares that he will give those ignorant of the law an opportunity to learn it (*Ant.* 11.129). The emphasis in Josephus is on Ezra as a teacher of obedience to law, again a point that would clearly have appealed to the Romans, with their strong tradition of abiding by the law at all costs. Thus, whereas the biblical text states that the whole Jewish people listened intently while Ezra read the Law (1 Esdr. 9:41 and Neh. 8:3), Josephus elaborates by declaring that the people were moved to tears as they reflected that they would not have suffered any of

the evils that they had experienced if they had observed the law (*Ant.* 11.155). In the biblical text Ezra teaches the people to be pious (1 Esdr. 9:52); in Josephus they are taught to be just (δίκαιοι), that is, to obey the law (*Ant.* 11.155). Again, in an extra-biblical addition, it is obedience to the law of the community (πολίτευμα) that Ezra teaches; and consequently the people are grateful to him for rectifying offences against these laws (*Ant.* 11.157). Furthermore, whereas, in the biblical text, Ezra is termed a scribe on ten occasions (Ezra 7:6, 11, 12, 21; Neh. 8:1, 4, 9, 13; 12:26, 36), and whereas, as we have noted, in rabbinic tradition Ezra is termed a scribe comparable to Moses in transcribing the laws, Josephus never calls him a scribe but is content to describe him as sufficiently skilled (ἱκανῶς ἔμπειρος) in the laws of Moses (*Ant.* 11.121). Again, although it is Josephus' practice to present an extra-biblical eulogy upon the death of his biblical heroes, it is particularly striking to find that his encomium of Ezra consists of a single sentence of two and a half lines (*Ant.* 11.158), which actually contains only a single element of eulogy, namely that he was honored by the people.

Josephus' chief aim, in his reworking of the biblical Ezra narrative, is to stress Ezra's loyalty to his ruler and, by implication, to underscore the similar loyalty of Jews to the government of the state in which they reside. It is particularly important, therefore, that when Ezra is first introduced to his readers by Josephus he is termed, in an extra-biblical addition not to be found, as in 1 Esdr. 8:4, "friendly" (φίλος, *Ant.* 11.121) to King Xerxes. A precedent for Ezra's status here may be seen in Josephus' references to Hezekiah, who was invited by the king of Babylon, Berodach-balaban, to become his ally and "friend" (*Ant.* 10.30), as well as to Daniel, who was given the extraordinarily high honor of being designated by King Darius of Media as the first of his "friends" (*Ant.* 10.263), and to Zerubbabel, who had an "old friendship" with King Darius of Persia and who was on that account judged worthy of a place in the king's bodyguard" (*Ant.* 11.32).

Ezra's loyalty to his monarch may be seen in Josephus' reduction of the gifts that he receives from the Persian king. Thus, according to 1 Esdr. 8:19-20, Artaxerxes directs his treasurers to give Ezra whatever he might request up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred sacks of wheat, a hundred casks of wine, and salt without limit. The Hebrew version adds a hundred baths of oil. Josephus, though it is his wont to give precise figures, here on the contrary, appar-

ently realizing the extravagance of such amounts, particularly since it might provoke the charge that the Jews are greedy, omits these figures altogether and states merely that the king gave orders that his treasurers should grant Ezra's request (*Ant.* 11.127).

In connection with Ezra himself Josephus' stress is on his loyal service to the king and his concern for upholding the law. Thus, whereas in 1 Esdr. 8:36 it is the Jewish exiles who deliver the orders of the Persian king to the governors of the province Across the River, in Josephus it is Ezra himself who does so (*Ant.* 11.138); and this results, in an extra-biblical apologetic addition, in the governors' being compelled to honor the Jewish nation and to assist them in all necessary ways. Again, whereas in the biblical text we are told that the leaders and principal men of the Jews share in the violation of the law (1 Esdr. 8:70), and whereas in Josephus we are informed that they violated the constitution and broke their ancestral laws (*Ant.* 11.140), Ezra is urged by some of the leaders to come to the aid of the laws (*Ant.* 11.141). It is this quality of Ezra's obedience to the law that is also stressed by Josephus in an addition to the Bible (1 Esdr. 8:68), when he declares that Ezra took the leadership in planning (ἐβουλεύσατο), but that it was due to G-d that all turned out well for him, since G-d saw fit to reward him for his goodness (χρηστότητα) and for his righteousness (δικαιοσύνην) (*Ant.* 11.139). This latter term, "righteousness," is clearly related to observance of the law (δίκη). Thus, Ezra's role, as highlighted by Josephus, is that of upholding the law, surely a role that would have appealed to the Romans, who placed such a premium upon obedience to the law.

Ezra's usefulness to the Persian king, as portrayed by Josephus, is chiefly political. Thucydides, whom Josephus admired and imitated so much, cites (2.65.4) the truism that the way of the multitude is fickle. It is, therefore, indeed, significant that when Ezra is first introduced, Josephus, in an extra-biblical addition, notes that he enjoyed the good opinion (δόξης) of the masses (*Ant.* 11.121). With the huge Persian kingdom, consisting, as it did, of so many nationalities and with the Persians themselves being a distinct minority within it, a person such as Ezra, who had the ear of the Jewish masses, would prove extremely useful to his overlord. However, this quality would not necessarily raise Ezra in the esteem of Josephus' reading audience, since Josephus, particularly in his portrayal of Moses, stresses that the true leader is not swayed by the multitude. It is only a rabble-rousing demagogue such as Korah who caters to the multitude and

who is consequently the candidate of the people (*Ant.* 4.15, 20), whereas the multitude itself is actually bent on stoning Moses (*Ant.* 4.22). Again, Josephus stresses that the natural state of the multitude is anarchy, noting that once their great leader Joshua had died, the people continued in a state of anarchy for a full eighteen years (*Ant.* 6.84). That Josephus presents Ezra's mission as chiefly political is clear also from his addition to the Persian king Xerxes' instructions. Whereas, according to the biblical text, Xerxes wrote to his satraps that whoever does not obey the law of G-d and of the king shall be punished by death or degradation or fine or exile (1 Esdr. 8:24, Ezra 7:26), in Josephus' version there is a further phrase, namely that ignorance of the law will not be accepted as an excuse (*Ant.* 11.130). Josephus also highlights the patriotic loyalty of the Jews to the king when he adds to the biblical text (1 Esdr. 8:25) that when the Jews of Media learned of Xerxes' orders and of his piety toward G-d, as well as of his goodwill toward Ezra, they were all greatly pleased (*Ant.* 11.132-33). Indeed, even when given permission to leave for Palestine, we are told, in an extra-biblical addition to 1 Esdr. 8:27 (Ezra 7:28), that the Israelite nation as a whole (ὁ δὲ πᾶς λαὸς τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν) opted to remain in the Median country (*Ant.* 11.133).

However, Josephus is concerned to balance his picture of Ezra's popularity with the masses with one of Ezra as a leader, inasmuch as, on the one hand, it would have made no sense for the Persian king to entrust such an important position to Ezra if he lacked qualities of leadership; while, on the other hand, it would also have been degrading for the Jews to have as their leader someone who lacked such qualities. Consequently, whereas the biblical text employs the passive voice in stating that Ezra was accompanied to Jerusalem by some Israelites (1 Esdr 8:4), Josephus represents Ezra as assuming the lead in deciding to go to Jerusalem and in taking with himself some of the Jews (*Ant.* 11.122). Again, whereas 1 Esdr. 8:8 claims to be quoting a copy of the mandate that King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra, in Josephus Ezra takes the initiative in requesting the king to give him a letter to take to the satraps of Syria (*Ant.* 11.122). Furthermore, the biblical text says merely that Ezra took courage from the help of the L-rd and gathered Jews to accompany him on his trip to Palestine (1 Esdr. 8:27), whereas Josephus' Ezra shows much more leadership in not only reading the letter of King Xerxes to the Jews in Babylon but also in taking charge of the whole undertaking by sending a

copy of the letter to the Jews in Media (*Ant.* 11.131). Ezra's qualities in organizing the trip to Jerusalem would likewise be called into question by the biblical scene at the river with the returnees (1 Esdr. 8:41-59), since Ezra himself admits that he was ashamed to ask the king to supply footmen and horsemen so necessary to safeguard the trip, inasmuch as he had told the king that G-d would protect them; but Josephus avoids such embarrassment by greatly condensing the account (*Ant.* 11.133). Moreover, the king had already spoken about the return of the Levites (*Ant.* 11.123); hence Ezra would appear a poor organizer and leader if he first thought of the matter only at the Euphrates. Ezra's ability as a leader would likewise seem to be impugned by his three-day delay, with no reason being given for it, once he had gathered the returnees on the way to Palestine (1 Esdr. 8:41); Josephus removes this blot on Ezra's leadership by explaining that the three days were devoted to a fast to enlist divine aid (*Ant.* 11.134).

Again, Ezra emerges as a more effective leader in that whereas the biblical text declares that Ezra sat down perplexed and miserable when he heard of the intermarriages that had taken place among the Jews (1 Esdr. 8:71), Josephus' Ezra is much stronger in his reaction by actually throwing himself upon the ground (*Ant.* 11.141). Likewise, 1 Esdr. 9:48-49 indicates that it was the thirteen Levites, whose names it cites, who taught the people the Law, whereas Josephus omits the names of the Levites (*Ant.* 11.155), thus keeping the focus more directly upon Ezra's activity: again, in the biblical text it is the Levites who command the people how to celebrate the holiday (1 Esdr. 9:53), whereas in Josephus it is Ezra who, excellent leader that he is, does not command but rather successfully exhorts (προετρέπετο, "urged," "encouraged") the people to repentance, assuring them that they would thus gain security (*Ant.* 11.156). Josephus omits the long list of names of sixteen priests, six Levites, four temple-singers and door-keepers, and seventy-five Israelites who had taken foreign wives, offering no rationale for this other than that he thought it unnecessary to give their names (*Ant.* 11.152). But aside from the embarrassment that mention of them would cause their descendants, the omission also serves to further diminish the biblical emphasis on the vast number of such intermarriages. Finally, as in the case of the Midianite women and Samson, Josephus' opposition to the intermarriages is based on his concern about yielding to passion—grounds that would appeal especially to the Stoics in his audience—and on his conviction that

intermarriage violated the constitution (πολιτείαν) and broke the laws of the country; consequently, when the Jews do dismiss their foreign wives, he, in an extra-biblical comment (1 Esdr. 9:20), remarks that in doing so they had more regard for the observance of the laws than for the objects of their affection (φίλτρων, “love potions”) (*Ant.* 11.152). Here again we see Josephus’ emphasis on obedience to law that was so important to the Persian government and would be so impressive to his Roman readers. Finally, Ezra, in an addition to the biblical text (1 Esdr. 9:36), is credited not merely with resolving the immediate matter of the mixed marriages but also with setting a standard of obedience to the law “so that it remained fixed for the future” (*Ant.* 11.153). Indeed, once the matter of mixed marriages is viewed, as it is by Josephus, in political terms, Greek readers might well have thought of the parallel to the citizenship law of 451/450 attributed to the much-admired Pericles, which restricted citizenship to those who could prove that both their parents were citizens of Athens.¹⁸

One of Josephus’ major goals in writing his *Antiquities*, no less than in his essay *Against Apion*, was to defend the Jews against the charges of pagan intellectuals. One of the basic reasons for hatred of the Jews was their wealth, as we may discern from the tone of Cicero’s remarks (*Pro Flacco* 28.66-69), especially since their wealth was constantly being sent off to the Temple in Jerusalem.¹⁹

Hence, it is a sensitive matter when the biblical book lists the silver, gold, and sacred vessels that had been presented to those returning to Palestine by the king, his counsellors, and all the Jews (1 Esdr. 8:55-57). According to the biblical account, these included a hundred talents of gold, twenty pieces of gold plate, and twelve vessels of brass so fine that it gleamed like gold. Such tremendous wealth seems to confirm contemporary critics’ claims about the Jews

¹⁸ See Ostwald 1986, 182-83, and the literature cited there. Ostwald, 507-8, notes that following the restoration of the democracy after the end of the Peloponnesian War, this restrictive provision of the citizenship law was revived.

¹⁹ Tacitus also alludes to this charge when he speaks bitterly about proselytes to Judaism who keep sending tribute to Jerusalem, “thereby increasing the wealth of the Jews” (*Hist.* 5.5.1), and shortly thereafter refers to the Temple possessing enormous riches (*immensae opulentiae templum*) (*Hist.* 5.8.1). In his address to the revolutionaries, Titus likewise bitterly reminds them that the Romans allowed the Jews to collect the tribute for the Temple “only that you might grow richer at our expense and make preparations with our money to attack us!” (*War* 6.335).

sending vast sums to the Temple in Jerusalem. In Josephus' version the list has been considerably trimmed to gold vessels weighing twenty talents and vessels of bronze weighing twelve talents (*Ant.* 11.136).

Again, Josephus' treatise *Against Apion*, in large part, is intended to refute the charge that the Jews are an insignificant people who have, for good reason, been ignored by the Greeks (*Ap.* 1.60-68). Hence, it is important that the biblical text notes that when the returnees to Palestine deliver the king's orders to the royal treasurers and governors of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, the latter added lustre to (ἐδόξασαν, "extolled," "magnified") the Jewish nation and the Temple (1 Esdr. 8:67). In Josephus' magnified version the governors are spoken of as actually compelled to carry out the king's commands; and, moreover, they not only honor the Jewish nation but they also assist it in all necessary ways (*Ant.* 11.138).

If charges are to be brought against the Jews, the best source, it would seem, is the Bible itself. It is not surprising, therefore, that Josephus, the apologist for the Jewish people, has omitted, as we have noted, a number of apparently embarrassing passages.²⁰ Likewise, in the biblical narrative of Ezra the Jews themselves admit that their sins are so great as to tower above their heads (1 Esdr. 8:74-90). Josephus, however, in his desire to withhold giving ammunition to the enemies of the Jews, seeks to avoid indicting the Jewish people so strongly and prefers to tone down their humiliation. Hence, this extended confession of sins is very much abbreviated by Josephus (*Ant.* 11.143). Likewise, whereas the biblical text declares that Ezra neither ate food nor drank water while he mourned over the serious violations of the law by the community (1 Esdr. 9:2), Josephus at this point avoids mentioning the embarrassing fact of the sins of the Jews and says merely that Ezra fasted because of his grief (*Ant.* 11.147). Similarly, whereas in 1 Esdr. 9:13 Ezra persuades the Jews who have taken foreign wives to assemble at a fixed time so that the fierce wrath of G-d may be averted from them for this matter, in Josephus there is no mention of such divine wrath (*Ant.* 11.150). In like fashion, whereas in the Bible Ezra has a long prayer to G-d in which he rehearses Israelite history, including such unflattering episodes as the building of the Golden Calf (Neh. 9:6-38), and states that the Israelites had rebelled against G-d, killed His prophets, and

²⁰ See the list in Feldman 1998, 37-38.

committed great blasphemies (Neh 9:26), Josephus again avoids such embarrassments by omitting the prayer altogether (*Ant.* 11.158).

One of the most embarrassing passages in the biblical narrative is the statement that when Ezra read the Law to the Jews in Jerusalem on the festival of Tabernacles, the people made *sukkot*, inasmuch as they had not observed the commandment to dwell in *sukkot* since the days of Joshua (Neh. 8: 14, 17). That the Jews for so long a period of time had not observed a festival so explicitly enjoined in the Pentateuch raises the question whether they had the Pentateuch at all during this period or whether perhaps it was not given by G-d at Sinai but rather was written much later, possibly even by Ezra himself, as critics such as Spinoza were later to suggest.²¹ Hence, Josephus discreetly avoids stirring up this hornet's nest by omitting the passage altogether (*Ant.* 11.157).

5. THE ROLE OF NEHEMIAH

An indication of Josephus' relative lack of interest in Nehemiah may be seen in the sheer amount of space that he devotes to him.²² Thus, in the portion of 2 Esdr. 11-23 (Hebrew Neh. 1-13) which Josephus paraphrases (*Ant.* 11.159-83: 144 lines in the Loeb Classical Library text) there are 792 lines in Rahlfs' text in the LXX (589 lines in the Hebrew version corresponding to this). This gives a ratio of only .18 of Josephus to the Greek of 2 Esdras and of .24 to the Hebrew text. This is by far the lowest ratio for all the significant biblical figures that we have examined. We may attribute this brevity in part to Nehemiah's unpopularity in his own lifetime²³ or to

²¹ Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Tractate*, Chap. 8.

²² See Feldman 1992a, 187-202. Prior to my article there had been no substantial study of Josephus' treatment of Nehemiah. Rappaport 1930, who attempts to cite midrashic parallels for all of Josephus, has nothing at all on Nehemiah. Likewise, Attridge 1976 has not a single reference to Nehemiah. Blenkinsopp 1974, 258, mentions, in passing, that Josephus is at pains to present Nehemiah in as favorable a light as possible and notes that he passes over in silence allusions to internal difficulties and opposition during his administration but does not supply details. The only work that had even attempted to consider at all systematically Josephus' treatment of Nehemiah is Pohlmann 1970, 114-26; but Pohlmann makes no attempt to evaluate the significance of the differences between the biblical text and Josephus.

²³ Cf. *b. Sanh.* 103b, which points out that Nehemiah, like David, had many enemies, but that both were truly righteous men.

the fact that he was supposedly excessively self-complacent (*b.Sanh.* 93b) or to the relative paucity of aggadic material about Nehemiah or to Josephus' desire to give greater attention to the priest Ezra, the other great figure involved in the resettlement of Jerusalem, with whom Josephus would have identified more closely, inasmuch as he, too, was a priest. Nevertheless, the fact that Nehemiah was identified with the famed Zerubbabel (*b. Sanh.* 38a), who was the leader of the original caravan of repatriates and who is spoken of as the builder of the Temple which frequently bears his name (Ezra 3:2), should, it would seem, have induced Josephus, who was so proud of his priesthood, to give him much more attention. In any case, it is very hard to explain his omission of vast portions of the biblical Nehemiah narrative.

The very beginning of Josephus' account of Nehemiah calls attention to his relationship to the king. Whereas in the biblical account it is not until after eleven verses of the first chapter that Nehemiah is identified as the cupbearer of the king (Neh. 2:1), a position of crucial importance requiring the complete confidence of the monarch, Josephus' very first sentence so describes him (*Ant.* 11.159).

In Josephus' reworking of the biblical narrative, Nehemiah emerges, in an extra-biblical detail, as the Persian king's loyal servant who gave stability to the land of Palestine at a time when it was being overrun by marauders who plundered it by day, did mischief to it at night, and carried off many captives from the country and even from Jerusalem itself (*Ant.* 11.161). The biblical text simply states that the inhabitants of Palestine were in great affliction and reproach (Neh. 1:3). Josephus adds that highwaymen had made the roads unsafe, so that they were full of corpses (*Ant.* 11.161). Inasmuch as roads were the great pride of both the Persians (cf. *Hdt.* 8.98) and the Romans, the fact that Nehemiah secured the safety of these roads, according to Josephus' extra-biblical addition, must have made an extremely strong impression upon his readers.

Again, Josephus dramatically illustrates the loyalty of Nehemiah to the Persian king by adding to the biblical passage (Neh. 2: 1) that Nehemiah, in his fidelity to the king, hastened just as he was and without even bathing to perform the service of bringing the king his drink (*Ant.* 11.163).

The king's confidence in Nehemiah is also illustrated by the omission of a biblical passage. In Neh. 2:6 the king is represented as asking him how long he will be gone and when he will return,

whereupon Nehemiah, of course, answers him by setting a time. Apparently, Josephus regarded such an inquiry as itself a sign of lack of confidence in Nehemiah, and so he simply omits it (*Ant.* 11.166). An indication of Nehemiah's persuasiveness and of the king's confidence in him may likewise be seen in Josephus' addition to the biblical text (Neh. 2:8) that it took the king only one day to fulfill his promise to Nehemiah and to give him a letter to the governor of Syria (*Ant.* 11.167).

Nehemiah, as the representative of the Persian king, could hardly afford to show hesitation or fear, and yet the biblical text indicates that whereas he heard in Kislev about the difficulties in Jerusalem (Neh. 1:1), it was not until four months later in Nisan that he went to the king with a request to remedy the situation (Neh. 2:1). Such a delay is obviously not consonant with dynamic leadership, and so Josephus has Nehemiah go immediately to the king after hearing of the troubles of the Jews in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 11.163). Moreover, according to the Bible, when the king asked him why he was sad, he became very much afraid (Neh. 2:2). Josephus, however, obviously found such a detail unseemly in a leader and simply omits it (*Ant.* 11.164).

A major ingredient of Nehemiah's character, as highlighted by Josephus and crucial in his capacity as the right-hand man of the Persian king, is respect for law (*Ant.* 11.183). Indeed, it is significant that in his brief encomium for Nehemiah, consisting of a single sentence, Josephus calls attention to his being just (δίκαιος), that is, observant of the proper way (δίκη, *Ant.* 11.183). We have noted that the same two adjectives used here of Nehemiah, χρηστός and δίκαιος are employed also for the prophet Samuel (*Ant.* 6.294) and for the model king Hezekiah (*Ant.* 9.260), as well as for Jehonadab (*Ant.* 9.133), Jehoiada (*Ant.* 9.166) and Jehoiachin (*Ant.* 10.100).

A crucial quality of a leader, as we may see in the portrait of Pericles by Thucydides, is the ability to persuade. In the case of Nehemiah, in a supplement to the biblical narrative, Josephus says that Nehemiah, before approaching the king for permission to go to Jerusalem, prays to G-d to give his words some measure of grace and persuasion (πειθώ, *Ant.* 11.165). That Nehemiah was indeed gifted in the art of persuasion is clear from the fact that he gains his request. Moreover, whereas the Bible remarks that the king granted it, "for the good hand of my G-d was upon me" (Neh. 2:8), Josephus omits

the role of G-d altogether and attributes Nehemiah's success solely to his own efforts (*Ant.* 11.166).

As for Nehemiah's mission itself in going to Palestine, it is significant that the Bible speaks only of its religious dimension, emphasizing the importance of the tombs of the ancestors, in that Nehemiah asks the king to send him to Judea, "to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may rebuild it" (Neh. 2:5). In Josephus' version the mission is both religious and, more especially political, inasmuch as Nehemiah puts the emphasis on the need to repair the walls and the gates of the city of Jerusalem when he declares that the occasion for his mission is the report that he has heard that the walls of his native city of Jerusalem, where the graves and the monuments of his forefathers are located, have been thrown to the ground and its gates burnt (*Ant.* 11.165).

Nehemiah's qualities of leadership may be discerned also in the fact that whereas the biblical text asserts that only a few men accompanied him (Neh. 2:12), Josephus states that many of his countrymen went with him and, what is more, did so voluntarily—a clear indication of his ability to inspire confidence in his followers (*Ant.* 11.168). Again, although the biblical text is generally much longer than Josephus' version of the Nehemiah narrative, Josephus considerably amplifies Nehemiah's speech (Neh. 2:17-18), encouraging the Jews in their work of rebuilding Jerusalem, and thereby underscores his qualities of inspiring leadership (*Ant.* 11.169-71). In particular, by his extra-biblical remarks, Nehemiah instills confidence in his hearers that they will, with G-d's help, be able to withstand the hostility of their neighbors.

To the reader of the biblical narrative Nehemiah emerges as a kind of "tyrant," very similar to those of the Greek cities along the coast of the Aegean Sea.²⁴ Whereas it was typical of tyrants to have the backing of only one segment of the people, through whose aid they came to power, and whereas the biblical Nehemiah (2:16) at first works secretly with a small group of followers, in Josephus he summons the people of Jerusalem and is viewed as a leader by all of them (*Ant.* 11.168). Again, whereas one of the common characteristics

²⁴ See Andrewes 1956); Pleket 1969, 19-61; Smith 1971, 136-47; Drews 1972, 129-44; and Sealey 1976, 38-65. Smith, 141-44, notes that the similarity of Nehemiah to the Greek tyrants is no mere matter of general outline; it extends to every detail.

of the Greek tyrants was utter secrecy and the general distrust thus evoked, Josephus leaves out the biblical report (Neh. 2:12-16) that Nehemiah made a secret inspection of Jerusalem's walls at night (*Ant.* 11.168).

An important change from the biblical portrait of Nehemiah may be seen in Josephus' paraphrase of the description of his repairs of the various gates of the city of Jerusalem (Neh. 3: 1-32). In particular, he leaves aside all of these biblical details and instead focuses upon the picture of Nehemiah as leader and organizer, stressing that Nehemiah himself promised to assist in building together with his servants (*Ant.* 11.172). In extra-biblical additions we are given a portrait of an excellent administrator who assigns the work on the wall of Jerusalem by villages and cities, bearing in mind the abilities of each person (172). One is reminded of the scene in Virgil in which Dido, queen of Carthage, is similarly depicted as directing the building of the walls of Carthage, apportioning by just division or by lot the tasks to be done (*Aen.* 1.507-8). Likewise, to emphasize Nehemiah's ability in organizing the builders, whereas the Bible states merely that he stationed a trumpeter near him (Neh. 4:12), Josephus is much more elaborate and precise in saying that he stationed trumpeters at intervals of five hundred feet with the command to give the signal to the people if the enemy appeared (*Ant.* 11.177).

Nehemiah's achievement as a leader is all the greater because of Josephus' exaggeration of the difficulties that he faced. Thus in the biblical text the adversaries of the Jews threaten to slay them (Neh. 4:5), whereas in Josephus they actually kill many (*Ant.* 11.174).

Moreover, in an addition having no parallel in the Bible (Neh. 4:8), Josephus adds to the obstacles that confronted Nehemiah by noting that the enemies of the Jews instilled fear and alarm in them and spread rumors, undoubtedly more frightening than the attacks themselves, that many nations were about to attack them, so that as a result the Jews very nearly gave up their building work (*Ant.* 11.175).

The fact that, like the Greek tyrants, Nehemiah, according to Josephus, surrounded himself with a bodyguard would raise the obvious suspicion in the minds of Josephus' readers that Nehemiah was more concerned with his own safety than he was with the well-being of the Jews (*Ant.* 11.176). Josephus, clearly well aware of this problem, in an addition to the Bible (Neh. 4:8), goes out of his way

to stress Nehemiah's unwearying zeal and insensibility to hardship. He carefully and apologetically explains that the reason why he took forethought for his own safety was not that he feared death but rather that he was convinced that should he be slain the Jews would be leaderless and unable to continue rebuilding the walls of the city (*Ant.* 11.176).

Though, as we have noted, Josephus has greatly condensed the biblical narrative, yet, in order to emphasize Nehemiah's energy, Josephus asserts that he ate and slept not for pleasure but only out of necessity (*Ant.* 11.178). Most significantly, in the very brief summary that Josephus gives of Nehemiah's achievements he singles out his extraordinary eagerness to serve his countrymen (περὶ τοὺς ὁμοεθνεῖς φιλοτιμότητος, *Ant.* 11.183).

Again, whereas the biblical text calls attention to the sufferings of the people and paints a dark picture of their heavy burdens of taxation and their general degradation (Neh. 5:2-5, 14-15), Josephus shifts the emphasis to Nehemiah himself and speaks of the hardships that he endured for two years and four months (*Ant.* 11.179).

Furthermore, in an addition to the Bible, Josephus proudly reports that Nehemiah built houses for the priests and the Levites at his own expense²⁵ in order to increase the population of the city of Jerusalem, which had apparently declined in numbers (*Ant.* 11.181). Here, as we would expect from one so proud of his priestly status, Josephus shows his pro-priestly bias, inasmuch as the corresponding biblical passage speaks not of priests and Levites but of nobles, officials, and the people generally (Neh. 7:4-5).²⁶ In addition, the Bible co-ordinates the efforts of Ezra the priest-scribe and Nehemiah the governor (Neh. 8:1, 9), but since the net result of this coupling would be to detract from the achievements of both figures, Josephus never brings them into juxtaposition.

²⁵ Sir. 49:13 likewise says that "Nehemiah built again our ruined homes," though he does not assert that he did so for the priests and Levites or that he did so at his own expense.

²⁶ Blenkinsopp 1974, 58, conjectures that the detail that Nehemiah built houses in Jerusalem is perhaps taken from Sir 49:13; but that passage most probably alludes to Nehemiah's rebuilding of the outer walls and gates of the city, inasmuch as it refers to his erecting walls, gates, and bars and his raising up of ruins, presumably of the walls of the city. In any case, it does not speak of Nehemiah doing so at his own expense. For other examples of Josephus' propriety revisions of the biblical narrative see Schwartz 1990, 89-90.

In order to focus greater attention on his biblical heroes, Josephus, as we have remarked, frequently reduces the role of G-d. Thus, in order to accentuate the achievements of Nehemiah, Josephus omits Nehemiah's prayer to G-d (Neh. 4:9), as well as his statement to his workers (Neh. 4:20) that G-d will fight for them (*Ant.* 11.177). Instead, he mentions only Nehemiah's organizing achievements and his orders to his men. It is only when the walls are finally completed that Nehemiah sacrifices to G-d (*Ant.* 11.180).

Likewise, the Bible declares that it was G-d who frustrated the plans of the enemies of Jews who had sought to stop the rebuilding of the city (Neh. 4:15). Again, when the enemies hear that the wall of the city has been completed, all the neighboring nations, according to the Bible, were afraid because they concluded that the work had been accomplished with divine help (Neh. 6:16). To Josephus, however, the credit belongs to Nehemiah and his leadership, and so he omits such statements (*Ant.* 11.179).

A charge frequently made against the Jews is hatred of mankind.²⁷ In reply Josephus stresses the Jewish quality of φιλανθρωπία, closely connected with which is the virtue of gratitude. Thus, in an addition to the biblical text (Neh. 2:8), Josephus' Nehemiah gives thanks (εὐχαριστήσας) to the king for his promise to help in the rebuilding of Jerusalem (*Ant.* 11.167).

In the Nehemiah pericope, Josephus is concerned to underscore the allegiance of the Jews to the state, as we may see in his omission (*Ant.* 11.170) of the biblical charge, made by Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab, that the Jews were rebelling against the Persian king (Neh. 2:19-20, 6:6). These neighbors likewise tried to reduce to absurdity the action of the Jews in rebuilding the wall; indeed, the biblical text observes that they derided and despised them. Josephus omits such disparaging remarks. Again, whereas the Bible stresses that Sanballat and Tobiah the Ammonite had ridiculed the Jews by remarking that if a fox were to climb the wall he would break it down (Neh. 4:1,4). Josephus significantly omits the mention of ridicule and instead limits the reaction of the various neighboring tribes to anger and plots to hinder the Jews (*Ant.* 11.174).

²⁷ See Feldman 1993, 125-49.

In the Bible, Sanballat, the chief enemy of the Jews, is said to have sent a letter to Nehemiah for the fifth time repeating the accusation, as “reported among the nations,” that the Jews intended to rebel against the Persians, that Nehemiah himself was seeking to become their king, and that all this would be reported to the Persian monarch (Neh. 6:57). The biblical narrative, of course, vehemently denies all this; the very thought, however, that such charges could be made against him was apparently embarrassing to Josephus, who, not surprisingly, omits them altogether.

To be sure, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.181) adds considerably to the biblical account (Neh. 7: 1-4) of Nehemiah’s achievements in the rebuilding of Jerusalem. In particular, he remarks that Nehemiah, seeing that the non-Jewish population of the country were angry that the building of the walls of Jerusalem had been finished and noting that the population of the city was small, urged the priests and Levites to leave the countryside around Jerusalem and move into the city proper and remain there; moreover, Nehemiah told the people to bring tithes of their produce to Jerusalem so that the priests and Levites might have a perpetual source of livelihood and thus not have to abandon the service in the Temple (*Ant.* 11.182). In particular, Josephus adds the extra-biblical detail that Nehemiah had prepared houses for the priests and Levites at his own expense. Furthermore, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 11.183), he performed many other splendid and praiseworthy public services (φιλοτιμησάμενος, “assiduous work,” “eager contributions”). As a result (*Ant.* 11.182), the population of Jerusalem was increased. Indeed, in his extra-biblical encomium of Nehemiah, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.183) singles out the fact that he left the walls of Jerusalem as his eternal monument. However, an examination of this passage indicates that, in Josephus’ view, the great contribution of Nehemiah was not in encouraging the Jews of Babylonia to return to Palestine but rather in getting those who were already in Palestine to leave the countryside and to move into the city proper; and his reason for doing this was his concern with the reinstitution of the Temple and its sacrifices. Indeed, his attention to the rebuilding of the walls of the city was due to his concern to protect the Temple.

6. THE ROLE OF ZERUBBABEL

According to Ezra 3:2, it is Zerubbabel, who, together with Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his fellow priests, is credited with actually building the altar of the renewed Temple and offering sacrifices upon it. It is he who is the leader of the returning Jews (1 Esdr. 6:18; *Ant.* 11.14); and it is to him that King Cyrus entrusts the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken as plunder from the Temple in order to have him carry them back to Jerusalem and to place them again in the Temple. Consequently, the Temple became known as the Temple of Zerubbabel, though in Ezra 6:14-18 he is not mentioned at all in connection with the ceremonies at the time of the rededication of the Temple. Josephus (*Ant.* 11.32), however, heightens his role by adding the extra-biblical detail that he had been appointed governor of the Jewish captives, noting that there had been an old friendship between him and King Darius and thus accounting for the fact that he had been made one of the king's bodyguards. Whereas in 1 Esdr. 3:4-5 it is the three bodyguards who take the initiative in proposing that King Darius should give rich gifts and great honors of victory to the one who should give the wisest answer to the question as to what one thing is the strongest, in Josephus (*Ant.* 11.34-35) it is Darius himself who initiates the contest, and it is he (rather than the bodyguards) who proposes that the winner should be called "my kinsman" (συγγενής). This initiative by Darius, of course, enhances the status of the winner, who turns out to be Zerubbabel, whose answer (*Ant.* 11.49-56) praising women and truth²⁸ as the strongest of all is acclaimed by the judges, consisting of nobles, satraps, and toparchs of Persia and Media. The king (1 Esdr. 4:42-46; *Ant.* 11.57-58) fulfills his vow to grant to the winner whatever he wished, whereupon Zerubbabel reminds him of his vow to rebuild Jerusalem, to construct the Temple, and to return the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken as spoil to Babylon. Darius then adds the extra-biblical remark, complimenting Zerubbabel's wisdom and directing him to request something beyond what he had himself promised, since he

²⁸ It is not surprising that truth turns out to be the strongest, since, as Herodotus (1.136) states, the Persians educate their boys from five to twenty years old, teaching them three things only, namely, riding and archery and truth-telling. He adds (1.138) that they hold lying to be foulest of all.

would grant it to him for being judged wise (σοφῶ) and intelligent (συνετῶ). Darius then writes to his officials (1 Esdr. 4:47) to grant safe conduct to him and to all accompanying him to build Jerusalem; but Josephus, with his constant focus on the Temple, changes this (*Ant.* 11.59) to “to build the Temple.” Darius’ friendship for the Jews is enhanced by the statement that he commanded not only the Idumeans (1 Esdr. 4:50) but also, as Josephus (*Ant.* 11.61) adds, the Samaritans and those in Coele-Syria, to give over to the Jews the villages that they held. The addition of the Samaritans is particularly significant, since they had placed such obstacles in the path of the returning Jews.²⁹

7. THE ROLE OF THE PROPHETS IN THE RESTORATION

Because of the importance of the role of the prophets, notably Isaiah, in predicting the restoration, and Haggai and Zechariah, in inspiring the Jews to rebuild the Temple, one would expect Josephus to stress their role. We may assume, moreover, that Josephus had a considerable knowledge of the prophets.³⁰ If so, we may ask, why

²⁹ In later times, as seen particularly in the *Book of Zerubbabel*, dating from perhaps the seventh century, the memory of Zerubbabel became so prominent, and he came to be associated with the revelation by the angel Michael (or Metatron) of the events at the end of days and the coming of the Messiah.

³⁰ Some of the reasons for thinking that Josephus had such knowledge are the following: (1) Josephus presents himself, probably, to be sure, with some measure of exaggeration, as extremely knowledgeable in Jewish law, so much so that the chief priests and the leading men of Jerusalem would constantly consult him from the time when he was a lad of merely fourteen years of age (*Life* 9). One takes it for granted that if he was so well versed in Jewish law, he must also have known well the prophetic and wisdom books of the Bible, which are so often quoted and expounded in the Talmud and in the rabbinic Midrashim. (2) In his apologetic work *Against Apion*, where Josephus had to be particularly careful lest he be accused of misrepresenting his case, he (1.37), in defending the accuracy of the biblical narrative, declares that only the prophets had the privilege of recording the history of the Jewish people, and that the accuracy and consistency of their records are guaranteed by the fact that they were divinely inspired. He could hardly have made such a claim as to the reliability of the prophets if he had not studied them. (3) As a pious Jew, Josephus, we are justified in supposing, must have gone to the synagogue regularly, where he would have heard the haftarah, which comes from the prophetic books, changed each week after the reading of the portion of the Pentateuch. That the haftarah was, indeed, regularly included in the Sabbath service at the time of Josephus seems clear from the passage in Acts (13:15) that

does Josephus omit so many prophets³¹ and prophecies? One answer may be that he is writing a history, and his main emphasis is on political and military events. Another reason, however, for his omission of some prophecies is because of their nationalistic implications, which were abhorrent to Josephus, the supporter and admirer of the Romans and the great opponent of the revolutionaries, the latter of whom sought to revive an independent Jewish state. Granted that Josephus is writing a history rather than a book of theology, to the latter of which he intended to devote a separate treatise,³² we may well ask why he dedicates so much more attention to Jonah and to Jeremiah than to Isaiah, especially since so much of the book of Isaiah deals with history in its prophecies. In fact, one would have expected Josephus to devote more attention to Isaiah than to any other of the prophets. Indeed, the oral tradition, with which Josephus

states that “after the reading of the Law and the prophets” Paul, Josephus’ contemporary, was invited to deliver an exhortation. (4) Josephus in his youth (*Life* 10) spent considerable time with the Essenes, as we may also gather from his detailed account in the *Jewish War* (2.119-61), who from their early years were particularly well versed in the prophetic books (*War* 2.159) and who, indeed, had a special gift for prediction themselves (*ibid.*). If the Essenes are related to or even identical with the Dead Sea Sect, which cultivated a special interest in apocalyptic and prophetic books, Josephus’ interest in prophecy would be reinforced. (5) Josephus (*Life* 12) says that after experimenting with the three sects of Jews, he began to engage in public life following the school of the Pharisees, who were said to have a special gift of foreknowledge, as we can see from the predictions of Pollio the Pharisee (*Ant.* 17.4) and his disciple Samaïas (*Ant.* 15.174-75) (see Feldman 1958-59, 53-62). (6) Josephus looked upon himself, in a certain sense, as a latter-day Jeremiah, as we can see from the explicit reference to Jeremiah in his speech to the Jews (*War* 5.391-92) (on Josephus’ identification with Jeremiah, see Wolff 1976, 10-15; Daube 1980, 18-36; and Cohen 1982, 366-81); and he clearly saw and emphasized the parallel between the first destruction of the Temple, so vehemently warned against by the prophets, and the destruction of the second Temple, against which he, in turn, had warned his fellow countrymen. (7) We recall that he himself regarded himself as having a special gift for prediction, like his biblical namesake, Joseph, as he showed in foretelling (*War* 3.400-2) that Vespasian would become emperor. (8) The prophets had standing even among pagans if we may judge from their popularity in the following century among philosophers, such as Numenius of Apamea, the Pythagorean, who, according to Origen (*Contra Celsum* 4.51), quoted not only Moses but also the prophets in many passages in his writings.

³¹ Begg 1988, 343, notes that of the fifteen classical prophets in the Bible Josephus makes no mention at all of seven of the minor prophets. The only prophets for whom he offers any kind of extensive treatment are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, and Nahum.

³² See *Ant.* 1.25, 29, 192, 214; 3.94, 143, 205, 257, 259; 4.198; 20.268.

seems to have been well acquainted,³³ actually equated Isaiah with Moses as the greatest of the prophets (*Mid. Deut. Rab.* 2.4 on Deut 3:23; *Pesiq. Rabbati* 4.14a). That Josephus knew the entire book of Isaiah is implied from the fact that he states (*Ant.* 10.35) that Isaiah “wrote down in books all that he had prophesied and left them to be recognized as true from the event by men of future ages.” Josephus, however, makes no allusion to the chapter (Isa. 40:1-11) which presents so poignantly the theme of return from the Babylonian captivity. Nor does he mention the famous lines (Isa. 43:5-8) telling the Jews in Babylonia not to fear since G-d will bring back their offspring from east and west and north and south. Nor does he allude to G-d’s reassurance (Isa. 49:8-26) that the exiles will come forth from all directions from afar. Nor does he refer to Isaiah’s triumphant song (Isa. 52:7-15) when the watchmen see the return of the L-rd to Zion, Nor does he cite the prophecy (Isa. 60:1-22) that upon the return of the Jews those who have oppressed the Jews will bow down at their feet. Nor does he mention the prophecy (Isa. 11:1-12) that G-d will gather the dispersed Jews from throughout the world or that he will set them in their own land and will take captive those who were their captors (Isa. 14: 1-2). And neither does he mention that those who were defeated in battle (Isa. 27:12-13) will be gathered one by one; “And on that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were driven out to Egypt will return and worship G-d in Jerusalem.” Josephus (*Ant.* 11.5) does cite Isaiah’s prophecy that King Cyrus of Persia will send the Jews back to their homeland, but the point of this is in what follows immediately, that they will build the Temple. Indeed, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.6) specifically says that it was through reading the prophecy of Isaiah (the reference is to Isa. 44:28-45:1), which Josephus notes was made some 140 years before the Temple was demolished, that Cyrus came to the realization that he had been divinely appointed to allow the Jews to return to their own land and—the important corollary—to rebuild the Temple. The statement that Cyrus had read the book of Isaiah is not in Josephus’ source, whether Ezra 1:3 or 1 Esdr. 2:5. Specifically, Josephus includes the passage because it refers to the rebuilding of the Temple, so dear to him, while carefully omitting all reference to the establishment of an independent nation, so abhorrent to him.

³³ See Feldman 1998, 65-73.

As to Jeremiah, Josephus has frequent references to him as a forecaster of doom, one who laments, one who suffers for his dire predictions, and one who urges surrender (*War* 5.391-92; *Ant.* 10.78, 80, 89-93, 94-95, 104, 106, 112-13, 114-15, 117, 119, 120-23, 124-30, 141, 156-58, 176-79). In the biblical book Jeremiah, to be sure (30:18-22), presents G-d's promise that the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, that a ruler will come forth from their midst, and that a veritable utopia will be established. "For behold," the prophet (Jer. 30:3) declares, "days are coming, says the L-rd, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the L-rd, and I will bring them back to the land which I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it." This same theme of G-d's promise that the Jews will be restored to their land and will have a righteous and wise king is found in numerous passages in Jeremiah (23:1-8, 29:10-13, 31:1-40, 32:36-44) but hardly in Josephus. In fact, we do find this theme of Jeremiah's statement of optimistic promise exactly once in Josephus (*Ant.* 11.1), when the latter declares that G-d took pity on the captives and, "as He had foretold to them through the prophet Jeremiah before the city was demolished, that, after they should have served Nebuchadnezzar and his descendants and endured his servitude for seventy years, He would again restore (ἀποκαταστήσει) them to the land of their fathers." The key point, however, is the phrase that follows, since it indicates the goal of this restoration, "and they should build the Temple and enjoy their ancient happiness, so did He grant it them."

It is clear that Josephus also knew the prophecies of Ezekiel; and he cites his prediction of the capture of both Jerusalem and Babylon (*Ant.* 10.79), his exile and deportation to Babylon (*Ant.* 10.98), his prophecy that King Zedekiah would not see Babylon (*Ant.* 10.106), and the fulfillment of that prophecy (*Ant.* 10.141). And yet, even though Ezekiel has a number of glorious portrayals of the restoration of the Jews (Ezek. 34:11-16; 35:1-36:15; 36:16-38; 39:25-29) and though he insists that G-d must restore and glorify Israel in order to establish His authority on earth, and though he has the memorable description of the revival of the dead bones of Israel (37:1-14), Josephus nowhere cites these prophecies of restoration.

Of the prophets who deal with the return, with the rebuilding of the Temple, and with the glorious events that will follow, two stand out, Haggai and Zechariah. The fact that whereas Ezra (5: 1) and 1

Esdras (6:1) state merely that they prophesied, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.96) asserts that they urged the Jews to take courage and not to fear any unfavorable action by the Persians—themes that are pre-eminent in the books of Haggai and Zechariah—shows that Josephus was acquainted with their books in the Bible. It is because of this encouragement, adds Josephus (*Ant.* 11.96), that the Jews applied themselves vigorously, without relaxing for a single day. But again, Josephus' emphasis, as we see in his reference to Haggai in his summary (*War* 6.270) of the number of years that the Temple stood from its rebuilding by Haggai to its destruction and to the success of Haggai and Zechariah in arousing the zeal of people to engage in the work of its construction (*Ant.* 11.106), is on their role in encouraging the Jews to rebuild the Temple.

8. THE ROLE OF KING CYRUS OF PERSIA

One of the recurring charges against Jews was that they had an implacable hatred of non-Jews. It is to answer this charge, as made by Apollonius Molon and Lysimachus (*Ap.* 2.145) and repeated by Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.5.1), that Josephus goes out of his way to stress that Jews show compassion and concern for non-Jews. Thus, in Josephus' version, Joseph sells grain to all people and not merely to native Egyptians (*Ant.* 2.94, 101). Again, Solomon, in dedicating the Temple, asks that God grant the prayers not only of Jews but also of non-Jews (*Ant.* 8.116-17). Whereas the biblical Jonah appears to be indifferent to the Gentiles whom he is to warn, since we find him, at the beginning of the account, fast asleep and even, according to the LXX, snoring (Jonah 1:5), Josephus' Jonah is not asleep and, we are told, has absented himself only because he did not wish to imitate what the sailors were doing. Furthermore, when Mesha, the king of the Moabites, sacrifices his own son to his god, the Bible says nothing about the reaction of Kings Jehoshaphat and Jehoram (2 Kgs. 3:27); Josephus, on the other hand, calls attention to their humanity and compassion (*Ant.* 9.43).

In particular, unlike Philo and, on the whole, the rabbinic tradition, Josephus, in order not to offend his non-Jewish readers, goes to great lengths in an effort to rehabilitate non-Jewish leaders. We may see this in Josephus' more favorable portrayal of the Pharaoh

in connection with Sarai (*Ant.* 1.165), of the Pharaoh in connection with Joseph and his brothers (*Ant.* 2.185), of the Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus (*Ant.* 2.238-53),³⁴ of Jethro (*Ant.* 2.258, 262-63);³⁵ of Balaam (*Ant.* 4.107),³⁶ of Eglon, the king of Moab (*Ant.* 5.185-86),³⁷ of Nebuchadnezzar (*Ant.* 10.217), of Belshazzar (*Ant.* 10.246), of Darius (*Ant.* 10.254),³⁸ and of Ahasuerus (*Ant.* 11.216).³⁹ Where he does criticize non-Jewish leaders he usually puts the blame on their advisers.

King Cyrus of Persia is portrayed in both the Bible (Ezra 1:1; 1 Esdr. 2:1-2) and Josephus (*Ant.* 11.3) as having been divinely inspired to end the Babylonian captivity. The rabbis, notably the fourth-century Rabbi Naḥman, the son of Rabbi Ḥisda, go even further (*b. Meg.* 12a) in citing the verse (Isa. 45:1): “Thus said the Lord to his anointed (למשיח), to Cyrus.” The simple meaning of this verse would seem to indicate that God had chosen Cyrus as the Messiah, and Rabbi Naḥman responds to this assumption by asking: “Now was Cyrus the Messiah?” He then proceeds to explain: “Rather, what it means is: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the Messiah: I have a complaint on thy behalf against Cyrus,” understanding the text to mean, “Thus said the Lord to his anointed regarding Cyrus,” a rather forced interpretation.

But Josephus goes even further than the Bible in adding the extra-biblical remark identifying the G-d who had appointed him king of the habitable world (οἰκουμένης) with the G-d whom the Israelite nation worships, thus recalling the passage in the *Letter of Aristeas* (16) declaring that the Jews worship the same god as do the Greeks (Zeus or Dis) under another name. Moreover, he even adds (*Ant.* 11.4) that G-d had foretold His name through the Hebrew prophets. Furthermore, whereas in the Bible (Isa. 44:28) G-d tells Isaiah that Cyrus is His shepherd and that he will fulfill all His purpose in rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple, in Josephus (*Ant.* 11.5) Cyrus has direct knowledge of G-d’s intention, which he is said to have

³⁴ See Feldman 1993g, 58-63.

³⁵ See Feldman 1997a, 513-94.

³⁶ See Feldman 1993a, 48-83.

³⁷ See Feldman 1994a, 177-201 (esp. 189-93).

³⁸ On Josephus’ portrait of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius see Feldman 1993g, 52-54.

³⁹ See Feldman 1994, 17-39.

through reading the book of prophecy that Isaiah had left behind 210 years earlier. In addition, whereas in Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. 44:28) G-d says of Cyrus "He is my shepherd," in Josephus' version G-d aggrandizes Cyrus by telling Isaiah very dramatically in secret that He has appointed Cyrus king of many great nations.

Again, whereas in the Bible (Ezra 1:1; 1 Esdr. 2:2) Cyrus issues an impersonal proclamation permitting the Jews to return to Judea, Josephus' Cyrus (*Ant.* 11.6) is much more involved, is described as wondering at the divine power, and is seized by a strong desire (ὄρμη) and ambition (φιλοτιμία) to do what was written in Isaiah's prophecy. Moreover, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.7) adds the extra-biblical detail that indicates how committed Cyrus is to the cause of the restoration of the Jews, namely that he himself will write to his own governors and satraps to assist the returnees. Again, whereas in the Bible (Ezra 1:6; 1 Esdr. 2:9) it is their neighbors in Babylon who help the returning Jews, in Josephus (*Ant.* 11.9) those who help them are the king's friends and they do so after their arrival in Judea in fulfillment of the king's orders. Furthermore, he adds to the importance of Cyrus' role by noting (*Ant.* 11.8) the difficulties that he encountered in inducing the Jews to return, since, as Josephus notes, "many remained in Babylon, being unwilling to leave their possessions." Significantly, whereas Ezra 1:6 says that "all who were about them" aided the Jews who had returned, and 1 Esdr. 2:9 says that their neighbors (οἱ περικύκλω, "all around") helped them, clearly implying that it was the Jews' neighbors in Babylon who helped them, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.9) gives credit to Cyrus in noting that it was all the king's friends who helped them and that it was upon their arrival in Jerusalem. Moreover, 1 Esdr. 2:9 specifies that the neighbors helped them "with everything, with silver and gold, with horses and cattle, and with a very great number of votive offerings"; and Ezra 1:6 uses similar language, indicating that their aid was not restricted to offerings for the Temple. Josephus (*Ant.* 11.9) focuses upon the Temple in particular, noting that they brought their share for the construction of the Temple. He furthermore adds the extra-biblical detail, focusing upon the revival of the sacrificial cult, that "they made the offerings vowed to G-d and performed the customary sacrifices in accordance with ancient custom, as if their city were being rebuilt and the ancient form of worship revived." Again, whereas Ezra 1:7-8 and 1 Esdr. 2:10-11 state merely that Cyrus took the holy vessels

that Nebuchadnezzar had carried off and gave them to his treasurer Mithridates, who in turn gave them to Sheshbazzar, the governor of Judah, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.11) emphasizes Cyrus' great concern for these vessels and for the rebuilding of the Temple by noting that he gave them to Mithridates, "to carry, instructing him to give them to Abassaros [Sheshbazzar] to keep until the Temple should be built, and upon its being completed to turn them over to the priests and leaders of the people to be deposited in the Temple."

In addition, whereas Ezra 6:1-12 and 1 Esdr. 6:23-34 state that Darius, at the request of the Jews, searches the archives and discovers a decree issued by Cyrus permitting the Temple to be rebuilt at Persian expense, in Josephus' version, the Jews do not have to request the search. Instead, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.12-18) quotes Cyrus' letter in its proper place and indicates that it is at his own initiative that he has given permission to the Jews to return to their native land. Moreover, to the Scriptural account he adds that he specifically permits (*Ant.* 11.12) the Jews to build the Temple on the very same site where it formerly stood. Furthermore, the role of Cyrus in the rebuilding of the Temple is heightened by the fact that whereas in Ezra 6:3-5 and 1 Esdr. 6:24-26 there is no mention of a direct role played by Cyrus' emissaries in the rebuilding of the Temple, in Josephus' version of Cyrus' letter, he sends his own treasurer Mithridates to join with Zerubbabel, the Jewish leader, in building the Temple. Moreover, whereas Ezra 6:3-4 and 1 Esdr. 6:24-25 give the dimensions of the Temple, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.13) adds that they are to join even in building an altar on which they may sacrifice.

Josephus has also added to the portrait of Cyrus' magnanimity, since whereas Ezra 6:9 and 1 Esdr. 6:29-30 do not specify the amount of money that he gives to the returnees for cattle, wine, and oil, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.16) states the exact sums. In addition, since it had been the Samaritans who had placed so many obstacles in the path of the returnees, it is significant that whereas in the decree as quoted by Ezra 6:8 the cost is to be paid from the tribute of the province from beyond the river (that is, Palestine and Syria) and, as quoted in 1 Esdr. 6:29, from the tribute of Coele-Syria (that is, Palestine and Syria) and Phoenicia, Josephus (*Ant.* 11.16) specifies that it is to be paid for from the tribute from Samaria—a clear indication that Cyrus sympathized with and supported the Jews in this continuing

and bitter dispute with the Samaritans. Cyrus' sensitivity to the practices of Judaism is indicated by still another addition (*Ant.* 11.17), namely that the priests in Jerusalem are to be permitted to offer their sacrifices in accordance with the laws of Moses. Moreover, in an implied answer to the charge that the Jews are not loyal to any government other than their own, Josephus has added the statement that they will pray (*Ant.* 1.17) that the kingdom of the Persians may long endure. In view of the very positive attitude of Cyrus toward the restoration, Josephus was apparently troubled by the fact (*Ezra* 4:5; *1 Esdr.* 5:73) that during the reign of Cyrus the returning Jews were hindered by the Samaritans for two years from building the Temple. The Bible makes no attempt to explain this inconsistency, but in an extra-biblical addition (*Ant.* 11.20) Josephus preserves the favorable portrait of Cyrus by explaining that Cyrus was unaware of what was happening because of his preoccupation with the wars in which he was engaged.

9. SUMMARY

Josephus is of importance in reconstructing the restoration period because while his chief source is *I Esdras*, he does apparently have additional sources, notably in correcting the chronology of the Persian kings.

The verb *διασπείρω*, which corresponds to the noun *Diaspora*, generally has a negative connotation in Greek literature. In Josephus, however, who spent the last thirty years of his life in the *Diaspora*, namely in Rome, it is used in connection with exile and is viewed negatively in only one passage.

Though Josephus had ample, opportunities, in his survey of all of Jewish history, to mention the key word for restoration, *ἀποκατάστασις*, he actually employs it only twice, both times significantly without mentioning the return from Babylonian captivity or the rebuilding of Jerusalem but only the restoration of the Temple, namely what Josephus, the proud priest, was most interested in. As for the verb, *ἀποκαθίστημι*, corresponding to this noun, it likewise centers on the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Significantly, Josephus omits in his paraphrase the biblical statement that the Jews are to be gath-

ered from all the lands in which they have been scattered. He does not mention at all the prophecy of the restoration of the ten lost tribes.

The two chief leaders in the return of the Jews from Babylonian Captivity, Ezra and Nehemiah, are given extraordinarily little space in Josephus. Despite the importance of Ezra's pedigree in the biblical text, there is not even any mention of it in Josephus. Nor is there anything about Ezra's wisdom; rather, the emphasis is on Ezra's loyalty to his ruler.

What attention Josephus does give to Nehemiah is chiefly to his loyalty to the Persian king and to his concern with rebuilding the Temple and reinstituting the sacrifices. His greatest achievement, according to Josephus, was not in getting the Jews of Babylonia to return to Palestine but rather in getting those already in Palestine to leave the countryside and to move into the city proper. On the other hand, Josephus heightens the role of Zerubbabel, referring to him as Darius' friend and complimenting him for his wisdom, as shown notably in his speech demonstrating the power of women and, above all, of truth. In particular, Josephus emphasizes Zerubbabel's role in building the Temple.

Despite the fact that Josephus had considerable knowledge of the prophets and declares that it is the prophets who guarantee the accuracy of the record of Jewish history, he devotes more attention to Jonah and Jeremiah than to Isaiah, notwithstanding that so much of the book of Isaiah deals with history. In particular, he makes no mention of Isaiah 40, which alludes to the return from Babylonian captivity. When he does mention Isaiah's prophecy that King Cyrus of Persia will send the Jews back to their home, it is to build the Temple.

As to Jeremiah, Josephus presents him as a prophet of doom. When he does say that G-d will restore the Jews to their ancestral land, it is so that they may rebuild the Temple. As to Ezekiel, Josephus nowhere cites his prophecies of restoration. As for the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Josephus emphasizes their role in encouraging the Jews to rebuild the Temple.

That Josephus' focus is on the Temple rather than on the restoration of Jerusalem may be seen from the fact that he nowhere mentions, let alone laments, the Roman decision to transfer the capital from Jerusalem to Caesarea.

In an important extra-biblical remark, Josephus states that King Cyrus of Persia actually read Isaiah's prophecy and thus had direct knowledge of G-d's intention to rebuild the Temple. As for the fact that Cyrus apparently did not stop the Samaritans from hindering the rebuilding of the Temple, Josephus explains that Cyrus was unaware of this because he was so busy fighting battles.

PART FIVE

RABBINIC SOURCES

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

RABBINIC SOURCES FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION: WITH WHAT ASSUMPTION DOES ONE START?

In a letter (20 December 1995) to the present writer Fergus Millar remarks: "I suppose that the truth is that I become more and more sceptical as to whether *any* use can be made of rabbinic sources for the period before the fall of the Temple. I would certainly rule out absolutely any use of either the Jerusalem or the Babylonian Talmud, given the length of time which had elapsed and the profoundly changed circumstances under which both were written.... So, although there is a vast bibliography, in my present view it is pretty well all systematically misleading. One must start from the genuine contemporary documents (and, of course, contemporary literary texts, like Josephus)." Indeed, in his recent monumental survey,¹ one will note Professor Millar's deliberate and almost total disregard of rabbinic evidence, and this despite the fact that the rabbis have so much to say about the period that he covers. Similarly, in another recent book, Price² states that any rabbinic story unconfirmed by outside sources is to be treated as fiction.

Methodologically, should one start with the assumption that the rabbinic literature is not trustworthy in historical matters unless proven otherwise, in view of the fact that the earliest of the midrashim dates from no earlier than 400 C.E., and the codification of the Jerusalem Talmud dates from about the same time, and the codification of the Babylonian Talmud dates from about a century later, and in view of the fact that the rabbinic documents are concerned with history in only the most incidental way, and in view of the fact that we do not know how broad were the circles which they reflect; or should one start with the opposite assumption?

There are at least six reasons why one should start with the prem-

¹ Millar 1993.

² Price 1992, 264.

ise that statements by the rabbis in historical matters are deserving of some consideration: (1) It is much more difficult to tell a lie, especially systematically, than to tell the truth. Human beings may well be defined as “truth-speaking animals.” We shall do well to be guided by this principle, which is really based upon an understanding of human nature. Examples in rabbinic literature abound. Thus, says Rabbi Hamnuna (*b.Ket.* 22b, *b.Ned.* 91a), if a woman says to her husband, “You have divorced me,” she is believed even when there is no further evidence, the presumption being that a woman would not be so insolent as to lie in his presence, though the Talmud (*b.Ket.* 22b) is quick to add that this is the case only when there are no witnesses who support her, but that when there are witnesses who support her she may be brazen enough to lie. Likewise, we have a right to presume (*b.B. Mez* 3a) that a debtor would not be so impertinent toward his creditor as to give a complete denial to the latter’s claim. Furthermore, we may assume that an employer, even in the absence of witnesses, is believed when he says that he paid his employee at the end of the day’s labor, since we presume that he would not transgress the biblical law that requires him to do so (*Lev.* 19:13); and, in any case, we have a right to assume that the employee would not permit delay of his payment. We may counter by saying that in our day people are brazen enough to make such denials; but the point to be emphasized is that the rabbis, in their era, felt secure in making such an assumption. (2) The rabbis were well aware of the biblical commandment to keep far from falsehood (*Exod.* 23:7). G-d’s very seal is truth; and the rabbis deduce from the fact that the Hebrew word for truth, אמת, has the first, middle, and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, that G-d is the first, middle, and last (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 81.2). The world itself is said to be preserved by three things, the first of which is truth (*m. ’Abot* 1:18). (3) The Talmud is a sacred book, and it is hard to imagine that in such a work the authors would be deliberately negligent of the truth. In particular, as we can see from the statement (*b.Meg.* 15a) of the third-century Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedath in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina, “Whoever reports a saying in the name of its originator brings deliverance to the world,” how important it was to acknowledge accurately one’s indebtedness to a predecessor. The rabbis, as Safrai³ has stressed,

³ Safrai 1999, 158.

took great care in the transmission of what they had learned from their teachers. They even went so far as to refuse to modify the language of a dictum, insisting that “a person must state teachings in the language of his teacher” (*m. ‘Ed.* 1:3). (4) The Talmud is a book of debate, with rabbis constantly challenging one another. The rabbis are not afraid to admit that they do not know, and, indeed, in no fewer than 319 instances the Talmud, after recording a disputed point, uses the word תִּיקוּ to admit that the matter remains undecided. In particular, the rabbis were sharply divided in their attitude toward the Romans.⁴ It is almost as if the motto of the work is “Dubito ergo sum.” The Talmud (*b. Meg.* 9a) records the miracle that the seventy (or seventy-two) translators of the Torah into Greek agreed in their versions, though they were in separate cubicles; we may suggest that it would have been a greater miracle if they had agreed after being in the same room. In such a setting, which encourages critical method, the participants would have been constantly alert to avoid falsehood lest their credibility be impugned. (5) It is precisely because the Talmud is not a history book that the remarks of rabbis concerning historical details should be of particular value, inasmuch as they are usually said incidentally, casually, and in passing. In this respect, as Lieberman has remarked, Rabbinic literature has much in common with the non-literary papyri and inscriptions.⁵ (6) As for the gap in time between the events and the rabbis who report them, we must realize how carefully they cultivated their memories, as even Jerome, who is often hostile to Judaism, acknowledged (*Epistle to Titus* 3:9).

Let it be stated here emphatically, however, that, like Azariah dei Rossi in his *Me’or ‘Eynayim*, we do not ascribe rabbinic recollection of historical details in their corpus to the oral tradition emanating from Sinai, since this corpus includes personal opinions that are subject to contradiction and error. Moreover, one must draw a sharp line of distinction between Halakah, which is religious law and which is traditionally regarded as binding, and Aggada—and this includes scientific information, as well as the historical data comprising the present essay—, which is lore, and which the rabbis themselves treated with considerable freedom.⁶ In particular, we may call atten-

⁴ See Feldman 1992b, 39-81.

⁵ Lieberman 1939-44, 395.

⁶ See Baron 1964, 221.

tion to Azariah dei Rossi's view that round hyperbolic numbers in rabbinic literature are to be understood not literally but rather as stereotypical qualitative statements; and this will explain discrepancies in such matters between the Babylonian and Jerusalemite Aggadot. Likewise we may explain rabbinic identification of distinct historical personalities and discrepancies between rabbinic passages as due to rabbinic aims to teach and moralize.⁷ Their errors in matters of science and history are due to the era in which they lived and to the fact that in such matters the rabbis were subject to human error. Finally, matters of chronology, as Azariah notes, are of no practical halakhic concern, and hence we may explain the rabbis' error in indicating that the Persian period lasted thirty-four years and that the First Temple was destroyed in 421 B.C.E., when biblical and both Jewish and non-Jewish historical writing assert that the Persian period lasted much longer and that the First Temple was destroyed in 587 B.C.E.⁸

We may suggest that a somewhat similar problem arises in what use, if any, is to be made of the so-called *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. This is a collection of thirty biographies, for the most part of individual Roman emperors of the second and third centuries, attributed to six different authors and addressed to Diocletian, Constantine, and others. On the surface this would seem to be a work similar to the biographies by Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch, and Suetonius, which contain numerous anecdotes of the sort found in the rabbinic literature. What makes the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* particularly similar to the historical data found in rabbinic literature is that the work seems to have been edited by a single author, since the separate authors of the biographies show great similarity in construction and language; moreover, as in rabbinic literature, there is a considerable amount of repetition from one biography to another. Likewise, as in rabbinic

⁷ Azariah dei Rossi 1970, 227-228, 235-239. See Safran 1979, 132-133. The most famous example of Azariah's readiness to concede that the rabbinic aggadah need not be taken literally is his understanding (p. 217) of the rabbinic statement (*b. Git.* 56b) that when the Emperor Titus died his skull, when split open, contained something like a sparrow two pounds in weight. To Azariah, convinced that such a creature could not have survived thus and that the non-Jewish sources of Titus' death make no mention of this, the passage is to be understood as a pedagogical device of the Rabbis to illustrate the consequences of sinfulness.

⁸ Azariah dei Rossi 1970, pp. 310-25; Weinberg 2001, Part 3, Section 2, Chapter 22, esp. 352; Part 3, Sect. 3, Chapter 42, esp. 533-34.

literature, there are numerous inconsistencies and anachronisms. Just as the rabbinic literature presents data from several centuries earlier though it was not codified until the fourth century at the earliest, so the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* is generally thought to be the product of a single writer or editor at the end of the fourth or the early fifth century. The work has been termed a historical romance;⁹ yet, as even the ultra-critical Syme admits, a wealth of valuable details can be disengaged from it.¹⁰ We may cite, as an example, its statement (*Life of Hadrian* 14.2) that the cause of the Bar Kochba rebellion was Hadrian's decree forbidding circumcision. In contrast, Cassius Dio (69.12.1-2) gives the cause as Hadrian's decision to establish a city of his own on the site of the ruined Jerusalem, as well as a temple dedicated to Zeus on the site of the Jewish Temple. The Vermes-Millar revision of Schürer,¹¹ aware that it must choose between the two reasons, prefers to accept the *Historia Augusta's* explanation, since there is direct evidence for the universality of the ban on circumcision in regard to the Arabs, Samaritans, and Egyptians, and not merely in regard to the Jews. In sum, even if we are suspicious of a later source, this does not mean that we should not examine it at all. As Safrai¹² puts it, so simply and so sharply, "Every novice researcher knows that the descriptions of Thucydides are not identical with those of Plutarch. The distinction between the source and the development of the tradition is a rudimentary component of any scholarly effort. Notwithstanding this, would anyone attempt to study the history of the Peloponnesian War without Plutarch?"

2. PARALLELS BETWEEN RABBINIC LITERATURE AND JOSEPHUS: AGRIPPA I

Shaye Cohen¹³ concludes that the rabbinic tradition in historiography must be tested by comparing it with parallels in Josephus or other sources. Josephus is, moreover, at least a century older than the recording of the earliest rabbinic source. Does this, however, mean that the rabbinic sources should be disregarded?

⁹ Syme 1968, 205, 219.

¹⁰ Syme 1968, 177.

¹¹ Schürer 1973-87, 1:537-40.

¹² Safrai 1999, 144.

¹³ Cohen 1986, 7-14.

Let us look at some examples.

The potential importance of rabbinic literature as a source for the history of the Second Temple period is particularly great because our chief source for the period, Josephus, is so suspect, especially for those events in which he personally was involved. A case in point is the portrayal of Agrippa I. As Schwartz¹⁴ has noted, neither Philo nor Josephus seems to have any sources antagonistic to Agrippa I, even though we may well suspect that he was less than admirable, to judge from his luxurious living and the large payments that he made to the Emperor Tiberius' freedmen in the hope of securing their co-operation (Jos., *Ant.* 18.145), as well as from the fact that he seems to have enjoyed being flattered and did not rebuke his flatterers even when they referred to him as more than mortal (*Ant.* 19.345-46). Moreover, we may well be suspicious that the conclave in Tiberias to which Agrippa I invited five kings (*Ant.* 19.338-42) and which Marsus, the Roman governor of Syria, ordered to be broken up, was an instance of Agrippa's ambition for greater power.¹⁵ The fact that Josephus (*Ant.* 19.328-331) goes out of his way to present an encomium for Agrippa, comparable to the encomia that he writes for a number of biblical figures, notably Moses (*Ant.* 4.328-31), Samuel (*Ant.* 6.292-94), Saul (*Ant.* 6.343-50), and David (*Ant.* 7.390-91), and such as he presents for no other post-biblical figure, and in particular to contrast him, in the most glowing terms, with Herod is a clue to the tremendous admiration that he wishes his readers to conceive for Agrippa. We may well wonder whether Agrippa played the key role in getting Claudius to be emperor in succession to Caligula (*Ant.* 19.236-45), whereas Cassius Dio (60.8.2) simply asserts that Agrippa co-operated with Claudius in seeking the rule, since he then happened to be in Rome. We may likewise be suspicious of the extremely positive portrayal of Agrippa by Philo (*Legat.* 266-329) in persuading Caligula to cancel his project of setting up a statue of himself in Jerusalem, perhaps influenced by the fact that Philo's nephew had married one of Agrippa's daughters (*Ant.* 19.276).

¹⁴ Schwartz 1990, 157-71.

¹⁵ Schwartz 1990, 138-39, suggests that the conference was simply a friendly meeting, a kind of class reunion. But Marsus may well have had grounds for being suspicious of Agrippa's ambition in view of the elaborate entertainment that Agrippa gave to these kings (*Ant.* 19.339) and the appreciation that Agrippa showed for the honor given him by these kings.

It is precisely in such a situation, where the contemporary sources seem to be biased, that we may find the rabbinic sources of some value, if read carefully. We may, of course, express skepticism as to whether the rabbis are objective when it comes to relations with Rome, in view of the terrible destruction wrought by the Romans in the Great War of 66-74, in which the Temple, the central feature of Jewish religious life, was destroyed by the Romans, as well as in view of the terrible losses suffered by the Jews at the hands of the Romans in the uprisings led by Lukuas-Andreas in 115-117 and by Bar Kochba in 132-135. One might have expected the rabbis to speak about Agrippa in the most bitter terms, inasmuch as he was the person who represented Rome's most serious attempt to establish a *modus vivendi* with Judea.¹⁶ But the rabbis by no means speak with one voice; and hence it should come as no surprise that while there are rabbis who condemn the Romans, such an influential figure as the third-century Palestinian Resh Laqish (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 9.13), commenting on the verse (Gen. 1:31) "And behold it was very good," says that this refers to the earthly kingdom, that is Rome; and, in particular, he compliments the Romans for their administration of justice. His contemporary, Rabbi Levi, is especially impressed with the security that the Empire had brought its inhabitants against robbers (*Mid. Lev. Rab.* 35.5). His contemporary, the Palestinian Yosef bar Hanina, although well aware of the oppression by the empire and its rapacity toward its subjects, regards its success and prosperity as evidence of G-d's justice (*Mid. Eccl. Rab.* 5.7.1).

What complicates the use of rabbinic sources for Agrippa I, however, is that the rabbis speak merely of "King Agrippa," without specifying whether Agrippa I or II is meant. But, as Schwartz¹⁷ has suggested, it seems reasonable to conclude that the rabbis did not see much difference in their attitude toward Agrippa I and Agrippa II, since otherwise they would have distinguished between the two. The rabbis (*m. Sot.* 7:8), like Josephus (*Ant.* 19.331), note Agrippa's scrupulous observance of the Jewish tradition, adding that when he read the Torah at the septennial ceremony (Deut. 31:10-13), he read from it standing, whereupon he was praised by the sages. The Talmud (*m. Sot.* 7:8) may even help us to establish the Greek text

¹⁶ So Schwartz 1990, 158.

¹⁷ Schwartz 1990, 162.

of Josephus. Thus we read (*Ant.* 19.332) that a certain Jew named Simon denounced Agrippa on the grounds that the right of entrance to the Temple should be restricted to those who were ἐγγενέσιν, that is, those who were of native Jewish stock. Niese, in his edition of Josephus, emends this to εὐαγέσιν, that is, those who are ritually clean, since in the previous sentence in Josephus we read that Simon had denounced Agrippa as “unholy.” But the Mishnah here notes that when Agrippa read from the Torah and came to the passage, “You may not set over you [as king] a foreigner” (Deut. 17:15) Agrippa burst into tears, presumably because he was of part Edomite descent. A key point in Josephus’ portrayal of Agrippa I is, as we have noted, that he did not reject the extreme flattery uttered by his followers (*Ant.* 19.345). Here the evidence of the rabbis (*b. Soṭ* 41b, t. *Soṭ* 7.16), though, to be sure, they do not indicate which Agrippa is meant, is in accord with Josephus, for we read: “It was said in Rabbi Nathan’s [second century, Babylonian and Palestinian] name: Israel was doomed to destruction because they flattered King Agrippa.” What is striking here is that we have a tradition that is highly critical of Agrippa and that may correct the undue favoritism shown by Philo and Josephus.¹⁸

3. THE CONVERSION OF THE ADIABENIANS

An example where information from rabbinic literature may be useful in confirming and supplementing data from other sources is the account of the conversion of the Adiabeniens.

Our major source for this episode is Josephus (*Ant.* 20.17-96). It seems likely, in view of the fact that Josephus begins the passage with a standard phrase, κατὰ τοῦτον δὲ τὸν καιρὸν,¹⁹ indicating that he is moving from one source to another, that he is dependent upon a new and special source detailing this episode. That, indeed, he is dependent upon a special source would seem to be indicated by

¹⁸ Though it is tempting to think that Agrippa II, a contemporary of the destruction of the Temple, is meant here, a tradition which attempts to explain the destruction of the Temple might well view a generation as a brief period, as we find, for example, in the case of the Christian tradition which viewed the destruction of the Temple as divine punishment for the death of Jesus. So Schwartz 1990, 161.

¹⁹ See Schwartz 1981-82, 241-68.

the fact that in three instances (*Ant.* 20.48, 53, 96) within this pericope he promises the reader that he will later give him certain information which he actually fails to provide. The fact that Josephus did not delete the cross-references would indicate that he here did little, if anything, to check his data. Hence, information from other sources, particularly for these unfulfilled promises, is especially welcome.

There are at least seven details where the rabbinic sources confirm or supplement what we find in Josephus: (1) Josephus (*Ant.* 20.49-53) tells us that Helena, the mother of the king of Adiabene, seeing that peace prevailed in the kingdom, visited Jerusalem in order to make a thanksgiving offering in the Temple, and that she and King Izates supplied with food the inhabitants there, who were hard pressed by famine. The reader would like to know more about what preceded the peace that prevailed in the kingdom and precisely why she made the trip to Jerusalem at this particular time. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.48), immediately after his account of Izates' conversion, declares that he will report at a later time how G-d rewarded Izates and his children for their piety, but we do not hear of the miraculous escape from the dangers that confronted Izates' children. Nor do we hear of G-d's aid to Izates during the period that elapsed between Izates' conversion and Helena's journey to Jerusalem. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.53) tells us that he will "leave to a later time the further tale of good deeds performed for our city by this royal pair." The Mishnah (*Naz.* 3:6) likewise tells of Helena's journey to Jerusalem but tells us why she made the trip at that particular time. Whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 20.49) states merely that peace prevailed in the kingdom of Adiabene and that Helena conceived a desire to go to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple and to make thank-offerings there, the Mishnah supplements this account by telling us that her son had gone off to war and that she had vowed that if he returned safely she would become a Nazir for seven years. It adds that when, indeed, he did return safely she fulfilled her vow by becoming a Nazir for seven years and that thereafter she went to the Land of Israel, whereupon, in accordance with the view of the House of Hillel, she became a Nazir for another seven years, at the end of which time she was made unclean, so that she became a Nazir for still another seven years.²⁰

²⁰ Schiffman 1987, 298, concludes that the account of Josephus and that of the

Josephus (*Ant.* 20.52) tells us that because of her benefactions to the Jews of Jerusalem at the time of the famine Queen Helena “left a very great name that will be famous forever.” The Rabbis (*t.Suk.* 1:1) give us further insight as to the reason for her fame, namely that she was so observant of the commandments that she built a huge sukkah even though she, being a woman, was not required to fulfill the commandment of dwelling in a sukkah and, indeed (*b.Suk.* 2b) did nothing that was not in accordance with the Sages. Moreover, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 20.71), Izates sent five sons of tender age to Jerusalem to get a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew language and culture at the same time that his mother Helena had gone to worship in the Temple. This does not, to be sure, accord completely with the rabbinic tradition (*t.Suk.* 1:1), which speaks of seven rather than five sons and refers to them as Helena’s rather than Izates’; but it speaks of them as תלמידי חכמים, and the main point is the same, namely that the royal family of Adiabene educated its children in Jerusalem to be learned in Jewish lore.²¹ Moreover, whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 20.53) fails to fulfill his promise that he will at a later time tell us of the good deeds performed for Jerusalem by the royal family, the Mishnah (*Yoma* 3:10) supplies us with the detail that Queen Helena set a golden candlestick over the door of the sanctuary of the Temple and also made a golden tablet, on which was written the pericope of the wife accused of infidelity. Furthermore, there is an allusion to the charitable deeds of the royal family in the rabbinic passage (*t.Pe’ah* 4:18) in which Izates’ brother and successor, Monobazus, when accused of squandering his treasury, replies that “My brothers stored up below [that is on earth], but I have stored

Rabbis are completely at variance regarding the issue of the timing of Helena’s trip to Jerusalem, inasmuch as the Mishnah assumes that Helena left Adiabene after the battles in which her son Izates was involved, whereas Josephus relates that she left Adiabene before those battles. However, previous to his account of Helena’s trip Josephus (*Ant.* 20.48) asserts that Izates and his children were often threatened with destruction and were preserved through divine intervention. There is no reason why we have to assume that all the battles occurred after she left.

²¹ There is not necessarily a contradiction, inasmuch as Josephus (*Ant.* 20.71) does not speak of *the* five sons of Izates but rather of five sons. Moreover, in the rabbinic tradition the injunction “And thou shalt make them known unto thy sons and they sons’ sons” is said to mean that to him who teaches his son Torah the Torah ascribes merit as though he had taught him, his son, and his son’s son until the end of all time.

up above [that is, in heaven].” Here we may note that there is no necessary contradiction between what Josephus and the rabbis say, inasmuch as the former speaks of the good deeds performed by the royal family (βασιλεῦσιν, literally kings), without specifying which members of the family, whereas the Tosefta specifies that it was Monobazus, Izates’ brother and successor.

As to the central feature of the narrative, namely the actual conversion of Izates, there are, to be sure, a number of differences between Josephus’ account and that of the rabbis (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 46:11). In the first place, Josephus focuses at length on the conversion of Izates (*Ant.* 20.34-48) and does not mention the conversion of Monobazus until later (*Ant.* 20.75) and then only briefly, whereas the rabbinic account has them convert at the same time. Secondly, the rabbinic account speaks of Izates and Monobazus as the sons of King Ptolemy, whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 20.18) gives the name of their father as Monobazus. Thirdly, according to the rabbinic account the conversion took place while Izates’ father was still alive, whereas, according to Josephus, it occurred after the death of the father (*Ant.* 20.24). Fourthly, Josephus (*Ant.* 20.34) mentions the role of a Jewish merchant named Ananias in influencing the king’s wives, as well as Izates, to convert to Judaism, but there is no mention of such a role in the midrash. Fifthly, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 20.39), Izates’ mother tried to stop him from being circumcised because she regarded it as dangerous if his subjects should discover that he had taken such strange rites upon himself. Sixthly, Josephus (*Ant.* 20.43) mentions the role of another Jew named Eleazar, who urged Izates to undergo circumcision, whereas Ananias had urged him not to do so since it would antagonize his subjects; the rabbis, on the other hand, mention no such role. Seventhly, it is the father of Izates and Monobazus who is rewarded for agreeing to the circumcision of his sons, whereas in Josephus (*Ant.* 20.48) it is Izates who is rewarded.

There can, indeed, be no denying that there are differences in details; but the rabbinic account is in accord with that of Josephus in the most important points, namely that those converted included Helena, Izates, and Monobazus; that Izates did at first hesitate to be circumcised; that, in fact, the immediate occasion for the decision to be circumcised was that he was reading from the Pentateuch (*Ant.* 20.44) and that he realized that it was necessary not merely to read from it but also to do what it commanded. Moreover, in Josephus, as in the Midrash, the conversion is followed by his victories over

the Arabs (*Ant.* 20.77-80) and the vaunted Parthians (*Ant.* 20.81-91), due to the providence (πρόνοια) of G-d. As to the Midrash's identification of Izates' father as Ptolemy, this may be, in the eyes of the rabbis, a general name for kings during the period, just as Pharaoh was in an earlier period.

Finally, Josephus (*Ant.* 20.96) promises the reader that he will later narrate the acts of Izates' brother and successor, King Monobazus; but he never fulfills this promise. The Talmud (*b.Men.* 32b), however, supplements Josephus' account by relating that the members of the house of Monobazus were so pious that they carried a mezuzah with them and set it up in the inns where they stayed, even though a mezuzah is not required for such temporary dwelling-places.

4. THE JEWISH WAR AGAINST THE ROMANS (66-74): THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

When it comes to the Jewish War against the Romans there can be no doubt that Josephus has much more information than what we find in the rabbinic literature. Josephus (*War* 2.409) states that the immediate cause of the war against the Romans in 66 was the failure of those who officiated in the Temple to accept sacrifices on behalf of the Roman Empire and its emperor. Eleazar son of Ananias the high priest, who then held the position of captain of the Temple, is named by Josephus as the one who persuaded those in charge of the Temple services to reject such gifts. The Talmud (*b.Git.* 56a) likewise ascribes the outbreak of the war to the refusal of those in charge of the Temple sacrifices to accept an offering submitted by the Roman Emperor. Here, however, it is Rabbi Zechariah ben Abkulas who is named as the one responsible for persuading the people not to accept the sacrifice. What is to be emphasized is that the Talmudic version is corroborated in its main point, namely that the immediate cause of the war was the failure to accept a sacrifice on behalf of the Roman Emperor. Moreover, Josephus (*War* 6.94) and the Mishnah (*Ta'an.* 4:6) are in accord in noting that the daily sacrifice ceased to be offered on the seventeenth of Tammuz. With regard to the discrepancy between the two accounts as to the name of the one responsible for persuading the people there is not necessarily a discrepancy at all. In Josephus (*War* 4.225-26) we read that Zacharias the son of Amphicalleus [presumably Abkulas], a priest, was one of the leaders of the Zealots. The fact that both Eleazar and

Zacharias are priests must have established a kinship between them. One may suggest that Zacharias turned to a fellow priest who had more influence than he, namely the son of the high priest, and that it was the latter who succeeded.

The Talmud (*b.Git.* 55b-56a) has an account, unparalleled as such in Josephus, that ascribes the destruction of Jerusalem to an event involving a certain Kamza and Bar Kamza. According to this narrative, by mistake a certain man's servant, sent to invite Kamza, invited Bar Kamza, his master's enemy, instead. When the master refused to admit Bar Kamza, even when the latter offered to pay for the cost of the entire party and when, despite this, the rabbis, who were present, remained silent, Bar Kamza, in revenge, informed the Emperor that the Jews were rebelling against him. When the Emperor asked for evidence, he was told to test their loyalty by sending them an offering so as to see whether they would offer it. We may well ask what connection there was between the insult offered to Bar Kamza and the accusation of a rebellion by the Jews against Rome. However, by putting the two accounts, those of the Rabbis and of Josephus, together we may shed light on the stance of the Rabbis toward revolution against Rome. The Talmudic version declares that the Rabbis were inclined to continue the offerings in order not to offend the Roman government. Likewise, Josephus (*War* 2.410) states that the chief priests and the notables (γνώριμοι) besought those who officiated in the Temple not to abandon the customary offering for their rulers. It would appear reasonable to suggest that the Rabbis were among those notables. We may wonder why the revolutionaries were able to hold out so long against the mighty Roman army and why they seemed to command considerable support among the populace. The fact that at least one of them, Zacharias, was a Zealot and the fact that he was able to convince the other Rabbis is an indication that the Zealots found some support among the Rabbis themselves. Here the rabbinic account would appear to supplement and correct that of Josephus. According to the latter (*War* 2.410), the chief priests and the notables earnestly but unsuccessfully besought the priests who officiated in the Temple services not to abandon the customary offering for the Roman Emperor. According to the Talmud (*b.Git.* 56a), the Rabbis, who, as we have suggested above, were presumably among the notables, were divided in their opinions, most of them being inclined, in the name of peace, not to offend the Roman government, but were eventually convinced by Rabbi

Zechariah. Whether or not, therefore, we accept the historicity of the account of Kamza and Bar Kamza, the Rabbinic account not only corroborates Josephus' version of the immediate cause of the rebellion but also sheds important light on the Rabbinic attitude toward the rebellion.

Furthermore, the Rabbinic account serves as an important corrective to that of the Sibylline Oracles (5.28-29), which attributes to Nero the entire responsibility for the war.

Where we are on the safest ground is where we find agreement of Josephus, Tacitus, and the rabbis. Such an instance is to be found in the tradition that during the siege of Jerusalem vast quantities of grain were burnt. Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.12) very briefly states that there were continual incendiary fires, and that a vast quantity of grain was burnt. The most famous incident in rabbinic literature connected with the siege of Jerusalem is Johanan ben Zakkai's escape and his encounter with Vespasian.²² This has been the subject of a vast literature,²³ most of which has been critical of its historicity. And yet, even those who cast doubt on the account will have to admit that the circumstances of the escape are in accord with the information that we have from Josephus, namely, the tremendous shortage of food. The rabbinic account (*b.Git.* 56a) tells how the servant of Martha, one of the richest women in Jerusalem, sought and failed to find some fine flour, then white flour, then dark flour, then barley flour. Then she herself went out to see if she could find anything at all to eat, but she found nothing. Finally, some dung stuck to her foot and she died. The shortage of grain and its consequence, high prices, and the implied search finally for dung are both corroborated in Josephus (*War* 5.571): "A measure of corn had been sold for a talent, and ... later when it was no longer possible to gather herbs, the city being all walled in, some were reduced to such straits that they searched the sewers and for old cow dung and ate the offal therefrom, and what once would have disgusted them to look at had now become food." The rabbinic literature, like satire, is particularly useful in evoking the mood of the time, even if, as in satire, it may resort to

²² There are four major versions of the story: *b.Git.* 56a-b, *Mid. Lam. Rab.* 1.31, *'Abot R. Nat.*, version A, chapter 4; and *'Abot R. Nat.*, version B, chapter 6.

²³ See the bibliography in Schäfer 1979, 43-101; and most recently, Price 1992, 264-70.

exaggeration. Thus the rabbis (*Midr. Lam. Rab.* 4.12) recall that so great was the hunger at the time of the destruction that there were not even thistles to eat, whereupon the Romans roasted kids adjacent to the city of Jerusalem; and this so aroused the appetite of the Jews that they died. This is very similar to what we find in Josephus (*War* 5.521), namely that the Romans displayed masses of food so as to inflame the pangs of the Jews' hunger.

Moreover, that the revolutionaries refused to permit any to leave the besieged city is clear not only in the rabbinic version (*b. Git* 56a) but also in Josephus (*War* 5.30), who states that "watch was kept everywhere; and the brigand chiefs, divided on all else, put to death as their common enemies any in favor of peace with the Romans or suspected of an intention to desert."

5. THE JEWISH WAR AGAINST THE ROMANS: MASADA

Many have wondered why so striking an event as the mass mutual suicide at Masada is mentioned only in Josephus. Here, too, the rabbis may cast some light. We read in *Midr. Cant. Zuta* (end), as Lieberman²⁴ has noted, that as a result of the dissension between a certain Menahem and a certain Hillel, Menahem left with eight hundred students. This may very well be consonant with Josephus' statement (*War* 2.433) that Menahem took some intimate friends with him to Masada, where he took some weapons, and then returned to Jerusalem, where he was murdered (*War* 2.448). According to Josephus (*War* 2.447), Eleazar ben Jair, a relative of Menahem, together with some others, managed to escape to Masada. According to the Midrashic text, Menahem's students were dressed in golden scale armor; but one of the manuscripts reads that they were dressed in *seriqonin*, that is silk dresses. We may here suggest, however, that the word should be emended to *siqariin*, that is, daggers, whence the name Sicarii. Indeed, Josephus (*War* 7.253) tells us that it was the Sicarii who had occupied Masada under the leadership of Eleazar ben Jair. The number eight hundred is close to the total number at Masada (*War* 7.400), 967, which included women and children. To be sure, the Midrash does not mention the murder of Menahem,

²⁴ Lieberman 1942, 179-184.

but it does mention the murders of Hanin ben Matron and Judah the brother of Menahem; and Hanin may perhaps be identified with the high priest Ananias, who is mentioned by Josephus (*War* 2.442) as having been murdered by the revolutionaries.

6. THE STORY OF ABBA KOLON AND THE FOUNDING OF ROME

An example, admittedly speculative, of light that may be cast by a midrashic story upon historical events may be seen in a passage (*Cant. Rab.* 1.6.4) in which the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Levi notes that at the founding of Rome each time two huts were built they collapsed, until an old man named Abba Kolon told the Romans that unless water from the Euphrates were mixed with mortar, the buildings would not stand. He volunteered to get the water and, disguised as a wine carrier, journeyed to the Euphrates, where he obtained some water, returned, and mixed it with the mortar. The huts then remained standing. The city thus built was called Rome-Babylon.²⁵

This enigmatic story may be understood against the background of the third century, when Rabbi Levi flourished. At that time there were sharp fluctuations in the fortunes of the two great powers, Rome and Persia. In the year 258 Gaul and Spain were invaded by the Franks, the Goths ravaged Greece and Asia Minor, and King Shapur I of Persia seized the important city of Nisibis in Mesopotamia. The nadir in Roman fortunes occurred in the year 259 when, after a reverse at the hands of the Persians near Edessa in northwestern Mesopotamia, the emperor Valerian was forced to make peace with the Persians. Then came the height of ignominious disgrace, when Valerian was abducted by Shapur and indeed ended his life in captivity in that year. In 260, with the collapse of the Roman army, Shapur managed to occupy Antioch and most of Asia Minor, as far north as the Sea of Marmora. Such staunch Persian patriots as the great Babylonian rabbi, Samuel, who was apparently a close friend of Shapur, would seem to have rejoiced in these victories; and his sentiments would appear to have been shared by the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine,

²⁵ See Feldman 1990-91, 239-266.

who were exploited by exorbitant taxes and now saw the Roman Empire disintegrating.

But then, with Persia at the height of its success, came an utterly unexpected challenge from Palmyra, the principal station on the caravan route from Damascus to Seleucia, which had previously paid homage to Persia. A succession of Roman emperors had given special privileges to the city, notably permitting it to levy tolls upon all goods passing through it. Most significantly for the understanding of our passage, Palmyra had been raised to the status of a Roman colony early in the third century and was exempted from the land tax, probably by Caracalla or Septimius Severus (see Ulpian, *Digest* 50.15.1.5). The very word *Kolon*, a pseudo-Greek word, appears in both Greek and Palmyrene in a bilingual inscription dating from the very century in which a nobleman named Odaenathus lived, on a Palmyrene bust of a certain Marcus Julius Maximus Aristeides, a *kolon* (colonist) of Berytus.²⁶

It was Palmyra that, under the command of Odaenathus and at the very height of Persian success in 260, made a counterraid into Mesopotamia, and, to the amazement of all, defeated Shapur on the western bank of the Euphrates and in a series of other engagements. Indeed, in 262, because of his fidelity to the emperor Gallienus when two leading generals of the Roman Empire, Cyriades and Macrianus (*Scrip. Hist. Aug., Tyranni Triginta* 2.1-2, 15.4), had renounced their allegiance, he was appointed *dux Orientis*, a kind of associate emperor for the East. There would seem to be an allusion to this event in the midrash (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 76.6), which states: “‘And behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one’—this refers to Ben Naṣor—‘before which three of the first were uprooted’—this refers to Macr[ian]us, Carus [?], and Cyriades.” This midrashic passage then proceeds to refer to Ben Naṣor as “my brother who advances upon me on behalf of Esau [i.e. Rome].” There would appear to be good reason to identify this Ben Naṣor with Odaenathus.²⁷

Thus, when Rabbi Levi declares that the huts in Rome collapsed until Abba Kolon brought water from the Euphrates and mixed it with mortar, he may well be referring to the dependence of the Roman Empire upon the natural resources of the East and, in particular, upon

²⁶ See Feldman 1990-91, 259 n.51.

²⁷ See Feldman 1990-91, 260, note 54.

the colony of Palmyra. The fact that Palmyra, the most important trading post between the Roman and Persian states, was an oasis in the desert will explain the significance of bringing water from the East.²⁸ The equation of Rome and Babylon (so in pseudepigraphic, rabbinic, and Christian sources)²⁹ may reflect the fact that the two temples had been destroyed respectively by the Babylonians and the Romans, as well as the fact that it was now an ally in the East, Palmyra, that had saved the West. Thus the rabbinic passage may shed some light on an otherwise relatively obscure historical event in the third century.

7. CONCLUSION

Admittedly, though the first work in the canon of Jewish writings, namely the Bible, is, to a great degree, a history, the rabbinic writings are not history books; and there is not a single rabbinic work, with the exception of the *Seder Olam*, that may be classed as a history. But the Rabbis are keen observers of events; and, what is more, they glory in independence of judgment—precisely the crucial characteristics of good historians. While it is true that many of the events that they mention in passing occurred hundreds of years before the codification of the rabbinic writings, the rabbis place a great premium upon truth and, in their reverence for the past, take pains not to forget it. Of course, this does *not* mean that they cannot err in details. But their *general* impressions of events ring true; and where we can compare them with other sources, as, for example, Josephus, their

²⁸ The connection with water may perhaps explain the name Kolon, inasmuch as the Greek word κήλων (the letter *waw* in Kolon and the letter *yod* as in κήλων are often indistinguishable), which occurs in the Mishnah (*Mo'ed Q.* 1:1) refers to a mechanical contrivance for raising water by a waterwheel or bucket from a deep well. We may also suggest that there may be a play on the name Kolon, since the Greek word κῶλον in the plural is used in the LXX (Num. 14:29, Isa. 66:24) in the sense of “corpses”; hence Abba Kolon would be the father of corpses—an indication of the decrepit state of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, the Greek word κόλλα means glue (as it is also found in *m.Pes.* 3:1); and perhaps the indication would be that to glue the disintegrating Roman Empire together would require an accommodation with Persia.

²⁹ See Feldman 1990-91, 245-246, notes 15-17.

descriptions are often corroborated. And where they are not, there is often reason to dispute the versions of writers such as Josephus, who are no better than their sources and who are frequently less than impartial.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

RABBINIC INSIGHTS ON THE DECLINE AND FORTHCOMING FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

1. INTRODUCTION

Though the Roman Empire is commonly said to have fallen in 476, in the search for causes it is the third and fourth centuries in particular on which scholars have centered their attention. Unfortunately, for this period we do not have a Tacitus, and indeed we have relatively little literary, documentary, and archaeological evidence. In view of this, it is surprising that almost all writers on the topic, starting with Gibbon,¹ and including such scholars as Alföldy, Bowersock, Brown, Cameron, Ferrero, Fuchs, Grant, Haywood, Heidland, Jones, Katz, Kornemann, Lot, MacMullen, Mazzarino, Millar, Monks, Parker, Perowne, Rehm, Rostovtzeff, Seeck, Simkhovitch, Sorel, Stein, Vogt, Walbank, Walser, Werner, and White,² in their discussions of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and, in particular, in their

¹ Gibbon 1776-88; 1909-14.

² Alföldy 1974, 89-111; Bowersock et al.(eds.) 1977; Brown 1971 and 1978; Cameron 1993; Ferrero 1921; Fuchs 1964; Grant 1976; Haywood 1958; Heidland 1922; Jones 1964 and 1966; Katz 1955; Kornemann 1922, 193-202, 241-54; Lot, 1961; MacMullen 1966 and 1976 and 1988; Mazzarino 1966; Millar 1981; Monks 1957, 748-79; Parker 1958; Perowne 1966; Rehm, 1930; Rostovtzeff 1930, 197-214, and 1957; Seeck 1921-22; Simkhovitch 1916, 201-43; Sorel 1925; Stein 1959; Vogt 1965; Walbank 1969; Walser 1960-61, 142-61 and (with Pekáry) 1962; Werner 1939; White 1966. It seems especially remarkable that Alföldy, p. 90, in an article dealing specifically with the crisis of the third century as seen by contemporaries, can make a statement that "our preserved literary sources for the third century are quite diverse works of pagans and Christians, historians and rhetors, apologists and philosophers, written in Egypt, Asia Minor, Africa, Rome, Gaul, and elsewhere" and does not even mention the numerous comments of rabbis who lived during this very period. It likewise seems remarkable that Walser and Pekáry, in their survey of the scholarship of the two decades from 1939 to 1959 on the crisis of the third century do not mention a single entry dealing with rabbinic literature on this subject. Moreover, in his otherwise exhaustive survey, Jones 1964, 2:944-50, while devoting an entire section to the Jews and the Samaritans, does not cite a single reference to rabbinic literature.

survey of the crisis of the third and fourth centuries, totally disregard the comments of the numerous rabbis who lived during this very period. Rostovtzeff,³ in his massive and monumental work, so far as the rabbis are concerned, restricts himself to the single statement that "it might be worthwhile to collect the whole evidence, including that of the Talmud," on the subject of the social and economic life in Palestine, but he says nothing about the value of the rabbinic comments concerning the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Fuchs,⁴ to be sure, mentions the fact, though without analysis, that the rabbis comment on our subject, but he restricts himself to a single long footnote. Millar⁵ likewise restricts himself to five extremely brief references to the Talmud. Moreover, in his several works on the subject, MacMillan mentions, and without comment, rabbinic comments in only three footnotes.⁶ Finally, Walbank mentions the Talmud in only one sentence on the prices of wine and oil.⁷

Whereas the question of how the Jews were viewed by the Romans has been explored numerous times,⁸ the reverse side of the coin, namely how the Romans appeared to the Jews, has not. A few writers, to be sure, notably Herzog, Vermes, and de Lange,⁹ have surveyed the attitude of the rabbis toward the Roman Empire; but their discussions are brief and hardly systematic and do not concentrate, except incidentally, on the rabbinic attitude toward the decline and fall of the Empire. I myself,¹⁰ in a preliminary study, have dealt only tangentially with the rabbinic attitude on this topic.

To be sure, a number of writers have dealt with the attitude of other peoples toward the Roman Empire. We may here note the

³ Rostovtzeff 1957, 2:664, n. 32.

⁴ Fuchs 1964, 68-72.

⁵ Millar 1981, 95, 100, 195, 206, 262.

⁶ MacMullen 1966, 314 n. 37 and 330 n. 20; and 1976, 218-19 n. 29.

⁷ Walbank 1969, 26.

⁸ See, in particular, Radin 1915; La Piana 1927, 183-403; Heinemann 1931, 3-43; Leipoldt 1933; Goldstein 1939, 346-64; Heinemann 1939-40, 385-400; Marcus 1946, 61-78; Davis 1952; Leon 1960; Sherwin-White 1967, 86-101; Wilken 1967, 313-30; Stern 1974-84; Sevenster 1975; Smallwood 1976; Stern 1976, 1101-59; Daniel, 1979, 45-65; Gager 1983; Feldman 1984, 188-207, 340-45, 378-380; Feldman 1986, 15-42; Stern 1988, 13-25; Feldman 1993, 84-176; Feldman 1997b, 39-52; Schäfer 1997.

⁹ Herzog 1976, 83-91; Vermes 1975, 215-24; de Lange 1978, 255-81.

¹⁰ Feldman 1992b, 39-81.

works of Fuchs, Oliver, MacMullen, Forte, and Balsdon.¹¹ But aside from the few footnotes in Fuchs noted above, there is no citation of the rich Talmudic references for comparative purposes. It is particularly disappointing that in Balsdon's work, which attempts to present a fair cross-section of views of the Romans held by other peoples, there is not a single mention of the rabbinic passages.

In particular, we are fortunate in having the comments of a number of rabbis who lived or taught in Caesarea,¹² the seat of the Roman administration in Palestine, notably Rabbi Hoshaya (*y. Ter.* 10.3.47a), who came to Caesarea about the year 230, founded a school there, and soon came to be the most prominent rabbi of his generation.¹³ Many of his students became the outstanding rabbis of the next generation, including Rabbi Johanan ben Nappaha (*b. Erub.* 53a, *b. Yeb.* 57a, 65b), the most outstanding of all, and including Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedath (*y. Erub.* 8.3.25a), Resh Laqish (*y. Kil.* 9.4.32c), and Ammi (*b. Hul.* 86b, *y. Shab.* 3.1.5d).¹⁴ Caesarea also had a large number of other leading rabbis, most of whom, significantly, flourished during the latter half of the third and the beginning of the fourth century: Abba ben Hiyya bar Abba (fourth century, *b. Ta'an.* 15b, *b. Hul.* 86b), Abbahu (third and fourth century, *b. Rosh ha-Sh.* 34a, *b. Mo'ed Q.* 25b, *b. Sanh.* 14a, *b. Abod. Zar.* 39a), Adda (fourth century, *b. Mo'ed Q.* 20b), Ahaba ben Zera (fourth century, *y. Hal.* 1.1.57a), Hanina ben Abbahu (third and fourth century, *b. Qid.* 33b), Hanina bar Papa (third and fourth centuries, *b. Ket.* 84b, *b. Giṭ.* 29b), Hezekiah (fourth century, *y. Dem.* 1.3.22b), Hoshaya (third century, *y. Ter.* 10.3.47a, *y. Hal.* 1.7.58a), Hoshaya ben Simi (*y. Kil.* 6.3.30c), Isaac ben Eliezer (fourth century, *y. Bik.* 3.3.65d), Isaac ben Joseph (third and fourth centuries, *b. B. Bat.* 170a), Isaac ben Nahman (third century, *y. Suk.* 1.2.52b), Isaac Nappaha (third and fourth centuries, *b. Giṭ.* 59b-60a), Jacob ben Aha (third century, *y. Shebi.* 8.4.38a), Johanan b. Ila'i (second century, *b. Suk.* 27b), Jose ben Halafta (second century, *b. Suk.* 26a, *b. Sanh.* 108a), Jose ben Hanina (third century, *b. Sanh.* 30b), Jose ben Qisma (first and second century, *b. Abod. Zar.* 18a), Mani (fourth century, *y. Mo'ed Q.* 3.5.82c), Nisa (*y. Pes.* 2.2.29a), Safra

¹¹ Fuchs 1964; Oliver 1953, 871-1003; MacMullen 1966; Forte 1972; Balsdon 1979.

¹² See Levine 1975, 86-106.

¹³ See Levine 1975, 88.

¹⁴ Levine 1975, 214, n. 306.

(third and fourth century, *b.ʿAbod. Zar.* 4a, *b. Ber.* 63a), Shimon ben Gamaliel (second century, *b.Suk.* 26a), Zera (fourth century, *b.Hul.* 86b), Zerikon (fourth century, *y.Shab.* 7.2.10b). The Talmud (*b.Yoma* 78a) speaks of the third- and fourth-century Ze’iri ben Ḥama as hosting “all the rabbis of Caesarea,” with the clear implication that they were both numerous and extremely important, and indeed frequently speaks of the rabbis of Caesarea¹⁵ as a group (*b.Suk.* 8a and 55a, *b.ʿEruv.* 76b, *b.Naz.* 7a, *b.Meg.* 5a), as well as of the judges of Caesarea as a group (*b.Suk.* 8a, *b.ʿEruv.* 76b). In addition to having such outstanding scholars, to whom Babylonian rabbis frequently turned for halakhic advice, the city also proved attractive to them because of its economic importance.¹⁶ What makes the rabbinic evidence particularly valuable is the fact that many of the rabbis who lived in Babylonia, the seat of the Parthian Empire (and its successor in 226, the Sassanians), came to Palestine for extended periods of time, and similarly that many Palestinian rabbis went to Babylonia. Hence, such rabbis had a vantage point in comparing the two superpowers of the day. Moreover, the fact that the rabbis regarded the Bible as containing wisdom that was relevant for every era led them to look at that text for guidance to their contemporary situation; and hence it is not surprising that they have frequent comments on contemporary affairs. In addition, there is a value in the rabbinic comments precisely because they are often *obiter dicta* rather than part of a formal history. There is special value in these remarks in that the main extant sources for them, the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, are books of debate, with rabbis constantly challenging one another. Consequently, it is not surprising that the rabbis were sharply divided in their attitude toward the Romans, as they were on so many matters of Jewish law.

To be sure, the remarks of the rabbis must be approached with caution, since, while we generally know the approximate dates of the rabbis (though, to be sure, we can hardly be precise as to which part of the century it was in which they lived), the works in which they are cited were generally redacted much later, often by centuries.

¹⁵ See Bacher 1901, 298-310; and Lieberman 1968, 9ff. Levine 1975, 95 remarks that the “Rabbis of Caesarea” as a group or guild are mentioned no fewer than 140 times in the Jerusalem Talmud.

¹⁶ So Levine 1975, 90-91.

Moreover, many of the comments occur in homiletic, sermon-like discourses, where, presumably, fanciful and imaginative exaggerations are often preferred to literal exegesis. Furthermore (just as with the Gospels), to our consternation, we often have substantially the same account or anecdote in several rabbinic sources but with variations. Because the Talmud was subjected to censorship in the Middle Ages certain references to Rome were modified or even eliminated and, to our utter dismay, in some cases “Persia” was substituted for “Rome.” In addition, while most scholars believe that references to Esau, Edom, and Amalek are to Rome, we can hardly be sure. Furthermore, often a rabbi is referred to merely by his first name, whereas there may be many by that name; thus, for example, there are no fewer than fifty-eight different Rabbi Shimon’s in the Babylonian Talmud alone. Often comments are by rabbis in the name of their predecessors, and it is difficult to decide whether they represent a long-standing tradition or reflect the much later date when the works in which they are quoted were redacted. Some scholars have expressed suspicion that many of the comments, which appear in supposed dialogues with Roman emperors and their officials, are stereotyped or even invented.

Despite the fact that one would have thought that the rabbis would have been afraid to comment on the authoritarian powers who ruled their countries, they actually have a good deal to say about them, both positively and negatively. We shall note that most of the rabbis who have remarks about political questions lived in the third century and in Palestine under the rule of the Romans. They have keen remarks about both the strength and the weakness of the Roman Empire.

2. RABBINIC COMMENTS ON THE STRENGTH OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

A number of important third-century rabbis, living under the Romans in Palestine, comment on the tremendous strength of the Roman Empire. No rabbi living in Palestine during this period is cited in the Jerusalem Talmud more frequently than Rabbi Joḥanan ben Nappaha, to whom Maimonides¹⁷ actually ascribes the compila-

¹⁷ Introduction to *Mishneh Torah*.

tion of this version of the Talmud. Throughout his long life (ca. 180-ca. 279) he was clearly regarded, and with good reason, as the outstanding Jewish scholar in Palestine. Moreover, he had studied with the patriarch Judah the Prince, clearly the most influential leader of his era and the redactor of the Mishnah, who is said to have been on very close terms with the Roman Emperor "Antoninus" (*y.Shebi.* 6.1.36d, etc.); and hence we may assume that he had some, and indeed even considerable, acquaintance with the status of the Roman Empire. We should, therefore, ascribe considerable importance to his answer to the question as to how we know that the Romans are so important, namely his quotation of the verse from Daniel 7:23: "And he shall devour the whole earth and shall tread it down and break it in pieces," which, he asserts, refers to Rome, "whose power is known to the whole world" (*b.'Abod. Zar.* 2b). This is confirmed by the fact, according to Rabbi Joḥanan, that Daniel saw the fourth beast, whom he identifies with Rome, in a separate vision (*Dan.* 7:7); hence, he concluded, Rome was as strong as the other three kingdoms combined.

Second only to Rabbi Joḥanan among the greatest scholars in Palestine during the third century was Rabbi Shimon ben Laqish, better known as Resh Laqish, who studied with Rabbi Joḥanan and whose sister Rabbi Joḥanan gave him in marriage (*b.B. Meẓ.* 84a). The fact that before devoting himself to the study of Torah he had been a gladiator (*y.Ter.* 8.5.45d) would seem to indicate that he was probably well acquainted with worldly matters; and hence his views about the Roman Empire should be of value. He was particularly well known for his independence of judgment (*y.Sanh.* 2.1.19d). Hence, there is special value in the fact that he speaks both positively and negatively about the Roman Empire. Thus, on the one hand, he states that Rome surpasses all in power (*Mid. Lev. Rab.* 13.5). Moreover, he compliments the system of Roman justice in the highest terms when he declares (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 9.13) that the verse "And behold it was very good" (*Gen.* 1:31) refers to Rome and its system of justice, perhaps alluding to the tremendous prestige of the great Roman jurists who flourished in the third century. On the other hand (*Mid. Lev. Rab.* 13.5; cf. *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 76.6), he maintains that Rome is wicked.¹⁸

¹⁸ Resh Laqish's statement (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 2.4) that there is no depth to the

Among the outstanding students of Rabbi Joḥanan, Rabbi Ḥanina bar Papa, who lived at the end of third century in Palestine (some ascribe the statement to Rav Simlai, who lived in the second half of third century in Palestine), like his teacher, acknowledged the supremacy of the Roman Empire. In times to come, he prophesied, G-d will take a scroll of the Law in His embrace and proclaim: "Let him who has occupied himself herewith, come and take his reward." Thereupon, citing the verse "And he shall devour the whole earth and shall tread it down and break it in pieces" (Dan. 7:23), Ḥanina declares that the Kingdom of Edom (i.e., Rome)¹⁹ will enter first before Him because it is the most important (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 2b).

Another student of Rabbi Joḥanan, Rabbi Ulla, who lived in Palestine during the second half of the third century, shows how much he is impressed with the sheer size, economic strength, and military invincibility of Rome (*b. Meg.* 6b). "The great city of Rome," he says, in obvious exaggeration, "covers an area of 300 parasangs [approximately 1200 miles] by 300. It has 300 markets corresponding to the number of days of the solar year. The smallest of them is that of the poultry sellers, which is sixteen mil [approximately sixteen miles] by sixteen. The king dines every day in one of them. Everyone who resides in the city, even if he was not born there, receives a regular portion of food from the king's household [alluding to the regular distribution of corn and money in Rome], and so does everyone who was born there, even if he does not reside there. There are three thousand baths in it, and five hundred windows, the smoke from which goes outside the wall [the reference is presumably to the wall erected by the Emperor Aurelian (271-276)]. One side of it is bounded by the sea, one side by hills and mountains, one side by a barrier of iron." Hence, he is saying, in effect, that Rome is impregnable. His statement is of special value, inasmuch as he frequently visited Babylonia, where he was often invited by the exilarch, the head of the Jewish community there, to deliver discourses, and hence was in a good position to compare Roman Palestine with Sassanian Babylonia.

kingdom of Rome is enigmatic. It may indicate that there is no comprehending the date of its downfall due to its great power, or it may mean that there is no depth to Rome's wickedness.

¹⁹ *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 65.21. See the discussion in Feldman 1998, 322-24.

Another of Rabbi Johanan's students, Rabbi Isaac Nappaha, who lived in Palestine during the third century and whose aggadic remarks frequently reflect contemporary events, comments on the tremendous military power of Rome, noting (*b.Meg.* 6a-b) that were it not for the Germans, the Romans would go out and destroy the whole world.

Still another third-century Palestinian rabbi, Shmuel ben Nahman (*Midr. Lev. Rab.* 29.2), in his depiction of Jacob's conversation with G-d, speaks of the continuing strength of Rome, when he refers to an Edom (i.e., Rome) that will ascend without an end in sight.

As to the military prowess of Rome, Rabbi Eleazar, who lived in Palestine in the second century (*b.Git.* 57b), also comments on the military prowess of Rome: "No war is successful unless the seed of Esau [i.e., Rome] has a share in it."

Since the coming of the Messiah is associated with the overthrow of Rome, there is a view, although it is clearly that of a minority, uttered (*b.Sanh.* 99a) in the name of the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Hillel, the grandson of Rabbi Judah the Prince and the brother of Judah Nesiah, that there will be no Messiah for Israel because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah, the implication being that the Roman Empire will not be overthrown.

As to the economic strength of Rome, the third-century Babylonian Rabbi Judah, in the name of his renowned teacher Shmuel (*b.Pes.* 119a), declares that the biblical Joseph was able to obtain all the world's wealth during his administration in Egypt and that after his death it passed from nation to nation until it came into the hands of the Romans, who still control it.

One is struck by the fact that so many rabbis—Sperber²⁰ lists thirty-four, and his list is hardly exhaustive—came from Babylonia to Palestine to settle and stay, and in most cases (twenty-nine, to be exact) did stay, this despite the relative comfort of life in Babylonia compared with the alleged hunger and oppressive governmental rule and corruption in Palestine. Undoubtedly, these scholars were motivated by their yearning to learn at the feet of the great Palestinian masters; but in view of the fact that during the third century Babylonia had scholars of the stature of Rav and Shmuel, who were at least as great, one wonders whether the political and economic

²⁰ Sperber 1970, 23-24.

conditions were really as oppressive as they are painted for us by some of the rabbinic and non-rabbinic texts.

3. PREDICTIONS OF THE FALL OF ROME

Already in the middle of the second century we find a confident prediction that Rome would be overthrown. This appears in the statement of the Palestinian Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai in the name of Rabbi Meir, that G-d showed Jacob the dominion of Edom that had ascended and that would descend (*Midr. Lev. Rab.* 29.1, *Pesiq. Rabbati* 151a-b, *Tan. Vayeze* 3). The bitterness implicit in this statement would seem to be influenced by the Hadrianic persecutions. The same statement is ascribed to the Palestinian Rabbi Berekiah and his Palestinian teacher Rabbi Ḥelbo, during the late third and early fourth centuries (*ibid.*), and would seem to be influenced by the chaos that prevailed during the third century.

This same Rabbi Berekiah is sure, as he puts it, that “the ox [Rome] will receive its slaughtering,” basing himself on the verse “For a slaughtering of G-d in Bozrah and a mass slaying in the land of Edom” (Isa. 34:6) (*Midr. Gen. Rab.* 65.11, 83.3, *Pirqe R. El.* 12). In fact, according to Resh Laqish, who, as we have remarked, did utter some statements in admiration of Rome, even the angel of Esau will not find refuge (*Pesiq. Rabbati* 12, *Mak.* 12a, *Yal.* 506).

A number of third-century rabbis in Palestine cite biblical verses that they interpret to mean that the Roman Empire is destined to fall. Thus the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Shmuel ben Naḥman, in the very same passage (*Midr. Lev. Rab.* 29.2) that we have noted above as referring to the continuing strength of the Roman Empire, presents an exegesis of the verse “And he [Jacob] dreamt, and behold there was a ladder standing on the ground” (Gen. 28:12), which, he says, teaches that G-d showed Jacob the angel of Babylon rising 70 rungs (i.e., 70 years) and of Media 52 (i.e., 52 years) and of Greece (i.e., Macedonia and its successor states) 180 (years) and of Edom (i.e., Rome) rising without knowing how many. Thereupon, according to this exegesis, Jacob became frightened and said: “Is it possible that this one will not fall?” To this G-d replied assuring him that Rome would indeed fall, citing the verse from Jeremiah (30:10): “Do not fear, my servant Jacob”: “Even if he ascends and sits beside Me, from there I will bring him down, as it states (Obad.

1:4): ‘If he rises as an eagle [i.e. Rome, which is identified with the eagle] (*b.Sanh.* 12a).’”

Even Rabbi Johanan, who, as we have noted, was so impressed with the strength of the Roman Empire, was convinced that the day of vengeance (Isa. 63:4), that is, when the Messiah would arrive, would come; but he kept this knowledge sealed in his heart (*b.Sanh.* 99a).

Similarly, Rav, who was one of the two most outstanding rabbis in Babylonia in the third century and who had also studied in Palestine, where he was ordained by the patriarch Rabbi Judah the Prince, clearly anticipating the fall of Rome in the very near future, declares that “Rome will be at the zenith of her power, holding sway over the whole world for nine months, before her fall at the coming of the Messiah” (*b.Yoma* 10a, *b.Sanh.* 98b).

The fact that a number of third-century rabbis speculate at length about the coming of the Messiah is of particular interest, since they accept the equation of the fall of Rome and the coming of the Messiah,²¹ as if they expect him to come at any moment.²² Indeed, we read (*b.ʿAbod. Zar.* 9b) that according to Rabbi Ḥanina bar Ḥama, who lived in Babylonia and Palestine in the first part of the third century, “From the year 400 after the destruction [of the Temple, i.e., 468 C.E., according to rabbinic calculation] onwards, if one says to you, ‘Buy a field that is worth a thousand denarii for one dinar,’ do not buy it. In a Baraita it is taught: From the year 4231 [i.e. 471 C.E.] of the Creation of the World onward, if one says to you, ‘Buy a field that is worth a thousand denarii for one denar,’ do not buy it.” Hence, this is a clue that the rabbis expected Rome to fall soon, though the actual date that they project, when they give a date, is in the fifth century, perhaps because they feared that a

²¹ See Berger 1985, 152 n. 43.

²² The *Tanna debe Eliyahu* [the title of a Midrash, containing chiefly Baraitas compiled by Rabbi Anan, a third-century Babylonian] taught (*b.Sanh.* 97a-b): The world is to exist 6,000 years: the first 2,000 years are to be void [which the Talmud (*b.ʿAbod. Zar.* 9a) reckons from the time when Abraham, then 52 years old, and Sarah had “gotten souls in Haran” (Gen. 12:5)], the next 2,000 years are the period of the Torah, and the following 2,000 years are the period of the Messiah, but through our many sins a number of these have already passed [and the Messiah has not yet come].” 2005-2006 is the year 5766. The Messianic 2,000 years began 1766 years ago, i.e., in the year 240. The Messiah is to come within this period, i.e., some time between 240 and 2240.

nearer date would antagonize the Romans or because they feared that a nearer date would prove them to be wrong.

The most important of the rabbis foreseeing the coming of the Messiah and the consequent fall of Rome was Joshua ben Levi, who lived in Palestine during the first half of the third century. That he had considerable knowledge of Roman rule is evident from the fact that he was associated with the patriarch Judah the Prince (*b.Shab.* 46a, *b.Yeb.* 60b), who, as we have noted, was on close terms with the Roman emperor “Antoninus,” and from the fact that he was sent on a number of missions to the seat of Roman rule in Palestine, Caesarea, as well as to Rome itself (*y.Ber.* 5.1.9a, *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 78.5).

According to a famous story (*b.Sanh.* 98a), Rabbi Joshua ben Levi once met the prophet Elijah and asked him, “When will the Messiah come?” “Go and ask him himself,” was his reply. “Where is he sitting?” “At the entrance of the town” [Vilna Gaon deletes this and substitutes “of Rome”]. “And by what sign may I recognize him?” “He is sitting among the poor lepers.” Joshua then went, greeted such a man, and asked him when he would come. “Today,” was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, “He spoke falsely to me,” said Joshua, “inasmuch as he has not yet come.” Elijah then explained, “Today, if you will hear his voice.” Apparently, as we can see from this anecdote, Joshua felt that Rome’s collapse was imminent, since he expects the redemption even on that very day.

Citing G-d’s assurance (Exod. 17:16) that he will have war against Amalek, that is, Rome, to all eternity, the third-century Rabbi Abba, who was the son of Rabbi Kahana and who lived, as we have noted, in the Roman administrative capital of Caesarea, declares that so long as the seed of Amalek exists it is as if G-d’s face is concealed, but that when the seed of Amalek will be uprooted from the world the face of G-d will be revealed.²³

Similarly, Rabbi Joshua, in the name of the third-century Rabbi

²³ A similar view is expressed anonymously. “‘G-d will reign; the world will rejoice’ (Ps. 97:1). This teaches that there is no joy in the world all the time that Edom [Rome] exists, and the name [of G-d] will not be complete and the seat [throne of G-d] will not be complete, as it says: ‘The throne of G-d’ (Exod. 17:16). Once G-d reigns during the fourth exile, immediately ‘G-d will be king’” (Zech. 14:9) (*Mid. Ps.* 97.1). Another anonymous source asserts confidently that G-d will punish Rome by breaking them like pottery (*Tan. Teruma* [Buber] 6, p. 92) or that the Romans were created merely to serve as fuel for *gehennom* (*Pirque R. El.* p. 202).

Alexandrus, confidently anticipates Messianic redemption in his remark that since the hands of Amalek [Rome]²⁴ touched the throne of G-d [i.e., destroyed the Temple], “And Jerusalem is the throne of G-d” (Jer. 3:17), he [i.e., Rome] will be uprooted from the world. Commenting on the verse “A war of G-d with Amalek” (Exod. 17:16) and the verse “You [the Jews] shall destroy Amalek” (Deut. 25:19), he remarks that once they [the Romans] stretched out their hand against the Jews, “A war of G-d with Amalek” will result in the overthrow of Amalek (*Pesiq. Rabbati* 12).

Likewise, we hear in the name of Rabbis Alexandri and Rabbi Abba bar Kahana, who lived during the latter part of the third century in Palestine and whose aggadic statements (e.g., *Mid. Lev. Rab.* 15.9) reflect the hardships endured by Jews, particularly the heavy tax burden imposed upon them by the Romans, and the persecutions that they suffered during this era, their expectation of the Messianic redemption, which, they say, will come when the student benches in Palestine are filled with sectarians (i.e. Babylonians) (*Mid. Lam. Rab.* 1.41). When this redemption comes, they say, G-d will spread the Romans like chaff from the silo because “they stretched out their hands to the mighty ones [the Jews]” (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 63.8)

A similar view, expressing keen hope and expectation of the coming of the Messiah and consequently the end of Roman rule is expressed by his contemporary, Rabbi Hama bar Hanina, who declared that “the son of David [i.e. the Messiah] will not come until the pettiest kingdom [presumably Rome] will cease [to have power] over Israel” (*b.Sanh.* 98a).

That Rome will fall is the conviction also of Rabbi Shila, who lived in Palestine during the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries. Commenting on the verse “Yours, O G-d, is the victory [*neṣaḥ*]” (1 Chron. 29:11), he says that this refers to the fall of Rome, as it says, “And their life-blood [נַצַּחִם] is dashed against my garments” [Isa. 63:3] (*b.Ber.* 58a).

That Rome will be overthrown is clear, though the time is not indicated, in the remark of the late third-century Palestinian Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥman, who, in his version of the conversation between

²⁴ On Amalek as a symbol of Rome see *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 3.27a and other sources cited by Ginzberg 1909-38, 6:25, n. 147. See Bacher 1903, 1:146.

Jacob and G-d, depicts G-d as assuring the Jews that He will personally humble Rome (*Mid. Lev. Rab.* 29.2).²⁵

On the other hand, the third-century Babylonian Rabbi Aḥa envisages a scenario in which not G-d but all the nations of the world are destined to rise against Rome and destroy it utterly, leaving “neither city nor province” (*Yal.* 133).

4. THE CAUSES OF ROMAN DECLINE

By the middle of the third century, some of the rabbis saw the political chaos that was enveloping the Roman Empire and, in particular, the rapid turnover of emperors at the very time when the challenge of the barbarian invasions was becoming most serious.

A direct contemporary of these events, the Palestinian Ḥama bar Ḥanina, who lived in the latter part of the third century and whom we have mentioned above, alluding to the constant wars between Rome and the Germans, asks (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 75.9: “And what did G-d create for the wicked Esau [i.e., Rome]?” And he answers, “The people of Barbary [in northern Africa] and the people of Germany, of whom the Edomites are afraid.” The reference to uprisings in northern Africa is one for which, significantly, we lack other sources.

Ḥama also (*b. Meg.* 6b and *Mid. Gen. Rab.* 75.9) remarks that there were 300 crowned heads in Germany and 365 chieftains²⁶ in Rome; and every day they engage in combat and one of them is killed, so that they have the trouble of appointing a new king.²⁷ In this com-

²⁵ On the other hand, the Palestinian Rabbi Eliezer ben Hycanus, who lived during the first and second centuries, while he is sure that the Romans will be overthrown, cannot state when this will happen. He links Rome’s destruction with the time of the abolition of false gods (*Yal.* 267). His Palestinian contemporary, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, while likewise confident that the Romans will be overthrown, cannot predict when this will be. “When G-d sits on the throne of His kingdom and the dominion is His,” he asserts, “at this time there will be a war of G-d with Amalek (i.e., Rome)” (Exod. 17:16) (*Yal.* 267, *Mek.* 72a).

²⁶ Prefects, dukes, custodians of the borderland, but apparently equivalent to kings here, in view of the fact that their death requires appointment of new kings.

²⁷ The text is corrupt; and it seems more likely that the number of chieftains was 300 and the number of crowned heads of Rome 365, as an indication that each day, so to speak, there was a new emperor. As Alföldy 1974, 99, has remarked, almost all authors of the third century were deeply impressed with the quick change of emperors and by their violent demise. He cites, among others, Cassius Dio 78.41.1 and 80.7.3; Pseudo-Aristides, *Eis Basilea* 7; Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 6.10.13; and Herodian 1.1.5.

ment Ḥama clearly recognized the tremendous threat to the Roman Empire posed by the many German tribes. He also alludes to the tremendous turnover in Roman emperors during the third century: during the period of half a century from 235 to 284 we know of no fewer than twenty-two emperors, one of whom died a natural death. The administrative chaos created by the tremendous turnover of emperors in the third century was also recognized by Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedath (*Mid. Esth. Rab.* 1.3), who lived in the third century in both Babylonia and Palestine and who was a foremost student of both Rav and Rabbi Johanan. Indeed, he remarks that a king is not Augustus until two legions hail him thus. A similar disdainful sentiment about the way in which emperors are named is expressed by the Palestinian Rabbi Aibu in the fourth century, who notes that the first legion that speaks in praise of the new emperor is granted a promotion by him that will not be rescinded (*Mid. Ps.* 3.2, *Yal.* 2.847).

In view of Rabbi Ḥama's dictum (*Pesiq. Rb. Kah.* 3.16; *Tan.* B, Deut. 45) that so long as the descendants of Amalek (who are identified with the Romans) survive, G-d's name and throne are not complete, we may surmise that Rabbi Ḥama, in his bitterness, rejoiced at Rome's discomfiture and at the prospect of her fall.

Rabbi Levi, who flourished in the third quarter of the third century in Palestine, noted Rome's military weakness. On the verse "And upon your [Esau's] sword you shall live" (Gen. 27:40), he comments: "Sheath your sword and you shall live" (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 67.7), implying that Rome will be defeated if it steps onto the battlefield. This statement may have been a result of Rome's losses to the Persians and the Germanic tribes at this time.

This contempt for Rome's vaunted military might may be seen in the anecdote in which the Palestinian Rabbi Shimon the son of patriarch Rabbi Judah the Prince, who lived at the end of the second and at the beginning of the third century, was greatly impressed with a Roman legion and remarked to his colleague, Rabbi Ḥiyya, who lived in both Babylonia and Palestine, "See how fat are the calves of Esau [i.e. Rome]!" Thereupon Rabbi Ḥiyya led Rabbi Shimon to a marketplace and showed him a basket of grapes and figs surrounded by flies. "These flies," he remarked, "and that legion are equal in value." Even more striking is the sequel. When Rabbi Shimon proceeded to tell his father, Rabbi Judah the Prince, about his conversation with Rabbi Ḥiyya, Rabbi Judah, who, it must be

remembered, as *de facto* head of the Jewish community in Palestine and the chief link between them and the Romans, had to be and was on excellent terms with the Romans, is said to have exclaimed: "So much value does Rabbi Ḥiyya of Babylon attribute to a legion that he equates them in value to flies. These legions are not destined to accomplish a thing" (*Tan. Vayeshev* 3, p. 400). It must have taken considerable courage, even if the remark was said in private, for Rabbi Judah the Prince, the patriarch and chief liaison of the Jews with the Roman administration, to have spoken such a strongly critical comment about the Roman military establishment, and hence it is very likely to be authentic. What is furthermore significant in this anecdote is that the son of the patriarch is impressed with Rome's military might, perhaps because of improvements in the organization of the Roman army, whereas the father is not.

The rabbis also note the breakdown of Rome's judicial system. Thus, the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Shimon says that precisely because Rome boasts a fair and just judicial system, it is more worthy of blame for its misdeeds (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 65.1). "Why," he asks, "is he [Esau, i.e., Rome] compared to a swine? Because just as a swine, at the time it lies, spreads its hooves as if to say: 'I am pure', so this wicked nation steals and robs and shows itself as if executing judgment."

One of the paradoxes of the Roman Empire is that the Romans were actually a minority within that empire and that Latin was spoken by only a minority of the population. The third-century Babylonian Rabbi Levi commented on the Roman Empire being filled with foreign nations (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 42.4) and noted that Rome, as he puts it, is "saturated with nations."²⁸ This may be a reference to the celebrated Edict of Caracalla (212).

Rome's moral decadence is noted in the statement of the Palestinian Rabbi Ḥunya of the early third century (*Mid. Cant. Rab.* 3.4.2), who has Jerusalem address the daughter of Babylon (i.e., probably Rome, as we can see, from *Mid. Cant. Rab.* 1.6.4), using the Greek words *παγὶ παλαιὰ κακέσχατε*, "you old extremely bad trap," and implying that the Roman Empire was an aged harlot (*παγίς*, as Lieberman²⁹ has noted, is an equivalent for "harlot" in the comedian

²⁸ See *Sifrei Deut. Haazinu*, p. 335.

²⁹ Lieberman 1942, 44-46.

Amphis [*ap.* Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.567-68]); and the figure of an old harlot who pretends that she is young is apparently a stock source of ridicule.³⁰

The rabbis, moreover, note Rome's economic problems. They vividly contrast the ostentatious wealth of Rome with the tremendous poverty of the masses. The Palestinian Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, who visited Rome during the first half of the third century (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 33.1, *Pesiq. Rb. Kah.* 9.1 [74a], *Mid. Lev. Rab.* 27.1, *Yal.* 2.727, *Tan. B Noah* 8), notes the remarkable contrast between the marble pillars covered with tapestries in the winter so as to contract and in the summer so as not to split, and a poor man wrapped in a reed mat (or according to others, in half an ass' packsaddle). Rabbi Joshua might have been influenced as to the awareness of Rome's weakness from the position of his teacher, the patriarch Rabbi Judah the Prince, who, despite his close relationship with the Romans, maintained that Persia would defeat Rome (*b.Yoma* 10a).

Another indication of economic problems may be seen in the anecdote related by the Palestinian Rabbi Levi, that the prophet Elijah berated a Roman ruler who had squandered all the treasures of his ancestors (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 83.4).

The rabbis also sharply criticized the rapacity of imperial officials. Thus Rabbi Levi (*Mid. Eccl. Rab.* 1.7.9) declares, "The eyes of Edom [i.e. Rome] are never satisfied." They even interpreted the Bible to illustrate this tendency. Thus the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Judah ben Rabbi (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 78.12), commenting on the biblical passage in which Esau [said to be the ancestor of the Romans] declined to accept the gifts that Jacob offered to him (*Gen.* 33:9), declares that this was a mere pretense and that he actually stretched out his hands to accept them. Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba, in the name of his teacher, the third-century Rabbi Joḥanan, remarks, in what seems to be an allusion to Roman officials, "They stretch out their hands to accept money, but do not carry out the owner's wishes."

Rabbi Levi may also be alluding to the importance of plagues as a cause for the decline and fall of the Empire. Thus he predicts that G-d will torment Rome with the exact plagues that He brought on the Egyptians (*Pesiq. Rb. Kah.*, pp. 151-52). This might conceivably

³⁰ Cf. Lucian, *Dialogi Meretricii* 11 (309).

refer to the outbreaks of plague that depleted the population of the Empire in the middle of the third century.

5. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN ROME AND PERSIA

Inasmuch as the Roman Empire and the Parthian (succeeded by the Sassanian Empire in 226) Empire were the two most powerful states during the third century and in constant struggle with each other, the views of the rabbis as to which of the two would prevail are of great interest, especially since many of the rabbis lived in both of the states at various times.

On the one hand, we have the view ascribed to Rabbi Ḥanina bar Papa, who lived in Palestine at the end of the third century (some ascribe it to his contemporary, Rabbi Simlai, who lived in both Babylonia and Palestine), that when, in times to come, G-d will take a scroll of the Law and proclaim, "Let him who has occupied himself with this, come and take his reward," the kingdom of Edom (i.e., Rome) will enter first because they are the most important. The kingdom of Persia will enter next. In answer to the question as to why these two nations are singled out, the answer is because their reign will last till the coming of the Messiah (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 2a-b). It is significant that Rome is given first place among the nations, despite the fact that this passage is part of the Babylonian Talmud, which was redacted about the year 500 under the Sassanians. Indeed, the Talmud even asks why the Persians, having seen the Romans fail in their encounter with G-d, should have stepped forward at all, and replies that they did so because the Romans had destroyed the Temple, whereas the Persians (under Cyrus) had rebuilt it.

Rav, who was one of the two major rabbinic figures in Babylonia during the third century, though convinced, on the one hand, of Roman power and, on the other hand, that this power would be overthrown in the very near future, was nevertheless of the opinion that Persia would fall into the hands of the Romans. Thereupon Rabbi Kahana, who lived in both Babylonia and Palestine during the first half of the third century, and his Babylonian contemporary Rabbi Assi asked of Rav: "Shall the builders fall into the hands of the destroyers?" He replied that such was G-d's decree. "Others say: He replied to them: 'They [the Persians], too, are guilty, for they destroyed the synagogues.' It has also been taught in accord with the above: Persia will fall into the hands of Rome, first because they

destroyed the synagogues, and then because it is the King's decree that the builders fall into the hands of the destroyers" (*b.Yoma* 10a). We may remark that the Babylonian Talmud was not codified until the end of the fifth century; by that time the Roman Empire had fallen, and the Persian Empire still survived; hence this probably reflects what these rabbis actually said. (*b.Yoma* 10a).

Even the great Shmuel, who was one of the two most influential rabbinic figures in Babylonia during the end of the second and the first half of the third century and who was personally acquainted with the Parthian King Shapur I, nevertheless had the courage to tell him that he would see in a dream the Romans coming, that they would take him captive, and that they would impose upon him the disgraceful task of grinding date-stones in a golden mill. As it happened, Shapur saw all this in his dream, and in point of fact this turned out to be true, perhaps a reference to Shapur's defeat by Rome's ally Odaenathus of Palmyra (*b.Ber.* 56a).³¹

In another scenario, the fourth-century Babylonian Rav Papa asked his contemporary Rava which of the two, King Shapur and the Roman Emperor, was greater. To Rava the answer was obvious, since he said to Papa, "You eat in the forest [i.e., you know not what is going on in the world]. Surely you know that the Roman Emperor is greater. Go forth and see whose authority is greater in the world, for it is written: 'It shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces'" (Dan. 7:23). Finally, the third-century Palestinian Rabbi Joḥanan is quoted as saying: "This is wicked Rome, whose authority is recognized all over the world" (*b.Shebu.* 6b). What is significant in this anecdote is that Rava, who had such close relations with the Persian king Shapur II and with the king's mother (*b.B. Bat.* 10b and *b.Žeb.* 116b) that he was accused by the other rabbis of being too close to the Persian court (*b.Hag.* 5b), here is so independent and so fearless that he dares to say that it is obvious that the Persian king is inferior to the Roman emperor.

Indeed, there were periods, even during the supposed nadir of Roman rule in the third century, when Jews, suffering from Persian outrages, actually looked forward to Roman victory over the Persians. Thus we hear (*b.Git.* 17a) that Rabbah bar Bar Ḥana, who lived in both Palestine and Babylonia in the second half of the third

³¹ See Feldman 1996, 429-34.

century, suffered from the persecutions of the Sassanian Guebers (a fanatical sect of the worshippers who became powerful in the Sassanian Empire) in Babylonia, who even broke into his house and took away his lamp, presumably because it was a Gueber festival on which the lighting of fire was forbidden; whereupon he called out to G-d, "Either in Thy shadow or in the shadow of Esau [i.e., Rome]." On the other hand, in contradiction to this attitude toward Parthia, Rabbi Ḥiyya, the third-century outstanding pupil of Rabbi Judah the Prince, who had been born in Babylonia and had emigrated to Palestine, is quoted as indicating that the reason why G-d had driven the Jews from Palestine to Babylonia was that He knew that the Jews would be unable to endure the persecutions of the Romans. The Talmud (*ibid.*), however, in an anonymous comment, explains that this was before the fanatical Guebers came to Babylonia.

In the fourth century the Palestinian Rabbah bar Ulla (*b.Yoma* 10a), dissenting, as had the third-century Babylonian Rav, from the view that the Persians would defeat the Romans, alludes to the Sassanian persecution of the Jews when he declares that because they (the Sassanian Persians) had destroyed synagogues they were destined to be defeated. But the same Rav, in effect expressing the view of "a plague upon both your houses," speaks of the wicked kingdom of Rome coming to an end when she has spread her sway over the whole world for nine months. Hence, there were those who, in an anonymous comment, favored fence-straddling (*Mid. Gen. Rab.* 76.3, *Mid. Deut. Rab.* 1.19).³²

Nevertheless, it is not surprising that some rabbis saw salvation only if the wicked empire of Rome would be overthrown. An example of this attitude may be seen in the remark of the second-century Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai: "When you notice a Persian horse tethered in Palestine, you may look for the Messiah" (*Mid. Lam. Rab.* 1.13.41). The implication is clear: salvation will come only when the Persians conquer Palestine from the Romans.

To be sure, Yose ben Kisma, who lived in Palestine during the

³² The same difference of opinion with regard to the future overthrow of Rome is found in the Pseudepigrapha. Thus 4 Ezra 11:45 predicts that the eagle (i.e., Rome), with all his worthless body, will disappear. On the other hand, we are told (1 Bar. 1:11-12) that one should pray for Nebuchadnezzar and his son Belshazzar (i.e., the Romans, since Babylon = Rome, as we have noted above) that their sway may last forever.

first half of the second century, was convinced, even during the period of the Hadrianic persecutions and the Bar Kochba rebellion, that it was ordained by G-d that the Romans should rule, and that therefore the Jews should submit to them (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 18a). Consequently, he so insisted when Rabbi Ḥanina ben Teradyon came to visit him. Nevertheless, when he lay dying, convinced that the Persians would ultimately triumph over the Romans, he said to his disciples, "Place my coffin deep [in the earth], for there is not one palm tree in Babylon³³ to which a Persian horse will not be tethered, nor one coffin in Palestine out of which a Median horse will not eat straw [i.e., Babylon and Palestine will be overrun with Persians, Medes and Parthians, and their horses will dig up the dead]." (*b. Sanh.* 98a-b). However, when, shortly thereafter, Yose died, we read that "the great men" of Rome came to his funeral and lamented him greatly.

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, who, as we have remarked, had considerable contacts during the third century with the Roman authorities in both Caesarea and Rome, to support his view that Rome is destined to fall into the hands of the Persians, is reported to have cited a passage from Jeremiah (49:20) "Therefore, hear ye the counsel of the L-rd, that He hath taken against Edom; and His purposes that He hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: surely the least of the flock shall drag them away, surely their habitation shall be appalled at their fate." (Jer. 49:20). To this Rabbah bar Ullah, who lived in Babylonia in the fourth century, asked what reason there is for thinking that "the least of the flock" refers to Persia? The answer is that the phrase "the youngest of the brethren" is used of Tiras (Gen. 10:2), which is identified with Persia.

Rabbah bar Bar Ḥana, who studied with Rabbi Joḥanan in Palestine and who lived in Babylonia during the second half of the third century, is reported, on the authority of Rabbi Judah bar Ilai, who lived in the middle of the second century in Palestine, to have said, "That Rome is designed to fall into the hands of Persia may be concluded by inference *a minori ad majus*: If in the case of the first Sanctuary, which the sons of Shem [i.e., Solomon] built and the Chaldeans destroyed, the Chaldeans fell into the hands of the Persians, then how much more should this be so with the second

³³ Perhaps Rome, as we have noted in *Mid. Cant. Rab.* 1.6.4.

Sanctuary, which the Persians built and the Romans destroyed, that the Romans should fall into the hands of the Persians [their enemies, i.e., the destroyers fall into the hands of their builders]. (*b.Yoma* 10a). The fact that this statement is presented on the authority of Judah bar Illa'i seems surprising, inasmuch as he was termed by the Roman government "the chief spokesman on all occasions," since he had praised them, saying: "How fine are the works of this people! They have made streets, they have built bridges, they have erected public baths." (*b.Shab.* 33b).

Particularly after the time of Constantine's granting of licit status to Christianity in 313 and after the issuance of various decrees against the Jews, the Jews naturally looked more and more to the Sassanian Persians as allies. The fact that the Romans frequently intervened on behalf of Christians in the Sassanian Empire, must have increased the apprehension felt by Jews.³⁴

6. SUMMARY

Though there are numerous difficulties in dealing with rabbinic literature, an examination of the references there to the Roman Empire, and, in particular, indications of its forthcoming decline and fall, would seem to be of value, especially since so many rabbis lived in the century, the third, so crucial in the eyes of some scholars in perceiving the decline of the Empire. Moreover, many of the rabbis lived in both Palestine under the Romans and Babylonia under the Parthians and their successors, the Sassanians, and hence were in a good position to compare the rulers and conditions of both. The fact that such a rabbi as the third-century Johanan ben Nappaha had studied with the patriarch Rabbi Judah the Prince, who was on intimate terms with the Roman emperor, probably meant that he was in a good position to see the strength of the Empire, which he, indeed, affirmed. Rabbi Johanan's student, Rabbi Shimon ben Laqish, was likewise in a good position to evaluate the Empire's strength and weakness, since he had been a gladiator in his youth. Another student, Rabbi Ulla, comments on the tremendous economic

³⁴ Baron 1952, 178.

strength of Rome. A contemporary of these, Rabbi Isaac Nappaha, comments on Rome's tremendous military power.

The fact that a number of rabbis speculate on the imminent coming of the Messiah, which they connect with the downfall of the Roman Empire, would indicate that they expected this to occur very soon, though the actual date, when they give a date, is in the latter part of the fifth century, very close actually to the date of 476, which is often given as the date marking the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. The most important of the rabbis foreseeing the coming of the Messiah and the consequent fall of Rome was Joshua ben Levi, who probably had considerable knowledge of Roman rule from the fact that he was associated with the patriarch Rabbi Judah the Prince.

In analyzing the causes of Roman decline the rabbis mention the military weakness of the Empire. They also allude to the constant wars between the Romans and the Germans and the administrative chaos created by the frequent turnover of emperors. They also mention the breakdown of the judicial system, the lack of homogeneity in the population of the Empire, the tremendous economic contrast between the wealthy and the poor, and the health problems caused by plagues.

In evaluating the struggle between the two superpowers of the day, Rome and Persia, the rabbis were divided. What is particularly surprising, however, is that the great Shmuel, who was one of the two most influential rabbinic figures in Babylonia during the first half of the third century and who was personally close to the Parthian king Shapur I, had the courage to predict that Shapur would be taken captive by the Romans. On the other hand, the influential Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, who had considerable contact with the Roman authorities in both Caesarea and Rome, cites a biblical verse to support his view that Rome is destined to fall into the hands of the Persians.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAAG	<i>Annals of the American Association of Geographers</i>
ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6 vols.
‘Abod. Zar.	‘Abodah Zarah
‘Abot R. Nat.	‘Abot de-Rabbi Nathan
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
Abr.	Philo, <i>De Abrahamo</i>
Aen.	Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>
Aes.	Aeschylus
Aet.	Philo, <i>De Aeternitate Mundi</i>
Ag.	Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i>
Agr.	Philo, <i>De Agricultura</i>
AI PHOS	<i>Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire Orientales et Slaves</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AJSReview	<i>Association for Jewish Studies Review</i>
Alex.	Plutarch, <i>Alexander</i>
And.	Andocides
Anim.	Philo, <i>De Animalibus</i>
Ann.	Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
Ant.	Josephus’ <i>Antiquities</i>
Ant. Bib.	Pseudo-Philo, <i>Antiquitates Biblicae</i>
Ant. Rom.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Antiquitates Romanae</i>
Antig.	Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i>
Anton.	Plutarch, <i>Antony</i>
AO	<i>Archiv Orientalni</i>
AOAW	<i>Anzeiger der Österreichischer Akademie der Wissenschaften</i>
Ap.	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
Apol.	Plato, <i>Apology</i>
‘Arak.	‘Arakin
Aris.	Aristotle
Arist.	Letter of Aristeas
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
Aug.	Augustus
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
b.	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
B. Bat.	<i>Baba Batra</i>
B. Mez.	<i>Baba Mezia</i>
B. Qam.	<i>Baba Qamma</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
Bar.	Baruch
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>

<i>B. Civ.</i>	Appian, <i>Bella Civilia</i>
<i>Ber.</i>	<i>Berakhot</i>
<i>Bez.</i>	<i>Beza</i>
<i>BFCL</i>	<i>Bulletin des Facultés Catholiques de Lyon</i>
<i>BI</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>Bib. Ant.</i>	Pseudo-Philo, <i>Biblical Antiquities</i>
<i>Bik.</i>	<i>Bikkurim</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Beth Mikra</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
<i>Cant. Zuta</i>	<i>Midrash Cant. (Song of Songs) Zuta</i>
<i>CB</i>	<i>Classical Bulletin</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>C. Cels.</i>	Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Chap.</i>	Chapter
<i>Cher.</i>	Philo, <i>De Cherubim</i>
<i>Cho.</i>	Aeschylus, <i>Choephoroe</i>
<i>Chron.</i>	Chronicles
<i>Cic.</i>	Cicero
<i>CIJ</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>Cod. Just.</i>	<i>Codex Justinianus</i>
<i>Cod. Theod.</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
<i>CoJ</i>	<i>Conservative Judaism</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De Confusione Linguarum</i>
<i>Congr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia</i>
<i>Contempl.</i>	Philo, <i>De Vita Contemplativa</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	Corinthians
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CPJ</i>	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> , ed. Victor A. Tcherikover, Alexander Fuks, and Menahem Stern, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957-64).
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>Cri.</i>	Plato, <i>Crito</i>
<i>Cyc.</i>	Euripides, <i>Cyclops</i>
<i>Dan.</i>	Daniel
<i>Dec.</i>	<i>De Decalogo</i>
<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Demai</i>
<i>Demonst. Ev.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Demonstratio Evangelica</i>
<i>Der. Er. Rab.</i>	<i>Derek Erez Rabbah</i>
<i>Det.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat</i>
<i>Deus</i>	Philo, <i>Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis</i>
<i>Deut.</i>	Deuteronomy
<i>Deut. Rab.</i>	<i>Deuteronomy Rabbah</i>
<i>Diod.</i>	Diodorus
<i>Diog.</i>	Diogenes Laertius
<i>Diss.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Dissertationes</i>
<i>DJD</i>	<i>Discoveries in the Judaean Desert</i>
<i>Dom.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Domitian</i>
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>EB</i>	<i>Estudios Biblicos</i>

<i>Ebr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Ebrietate</i>
<i>Eccl. Rab.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes Rabbah</i>
<i>Ed.</i>	<i>Eduyyot</i>
<i>EDSS</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> , ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 2 vols.)
<i>EHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>E-I</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
<i>Ej</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> (Jerusalem: Macmillan, 1971), 16 vols.
<i>Erub.</i>	<i>Erubin</i>
<i>Esdr.</i>	<i>Esdras</i>
<i>Esth.</i>	<i>Esther</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>Eur.</i>	<i>Euripides</i>
<i>Eus.</i>	<i>Eusebius</i>
<i>Exod.</i>	<i>Exodus</i>
<i>Ezek.</i>	<i>Ezekiel</i>
<i>Fam.</i>	<i>Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares</i>
<i>Flacc.</i>	Philo, <i>In Flaccum</i>
<i>Frg. Tg.</i>	Fragmentary Targum
<i>FRLANT</i>	<i>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	Philo, <i>De Fuga et Inventione</i>
<i>Gal.</i>	Julian, <i>Contra Galilaeos</i>
<i>Gen.</i>	<i>Genesis</i>
<i>Gen. Animal.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De Generatione Animalium</i>
<i>Gen. Rab.</i>	<i>Midrash Genesis Rabbah</i>
<i>Geo.</i>	Strabo, <i>Geographia</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	Philo, <i>De Gigantibus</i>
<i>Gît.</i>	<i>Gîtîn</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>Grg.</i>	Plato, <i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Hag.</i>	<i>Hagigah</i>
<i>Hal.</i>	<i>Hallah</i>
<i>Hdt.</i>	<i>Herodotus</i>
<i>Hell.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Hellenica</i>
<i>Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit</i>
<i>Hipp.</i>	<i>Euripides, Hippolytus</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Tacitus, Histories</i>
<i>Hist. Eccl.</i>	<i>Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>H.N.</i>	<i>Pliny, Historia Naturalis</i>
<i>Hor.</i>	<i>Horayot</i>
<i>HR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>HT</i>	<i>History and Theory</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>Hul.</i>	<i>Hullin</i>
<i>Hypoth.</i>	Philo, <i>Hypothetica</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IGRom.</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i>
<i>IJCT</i>	<i>International Journal of the Classical Tradition</i>
<i>Isa.</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>

<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
Jer.	Jeremiah
<i>JH</i>	<i>Jewish History</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJGL</i>	<i>Jahrbücher für Jüdische Geschichte und Literatur</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JMA</i>	<i>Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology</i>
<i>JNS</i>	<i>Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
Jos.	Josephus
<i>Jos.</i>	Philo, <i>De Josepho</i>
Josh.	Joshua
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JSQ</i>	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
<i>JSoS</i>	<i>Jewish Social Studies</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
Jub.	Jubilees
Judg.	Judges
Jud.	Judith
<i>Ket.</i>	<i>Ketubbot</i>
Kgs.	Kings
<i>Kil.</i>	<i>Kilayim</i>
Lam.	Lamentations
<i>Lam. Rab.</i>	<i>Midrash Lamentations Rabbah</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	Philo, <i>Legum Allegoriae</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	Philo, <i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Lev.	Leviticus
<i>Lev. Rab.</i>	<i>Midrash Leviticus Rabbah</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
LXX	Septuagint
<i>Lyc.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Lycurgus</i>
Lys.	Lysias
<i>m.</i>	<i>Mishnah</i>
Macc.	Maccabees
<i>Mak.</i>	<i>Makkot</i>
Mal.	Malachi
Matt.	Matthew
<i>Med.</i>	Euripides, <i>Medea</i>
<i>Meg.</i>	<i>Megillah</i>
<i>Mek.</i>	<i>Mekhilta</i>
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Menahot</i>
<i>MGWJ</i>	<i>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>
<i>Mid.</i>	<i>Midrash</i>
<i>Mid. Agg.</i>	<i>Midrash Aggadah</i>

<i>Mid. ha-G.</i>	<i>Midrash ha-Gadol</i>
<i>Midd</i>	<i>Middot</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>MJS</i>	<i>Münsteraner Judaistische Studien</i>
<i>Mo'ed Q.</i>	<i>Mo'ed Qatan</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	Philo, <i>De Vita Mosis</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	Philo, <i>De Mutatione Nominum</i>
<i>Nah.</i>	Nahum
<i>Nat. Hist</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural History</i>
<i>Naz.</i>	<i>Nazir</i>
<i>Ned.</i>	<i>Nedarim</i>
<i>Neh.</i>	Nehemiah
<i>Nic. Eth.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Nid.</i>	<i>Niddah</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>Num.</i>	Numbers
<i>NYRB</i>	<i>New York Review of Books</i>
<i>NYSJM</i>	<i>New York State Journal of Medicine</i>
<i>Obad.</i>	Obadiah
<i>OCD</i>	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
<i>Od.</i>	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>
<i>Oed. Tyr.</i>	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i>
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	Philo, <i>De Opificio Mundi</i>
<i>Ores.</i>	Euripides, <i>Orestes</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>Pan.</i>	Isocrates, <i>Panathenaicus</i>
<i>PAPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society</i>
<i>PCPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>Per.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Pericles</i>
<i>Pes.</i>	<i>Pesahim</i>
<i>Pesiq. Rabbati</i>	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i>
<i>Pesiq. Rb. Kah.</i>	<i>Pesiqta de-Rab Kahana</i>
<i>Pet.</i>	Peter
<i>P.G.</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (ed. J. P. Migne)
<i>Phdr.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Pirqe R. El.</i>	<i>Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer</i>
<i>P.L.</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> (ed. J. P. Migne)
<i>Plant.</i>	Philo, <i>De Plantatione</i>
<i>Plut.</i>	Plutarch
<i>Pol.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
<i>Pomp.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i>
<i>Pompe</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Epistula ad Pompeium</i>
<i>Post.</i>	Philo, <i>De Posteritate Caini</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>Pr. Ev.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	Philo, <i>De Praemiis et Poenis</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit</i>
<i>Prot.</i>	Plato, <i>Protagoras</i>

Prov.	Proverbs
<i>Prov.</i>	Philo, <i>De Providentia</i>
Ps.	Psalms
<i>PS</i>	<i>Population Studies</i>
<i>PSI</i>	<i>Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la Ricerca dei Papiri greci e latini in Egitto: Papiri greci e latini</i> (Firenze 1912 ff.)
Ps.-Ph.	Pseudo-Philo, <i>Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum</i>
<i>PSQ</i>	<i>Political Science Quarterly</i>
<i>QE</i>	Philo, <i>Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum</i>
<i>QG</i>	Philo, <i>Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin</i>
<i>Qid.</i>	<i>Qiddushin</i>
<i>Quomodo</i>	Lucian, <i>Quomodo Historia Conscribenda Sit</i>
<i>Rab.</i>	<i>Rabbah</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , ed. A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, and K. Mittelhaus (Stuttgart: Metzler, Druckenmüller, 1893-1978), 1st ser., 47 vols; 2d se., 18 vols.; 15 suppl. vols.
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des Études Juives</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	Plato, <i>Republic</i>
<i>Res. Lac.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Respublica Lacedaimoniorum</i>
<i>Rev</i>	Revelation
<i>RiB</i>	<i>Rivista Biblica</i>
<i>RIL</i>	<i>Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo, Classe di Lettere e Scienze Morali e Storiche</i>
<i>ROIELAO</i>	<i>Revue, Organisation Internationale pour l'Étude des Langues Anciennes par Ordinateur</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Review of Religion</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Scientific American</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>
<i>Sam.</i>	Samuel
<i>Sanh.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satires</i>
<i>SBAG</i>	<i>Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte</i>
<i>SBB</i>	<i>Studies in Bibliography and Booklore</i>
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Syllecta Classica</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
<i>Scrip. Hist. Aug.</i>	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>Sert.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Sertorius</i>
<i>Shab.</i>	<i>Shabbat</i>
<i>Shebi.</i>	<i>Shebiit</i>
<i>Shebu.</i>	<i>Shebu'ot</i>
<i>Sir.</i>	Sirach, Book of Jesus ben- (Wisdom of Ben-Sira; Ecclesiasticus)
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>SMEA</i>	<i>Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici</i>
<i>Sob.</i>	Philo, <i>De Sobrietate</i>
<i>Sof.</i>	<i>Soferim</i>
<i>S. 'Olam Rab.</i>	<i>Seder 'Olam Rabbah</i>

<i>Somn.</i>	Philo, <i>De Somniis</i>
Soph.	Sophocles
S.P.	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>SPA</i>	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	Philo, <i>De Specialibus Legibus</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>
<i>Sub.</i>	Pseudo-Longinus, <i>On the Sublime</i>
Suet.	Suetonius
<i>Suk.</i>	<i>Sukkah</i>
<i>Super.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De Superstitione</i>
<i>SVF</i>	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> , ed. Hans F. A. von Arnim, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-24)
<i>t.</i>	<i>Tosefta</i>
<i>Ta'an.</i>	<i>Ta'anit</i>
Tac.	Tacitus
<i>Tam.</i>	<i>Tamid</i>
<i>Tan.</i>	<i>Tanhuma</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TAPS</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society</i>
<i>Ter.</i>	<i>Terumot</i>
Test.	Testament
Tg.	Targum
Tg. Onq.	Targum Onqelos
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Tg. Neof.	Targum Neofiti
<i>Theo.</i>	<i>Theokratia</i>
<i>Theog.</i>	Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i>
Thuc.	Thucydides
<i>Thuc.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>De Thucydide</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i>
<i>Trach.</i>	Sophocles, <i>Trachiniae</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>Vesp.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Vespasian</i>
<i>VG</i>	<i>Vergangenheit und Gegenwart</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	Philo, <i>De Virtutibus</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>War</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
<i>y.</i>	<i>Jerusalem Talmud</i>
<i>Yad.</i>	<i>Yadayim</i>
<i>Yal.</i>	<i>Yalqut</i>
<i>Yeb.</i>	<i>Yebamot</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>Ẓeb.</i>	<i>Ẓebahim</i>
Zech.	Zechariah

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